

Co-authors with taste of cop life



COMMENTARY
**DENNIS
DUGGAN**

For 15 years, beginning in 1988, former cop Frank -
Lione worked the midnight shift in Times Square patrolling 42nd Street — then a war zone peopled by pimps, prostitutes and “chicken hawks” who preyed on the young.

Lione, 42, is still working that street, but as a writer, trading in his gun for a pencil.

His first novel, “The Deuce,” (Baker-Revell) was published in January.

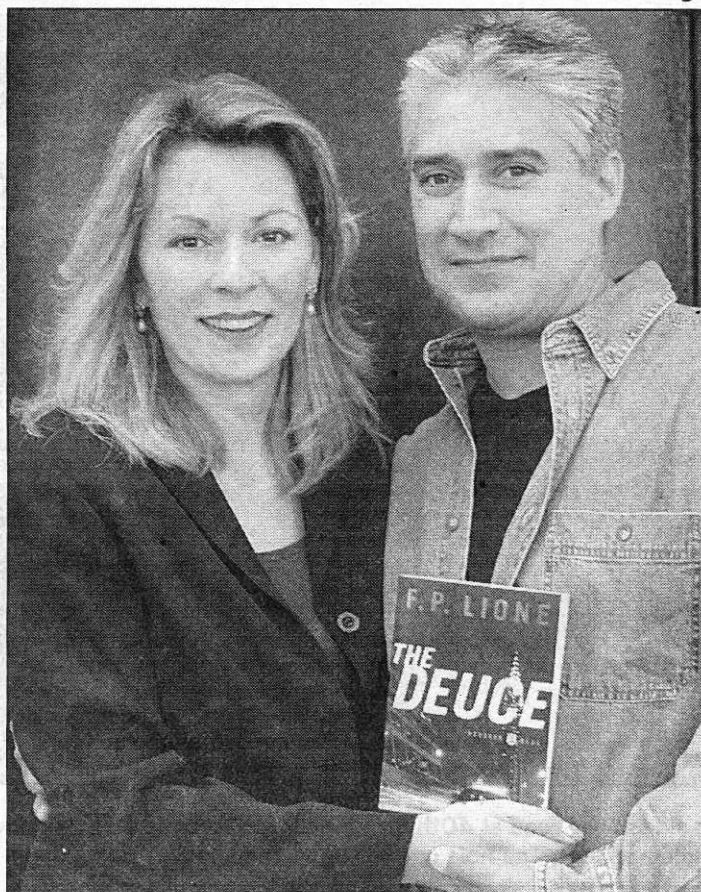
It was co-written by his wife, Pam Lione, 43, who shares her husband’s background as well as his life. They are both Italian-Americans, both are the children of NYPD detectives — Frank’s father worked on Mayor Edward Koch’s security detail. They use the pen name F.P. Lione.

The Liones met at a cop bar on Staten Island where they lived and they were married in 1992 and now make their home in the Poconos.

They are a sitcom in the making. Frank starts a sentence, Pam, a former health technician, finishes with plenty of whooping and laughter. Neither seems to mind the intrusion. This is a couple who seem welded at the hip and if there is such a thing as a marriage made in heaven, here it is.

Both are also Christians, but stress they are not of the “finger pointing variety.” They dedicated their new novel to “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” and to Pam’s 18-year-old son, “Georgie . . . a wonderful son.”

The two began writing their novel in 2000. They finished it in 2001, when they began sending it to literary agents and publishers.



NEWSDAY PHOTO / VIOREL FLORESCU

Pam and Frank Lione with their Times Square-based book “The Deuce,” a story about the life of two NYPD cops.

“I got a phone call from Pam and she said she wanted to talk to me that night,” Frank Lione said. “I thought something was wrong, but she said, ‘It’s OK, I just want to talk, that’s all.’”

“When I got home, Pam said that she wanted to write a book about New York City cops.”

She then told him that she couldn’t do it without him.

“I said OK, but how do we do this?” he said.

Pam Lione went and got a tape recorder and her husband began to talk about life as a cop. She then transcribed the tape, typing the novel’s pages.

The stories spilled out of Frank, who described police work in one of the busiest and

most colorful places in the world, where 50 serious incidents a night were the norm. Frank was one of about 400 cops who worked out of Manhattan South, which runs from West 29th to West 45th streets and from Ninth to Lexington avenues.

“I began writing to 10 literary agents and the seventh — a man named Michael Valentino in Boston — said to send him the early chapters,” Frank Lione said.

Valentino found a publisher in Grand Rapids, Mich. The publisher usually published Christian literature.

“We had never published a work of fiction written by two

people,” said Lonnie Hull DuPont, acquisition director for Baker-Revell.

Still, the firm liked “The Deuce” because of the “reality of cops on the street, cops in a crisis and cops at home,” DuPont said, adding that 10,000 paperback copies have already been sold. A second book by the pair, “The Crossroads,” is expected in the fall.

DuPont said “The Deuce” is not a “pious” story. It is about two cops, one who is turning into a drunk and a cynic, and another who leads that cop into a life of faith. “We have not been this excited about a new novel in a long time,” DuPont said.

“Back into the late ’80s and ’90s, when I came on, midtown was full of welfare hotels. Places like the Strand hotel, the Elk and the Holland were some of the worst,” says the stand-in detective reflecting Frank’s own views. “It was then I learned what the department was really about.”

“The NYPD was all about numbers. Fudging the numbers to make it look like they were keeping crime down when all they were doing was banging down the charges.

“Robberies got banged down to grand larceny,” the book’s cop says, “grand larceny to petit larceny or, if the person didn’t see who took his property, it became lost property.”

“The bottom line is how many collars you got, how many tags you write and whether they were parking or moving violations.”

Frank and Pam are already working on their third book — also set in Times Square.

“They are a delightful couple,” said DuPont, who trades e-mail with Pam.

They are indeed. Full of love and laughter and confidence, even though they are somewhat amazed that they have unconventionally embarked on a literary life.