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# MANAGING EDITOR'S MESSAGE



*It's not about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. - Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) from the movie "Rocky"*

How much can each of us take, unassisted?

There is no doubt that unnatural biorhythms necessitated through shift work along with the stress of law enforcement operations and navigation of the political landscape are all contributors to self-medication. Caffeine to start your day and a beer or two to wind down after a shift is commonplace for first responders.

When reliance on alcohol, specifically, becomes a necessary crutch to numb the grind of daily negatives and injury is when consumption, often to excess, becomes problematic.

"Numbing the pain for a while will make it worse when you finally feel it" points out J.K. Rowling in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (Harry Potter, #4).

In this issue, we explore the issue of alcoholism among the ranks of first responders.

Also in this edition of the BLUE Magazine, Lt. Joseph Bucco, Jr writes about *Breaking the Silence: Mental Health Challenges Facing Our Nations Officers*. Lt. Robert Spano encourages us to *Be the Change You Want to See in Agency Culture* and I offer thoughts on law enforcement evolution to the escape by many in *The Great Escape: Evolution to Exodus*.

How much can we take? The assistance we seek can be found in supporting one another. We must have each other's best interest as a top of mind awareness endeavor. Both our safety and sanity are dependent upon it.

While facing the many obstacles inherent in our chosen profession, we must remember what brought us to public service and always be guided by our own moral compass. Every generation is called to face hardships. We must stand up and not surrender in our fight for freedom, life and pursuit of happiness!

As always, we are here to help support you. Our sister organization Moment of Silence is here to help as are we. Reach out whenever you need us!

Joel E. Gordon, Managing Editor

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# 10-13

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SHERIFF CLARKE SPEAKS OUT

# Mr. Criminal Goes to Washington

By Sheriff David Clarke (Ret.)

**M**any of you can remember the 1939 classic movie titled “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.” For a refresher, it was a story about a naïve man who is appointed to fill a vacant U.S. Senate seat. He enters a Washington, D.C. that is filled with corruption. All the elected people in Congress have been compromised unbeknownst to Smith as he tries to make a difference and clean things up.

I use this backdrop because Washington D.C. remains the same place today that was depicted in “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.” In Washington, they are narcissists, oblivious to the world of pain and suffering around them. The political class is totally disconnected from the world, or in this case the country around them. They live in a bubble, a cocoon while insensitive to the plight of Americans living way out there dealing with real-life issues that need attention, things like inflation, rising food costs and rising fuel costs. Rent costs are rising, as is household debt. Rising interest rates have put owning a home out of reach. And then there is another crisis that people are experiencing that the political class in Washington has been insulated from, at least until now.

Crime, violence and disorder have ravaged cities all across America, as the D.C. elites live in area full of security and police and described

in news stories as swanky neighborhoods. They haven’t had to live with the murder, assaults and armed robberies that go on unabated in every large urban city in America including neighborhoods surrounding the federal district. The neighborhoods surrounding the federal district have always been crime-ridden, but it was contained therein because elites live in neighborhoods that had been immune from real life outside the federal district. They got away with simply expressing faux concern and virtue signaled in front of television cameras when it happened to somebody else, but in truth they didn’t really care. But their arrogant indifference and attitude that those things happen over there, and not here, has caught up with them.

Several recent crime incidents have grabbed headlines. Now, we have the attention of D.C. media and of the political elite. It has been noted that carjackings in D.C. have smashed the total number that occurred in 2022, and that was a record year. Last year there were 360 carjackings in Washington, D.C. So far this year, there have been 757 incidents. Keep in mind that we are only in October so the total will undoubtedly continue to rise. More notably, several members of Congress have been victimized. Democrat U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar was recently carjacked outside his Navy Yard neighborhood apartment. Reports indicate

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## "I have to ask where the everyday citizen goes for respite from the dangers of the streets in their neighborhood that happen in broad daylight?"

that three young, masked males with guns drawn demanded his car along with his phone and luggage. Cuellar went on TV and said that Washington is about two or three times more dangerous than at the border in his district in Laredo, Texas- "and we certainly see it now." Really? He only certainly sees it now? He even found some humor in recounting the incident by saying that he was more disappointed in losing his sushi that was in the car. This is a perfect example on how oblivious these elites in Washington feel and how disconnected they are from what everyday Americans have been dealing with for the last five or ten years of rising rates of crime, violence and disorder. But as long as crime doesn't visit D.C. politicians, they whistle past the graveyard. I spent a 40-year career dealing with crime victims. I never saw a victim of a crime of violence joke about it later. Cuellar should get out of the bubble of Washington and visit some crime victim care centers or hospitals where victims of violence are being treated.

There is more indication that we see these elitists getting a dose of reality. Another news story was written that talked about how some D.C. lawmakers are so fearful about crime in the District that they are hunkering down and sleeping in their offices at the Capitol because it has become "very dangerous" after dark. This same U.S. Rep. said, "I don't want to walk back and forth from an apartment in D.C. at night or in the early morning to get to work. It's not a safe environment." Oh really? I have to ask where the everyday citizen goes for respite from the dangers of the streets in their neighborhood that happen in broad daylight? They can't hun-

ker down in a taxpayer-funded office. The same congressman said that "It's insane to even own a car in D.C. because it is likely to get broken into and you are likely to get carjacked." Is this guy just now figuring out what life for the rest of the country is like? Yet another lawmaker said in response to the crime surge that, "Any reasonable person would be afraid of the increase in crime and the danger of being in the capital." Wait a minute. Is it only important to do something about it because it is happening to them? I want to make something very clear. I don't wish that crime and violence happen to anybody, but if it has to happen, I can't think of more worthy people to be victimized than members of the elitist political class, many of them Democrats, who either voiced support for the cop haters after Ferguson, Missouri or after George Floyd that started the movement for defunding police, and if they didn't say so publicly, their silence in the face of this war on police spoke volumes.

Yes, indeed, Mr. Criminal has gone to the Federal District in Washington. The only difference is that Mr. Criminal is not some naïve guy who doesn't know what he is up against. Mr. Criminal isn't there to make things better. He is taking advantage of the naïveté of the political elites. He is there to perpetrate misery and suffering. What political elitists don't understand is that crime rates are like water. They seek their own level. You can only put up so many sandbags or walls to protect or insulate yourself from a flood of crime and violence. If it doesn't stop raining criminals, eventually they will find their way into, over and around any protective barriers. 🌊

*Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. is former Sheriff of Milwaukee Co, Wisconsin, President of Americas Sheriff LLC, President of Rise Up Wisconsin INC, Board member of the Crime Research Center, author of the book Cop Under Fire: Beyond Hashtags of Race Crime and Politics for a Better America. To learn more visit [www.americassheriff.com](http://www.americassheriff.com)*





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SCAN ME

# The Great Escape: EVOLUTION TO EXODUS

By Joel E. Gordon

What a challenging time we continue to find ourselves in.

During the last many months and years, the trust people have placed in every level of government has greatly diminished. One result is the many new plans and restrictions that are being proposed and implemented in an attempt to hold police accountable. Where however, are the plans to hold those for criminal acts and all of the chaos and destruction accountable? Where are the plans to reduce the violence? Where are the plans to improve community relations instead using such divisive measures that only serve to portray police as the enemy?

So who are the people that are most likely proposing plans for reform and police oversight? Is it professionals with extensive knowledge of the law, a perspective on the evolution of law enforcement and of the job itself? No, instead in many communities it is comprised of politicians and ordinary citizens with anti-police agendas; facts be damned. Would you want a committee of non-medical people organized to monitor doctors or non-educational persons to educate educators? Maybe there should be a committee of non-aviation people to tell pilots how to fly aircraft?

Law Enforcement has evolved from a Reactionary Policing model to Proactive Policing to Community Policing to Broken Windows Theory to Intelligence Lead Policing into Evidence Based Policing. What is referred to as Evidence Based Policing is subjective and is the brainchild of academia. It makes judgments on outcomes opening the door to many unresolved contradictory ideas which routinely override long established mandates and opportunity for personal growth and promotion. Since subjective to the whims of political correctness many unintended consequences are resulting in an environment which is

untenable to the newer generation of law enforcement leaders who were, in fact, in many cases born of the culture of the importance of the diversity philosophy.

Ever watched dominoes falling in real time? The sad reality is that many in law enforcement are throwing in the towel and just can't take it anymore. The pressure of the job and sudden pivot away from decades old reforms for diversity, increased training with community policing and de-escalation techniques being replaced by a cry for sweeping defunding have resulted in reevaluation of many considering entering the profession along with many resignations of many tenured and highly respected law enforcement leaders, a substantial number many of which who identified as minority professionals that successfully earned their way up in the ranks. From Dallas to Seattle, to an entire command staff in Rochester New York, along with many other chiefs nationwide, the time to move out of law enforcement had come on the heels of their defiance against those with an anti-police mindset, ideology and agenda.

Will this result in more feckless police leadership remaining in office or in being hired who will be willing to put their officers in unsafe, retreating or defenseless positions at the behest of those lacking sufficient knowledge to make informed or rational judgments? Society can't reasonably expect law enforcement to succumb to violence without responding in such a fashion as to protect the very lives of the protectors themselves. No one signed up to be physically harmed by becoming a law enforcement officer.

Although the job remains largely one of regulating human behavior, the desire to help others continues to be the driving motivational force and reason that some still answer the calling to keep the peace.

The bottom line appears to be that regardless of the current preferred prac-



ticed model of policing, or the high level of professional training implemented, the idea that the police are unwanted (until needed for selfish or individual safety reasons) has become the guiding principle of those politicians holding the power of life and death over our future.

The way forward remains a mystery. I have long professed that we must reject an "us versus them" mentality. In this current environment, through the actions of many others, it seems increasingly difficult to maintain this mindset. The truth remains, however, we are all in this TOGETHER. Unfortunately though, if things continue on their current trajectory this clearly isn't likely to be ending well for the common good. 🌍

Joel E. Gordon, Managing Editor of BLUE Magazine, is a former Field Training Officer with the Baltimore City Police Department and is a past Chief of Police for the city of Kingwood, West Virginia. He has also served as vice-chair of a multi-jurisdictional regional narcotics task force. An award winning journalist, he is author of the book *Still Seeking Justice: One Officer's Story* and founded the Facebook group *Police Authors Seeking Justice*. Look him up at [stillseekingjustice.com](http://stillseekingjustice.com)



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# Free Palestine... From HAMAS!

By Lt. Patrick J. Ciser (Ret.)

October 7th, 2023 was undoubtedly, Israel's 9/11, as Islamic terrorists savagely attacked Israeli civilians from Palestine's Gaza Strip. Most of us who saw the pictures and videos as well as news reports were horrified at the brutal surprise attack and massacre. This was not an army attacking military or even police targets, but the slaughter of innocent families. 260 young people celebrating at a festival were among the first victims when gunfire replaced music as the revelers attempted to run for their lives. Young girls were not only shot or stabbed, but found brutally gang raped as a few even had their pelvis broken from the barbaric attacks. A nearby kibbutz near Sderot, and about ¼ mile from the Gaza strip, was another target of HAMAS' (Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah) unrelenting savagery. Not to be outdone by ISIS, another Islamic terrorist group known for their barbaric atrocities, HAMAS, savagely killed families in their homes, and tortured many before they died, gang-raping mothers and daughters in front of their husbands and fathers, cutting heads off babies, and even putting a couple of babies in ovens, burning them alive. Their goal, apparently, was to cause complete terror in their victims, and perhaps, shock the world. After slaughtering an estimated 1,200 people, they would then round up 240 hostages to bring back to the tunnels of Gaza. A legitimate army takes prisoners of war, while criminal terrorists kidnap women and children, including toddlers and the elderly.

