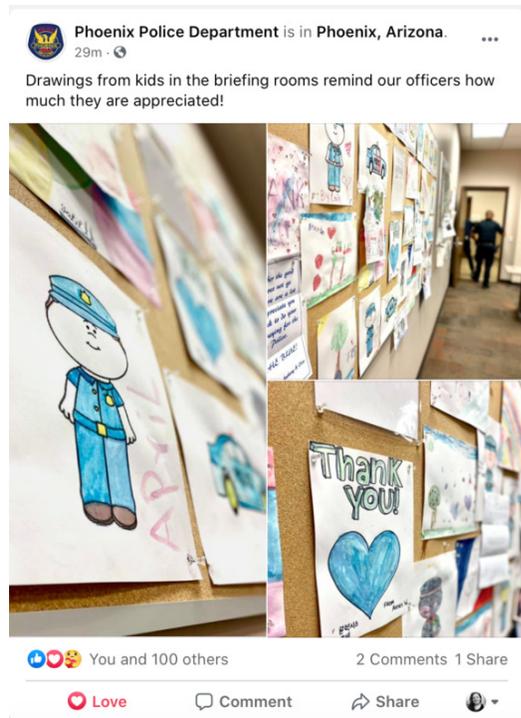


# Archiving the Pandemic Year: One Writer's Quest to Explain the Effects of the Pandemic on Law Enforcement Professionals

By Ashley Pierce



Instagram post from Phoenix PD's public Instagram account submitted to the *Journal of the Plague Year*

officers and their families. As first responders, law enforcement officers are at the forefront of everything happening this year. Many of the submissions highlight the degrading public opinion of law enforcement juxtaposed against the rising need for the profession. Protests, riots, civil unrest seem to be the new 'status-quo' for 2020. In one submission, author Joan B. Rhoades discusses her experience as a law enforcement professional and the daily challenges she faces on the job<sup>1</sup>.

In another submission, this time an oral history interview, Officer S. Keebler explains the lengths her employer goes to ensure the safety of employees during

At the start of 2020, there were rumblings of a new illness emerging in the far east. Quiet at first, many thought nothing of it, but soon it reared its ugly head and the world was changed forever. As the entire globe hunkered down to weather the pandemic, another disaster awaited. Soon, the United States (and other locations worldwide) soon faced us all. Social Injustice, racial profiling, law enforcement brutality issues all came to a head, triggering protests, riots and calls for reform. Arizona State University set out to archive this unprecedented year in real time, as it happened. They created *The Journal of the Plague Year* to preserve stories, articles, photos, artwork and the voices of those who lived it. Within the archive, there exists a collection dedicated to preserving and showcasing the voices of Law Enforcement

<sup>1</sup> Joan B. Rhoades, "Don't Stereotype. Ever." last modified June 11, 2020, <https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/item/20936>

the pandemic as well as her thoughts on how the public perception of the profession has affected her<sup>2</sup>.

But not all the submissions are all doom and gloom, there are a few bright moments to be found, such as the article submitted from [foxnews.com](https://www.foxnews.com) that highlights a touching moment between a child and a first responder. In the article and accompanying picture, the child can be seen being comforted by a detective until family members could come pick up the child<sup>3</sup>. Stories such as these are incredibly important because they highlight the side of law enforcement most often overlooked and forgotten, that these officers are human too and have all the same worries, fears, feelings as we all do.

With all the attention being given to the #BLM and #ICantBreathe movements, Law Enforcement officers and the profession as a whole are being placed under the microscope and every action they undertake being 'Monday Morning Quarterback-ed' to death, it can be hard for some to know how hard the job is, and how much each action can weigh on the officer. The Law Enforcement collection seeks to provide an outlet for the Law Enforcement community to tell their stories and have their voices remembered. The collection seeks to re-humanize a profession that has long been demonized and marginalized for both doing and not doing their job.

Are you a member of Law Enforcement, a friend or family member of Law Enforcement? The Journal of the Plague Year archive is looking for your stories!

The archive is seeking submissions from officers, deputies, employees, or family members; We want to hear your stories, your experiences and your thoughts on this year. Being connected to law enforcement gives you a unique view of the pandemic and how its affected the community. Possible submissions could include, but are not limited to, personal accounts of events, journal/diary entries, photographs, and flyers/artwork that you feel are relevant.



[Who you gonna call...?](#) Archive submission highlighting the emerging crime issues in Minneapolis as a result of the 'defund the police' movement.

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<sup>2</sup> Ashley Pierce, "Oral History Interview with Suzan Keebler by Ashley Pierce" last modified on October 21, 2020, <https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/item/31364>

<sup>3</sup> Janine Puhak, "Hearwarming Facebook post from Illinois Sheriff's Office goes viral" last modified on 11/08/2020, <https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/item/32271>

The Journal of the Plague Year would like to invite you to add your voice to the archive and contribute to the collection.

Submissions can be made [here](#). In the description field, please use the hashtag #lawenforcement when submitting items relating to law enforcement.

If you have questions or would like more information on the Law Enforcement Collection or the Journal of the Plague Year in general, please feel free to contact Ashley Pierce at [aspierce@asu.edu](mailto:aspierce@asu.edu).