

COPS, THE FUZZ, THE HEAT; Lawmen !!!

“If you don’t want them in your neighborhood send them over to mine!”

At times I’ll admit **“I hate um”** too, especially when I’m in a hurry and they stop me for an autograph and a donation to the city..... give me a ticket.

Some of my relatives and friends are policemen. Most would be considered “naturals”, great at their job of serving and protecting me and you, animals, our country and the planet. Sadly, some guys or gals in uniform accidently end up in uniform. Everyone wants a job, well most everyone. All communities and cities want a quiet, friendly and above all safe place for their young, middle and older citizens to live.

Most areas can’t pay “CEO” wages to city personnel including police officers. Mediocre wages result in a high turnover which forces personnel, the hiring department, to be on a continuous search for individuals with the ability, mental competence, and most importantly, a desire to be a law enforcement officer.

They would like for their policemen to live in the area, perhaps raising their own family there, as well as being interested in law enforcement for the long term. Locals officers can spot changes in roads, homes, schools, neighborhoods even in individuals and help respond to potential problems before they escalate. Youngsters and other folks in trouble from bullying, an illness or accident can go to someone they know and trust.

Opportunities open often for folks thinking about police work as a career. They, with a good personal record, can apply, take the test and if they do well and are hired go into the training program. Instructors at the police academy work hard to provide basic training, develop or eliminate future public servants. Hot tempered, overbearing as well as shy to the bone individuals can’t be placed in a

position that will require empathy, extreme patience as well as extreme but controlled force with their weapon. Many officers will experience all three in one 8 to 12 hour shift.

Why “COPS” in the first place. If you lived back in the caveman era you probably had a 25 year or less life expectancy which somewhat **depended on how big and tough you were.** Now 115 pound guys and gals can live in peace and quiet for a hundred years.....WHY.....because our law enforcement officers get between us and mean, dangerous, overbearing, power hungry and out of control, for whatever reason, individuals.

Archeologists found that somewhere during or a little past the cave man times average folks banded together to either control or “get rid of” individuals that made everyone else fear for their life, mates, family and accumulated properties. Rules and laws to protect everyone were developed. Eventually someone tough yet humane, smart enough, and trustworthy had to be chosen to **enforce the rules and stop “law breakers”WALLA.....A POLICEMAN.**

Teachers serve as policemen in our grade schools. They keep the meanest kids from taking milk and lunch money and prevent them from beating up and bullying “mild mannered” youngsters. We all know some teachers handle that aspect of their job better than others. But without even the average protection from our teachers it would be a miserable life for many youngsters.

I am aware that we have some “BAD COPS” on our streets. How do the bad ones **get the job in the first place?** There is more than one reason for that. Some marginally passed through the academy but were not suited for good police work to begin with. Others were changed by the nature of their job and sadly poor hiring practices let some “slip through the cracks”. Hiring good public servants, **especially those that carry guns,** isn’t as easy as it looks to most of us.

Lets you and me be assigned to hire a good officer. What do we want him or her to be able to do?

Help a disabled vet or elderly person in need. Most will do that, right?

Give a ticket and stop a 75 MPH speeder in a school zone. Most will.

Rush to and help seriously injured folks in a car wreck. Most will do that.

Rush to mine or your home and take on a crazed attacker/possible killer.

HUMMM?

Well the above requirement nixed **2/3 of our applicants.**

Rush to an **“ACTIVE SHOOTER or SHOOTERS”** in a school, bar, plant, or business.

We lost more applicants.

Now we need someone that can take **“LOTS OF CRAP”** from drunks and plain old cop haters without peppering or shooting someone. Being called a porker or **spit on is not a shooting offence.**

The last one has a catch. Officers can **take the crap for different lengths** of time. Some 1-2 years until they snap and deck or shot a mouthy “customer.” Others may last 5-10-15 years etc.etc. because it’s in their personality to let “crap talk” roll off them like water from a duck’s back. Some keep their mouths shut and their night stick holstered to keep their job. They’re rewarded by knowing they didn’t let the mouthy guy or gal get to them. They can grin as they walk away or lock them up perhaps saying, “A mouthy DA isn’t worth my job” under their breath.