"HAMAS, militant Palestinian nationalist and Islamist movement in the West Bank and

Gaza strip that is dedicated to the establishment of an independent Islamic State in historical Palestine. Founded in 1987, HAMAS opposed the secular approach of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, rejecting attempts to cede any part of Palestine, and embraced the use of violence, including acts of terrorism, as a means to achieve its goal." (Britannica)

HAMAS, ISIS, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Al-Qaida, and other terrorist organizations who are hell-bent on killing all infidels (non-believers) need to be delt with accordingly, as you can not reason with their extreme ideology.

In 1948, when Israel declared itself a nation, several surrounding Islamic countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, agreed to simultaneously attack Israel and wipe it off the face of the earth. Unfortunately for them, and against all odds, the fledgling, yet tenuous nation fought back hard and successfully defeated them all. Militant neighbors would attack again in 1967, during the six-day war, only to lose more land as a result. Later, in 1979, Israel would return the Sinai back to Egypt in exchange for peace. Israel's critics say that they should give back Jordan's West Bank. By that logic I imagine that the United States should return Texas-California back to Mexico. In 2005, Israel withdrew from Gaza believing it could appease the Palestinians to some degree. However, the Palestinians voted for HAMAS to govern Gaza over Fatah, a more moderate group that aligns with the PLO. Are you aware that Israel's Parliament, the "Knesset" has two Arab members? Their coalition government,



in Jerusalem, has the Islamic “Ra’am” Party as a member organization. Most secular Palestinians want nothing to do with the terrorists, HAMAS, in Gaza, and never go there.

This recent attack, although the most violent by far, is nothing new to Israel, as rocket fire from Gaza, and even Lebanon is quite common; which is why they have the “Iron Dome” defense system. Because of the incessant mortar attacks and suicide bombings, Gaza imports need to be constantly monitored by Israel. How would you like to live on America’s southern border and not know every night whether your house might be hit by mortar fire, or you might get blown up in a local restaurant? How can anyone live like that? After 9/11 we knew that we needed to obliterate Al-Qaida, and we did just that. ISIS later popped up, and we dealt with them as well. So why can’t so many people understand that HAMAS also needs to be totally eliminated? If not, it’s like “whack-a-mole” as they keep popping up to attack again and again. Would we, as police officers, allow these vicious murders to run free and kill again?

Iran, funding HAMAS, knew that they had to act now, as Saudi Arabia’s secular crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, was about to normalize relations with Israel. The prince has made drastic changes, including improving women’s rights, as Saudi Arabia is looking more like Dubai every day. Historically an adversary to



Iran, there is currently a power struggle between these Middle East power brokers. The upcoming meeting between the Crown Prince and Israel’s, Benjamin Netanyahu had to be stopped! This forced war by HAMAS puts the prince in a difficult position, not to mention Egypt and Jordan. These leaders would love to see HAMAS destroyed, but it all gets very political.

And while we’re talking about Netanyahu, how is it that he, and the MOSSAD, Israel’s intelligence agency, didn’t see this attack beforehand? Did Netanyahu have enough of living under the threat of HAMAS, with their incessant threats and mortar fire? Did he not realize just how barbaric the attack would

be, as he allowed it to happen? Did he need a reason to finally wipe out HAMAS and push for a more benign government. After all, HAMAS charter says that all Israelis need to be wiped out, from the “River to the Sea.” 🌐

*Pat Ciser is a retired lieutenant from the Clifton Police Department, and a 7th Degree Black Belt.*



*He was a member of 5 U.S. Karate Teams, winning gold medals in South America and Europe. He is the Author of BUDO and the BADGE; Exploits of a Jersey Cop (BN.com/Amazon), and is a guest writer for Official Karate Magazine.*

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# Navigating The Housing Market: A GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS

By Janet Larrain

Hello, fellow law enforcement professionals! As the proud leader of the Listed By Janet team, I wanted to take a moment to provide you with valuable insights and guidance on navigating the ever-changing housing market. Whether you're considering buying or selling a home or an investment property, understanding the current state of the market is crucial for making informed decisions. So, let's dive in and explore what you need to know!

The housing market has experienced notable shifts in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced buyer preferences and market dynamics. Despite these changes, it's important to note that buyer demand remains strong and a location with diverse neighborhoods and excellent amenities makes an attractive place to call home and this continues to be in high demand.

Currently, the housing market in many parts of the United States is experiencing a seller's market, where demand exceeds supply. This means that there are more buyers than available homes for sale. While this limited inventory situation can create challenges for buyers who may face increased competition and higher prices when searching for their dream home, opportunities still exist with the right strategies and guidance.

One common concern in a seller's market is the limited inventory of available homes. It can be frustrating to struggle finding properties that meet your specific needs and preferences. However, as part of my commitment to serving law enforcement professionals like you, I have access to off-market listings and can keep you informed about new properties as soon as they become available. Rest assured that I'll work tirelessly to find your dream home within your budget.

Another worry among homeowners is high interest rates, which can impact purchasing power. While rates may be relatively high compared to previous years, it's important to note that they are still historically low overall. Waiting for rates to decrease is not guaranteed and may result in missing out on potential opportunities in the current market. By exploring different financing options tailored to your specific needs, you will feel confident in navigating these conditions and securing a

favorable rate.

Did you know that the average homeowner in the United States has more than \$290,000 in equity? This means that homeowners have significant financial resources that they can leverage when buying or selling a home. Having a customized strategy during the process of buying or selling a home is essential and will help you to confidently navigate the current market conditions.

For buyers, getting pre-approved for a mortgage can help strengthen your position when making an offer. This, combined with the equity you may have in your current property, can give you a competitive edge. Sellers can take advantage of the high demand by strategically pricing their homes and leveraging our effective marketing strategies to attract motivated buyers.

As members of the law enforcement community, you deserve the support of a trusted real estate professional who understands your unique needs. The Listed By Janet team is dedicated to providing personalized guidance and exceptional service to help you achieve your real estate goals in this housing market. Don't let limited inventory or high interest rates deter you from making a move towards finding or selling your perfect property. Reach out to me today for a complimentary consultation and let's embark on this exciting journey together! 🏠



*Janet Larrain, a St. John's University graduate with a B.S. in Finance, expertly bridges law enforcement and real estate as a Law Enforcement Real Estate Liaison. Her years in NYC's financial services industry and her thriving investment property portfolio attest to her multifaceted expertise. Janet's unique blend of financial acumen and real estate savvy makes her an exceptional guide for clients in home or investment property transactions. Leading the esteemed "Listed by Janet" team, she upholds a stellar reputation for discretion and professionalism. Additionally, as an Honorary Board Member of Moment of Silence, Inc., Janet is committed to giving back to the law enforcement and first responder communities.*





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# IN THE END

*By Major Wesley R. Wise (Ret.)*

**Y**ou may not realize it, but time has a way of moving too quickly and catching you by surprise, unaware of the passing years. It seems like only yesterday that I was a relatively short (5'8"), thin, bespeckled, young man, looking for a job – or better yet, a career – in law enforcement, a career I had yearned for my whole life as a child and as a teenager. A short time later, I was embarking on my dream job as a Baltimore Police Officer, just married, and looking forward to starting a family. Yet it also seems like decades ago, and I wonder where all those years went.

I know that I lived them all, and lived them well. Now, from time to time, I suddenly and without notice have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams. But, suddenly, reality strikes, and I realize that here it is ... the winter of my life, and I have many more years behind me than in front of me, and it catches me by surprise... How did I get here so fast? Where did the

years go? Where did my youth, my health go? Where did some of my friends go? Where did so many of the fine people I worked with go?

I well remember seeing older people through the years and thinking that those "old farts" were years away from where I was today as they faced their winter, and I was satisfied with my life but happier still that my winter was so far off that I could barely fathom it, or even fully imagine what it would be like.

But, here it is – one more upcoming winter. Perhaps my last. Unexpectedly, I feel at the edge of the winter of my life. Most of my friends have gone, retired and getting gray – just as I am. They all move slower now – just as I do. Our only race now is our race to the end, and we're all getting closer and closer to losing the race. Every day I see an old man looking back at me in the mirror and I barely recognize him. Still short and bespeckled, but no longer thin but hopefully a little wiser.

Some of my friends from over the years

---

are in better shape than I am, and some are a little worse. But none are anything like they were “in the old days” when they were also young, vibrant, and fresh-faced like me. Also like me, their age is showing and we realize we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd be. And some – way too many – are no longer with us at all, having already failed to make it through their winter.

Each day now, I find that just getting up in the morning, or getting a full night's sleep, are my targets for the day. Taking daytime naps is not a treat anymore... it's inevitable, and I usually just fall asleep where I sit.

Now, as I embark on this journey through the final season of my life, I find myself ill-prepared for all the aches and pains or the loss of strength it brings, the loss of so many of my friends, the loss of my ability to remember important stuff. Or to remember the even more enjoyable unimportant stuff. I wish I could still do the things I used to do so easily and enjoy so immensely – but I often can't remember what those things were.

But, at least I know that though the winter has come, and I'm not sure how long it will last... cthis I do know – that when it's over on this earth... it's not over – a new adventure will begin in its place!

I do have regrets; many of them. I look at all the things I wish I had done but didn't. There are things I wish I hadn't done ... but got caught doing. And there are so many things I'm happy to have done. A lifetime of challenges faced and met – and some unmet. But little regret other than having not taken better care of myself, as everybody told me I should.

If you're like me, many of the things you used to care to do, you no longer care about. You sleep better, if at all, on a lounge chair in the living room with the TV blaring than in bed. What used to be freckles are now liver spots. Everybody for some reason seems to be whispering and you can't figure why, and you say “Huh?” way too often. Why don't they speak louder so you can hear them?

If you're not in your winter yet... let me remind you that you WILL be – and way too soon, because the end will be here faster than you can

imagine. Whatever you would like to accomplish in your life, do it now, sooner rather than later! Don't neglect your career, your family, or yourself. And don't put things off too long, like I did, because life goes by too quickly to make up for it later.

There is no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life one more time... so do what you can TODAY. You can never be sure whether this is your winter or not! So, say all the things that you want to say now and that you want your loved ones to remember... and hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past, and love you the way you loved them!!



Remember, life was a GIFT to you, and the way you lived it was your gift to those who came after. I hope you made a fantastic life for yourself, as I mostly did. Navigate the time you have left carefully, because whatever you yearned for in life, time is all you have left. 🌍

A thirty-six-year veteran of the Baltimore Police Department, Wes retired in 2006 as the Commander of the city's 911 System. While recovering from a stroke in 2014, he wrote two books about his experiences as a Baltimore cop. Wes has also self-published fourteen books for other writers. Need publishing help? Contact Wes at [weswise78@gmail.com](mailto:weswise78@gmail.com). A father of two and grandfather of ten, he and his wife of 49 years live near Baltimore, Maryland.





