



THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article September, 2020

Policing in America is rapidly changing right before our eyes. Use of force, qualified immunity, body cam policies, and even our discretion is all being reviewed, changed, eliminated, and overhauled. What we did as recently as April, is now considered archaic, dirty, out of touch with the communities, and unacceptable. Some of our communities are so disgusted with us, that they have chosen to get rid of us completely and “police” themselves through alternate methods. Talks of social workers combined with notions that people are only violent because the police exist, have been a driving force behind such mind boggling decisions. Our society, its leaders, and the media have chosen to believe that police have become brutal, and irresponsible with the power given them.

Stretch back in your memory to before you became a cop yourself. Now go back a little further. Go back to before you began researching academies and departments as a career option. Go so far back that you hadn't yet decided what you wanted to do when you grew up. Ok. chances are good that you in fact wanted to be a cop. Police are like a breed. It's not something you just do for the paycheck, or because you're bored with whatever current job you have. To be a protector you have to have an innate sense of justice. You have to believe that doing what is right is more important than your own life. You have to love yourself, but you have to value the flock above your own needs. That's not a job requirement that people wander into; That's a personality trait that most develop very early in life.

Now, remembering that pre-police you, the you that likely still had a slightly better knowledge of the job than the average citizen, think about how well you really did know and understand what police do. You didn't know about use of force continuum's. You didn't understand there was two prongs that had to be met before Miranda was read. You didn't have a clue about the paperwork and report writing and the answering to judges, and lawyers and sergeants and captains and..... You didn't know.

This is the community we protect and the leaders who wright and re-wright our governing legislation. They do not know. But to even compound the split between the police and community even further, they will never know what it is like to watch a child die in a mangled pile of metal that used to be the family car. They will never feel

the way your heart races when you tell a 6'09" body building 23 year old male he's under arrest for breaking the other guy's face in the bar five minutes before you got there. They have not spent their lives rehearsing "worse case scenarios" and then played them out in real time. They have never made split second decisions and had to consider the law, case law, the Constitution, policy, the community's safety, their own safety, and the safety of their adversary when doing so. And make sure when you consider all the above that you are scanning your brain for the most recent versions, and not relying on old information.

One major change in policing has come about that has lent to closing these gaps. It was not a decision made in state capitol buildings or even inside the chiefs office. It hasn't been written into policy, in fact, in many organizations it's been forbidden, but I believe it has done more for bringing the police and community together than anything else to date. Social media. Humanizing the badge. There are some celebrity cops out there whom we all know and love, and there are many others who take to the scene of social media as well, and the people love them. Of course there will always be those who are unreachable. Generally they are the criminal element, although we have all have met plenty of career criminals who respect the police and know we have a critical role in society. But beyond those that are beyond educating, the masses do watch our videos. They laugh at our jokes. They cry at our stories. They begin to understand our jobs a little better than they did before. Their respect for us grows. They support us at their local city halls. They defend us to the cries to defund. They know they need us.

Take to your social media and help the public understand a little better who we are and what we do. Help them to see that what we know to be a fraction of a fraction of a percent of bad peace officers is more accurate than their understanding of a systemic policing problem. Because of our roles in society, we have traditionally been silenced. We are not allowed to have an opinion, even if it is in defense of ourselves. But it's time to show the communities that we in fact love them, and that is why we are here. We do not wish harm to anyone in our communities and we are willing to lay down our lives if needed to protect them.

While they may never experience the carnage and mayhem, we can go home at the end of our shifts knowing they also will never deliver a baby before the squad arrives. They'll never push a car off the tracks seconds before the train arrives. They'll never pull an elderly woman out of her burning home. They'll never find the satisfaction of being a part of something as amazing as what we do every day.