



For everyone reading this, I want to personally thank Officer **Bobby Felix** for writing such a compelling article.

I couldn't be prouder of Bobby's sobriety, and I hope that his testimony will resonate with many of you so that you recognize you are not alone, that you are cared for, and there are resources available for you right now. Feel free to reach out at (661) 510-6129 or [MarkCronin@lappl.org](mailto:MarkCronin@lappl.org).

### ***Alcoholism, the evil beast in law enforcement***

*Law enforcement officers have a significant number of things to deal with every day while on duty. Officers expose themselves to danger and are confronted with life-threatening situations each day they put on their uniform. Unfortunately, those are not the most difficult tasks officers face on a daily basis. You ask what is the most difficult tasks officers face daily?*

*Alcoholism is the dangerous beast that an average person is confronted with day after day. The average person consumes alcohol to relieve their stress after a difficult day at work. As it relates to law enforcement officers, alcohol abuse is alarming and serious. It is a nationwide problem within the law enforcement field, and it can be career ending and/or deadly to officers.*

*Officers, much like soldiers in combat, often experience the effects of job-related stress in a delayed manner, like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is statistically known throughout the law enforcement industry that officers are faced with lots of on-the-job stress.*

*Officers turn to alcohol to help them cope with the enormous stress they sustain after a long workday. They might have one or several drinks to relax at the end of their day. After a workday or on regular days off, many officers consume an alarming amount of alcohol.*

*In this day and era, many officers nationwide have been arrested due to alcohol-related incidents. The numbers are astronomically high, and the source of the problem is not the alcohol. The root of the problem is the evil beast known as alcoholism.*

*Alcoholism is a disorder that causes an alcoholic to drink excessive amounts of alcohol, which leads to psychological and physical dependencies and/or addictions. The effects of chronic alcohol abuse by an alcoholic are called “Cytotoxic” or cell poisoning effect.*

*Alcohol abuse also causes damage to an alcoholic’s nervous system. This is called “Peripheral Neuropathy,” which produces a lack of sensation in the feet that contributes to unsteadiness. Along with that, one will also experience numbness, pain, burning and tingling in the feet. Chronic alcohol abuse can also damage muscles in the body. Approximately 50 percent of alcoholics suffer from some degree of muscle weakness, and the alcoholic will not realize that it is caused by alcohol.*

*My name is Robert Felix, and I am an alcoholic. In my personal battle with alcoholism, I regretfully refused to admit to myself that I was an alcoholic for many years. I am known as a “binge drinker” according to the studies of alcoholism. I’ve been a binge drinker for over 15 years, and alcohol abuse has affected me in many ways for most of those 15 years.*

*As I consumed my first alcoholic beverage at any given gathering, it was the commencement to hell. The reason is that the evil beast of my brain valued the alcohol that streamed through my system. My brain enjoyed controlling my actions and emotions while I was under the influence of alcohol. I experienced many sleepless nights due to alcoholism. The restless leg syndrome was aggravated tremendously.*

*When I started consuming too much alcohol over time, I began to sustain many blackouts, which resulted in severe marital and family problems. The ventral striatum and prefrontal cortex of my brain truly enjoyed the alcohol to the fullest. My blackouts were affecting the hippocampus of my brain that stores memory. Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol was the reason I was sustaining blackouts more often.*

*Consuming alcohol in excess also affected my brain’s cerebellum, which controls movements and balance. My brain’s frontal lobe was extremely affected by all the alcohol that I was consuming. This was the reason my judgments, behaviors and emotions were suffering tremendously in my home life and at work. I was starting to miss work at times due to my alcoholism.*

*There came a point that I had to reach out for help due to my ship sinking with me trapped inside. I looked into resources that were available to me by my private medical insurance and through our Department. I made my way into our Department’s Behavioral Science Services office and requested the help that I desperately needed. It was recommended to me by staff at BSS that I should strongly admit myself into a 30-day inpatient treatment facility. I agreed, and I was taken to a treatment center, where I was admitted.*

*I was astounded on how many law enforcement officers were at the treatment center. There were at least five other officers from our Department and an FBI agent at the treatment center obtaining the same help as me. Alcoholism affects all humans who consume alcohol in excess no matter what they do for a living. Alcoholism is a dangerous disease to anyone who does not admit to themselves that they’re an alcoholic.*

*This was the absolute alcohol-free veracious decision that I had to make because it saved my life, saved my marital relationship, saved my relationship with my sons and saved my law enforcement career. I was admitted into Hoag Addiction Treatment Center where I was skeptical and nervous at same time. For the time being, I knew this is where I had to be. I accepted that I was an alcoholic and was going to give my 100 percent in the program.*

*I obtained lots of essential information regarding alcoholism and the damage it was doing to me. There is so much information readily available to alcoholics on how it affects our family members and our internal organs. I completed the 30-day alcoholic treatment program, and I am a little over eight months into my sobriety as of this writing. Being sober today has changed me for the better tremendously, and it feels wonderful. I am a happier husband and father to my loved ones. I never thought I'd be this happy in my wildest dreams.*

*I see myself falling asleep easier and not being in those roller-coaster mood swings as I was with alcohol in my system. I have lots of fun with my family and friends at gatherings, and it's all due to not having any alcohol in my system. My family is extremely proud of me and of the steps that I took to receive the help that I desperately needed. My family is absolutely 100 percent behind me in my road to recovery in sobriety.*

*It is not easy staying sober, but sticking with the program and surrounding myself with support from the alcoholic community—it does become easier. I take it one day at a time. I've made plenty of promises that I could not keep in my past to my family regarding my drinking. That is why I attend Alcoholic Anonymous regularly, I work my 12 steps with my sponsor and I say my serenity prayer every morning and at bedtime. The program allowed me to open my eyes to this disease and addiction with a clear-minded head.*

*I would like to thank several personnel from our wonderful Department's Behavioral Science Services Unit who assisted me throughout my entire treatment center experience. I was not alone during my road to recovery. You are not alone either if you are battling this horrific disease. Should you be suffering from alcohol abuse, feeling the same symptoms as I was feeling, with life becoming overwhelming with work and family, please reach out to our Department's Peer Support Roster or to our Behavioral Science Services office at (213) 486-0790.*