



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article August, 2019

Welcome to the show. You get a front row ticket to the best show on earth. In exchange, you're expected to work nights, weekends, and holidays. Be aware, this show can be very draining to watch, and in that front row you are definitely going to get wet. Make sure you tend to your needs as necessary so that you last to the end.

There is no other job on earth as entertaining, educational, joyful, saddening, rewarding, stressful,.... the adjectives never end. We've all been asked to explain a day at our job, and no doubt we have all held our breath, filled our cheeks, and blown out our lips before responding, "A typical day? Well, there isn't one really." The same people who ask us questions like this, turn on the evening news to see what happened that day. We were there. We turn on the evening news to see if we will have to bring ice cream to briefing tomorrow.

This is why we love our jobs. We are not the type of people who like monotonous repetitive work. Crunching numbers or creating widgets is not for us. Problem solving. Crisis handling. That's us. I love that I have been doing this nearly two decades and I can still leave a call and say, "Never seen anything like that before..."

Unlike the masses, our jobs cannot be justified by productivity reports and customer bases. We don't get to find out at the end of the month if we sold enough couches to pick up a nice bonus. Instead we have to constantly account for our time. Report writing, business checks, calls for service. Whatever we do, we have to be able to tell our supervisor we were there because we felt it was where we would have the greatest impact on the community we serve. We cannot prove we saved a life tonight when we arrested a drunk driver, nor can we say for a fact that we prevented an armed robbery when we drove through a high crime neighborhood and never contacted anyone.... But we did.

Our reach is so enormous every time we leave the station, that we really cannot even quantitate it and most of the time likely sell ourselves short if we try. Always view your career and the thoughts and feelings you have, as unique to you and others like you. When you try and compare yourself to private sector workers, you will never make sense of what you are looking at. The purpose of this month's article is to get you to think about a few things using that light:

- 1) How are you at adjusting to this show? Is there one type of call that bothers you more than the rest? Although much of the time it is death and carnage, it doesn't have to be. Maybe you are more bothered by suffering animals or spousal abuse. It's completely normal to have a thing. The key is to recognize it and address it. Understand why it bothers you, to what degree it bothers you, and what are your best tools for handling it.
- 2) Are there areas you really excel? Why do you do particularly well at victim interviews, but not always so good at suspect interviews? How is your approach different? Is there a response inside you that makes one better than the other? Do you feel like you're stronger when you have a

partner, or do you prefer to work alone? what is it about that answer that is good, and bad, for your growth as an officer?

- 3) Is your family enjoying their ticket to the show, or are you leaving them out? They don't have to be in the splash section with you, but they do enjoy "being in the know." There are very few perks to being in a cop family. Let them enjoy your career with you.
- 4) The show sets the stage before you arrive. Do you direct it once you get there? Where is your confidence level at when you arrive on a scene? Is the scene yours or do you allow for the other parties involved to have some control? Is your answer to that all good or all bad, or somewhere in between?
- 5) When your role is done and it's time to take off your costume, are you ready to go home? Are you ready to come back the next day? Both questions are equally important. If one is answered with "no", find out why and do whatever you can to fix it.

In today's rapidly changing law enforcement environment, it is imperative that your head be ready for whatever comes your way. Unfortunately, the list of things that can be is longer than any of us can write out, because tonight some of us will see something no one has seen before. It's true. This is a front row ticket to the greatest show on earth, but it comes with a price. Make sure you are up to the task before you go in.