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# ARE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAMS WORTH THE EXPENDITURE?



By Leonard Adam Sipes, Jr.

**T**here's nothing wrong with trying new community-based crime control strategies. The problem is what seems intuitive to so many doesn't mean that programs will work.

Properly constructed research is essential to our understanding of what works, and more importantly, what doesn't. Until the proof is in, the billions of dollars projected to be spent on community-based violence programs probably won't work.

I was involved in numerous meetings with community organizations regarding crime. Charismatic community organizers made presentations to my agencies seeking support for a wide array of programs that they said would lower violence. They stated that they know their communities better than anyone and that we bureaucrats just need to fund them or cooperate and get out of the way. To suggest that we were skeptical was an understatement.

Per community leaders: Our young people need somewhere to go, something to do. They need skills they are not getting in school. They need hope. They need someone who cares. They need a future. They need mentors. All we have to do is to offer them the right programs, they said. They said that it was intuitive. It was common sense.

Do you know how many programs for crime control made intuitive sense to many but failed? Boot camps. Hawaii's Project Hope. Educational and vocational programs in prison. The list is endless.

There's nothing simple about offenders. Offenders are complex. The degree of substance abuse and mental health problems is enormous. Many (if not most) come from histories of child abuse and neglect. The degree of female sexual violence by someone the victim knew is considerable. Brain damage is commonplace. Our youth are scarred by violence in their homes and their communities. Parole and probation agents say that offenders have

chips on their shoulders the size of Montana. The degree of recidivism (new crimes-new incarcerations) after leaving prison or juvenile facilities is overwhelming.

I have no issues in offering programs to people caught up in the justice system. I advocate for these programs on a humanitarian or religious basis. But the essential question comes down to effectiveness, and the data to date is either inconclusive or discouraging. My criminological training emphasized accountability and not misleading taxpayers who fund these programs.

While it's not politically correct to say, the great majority of community leaders don't have a clue as to what it takes to create a small bureaucracy that hires and fires people, writes grants and implements programs. They are not comfortable with people evaluating them because it's simply more outsiders who, in their opinion, don't understand life in their communities. They are sure that their approach works but can't offer proof (based on outside researchers) that their programs have merit.

Our world is full of organizations and publications acting as advocates. In my opinion, 90 percent of what's written or offered regarding crime control is sketchy. People will swear that programs work when they don't.

The TRACE seems to be an exception. They state that "Gun violence is often portrayed as an intractable problem, but a growing body of evidence shows that there are existing interventions that can save lives right now. These programs rarely get the careful, sustained attention they deserve. This project seeks to change that."

Now, to my knowledge, gun violence community-based programs do not have a substantial body of methodologically correct research backing them. The only modality we have based on good research that lowers crime based on hundreds of evaluations is proactive policing.

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"Whether or not people like it, properly constructed research is essential to our understanding of what works and more importantly, what doesn't."

## THE TRACE AND PHILADELPHIA

Community-based violence interruption programs are a key part of local governments' response to the nationwide rise in homicides. The Biden administration has contributed more than \$10 billion in American Rescue Plan funding to more than 300 communities, including Philadelphia, for anti-violence initiatives. The Philly grant program costs \$22 million altogether because of administrative costs.

Despite the push, some critics believe there isn't enough traditional academic evidence to justify such spending. And measuring success in an emerging field made up mainly of smaller nonprofits — which lack large grant-writing teams and development infrastructure — has proven to be a complicated task. But the programs are varied and neighborhoods aren't laboratories, complicating ordinary evaluation.

The city will likely announce the new round of grantees, and will also make public an independent evaluation of the program. But some of the puzzle pieces during the first round of the grant program were a bad fit. Take the case of Put It Down Philly, a violence interruption program co-founded by an ex-felon, which was approved for a grant of \$729,696 to expand its program targeting the 18- to 30-year-old men who are at risk of being involved in violence.

Despite the organization's impressive pitch and the ex-felon's made-for-TV background as a reformed gangbanger, infighting led to the collapse of Put It Down Philly before it could even begin to spend the money to help young men.

## THE TRACE AND PROOF

The government — at the state and federal levels — is about to invest billions of dollars in community-based violence intervention programs, which focus on strategies like mediation of potentially violent disputes and social support for likely perpetrators of violence. Critics, however, are pushing back, arguing that there is not enough rigorous scholarship to support the investment.

In fact, there is evidence from across the country for the efficacy of such interventions. But large-scale traditional academic study of this type of work is rare. The complicated nature of violence makes it uniquely

challenging to pull apart, and the expense of formal public health and sociological studies is immense. For smaller groups, which now must compete for the millions available, the burden is particularly high.

The back and forth raises an important question: If gun violence is a key social crisis of our time, why don't we have more science about how to stop it?

There's nothing wrong with trying new strategies. The problem is what seems intuitive to so many doesn't mean that programs will work. Sending violent and repeat offenders to prison strikes many as intuitive, and it has a substantial research base. Hiring more cops and enforcing the law is equally intuitive and, like incarceration, it has a considerable research base, with police initiatives depending on community cooperation and assistance.

Most community-based programs do not. That doesn't mean that such programs are worthless. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't try them. But at least the TRACE understands that research and data are essential components of new programs.

Advocates will always be the bane of criminal justice and crime control efforts. Advocates mislead, thus endangering the very programs they promote. Most prison-based rehabilitation programs produce terrible results but rather than admit this and search for reasons why, advocates will claim endless success where none exists.

Whether or not people like it, properly constructed research is essential to our understanding of what works and more importantly, what doesn't. 🌐

*Leonard Adam Sipes, Jr. is a retired federal senior spokesperson. A former Adjunct Associate Professor of Criminology and Public Affairs - University of Maryland. Former advisor to the "McGruff-Take a Bite Out of Crime" national media campaign. Past police officer. Aspiring drummer. Operator of CrimeinAmerica.net. His book based on thirty-five years of criminal justice public relations, "Success with the Media: Everything You Need to Survive Reporters and Your Organization" is available at Amazon and additional booksellers. He can also be found @leonardsipes.com*





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(L-R) Devine Guzman, Xavier Correa, Dennis Guzman and Daniel Guzman

# True Warriors Boxing Dominates the 2023 New Jersey Golden Gloves

By George Beck, Ph.D.

## True Warriors Boxing And Fitness Club



Paterson, New Jersey, is known for silk and boxing. It is named the "Silk City" for its once-dominant role in silk production during the late 1800s. However, the silk factories have faded into yesteryear while boxing in Paterson still produces many prolific fighters.

Paterson is New Jersey's third-largest city, with a current population of 154,594. It showcases a long and storied boxing history, including during the 1920s when young Paterson native Lou Costello, later of the famed comedy team Abbott & Costello, boxed at the many gyms in the neighborhood. During the 1930s, Abbott and Costello performed at the local Hinchliffe Stadium before boxing matches. Many fighters have come up in the city gyms, rugged men, such as Paul Cavalier, who Gene Tunney called

the "cleverest heavyweight in the world." Cavalier became the first to defeat Jim Braddock, "The Cinderella Man," in 1927. Others include Rubin Carter, Frankie Toledo, Omar Sheika, Vince Martinez, Pat Comiskey, George Khalid Jones, Curtis Harris, Henry Crawford and the list goes on.

From the numerous gyms that once flourished during the 20th century, boxing in Paterson has consolidated into two: Ike & Randy's Boxing and True Warriors Boxing & Fitness Club. Both are firmly established

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and respected in the sport, each producing some of the toughest fighters to get in the ring. Both are nonprofit 501 (c)(3) gyms focused on keeping young people off the streets where dimly lit gunfire, gang warfare, and social and economic blight envelope the city. Both gyms are making a significant difference in the lives of children living in a despondent city by offering encouragement, leadership, skills and hope.

The husband-and-wife team Jose and Ramona Concepcion run True Warriors. The Concepcions have produced many talented amateur and pro boxers and have a heart of gold for the youth. They also officiate boxing matches.

[View fullsize](#)

"Jose and Ramona are not here for the money," amateur boxer Alberto Palacios told Blue Magazine as he trained, hitting one of several heavy bags in the gym. "They care about the kids, and they care so much for these kids you can see it in the gym's atmosphere. It's old school around here."

Palacios is speaking of the many rules of respect the gym has for its members and guests. Cursing is not allowed. Respecting the facility is mandatory, and re-



specting each other is strictly enforced. This, in turn, has created an environment where boxers from beginners to advanced work together to develop their boxing skills irrespective of the ways of the bustling city streets outside their doors. The gym has become a sanctuary for youth looking to establish themselves and have the most incredible opportunities life offers them.

A mother watching her son during their afternoon kid's class told Blue Magazine that she'd noticed a tremendous improvement in her son since she enrolled him in True Warriors. "We've been here for six months now, and everyone tells me how respectful and calm my son is. His teachers and even family members ask me what I did for this to happen," she said. "I tell them it wasn't me. Jose and Ramona deserve the credit."

[View fullsize](#)

The Concepcions' strategy for turning young men and women into respectful children while teaching them boxing skills is a proven recipe for success. True Warriors Gym entered the New Jersey State Golden Gloves this year and produced five champions. Dennis Guzman, 10; Daniel Guzman, 16; Devine Guzman, 18; Xavier Correa, 18; and Justin Wiesner, 19, each won the tournament in their respective divisions. These young men not only experienced the accomplishment of success, but they learned how to overcome challenges through hard work, dedication and perseverance — all essential qualities needed to navigate the road of life ahead.

The Blue Magazine congratulates True Warriors 2023 Golden Gloves Champions and offers a genuine and heartfelt sense of gratitude to the Concepcions who, through boxing and kindness, provide kids with leadership and opportunity in a world where many have turned a blind eye. We see you and appreciate all that you do! 🌍

*George Beck is a police lieutenant, award-winning journalist, and editor-in-chief of Blue Magazine. He holds a Ph.D. in History & Culture from Drew University. He is the author of Law Enforcement in American Cinema, 1894-1952 and several other books. His nonfiction and short stories have been featured in magazines and anthologies nationally and internationally.*



**COVER  
STORY**

# ALCOHOL & LAW ENFORCEMENT

# MARRIAGE MADE IN HELL

*By Joel E. Gordon and George Beck, Ph.D.*

*"Alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine share several common features. Being palatable for their mild psychotropic properties, they are the most widely consumed drugs worldwide. As licit psychoactive drugs, they are used mostly by "normal" people, in contrast to illicit "hard drugs."*

*~Source National Library of Medicine*



"Police alcoholism can significantly impact an officer's ability to perform their duties effectively."

## Use of Alcohol in Law Enforcement

Caffeine via a cup or two of coffee to start your day. An alcoholic beverage, perhaps a beer or two, to wind down before retiring to end your day. Sound familiar? At what point does this become problematic?

The law enforcement profession is ripe with pitfalls for enthusiastic newcomers soon to experience. Many agencies still run around the clock on shift work, often changing working hours weekly, leaving many officers exhausted. The rookie cop cruising their patrol area at 3 a.m., excited for the job, soon relies on coffee and/or energy drinks to keep from crashing the patrol vehicle. A career initially met with grand ideas of selfless service and sacrifice for the safety and protection of the community recedes slowly into a reality that, all too often, officers are not equipped to handle. Experiencing traumatic situations begins to take its toll in multiple ways. Having a child die in an officer's arms, watching someone burn alive while they can't pull them to safety, seeing lifeless bodies twisted in the carnage of car wrecks or witnessing the endless suicides that frequently were permanent solutions to temporary problems are everyday experiences officers are tasked with on a moment's notice.

