



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article November, 2019

We are all aware that our job is particularly dangerous. But just how dangerous is it, and why? Are we manufacturing a problem that doesn't really exist? After all, oil rig workers have a high mortality rate. So do coal miners. What makes us so special?

Well there's a few points to focus on when answering this question. For starters, no one ever hunted down and killed a coal miner for being a coal miner, and when oil field crews are speaking to others during their shift, they're not threatening to take their freedom away.

We meet people in their most emotional and difficult moments. Our mere presence threatens the independence of those we are speaking to and they are forced into a fight or flight decision. In large part, due to fake news and misplaced agendas, much of the time that fight or flight decision is not just for their independence, but for what they may perceive as their own safety. It's our job to move these people from making an emotional decision to fight us or run from us, to help them think rationally about complying with our direction. I can't think of any other profession on earth that requires you to move people from emotional self-preservation thinking, to rational thinking and compliance constantly throughout their day. That is the ultimate key to what makes our job unique, and our line of duty death toll exceptional.

Yes, accidents happen, and it's why we will lose people right along with so many other physical labor professions. When there are moving parts and more than one entity influencing those movements, mistakes happen. Car crashes, industrial accidents, mishaps of any sort. Often we hear people talk about seconds and inches. That's all it takes right? Perhaps. Then there's also the medical losses. Over-exertion or even poor chronic health. Whichever the case, every profession is susceptible to these. But being murdered for what we "do" is pretty well reserved for us.

While we have become accustomed to the confrontation that comes with our jobs, we should remember that those we contact have not. When those lights come on in their rearview mirror, it doesn't matter if it's a soccer mom, or a bank robber, or even an off duty cop...their body is filled with adrenaline, their blood pressure spikes, they shake, they stutter, and they are ripe for poor decision making because they are responding from a place of emotional stress. It's not their fault. Their bodies are designed for it. Most people can fight through this response and are no real threat to us. But if they truly believe you may be about to take their freedom, this emotional response will only manifest stronger and stronger responses until they are left with only bad choices.

I know a lot of cops who enjoy using this response in suspects to play with them and work them up, but when we do this we make our own contact more dangerous and likely compound the dangers for the next officer to contact them down the road. Our job should always be to calm a suspect. Move them to rational thinking to get them to understand why we are there and why we are taking whatever action needs to be taken. The likelihood of compliance and therefore no loss of life, is dramatically improved when all parties involved are thinking rationally.

This month we begin to move into the holiday season and focus more on our families. In November we especially think about the things for which we are thankful. When you sit down for Thanksgiving dinner and you look around the table at all the people you are thankful to be eating with, remember not only are they thankful for you, but they need you. You are their source of life and strength, comfort, and knowledge. The worst mistake you can make is taking for granted your safety and ignoring simple tactics like moving a subject to rational thinking...all in the name of having some fun with your suspect. Your family needs you to be alive. My family needs me too. Treat everyone on the street with respect and offer them the courtesy of rational thinking for themselves. You may even teach a person how to find their own rational thoughts and ultimately reduce call load. Maybe I'm dreaming, but wouldn't that be nice?

Happy Thanksgiving, and as always, I'm thankful for all the men and women in the many shades of blue who protect the laws and the rights of the people of this great country every day and night of the year.

Patrick Rice
CEO

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