

The Debrief Marcus and Brent

JON BECKER: My name is Jon Becker. For the past 4 decades, I've dedicated my life to protecting tactical operators. During this time, I've worked with many of the world's top law enforcement and military units. As a result, I've had the privilege of working with the amazing leaders who take teams in the world's most dangerous situations.

The goal of this Podcast is to share their stories in hopes of making us all better leaders, better thinkers, and better people. Welcome to The Debrief.

JON: My guest today are the hosts of the very successful California Association of Tactical Officers Podcast, Brent Stratton and Marcus Sprague. Brent is the assistant chief at a Southern California agency and the president of CATO. Marcus is the vice president of CATO and a lieutenant at a Northern California agency. Guys, thank you for joining me today.

MARCUS: Thanks for having us, Jon.

BRENT: Thanks for allowing us to be here, Jon.

JON: Why don't we start with just kind of your personal stories. Marcus, why don't you lead us off with your personal story, how you became involved in CATO, and your background.

MARCUS: So, I worked with one agency my whole career in Northern California, by under 200 officers. And to find myself about mid-pack on our SWAT team and was promoted to sergeant. And due to some other issues in the agency, I found myself in charge of SWAT. And I didn't really understand why we did a lot of the things we did. And felt the burden of leadership knowing that, if I didn't understand some of these tactical problems, I could make a bad decision, and someone can get hurt. So, someone mentioned to me, I should reach out and learn about tactical science. So, I jumped on the Field Command website, left my email account. A couple of months later, I received a phone call in my personal phone from Tim Anderson inviting me to attend the course. I attended the course, had to take my own time. Sid, Tim, and Odie were, for whatever reason, liked me. They kept giving me opportunities.

So, I read every book they suggested. Every chance they said, "Do you want to come see this, or do this?" "Be a part of CATO?" I did. And quite honestly, I was embarrassed at some of the principles that I didn't understand until that late in my career. So, that's pretty much how I found myself here today to continue that, because I think there are a lot of people like me that are trying to find those answers. And our agencies and the

state don't have the time or resources to teach all of that. And so, I just kept saying, yes, those guys really changed my life and taught me a lot of stuff. And my goal is just to kind of continue their work with CATO.

JON: I love that. Brent, what about you?

BRENT: A real similar story, actually. Working at the department I've worked in, real early on in my career, I was fortunate enough to get picked up on the SWAT team. But it was a collateral assignment team. I've spent time working in our gang unit, and in patrol, and promoted to detective. When I was on the team, I enjoyed the work. But mediocre at best, as a SWAT operator and as my career progressed, I'm kind of real similar to what Marcus was describing, just the way the stars were aligned within our organization, I became the only sergeant on the team. And both similarly a tremendous burden, for the team and the decision-making that needed to occur. And I felt ill-equipped and ill-prepared.

Our agency had not really done much of sending people outside of our walls for training. And so, I began really doing a lot of research into what was out there and found there were so much that I really did not know. And CATO was the answer for me. Similar to Marcus, I put myself through trainings, and reading magazines, and conferences. Just see and hear people speak, you know Sid Heal, and hear R.K. Miller, and Ken Hubbs, and speak Gene Ramirez. And I would put myself at their classes and stay afterwards and ask them questions and bother them with emails and phone calls. And they were all kind enough and gracious enough to give me information to help, really develop my thought process.

The more I got into it, the more I really started to love and really appreciate the organization, the mission regarding the organization, and what it can do for our officers throughout the state of California. When the Strategic Leadership Program was announced, I applied and was accepted. And that really started to help develop additional areas for me. I'm kind of critical thinking from a leadership perspective, and I got to be introduced to a lot of variety of other instructors including people like Mike Hillman, and Tim Anderson, and Odie Odenthal. And I'd got to be classmates with people like Marcus Sprague, and Travis Norton, and Hilby Darby, Kenny Braden... You know, people all throughout the state...just to be able to learn and understand from each other. And it really changed the path of my career. And then hearing Sid talk, his principles of leadership and tactical science principles helped me realized that these aren't just principles in a tactical environment. These are principles that translate into life, and something that help and make me a better husband, and a better father, and a better

person because the principles are the same way whether you're in a tactical situation or just trying to be a better human. So, I'm forever indebted to CATO. So, when the transition started to occur, and some of our heroes were stepping out of the organization, I really took the opportunity.

Even though I didn't feel I was the best person to be able to do anything, because we're the only people willing to do it along with Marcus, was to kind of help move the organization forward and volunteer to help lead CATO. And we feel a tremendous burden that we volunteer a lot of our time, kind of like a labor of love to help keep the organization alive and running and moving forward. That way we can serve officers who can go back and serve their departments better, who can then serve their communities and make their communities safer. That's the entire mission of what we do. So, it's been a great road and I'm thankful for the opportunity. And I got to mention throughout, that way I got to meet you, and learn from you and speak with you along the way. And get to develop a friendship with you, I've learned a lot from you as well. So, there's been, just led to me getting to meet a lot of really, really great people. It's been one of the absolute pleasures and highlights of my career, so far.

JON: Yeah, I think one of the things that's really interesting is, you know, CATO has basically gone through 3 generations. Right? The first generation was Ken Hubbs, kind of was a one-man show, you know. All credit to Ken, created CATO, ran it, you know, by himself for an extremely long time, and built it into a pretty robust organization. And then when Ken was ready to transition out, Sid, R.K., and Ramirez, all kind of took over and ran it until this third generation. And I think that, the discussion from the beginning about SLP was to find the next generation of leadership. And if you look at the DSLP1 class, which you named everybody in, I think it's created this third generation. And I think that the guys that were in the SLP1 or the guys that are now leading the organization, yourselves included.

BRENT: Yeah, and it's interesting because it's a different dynamic. Right? And none of us are coming from a fulltime team like Ken or Sid or Tim or these guys that have literally written the book about tactics and have done these types of things, were not the tacticians in that way that those men are. They are heroes, they've written the books and they've done those types of things. Where I really see us really focusing is being able to keep the organization alive, to grow the organization, to build the infrastructure of it, to be able to help integrate with police departments.

To be able to take the broad spectrum of things that are out there, to identify best practices, to be able to collect data, to take it to where it's a

little more articulable, a little bit more synergistic, to be able to take it and launch and move the organization forward, to serve officers based on the challenges and unique challenges that our cops out there are facing today. And to truly make it a profession, and to take the things that we're learning that comes from a variety of different mediums. And Marcus has really helped us in that regard with you know, the Podcasts and the website, and moving things along. And there's just tremendous amount of people, you know the board of directors, people that volunteer their time and effort because they care about the profession, the work that's out there, and just making cops better so that they can serve their departments and their communities better.

So, there's a definite different style of leadership than we have from our predecessors, but it's our hope that, you know, they can look at the organization and be proud of where it is and be proud of where we're going and what we're trying to push it towards.

