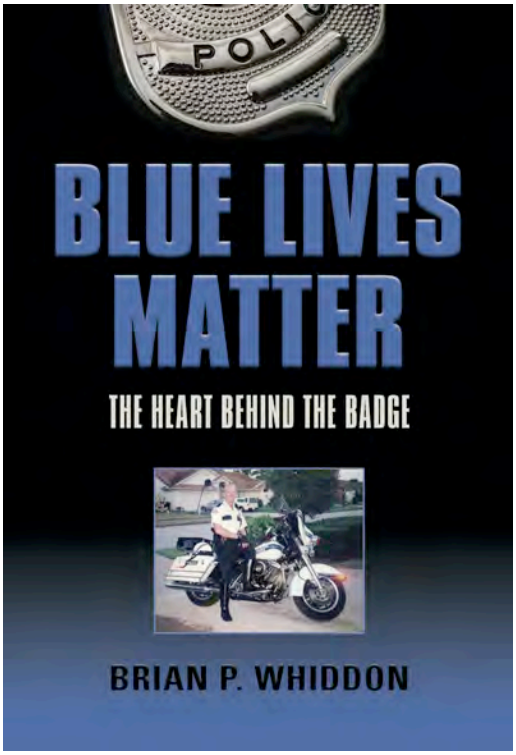

There is a war against cops in America. A common strategy in warfare is to de-humanize the enemy. Americans need to remember that cops are people, too. These pages provide a rare look into the humanity of a cop on the street. Car chases, fights, arrests, shootings, rapes, deaths - they are all in here. But, this book takes you deeper than that...

BLUE LIVES MATTER:
The Heart Behind the Badge

By Brian P. Whiddon

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BLUE LIVES MATTER

THE HEART BEHIND THE BADGE

BRIAN P. WHIDDON

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Tunnel to Towers Foundation

A portion of all royalties from this book are donated by the author to the *Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation*.

Tunnel to Towers has several programs to help the family members of **fallen first responders**. Mainly, they pay off the mortgages of the homes of fallen heroes so that the family will not have to struggle with the burden of keeping a roof over their heads.

Stephen Siller was a FDNY fireman who was getting off shift on the morning of September 11, 2001. After hearing reports of a plane crashing into the World Trade Center, he called his wife to say he would be home late, jumped in his truck, and raced toward the scene. However, the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel had been closed off for security reasons, and he could not drive through. Stephen strapped 60 pounds of equipment to his back, and ran on foot to the World Trade Center.

He was one of the firemen who lost his life at Ground Zero.

I invite you, also, to give to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation at: https://tunnel2towers.org

Please enjoy this book knowing that part of what you paid will be donated to this worthy organization.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my father, Roscoe Owens Whiddon, who was married to my mother, Patricia, for 51 years, until his death in 2013.

My father served as a medical officer in the Navy and reserves for 20 years, and was deployed in the blockade of Cuba in 1962, leaving a young wife alone in Miami, with neither of them knowing if Fidel Castro would obliterate Florida with the nuclear missiles that were discovered to be hidden in that island nation that year.

With my mother, he raised four children while dedicating countless hours to his own medical practice. And, he could not have dreamed how much stress and anxiety one of those children would cause him…

I will never be able to count the number of ways I let my father down as a child and teenager. He was a man of strong conservative moral values and convictions. I wanted nothing more in my teen years than to be out from under his control. And, to be honest, my parents' home would have been much calmer and more peaceful without me. He had every reason and right, in my opinion, to kick me out, emancipate me, and let me fail at life.

But, he never did. In fact, he never stopped fighting to stay one step ahead of me, and keep me from ruining my life. He never stopped holding me to a standard that I was determined never to live up to.

Like all teens, I grew up eventually. But, not before causing some very large rifts between me and my parents.

The second "proudest" moment of my life was when my parents got to watch me graduate the US Army MP School in Ft. McClellan, Alabama.

