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Drug Dealing Women and Wild Horses

By Samuel E. Stone

Author, Poet, Investigator, Retired Police Sgt who served two tours of Duty working deep undercover operations.

People want to know who you are, what you do for a living, and where you come from. If you can satisfy those basic curiosities, the majority of people would rather talk about themselves than hear any more about you. This is the sixth in a series of articles about illegal drugs and the impact they have on every one of us.

Prior to “Narcotic Task Forces,” and “Street Gang Task Forces,” the narcotic division was operated out of “The Special Investigation Unit,” known simply as “The SIU.” This unit was responsible for identifying specialized criminal activity. Everything involving organized crime, from white collar crimes to criminal behavior such as prostitution, drug trafficking, extortion, money laundering, loan sharking, pandering, bribery, illegal gambling, contract killings, and any other methodical street crime activity whether gang related or not. My job was Detective Sergeant in charge of The SIU Division.

The method of operation under which The SIU Division operated was divided into six categories, Identification, Strategy, Investigation, Arrest Warrants, Interviews, and Prosecution.

The first step involved identifying the nature of the crime, the principle players, the associates involved from financiers to worker bees, and the structure under which they operated. The second phase of operation was to develop strategies of engagement that would work to infiltrate the organization and to do so with minimal expenditures and risk. The third stage was to initiate an investigation, utilizing undercover operatives, surveillance techniques, confidential informants, subpoenas, search warrants and whatever other tools that were available. The fourth step, came after developing “probable cause,” which is defined as more than a “reasonable suspicion.” This involved obtaining arrest warrants and executing them upon the players involved with whom probable cause had been developed. This phase, however, was more complicated than merely arresting the suspects involved. Each arrested suspect was then interviewed. The interview process was the next step. The goal and object of the interview was to “turn the suspect” in order to have him or her lead you up the ladder to their boss. The final step was preparing to testify in the prosecution of the subjects involved.

Now with that said, we’ll get into the story in a minute, but first I have to tell you one more bit of information. The ones who profit the most from illegal drugs are the financiers. They hardly ever handle the drugs, but take the biggest part of the profits. These are also the hardest ones to catch. The next in the drug chain is the main distributors, who deal with large quantities of drugs. They deal the product directly to the higher level suppliers on the street who filter the drugs down to the street peddlers and user/dealers. The distributors are also very difficult to catch since they only supply large quantities to people they know or known and have done business with for years.

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Okay, now for my story, thank you for your patience. On this one particular occasion, there was a woman, I'll call Mary Sue. The SIU Division had been hearing for years that Mary Sue was a major cocaine distributor in our local area but no one had or would ever give her up (narc her off) and so no case was ever developed against her and she remained no more than a person of interest. Mary Sue was a mother of two children, a 6 year old boy and a 4 year old girl. She lived on a 20 acre horse ranch with her two children, her boyfriend, and 30 head of horses. Neither she nor her boyfriend worked or had any visible means of support other than her horse business. She would buy, sell, and show horses. It appeared on the surface from the life style, that they lived that she had a very successful horse ranch business. In the area where we live, horses have to be fed hay and grain; there is not enough protein in the pasture grass to sustain them. Hay is not cheap and when you're feeding a herd of thirty horses, it becomes downright expensive, something that most of us could never afford to do. Still there was nothing more than a suspicion that Mary Sue was a drug distributor, which is until one day The SIU Division got lucky.

Sometimes, in fact more times than I really would like to acknowledge, good police work is no more than getting lucky and having the insight to realize an opportunity has presented itself. The only skill involved is the initiative to take the steps to act upon it. On this Spring day, a patrol unit responded to a one car minor injury accident only to discover the driver to be carrying a concealed semi-automatic revolver without a permit and under the influence of alcohol and drugs. To make matters worse for the driver, searching the vehicle "incident to arrest" the officer discovered a dozen one ounce bags of cocaine and several thousand dollars in cash. Now according to state law, it is a mandatory five year prison sentence if you are caught with a felony amount of drugs and a firearm. The Patrol Officer notified The SIU Division and arrangements were made to bring the suspect in to be interviewed.

The subject was a 32 year old, white male, I'll call him David. He had never been in trouble with the law. This was his first encounter with the police, even though he had worked his way up to becoming an upper-level cocaine supplier over the past six years. Learning this history about David actually placed him at the top of the list to play, "let's make a deal." You see, having never experienced the system made David a prime candidate. He was after all, intelligent enough to know that he was in trouble and facing a mandatory five year minimum prison sentence. He was scared, nervous, and did not want to go to jail. He wanted this to go away, or at least to minimize the impact it would have on his life.

David was advised of his Miranda rights, to which he acknowledge he understood. I could see he was physically shaken. He immediately asked if there was anything he could do to get out of his situation, stating he really was not a bad person. He was told up front the possession of cocaine charges were not going away but if he was willing to cooperate, the possession of a firearm with the mandatory minimum 5 years part could be removed from the charge. He would be allowed to plead guilty to a simple felony possession, which still carried a prison sentence, but with a much less sentence. He found some relief in this and asked what he had to do. He was informed that we wanted his "supplier," the person he has been getting his cocaine from for the past six years. He paused for a moment, and then threw his hands up in the air. "Wait a minute; what are you trying to do, get me killed dead? She'll have me killed, you don't know these people." He caught my interest saying "she." My mind was redirected to Mary Sue; I wondered if the "She" could be her. We sat there in silence for a few minutes. I turned to David, and stated, "You know, drug dealers operate on putting a sense of fear into those they deal with, I'm sure you have probably done the same thing. The fact of the matter is, you are going down for felony possession of cocaine with the intent to sell while in possession of a firearm.