JON: Yeah, I think you know, if you look at the way that SWAT has evolved, it really started with the bigger teams. Right? I mean your expansion squad and, it was really the '84 Olympics what drove it on the west coast and that was all the fulltime teams. And as SWAT has evolved, it's moved down to small arms, smaller agencies. There are a handful of fulltime teams. So, SWAT now really is a 90 to a 95 percent parttime team scenario. So, it seems logical that the organization would transition more into a mindset of parttime. Marcus, what do you see kind of the role of CATO being in the role of regional associations?

MARCUS: Well, there's a lot of talk out there about national policing, especially recently due to George Floyd protests and stuff like that. In America, we should have a standard that you should police- your policing should reflect the community, and the values of the community you serve. So, the things that police officers have to do in Los Angeles are only slightly different from say where I work in northern California. So, the role in our association is to bring up that standard to maintain a professionalism but have the flexibility to meet the needs of everyone's community.

And those are different. And those go all the way back to Robert Peele. So, our role is to give that information to raise the training across the state but give the flexibility through our regional REP program, that we can meet the needs of your community. And where your team is at, is each team's missions are different. If we look at historic law enforcement, there are no new problems but there's a lot of new technology. And if you look back when the new plank holders of CATO started, before Columbine, a lot of that

was “wait for SWAT to come with their equipment.” If you look now at the average equipment of police officers in the state of California wears, it’s tenfold. They carry a lot of the munitions that used to only be for SWAT. So, in some ways, the job is more complex or has more tools. And so, we need to reach out and expand those tactical principles to everyone. They’re not exclusive to spot. And so, the mission of our organization is, let’s make our SWAT teams better. Since the majority of the teams are collateral, how can we help those teams make their departments better. Because then everyone’s going to make better decisions, and the communities are going to be safer, and the officers and deputies are going to be safe.

JON: That’s a good point. I think you know, like the National Tactical Officers Association synthesizes the viewpoints of kind of the whole country. But if you look at regulation and you look at litigation, it tends to happen in state court and be state-driven. So, it makes sense that the interest of California would vary from the interest of Arizona. Apart from the cultural differences between California and Texas, there are legal differences between the 2 states. And I know later we will talk a little about where of the state has gone with legislation. But why don’t we start with kind of talking about what you see as the hot topics in California. I know from previous conversations we’ve talked about kind of a lack of a defined standard for tactical teams. Brent, you want to riff on that a little bit?

BRENT: Yeah, I was fortunate to get to be a part of the second iteration of the California POST, SWAT’s standards and regulations and recommendations on there. So, helping to be able to kind of shape definitions of SWAT teams and being able to make recommendations for agencies. In the hopes that each agency will take these recommendations and then figure out how to be able to apply them for their specific department and their specific community, because you’ve talked about some of the differences that you see across the country. Well, you see a tremendous amount of differences even throughout the state of California. And that’s where I think that there’s tremendous amount of value in- of the things we try to do is make sure that our board that are instructors are reflective of really going across the expanse in the state of California. We have from the top of the state all the way down to the bottom. We have small agencies represented, midsized agencies, large agencies, collateral simultaneous fulltime teams, regional teams that are there. Because everybody’s facing kind of a unique situation, kind of wherever they are, being able to take that information and be able to push it out. So, it’s very difficult to have kind of a one-size-fits-all role and regulations. So, what we do have are some of those standards, and you break up the standards down to variety of different areas. It’s our hope that

teams are able to take those standards and be able to see and identify what the baselines of recommendations are, and then be able to apply them.

JON: Yeah, it's an interesting problem. Because you know, if you look at LAPD, LA sheriffs, you know you're talking about ten million-men agencies that has sixty-men fulltime SWAT teams. That's a very different thing than a thirty or forty-men agency in the middle of you know, no where in California. But still we're faced with the same problems. The frequency varies based on agency size. Obviously, there are more problems in the city of Los Angeles than there are in small northern California agencies. But the problems that present themselves are the same. So, Marcus, what are your thoughts on how we are, you know. How can we play a role on defining those standards and helping teams to understand what constitutes mission readiness?

MARCUS: So, you bring up a great point. The community I serve doesn't really, I wouldn't use the word care, but it doesn't recognize that I don't have 270 missions a year, like LAPD or LASD. When that tactical problem comes to our community, I'm the one that signed up to solve it. So, we have train to that level that we could meet that. And so, part of what CATO brings to the table is, we're going to learn from the experiences of everyone across the state and bring that to you. And one of the biggest values I've thought for me, and my career was, I had the opportunity to meet the plank holders of SWAT for our country. And they're older. And our generation will probably be the last people to get to sit down and learn. But I could call in to CATO, I can call someone in LAPD or LASD, or San Diego, or Sacramento. And when you have this problem, what are you doing? How does that work? And so, that's kind of how Ken started. How do we share information? How do we share these lessons learned? And it's something our professions struggles with. And a lot of time we kind of hide under the blanket of liability, well you know it's a litigation, we really can't tell. And there's some legal arguments for that. And there's also some organizational ego litigation to that.

And so, we're really working on, how can we appropriately share information right now, so that you can learn from this problem and keys that comes to your house. A great example is our after-action report program. We send CATO representatives around the country and the world to be on the ground and go, "How do you solve this problem?" So, we can come back and go, "Hey, here's a very unique low-frequency high-risk event. And here's the lesson you need to learn."

BRENT: Yeah, I think we do a really good job throughout our profession, often times of being able to explain what happened especially in critical

incidents. And often times you'll find this was legal, it was reasonable, it was necessary. But what we don't see a whole lot, you see it in more tactical teams than you do in other areas of the profession is being able to critically look at something and identify: "Here's what we did, and what we did was within policy, was within the confines of the law, but we could've done better if we'd have done this." And what you see is you see a lot of opposition from it. I'm in law enforcement all the time, I'm being second guessed. I'm being Monday morning quarterback, yes. It's no different, we're trying to get better. It's no different than playing football, you're going to watch the game film the next week to be able to identify where you had problems and then you try to work on that and train to it, so that way you get better the next Friday night.

So, we're playing baseball growing up, filming your swing, and your hands they're too high, they're too low, they're inside, you're too far in your front foot, you're too far in you back foot. And being able to work on and getting better at that. With some of the technologies and things that we have now, with body-worn camera, these are the type of things we should be doing. It's still ok to be able to go in and defend ourselves criminally, legally, ethically, as to what we did. But also, as to being open to identifying areas where we can improve, and the building in the ability to be able to go in and improve. And then the humility to share that information with others. And that's difficult to do to step in and go, "Hey, we could've done better here. Or this is what we did here." If people ask you a question, "Oh, why didn't you do that?" And when you sit here and say it like that, it's really, I really wish I would've done that, I didn't think of that at the time, I should've done that.

