

A Few Minutes with the Boss

By: Joe Andalina

No more quotas for you

I guess that gone are the days when asked by a motorist why you can't give them a break on a ticket and your response could be: Go ask the mayor or my chief—it's their quotas! Talk about aggravating your boss. Trust me; that would do it.

But for so many years that would be the truth, wouldn't it? Cops always have had discretion. Stop and write or not write a real ticket. Or a warning ticket. Or a verbal.

Made it hard to do, however, when the expectation of your employer demanded a certain amount of tickets. And that could be in accordance to written policy, career motivating models, or simply your sergeant telling you to get your rear out there, Andalina, and write some tickets.

After all, they are the ones to get chewed out because their people under their watchful eye were low on "movers" this month, for statistical purposes. (You know how much the brass love statistics—as long as they are stats that make them look good.)

Because, according to the brass, you can't be doing your job if you're not writing tickets. They never cared who you pissed off as long as ticket quotas were met. Yes, over the years ticket quotas took on a new form. They were a measure to gauge your career.

There were "minimum standards" or "PiPs" or ways to evaluate your job performance or career development. Or many other monikers your local PD may have used to ensure that you write tickets after ticket ad-nauseum.

Sure, many times tickets are warranted. But you could always smell bullsh** when your boss in local municipalities told you to write them under local ordinances and not State so the town would get the revenue.

But now that's over. Governor Quinn signed legislation in mid-June which bans police departments from assigning ticket quotas and evaluating any officer on how many tickets they may or may not have written.

It's back to the officer's judgment or full discretion once again, as it should be. Police brass can no longer compare officers based on how many tickets they write.

The bill passed both the House and the Senate with overwhelming majorities. It should also improve relations between cops and the citizenry.

I always personally felt irritated that quotas caused bitterness between the police and the public because of quotas. We were just pissing off the very people we want on our sides. But chiefs, in all their mundane thinking, didn't care.

They got us to write the tickets and take all the grief; they just sat back because they didn't have to write them. Ever notice that chiefs almost never fall under the ire of the public? It's tickets, baby, tickets.

Now hopefully those relations will get better until your employer dreams up some kind of system to replace those stats and that revenue. Let's hope they just allow us to do our job, protect all citizens, and enjoy our working conditions.

So all you MAP chapters who may have not been notified, if you have any sort of quota system in your contract—real or perceived—contact us and we'll get it out.

Likewise, if you are still forced to write tickets under a quota system—real or perceived—it's grievance time. Contact MAP or your rep for more information.

Vita é Bella.