I have, jokingly, always said **“If I were ever a policeman, you can swing at me, cuss me, throw a rock at me, pull a gun or knife on me and I will do whatever it takes to restrain and cuff you. BUT YOU SPIT ON ME AND I WILL SHOOT YOU!”**

YUP ! You and I can’t hire “me” huh? One little **“PETUEEY”** and I’d be gone.

Next....the “hiree” must look nice in uniform, clean or design shaven at least to today’s standards, with no SHOWING gross tatoos and earrings to set a good example for our area youth as well as advertise for new quality police recruits.

That wipes out a lot of folks. Pants hanging below their butt, kitchen sink drains for earrings and scruffy, shaggy and dirty faces is the norm for many.

SO.....are we beginning to understand **what it takes mentally and physically to be a good policeman?** They must be somewhat like a good guard dog. They can be nice and let kids and little old ladies pet them but growl aggressively to keep people in line. That same critter, man or beast, may be called upon to risk their own life, charge an armed attacker, sub do or possibly finish him off to protect not only their charge but the public.

A little treat **rewards man's best friend**. But above all those "ATTA BOY", pats on the head and scruffy petting makes them feel like they are a part of the family.

We can't treat our police officers like our German Shepherd. Most don't like the free bank treats either. But treating our officers like trusted friends, a part of the family and community rather than the enemy is a good step in the direction of showing support for the guys that can and will step between us and a club carrying cave man.....these days an Uzi carrying cave man.

Think about it.

Man's best friend's friends wear whistles, badges and gun belts. Huummm.....that makes police officers our best friends as well.

The departments reward good work with promotions and metals. Those recognitions of good work are good, **but the greater reward needs to come from us** by showing our appreciation for them having our back even when we flub up....ie....speed, drink a little to much or start a fight in a bar or over a gal friend.

My law enforcement relatives, especially the sergeants or above, tell their officer to treat violators nice as they can because **any one of us could be in their shoes the next day**. A divorce, parent or child's death and a multitude of other happenings can send a good cop over the edge for a short time. Sergeants, teachers and others with a little time under their belt have seen this happen if not had it happen to them.

Funny thing happened to me the other day. A young officer pulled me over. I am a "mature aged guy". I am a former teacher and businessman and look everyone

in the eyes. When the officer looked me in the eyes, I could tell he hadn't pulled many, if any, drivers over before me. My straight on look may have intimidated him a little.

"I am really sorry to stop you sir, but your taillights are not working, and you have no directional blinkers. I just wanted to warn you sir."

This was a nice officer. He could have been nice but didn't need to apologize for doing his job. I was driving without taillights. He very well could have saved mine or **someone else's life that day**. I thanked him and replaced a blown fuse on the way home.

I grinned thinking about how, if he stayed in police work, he would change over his next few years. I hoped he'd keep a little of his soft attitude rather than letting "mouthy" customers develop a hard side to him. Instead of a thanks like I gave him he will get cussed at and butt chewing's for wasting a driver's time. That driver may never know that one of those stops saved **HIS own** wife or daughter's life from being in a bad wreck.

The old saying about **firemen and police run into danger while everyone else is running away from it** is pretty much true. Think about the New York towers attack in 9 11. 300 firemen and policemen were going up when the occupants were running down. They saved a lot of folk's lives while risking their own.... many of those brave public servants never lived to see retirement and many never even lived to see their first born.

Police run into schools with shooters inside. Some officers have been ambushed and paid the ultimate price. Sometimes the downed officer uses his last breath to save lives by pinpointing the shooter to his fellow officers.

Police officers become targets. Their badge, authority and sidearm stir up drunks, hotheads etc. that have been fined or cuffed and jailed for breaking the law.

Our police officers must be like football referees. If a football player hits a ref, he will pay a huge fine and may never play football again. That's it. You can not attack the folks that are there for all our safety.

The law keeping folks in our society cannot be physically challenged, beat up or shot without the attackers paying a huge price. **Law breakers will always get their day in court, but they must obey the police on the street.** As a kid, I never disobeyed my dad even if I thought he was wrong for the same reason..... there would be a big price to pay. Funny thing. **He was usually right.**

Funny thing here to note. Most of the time refs and policemen are right as well. An NFL player can't take a runner down by the face mask. It could cause a neck injury or even death. I had to pay a \$300 fine once for doing 55 MPH when I didn't see a 30 MPH school zone sign. I learned to watch closer for schools. That cop may have **saved one of YOUR KIDS** by giving me that ticket.