I'm really getting to where we can learn from others. And thankfully some of the things that we see, and some of the things the bigger more experienced teams do share that with those of us who can do collateral assignments. Teams or smaller teams that don't have the amount of reps, that don't have the amount of operations to help and be able to maintain that proficiency. Like Marcus said, the people that we serve in our community, they don't care that we don't have the same level of tools, training, equipment, personnel that the bigger agencies have. We still have the same responsibility to be able to solve these problems and being able to help identify and develop critical and independent thinkers. To be able to do that is really the only way we're going to have to solve these things as a profession.

JON: Yeah, it's interesting. When we started our lecture series, somebody asked me why do you do, "What's the point of doing these lectures." So, the first person to pick up a rattlesnake, learned a really valuable lesson about rattlesnakes. They bite and it hurts really bad, and it can kill you. If he didn't tell anybody, the second person who picked up a rattlesnake learned the same lesson. As did everybody after him. However, if he went back and said, "Hey, that thing with a rattle on the tail, don't ever touch one." Theoretically, nobody ever got bit by a rattlesnake again. And you know, it's very easy when you have a bad operation, when you have something go sideways to want to not share that information. The problem is, that's where the value is. It went perfect, is not valuable. This is how it went sideways.

One of the questions I ask people when we're thinking of using to present our lecture series is, what went wrong in your operation? And if they say nothing, we're done talking. If they go, "Oh my God, how long do you have? I've got a list." That's our guy. And I think that one of the services that CATO provides to the community that is easy to overlook, is the aggregation of those lessons. And because CATO sits in a position where you have a variety of different regional reps reporting in, one guy finds a rattlesnake, one guy finds a king snake, one guy finds a gopher snake. And pretty soon CATO's in a position to say, "Hey, if it's got a rattle, don't touch it. If it's this color, it's safe." And I think that not everybody has to go out and get bit by a rattlesnake. So, one of the things that strikes me is that modern law enforcement, there is no mechanism for capturing lessons learned. There is no mechanism for ensuring expertise. How do you see CATO affecting that?

MARCUS: So, I think, part of that is the ruler. Once the ruler that we're using, we all intellectually acknowledge that police officers and deputies can do the right thing and have a bad outcome. We say that, but we don't mean it. So often we measure success by the outcome. And so, I think it starts with the principle-based decisions. So, recognizing that I can demonstrate to you all the things I did as a leader to move all my chess pieces around the board, to bring about the safest and most peaceful resolution possible. And so, it starts with the right ruler. For CATO, it's teaching those principles at every level. And then bringing not just to debrief you, because everyone likes stories, I love stories. But if you're going to hear the debrief, you're going to have to know what the debrief's about. We struggle a lot in our profession. Right now, this happens every 5 to 7 years. I got a lot of emails this week on my executive told me not to write an SOP manual, a standard operating procedures manual. It's an outright after-action reports, because those are the sticks that our adversaries use to beat us with. So basically,

identifying our mistakes. And I think we're looking at it wrong. I think it's identifying those mistakes, documenting them. And then telling the public, here's what we're doing to fix them. And I think if we had done a better job as a profession to that, we wouldn't see some of the legislation we see today.

So going back to expertise, it's starting earlier in our careers teaching these principle base decisions. So, we don't jam the wrong solution into the wrong problem. And if you look across the country when you see a travesty, you can usually trace it back to some people not understanding the problem for what it really was. So, they went back to their most comfortable procedure and tried it. And sometimes they understand that and make adjustments, but a lot of times they don't. And I was one of those people. I would follow the procedures and did them really well, but I wouldn't understand the procedures at play. So, if I was ever faced with something I'd never seen before, I didn't know how to start.

BRENT: Kind of steal from one of our colleague and friend, Travis Norton. One of the things he's pointed out and talked about in our profession, we have trained a lot about how to do something, but not a lot of why to do something. So, I would think when you talk a little bit about some of the trailblazers there trying to figure out why there was no manual, and how to do things and kind of move forward from there. Then the next generation of law enforcement, I think we've done a pretty good job of taking some of that information and being able to move it forward. That's the basis of what CATO is and other organizations, training organizations. And each department have a training department, and there's post regulations and things that we want to be able to train to. But we're just starting to get back to the point of understanding why we are doing things instead of just how we do things. So, being able to test competency is your how to do something, but why and what are we trying to accomplish. I think there's some leadership failures that have occurred as well. And kind of getting back to the principles of end state of being to identify. What is the end state? What are you wanting? What are we wanting to be? What does success look like? Are we defining these type things on the front? If we're clear of what the problem is, are we clear of what we want to see? Then we can start to develop- You know, that's kind of getting to your why. Then we can start to develop how we're going to get to that point and be able to do that. I think that's one of the biggest areas we've seen some significant issues in our profession. And I think that's true at a local state or a national level. And so, we'll get into that principal-based decision-making is really where we want to be and moving that forward throughout the entirety of

tactics. And we touched on a little bit earlier too. We don't believe our organization, well it's generally, the bread and butter's been for tactical teams. We believe that tactics belong to everyone, and that it's not just for tactical teams, but it's for investigators, for traffic officers, for patrol officers, for canine units, for EOD, it's for negotiators, for intact dispatchers. Being able to understand what tools that we need. Take the set of circumstances that you have, what are your principles, where do you want to get to, and then be able to move forward from there. And that's really where we feel driven to be able to help provide that for officers.

JON: It's an interesting point because the how is extremely important for a technique. It becomes less important as you move to a tactic to an operation to a strategy. As you're moving up the spectrum, the why becomes more and more important. The problem is that the why is not testable, and the how is. So, we can say, "Marcus, go in the range, fire this many rounds. You have to hit this percentage." And we can inspect that and say, "Ok Marcus has X shooting proficiency." What we can't measure is, does Marcus know when he should or should not.

BRENT: Right. And you're not going to know those types of things until you're able to speak with people and be able to communicate. Often times where do we find these types of things. We find failures in criminal interviews, we find failures in civil litigation, where we have people who are unable to articulate why we are doing these types of things. So, you're a hundred percent right that these are very difficult assessments and circumstances to be able to quantify to put in some sort of a testing-scoring matrix or things like that. So, I would definitely encourage law enforcement leaders. You've really got to get out and be able to communicate yourself. You got to make sure you yourself can communicate. If you can't, make sure you're going out and finding as much information that you can to where you're learning. And you're costly learning, you're costly evolving to help to be able to make sure you have the articulation yourself. And then find ways that you're doing that within your organization.

Testing people and be able to have these types of conversations, and have people articulate these types of things. And ask why we're doing these things. And ask them to justify it to be able to do these things. You don't want to find out that somebody doesn't know why they're doing something when their being deposes civilly. You don't want to find out they don't know why they're doing something when they should be articulating themselves in their criminal interview. We need to find these things out in training then

build back kind of, into our training component as well. So, it is quite difficult to be able to quantify what some of these certain circumstances are.