In the high-pressure world of law enforcement, officers routinely face excessive stress and trauma in and out of their departments. Yeah, also inside their departments where officers who are genuine and intellectually honest with their thoughts and words will surely tell you, the internal stress from megalomaniac bosses and cow-

ardly administrators who genuflect nauseatingly to politicians quick to throw a good officer under the bus for personal gain is a battle many cops are also not prepared for. They experience leaderless anxiety-riddled milquetoast bosses/administrators who are insecure loathsome snakes intimidated by the success of another, challenged by their own insecurities, and quick to sabotage.

As the months and years roll by, the officers often become adaptive to their unconventional environment, socializing with other officers in a closed society—because who else could understand what they go through—where they've been, what they've seen, or had to do to perform their duties? The world's evils continue while the officer stems the tide, responsible for everything—nowadays, appreciated for nothing inside and outside their departments.

This constant exposure to difficult situations can lead some officers to turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism—a form of temporary escape. It is, therefore, no surprise that socializing off-duty with alcohol is a professional norm. However, using alcohol as a coping mechanism often exacerbates the problem, leading to a multitude of negative consequences for the officers' mental well-being. The burden of alcoholism further compounds the already challenging nature of police work, creating a cycle that is difficult to break.

Alcohol and law enforcement can become a marriage made in hell.

"Yeah, I drink a lot, but I can control myself." Sound familiar? Too many officers have said this to themselves and others to coach themselves to believe they do not have a problem.

However, the truth is the frequency of alcoholism within the police force is a deeply concerning issue that affects not only the officers themselves but also their families and the communities they serve.

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"Recognizing the signs of alcoholism and seeking help is crucial for individuals and their families."



Police alcoholism can significantly impact an officer's ability to perform their duties effectively. The perplexing nature of this issue is evident in the fact that those tasked with upholding the law may find themselves compromised by their own struggles with alcoholism. This internal conflict can lead to errors in judgment, compromised decision-making and a decline in overall professional performance. It leads to a relentless cycle of drinking, experiencing temporary relief or numbness, and then facing the consequences of their actions. Deteriorating physical health, such as liver disease and cardiovascular problems to depression and anxiety, are all effects of alcoholism that can be extensive and long-lasting. Damaged relationships with loved ones who often bear the brunt of the consequences, experiencing emotional turmoil, financial strain, and strained relationships as a result of their loved one's drinking, are also associated with alcoholism.

Addressing the issue of police alcoholism requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the complexity of the problem. Providing access to confidential mental health resources, implementing effective stress management programs and fostering a culture that destigmatizes seeking help are crucial steps in supporting officers struggling with

alcoholism. By understanding the multifaceted nature of this issue and offering relevant support, law enforcement agencies can work toward mitigating the impact of alcoholism within their ranks.

Recognizing the signs of alcoholism and seeking help is crucial for individuals and their families. With the proper support and treatment, individuals can break free from the cycle of alcoholism and rebuild their lives.

Blue magazine's sister organization, Moment of Silence, has been saving lives for over a decade. If you have an issue or something you feel you cannot handle, please get in touch with us. And although we might not have all the answers, we have the passion to want to do the best for you. So, we will mentor you, find whatever we can do and help you within our capacity. We get it. When faced with a problem, officers are afraid to say something because many panic, sound the alarm or gossip to everyone. We are different. We've held a retreat, all paid for, where officers stayed at a lake and over 100 acres. It's just a beautiful template where officers find serenity and peace. We hold many events where officers come together to help each other. So, again, if you have any issues, please contact us as an organization. We care about you. We're here for you. Your life and career depend on it. 🌐

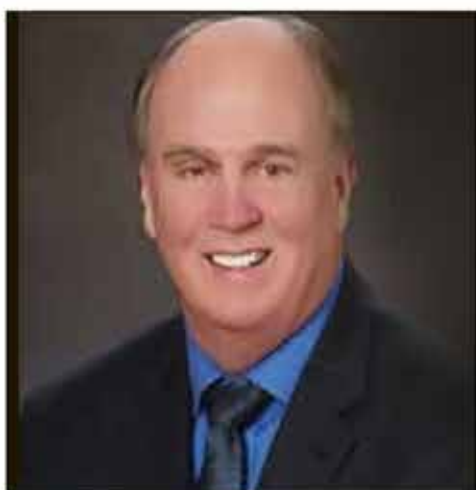


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# **BREAKING THE SILENCE: MENTAL HEALTH**

## **CHALLENGES FACING OUR NATION'S OFFICERS**

*By Lieutenant Joseph Bucco, Jr.*

**P**olice officers are the unsung heroes who tirelessly protect and serve their communities, often putting their lives at risk to maintain law and order. However, behind the badge and uniform, many of these brave men and women silently bear the burden of mental health challenges. The nature of their profession exposes them to traumatic events, constant stress and societal pressures, leading to a higher likelihood of developing mental health issues. This article delves into the mental health challenges faced by police officers and the need for support systems to address this critical and common issue.

Exposure to traumatic events is one of the most significant contributors to mental health challenges among police officers. Responding to accidents, crimes and violence takes an emotional toll, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in many cases. Repeated exposure to such distressing incidents can desensitize officers over time, creating emotional numbing and difficulty in processing their own emotions.

The high-stress work environment of law enforcement further compounds mental health challenges. The pressure to make split-second decisions, the fear of danger and the responsibility of protecting the public add to the constant strain officers experience on the job. Stress can manifest physically and psychologically, leading to anxiety, depression and burnout.

Despite the evident need for mental health support, a culture of silence prevails within law enforcement, discouraging officers from seeking help. The stigma surrounding mental health issues often makes officers reluctant to disclose their struggles for fear of being perceived as weak or unfit for duty. This reluctance to seek help exacerbates their mental health challenges and prevents them from getting the necessary support.

erbrates their mental health challenges and prevents them from getting the necessary support.

The irregular and demanding nature of police work, with rotating shifts and long hours, can disrupt the officers' sleep patterns. Sleep deprivation affects their cognitive abilities, decision-making skills and emotional well-being. Chronic sleep disturbances can contribute to mood disorders and increase the risk of developing mental health issues.

Police officers may resort to alcohol or other substances as coping mechanisms for the stress and trauma they face on the job. Self-medication through substance abuse can quickly spiral into addiction, compounding mental health challenges and hindering their ability to fulfill their duties effectively.

The emotional toll of the job can extend to personal relationships, leading to strained family dynamics and social isolation. The detachment necessary for coping with traumatic events can make it difficult for officers to open up and connect with loved ones, leading to a sense of alienation and loneliness.

Many police departments across the nation often lack sufficient mental health support programs for their officers. Even when available, these resources may not be adequately publicized or encouraged, further perpetuating the culture of silence. Confidential counseling and therapy services should be readily available to all officers to promote mental well-being.

The cumulative stress experienced by police officers over their careers can lead to burnout. The emotional toll, coupled with the pressure to maintain composure and strength in the face of adversity, can leave officers feeling emotionally exhausted and disengaged from their work.

Mental health challenges among police officers are real and pressing issues that demand immediate attention. It is crucial to destigmatize mental health discussions within law enforcement and promote an open environment where officers feel comfortable seeking help. Police departments must invest in comprehensive mental health support systems, including counseling, therapy and peer support groups, to address the unique challenges faced by officers.

By acknowledging and addressing the mental health needs of police officers, we can ensure they receive the care they deserve, allowing them to continue their vital role in protecting and serving their communities effectively. Only through collective efforts can we break the silence and pave the way for a healthier, more resilient law enforcement community. 🌐

*Joseph Bucco Jr. is a Municipal Police Lieutenant in New Jersey. He is currently in his 20th year of service and is assigned to the Detective Division as a Supervisor, A certified police instructor since 2011, Joe has taught a variety of topics at police academies and academic institutions across northern New Jersey. He received a B.A from Ramapo College of New Jersey and an M.A from Seton Hall University. In the fall of 2018, in addition to his police and consulting careers, Joe accepted a position as a Business Development Manager with a national communications and media company that is solely focused on serving our nation's law enforcement officers.*



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SCAN ME

# AMERICA *A Safe Haven for Terrorists*



By Eric Caron

In October 2023, U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) issued an alert to officers that Hamas, Hezbollah, & Islamic Jihad foreign fighters may attempt to enter the United States via the Southwest border. During this same time, CBP officials apprehended a former Afghanistan Army general attempting to enter the U.S. illegally, and Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) in New York arrested an African man wanted in Senegal for terrorist offenses, who was previously released by CBP at the southern border.

Since January 2023, CBP agents have apprehended 169 terror watchlist suspects along the southwest border. Not only is this a record, but it exceeds the combined totals of the past six years.

In September of this year, there were 232,972 migrant apprehensions at the southern border alone, making it the highest single month ever recorded. For the fiscal year 2023, CBP reported 3.2 million “Enforcement Actions,” making the highest annual total recorded in a single year. Furthermore, CBP estimates over 1.6 million “known got-aways” at the southern border in the last five years alone. These individuals were detected by CBP but not apprehended. Note that there are 328 official ports of entry into the United States to include seaports, airports & land borders. The “known got-aways”

from all these official ports of entry is truly anyone’s guess.

The federal government is currently allowing more “asylum seekers” into the U.S. with little or no vetting. At the direction of the president via the Dept of Homeland Security, officials from CBP & Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) are now facilitating the relocation of hundreds of thousands of “migrants” to various cities across the United States.

For decades, the U.S. government prevented America from becoming a safe haven for individuals who commit war crimes, genocide, torture and other forms of serious human rights abuses in conflicts overseas who may attempt to enter or have already entered the U.S. illegally.

Since 2003, ICE has arrested more than 480 individuals for human rights-related violations of the law under various criminal and/or immigration statutes. During that same period, ICE deported or removed more than 1,100 known or suspected human rights violators from the U.S.

Currently, ICE/Homeland Security Investigations have more than 170 active investigations into suspected human rights violators and is pursuing more than 1,700 leads involving suspected human rights violators from Rwanda, Ethiopia & 95 countries.

According to the United Nations, a quarter of humanity, approximately two billion people, are living in international conflict areas today, totaling 56 state-based conflicts. The world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since World War II ended. Furthermore, the U.S. is currently involved in 21 African “shadow wars” and assisting in wars in Ukraine and Israel.

Sadly, wars are raging throughout the globe, and recently America received another dreadful reminder of the importance of border security with the Hamas terror attacks that killed approximately 1,200 Israelis. Many Hamas terrorists & their supporters will attempt to evade capture by escaping to neighboring countries and to the United States with open borders.

Unfortunately for America, the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for keeping America safe, is actually facilitating the importation and relocation of suspected terrorists & war criminals

to U.S. cities. These additional burdens on local/state and federal authorities to track, investigate, & prosecute individuals who were allowed entry into America to commit additional crimes has sabotaged all levels of traditional policing in America.

