# Stink

ommendations. If we'd written down everybody's specifics, we'd of had a hundred page report. Even our report can't cover what we found out. And what's killing me is, after it's all over, I am finding out more charges now against the Police Department than I did when I was on the investigating committee.
I had coffee the other night with and five other policemen. And they were sitting there talking about charges and I said, "What?" And they said, "Did anybody bring this up, blah, blah, blah," and I said, "No, how come you didn't bring it up?" And they said, "I'm not gettin in that crap." You know, people are scared. There again, who's not scared ?

I: Who were the difficult people to deal with when you were on the investigating committee, and what do you think their motives were?

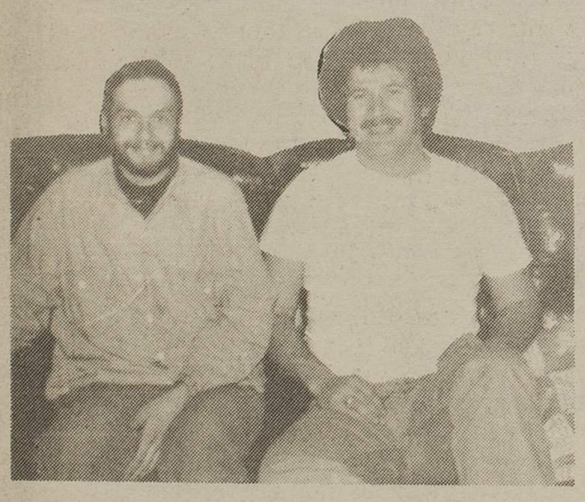
D: Sanitation. I'd say Sanitation and the Police.

I: They just refused to come before the committee?

D: Oh, a lot of them. A lot more would have testified if it'd been under different circumstances. Buford admitted he knew who testified in front of the committee. So what do you do?

B: Yeah, I think it became apparent to a lot of people that while I personally believe all 6 members of the committee had the best intentions in protecting anybody who testified, I think there was still doubt in some people's minds that while, perhaps, they would like to protect everyone's identity, they wouldn't be able to.

D: When it came time to investigate management, the superintendents, Buford Watson, it really wasn't an investigation.



P. Bohlander D. Smith

I: Who was your most defensive interview with?

D: I'd have to say Dick Stanwix (Chief of Police). He seemed to be the most nervous, the most defensive. As a matter of fact, after we interviewed him he drove straight from the Community Building right out to the two Commissioner's houses, the ones that were on the investigation committee...he drove right out there and talked to them after that meeting.

I: Who was the most open?

D: The fire chief. He's open, above board, and places a lot of faith and trust in his men. He treats his men as individuals, not as numbers. He treats everybody on an equal basis.

The chief in the Fire Department even admitted that the union has gone along with him and so anybody who's got enough nerve to sit down and listen to his own people's complaints and gripes and take action on them has got to be O.K. with me. It shows me that he doesn't care about the power structure. He cares about his people. I don't think that's true in the other departments. They don't want to rock the boat, like Phil said. They just want to shut you up and treat you like dogs, and then you go up to City Hall...you know, Buford called me up there about that meeting...

I: What meeting?

D: About three weeks ago Buford Watson called down to the Sanitation Barn and said, "I want to meet with Dennis Smith at 2:30 in the afternoon, in my office." And I'd just come in and somebody hollered down to me, "Dennis, you've got a meeting in Buford Watson's office at 2:30." And I said, "What's it about?" And he said, "I don't know, but the whole City Management Staff is gonna be there." And I said, "By myself?" And he said "Yeah." And I said, "I'm not goin'. I resent that." So he called back up there. I talked to Don Purdy and I said I want a witness up there and he said no. And I said can I have Phil there and he said no. Attorney? No. Press? No. So I went to the meeting. And the room was arranged in a real nice fashion, so that I had this special chair. I walked in the door and I was gonna play dumb and I started to sit on the couch and George Williams (public works director) grabs me around the shoulder and said, "Oh no, sit over here in this chair." So I had people in front of me, on both sides of me, and behind my back. And they browbeat me for over two hours.

I: Who was your most humorous interviewee? Who seemed to take the whole thing with a grain of salt?

D: I think Lyle Sutton from the Police Department. I think he had a good view about the whole situation. You know, everybody was talking about favoritism on his shift. But his theory is that the top patrolmen in his department, or on his shift, or the one who has top seniority, or the man with the dead-end job, he gives them preference as to what district they want and what days off they want, to give them a kind of bonus when they can't go any further. I think that's alright. Some patrolmen think that that's favoritism, I don't feel that way. I think that's recognition of a person who's been there and doing a job well. So I think he generally had a good view of everything.

