



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article June, 2020

At The Blue Family Tree we try to stay up to date, relevant, and provide life saving insight for real world law enforcement problems. With that in mind, I have struggled with authoring an article for June of 2020. The events of the last five months have every one on their heels. People talk about the perfect storm, or the stars are aligned. I don't pretend to understand the meaning behind the way all these events have unfolded and I am not here to hold myself as some kind of expert on it to you. I do, on the other hand, consider myself a stellar example of the average cop in America, and I believe my feelings are likely shared by the majority of law enforcement professionals. I am not referring to my feelings about Minneapolis, or the riots that have ensued, or police reform, or systemic racism, or COVID 19, or Bud Light vs regular, or steak over sword fish. (Although, I'll take a well cooked steak any day). I'm referring to our current mental and emotional well-being.

All too often we use cliches like "More than ever" but in the sentence to follow, it is no cliche at all. We need to focus on our self-care and that of our households more than at anytime in our nation's history. This article is ALWAYS about officer survival. Both surviving your next shift, and surviving a career. If you find yourself offended that it is not about police accountability or another article condoning the actions of a few, then understand what our purpose is. It is to keep police from dying on duty. There are plenty of other articles to cover the rest.

I know my house has been in a trance the past two weeks. It's unreal. My teenage children are all too aware of what the community thinks of their father. Even their own friends have expressed their disgust with police. We are sad. We are angry. We are scared. It's only families like mine and yours who discuss plans to protect the house in the event of a home invasion. Their friends from school are quick to blame all police but don't stop to consider what our dinner table discussions are like. We find ourselves wishing we could ignore it, and focus on something else. But that is neither the responsible thing to do nor is it even practical. you can't get away from it. Even if you hang up social media, every non-cop friend you have has an opinion to share and wants to hear yours. Some consider you the resident expert and others consider you the subject of study. It's not healthy for something to consume your mind, and your family's minds 100% of the time. But even if you thought of something you could do to get an emotional and mental break for just a couple of hours.... It's closed because of COVID. There is no release. There is no escape.

So my plea to all of you is this: Ironic as it may seem, the escape needs to be when you are at work. You have to have a clear mind. You cannot worry about your home or your family. You cannot worry about the opinions of judging eyes whom have never heard your voice. You must be focused on work. Properly serving your communities, and making sound judgements about your safety and that of your co-workers, the reporting parties, the victims, and the assailants. We still have a job to do. Sadly, it's true that the sheep despise the sheepdog. This hurts so much for so many of us because we have consciously decided that we love the sheep so much we will lay down our lives for them, regardless of their feelings towards us. Don't allow that to change during these trying times, but know that police

work has evolved and jumping in front of a bullet for a citizen is rarely our best option. You have already decided for yourself what that order of human life priority looks like; When the victim's life is more important than yours, and when is it not. I am not here to influence such a personal decision as that. I am here to ask you to hold on to whatever that is for you and don't allow the misbehaving of the crowd change how you feel about the citizenry you love and have sworn to protect.

It is often because of this priority of life decision that we pass on duty; a conscious decision we have all made. We are but a tool used to produce a better society and if that means we lay down our lives then so be it. Make sure when that moment comes, it's for your priority of life and not because you were distracted by the mental and emotional attacks on all of us as a profession. I pray for each and every one of you. Do the same for me.