With the current war on police in America, including low morale and staffing coupled with the actions from the Department of Homeland “Insecurity,” America is in turmoil.

Abraham Lincoln famously stated, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

America must stand up **NOW** for the rule of law. 🌐

*Eric Caron is a Special Agent (Ret) with 25 years of service. He is the author of "Switched On - The Heart & Mind of a Special Agent." His website is: [Switchedonlife.com](http://Switchedonlife.com)*

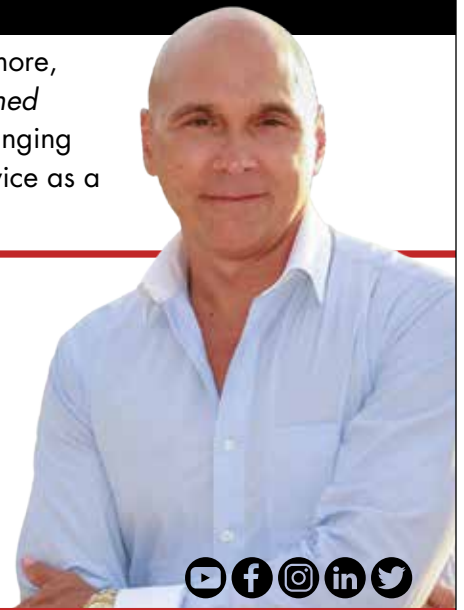


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# THIRTY-SIX YEARS AGO...

## *How can that be?*

By Dale Gabriel

**I** embarked on a journey like no other, a journey that cannot be defined, a journey that only a very small percentage of people are able to take, a journey that would take me places and show me things that NOBODY should ever have to see, a journey that would bless me with unbreakable bonds, a journey that would give me pride and jubilation, a journey that in the end, is ultimately life-changing!

I left my job that I absolutely loved as a radio announcer/news reporter, packed up my old yellow Firebird, kissed and hugged mom and dad, my then-girlfriend (now my wife of over 35 years, said goodbye, and began the long and lonely 2 1/2 drive across the state, to PA State Police Academy in Hershey.

I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Other than being 20 miles away at Saint Vincent College, and coming home most weekends, I had never even been away from home. The next five long months seemed like a lifetime for this college boy, being about as anti-military as they come. I never did learn to march or salute very well, something that would haunt me over the next 25 years.

The Academy classroom work was simple. Learning had never been difficult for me when I put in the effort. Pool time was easy since I had swum nearly every day possible for the past 12 years or so (although we did not have "pool duty" long because of a problem with the pool) The REST of the academy time was NOT easy.

My knees could NEVER withstand the morning run of up to 5 miles, regardless of the weather. Physical training

had its ups and downs. There was fight class, actual LIVE hand-to-hand combat. Sometimes you were lucky enough to get the weak; other times, you were the weak. The shooting range, working details, and much more filled the days. My parents and troopers I knew lied to me! This was nothing like college! What had I gotten myself into? And then, there were the constant inspections. They certainly were not my friend, especially considering I did not have my mom to make my bed or do my clothes.

But after that long, hard five months and finally passing the required tasks, including the obstacle course at the exact time I needed (I still think they shaved a few seconds off my time. Just a week earlier, I was still far off.), I would become a full-fledged Pennsylvania State Trooper. Trooper Gabriel. Just like the Angel. That had a nice ring to it. I probably said that a thousand times over the next 25 years, pointing to my name tag. My coworkers can attest to that. In fact, some of them started doing it FOR me.

Other than being a father, this was easily one of most important and proudest accomplishments in my life.

I would spend the next 25 years doing what I still consider to have been very important work, taking me from Shipperville in Clarion County, to Greensburg, then home to Kiski Valley for the last 20 years. I was proud of the work I did. Proud to be a "Road Dawg" for the entire time. I was punched, kicked, bitten, spit on, run down by a car, dragged by a drunken driver, and even attacked off duty, resulting in a fractured skull and severe facial injuries. Yet, like Buford Pusser, I kept "Walking Tall."

"Our co-workers become more than just your friends. They become your lifeline."



# pennsylvania

## STATE POLICE

I kept plugging away, going from wide-eyed rookie to grizzled veteran in what SEEMED like a very short time. Several times, I was among the top 10 in DUI arrests in my troop, receiving the High DUI award. For about 18-20 of those years, I had the most DUIs at my station. I probably took part in taking a thousand drunken drivers off the road, and I absolutely hammered underage drinkers. Many thought I was wrong hunting them out the way I did. Right or wrong, these were things I despised.

My very favorite thing, however, was simply the interaction with people when they were NOT at their worst, not victims, not the accused. I loved seeing kids out in public and the excitement in their eyes at seeing a policeman, still a hero to most of them. I would let them sit in my patrol car, blow the siren, just talk to them, let them know we are there when they need us, and a friend when they don't. I absolutely loved being like Superman to them.

I thoroughly enjoyed the hundreds of programs I put on at schools, old folks' homes, town meetings, scout troops, 4-H Clubs, PTA meetings and many more. I was extremely proud to incorporate, then put on for five years, "Camp Clelian," a one-day police camp for the students at Clelian Heights, a school for persons with special needs, the first of its kind to my knowledge. Each year, it got bigger and better. After the last one, I received a personal call from Governor Corbett and our PSP Commissioner. Great memories.

Unfortunately though, as only those of us IN law enforcement know, the job eats at you. It takes so much out of you, changes you. My outlook on life changed. We see a multitude of things the average person does not see. I had so many ups and downs over the years, hundreds of dead bodies, mostly fatal accidents and suicides, drug overdoses, fatal fires, even a few murders. I saw a man die screaming while trapped in his tractor-trailer, as fire raged around him, and caught his dog as he threw it out the window. I found my daughter's best friend and other kids I knew dead in a triple-fatal crash. I held an elderly woman's hand as she expired along the side of the road while awaiting an ambulance, talking to her for what seemed like hours. Delivering death messages to people, telling them they had just lost a loved one, was very difficult, completely draining you.

Over time, it hardens you. I saw people at their worst, injured, hurt and scared. Very often, however, I feel I was able to provide them some kind words, some comfort, which I believed helped them deal with whatever situation they were in.

And I was blessed to work with and become friends with so many great people along the way. Unlike a "normal" job, your co-workers become more than just your friends. They become your lifeline. They are guys and girls you know you can count on when the shit hits the fan. Brothers and sisters that you know will have your back, just as you have theirs.

It's not just those in your own department, but many of those in the neighboring stations, local police officers you work with regularly. Unfortunately, some of these brothers and sisters were taken from us at the hands of murderers. It does not matter if you know them personally or not; each and every one are family. May they all rest in peace. And now, I see many of my old law enforcement brothers' and sisters' KIDS wearing the uniform. I am as proud of them as if they were my own kids. And I pray for them as I do ALL police officers. Thank you for carrying on the tradition!

All in all, it was a great career for me. I am proud of my body of work. I am proud to have set an example in my neighborhood, someone people knew they could count on, and someone the kids could look up to. In addition, I was able to work midnight shift for much of it, which allowed me the time and ability to stay active in my three daughters' lives, which I think helped them turn into strong and successful adults.

Those of us IN law enforcement know the truth... but to those not in law enforcement, it's much different than you think. It's not like what you see on TV. It's a calling, not a job. When others run for safety, WE run toward danger. Today's world disgusts me. There is so much blind hatred for law enforcement. So much disrespect. But we are still out there doing the job every day, much of the time for people who do not appreciate it. I cannot believe it's been 36 years, and I have been retired for 11, but I still hold my head high. I am still proud to be part of a fraternity that most of the world could not or would not do. 🇺🇸

*Dale Gabriel is a retired patrol and community services officer with the Pennsylvania State Police. After 25+ years of service, in retirement, he has been working on a book of his many PSP memories. He also coaches a baseball team in a Miracle League for those with special needs. He holds a communication degree with English minor from Saint Vincent College in Western Pennsylvania.*





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# BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN AGENCY CULTURE

*By Lt. Robert Spano*

**A** recent issue in law enforcement is the ability to recruit and retain employees in this particular climate. There are some departments out there that are at full staff, however many are not. A major part of the equation to try and fix this issue is agency culture. Agency culture has a direct and profound effect on recruitment and retention. Departments should strive to have an agency culture where the focus is on strengthening and empowering our employees and teaching them to go out and be the best version of themselves.

## **PROVIDING CUSTOMER SERVICE**

In most police departments in the United States, the common and best practice is to give outstanding service to the public. We do not sell a product. Our product is customer service. As leaders, we instill in our subordinates to always give outstanding customer service and to treat the public better than we want ourselves and our family members to be treated. This is nothing new for most of us who are in leadership positions. I think that it is safe to say that this is the common best practice.

## **TREATING EMPLOYEES WELL**

Money is not everything. Employees want to be treated well and work in a positive environment where they feel they belong and share a common purpose. We need to make sure that our agency culture creates a positive environment where employees feel supported. How we treat our employees will have a direct impact on

this. Employees also need to feel that they have growth opportunities within their organizations.

The problem I see is that most police departments treat the public better than they treat their officers. This is a major problem when it comes to retention. It also affects the agency's ability to recruit. Imagine if we as police leaders could change the culture of our agencies and make it common practice to treat our employees the same positive way that we treat the public/members of our community. Imagine the impact this would have on most departments' retention levels, as well as recruitment efforts.

## **EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES**

Our goal should be to strengthen and empower our people and put them in positions where we know they can win. We should be using tools like mentoring and coaching to promote this type of positive agency culture where our people feel supported and feel like they matter. This will give them a sense of purpose and will give them more buy-in to the mission and to the organization as a whole. This makes it easier for all of us to achieve the police mission, which is to serve the public. We promote the environment where we expect our officers to go out and give outstanding customer service, to always go the extra step. We lead by example. We set clear expectations. To support all of this, we must give our employees the same great level of customer service that we expect them to give to the public. In most cases, this costs us nothing but time.

Think about how much time and money we invest in onboarding a new employee. Why would we not want to protect our investment? Well, in order to do this, we should be treating our people well, strengthening and empowering them and putting them in positions where they can win. This produces happy, loyal, and productive employees. We should be out there leading from the front, establishing or reinforcing our positive agency culture. We should be just as employee-focused as we are focused on giving outstanding service to our community members.

In addition to agency culture, employee-focused mission statements, mentoring and coaching, is the new initiative for agencies to have peer support teams and be concerned with employee wellness. This is another step in the right direction where we show our employees that they matter and that we are concerned about their well-being. I am happy to see our profession move in this direction where we are more concerned about our employees' health and well-being. This is truly a well-rounded approach to retention, which in turn improves our ability to recruit.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we need to treat our employees the same way we treat the public. We need to mentor and develop them, and we need to be concerned with their health and well-being. People will tell you money isn't everything. It's true. Most employees want to feel a sense of belonging, accomplishment and to feel that they matter to their agency. What better way to do this than to strive for an employee-focused agency culture where we expect excellence from our employees and we give them the best in return by strengthening them, empowering them and place a major emphasis on their health and wellbeing. Be the change you want to see in your agency. 🌐

*Robert Spano currently serves at a University Police Department in Northern Virginia, where he has served as a Detective/Background Investigator, Police Lieutenant/Patrol Watch Commander, and Police Captain/Patrol Operations Division Commander. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from Widener University in 2000 and is attending the FBI National Academy, Session 287.*



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# Are Corrections Officers

# Law Enforcement Officers?

By Lt. Joseph Pangaro



**T**his question, on its face, is simple to answer, but there always seems to be some kind of controversy around it, some kind of mysterious set of qualifications and unwritten rules that will define the answer and cause problems between the services. And quite frankly I'm tired of hearing all the drama, so I thought I would investigate it and come to a final conclusion and end the discussion once and for all.

