

Friday, May 15, 1992

## **Police Officer Brings Woman Down from Suicidal Perch**

By Donna Davis

### **The Orange County Register**

By the time Tyler Pinchot got to her, the frantic woman was tiptoe on a narrow ledge halfway across the Western Avenue overpass, ready to release her grip on a chain-link fence and end her life.

Pinchot, a motorcycle police officer, gingerly made his way toward her on the other side of the 8-foot fence, 30 feet above the northbound Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway.

Standing face to face with the woman, he reached his fingers through the fence and touched her.

"My name is Tyler," he said. "I want to help you. You are not going to die."

Depressed over a failed romance, a bitter childhood and the seizure of her two children by social services, the 26-year-old woman told Pinchot that nobody cared about her. She wouldn't tell him her name.

"Then I'll call you Carol," Pinchot said. It was a lucky guess.

"How did you know my name? " asked the woman, slumping into a crouch and suddenly screaming for help.

In a moment, Pinchot had scrambled over the fence. He wrapped himself around the woman's body, pinning her against the fence.

Grasping the woman's wrists in his hands, he held tight to the fence with two fingers.

On the freeway below, where traffic had been brought to a halt, firefighters raised a ladder and Pinchot maneuvered himself and the unidentified woman's limp body into a rescue basket.

The woman, who was not injured, was taken to a local hospital for observation, police said.

"I got a lump in my throat watching him," said Steve Lang, 39, a detective who witnessed the Wednesday evening rescue.

Pinchot, a 12-year veteran, said he was just doing his job.

"A couple years back, I wasn't able to help a baby who had stopped breathing and it made me feel so worthless," he said Thursday. "Last night, I felt so good. I helped somebody. I know she'll make it."

On Thursday, Pinchot received a hero's welcome from colleagues at the city's annual police-awards banquet, where he was named 1991 Police Officer of the Year.

"He's got a heart as big as all outdoors," said Sharon Parsons, a Crime Prevention officer.

"None of us are surprised that he would do something like save a life," Parsons said.