But, the moment I will always remember, for the rest of my life, will be the evening my father came out to Kissimmee, and spent an evening riding along with me on patrol. I could see the pride in him as he got to watch his son wearing the police uniform, and interacting with citizens as a law enforcement officer.

All those years of hell – the yelling, the disrespect, the sneaking out at night, the wild behavior – I knew that night that they had been forgiven and forgotten. I had made things right by successfully becoming what I had dreamed of being, even during those troubled years. I was a cop.

My father passed on June 4, 2013. I had already been out of law enforcement for five years, and was in the insurance business at the time. But, my father had never stopped being proud of me. It is the pride he had in me that has helped me strive to continue being successful in everything I have done, even after taking off the badge.

It was only at his funeral, and afterwards, that I came to realize just how many lives my father had touched in our hometown, and how many people truly loved and respected him. I don't think I'll ever be able to match his level of

influence. But, I have continued to spend my life living up to a moral standard that would make him proud to this day.

Every bit of success that I have enjoyed in my life, I owe to him, because he refused to give up on me when I had already given up on myself.

Ultimately, my law enforcement career ended because I refused to compromise on my moral values. Looking back, I am thankful to God for the father I had. He never compromised his values, and it was a lesson that took root in me even though I may not have realized it for many years.

I love you, Dad.

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Commended AND Disciplined for Pulling a Man from a Burning Plane

I had signed up for off-duty work at the Kissimmee Air Show one weekend where I was assigned to guard the room in the terminal building where they were counting the money taken in at the entrance, and from the concession stands.

In the afternoon, one of the flying performances was a stunt plane team. As the planes were taking off, I'd noticed that the winds were rather strong that day. I was actually kind of surprised that they hadn't called off the aerobatic flying, and just stuck with static displays, and maybe some fly-bys. But, take off they did and I was impressed at how well the pilots handled the planes.

Like a lot of guys, I've always had a fascination with flying. I've never tried to get my pilot's license simply because I've never been able to justify the cost. I watched the team doing its aerial stunts, and marveled at the precision with which these guys handled those planes. I was just outside the door of the money room, and it was the only way in, so I knew everything was safe as I kept watching the performance.

The planes did loops and barrel rolls, and flew in close formation. It was amazing, especially with the winds being what they were. I was totally taken in.

One of the unique things the human brain does when it senses danger is to become super focused on the dangerous

situation - to the point things where actually seem to move in slow motion.

The planes grouped together in a tight formation low to the ground, then simultaneously began a steep climb together. As they ascended higher and higher, I noticed one of the planes drifting over toward the one next to it. I saw, in minute detail, the propeller making contact with metal, and disintegrating into several pieces. Then, both planes seemed to intertwine together as their upward momentum stalled. They were about 700 feet up. When they started downward, I remember thinking how strange it was that they were falling so slowly. Both planes were still locked together, coming down in a twirling spiral motion, as if engaged in some macabre dance.

I wasn't able to move. I couldn't take my eyes off the spectacle. And, as they got closer and closer - crazy as it may seem - something inside of me was still expecting them to somehow pull apart from each other, and land safely. This all happened in what was probably less than six seconds. Twenty years later, I can still remember all the details as if it happened only an hour ago.

The sound of the planes hitting the ground was nothing like what Hollywood makes it out to be. There was no big explosion. No fireball. No big BOOM. In fact, it was little more than a dull, yet very sickening "thud."

The instant the planes were on the ground, it was as if the Super Glue that held my feet to the pavement was magically dissolved and I went into action. I opened the door, stuck my head in, and told the money folks, "Close and lock the door! There's been a crash!"

I then ran to my cruiser, which I had parked just outside, about 15 feet away. The fire department had their trucks staged somewhere on the opposite end of the runway. Another officer, Tom, had been working one of the entry points, about 50 feet from me. He was jumping into his car, too. We were the closest emergency personnel to the planes. We both gunned it, and sped down the runway to where the planes were now burning.