MARCUS: But there are organizations that have- If you look to the military model, that's not very popular in the law enforcement. Say we take things from the military right now. But we're at a disadvantage. So, when you sign up for the military, they kind of own you. And they'll say, "We're going to teach you these principles. You will read 6 books before you show up. And we're going to have you for a month." We take those same principles in law enforcement. And we say, "We're going to give you an 8-hour class. Now we can't make you read anything ahead of time because we have to pay you." And then we measure that success by, "You were here for 8 hours, you will handle this." And then we're off. And we all have limited resources. We all need to meet the demands of minimum training mandates. And those have almost doubled, if not tripled in the last 5 years. So, everyone's even struggling with meeting all these demands. So, if you're going to measure true decision-making at an operator level, at an entry level sergeant's position or lieutenant, you're going to have to take the time to do the exercises. Do the practical exercises, do the written tests, do the tabletop exercises, so we can measure how you think and teach you that ruler, which I would argue 99 percent of the time, law enforcement makes the right call.

JON: Yeah, for sure.

MARCUS: We do a horrible job at articulating why that was the right call. And that's kind of one of the things we're passionate about CATO is, "Hey, we think you're doing the right thing." When it comes to writing it down or explaining it, we got to do a little bit better.

JON: Well unconstitutionally, I mean if you think about it, law enforcement is depriving people of their constitutional rights. By definition, that is what law enforcement is. Right? It's seizing people, it's charging them with crimes, it's things that are specifically within the scope of the Fourth Amendment. And what separates a lawful action from an unlawful action, is being able to articulate why you did what you did. Because the same thing, shooting somebody could be completely constitutional or completely unconstitutional. And if you can't articulate why, it's unconstitutional. And I think that one of the places that we failed as a society in supporting law enforcement, is as you guys put, focusing the why and teaching the why. But the why takes a long time. Right? The why take a long time to learn different paradigms and learn from other people's experiences. One of the things that CATO's doing right now that I absolutely adore, we're going to do

an entire Podcast on, is your decision-making exercise. Can you just kind of give us a brief overview of how the DMEs work and why that started?

MARCUS: So, everyone likes stories. But there's principles that we can demonstrate in those stories that will help you remember. So, there's a lot of science of how we remember things. And you remember the emotion. And so, our goal here is to give you a tactical problem that's real and break it down into a chronological order with trigger points. So, here's what you have and you're the leader on the scene. What would you do? And we discuss it. Then we go through a series of steps as that event progresses. And the goal here is to see your thought process. And while you're doing that, we have experts participating, legends participating, that will kind of question you in your thought process to help you kind of fine tune it and hone. And then when you're done, the actual law enforcement officers that were at the event will tell you then what the event was. If we're fortunate, they can show video and maps, and really break down what worked for them and what didn't work, and kind of fill in those gaps. So, what we found was, it helps you make decisions, it gives you something to put in your rolodex.

So, as you see a problem, you don't start from scratch, you start from "this is similar to." But we also reinforce the principal part of making those decisions. And then we tell you what really happened. So, you get multiple benefits out of this one thing. And you're doing it with officers from around the state with a variety of experience. So, by the time you're done, you have a real-life scenario, it's not a made-up thing. You've learned what worked for them. You've articulated your decision-making process, and you've learned from other people's decision-making process, all overseen with really thousands of missions under their belt. And so, it's very hard to quantify based upon your experience because it depends on who you are what you came with. But in the end, you get- You can go back to your shop, give them the same scenario, give them the same talking points, and build up your people. Like, what would we do if that happened in our town with the resources that we have?

JON: Yeah, it's so much of tactical decision-making as paradigm based. Right? It's looking at a situation and saying, "Ok, this is like." And then being able to draw influence. And I think one of the things that are challenging about it is if you go back to the snake analogy, we can't measure how many people didn't get bit by a rattlesnake because they knew you shouldn't pick up a rattlesnake. We can only measure the ones that do get bit by the snake. And so that is you know, what I really like about the direction CATO is going right now, is that it is much leaner. You guys are

leading in a much more pro-active, you know, DMEs, restructuring classes, and focusing on tactical leadership, because most of the problems actually started at leadership level. They don't start at tactical-

MARCUS: People can execute, like the practical application, the skills, they're very good at training. And we have the time and the budgets to at least meet minimum qualifications for that. But it's much harder to develop thinkers too. And the older I get, the more I think, it's not really what I think that's important, it's how I think. Because what I think is very context-specific, but how I think, I can apply to any situation that you throw in.

BRENT: And that's really where the decision-making exercises are coming from. And we owe a lot of different people. Again, it's a synthesis of a lot of different areas, it's a synthesis of after-actions and debriefs, and having the relationships to bring that in. A lot of guys will take lists of these things. I say they kind of keep them as hip-pockets exercise when there's downtime in training with their teams. They're pulling them out, and they're kind of just going through some of those trainings that are there. And this is something we are forced through with COVID when we couldn't train, we couldn't get people together, we couldn't be able to provide any of the information we needed to be able to provide.

This turned out to be something where, Toby and Josh were studying about working on his doctorate on how people learn, and education, and studying these types of things. And we're thankful that he asked if he could study CATO and some of our other training components that we have. And they took some of these compilations of all these ideas and started pushing it out on Zoom. And then we started having more teams that were sitting in there. I know I spoke to one commander in particular who said he was talking through what occurred. And then was very difficult the circumstances, where he used every tool at his disposal in a very difficult of circumstances. And it created a divide within the team, from operators, from supervisors, from commanders about how things went in the decision-making that was there. He's been very torn over his decision-making. You know, not want to just accept that because it ended well that, that things went well. And he said for Sid Heal to be there and to critique it. And then to say, "I might've done this instead of that." But all in all, your decision-making was sound based on these principles that was here. And what you did was reasonable, I think what you did was necessary, I think what you did was right. It provided me with a ton of peace on top of that. So yeah, people that are learning along the way, you have people that

are willing to be critiqued, you're taking it and moving it forward. I was really proud of the organization, and to be able to, especially during a difficult time, and figure out, how can we take this information and push it out. And it's really- And it's catching fire and moving forward. So, I'm really proud of Toby and Josh and the work that they're doing. And for all the people that have contributed towards it.

MARCUS: And it brings up a great opportunity for us because historically our profession poorly provides data and research for what we do. It's very much based anecdotally. And then we'll have academics do the studies and tell us what we should do. And it's hard for them because they're looking at the data, but they don't understand the other parts of the job. And that's because we have not consistently partnered with academics to have more rigor in our research in our data but also have it addressed the right things. And so, this was one of our opportunities to partner with Josh on developing you know, a little bit more science behind how he teach and have a better more efficient and economical approach to giving it a product that these folks can use right away.

