

## **A Few minutes with the Boss**

*By: Joseph Andalina*

### **Victims of a somber illness**

Alejandro Robaina, the international symbol of Cuba's cigar making prowess, has died. He was 91. The Cuban state television reported that he was the victim of a somber illness. (Not that I actually tune into that station!) He could be found in his last days smoking cigars in his rocking chair.

While his passing will be mourned by cigar aficionados everywhere, there are many others who are dying of a similar malady.

It is us. The police. The centurions in blue who took on this job to make a mark for society. To protect and yes, to serve, and to make a difference in people's lives, hopefully mostly for good.

We hope if our governments do not take our pensions away, as they seem so wont to do, that all of us retired cops now but in the future could spend our last days in our nineties on our rocking chairs puffing on one of our favorite "habanas."

But it is getting harder. Our governments on local, state, and national levels seemingly go out of their way to disrespect the police. This has risen to the national level when our president of the United States of America, of Hope and Change, accused the Cambridge, MA police of "acting stupidly" when he tried to make a non-issue of proper police behavior into a race issue.

Catching a lot of heat, he formulated the infamous "beer summit" where all the parties sat down to discuss the issue in question—but then would not discuss what was said to each other. A teaching moment that went awry, or a CYA sit-down to silence the fact that our president had dissed the police?

So okay, let's forget it until the next time. Oh, the next time has come. Can you say...Arizona?

Arizona, the home of fabulous sports teams, war hero John McCain, the Grand Canyon, hot weather, nine species of rattlesnakes, Bark scorpions, beautiful red sand deserts, and half a million illegal aliens.

It's one of the busiest cities for police and sheriffs. It's also the kidnapping capital of the USA, too. How about some applause for some very dedicated Border Agents? Tough place to be a cop. And wouldn't you know it—our leaders, starting again with our president, find it necessary to once more disrespect our police profession.

As everyone knows by now, the governor of Arizona signed a law that mirrors the federal law and enhances the investigation into illegal immigrants on a state level. What side of

the debate people may sit on is immaterial. What is important is that starting with the president of the USA, he sure doesn't seem to think the judgment of Arizona cops on this crucial issue is one of importance, or that they can be trusted to honor the law and the oath they took to uphold the law fairly and equitably.

The law simply says that police officers are required to determine someone's immigration status if there is reasonable suspicion a person is in the USA illegally. This law was passed because there is so much illegal immigration in Arizona and the Federal government has been unwilling to resolve this issue.

But the president thinks, as do other government leaders, that it puts too much power into local law enforcement. Many believe it is a slippery slope to racial profiling as it targets Latinos.

Even though there are checks and balances in the law, and officers are well aware and have received additional training against racial profiling, I guess we are still considered too stupid to understand the errors of racial profiling and how to avoid it.

Our president again bashes us when he says he is "not happy with the Arizona law because when we start having local law officials empowered to stop people on suspicion that they may be undocumented workers, that violates our core values." What does that mean? You can't stop simply on suspicion, Mr. President and others pounding out the same incendiary soundbites. You have to have probable cause, just like always. The president also says "if you don't have your papers and you took your kid out to get ice cream, you are going to be harassed, that's something that could happen."

What did he say? Make that a double what! First, even Federal law says if you are a "resident alien" you have to carry your papers around all the time. And second, are you, the police officer, going to harass a family at their local Dairy Queen? How sad. Make us look like a bunch of yo-yos! First we act stupidly, now we harass folks at ice cream shoppes.

Our Federal Secretary of State—y'all know Ms Hillary—also believes that this is racial profiling and that the police will harass Latinos. Is this just another sound bite to pander to potential voters? Does she really mean this? How about a local councilman in LA who says he can't go to Arizona anymore as a Latino because if he goes and gets stopped, he can get deported. My, my, my. Yes, he can if he is an illegal immigrant and has no papers. But then how did he get elected? Didn't Cheech Marin make a movie similar to this in the 80's—**Born in East LA**?

Is that where this councilman would be sent? This all just galls me because again, a lot of these politicians are making cops the bad guys once more. Do they have no faith in our profession? Do they mistrust us that much? Do they think that we wake up in the morning, hoping that somewhere, someone will pass a law allowing us to harass someone—or even an entire ethnic group?

I sure do hope that local police organizations, as well as individual cops are standing up to this and are as PO'd as I am in my far away office in Illinois.

We all know this is about politics. Republicans want illegals here to work and not vote, while the Democrats want them here to vote and not work (so goes the rumor).

For us, it's not whether this law is right or wrong. The debate will continue. But I do know that people, especially our leaders on all levels, have got to give us a break here and trust that the police will do their jobs professionally and uphold our constitution.

The cops do have a "dog in this race" and it's name is Trust Us. I would like to see us avoid the coming reality of us being a victim of a 'somber illness,' which is a complete and utter failing of our government to trust the cop on the street, in the trenches, or at the border.

Vita é bella

ps: May is Law Enforcement month, where we honor our fallen officers who have been killed in the line of duty. Say a prayer and keep them in our hearts.

Have a safe Memorial Day weekend.

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