We were there in seconds, and jumped out, both grabbing fire extinguishers from our cruisers. I scanned the scene. There were flames everywhere and I spotted one of the pilots, still strapped into his seat, lying sideways over some burning debris. He wasn't moving. I had no idea whether he was alive or not. But, there was no discussion over *whether* we were going to go in there to get him - only how. I don't know what Tom was thinking at that moment. But, seeing that pilot trapped in that seat, literally roasting over those flames, sickened me. Alive or dead, I couldn't stand seeing another human cooking like that.

We both ran headlong toward the pilot, grabbed him, and tried to drag him out. He was buckled in, and wouldn't budge. The heat was horrible and we ran back. We tried again, and backed off again. The seat was still attached to what was left of the structure and we couldn't get the straps off of him. I've been around brush fires and bonfires before. But, I've never experienced heat like that, before or since. It was unbearable and my body just refused to get any closer. We tried the dry chemical extinguishers, dousing the area between ourselves and the pilot. But, they had no effect.

In my trunk, I carried a collapsible 2-gallon water jug that allowed me to continually hydrate myself throughout the day without having to stop at stores, buy bottled water, or keep

finding water fountains. Remembering this, I ran back to my car, and grabbed the full container. I told Tom to get ready to cut the pilot out of the straps. I unscrewed the cap, and began shaking the water out in front of me as we went in. The water successfully brought the flames down, and cooled the path just enough that it was tolerable to go in, but not completely painless. My eyes felt like they were going to boil out of my head.

We reached the pilot. Tom used his pocket knife to cut the seat straps. He and I each grabbed whatever material we could, and dragged the pilot out of the wreckage. It was only then that my senses picked up the sirens of the fire engines and ambulance pulling up. I remember looking back at the wreckage, and scanning the scene for the second pilot. But, I couldn't see him anywhere. I couldn't make out where one plane stopped and the other began. It was all just a big flaming heap of debris.

I don't remember the firemen working on the pilot. I don't remember getting in the ambulance, or the ride to the emergency room. They treated us both for first degree burns and heat exhaustion. I remember watching them wheel in the pilot, and rush him into a room. But, the commotion didn't last long. After everyone had walked out, I looked in the door, and saw the body covered with a sheet.

I remember feeling emptiness. I wondered why I wasn't feeling sad. I didn't feel any of the horrible things that people are "supposed" to feel when they try to save a life, and fail. I remember wondering if there was something wrong with me. I was just empty. Numb. Maybe something in me realized that there was little chance he'd survived the impact in the first place. I do know that I was happy he was no longer in that fire. Something about that sight - that pilot stuck in that seat

just above those flames. There are no words. Nothing adequately describes that feeling. It has never really left me. Whenever I think of that day, the most prevailing thought is that sight, and the sickening feeling it brought.

Looking back, I know Tom and I weren't firemen. We didn't have the right equipment or training to do what we did. And later, I was to learn that water is the worst thing to use on an aircraft fire because the magnesium in the aircraft frame will react violently. Firemen would have stopped, sized up the situation, waited until the right hoses, chemicals, and safety gear were ready, and went in safely. But, all we saw was someone who was in trouble. All we wanted was to get him out of that horrible place. Perhaps we risked our lives for nothing. But, to be honest, the thought never even crossed my mind that I might get seriously hurt or killed going in there.

To add a layer of insult to all this, within the next couple of days we found out that some of the brass in the police department wanted to punish us for unnecessarily putting ourselves at risk, and acting outside of our job descriptions. However, within a couple of weeks, we were presented with awards for heroism from the city commission. After that, all the talk about discipline stopped.

I mean, how stupid would it have looked to punish two "heroes?"

Lie Detectors and Sphincter Sensors are BULLSHIT!

Their official nomenclature is “polygraphs.” That makes them sound much more scientific, and less like some kind of hocus-pocus gadget, doesn’t it?