BRENT: Yeah, we have the ability to add to context to the data collection and the things that are going on academically to help to be able to get to where we generally not wanted to work towards that. We really want to push the organization towards being open to these types of things. We think that is what's going to lead us towards some of the answers. We think that it's very easy to say, well there's these huge political or philosophical differences and divides, and politicians are pushing this that or the other on us. And maybe that's true, maybe it's not. I don't know any of these politicians personally to know where they are, but we have the laws that we have here. And I think a big portion of it is not because of operational failures, I think it's because it's our inability to be able to capture data, to be able to tell our story, to be able to articulate it and move these things in that matter.

So, if we want to be able to get to where we're more closely aligned with, you know, those who we report to the public, those who have the authority over us, the politicians; then we've got to do a better job of being able to capture this. And we really see CATO's being in a unique position to be a clearinghouse to capture that information: 1) But we have to develop a skill of educational component, then to be able to tell our story and put context to it and be able to push it out. Because generally, it's the joke that we all say you know, "No comment" I think. Or we capture things anecdotally. We've got to get better at being able to tell our story and what occurred.

And I'm really proud that we're seeing law enforcement moving in that direction. And we're really happy that CATO's playing a role in that.

JON: Yeah, I think historically there's been a "circle the wagon" mindset that everybody is attacking us so, we "circle the wagon" to protect ourselves. And unfortunately, what ends up happening is law enforcement begins to fall behind. So, the organized opposition that wants to take away tools and limit power and everything else, are out collecting data. And they're collecting every bit of negative data and they're aggregating it, and they're using academics to build very clear articulable story. And law enforcement is frequently blindsided by that attack because there hasn't been engagement with the opposition. You know, you look at people that are critical in law enforcement, and frequently in conversations you'll hear, "Well now, I'm not going to read that book. That guy is anti-cop." The problem is, if you read those books, you learn how the opposition thinks.

Recently, there's been a series of books and articles that have come out, and the most popular being the Radley Balko book, *The Rise of the Warrior Cop*. I disagree with probably- I agree with probably 95 percent of what was said in that book. The constitution, the discussion of constitutional life. Five percent I very strongly disagree with. The problem is, is if we focus on the 5 percent, the 95 percent is how they sell the 5 percent. And you know, it's a good Segway to talk about kind of what's happening in California from a legislation standpoint because that book combined with the ACLU report have funded a speight of legislation, probably starting with AB392 that is certainly redefining the competitive law enforcement environment. Let's start with AB392. What are your thoughts?

BRENT: Kind of get back to what you're talking about too, even before we get to that direction. I a hundred percent agree. And you're seeing these books that are coming out, you see the legislation that's coming out. And if it's out there, I'm not going to say it's not out there. But if it's out there, I am unaware of people who are riding kind of the flip side of the coin.

We're able to say, "No, that's not what's happening." This is what's going on here, this is what we have, this is the context to that. This is what we're trying to accomplish. These are the standards that are here. This what our accountability looks like. This is what our transparency is. This is data that we're trying to capture to put the data that you have in proper context to be able to tell the fullness of that story. And there's a major gap in law enforcement. And again, I'll say that little bit ignorantly, and maybe there are those things that are out there. But if so, we're not seeing it. And we're just now getting to the point where we're starting to be open to it, and

understanding it, and building the infrastructure to be able to have that conversation to be able to put that type of information truly in context. And if you care about this profession, you care about what you do. And I think the extreme majority of the people that are in this profession do, that this job is not just something that they choose to do.

It's a little bit about who they are in the service and the things that they have in their heart that's naturally a part of who they are. Then we've got to get to the point where you're not just a tactician who understands what tool to use, that you're not just a tactician who understands why you're doing these types of things; that you can take it and contextualize it, and be able to articulate it, and speak in a manner to be in the same language as those who are speaking the language to us. That's coming off as quite worn so- So yeah, AB392, Senate Bill 48, changes to sections of Penal Code 835, and the A section, the militarization on Assembly Bill 481. There's a ton of them that are coming out, and these things have been building for the last several years, because we've not done a good job of being able to put these types of things in context.

JON: Yeah, to counter the narrative. The example I always use is like a plane crash. Right? People are afraid of planes, they're afraid of sharks, you're more likely to die driving to work. But of the sensationalism of a story of a plane crash or a shark bite, it draws attention, everybody worries about it, everybody focuses on it, and ignores the real risk. And there are certain instances of law enforcement going back to Rodney King that have driven this anti-law enforcement narrative, and there hasn't been organized counter. There's a story of Albert Einstein that he was teaching a class, and he wrote 10 problems on the board. And they were simple arithmetic problems, 10 plus 10 is 20, kind of thing. And he made the last one wrong. And somebody raised their hand and said, "Mr. Einstein." Laughing, "You're supposed to be a genius. You got the last wrong." He said, "There's a valuable lesson here. I did this for a reason. I got every other problem before that right; you don't remember any of that.

"All you remember is the one I got wrong." And the problem here for law enforcement is, there is no one telling the story. Right? There is no one out saying, look at all these times, look at the recent LAPD hostage rescue. You know that lady was going to die if they didn't intervene flawlessly. That's not the story we hear. That was a 30 second news story. But you know, every bad outcome is weeks of news. So, it strikes me that the role that CATO was playing of trying to be a clearinghouse provide that information goes a long way to protecting the profession.

BRENT: Sure, and the fact that it's news in it and itself, and my estimation shows how infrequently that occurs. You know so, again and it's hard to capture and articulate the absence of problems, the absence of depth, the absence of force. The absence of all those types of things is not and cannot be sensationalized. You could make the argument that it's actually pretty boring. So, when you have these types of things that occur and that's becoming sensational, yeah, we need to address that. We need to fix those things. So, if we have failures, of course, we need to own it and move on. And sometimes it gets complicated by the economics behind what happened whenever you admit to doing something wrong civilly. But it's big business. But being able to get to the point where you can articulate those types of things, that's really where, I think, we need to be one out there yet.

JON: I recently interviewed Lee McMillion from LAPD SWAT. And one of the statistics that Lee brought with him was in their last 1200 operations, they've used force of any kind in 8 percent of the operations. That includes just twist-lock on a wrist. In 8 percent of their operations, they've used deadly force one and a half percent of a time.

BRENT: Right, and you think about that. Right? There's a common thought process at one point that talked about SWAT being an automatic escalation force. When you bring the SWAT team out, you're escalating force. Actually, I have a different opinion. I think the utilization of SWAT is by its very definition, de-escalation. You're bringing additional resources. You're creating time, you're creating training, you're creating distance, you're bringing in negotiation teams to work on communication. You're bringing in drones or robots to help facilitate communication to open up. You're trying to utilize time to be able to get to where it is that you want to be, to help try to minimize the risk to the suspect, to minimize the risk to the public, to the officers, to help facilitate a peaceful solution and resolution to it. You're bringing less lethal tools, you're bringing 40-millimeter launchers, you're bringing, you're bringing tasers, you're bringing all these things.