I: Isn't it true that the Sanitation Department has the highest rate of injuries of any City department?

B: Yes. Fifty-one per cent of all municipal accidents are sanitation injuries. On a national level, sanitation work has a 900 per cent higher accident rate than industry.

I: What do you as workers do to insure that you don't throw a rider, say, or back over him, or something like that?

D: Well I can speak only for myself. When I get a new man on a truck and we first go out on the route, the first trash can we come to on the route I stop the truck and get out, I go to the back of the truck, I have him stand there, I pick the can up, I show him how to lift, I get on the truck, I show him how to stand, I show him how to hang on, and then I have to rely for the rest of it on his ability to be alert, to watch for limbs, to hang on tighter when you go around a corner, to be sure your feet are planted pretty sturdy, so you don't slide under the truck 'cause it'll kill you pretty quick. So I do that with all my new people. I do it on my own because I figure that is my responsibility, I'm responsible to those two men on the back of my truck.

On the management level, when I think about safety I think more about equipment, about the Sanitation Barn, about work clothes. The superintendent, as busy as he is, wouldn't really have time to take a man aside and show him how to lift a trash can. So I figure the drivers have to have some responsibility.

I: How long has the city had a safety officer?

D: I think for about two months. I think they got one when this all came up.

I: Isn't it only a temporary position though ? Funded by a federal give-away program?

D: Yeah, that's pretty funny, because I really didn't even know we had one until one day the safety director came down to the barn and I found out he was federally funded by the CETA program, and one of the recommendations of our report is to keep that man because, in my personal opinion, he is a wonderful person with a lot of good ideas, and I think if they give him the freedom and power that he should have he'll correct a lot of these safety problems that we have.

I: How often do you get to see him?

D: Once a day.

B: Who's this?

D: Roger Martin.

B: He comes down to Sanitation a lot, I guess because we've got most of the accidents and he's been driving around on routes and talking to workers and asking them for their suggestions for ways to make things safer. He's really getting into it.

I: Do you think he's doing a good job?

B: Yeah.

D: I don't think he's qualified but I think the man's got enough pride in his work that he's gonna do the best he can to find out what he can do as quick as he can. I don't know what his goals in life are but everybody he seems to talk to seems to have a lot of...he's just respected.

B: I think people are aware that while he is not trained as an official safety man he's got the intelligence and the research skills to figure out what he has to know.

D: Yeah, I think the reason the men feel...for him is that he doesn't come there as a power symbol but he comes down there as a person trying to help them.

B: He just gathers information, there's no value judgment, there's no intimations that somebody's no good, he's just strictly gathering information to figure out ways to improve working conditions to make them more safe. He gets that across really easily, so that I have yet to run into anybody who is suspicious of him.

I: You know, one of your allegations is that supervisor Don Purdy is too much of a cut-up, too much one of the boys. Can you document that? Where did that come from?

D: That's his way out, that's his way out of the allegations made about insulting people's wives. That's the easy way out. When it comes right down to it he'll say yes, I did say it, but I was just joking. That's the easy way out for anybody. He'll say, "Yeah, I said I wanted to screw your wife, but I said it in a joking manner at seven in the morning, so what?"

I: Why shouldn't a supervisor be "one of the boys?"

D: It's O.K. to be one of the boys. You can talk about fishing or camping, but when it comes down to personal family problems, when it comes down to your wife or profanity, "you son-of-a-bitch," and worse, that's not being one of the boys. It's O.K. for two laborers to come up and say, "Boy you got a nice looking wife," or something like that, but a manager, no, I've never worked in a place where a boss will come out and say he wants to screw my wife.

B: Yeah, being "one of the guys" means you're in the same peer group. Obviously a superintendent is not in the same peer group as a laborer. And so you can't really be one of the guys. That's just common sense.

D: He'd be one of the guys when he got together with a group of superintendents.

B: Yeah, if he was sitting there with George Osborne, (parks department supervisor) and Wiley and Stanwix having a beer, and they were joking around, he could be saying things to them that he souldn't be saying to people under him. It's like the old phrase, "Don't call me boy." If I go up to Dennis and say, "Hey boy, I'm gonna slap you," that's a whole lot different than if Don Purdy goes up to him and says, "Hey boy, I'm gonna slap you."

See, if I said that to Dennis he could grab me by my shirt and say, "If you slap me I'll knock your head clean off," and he couldn't grab Don Purdy and say that.

D: I got on the commissioners tonight about that because they kept relating to us as kids. What'd they call us Phil?