I know there are times when officers make poor decisions in high stress and emergency situations. **They are human** just like you and me.

Just like most of you I have seen videos where I thought the officers had time to back up and think before taking life threatening steps. Of course, we weren't there. But my nonpolice background, armchair cop thinking saw situations on the videos that I thought could have been handled differently.

With a squad car one or two steps from the officer or officers involved, it seems like they could take cover before shooting at a suspect, especially a suspect or suspects that haven't fired on or physically attacked the officers. Again, you and I weren't there to see the, always there, **time line pressure**, the stress levels created from past experiences on the job or with the suspect/suspects, darkness or crowd involvement on the scene and most of all the temperament of the individual officer/officers involved as well as upper management, sergeants and lieutenants attitudes and orders.

I do not condone management in police departments that put a badge on anyone that can't be fair with everyone, fat, tall, skinny, pink, red, brown, black, white and gays. **Hiring and training programs should eliminate those individuals.**

They might fit into supply, dispatch, motor pool or office but not out on the street with a 9 mil or even an oak club.

Some folks are raised from birth to hate cops, whites, blacks and others. Hard core raised religious or political folks furiously hate the other side or beliefs. If youngsters are raised and told crazy things from birth, it's hard to change them.

My advice to young and old is to let your common sense come into play before you make harsh decisions about most everything in life. If someone is making money from selling a product or idea, they may not be the best folks to get the straight skinny from, as my grandpa, Papa, used to say.

I personally like to go to Web Md and Mayo to see if they have an opinion about a medicine or an illness. I did learn that a little tiny critter can do you in. I was given 3 days to live with tick fever a few years ago. A good doctor and a bit of chemo gave me a few more years of fishing but it was close. We've known several folks that tock fever killed. My wife told me the other day about a famous singer that it liked to have killed.

Anyway, back to the heat. I began by saying that the police irritate me at times just like everyone else. My calming thoughts while they're writing me a ticket is, "I **was** speeding and at least this isn't a big dude stopping me with a gun or club to take my food, car or wife. This officer writing me the ticket keeps that from happening. And he might just be the one to help if I have a wreck or a heart attack." My uncle saved a young wreck victim once by pumping his heart until the ambulance got there. She sent him a Christmas card every year until he passed.

Now, I realize, all that I have said goes right though some folks like Exlax through a wider woman, another of my PaPa's sayings if you have had a bad experience with the police. But think about how those experiences came about. Were you or the cop in the wrong? I know sometimes officers step over the line. In your situation it may not be your fault. If you are pretty sure that is the case, go through the proper channels and make a complaint.

Like the cave men eliminating bullies we want to do the same with overzealous officers. Your complaint may help the officer as well as us out here in

the public. He or she may get a needed attitude adjustment. Several complaints about their behavior out in the field will get them sent packing to find another career. Sadly, they sometimes go to another city in need.

Lets focus on what we can do to help the police as well as keep us out of trouble and danger.

- (1) **Never...ever...ever...ever text** while driving. One of my wife's and my lifelong friends was killed just last week do to texting.
- (2) **Never drink and drive.** A DUI follows you like a caveman with a club. And a wreck that hurts or kills someone could get you a jail sentence.
- (3) **Slow down** especially on rainy or snowy days. You can always hear additional ambulances running on a rainy day do to wrecks.
- (4) **Be courteous.** When someone pulls out in front of me, I hit the brakes and give them room. Every single one of us has made that mistake before. But wrecks are caused due to drivers saying "He pulled out in front of me. It was his fault." The fact was if they had just bumped their brakes there would not have been a wreck that ruined their back and created other injuries and damage.
- (5) **Do what the officer asks** without giving him guff. Answering with yes sir and no sir goes a long way too. It doesn't cost you a nickel. If you were speeding or have lights out, he did not stop you because you were red, black, white or a pretty blond. If you think he didn't have a good reason to stop you, **be nice and then file a complaint.**
- (6) **Share real police experiences with you youngsters.** Be honest to them as well as to yourself. They with probably need a cop someday. Don't let a false or biased attitude distort your children's and grandchildren's view of the value of local law enforcement in their lives.
- (7) **If you or a loved one are threatened or attacked** call a policeman. Most bullies or attackers are frightened away and many stay away once they know you will call a cop. Trying to handle serious things on your own may make them worse or **get you** into trouble.
- (8) **Should you decide to get a conceal carry permit** contact your local police station and ask how they like for a person to mention the gun in

the car and permit when pulled over for a ticket. You will be relieved to know how to inform an officer during a man hunt or traffic stop.