And Marcus- And especially these are things that patrol officers are running with right now thankfully, in many departments as well. But you're bringing a whole array of tools to help facilitate a peaceful resolution ideally. So, that's the very definition of what we're trying to do in utilizing tactics and to be able to achieve those positive outcomes.

JON: Yeah, it's funny that. I recently had Mike Hillman on the Podcast. And one of the things Mike said is, "People tend to focus on the weapons, special weapons and tactics. And it's really not the weapons that solves the

problems, it's the tactics. It's the negotiation, it's slowing the entire event down, you know, creating less opportunity for the suspect who thinks he's going to win. It's those types of things that result in a better outcome for both the suspect and the public.

MARCUS: When you're talking about the science behind the tactics- So that's the science, right? Our goal at any level is to manipulate time and train the place, that adversary at such a disadvantage, and our people at an advantage, that the disparity is so great, that they will surrender peacefully, or we will use the least amount of force necessary. And that's the art, the arts and the application of that. And that's what we're teaching at CATO, a version of that and all of our classes, because that's the science behind what we do. Very rarely that a piece of equipment overcome and win. It can take away suspects' center of gravity or a critical vulnerability, but it's how you manipulate all those pieces.

JON: Yeah, it's funny. It brings back when I first started my career. Sid Heal was very influential in my career and has been a friend now for 30 some odd years. But 2 things that he said very early on in my career has stuck with me. One is that good tactics can often overcome the challenge of bad equipment. The converse is not true. And the other is that the objective of any type of tactical operation is to put the suspect in a situation where surrender is likely, and resistance is futile. And the more we make the suspect understand that the more likely you'll have a peaceful resolution.

BRENT: And it's funny that it seems to me, that your job becomes to minimize the effects to bad tactics. And when they get utilized, because if the equipment isn't going to overcome that, then let's work on having good equipment. Because there's going to be time when bad decisions or bad things are just going to happen to be able to minimize that and provide for that safety. So, it's interesting hearing you say that and seeing how you fit into that new equation.

JON: Yeah, it's- There has always been a tension between what the community has taught me and my job. And my goal with work has always been to vector my career towards providing tools that protect operators. And protecting operators might mean putting in a drone or a robot instead of putting in a person. Protecting operators might also be doing a lecture series, doing a Podcast, trying to create an opportunity where the people that we encounter every day that are amazing and knowledgeable. Like you guys have a broader platform to reach other people. And a lot of my personal job as CEO, is introducing people. It's saying, "Oh you guys have this problem, you should meet this guy." And very early on, Sid and Mike,

and the guys that really brought me up, taught me that information is not something you own, it's something you steward. And if you have information, you share it. No matter what. I remember Sid teaching a flashbang class when I was 19 or 20 years old. And a guy walked up and said, "Hey sir, can I have your slides?" This was back when they were overhead slides. And Sid said, "Yeah, absolutely." So, one of the things that I think you guys that you're doing that is really interesting, is this CATO Podcast. Can you kind of tell me a little bit more about the Podcast?

MARCUS: So, the Podcast started at a conference, a CATO conference. And we all met, Brent and I met, several of us met through this strategic leadership program of CATO. And so, we developed a pretty good bond with that group of students. And one of our mentors Tim Anderson got diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. And we all were kind of talking about it because you don't survive that. And we're talking about the lessons that Tim had taught us. And we'd all taken notes, but we felt like it didn't do us justice. So, we're trying to figure out, how do we capture the wisdom that a guy who was a colonel in the Marine Corps and an LAPD Metro sergeant, all the things he taught us. So, we're all kind of figuring that out. I volunteered to just go on down to LA and record my conversations with him. Because I respect and love all 3 of those guys for everything, they did for me. But for whatever reason, Tim and I had hit it off. So, I volunteered to go to LA and record my conversations with Tim, figuring at best we'll have these recordings, we'll figure out what to do later.

Now I'm not going to lie, there was some whiskey involved with a lot of good ideas. And someone mentioned that that should be a Podcast. So, next thing you know I did a Podcast. And my first episode was interviewing Tim. We hadn't seen each other for several months. And we met in San Diego during a team leader course. It was the first time I saw Tim in a wheelchair. He couldn't walk anymore. He needed help breathing. Using his hands, he can steer the cart. And so, the hotel was great, gave us a place. We did our first Podcast; it was just lesson-learned from Anderson. And if you listen to our Podcast, you can't even tell, because- and that's the devastating part of that disease. But we realized after that, that not a lot of these folks are going to be around forever. And the cool thing about this Strategic Leadership program is, there's a lot of leadership programs out there. And there's several that POST recommends, and that are the staples of law enforcement. So, my argument with my executives attending was, they're great, I've read the books. I'm sure the class is great. But I got to meet the people that wrote the books about.

I got to meet Mike Hillman, I got to meet John Coleman. I can call Jackie Uhle and ask Jackie Uhle, "What LAS did he do?" I can ask Lee, "Hey Lee, how do you guys do this?" I can learn from these people. And so, Tim would challenge me, every session he would say, "What have you learned, what have you learned?" And at the end of SLP, I sat down, and he said, "Tell me, give me your top of the 18 things that you learned from this course." And one of them was, your life never goes in a linear path. So, invest in yourself, invest in others, and follow it. And so, here I was doing Podcast for Tim, and it just kind of spiraled after that. And Brent and I, quite honestly, we're selfish. We do these Podcast so that we can learn, the questions that we have. And we just hope that there's other people listening that would find those lessons valuable.

BRENT: Yeah, when you're Sid- I don't know who Sid learned from. You know, but he writes these books. I feel like he has the answers. When you sit in the class and you're listening to somebody, and he has the answers. But for us, I know that we're completely dedicated to constantly learning, and evolving, and trying to get better, and never feeling you've reached a rank or a level, or a point in your career where you have these stuff figured out. At least, I know I don't. I'm certain I speak for Marcus in that, we don't. And we build in the time to do these things so that we can ask the stupid questions that we want to know. And it amazes me that anybody listens to this thing because sometimes like, it's probably common sense for everybody to listen, "Yeah, you're an idiot. Why are you asking these types of questions? We all know that." But we get to learn and talk to some of the best people, some of the best brightest minds, some of the most inspiring people. And it's just another medium to be able to get information out.

