**Summer Evening**

There’s hot and then there is inner city August, temperature equals humidity hot. Experience says it’s going to be a busy shift.

Its human nature when conditions reach this level; patience, tempers and just being too close to each other, will ultimately result in no good.

What is considered a ‘airconditioned’ unit, is in reality a worn down before its time vehicle that blows air. Not cool air; air. Such a vehicle my partner and I start the 3pm to 11pm shift. After receiving assigned area of patrol, events and issues to be on alert for at rollcall, it’s time to go to work.

Precheck of the vehicle includes checking for operation of emergency systems, overhead lights, siren, if any first aid paraphernalia in the trunk. Some have it, some don’t. An oxygen tank is a rare commodity and every other car has it…not this one. Also check the back seat for anything left over from the day shift. Pull the rear seat out, no drugs, guns, knives or needles. Just the smell of Lysol used by the prior shift to mask the odor left by the last occupant.

I take a look at the left-over calls from the day shift that were deemed low priority that got pushed back because of emergency calls. Blocked driveway, kids playing in an open fire hydrant, customer dispute with a merchant, ball game in the street disturbing the neighborhood, etc.……

I notice the driveway call and the ball game in the street are close to each other, so we head in that direction. Knowing we will unlikely finish one of them, before receiving a priority call.

The ball game in the street, although typical on a hot summer day, often escalates to a dispute with someone, either with an irate driver or a neighbor. So, this is the one we will take first. Also, there’s a great Italian lemon ice truck on the same street….maybe, just maybe we can grab an ice after the call.

The street where the kids are playing is on the furthest end of our assigned district. In route we pass all the makings of a busy night for sure. The world is on the street on a hot summer night.

**‘West Xray 6’** ten minutes into the shift, first call…**’West Xray 6’**, I respond…**’West Xray 6 report of a child struck by a vehicle, intersection of Sip and Montgomery Avenues’**….**’West Xray 6, received, in route’.**

My partner is a good wheel man. He cranks up this worn-out machine. A child possibly hurt will start the adrenaline flowing. I activate the lights, siren and call out clearance at intersections. Calls like this are when you just get pissed at the double and triple parked cars you have to navigate around. Mental note to request a traffic unit clear up some of these inconsiderates’.

Upon arrival, a large crowd is around a vehicle that obviously came to an abrupt stop and angled into the opposing lane. As I exit, people are yelling at me, ‘he’s under the car, he’s under the car’!

I crawl under the car. The heat from vehicle is oven hot, the smell of the engine and black top of the hot street is acrid. The boy, about 8 or 9 years old, on his back, unconscious, labored breathing and contorted in a way that shows serious extremity fractures.

The sign of blood is a small pool on the left side of his head matting down his hair. My partner has called a ‘bus forthwith’ and ESU. Our speak for an ambulance asap and a police Emergency Service Unit to possible lift the car so the boy can be moved.

My partner and I communicate in terms that we understand and not alert or cause a reaction from the crowd that will escalate the scene to more chaos than already exists.

In moments, my partner is passing me large first aid gauzes as I inch as close as I can to ascertain how bad is the head wound. My bullet proof vest is riding up and pushing against my throat, sweat is pouring off me. I talk to the boy and tell him who I am, ‘I’m here to help you…you’re going to be alright…hang in there’. There’s no response. Just the labored breathing. At least he’s breathing. I gently touch his face and say a silent prayer.

I can’t move him and don’t want too at this point, the space is just too tight. I’m inches from his face and the heat is real. I hear ESU arrive. My partner fills them in and they immediately start their magic to lift the car. Moments later the ambulance arrives.

The paramedic crawls in next to me as the car starts to lift. ‘Whadda got’? I recognize him from working the same shift for some time...’Unconscious, apparent head wound and lower extremities severely distorted. As the car lifts and tilts towards one end, we have more room to maneuver. The medic, gets closer to the boy as I move away to provide him room. He communicates with his partner, what he observes, what materiel he needs.

After addressing the boys’ wounds and stabilizing his apparent lower injuries, a back board is slid under him. We are able to extricate him from under the car and place him in the ambulance. Before the ‘bus’ leaves, the look that I’ve seen all too often before, is communicated to me with a glance from the medic. This don’t look good. I knew when I touched his face.

After the ambulance leaves, my partner has already started the paperwork involved. Obtaining information from the driver. Who is also going to the hospital; the guy understandably is a wreck. A second unit has been dispatched to help with the crowd who begins to turn ugly towards the driver.

The boy’s older brother, all of 13 is on the scene. Someone went to the house and only his older brother was home. Witnesses are interviewed and information is gathered as to the cause. Just kids playing around chasing each other, and one darts into the street laughing at his friends.

The brother tells us his mother is at her sister’s house and he doesn’t know the phone number. He does know the address and another unit is dispatched to inform her of the news a mother never is ready to hear. She’s transported to the hospital.

**‘West Xray 6…..Go ahead West Xray 6……West Xray 6, we’re clear that accident scene, in route to the ER to obtain more information and status’……**

I’m no longer in the mood for a lemon ice right now………