

SPOTLIGHT ON

# Carolyn Arnold

A police officer makes the ultimate sacrifice in Arnold's newest police procedural



**C**arolyn Arnold, the prolific Ontario-based author of mystery novels, writes with a deeply felt commitment to truth and accuracy. Her slogan, “police procedurals respected by law enforcement,” is not only a standard to which she holds herself, but something she’s earned through praise from law enforcement professionals. Arnold believes in the importance and integrity of real police. “I have such a love and respect for law enforcement; I want to get it right,” she says.

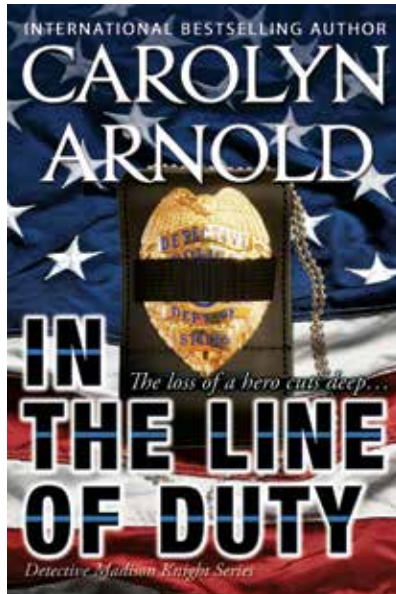
*In the Line of Duty* is the seventh book in Arnold’s Detective Madison Knight Series, about a tough female detective in the Stiles police department. Madison is obsessed with solving murder cases and pursuing justice for victims. In this book, the victim is one of Madison’s fellow officers, Barry Weir. Madison and her boyfriend, Troy Matthews, leader of their department’s SWAT team, wake up early one Saturday morning, revelling in their burgeoning romance, when both of them get calls from other officers. As they both hang up their phones, they turn to each other: “Barry was shot,” Madison says in disbelief.

Troy’s face is pale as he gets out of bed ahead of her. “I know. We’ve got to go.”

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So begins a series of reverberations that will rock Madison’s life, her relationship with Troy, and the Stiles PD. The stakes are different, infinitely more personal, when the murder victim is a fellow officer. In this case, he’s more than that—for Madison and Troy, he’s a dear friend.



Evidence points to gang activity, but there may be more to it; meanwhile, retribution is on Madison and her fellow officers’ minds.

According to Arnold: “Detective Madison Knight was born when I decided to write a mystery series with a strong female lead. At the time, independent and courageous women were hard to find in literature and on television. A female detective was usually found tagging along behind her male partner and having very little to say. I wanted someone who spoke her mind.”

Of course, with all the public discussion over violence surrounding police officers, it’s a complicated moment for a book like this. But Arnold has thought deeply about the public’s attitude toward police. Her goal is to portray law enforcement officers as truthfully as possible, neither idealizing or vilifying them. “People either tend to point their fingers at the police or they raise them up on pedestals,” Arnold says. “Unfortunately, no one is perfect and what happens is that sometimes that pedestal cracks. Instead of idealizing police, I think it’s important that we respect them and accept that they are human like the rest of us. They have family and friends like us. They have feelings. They have hopes. They

have dreams.”

Veracity is the central expression of Arnold’s sympathy and love for law enforcement officers. She goes to great lengths to ensure she’s giving the most accurate portrayal possible of how police work and live. “I do not have a background in law enforcement, but I feel a strong connection toward those who serve,” she says. “I have friends and contacts who selflessly offer their help. Some of these contacts have even read entire manuscripts to ensure that I had my procedures and terminology spot-on. What I’ve found is those who serve greatly appreciate my going to this effort.”

The book is full of moments in which popular myths about police work are debunked. “Vests only helped so much,” she writes. “Bullets could still penetrate the Kevlar despite the fiction of movies.” Arnold is proud to offer these kinds of insights. “I want readers to know that they can turn to my books and find them reliable and grounded in truth,” she says.

Arnold works hard not only at getting her policing facts and terms correct but at creating deep and believable characters: “I wanted a book that showed the human side of policing. I wanted to paint the vivid picture that police are people, and I wanted to show how the loss of a brother in blue affects them—not only on a professional level, but more importantly, on a personal one.”

*In the Line of Duty* shows police facing the ultimate challenge: “The characters in my book must carry on despite their grief and find their fellow officer’s killer. It tears apart relationships, changes people’s viewpoints, and has them acknowledging their own mortality.”

Fans of crime fiction will be moved and enthralled by *In the Line of Duty*, as much an action-packed mystery as it is a heartfelt tribute to police who give up their lives to protect others.

Learn more at [carolynarnold.net](http://carolynarnold.net).