So, we owe a lot to Marcus and his idea for bringing that forward to us and other way to do it. Because we'd always only relied on the magazines. Being able to write articles in a magazine, that was great. A lot of people really liked it, especially when we stopped doing it on here. It's like, "Man, I love to get those magazines every couple times a year. And being able to have it and read through it." But based on some of the financial challenges we had, just different issues we had in the organization, we decided to transition to a digital newsletter. And then be able to have the Podcast, another way for people to be able to listen, just another way to be able to communicate. So, he deserves a lot of credit to be able to move forward. And just in the year or two, I've been serving as his wingman on that. I know that it's opened my mind exponentially, helped teach me. I learned something every time. So, we'll call each other usually, and like, "Hey, I

happen to get an email," or, "Hey, somebody happen to say something kind about the Podcast, that they learned this from it."

I immediately call him, and he does the same thing because obviously, we volunteer our time to do this stuff. You listen to it; we don't have all the equipment that goes into it. You know, it's not a money-making thing. It's none of those things. So, when somebody actually gets some use out of it, it really makes it worthwhile because we're sitting in there trying to keep the door shut. Kids are playing in the background. So, it's usually after work and you kind of smoked already anyways, and just trying to do something that's useful and beneficial for people.

MARCUS: It's like a lot of things in this profession. You do exist the right thing to do. You hope somebody gets value out of it. And your family thinks you're screwing off in the other room. And that's partially true also.

BRENT: That's what my wife says, "Oh, you're just hanging out with your buddy over there talking on the phone. Talking about whatever you guys talks about." Yeah-

JON: It can be fun and productive. If I've learned anything in my career, is I can have fun and still do productive stuff. I think you've undersold the Podcast a lot. I mean, I know that it's got an international following now. I think that one of the things that you guys, you know by designer, by luck, created was an environment where you know, magazines are great, but not everybody will sit down and write a magazine article; and edit it, and submit it, and go through all that. And not everybody will sit and take the time and read a magazine article. And I think as CATO has evolved, you moved into a digital platform, you moved into a means of reaching this generation of officer. But also, it gives you the ability to sit down with Tim who is dying with ALS. And capture hours of the wisdom that we all knew we would lose. Tim is forgotten more than most people will ever know. And so, I really loved the fact that that was where you started the Podcast.

Because it was an ineditibility and what has driven this Podcast is that same ineditibility. Because I was brought up by those guys. And as they're getting older, and they're getting health challenges, and they're dying, we're losing that first generation of information.

BRENT: Is there a week that goes by at your shop, where you don't quote something that Tim Anderson had taught you? There's not a week that goes by that I will not use one of the phrases taught, in any conversation I have with anybody at my shop from different levels of the organization. The principles he had said and the most frequent one that I use, "Round peg,

round hole. Square peg, square hole.” He goes, “You learned it in kindergarten, still appropriate in law enforcement. About how you apply people into an organization, and how you can select and evaluate, and move them forward in training and dedication.” It was just the things that we learned from him had been tremendous. But when you talk about lessons-learned from that. A life’s lessons for me is from- I would love to tell you, there’s this grand strategic plan. And maybe Marcus had in his mind, it wasn’t clear to me that we’re going through this, and that it was going to create all this opportunity for us. I think you just start walking through one door and other doors open.

I kind of like to take some of those that initiative that leads to other opportunities which has been a very valuable lesson that I learned from you and from the Podcast in the other areas of my life taking those steps and then moving forward. And then that brings other things right that’s kind of my estimation that’s a life well-lived. The series of good decisions made over and over again. Incrementally and very rarely do you live back and take that, there was this one thing that happened, and everything went right. And there’s that one thing that everything went wrong. It’s usually a series of small bad decisions end up something bad. A series of good decisions, there’s some things that are going to end up good. And so, it’s really been a pretty cool road to get to walk down and- Excited to see where it takes us.

JON: Yeah, talk to me about where CATO is going. What’s coming up? What’s on the horizon?

MARCUS: So, we survived COVID and being shut down. We were able to continue some of our flagship courses. Right now, we are developing our online content, Decision-making Exercises. And really, we could’ve thrown those out a lot sooner. It’s easy to tell a story and tell people what went right and what went wrong. But we want to make it so that we can replicate it. So that, it’s just not you attending it.

But now we can give your product, that you can go back your agency and do that hip-pocket exercise with your group. And a lot of them are SWAT problems but a lot of them aren’t, because the principles apply to everyone. So, we’re working forward on that. We really see our mission is continuing on Ken and Sid’s work. And that is improving on the professionalism of the organization, improving law enforcement officers as a whole ability to solve tactical problems. So, you know, this last conference was back in 2019 now. But we had probation officers there. We had different crime-suppression teams there. We had a variety of law enforcement officers from around the

state, and the world attend. Because we hope that they're seeing the value in the leadership track learning this leadership lessons. Listening to people from all around the world talking about their tactical problems. What worked and what didn't work for them. So, we really feel I guess, a burden to, how can we better prepare everybody that has dedicated their profession, their career to serving their communities; so that they can make really good decisions and can explain those decisions.

Defend themselves to their executives, to their subordinates, prepare their subordinates into the community. And so, we had a demonstration response class. And it was really because we have identified these principles that a lot of us got wrong in demonstration response. So, you'll see that rollout this year. We have their normal skills stuff. You know skills like, Non-lethal Technology, Grenadier Contagion, Team Leader Commander, those kinds of things. But really looking, how can we help the patrol officers and their advanced tactics. How can we teach tactical strategies? So, we teach, we have a 4-hour and an 8-hour block, and that's the class that Sid created with Daryl Evans. Daryl still teaches it. I from time to time, I teach it. And Post is looking at adopting a lot of those principles for frontline supervisors. And so, that's really the mission of CATO. Right? To impact the law enforcement community to prepare them to make good decisions.

BRENT: And we're not a hundred percent certain on what it's going to look like. We sat down and wrote a strategic plan a couple years ago just to see, to get us to almost about where we are in keeping the organization alive, and functional, and healthy; and thriving being able to move it forward. And just to see, we just wanted to stay in the game. And then continue to develop and bring people along. They are going to help move the organization forward with the fourth generation of CATO, whenever that's coming. And I'm certain it's not too far off. So, we have made changes within our board, within our instructors to make sure that it is a hundred percent comprised of people who are active in law enforcement.

Or we have our emeritus board which is containing of our heroes and the people that have helped mentor us, and helped developed us, and Hillman, and Odie, and Hill, and R.K., and Ken. You know, who are helping to make sure we have historical perspective, and their voice is still there and present while we're trying to move things forward. But we're always wanting to be pushing out new useful classes, like we've talked about some of the less-lethal technologies and the critical incident decision-making. And developing this type of- Anything that we can do training-wise to be useful, and beneficial for profifiers and members and going forward. So, I'm a

hundred percent certain about what it's going to look like in 3 to 5 years. But we are always trying to stay a year or 2 ahead. Some of the issues that are comprised of having people who are all active in law enforcement, is that we're all spread throughout the state.

