



## THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

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Perhaps one of the greatest contributors to survival is knowing that you matter. Without question, knowing that you matter creates a desire to survive. To the contrary, believing you don't is one of the most dangerous beliefs to hold. So what happens when a person who believes they have nothing to live for and a person who knows that they matter are in a battle to the death?

This is the scene on America's streets everyday. With an ever increasing population of drug abusers and climbing unemployment, we are farming American's who believe they don't matter to anyone. They believe if they cannot provide, they have no purpose, or if they cannot focus on matters of importance to their loved ones because they're fully consumed with their own demons, that those loved ones may be better off if they just went away. Sometimes the feeling of being irrelevant drives the desire to matter, and manifests itself through crime. A father robbing a bank, or a mother filling a shopping cart and running for the car, all to provide for someone else. At the most basic level it is a primal need to survive and as mentioned a moment ago, why survive if you don't matter?

When we respond to calls for service, one of the first things we should determine is a reason or motive for our suspect's behavior. Is this a primal survival crime? Is this a desperate person? Are they just trying to feed their family? It's ok to feel sorry for them and understand their need. It's absolutely ok to recognize that before today they have been a good law-biding citizen. But you cannot ignore that they are behaving in ways that desperate people behave, and desperate people are dangerous. The greatest thing a police officer does in their career is recognize this person and handle them in a manner that demonstrates they do care and gets the person the help they need. Daily we turn would-be lethal fights

into life changing moments for American's who learn they matter to others and are forever grateful for our intervention in their lives. We don't know the deadly fights we avert, and nor does the media. These heroic moments go unrecognized by all but the offender who has a second chance to make their life better.

Sadly, we all know there is a percentage of police out there who somehow believe they do not matter to anyone. I pray all of you know that to be a lie your mind is telling you, and would remind you that you matter to people whose names you have never heard. Police are cherished by all walks of life and levels of society, regardless of what we hear and see day-in and day-out. But I want to focus for a minute on the majority of police who know unequivocally that they matter to someone, and that in their absence others would struggle to get by and their lives would be much harder.

The score, it seems, when people who have nothing to live for pick a fight with people who have everything to live for is pretty close to a tie. One will fight passionately until the last drop of blood has drained from their heart just to see their family's faces again. Just to hear that child giggle one more time. Just to hug that special someone, one more time. The other has no intention of surviving the battle unless they get everything they want out of it. Anything short of complete dominance is yet another failure for them and more proof they are no good so, a fight to the death it is. One chose the battle and the opponent. The other just showed up to work. One is ahead from the beginning by picking the scene, the scenario, and the time. The other starts out behind, but with proper training and mindset, can quickly become the appropriate aggressor needed to win the fight. This is the cop the criminal didn't want to choose and his fatal mistake. Be that cop. Be the one that doesn't want to be there but can accept the challenge as fast as your adrenal glands can pump adrenalin into your blood. Be ready because you have everything to live for, but maybe more importantly, because your opponent believes they do not.

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