



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article May, 2021

There is a growing sentiment across the ranks of law enforcement in our country today. In the words of The Clash, "Should I stay or should I go now?" We are seeing attrition rates like never before from chiefs to mid-management to the front line, public servants are hanging up the duty belt. Many are just reaching that age and retiring, a forecasted problem we anticipated near this time, but far too many are the up-and-coming sergeants, captains, and chiefs. American law enforcement is in for a rough couple of decades with massive knowledge gaps in the departments. SWAT dogs who are the department experts on tactics, and bookworms who are the go-to for any and all policy questions; These officers go on to be patrol commanders and policy directors. Without their knowledge to fill retirements, mid-size departments will have major issues complying with existing and upcoming standards and practices. We haven't begun to talk about the holes on the street yet.... Most of us would agree, at least on the day to day work of a department, we could do without mid-management, but the road is critical to the success of an agency and the community they serve. We have gone from hiring pools of several thousand for one or two positions, to hiring pools of several hundred for a dozen positions. Sadly we are finding that the qualified candidates are the ones not applying in today's climate and the questionable, badge heavy commandos are what's left for us to fill essential positions with. This is another problem facing law enforcement in the coming decades that will certainly further compound our less than favorable impression with much of the national community. I know it's scary to operate without qualified immunity. We are certainly more exposed than we once were, and no one wants to risk losing financially what you have worked so hard for. It hurts even more that it is coming from the very people you have sworn to protect. It's easy to believe that the very masses you care so much about that you are willing to perish for hates you. So, what's the answer?

Stand fast.

The pendulum of law enforcement has swung since it was put into motion at the dawn of time, and it will continue to do so until the clock's final tick. You may not see bad laws reversed in your career. Maybe the pendulum has swung much further than you've seen before. But it will return, and if there are not good men and women in place to safeguard our communities when it does, it will just continue to be pushed

back. Many of today's allegations against law enforcement are false and uneducated, but if we leave the commanding ranks void of knowledge and hire mere warm bodies to fill the patrol cars, those allegations will find merit in the future.

We all have a moral responsibility as men and women who chose to become police to support each other, support the sanctity of law enforcement, and support the community. Telling rookies to get out now and be a fireman, or discouraging new blood from joining with talk of how it used to be and will never be again, is not supporting and improving law enforcement in America. There are always people who should leave the career behind for a myriad of reasons. Supporting those officer's decisions is noble. Allowing good officers to walk away because we can't jail anymore, or admin has tied our hands and it's uncomfortable is not.

Do what you know is right for the right reasons. Continue to act within the color of your authority. If you're sued, stand tall in front of that judge on top of a foundation of strong moral ethics, sound decision making based in training and experience, and articulable facts as you knew them at the time. None of these pillars have changed in the eyes of the court. The only change is how easily we may find ourselves standing there. If you are considering a career change because you are nervous on every traffic stop, you don't trust your skills, or you recognize you have a mean temper, then please follow that instinct. If you are considering a career change solely because the sheep have turned on the sheepdog a bit, I would suggest to you that they have not. What you are seeing is a growing pack of wolves. The sheep are more grateful than ever for the teeth of the sheepdog.

Stay committed to what you know is important to you, your community, and the sanctity of our entire nation. There have been times in history when good people had to lead difficult lives. This is one of those storms, but without good officers willing to face the fire, our nation will burn.