(9) **I think everyone should think very seriously** before carrying a gun.

Shooting at someone even if they are attacking you may not be the best for them or you. Loaded guns often shoot bystanders, through homes and cars as well as get turned on the one firing the weapon.

(10) **A police officer friend told me that** anyone that's not comfortable with their firearm and fired 500 rounds through it should not carry it. "Many folks buy a gun, many times too big of a gun, put 9 rounds in the clip and poke it in the dash or purse. When attacked they have to learn how to inject a round in the chamber, find and release the safety, jerk the trigger. By that time their fumbled around weapon is in the attacker's hands or they have shot themselves in the foot or worse yet THEIR CHILDor the child's dog.....good luck with that mistake.

(11) **Weight, feel and recoil;** Choose the gun that fits YOU and makes you want to practice....practice....practice. 9 mil, 45, 357, 38 are all popular calibers. If you are threatened or attacked the main issue is to stop the aggressor. It's usually not necessary to kill or even shoot him or her. Showing a gun stops most aggressors. 32 caliber handguns have been carried by some police forces for years. 22 caliber handguns usually send would be robbers and thugs packing. Both are dangerous a mile away. The recoil is light. The weapon can be small and light. Ammo cost is reasonable. Small caliber drawback is knock down punch and penetration. Either weapon pointed at you or me or an attacker will get the point across. My dad was a Shore Patrol Officer and said one guy or four guys got on their knees when his weapon was pulled. "No one asked what caliber it was."

(12) **Pepper sprays are potent and easily to use.** They come in wrist straps, belt loopies, neck tieees, pistol gripeees....about any way you want to carry them. I tell trail walking folks to carry the wrist packs. Unlike a gun, it's ready to shoot the aggressor immediately. **The police strength spray, 1.33 GM,** makes an aggressor wish he had kept to himself. I've known nurses and hikers that have used pepper spray. Take

a light sniff of it for yourself sometime. It will definitely make you a believer. It's not going to kill anyone, but it makes them feel like they're dying for about an hour. The cost can be \$20, less or more. Guns aren't for everyone and pepper sprays do **"GETTER DONE"**.

(13) **After any confrontation you should call the police** and give them a description of the attacker and what happened as well as when and why, etc., etc. It's just good practice to have everything on record for later use if necessary.

(14) **The last weapon of choice for cave men** is the club. It worked for the old cave guys, the Walking Tall actor and Babe Ruth. But making a good one and then carrying it around takes it out of the running for me. Besides guns and pepper sprays aren't subject to termite damage.

The above article and hints are just that. I, being an educator, would like to think my suggestions will help or save one person and possibly many folks. Our police officers make life much easier for us all. Many sacrifice more than most of us do at our jobs. Their homelife and health is affected by what they see and must deal with.

The ever-present danger, stress levels causing heart and stomach problems and poor community as well as lacking court support doesn't make the job any easier.

Above it all the officers know they are put under a microscope when a serious arrest is made. Cops often say, "Perpetrators have way more rights than we do." One mistake by us during the stress of the arrest, sometimes under fire, and the perp goes free, the officer gets reprimanded, demoted and possibly fired.

That said, police officers agree that cases that could give out long jail time, even the death sentence, should be tried by the book. But the stress put on them by attorneys in court to discredit hard evidence, even the officer, is sometimes unbearable.

My hope is that we give our police departments support to develop comprehensive hiring and training programs, ongoing officer evaluations as well as income and benefit enhancements for longevity and professional accomplishments on the job and in the community.

See police stories at our web site that show what daily duties and challenges our officers face. I enjoy sharing the good and bad outcomes with you. You will enjoy reading some of these exciting short stories.

A COP WITH THE FLU

A WET POLICEMAN

THE COP, A MULE, AND A BLOODHOUND