

Sgt. Tom Krutka

Southwick Police Department

Southwick, MA 01077

To: Representative Nick Boldyga

Sir, I'm sure I do not have to tell you how concerned most of us in the law enforcement community are regarding all that has been going on in the country in recent weeks/months. It shames me tremendously to think there are police officers wearing the same badge as I committing these crimes, and that is exactly what they are doing, committing crimes. I know I do not have to tell you these officers do NOT represent what the rest of the hard working, caring, good honest police officers in everyone's communities believe in.

I really believe the law enforcement community has become the scapegoat for all of the chaos that is going on. Yes, there has been several incidents that have contributed to this mess, there is no doubt, but the rest, is just, political garbage.

Nick, we don't know each other all that well, but I believe you know me enough to agree with the fact that I have dedicated so much of my life as a police officer and to the Town of Southwick. I have sacrificed my own personal relationships in order to do my job to the upmost best of my ability. I am in no way nor have I ever looked for a "pat on the back", I have never been one to advertise my service for personal recognition. I have however, have been put in the spot light on social media many times throughout my career at the hands of my superiors, especially during my canine days. I was always told, "this is what pays the bills". I cannot say I did not enjoy and or appreciate the recognition from time to time, however, I would rather remain out of the spot light.

I am approaching 17 years of fulltime service and I feel, up to this point thus far, I have had a very good career. In in the beginning I worked regular patrol for three years, Canine officer for 10 years where my partner K-9 "Jax" and I did some amazing things throughout our time together, especially for a small town K-9 Unit and now, I have been promoted to Sergeant and assigned to the detective bureau where I have already had some success in solving a few rather big cases.

I have seen some horrible things in my career, some in which cause me, to this day to wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat with the vision of a dismembered kid from one of several very intense fatal motor vehicle accidents I have had the unfortunate pleasure of investigating over the years; one in particular from 2004, I cannot shake!

I have had to witness kids growing up in homes that I would not allow my dog to enter. Over the years I have helped so many kids in this town with addiction problems, some multiple times. I have some success stories and some which chose to end their lives with suicide that now I have to live with as well. I have gotten kids jobs, helped them with their cars, helped some with their relationships with their parents. I have even had to help two kids over the years come out to their parents with the fact they were gay.

This past fall I had to take part in a Westfield murder investigation where one of our (Southwick's) kids, a 17 years old boy was brutally murdered. The vision of his left hand clinched together in a fist as he was fighting for his life is forever engraved in my brain, not to mention the rest of his maimed body.

Aside from what our association has done over the years for those down on their luck, I personally have purchased clothes, shoes and other personal items for several kids in town that did not have very much. Just recently, I assisted a 25-year-old, who was a former student here in town, with getting him into a rehab for Heroin addiction. All he was allowed to bring with him was t-shirts and underwear which he didn't have either except for what he was wearing; so as I was driving him to Pittsfield Medical Center, we stopped at a Walmart and I purchased him socks, boxers and t-shirts because he had nobody else to help him, not even his parents.

A few years ago now, I took part in an escort where we drove to Bradley International Airport to pick up the remains of one of our boys who lost his life while serving in the United States Navy. I met Tanner when he was about 16 years old at which time he was having a lot of personal issues. We would meet often and just talk; it seems as if he was always looking for someone to just listen. As he grew some, life was getting better for him and then he came to me with the idea of joining the Navy. After numerous conversations regarding this idea, we went to his mother and we all sat down and discussed it. Tanner did enlist and he loved it. Tanner was assigned to the USS George Washington Aircraft Carrier and was stationed in Japan. After his deployment he returned to the states and was temporarily stationed in San Diego. Where something went terribly wrong. To this day we are still not quite sure what exactly happened, all we know is there is still an investigation going on by the US Navy investigators.

On his last journey back to Southwick, upon arriving at Bradley, we stood by at attention as his casket was being taken out of the plane and into a hearse. We then escorted him all the way back to Southwick; I think I cried the entire way back as I lead the escort at the request of his mother; I'll never forget it!

Just over a year ago I fought the heroin addiction battle with another 22-year-old boy from town. Jeremy was a young man who I became acquainted with over the years and became someone he trusted very much so. Out of the blue, Jeremy came to me looking for help as his addiction was out of control. He had lost so much weight, if he did not hold up his pants, they would just fall off as he stood. I spoke to his father in length explaining the addiction to him as he did not understand it all that well. Together, we got Jeremy the help he needed. After leaving rehab, Jeremy would text and or message me on Facebook once every couple of weeks as he went from half way houses to different treatment facilities thanking me every time for saving his life; I could not have been happier for him and his dad. I then noticed a couple of months went by and I did not hear from him. I saw his father and asked how Jeremy was doing and if he had heard from him and stated he hadn't heard from him; he did say he knew he met a girl but that was it; his father stated he was kind of worried.

That night I messaged Jeremy on Facebook asking if everything was okay; I did not receive a response from him right away. The next morning while driving to work, I received a message back from him which nearly caused me to crash. All the message said was, "The devil is winning". I frantically tried to message him back, call him on his phone which was disconnected, and a Facebook call, but there was no answer or response. I called his father asking him if he knew where Jeremy was but he didn't; he was pretty much freaking out as well trying to find him.

Two days later I received a call from a Connecticut Police Department informing me they received a call for an unresponsive male party at a residence in their town, it was Jeremy and he had overdosed and died; I cannot tell you how crushed I was, it felt like I had lost a son of my own.

Sir, I am telling you all of this so you can really get a grasp on what the good cops in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and other states in this great country do on a daily basis and it's not just about traffic stops and speeding tickets!

Sir, after everything I have told you thus far, I have never, ever questioned the fact that I love being a police officer and there is nothing else in the world I'd rather be doing, until now. For the first time in over 20 years, I am worried and having second thoughts of continuing being a police officer.

Now I am no politician; I am not an administrator; I have not always been politically correct, however, I have always been the go to guy to get things done, whether it was at the request of a superior officer, a fellow officer or a member of this community and now, I have to be worried I am going to be sued on a daily basis for every little thing we have to do to enforce the laws of this country and state, not to mention to keep people and their property safe.

One thing I have noticed since all of this mess has begun, not one person, group and or politician has mentioned how out of control society is! Most, including my closest friends cannot fathom some of the behavior and actions committed by society today that we as police officers witness on a DAILY basis, even in small towns like ours; it's pretty scary to see where society is headed. Police actions are getting more intense because of what they are facing on the streets. I cannot even fathom what it's like being a big city cop in places like Springfield, Hartford, Boston not to mention places like Atlanta, Las Angeles etc...

Nick I am not against reform, changes or whatever you want to call it, but law enforcement.....Police officers need to be protected and supported or you're going to see the good cops, after getting beat down, walk away, myself included; and believe me, this is a feeling that I would have never, ever thought would ever enter my mind!

Sir, I am just asking you to please, for the good of all of us, not just the police but for all the of the citizens and or people of every community, to take the time to do what's right by the people.

Thank you for your time,

God Bless,

Tom Krutka