The question here is how serious do you view the threat to your life against the mandatory five years in prison." There was silence in the room which seemed to last for the longest time, then the silence was broken. "Oh man, oh man, okay, well, okay, I'll do it. I'll do it. My supplier is Mary Sue. She is a major distributor dealing kilos of cocaine. I purchase two to five kilos a week from her. In fact, I'm set to meet her in the morning to pick up another four kilos." He was rubbing his hands together, weaving back and forth in the chair. "Oh man!!!" he repeated.

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Are your assets protected if you must use deadly force?

Don't Let Self-Defense Leave You With No Defense

As an honorably retired law enforcement officer you can legally carry a concealed weapon in most of the 50 states. However, if it is necessary to use deadly force to defend yourself or your family are you protected from financial ruin even if the shooting was entirely justified? The short answer is no, you are probably not protected. While continuing to carry an off duty weapon, most retired officers still hold a mindset that they are still “on the job” even after retirement when it comes to carrying concealed weapons. Yes, they are more seasoned and cautious, claim that they will “be a good witness,” and are more reluctant to engage, but in reality the instincts are still there.

Many rely on the belief that they will be given a break by a fellow officer and/or District Attorney's office. Most are relying under the confidence that they will be covered by their homeowner's policy, and/or umbrella policy in the event of a self defense incident and the civil lawsuit that will likely be filed against them. The simple fact is that most homeowner's policies do not respond to “intentional acts of self defense” and there is case law to support this. In an Iowa case, a woman with three small children was attacked by two knife wielding assailants. After a fierce struggle she managed to get to her husband's gun box and used deadly force on one of the attackers. The second attacker fled and was later captured by police. The family of the deceased filed a civil suit against her for wrongful death and she requested that her homeowner's insurance carrier respond to defend her. The company refused and she then filed suit against them. The case went up to the Iowa Supreme Court who ruled in favor of the insurance company.

An umbrella policy does not normally offer a broader range of coverage than the underlying homeowner's policy. Call your insurance company to find out if your homeowner's policy will cover you for an intentional act of self defense. If they claim that they will cover you, protect yourself and ask that they send that to you in writing.

As a retired law enforcement officer or federal agent, you have a good pension and assets that are fair game for an eager plaintiff's trial attorney. They can view your personal financial information via a quick database search.

A Florida State University study indicated that in the last few years there have been an average of 2.5 million defensive guns uses a year, with a recent USA Today study indicating that justifiable homicides are at a 10 year high.

You have worked too hard to see everything that you have saved for you and your family's future go to a felon's family and their voracious lawyers. If you are relying on the thought that you will just be a good witness, or will be given a break because of who you are, or that your homeowner's policy will cover you, think again. Every time you step out of the house carrying a weapon you are putting your family's financial future at risk.

Protecting your hard earned assets can start by making a prudent decision to purchase a LEOSA-HR218 Self-Defense Protection policy. Premiums begin at just \$250 a year and provide much needed primary/ first dollar coverage. You will have a choice of two levels of civil liability coverage: \$300,000 or \$500,000. You will feel secure knowing that the policy can provide reimbursement of up to \$50,000 for criminal defense costs. This is just a coverage introduction as the policy offers so much more. Sold exclusively through their website, you will find an easy-to-complete online application and complete information about the policy. LEOSA-HR218 Self-Defense Protection policy is financially backed by a solid A.M. Best “A” rated insurance carrier.

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- The choice of two levels of civil liability coverage: \$300,000 or \$500.00.

Remember the LEOSA-HR218 Self-Defense Protection policy was created just for you by someone just like you. LEOSA-HR218 President and creator **Terry Chodosh** is a former Florida Police Officer and a retired U.S. Secret Service special agent with nearly 30 years of service.

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“Okay here is what we are going to do. I’m going to have you write out a statement concerning your involvement with Mary Sue including all the details. Then we’re going to get a warrant for you to wear a wire (recording device) when you meet with her in the morning.” We worked out the details. He wasn’t happy about wearing a wire, but we convinced him it was in his best interest.

The next morning everything was set. Myself and the other officers in my squad laid back in surveillance mode as David, wearing a wire, went in and met with Mary Sue. He purchased the four kilos of cocaine. The entire drug transaction was recorded on tape via the wire. The money David used for the purchase was marked by us prior to the drug buy so that it could be identified after the buy went down.

The drug transaction went down smoothly and upon its completion we moved in and arrested Mary Sue. To my surprise I found her to be friendly and cooperative. The first words out of her mouth were, “I knew this day would come! How about me, I’m ready to deal, with two young children the last thing I want to do is go to prison! I can give you my supplier out of Los Angeles, in fact, if you can keep me out of prison I’ll arrange for him to personally bring the cocaine up to me. What do you say, Love?” she said acting as calm as can be. “See my horses, aren’t they beautiful wild things?” She said with a smile on her face. Until next time, when I will discuss the “The L.A. Connection.”

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Bring Safety Home

Safety in the home is more important now than ever. Preventable injuries and deaths are on the rise in homes and communities across the United States. To really make an impact, people need to be aware of the hazards around them and change their behaviors. The information you find in this article will help you do just that.

Share what you learn here about safety in your home with your family, friends and neighbors. Simple steps could make a huge difference.

- Don't use your cell phone while driving. Encourage those around you to do the same.
- Get trained in first aid, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and AED (automated external defibrillation).
- Get a flu shot and make sure your family receives flu shots too.
- Fall proof your home.
- Conduct emergency evacuation drills. Identify safety hazards around your house, such as electrical cords that someone could trip over, rugs that slip, etc.

Don't forget to engage your family.
Children could help.