

# RESPECT

**By Officer Bruce Wind, Seattle Police Department**

Why does everybody think they can negotiate?

We've all been at the scene when the field commander says, "hurry up, and just talk 'em out of there". Does that same field commander say to the marksman, "hurry up, just shoot the guy", or to the entry team, "hurry up, just go in and get the guy".

How many times have the SWAT team members, the field commanders, the public information officer, and others leaned over your shoulder and said, "why don't you tell him this? How many times before you've got to the scene have well meaning, but untrained, supervisors let a mother, girlfriend, or other family member talk to the suspect?

To prove my point maybe next time the negotiators should grab an MP5, an ARWEN, or some entry tools and show the SWAT guys how it's done. How about letting the negotiators do the press briefing or the negotiators tell the field commander what decisions to make? Why? Because we're not trained in those areas. Then why does everybody think they can negotiate?

When planning events how many times are the negotiators included in the planning of an event. Very rarely. We pre-plan traffic, we pre-plan perimeters, and we pre-plan entries. How about letting the negotiators pre-plan a psychological profile prior to a high-risk warrant service.

Like the Rodney Dangerfields of the police world, negotiators get no respect. Negotiators train extensively and we are well versed in the art of negotiations. Yes, an art. Contrary to the belief of the uninformed field commander, we don't just, 'talk 'em out".

A negotiation is the art of letting someone else have your way. It's not as easy as you may think. Just like it takes training and expertise to shoot an MP5, to enter a doorway with an armed man on the other side, or to command an entire operation, it takes training, experience, and knowledge to negotiate.

Considering that the police negotiators save governments millions in litigation, bring positive press to our agencies, and save SWAT team members from going through the front door about 90% of the time, I would think we have earned and deserve to be on the A team.

All we want is a little respect.

## Biography

Officer Bruce Wind is a thirty-one year veteran of the Seattle Police Department. He has spent his entire career 'working the streets', with assignments in Patrol, Canine Unit, and the Street Narcotics Team. Officer Wind has been a member of the Hostage Negotiations Team for approximately fifteen years, during which time he has negotiated a variety of incidents and is the senior crisis negotiator. In addition, he is a certified instructor through the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Center and a nationally published author in the art of police negotiations.

As a charter member of the Western States Hostage Negotiators' Association, he is also the founder and editor of their official newsletter, the Open Line, and webmaster for [www.wshna.com](http://www.wshna.com).