I don’t hate polygraphs because I’m dishonest. In fact, it’s just the opposite. I hate polygraphs, and have trouble passing them, because I’m *too honest.* I know that sounds counterintuitive - being too honest to pass a “lie detector.” But, let’s circle back to that later.

The reason I’m discussing polygraphs is because they are a very common tool used in the hiring process for cops. Most decent-sized agencies, all the major agencies, and even several smaller ones put all applicants through this process. Their reasoning is sound enough: Use every available method to weed out people whose past behavior and tendencies may not measure up to the level of integrity they are looking for in cops. I’m not writing this to convince people that polygraphs are good or bad. I just don’t like them.

Here is a basic rundown on how a polygraph operates: The main component is a machine (polygraph operators insist that they are not machines - they are “instruments”) that receives signals from various types of sensors, and translates those signals into a visual format that can be evaluated. In the old

days, that visual format was a chart that looked like graph paper with a bunch of squiggly lines drawn on it. Nowadays, computers do the same thing, creating the squiggly lines on a screen.

The sensors are connected to the human body, and pick up various things going on. Mainly, they use a strap or tube across the chest that flexes and contracts as the person breathes, a metal electrode attached to the finger that monitors skin perspiration, and a blood pressure cuff that monitors - you guessed it - the person's blood pressure and pulse rate.

Legend has it that, when a person lies about something, it causes stress within the mind of the person strapped to the machine, which then causes changes in the body that can be visualized on the graph.

Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Polygraph "experts" believe in the infallibility of these machines with the same faith that Christians have toward the resurrection of Jesus. And, you cannot talk them out of it - even though there are just as many controlled experiments that show that these things are flawed as there are that have proven them accurate.

You can do your own research about polygraphs if you like. I'm simply going to tell you my personal experiences with them.

My first polygraph test was in the Army while getting my security clearance to work around nuclear weapons. It was uneventful and I passed with no problem. My next polygraph test was at the hands of the Florida Highway Patrol, the first agency I applied to when I got out of the service.

Part of the process of a polygraph test is for the examiner to sit down, and explain how flawless the machine is, and how pointless it is to attempt to fool it. They basically work on convincing the subject that, no matter what, the machine is going to see into their soul, and find all the falsehoods.

The next step is interviewing the subject, and asking a series of questions. They ask about all kinds of stuff. The one that torpedoed me was, "How many times have you smoked marijuana?" Now, before you just accept that as a simple, cut and dry question, consider my past.

I smoked pot as a teenager. And, I was honest with the examiner about that fact. In fact, I smoked marijuana during my 9th grade year, and then quit doing it. My use consisted of accepting a hit whenever it was offered to me. I never bought my own stash. I never carried any on me. Sometimes, at a party, someone would pull out a joint and, when it came to me, I would take a hit. Sometimes, I would share a joint or a pipe with a friend at their house, which meant I was taking multiple hits. I never documented when I smoked pot so I really don't know how often it happened.

The examiner's question was, "How many *times* have you used marijuana?" So, what is a "time?" They wanted to know how many "times" I smoked pot. Is one hit off of a pipe a "time?" If a friend and I passed a joint back and forth and we each took four hits, was that one time because we only sat and smoked one joint together? Or was it four "times" because I took four hits? Additionally, as I said before, I don't know how often the opportunity to smoke arose. They wanted a number. If I do not know how often I actually did it, then any number was untrue. It was a lie.

I asked for clarification but the examiner just kept repeating the question, "How many *times* did you use marijuana?" I know that I smoked pot on well over ten occasions. However, I'm certain it was less than 50 occasions. So, what number between 10 and 50 is "true?"

Another question I've been asked in many polygraph tests was this: "Other than petty theft as a child, have you ever committed any crimes that you were not caught for?" Now, think about that.