As investigations go, we look at facts, make comparisons, discern what the facts tell us and come to a conclusion. As a starting point one has to look at the requirements of the jobs to see if they are similar in any way or completely different; so, let's go.

First, both groups of officers go to an academy for specialized training, both mental and physical. Both groups are trained in the use of weapons and hand-to-hand fighting tactics. Both groups deal with criminals, both groups are responsible for the safety of others as well as prisoners. Both groups are trained in the laws of their state or our nation. Both groups deal with the worst members of society, people who took advantage of others, brutalized others and robbed people of their innocence.

So far, they seem pretty close in mission, education and dedication. I wonder if there are more similarities.

Both groups can get killed or seriously injured at work at the hands of criminals. Both groups are dedicated professionals who give their all every day to keep the public safe. Both groups have families at home that worry about them because of the nature of the work they are engaged in.

Let's look at the surface, then, for differences.

Both groups wear a uniform, but some wear plain clothes to do their work. Both groups have investigators tasked with investigating crimes in their jurisdiction. Both groups charge people with crimes based on what they see people do or as a result of an investigation.

Both groups use informants to solve crimes and in-

idents. Both groups have a hierarchy within each organization. Both groups have to train constantly and both groups can aspire to supervision or leadership of their organization. Both groups have a brotherhood and sisterhood among their members. And both groups are ridiculed by the public for doing their very dangerous and difficult jobs under sometimes horrific circumstances.

Seems to me both corrections officers and police officers are very close in all aspects of their careers. Other than the place in which they do their work, they are dealing with the same people, the exact same people in fact.

Now I wonder what the differences might be that are the real determining factors that separate the two groups of officers and create all the difficulty. Let's see.

OK, well corrections officers work mostly inside a facility and police officers work mostly outside a facility- there's that, but I don't know if that distinction is enough to separate them, let me keep looking.

Police officers drive vehicles a lot and corrections officers don't drive around that often. Police officers carry guns with them at all times when dealing with dangerous people and corrections officers do not, now we're getting somewhere. Corrections officers are trapped inside a facility in close proximity to very dangerous people, police officers are as well, sometimes, but much less of their time is spent like this. This is not as easy as it sounded, is it? Seems to me both groups do almost exactly the same kind of work.

Police officers make arrests out in the street while corrections officers make arrests inside a facility. If a police officer arrests a robber, a rapist or a killer, they process them and place them in a cell in headquarters where they have to be watched and monitored. They can be suicidal and have to be closely watched 24/7. Does this make the police officer a corrections officer or are they a police officer with corrections officer responsibility at times?



*"The difference then is as simple as the answer to our question."*

Our corrections officers have to walk among the killers, rapists and robbers. They process these same criminals and lodge them in a cell and have to monitor them, even suicidal ones, 24/7.

Both groups have to deal with gang members and hidden weapons, ambushes, and threats, drug use- oops sorry, I'm back to similarities again.

We have come a long way on this investigation to find the answer to the original question: "Are corrections officers law enforcement officers?" And like any good investigation once we have the facts, we have to discern what the facts tell us, we make comparisons and judgments based on those facts and come to a conclusion that is actionable. In our case here, the action is to answer the question.

Seems to me that there are a few identifiable differences in the work of the two groups in question as well as where they do their work and the tools they have on hand as they do the work. We have chronicled those differences here.

As for the similarities, they go deeper. Both groups are highly trained and specialized individuals with serious responsibilities. Both protect society from some very bad people. Both investigate crime, process criminals, interact with criminals and can get seriously injured or killed at work by those same criminals. Now these similarities also include, shift work, working holidays and anniversaries, and kids' birthdays, but I didn't really review them too closely as I seek to answer the main question at hand, "Are corrections officers Law

enforcement officers," but there are, nonetheless, more similarities in the professions.

Where, then, does that leave us in answering that burning, divisive and uncomfortable question?

Like I said in the beginning, the answer is simple; it's right in front of us if we just look for it. But there had to be something else, some other thing that causes such consternation and division between corrections and police officers, either real or imagined.

I believe my investigation made it clear: It's not the work, that just takes place in different locations, it's not the people we deal with, they are exactly the same people, only we deal with them at different times- pre-arrest and post arrest. It's not the danger; both groups bleed and die when dealing with these same people- dangerous criminals. It's not really weapons; both groups have them and use them, when necessary. It's not dedication or professionalism both groups are made up of highly dedicated professionals.

The difference then is as simple as the answer to our question. The difference is a matter of respect.

Respect is given and deserved because of the nature of the work that both groups do. That work is vital for a safe and secure society. A place where it's safe to raise a family, where it's safe to walk the streets, and a place where we can all achieve whatever we desire. And it's time for all of us to put aside old, outdated thoughts and beliefs about what makes a law enforcement officer, which I believe I defined quite clearly, and come together under the Blue banner. We may be brothers

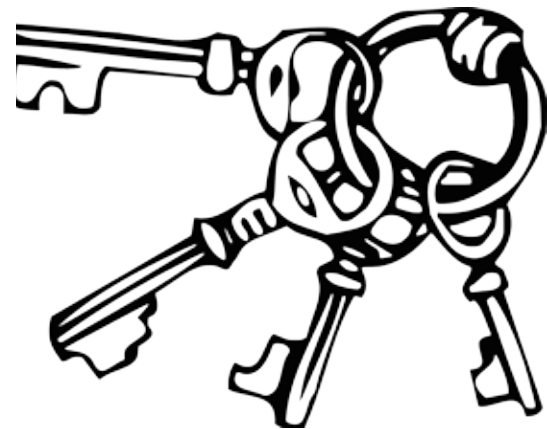
and sisters from other mothers, but we are all in the same family, the law enforcement family.

So, yes, corrections officers are law enforcement officers.

We have now walked through it and come out together on this end of the question. Let's all respect the individual duties and responsibilities we have on both sides of the fence and stand together.

Let me know what you think. Email: [Joe@PangaroTraining.com](mailto:Joe@PangaroTraining.com)

*Joseph Pangaro is a 27-year veteran of law enforcement. He retired in 2013 at the rank of Lieutenant and currently serves as the Director of School Safety and Security for a large school district in NJ. He is also the owner of Pangaro Training and Management, a company that provides training to the public and private sector on a host of topics. Email: [JPangaro@Yahoo.com](mailto:JPangaro@Yahoo.com)*





# The Leadership Crisis

By Heather Glogolich, Ed.D.

**W**e are losing members of this profession at astounding rates, and it is harder than ever to find quality people who want to be a part of this thin blue line family. We will never be able to recruit the right people if we are not retaining our current team members. It is critical that we create a culture people want to be a part of because we sacrifice so much of ourselves to succeed and serve. How do we lead a team of people who are overworked when we are understaffed? Where should the priorities shift? Can we deliver effective services to our stakeholders while also working to support our officers through resiliency and heart-led leadership?

I don't know the right answers for you, because it relies directly on your specific agency, its leadership, its team members, its internal dynamic and the current culture. As you read this article and think about all the issues facing your agency, self-reflect and ask yourself - Are you a part of the problem? The honest answer is yes - because we all are. That answer of "yes" comes down to us all having different levels of motivation, self-discipline, experience, and perspective. The balance between the needs of your people and the needs of the community you serve is forever teetering back and forth. There is no finite solution for balance, much like that of work and home life. It is a constant give and take for which area needs you and your attention more without completely ignoring the other.

So where do we start as leaders of our respective organizations to build a culture of retention and resiliency in order to help with the recruitment aspect of qualified people?

**Get to know your people.** All of them. Help them understand the needs of the agency on an administrative level so they can fully work up to their level of internalization regarding the mission and vision. Understand what motivates them. Figure out how they learn best. Help them develop their own "why" as an individual and as a part of your team. Learn their strengths and utilize those strengths to enhance the agency's professionalism. Understand where they have areas that are in need of improvement and help them without the fear of being mocked or ridiculed.

**Lead by example.** Continue to do the work that you expect your team to do. I understand that as you promote through your career many added responsibilities and collateral duties are placed on your task lists. Don't forget where you came from, and while you may feel as though you have put in the work throughout your career and earned the right to not complete the same details as newer officers, the best way to earn trust and buy-in is by walking the walk.

**Adapt and display a positive growth mindset.** To

constantly look for positives while also understanding we need to address the negatives takes a lot of work in a profession like ours. If we expect to be seen as law enforcement professionals then we need to be professional and have that expectation of our entire team. Create and share your goals with everyone and have your officers create and share their own goals. Allow your officers to know that failing is OK and we will never be perfect. The focus should be on failing forward. Try to adapt the mindset that nothing is truly a failure if you learn from it and grow. You succeed or you learn.

**Treat your team how you want them to treat others.** There is no room for yelling and berating people. Again - professionalism. Para-military or not, we as leaders have to employ empathy toward our people. They need to feel that you are approachable, balanced and fair. Without these three leadership traits, are you really an effective leader or are you gaining compliance through fear? Fear-based leadership may be effective in ways that get the job done to standard, but it is also effective in maintaining a culture within your agency that leads to citizen complaints, excessive use of force, resignation, burnout and unfortunately officer suicide.

**Be the leader you would want.** This is the simplest aspect of how to address the leadership crisis and is also self-explanatory while encompassing all the previous points. Be the example so that others get rid of their excuses. Be the best version of you in order to allow for the best versions of them.

You will not see change overnight and, depending on your current relationship with the people in your agency, it may take a lot longer for them to trust the process of redefining the culture. Gone are the days of continuing to do things one way because that's the way they have always been done. The world is changing constantly and asking more from law enforcement than ever before, and we need to adapt our models of leadership to respond in a way that is inclusive, respectful, and effective. It starts with you as the leader by focusing on your team so they can deliver on the front line. 🌐

*Heather Glogolich is a 20-year NJ law enforcement professional. She recently transferred from the Morris Township Police Department at the rank of Lieutenant. Heather is currently a Captain with the New Jersey Institute of Technology Department of Public Safety and holds a Doctorate of Higher Education from Saint Elizabeth University. She is an instructor for the NJ Chiefs of Police Command & Leadership Training Course, and is a PTC Certified Police Academy Instructor.*





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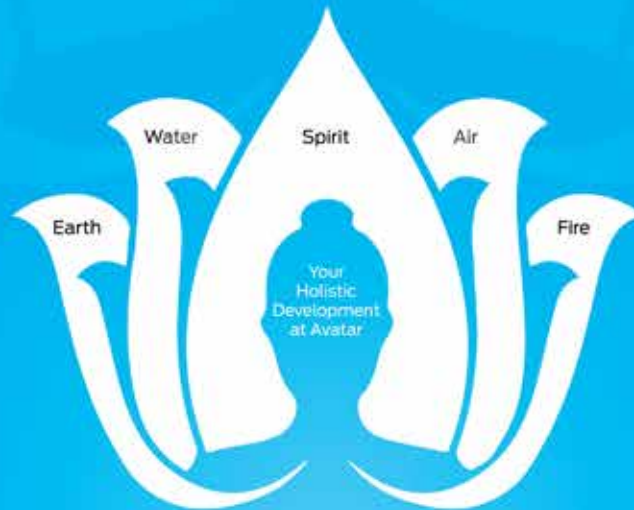
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# Live to Work? Work to Live!

