



# Anything You Say Can and Will Be Used Against You: Stories

By Laurie Lynn Drummond

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**Anything You Say Can and Will Be Used Against You: Stories** By Laurie Lynn Drummond

Every night when I go home after shift, I run my hands lightly over my body as I undress. The tips of my fingers catch the new scratches on my hands and arms, tiny red vines, an unreadable map. The burn from the teeth of the cuffs, I remember it catching my skin only now; the new welt on my side, unexplainable; the constant, steady bruise on the hip bone where my gun caresses the skin a deeper purple day after day. I unbraid my hair, shake it loose, stand under the shower. I place both hands on the wall and lean into the water, stretching out the muscles. Okay, I tell myself. Every night I tell myself, okay.

In this stunning debut collection, Laurie Lynn Drummond mines her eight years in law enforcement to tell the stories of five female police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In prose as unflinching and nuanced as the job itself, each woman's story -- like each call in a police officer's day -- varies in its singular drama, but all the tales illuminate the tenuous line between life and death, violence and control, despair and salvation.

These stories draw us into the insular world of cops -- how violence clings to a crime scene long after the crime has been committed, how officers determine when to engage in or defuse violence, why some cadets make it from the academy to the force and some don't -- and delve into the darkest chambers of police officers' hearts.

In "Absolutes," a stunned cop learns to live with the shimmering presence of the man she killed in self-defense, while her neighbor brings her casseroles because "it's the polite thing to do at wakes."

In "Something About a Scar," a rookie from Victims' Services tries to calm a woman with a nine-inch knife embedded in her sternum, while the crime scene officers snap photos and ask questions. At a vigil that seven policewomen hold for a brutally murdered victim in "Keeping the Dead Alive," the mourners get caught up in a vicious act of revenge that escalates out of control.

Fresh, unique, and uncensored, these stories are startlingly vivid and alive,

revealing the humanity, compassion, humor, tragedy, and, ultimately, the redemption hidden behind the "blue wall." This collection signals the debut of an extraordinary new talent.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Combining Southern grace and urban brutality, ex-cop Drummond debuts with 10 short stories grouped into five blistering fictional portraits of Baton Rouge policewomen. Each lady is tough even without her bulletproof vest, and all are plagued by death and corruption as they undertake the bracing, dehumanizing enforcement of justice. In the three "Katherine" stories, the protagonist relates in her own dispassionate voice how she fired two shots into a robbery suspect's chest and then massaged his heart through the gaping bullet wound. She possesses a keen talent for detecting danger and the gruesome gift of determining cause and time of death—a few hours, a day, a week—from the first pungent whiffs of a corpse. In "Liz," a haunted traffic officer recuperates from a car accident, dredging up grisly memories from her days on the force; in "Mona," the burned-out protagonist struggles not to lose control in her professional and personal life. On her first day at work in Victim Services, another policewoman ("Cathy") responds to a stabbing, the knife still sticking out of the woman's chest when she arrives. Years later, after Cathy has married one of the investigators, the victim returns to ask her to reopen the case, accusing Cathy's husband of misconducting the investigation. And in "Sarah," the protagonist escapes to New Mexico from the moral morass she lands in when a group of policewomen take justice into their own hands in a Louisiana swamp. Choosing original characters over clichés and gritty detail over simplification, Drummond continually surprises with her profiles in courage, which focus on a captivating minority on the force.

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### Review

"Tough, scary and riveting." (Entertainment Weekly)

"Unforgettable, beautifully written stories." (New Orleans Times-Picayune)

"Strong and wise ...like the memory of a loved one passed, these stories linger long past their last breath." (San Diego Union-Tribune)

"Drummond's clear voice shuns distracting, overtly literary first-book flourishes. The author's mapping of complex terrain ...keeps the pages turning." (Time Out New York)

"Stories that [put Drummond's] insider's knowledge to work, offering fresh insights into the lives of police officers and women." (Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

"This astonishing debut collection makes it clear that Drummond was a writer long before she was a police officer." (Los Angeles Times Book Review)

"Combining Southern grace and urban brutality ...Drummond continually surprises with her profiles in courage." (Publishers Weekly)

"A superb debut ...marvelous command of fear and sensuous involvement. Prose that weighs like a gun in your palm." (Kirkus Reviews (starred))

"Drummond brings a major new talent to the crime fiction scene." (New Orleans Times-Picayune)

“For readers who like their crime fiction raw and flavored by moral dilemmas, these stories are intriguingly fresh.” (New York Daily News)

“This is an exceptional body of writing.” (Library Journal (starred))

“Elegant, graceful, unexpected and completely haunting.” (New Orleans Times-Picayune)

“Tough and tender, this book is simply unforgettable.” (New Orleans Times-Picayune)

“Unforgettable stories. . . that will make readers suck in their breath.” (San Antonio Express-News)

“A brilliant debut carries the flash of fact.” (Portland Tribune)

“Unflinching in its portrayal of [female officers’] lives.” (Cincinnati Enquirer)

“So compelling that it’s difficult to stop reading.” (Entertainment Weekly)

“A superb debut. Prose that weighs like a gun in your palm.” (Kirkus Reviews (starred))

“This is an exceptional body of writing.” (Library Journal (starred review))

“Choosing original characters over clichés and gritty detail over simplification, Drummond continually surprises with her profiles in courage.” (Publishers Weekly)

“...Elegant, graceful, unexpected and completely haunting. Drummond brings a major new talent to the crime fiction scene.” (New Orleans Times-Picayune)

“Fresh and engaging. [Drummond’s] stories hold pleasures beyond those of a standard whodunit.” (San Francisco Chronicle)

“For readers who like their crime fiction raw and flavored by moral dilemmas, these stories are intriguingly fresh.” (Daily News)

“Sincere praise from Elmore Leonard is the equivalent of striking literary gold, and that’s just what Laurie Drummond has done.” (Bellingham Herald)

“Searing...eye-opening...[Laurie Lynn Drummond] is a deft storyteller.” (Contra Costa Times)

“The stories are sure-footed and fascinating in their insight into the specifics of a cop’s reality.” (The Oregonian (Portland))

#### About the Author

Laurie Lynn Drummond's fiction has appeared in such journals as *Southern Review*, *Fiction*, and *Story*, and she was a Tennessee Williams Scholar in fiction. Formerly a uniformed officer with the Baton Rouge Police Department, she grew up in northern Virginia. She now lives in Austin, Texas, with her dog, Rumi, and cat, Smilla, and is an assistant professor at St. Edward's University.

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**Veronica Mei:**

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