We're all working well over 40 hours a week at our shops doing things. So then, trying to figure out how we can, at the same time, dedicate our time and volunteer our time towards CATO, and then keep another organization running; and to help serve other organizations. So, that's a definite critical vulnerability for us that it's been coming upon Marcus and I to kind of figure that. There's going to be a cost and balance. There's always going to be a little bit of friction there at figuring out where that fits timewise and being able to make those types of things kind of happen. But we know that the alternative is having a and not having that service that we can provide. And that's not an option so, we'll figure it out, we'll continue to grind to it. It looks different day to day, week to week, month to month sometimes. But the organization's here, and it's strong. It's recovering financially. And we feel like we're in a good position, that we're uniquely qualified to be able to continue to move forward and serve.

MARCUS: And one of the biggest benefits of CATO is the community. And so, we're really investing in our region REP program. And that is, men and women who volunteer to represent CATO and their area that they work in. And we really see that is a way we can make us more flexible. So, we have the standards we want to meet that are best practices throughout the state and throughout the country. But then we have to meet the needs of each community. And so, our reps will help to help us by giving us the latest information. And at the same time, in turn, they can call and say, "Hey, I'm having this problem. How do I solve it?" And if it's not us, we'll put them in contact with someone who has solved that problem before. And really short in that, especially in the last 10 years, the technology for that is available. And if there's positive things, we got out of COVID, is how I could talk to somebody in France and say, "Hey, what just happened?"

And learn I can learn those lessons right away. So, we really see that as part of the future of CATO. And that also gives us the opportunity to speak educatively to the legislature and say, "Hey, here's what's happening. Here's where we're training our people. Here's the challenges that we have. Here's why we need more funding. Or we need more training. Or we need better grants." And really see the organization as a way to represent everyone.

JON: I like that you're expanding to kind of tactically adjacent, because tomorrows SWAT operators start patrol. All tactical problems start in patrol.

And the idea that the organization is broadening, you know, it's membership to allow people who are fledgling SWAT cops. Because it's not like you start, you know they put a pen on you and all of a sudden, you're a tactical operator. Right? There's a spectrum that has to develop and an education that has to develop. I think one of the problems of the past is that we've just kind of assume, "Oh, you're going to go to SWAT school and then you're going to know everything." And realistically that education can start much younger. And so, things like the Podcast, you know things like the upcoming conference create an opportunity for people to get exposed to those more knowledgeable minds, more experienced minds. What's the best way for people to interact with CATO? Like, how can people get hold of you guys and follow Podcasts and all those kinds of things?

MARCUS: So, because we're a statewide organization, we're spread throughout the state, Brent's in central Southern California, I'm in Northern California. We meet a lot online, but we have a website that people can contact us through. We have a phone number, and we also have a region rep. So, you have somebody that speaks a similar language and has common problems that you can go to right away. And that happens often. We have had a tragedy in Northern California. And we had a Bearcat that was disabled. And within hours, everyone in the state knew and- Here's the part you need to do in order to make sure this Bearcat, that this don't happen to you. And that's kind of the power of the community. Right? Last night, you know we had a tragic aircraft crash. And within moments everyone in the state wants to know what's going on. What do we need? And so, that's what you get from CATO. You know, think about Little Liam. You know, and that's hard to not to talk about emotionally, but that was the time in law enforcement where there wasn't a lot law enforcement can do that was good. Even when they were doing good, a lot of people didn't recognize it. And so-

JON: I think we should get some context on Liam.

MARCUS: So, Liam was a deputy's son who had cancer. And he's struggling with cancer. And a great family. Someone reached out to CATO and said, "Hey, we need to help these guys. They're missing work. They're staying in hotels. There doing all this stuff you do to save your kid's life." And it was during a hard time in law enforcement. And everyone kind of felt like they didn't have a lot of control. And there was a lot of moral issues because you couldn't really impact your environment. And so, they came together and raised money for this little guy who's fighting cancer. And we all got to go down and give the family a check and give him his little vest. Which I can't

even talk about that letter. I can't read it, I had to get Brent to read it. And that's the power of the CATO community. And it wasn't just the gift for Liam and his family, which is a great family and super thankful. But the gift really was ours. The gift was our ability to do something positive for somebody, who served his country, and served his community. And proud to say Liam is doing great. I got a picture of him the other day, he has big curly hair, and he is looking forward to being able to go back to school. Still can't go quite yet. But that's the power of having that sense of community that sometimes we forget, we get busy. And we all have the same problems, you know.

Brent and I were sitting down at LAPD D Platoon. And all the guys were in there, we're sitting beside Lee. And the presenter talks about an issue with EarPro. And testing your hearing every year, and all these things happen to SWAT cops that in the end, hurt them. When we kind of looked over at Lee and we like, "Hey, do you guys do A, B, and C?" And he's like, "No. Do you guys?" And I'm like, "No. We're all the same." You know, and- I'm not the same as Lee. There's not a lot of Lee's around, but we all have the same problems. You know, we need to learn from them. And that's what's kind of cool about CATO is- I'm not going to tell you that I have a bunch of experiences, LASD or LAPD. I don't. But I can learn from their experience. And if I have something, I know I can call somebody and they're willing to help.

JON: Well, in the end, it's the community that has more experience than any individual. If I want to join CATO, how will I do that?

MARCUS: So, you can jump online, and you can sign up to be a member. As of this date, it is still the second lowest professional law enforcement association in the country, as far as your cost to join. With your membership, you know, you have access to our website, all our after-action reports. And you can get behind kind of the public, facing the wall into the website. You can jump online and throw out questions.

You can utilize the region reps. You can come to our classes. And again, just contribute to the profession. For me, people ask me sometimes why I do so much for CATO and all that. Quite honestly, my agency, no fault of their own, just cannot spend the time and the money to train me at the level I need to know. And if you're going to take a leadership position, my opinion is, it's your responsibility to go seek that out and become a student of the craft. And that's something we grew up not having to do, because we had the Mike Hillmans, and we had the John Colemans. The plank holders to solve these problems no one has ever seen before. And so, we can learn

from them. So, joining CATO, I get that opportunity. And I get that opportunity to look outside my village and see how other villages solve this problem.

JON: Yeah, for less than a cost for a pizza and a beer. I mean, membership-wise it's a ridiculously low amount of money. Guys, I really appreciate you being here. And you know, sitting down with me on The Debrief. Before we let this end, Marcus, can you give us where people can find you on the internet? And how they can get hold of CATO?

MARCUS: So, our website is catotraining.org. You can find us on social media platforms as CATO Training, c a t o training. And our Podcast is on all the normal streaming platforms as CATO Podcast, one word.

JON: Thank you so much. We'll put all that on our show notes also to make it available to everybody. Guys, I can't thank you enough for being here today.

MARCUS: Thanks for having us.

BRENT: Yeah, thanks for having us, Jon. We appreciate you and all you've helped develop and teach us as well. Thanks for letting us come hang out with you.

JON: My pleasure.