

My Two Cent's Worth

By: Joseph Andalina

The Stuff of Nightmares

That's the unspoken truth of cops, EMT's and firefighters. Probably for the most part police officers, because whatever occurs in all three jobs, cops undoubtedly see the most violence and it most assuredly can be worse for them.

Police officers see the same tragedies of the EMT's and firefighters but it is the cop on the street who meets the mayhem head on. They see the blood and guts, smell the iron-coppery odor of blood and feel the grief of victims and families in a most personal way.

And of course they are infinitely more attuned to the violence and mayhem that can be perpetuated against them. And that is the stuff of nightmares. A recent "In My Sight" article by Dave Smith in the April 2017 issue of *Police* highlights this ever-so-common and mostly hidden aspect of policing.

Nightmares are a prime mover of PTSD for cops. We all have them. Some minor and not so much, while others produce devastating trauma simply while sleeping.

As Mr. Smith states "Creepy dreams I found out by talking to police psychologists over the years are very, very common, almost to the point of being considered 'normal'."

We probably try to cover it up by saying it's only a dream. But the dreams add up, can be debilitating, and worsen PTSD for many. The sheer volume of dreams, the seemingly reality, I imagine can be upsetting to the toughest cop out there. Primarily because there doesn't seem to be a damn thing you can do about them. It's only a dream!

But you can do something about it. There is no shame in cognitive therapy. Seek it out. Nightmares are bigger than you realize because it is unspoken and hidden. And that is the stuff of nightmares — not doing something about it.

Catch the article if you can. If it starts you out on a path to alleviate some pain, then that's a good thing.

Vita é bella.