Have you ever made a prank phone call? In Florida, that is a misdemeanor - a crime. Did you ever fudge your numbers on a credit application to get that car or house you wanted? That's a crime. Underage drinking? Crime. Did you ever try a "hard drug" just once, and realize you didn't like it? Crime. Ever given your kid a swig of your beer? Crime.

If you do a Google search on "How many felonies does the average American commit in a day," you'll find that the number is three. That's because there are so many laws and regulations on the books at the local, state, and federal level that the average American cannot simply function through a normal day without violating some of them.

That means little to the average American simply because most of those crimes are victimless, they go un-noticed, and your life goes on. But, picture yourself trying to get a job that requires you to divulge all of those things you've done…for which you were never caught. Now, you must decide how much you can divulge so you aren't "lying" without ruining your chances of getting that job. How would you do?

Like anyone else, I've done things I knew were against the law, like getting in a fight here and there, and bringing things

home from the military that were supposed to be turned back into supply. Do you know a veteran who still has the helmet or backpack he used in a combat zone? It's pretty common, isn't it? As far as the government is concerned, it is stolen.

So, here I was, knowing that, despite my best effort, I wasn't giving a truly accurate number of "times" I had smoked pot. Unfortunately, they would not accept, "I honestly don't know" as my honest answer. Plus, I didn't remember every fight I'd been in, every beer party I'd attended from age 14 to 17, every firecracker I'd thrown into someone's mailbox, or many other things. Hell, I had even carried a concealed firearm when I was stationed in Colorado without any kind of permit which, of course, was against the law. In addition, I *knew* there were things that I'd done, and completely forgotten about.

So, I told some of it - enough to make me feel that I'd been "honest," but not enough to make me look like Al Capone. And, I honestly struggled to come up with an accurate number of "times" for the pot use.

So, I went through the test. They basically ask you things like, "Besides what you divulged to me, have you committed any crimes you weren't caught for?" "Have you only smoked marijuana "X" times?" "Have you ever used cocaine?" "Have you ever used narcotics?" (They ask questions specifically naming each of the major drugs.) "Are you being completely honest about your disciplinary history in the Army?"

Interspersed among the test questions are what they call "control questions." These are questions that are obvious, and known to all parties. Things like:

"Is your name Brian Whiddon?"

"Are you 25 years old?"

"Is today Tuesday?"

These questions are supposed to help the examiner check to see how your body is reacting to your responses. At times, they will ask you to answer one of these with a lie to gauge your body's reaction to being dishonest.

In the end, they will usually ask a question like, "Have you been completely honest with your answers today?"

When the test was over, the guy looked everything over, then got really solemn, and told me there were some "problems" with my answers. Apparently, this machine showed that I had lied on practically EVERY drug question! I protested, insisting that I'd never done anything other than pot - which is absolutely true to this day. I said, "I *told you* that I don't know how often I did pot and you couldn't tell me what a 'time' even meant!" But, he just calmly said that all the machine (oops…sorry…the "instrument") had done was record my body's reactions and that, clearly, I had problems with the answers I had given him.

Now, here is the kicker: Looking down at the chart on the desk, I noticed one spot where the lines went all squiggly just like on the drug questions. I pointed, and asked, "Is that a lie right there, too?" The examiner said it was. I asked which question it was on. He looked back at his list of numbered questions, and said that it was one of the control questions - "Is your name Brian Whiddon?"

I about lost it. I demanded to know how accurate this whole thing could possibly be if it showed that I was lying about my own name. His reply, just as calm as the others, was, "Well, you must have been so upset about the lies you knew you were telling that it affected your reactions to your truthful

responses." Think about that for a minute. *His machine* was supposed to be able to decipher when I was lying and when I was telling the truth. And, when it failed, and showed that I was lying on an answer that was *known* to be true, it was somehow my fault.

I was curious about one other thing. I asked to look at the end of the chart. I saw the stretch where the last few questions were asked. His last question had been, "Have you been completely honest with your answers today?" The lines hadn't changed. My body had been completely calm. There was no deception shown.