By Monica Eaton Crawford

Do you have a good work/life balance?

Is your job constantly running your ass into the ground with being held over, mandatory overtime, or just constant stress and a less-than-positive work environment?

If it's not mandated, are you your own worst enemy by constantly picking up voluntary extra shifts and overtime?

Here's the thing. We all need a paycheck. We do have basic needs to cover for ourselves and our families. But at some point, you reach diminishing returns and that paycheck comes at a cost.

A cost to your mental health, physical health, your time away from work, your time with your family, missed events and milestones with the people you love, etc. Sure, some of those come as a part of the job and it's tough with a 24/7 job to make it to everything.

But, where do you draw the line? At what point is sacrificing yourself for work not worth it anymore?

We work to live, not live to work.

We work to enjoy our income with family, some luxuries or a vacation. We work to enjoy our time off with loved ones, where we can actually be present with them and in the moment. We work to fulfill our career goals and to find fulfillment in the work that we do and impact that we make.

We don't work to destroy our mental health. We don't work to destroy our physical health. We don't work so many hours that all we do at home is sleep, or be so mentally

absent we can't hold a conversation with our spouse. We don't work a 20+-year career to be so unhealthy that we become disabled only a few years into our retirement.

If the scales have tipped too far in the negative direction, it's time to fix it. It's time to start setting boundaries. It's time to prioritize your mental and physical health. It's time to cherish your free time and make the best of it. If that means finding another employer who can support you in ALL of your goals (not just career), then it may need the positive change you need to make.

You are in control. What's important now? What's important in your future? What is your legacy going to be?

Set those goals. Make them happen. You can do it. 🌍

Monica Eaton Crawford is the owner/ CEO of Five-0 Fierce and Fit which creates online nutrition and fitness programs designed to help female first responders lose fat, gain strength and take back their confidence in 90 days because "your family depends on you to be fit for duty." Using her six-year Oklahoma law enforcement experience along with her 15-year background in fitness and nutrition she helps female first responders reach their full potential in life and career. Look her up on Instagram @five0.fierce.and.fit.



**FIVE-0**  
Fierce and Fit

# I'VE HAD TO CHANGE *from* CRIME FIGHTING *to* DEATH PREVENTION

By Deon Joseph

I tell these stories not to brag about myself, but to open people's eyes to the realities I see. The things I do are done by many cops and firefighters, even regular citizens, so I don't need or desire applause. I just need your ears.

So the past few weeks in Skid Row have been tough. I've had to change my strategy from crime fighting to death prevention.

Two weeks ago, I literally brought a man back to life from a fentanyl overdose. He was literally knocking on the doors of the pearly gates. It took me seven minutes to bring him back. When I got tired, I tagged in a citizen. When I saw he was not using enough strength with his chest compressions, I took over again.

I gave the dying man Narcan, but it wasn't working fast enough. Now I really began pumping his heart. I feared as strong as I was, I would crack his ribs, but I couldn't

let him die.

As I'm continuing, several people surrounded us, some teasing and taunting the poor soul. Others were praying for him. One walked up and bent down and told the man, "That's what you get you stupid 'ninja'"

He continued scolding the dying man until I looked up with sweat pouring from my head and said "Bro. Is that really what he needs right now?" When he saw the look on my face, he backed off while the others continued praying and calling out to the man.

Finally, after minutes of trying, he came back to life. Watching his eyes go from dull to normal in an instant gave me a rush of relief. The paramedics came for him. As they took him, I took the time to educate the public about what to do when someone is dying from what the streets call "FEDDY". I then left.



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## "I took the time to educate the public about what to do when someone is dying from what the streets call "FEDDY".

Throughout the day, I saw paramedics pumping on the chest of more fallen victims. I hoped the next few weeks would be better. They weren't. I had to try to bring back two more. One I was successful with, another, I wasn't so sure if he made it when he was taken to the hospital.

I went to a community meeting at a shelter and gave a passionate speech about the dangers of fentanyl and how it is killing so many of them. The hands went up. Some with questions. Other statements like, "It ain't nothing you can do. These people want the shit. They know it's going to kill them. So who cares." Another chimed in in a more respectable tone, "He is right, Jordan. They actually want it." A third man started to talk, and broke down, stating, "I just lost my sister two months ago. I know she didn't want to die. I'm an addict. And I don't want to die. I just want to get high. But with every hit, I fear I'm not going to wake up but I can't stop it. I can't..."

He broke down and cried. He mourned his sister as well. I couldn't pray for him in uniform, but I promised I'd pray for him at 8 p.m. if he would set an alarm and do the same.

I left feeling emotional, and as I left, I got flagged down for another man who was dying. It never seems to stop. The only time it seems to stop is when I show up and disrupt it. But like many, I can't be there all the time.

I get to the station, and I get a phone call from a mother desperately seeking her daughter. The mother hears reports of fentanyl killing so many, and fears her daughter is one smoke away from being one of them. As soon as I hang up the phone, I get another from a father. I know both of their children. Being a father myself, I went to look for them. But with the tent being up, it's like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

It's not just those without housing. Over the radio I hear call after call of "ambulance overdose"

inside the area hotels. So many people who just got off the street and housed did all of that to die alone from the same deadly production in their home.

I look at the reduction in tents out there. Yes, some of it is people being sheltered and housed. But most of it is because people are dying. There are times I feel like this is the actual plan to reduce homelessness. I know that's not true, but how could our government allow such a horrible drug to thrive here. How can we not consider serious consequences for those who sell it.

Why do we have county-funded agencies giving meth pipes to people for them to destroy themselves? Then they want to show up as the heroes with Narcan to bring people back that they gave the tools of destruction to.

I got 4 1/2 years left. I wanted Skid Row to be better than when I found it. But with every dragon we slay, another gets created. And fentanyl is one of the worst I've ever seen.

I've come to this conclusion:

- Harm reduction is evil.
- Allowing drugs to flow freely across our borders is evil.
- Removing consequences for those who sell it is evil.

It's beyond wrong. It's beyond poor judgment. It is just plain evil. 🌐

*Deon Joseph is a 28 year veteran of law enforcement in Southern California - 24 of those years working in the homeless community to create an environment conducive to change for those in recovery, as a Lead Officer. He's been recognized for his work locally and nationally, and news stories and documentaries surrounding his work in crime fighting and community relations, featured him. [www.deonjoseph.org](http://www.deonjoseph.org).*





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**NO WAIT TIME FOR MEMBERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT  
OR FIRST RESPONDERS**

# TURNING IT ALL IN

By Kimberly Stratman

Is my identity really my uniform? The actual uniform? The hat? The badge?

Part of leaving a job, or in my case retiring from the Dallas Police Department, is returning your employer's property. Maybe it includes a computer, an ID card, a set of keys, or even a vehicle. Some employees might have to give back expensive or high-tech tools. I would imagine many individuals have emotional attachments to the "tools of their trade." Some items are synonymous with a particular field.

I had to relinquish my pants. (I turned in the exact same size pants I was originally issued 30 years earlier. Is it awful of me to be pleased about that? After 2 c-sections. They didn't fit exactly the same, but still). Historically, items in good condition were inventoried and reissued to other officers. I hit the jackpot about 20 years ago when the beautiful Carol Wilson retired. I was issued all of the pants she turned in! I know this because her name was written in fancy silver ink script inside each pair. The Quartermaster clerk actually searched the women's inventory for this identifier. I wore those couple of pairs of pants until they fell apart. It was extremely difficult for women to get pants that actually fit back in the day. And to be honest, they didn't fit great. They were somewhat comfortable. I could get in and out of the squadcar and also run while wearing them. Of course, falling down stairs and getting caught on chain length fences was rough on the pants.

In addition to the pants, I had to turn in everything else too. This included shirts, jackets, hats, leather wear, ballistic vests, medical kits, radios and weapons. Due to the pandemic, everything except the weapons and radios were thrown into the garbage. Thrown into the garbage while I stood there. That hurt! In a City with major budget shortages throwing away thousands of dollars of equipment made zero sense. I did retrieve, with permission, some of my leather gear, 2 tourniquet kits, and a medical kit, and gave it to some younger officers. The Department made it very simple to turn in my equipment. All I had to do was gather all my stuff and turn it in. My "check out list" would be signed and I would be done. I would be eligible for my final paycheck.

It took me three trips. I did it in stages. This totally goes against my "get it done" way of living.

My first trip I turned in everything except 1 full uniform and all of my "tools." I did honestly turn in a bunch of stuff! But I needed my armor in case something big happened.



My second trip I turned in everything but my pistol and my radio. If you think about it, in a true \*\*\*\*storm, that was all I needed. I had to be prepared.

My last trip to the Quartermaster- I gave back my gun and radio. That was very difficult. I cried a few tears as I drove away.

At first, I felt weak and foolish for tearing up about handing over an object that I only carried for about three years. (I purchased my original pistol that I carried the first 28 years.) Then I acknowledged that I felt a deep sense of loss. Without any pomp or circumstance, without any celebration, without any select words, I gave up a very important part of my career. (Full disclosure- my SWAT husband was very displeased that I did not purchase my newer pistol. I think I was more overwhelmed than I realized and did not even think about it.)

I had earned the right to wear and carry each piece of my Dallas Police Department Uniform.

I had earned the privilege to retire and to turn each piece back to the Department. 🌍

*Kimberly Stratman retired as a Lieutenant from the Dallas Police Department after an exciting and fulfilling 30-year career. She and her husband, an active SWAT officer, have two grown sons and two dogs that get lots of attention. Kimberly is the owner of To the Point Coach, a Certified Retirement Life Coach and Certified Life Coach service that focuses on first responders. Her goal is to ensure our law enforcement community thrives. She can be reached @tothepointcoach.org*





# EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT INSTITUTION PROVIDES 9-11 MEMORIAL

*By Cynthia Scott, PIO and Ted Freeman, Executive Undersheriff  
Monmouth County Sheriff's Office*

Department's Youth Academy. The Youth Academy had a tour of the Monmouth County Correctional Institution, a 1,328-bed direct supervision facility in Freehold Township, New Jersey. During that tour, Yusef and the members of the Youth Academy learned of the training required for correctional police officers, the challenges that they face daily and the high standards that correctional police officers are required to maintain. It was during that tour that Yusef began to envision his project to become an Eagle Scout, and that project would be to provide a 9-11 Memorial for the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office located at its largest division, the Monmouth County Correctional Institution. When asked why he selected that location, Yusef replied, "After learning about corrections from the tour in which I participated with the Marlboro Township Police Department Youth Academy, I recognized that this area of law enforcement lacked the well-deserved profes-

sional recognition of other areas of law enforcement and that this project might help change that perception."

