

Ever since I can remember, whenever I had something to say, even as a small child, I would write it down. It helped me to remember and capture exactly what I felt at that moment in time. Later in life I would be rewarded for having this skill. And so it shouldn't be a surprise to most who know me that I decided to write a book. When I told some friends what the subject of my book was about, they about snorted out the morning coffee. I received a rather quizzical look from each. "What" asked one friend? Have you lost it? You can't tell about the government's secrets and expect no one is going to have a fit about it?" I started writing this book in 1997. At that time, I was angry about my own circumstances. Angry about what our government did in Somalia when nineteen soldiers were killed in a botched raid to capture a Somali warlord. Angry because to many times we walked away from the important fights and engaged fights with countries I just couldn't understand. And so I put pen to paper. Over time, I realized that anger wouldn't help me tell this story. The anger subsided and I believe this product is better for it. I want you to enjoy it. But more than that I want this book to be informative so that people know what happens when something goes terribly awry inside the "green machine".

Like most CID Agents, I started out as a Military Policeman. I always wanted to be a patrolman, but once I did I hated this job with a passion. I didn't like writing tickets, directing traffic or a hundred other things. By February 1982 in Kitzengen, Germany, I had been "on the road" for almost a year. Once you start patrolling you find out what you like and what you don't like to respond to. *I did not like traffic accidents.* And so, when the weather turned bad as it often did in Germany, you would get one traffic accident call, or 10-50 in police terminology after another. In February 1982 it was snowing. It seemed like the snow wouldn't go away. I was on a swing shift, which meant I worked from four to midnight. It had been snowing all day and into the evening and I was dispatched to a traffic accident with injuries around 9:00 p.m. It was dark out but the snow reflected enough light to see fairly well. A soldier's wife had wrapped her car around a tree on a road as she was heading home. When I arrived she was on a stretcher on her way to the hospital. She wasn't awake and there was blood all over. She reeked of alcohol. By this time I had arrested my fair share of drunks and I could tell from the smell of the metabolized alcohol she had been drinking rum. More than any other alcohol, rum always gave off a peculiar smell to me. One that didn't agree with my senses. She was mumbling, but there wasn't anything I needed from her so I let the ambulance take her away. The German Police had jurisdiction since she was a civilian and they wanted a blood alcohol test. In Germany, you can't refuse a blood alcohol test like you can in the United States. On one occasion, I watched as they held a man down and beat the blood out of him. You don't screw around over there. I took a few pictures with my camera; measured what remained of the skid marks and came up with a general idea as to how the

accident occurred. The car was towed and off to the hospital I went. When I arrived the young lady was bruised and cut but nothing serious. The medical folks believed she was really intoxicated but the blood tests wouldn't be available for a day or two. It was getting close to midnight and I was interested in going home. It had been a long day. I was cold, tired and hungry and I just wanted to get to bed. I went into the room and she was hooked to an IV bag taking fluids. She was only partly awake. I told her who I was and that she was being charged with drunk driving among other things and that the German police would send her a summons to appear in court. She opens her eyes and says five words that made me wince. "How is my baby girl"? She goes on to say that her baby was in the car with her at the time of the accident. Now I had looked at that vehicle, I looked inside the vehicle and I saw nothing. I asked her, "Ma'am are you sure your baby was in that car"? She was positive, and as I saw those eyes water up, I felt a chill go down my spine. Without saying another word, and almost oblivious to the fact that she was now losing it, I walk out and start toward my car. I called Kitzengen, call sign Tarhill with emergency traffic and ask that everyone who can, meet me at the crash site. No small feat, because everyone was getting off at midnight. I tell the desk sergeant what was happening and fortunately, the oncoming shift was there which meant more eyes and ears to assist at the scene. I am all of 19 and can feel my heart pounding in my chest. Why didn't she say something to the medical personnel before I got there? The German Interpreter is calling the German Police who are sending some patrolman to assist. The GP's are also going to the tow yard where the vehicle was taken to take a look at it. I am almost crying as I get to the scene. I couldn't believe that I just didn't take a walk around the area of the vehicle to see if there was anything of evidentiary value. If this baby is in the snow, she had to have been dead. Outside in the elements on a cold night with the snow still coming, for now more than three hours, it was beyond hope that she would be alive. But we had to find her. My Patrol Supervisor was there and he asked me if I wanted to go back to the station. No way am I leaving, I want to look for this baby. Inside I was dying. My colleagues looked at me like I was some sort of idiot or so I thought. What they were really thinking was that it really sucked I had caught this call. Where do you look for a baby when the trees and the ground have snow over them? We spread out and walk ever so gingerly through the woods. We find nothing. Twenty men looking through the woods. If the baby had ejected why didn't it cry? It is now almost three in the morning, and calls for other incidents are backed up as we look for the baby. CID comes to the scene because we might have a fatality. Another CID agent comes to the scene, takes some information and goes off to interview Dad to see if there is anything else we can do. Around 4:30 a.m., CID calls off the search. We all go to the MP Station. Exhausted, angry and in disbelief that I could have fucked up so badly, the CID Agent comes into the room with the father and my patrol supervisor. Our drunk driver did have a baby. But

the baby had died the year before of SIDS and mom was not able to recover from it. She took to drinking to anesthetize her loss. And that is how we ended up here today. I remember shaking, and then sitting down. I went from being so angry to utter shock. What surprises me is how quickly the emotions shifted. I just looked at my patrol supervisor, Sergeant Jeffries. I couldn't say a word. Later mom was admitted to a psychiatric hospital and sent home.

I learned many valuable lessons that night about working a case, dealing with people and their grief, how things are not always what they seem. Well, I could go on and on. For you see, this wasn't an accident, but a suicide attempt. However calm I may have seemed, the one emotion I had, that I didn't realize I had at the time was fear. I thought the army had removed this emotion from me in all its training, in all its lectures about not losing or showing your emotions at the scene of a crime. "Keep those emotions in check", I could hear my Police Academy Instructors saying. I couldn't admit it to anyone, but I recognized how afraid I was at the very moment I thought I was responsible for the loss of an infant due to my screw-up. People could and would say an awful lot of things about me, but no one ever said that I didn't know how to do my job. I was always very competent in what I did. That's not me being conceded. This comes from numerous awards and letters from military commanders who firmly believed they owed me a debt of gratitude.

Come join me for the rest of this story. It will make you mad, make you laugh, make you proud and it will break your heart at some things we as people do to each other. But I hope it will leave you with the knowledge that military law and law enforcement is as good if not better than anything we have outside. Lets begin.

*Jerry Mattiaccio*