He had no answer for that other than to repeat that all his "instrument' had done was record my body's reactions, and that the thing was *accurate*.

To be fair, indeed, the guy was right about what the machine did. Polygraphs do nothing but show how fast or slow, heavy or shallow you are breathing. They show how hard and strong your heart pumps from minute to minute. They show how much your fingers are sweating. They don't "say" anything. That's the examiner's job. It is his interpretation that determines whether you are lying, or telling the truth. And, he is human. He has spent years becoming an "expert" at reading those squiggly lines. And, in many cases, he is earning his living reading them. So, do you think for a minute that "expert" is going to admit that their questions, and perhaps even their *method,* is flawed?

Needless to say, I didn't get the job with the Highway Patrol. And, from that day forward, I had a very real, and very justified fear of the polygraph "instrument." Because, at least with me, it was not accurate. I went on to learn that polygraph science has nothing to do with actual truth and deception. It

has everything to do with how the subject *feels* about the answers they give.

I went on to pass several polygraphs. The marijuana question became much easier when some examiners simply allowed me explain, honestly, when and how I used the drug, and accepted that I could not remember every use. Then, they would simply ask, "Have you been honest about your marijuana use?"

I found that the biggest "trick" to passing a polygraph is to be confident and calm.

Throughout my career, I talked to a lot of my colleagues about their experiences with the polygraph. And, the answers I got from them ranged from having been mostly honest in the exam, to "Man, I lied my ASS off on that thing." So, I am a total non-believer in the accuracy of polygraphs.

There are lots of studies on how flawed this pseudo-science is. You can do your own research. They have added other techniques into the "lie-detection" field over the years. "Voice Stress Analysis" runs the sound of your voice through a computer program that will translate it into a "graph" of its pitch, inflection, and other characteristics that the human ear cannot pick up. The last polygraph I took included a pad on the chair I was sitting on. Its purpose was to detect if my sphincter contracted. I'm not making this up. Can you imagine being labelled a liar because your butthole clenched?

Again, I'm not here to convince anyone that polygraphs work or don't work. I'm just telling my personal experience and opinion on them. And, until we discover how to accurately read a person's mind, police agencies are still going to

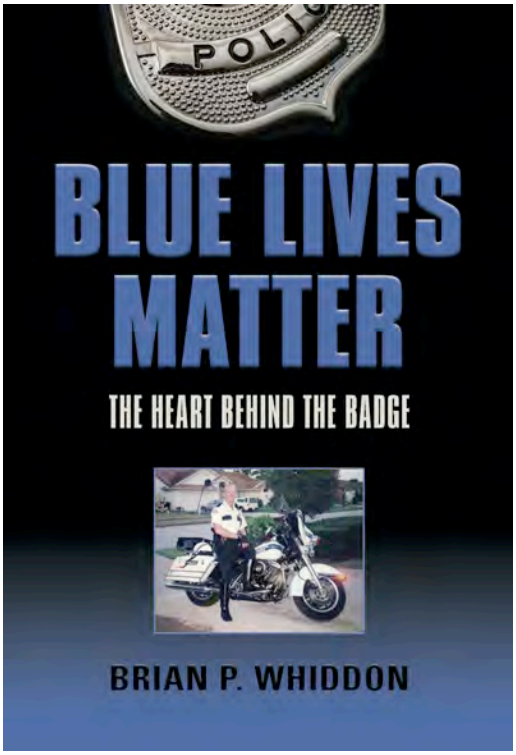
continue to use these machines because they are better than nothing.

In closing this chapter, I will give you two facts to ponder concerning police agencies' use of these devices to select candidates:

1. Generally, unless agreed otherwise by both sides in a case, polygraph results are not admissible as evidence in criminal courts.

2. There are two types of people known to be able to regularly "fool" a polygraph and lie without detection. They are sociopaths and psychopaths.

Something to think about…



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