Yusef Shehat is a member of Old Bridge Troop 219 of the Monmouth Council of the Boy Scouts of America. His Scoutmaster is Paul Hurley, and his Eagle Committee Chairman is Michael Mahon. After completing all the prerequisite requirements, Yusef's Eagle Scout Project was approved on Aug. 13, 2021.

To raise funds for the construction of the 9-11 Memorial and surrounding grounds beautification, Yusef sold patriotic socks of which 70% of the funds required were raised. The H.T. Hall Monument Company in Spring Lake Heights, New Jersey, worked with Yusef to create a meaningful monument with an attainable budget. The results were stunning. Yusef is still in the process of fundraising as he still must meet his set fundraising goal.

The biggest obstacles that Yusef faced were the delays caused by COVID-19, which delayed the completion of the project for several months due to transportation and other related issues caused by COVID-19. The 9-11 Monument was delivered in mid-October, 2022.

Yusef's largest supporters have been Garden State Law Enforcement Officers Association, PBA Local #240, FOP Lodge #30, the H.T. Hall Monument Company, surrounding local town community days and social media.

While actively engaged in fundraising for the Eagle Scout 9-11 Project, Yusef had the opportunity to meet with many people who shared their personal stories of Sept. 11, 2001 with him. Yusef said, "It was an honor to meet them, share in their stories of loss, and of heroism, and to commemorate the legacy of all of our heroes."

To date, Yusef has logged more than 400 hours and has expended approximately \$16,000 for the completion of the Eagle Scout Project.

Yusef Shehat is a graduate of Old Bridge High School and will attend Rutgers University. Yusef remains a police cadet in Marlboro Township, where he attained the rank of cadet captain. He is a graduate of phases 1, 3 and 4 from the New Jersey Law Enforcement Explorer's Youth Academy, the New Jersey State Police Trooper Youth Week, and has garnered personal achievement awards throughout these experiences. He looks forward to starting his law enforcement career as a Special Law Enforcement Officer (SLEO) with a goal of becoming a New Jersey or New York State Trooper or a Federal Law Enforcement Officer.

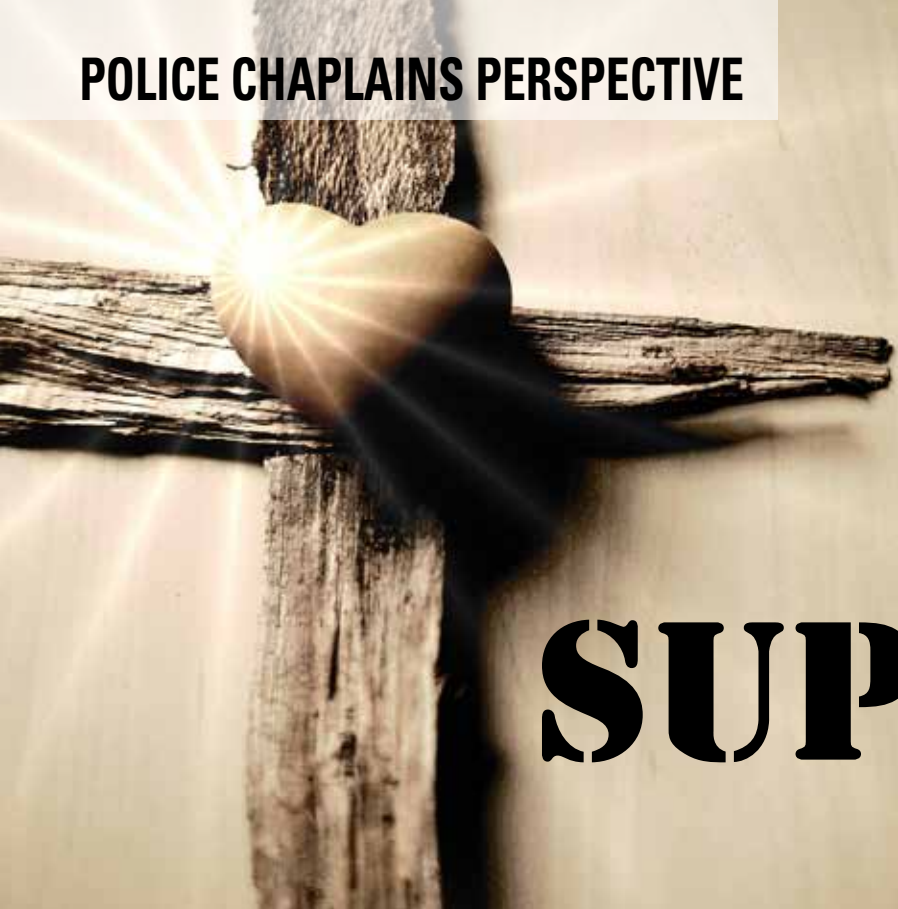
During the span of Yusef's Eagle Scout Project, Warden Victor Iannello, Capt. Shawn Reece, Capt. Jason McCauley, Capt. Thomas

Campagnolo, and Lt. Raymond Paul offered invaluable assistance in coordinating county resources and onsite activities. Warden Iannello presented Eagle Scout Shehat with a commemorative award at the Eagle Scout Ceremony on behalf of the men and women who faithfully serve the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Corrections Division as professional correctional police officers and supervisors.

Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden said, "We are grateful to Eagle Scout Yusef Shehat, Old Bridge Troop 219, Boy Scouts of America, Michael Mahon of Monmouth Council, Boy Scouts of America, Scoutmaster Paul Hurley and Yusef's parents, Stefanie and Mazen Shehat, for the selection and approval of the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office as the beneficiary of this Eagle Scout Project. Thanks to Yusef's Eagle Scout Project, the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office has a lasting monument to the memory of those who died on September 11, 2001. Let us never forget." The monument is in the circle in front of the main entrance to the Monmouth County Correctional Institution, 1 Waterworks Road, Freehold, New Jersey.

The Eagle Scout Ceremony was held at the Old Bridge Civic Center in Old Bridge, New Jersey and attended by local and state dignitaries, Troop 219 of Monmouth Council, Boy Scouts of America, family, friends, and the administrative staff of the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office - Correction Division. 🇺🇸





# BLUE LIFE SUPPORT

By Chris Amos

I am Pastor Chris Amos, a member of the team of LEOs put together for the sole purpose of encouraging and supporting our brothers and sisters in Blue. I'm a retired police officer. I worked almost 27 years for the Norfolk Virginia Police Department, retiring in 2014. My youngest son, Jesse, is currently on Norfolk's SWAT or Special Operations Team. My oldest son, Seth, was also a Norfolk police officer before dying in 2018 from complications of an infection he received while training for SWAT School.

I'll share more about Seth in the future but today I just wanted to say thank you, offer a quick word of encouragement and extend a challenge.

In 1999, I was ordained as a pastor. In fact, I spent the last 15 years on the NPD as a bi-vocational pastor. That simply means I made a living bouncing between the frying pan of police work and the fire of pastoring.

I'll never forget the shortest sermon I ever preached. It went something like this: "Good morning folks. Glad to see you. If you have your Bibles turn to..." before I could finish my sentence I was interrupted by a call from work. I was needed at a domestic-related homicide suicide scene not far from the church. After getting the message, I turned to the congregation and said let's pray. A couple minutes later I was out the door headed to a grue-

some crime scene and my folks to the Greasy Spoon café.

Seriously, though I as a pastor I have officiated more LEO funerals both active and retired, than I can count. I was struck by one I conducted just a few days ago. A good man and retired NPD officer named Willie had just passed away at young age of 68. While preparing for his funeral service, his wife told me his favorite Bible was his Archeological Study Bible. It was a Bible filled with study notes, graphs, maps and pictures of archeological sites and important historical excavations and findings.

I couldn't help but smile. Think about it: Is there an occupation where an individual is lied to more than that of a law enforcement officer? "ain't my car", "ain't my gun", "ain't my jacket", or my favorite right after pulling crack out of a suspect's pockets, "Officer, these ain't my pants."

After years of being lied to who can blame you if you don't believe most of what you hear?

That brings me back to Willie and his love for his Archeological Study Bible. Willie was able to not just read words on a page and choose to base his life on those words. No, he found a way to dig into the archeological and historic record to find supporting evidence on the reliability and truthfulness of The Bible. Even more importantly, on the claims of Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God. His final

conclusion as a veteran Cop and detective, “Yep, Jesus is the real deal.”

Friends, I just want to encourage you to conduct your own investigation about Jesus and His claims. While much of what He stated MUST be taken and accepted by faith, there is a boatload of evidence that corroborates His life, death, and resurrection from the dead! The very foundation of the Christian faith.

How important is corroboration? On Jan 3, 1996, at 1931 hrs, I was shot twice before returning fire and killing my attacker. Our homicide investigators spoke to me while still in the hospital. I told them what happened. A year later I looked at the file of my shooting and saw that a 19-year-old young woman was on the street at the time of my shooting. I never saw her. As I read her statement I discovered it corroborated everything I had said. Would the facts have changed had she not been out there that night? Nope, but her first-person eyewitness account that corroborated my statement sure didn't hurt.

I had the opportunity in 2005 to go to Israel. I can tell you my first-person eyewitness account is simply this: The vast archeological records in Israel, from the Sea of Galilee in the North to Jerusalem in the South, and everywhere

in between corroborates what I have been studying in the Bible for 32 years.

Friends, I challenge you to do a little digging. The Bible can withstand even the greatest of scrutiny. Trust me, if on trial Jesus would be more than able to withstand the most aggressive of cross examinations. In the infamous words of Detective Willie, “Yep, Jesus is the real deal.”

If you want additional information please check out [Bluelives.Support](#). That will take you to The Cornelius Project; a goldmine of resources to support and encourage you, your marriage, and family. The best part, it's by LEOs for LEOs.

God Bless, be safe, and Lord willing, I will see you at the Finish Line! 🏃

*Chris Amos is a retired officer and former spokesperson for the Norfolk Virginia Police Department. He is currently the pastor at Chr1st Fellowship Church in Norfolk. He is married for over 30 years and is the proud father of three children, two of whom are police officers. He serves as the volunteer Chaplain for Norfolk Police Dept. and Norfolk Sheriff's Office.*



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# REMEMBRANCE

Article & Artwork  
by Jonny Castro

*Police Officer  
Darrell  
Cunningham*

On November 4, 2023, off-duty Los Angeles Police Officer II Darrell Cunningham was traveling in Northridge when a drunken driver disregarded the red signal and collided with the passenger side of his vehicle. It's estimated that the 20-year-old suspect was traveling in excess of 100 mph at the time of the crash. Officer Cunningham and the front seat passenger were killed instantly. An off-duty San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy was a rear-seat passenger in Darrell's car, and also suffered severe injuries. All three of them were described as lifelong friends with each other. The unconscious suspect was taken to the hospital in critical condition. He'll be charged with gross vehicular manslaughter and related offenses.

Officer Cunningham served the LAPD for just under five years and was assigned to overnight watch at the West L.A. Station. He leaves behind a fiancée, two young sons, his mother and two brothers. Darrell was described by the Chief of Police as hardworking, honest and the person you can count on to get the job done. 🌍





**THE CHOICES**



**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

**YEAR  
10**

**WE MAKE**

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

**YEAR  
18**

**MATTER.**

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

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LEADING THE FIGHT TO END LAW ENFORCEMENT SUICIDE