

January 13, 2006

REF: Tracy L. Baldwin
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To Whom It May Concern:

On September 24, 2005, Hurricane Rita struck the City of Orange, Texas, where I have been a Police Officer for more than 23 years. There was tremendous damage to our city from the hurricane force winds that were sustained over several hours. Homes and businesses were destroyed over most of the city. Needless to say there was no water, electricity, or phone service anywhere. As police officers, we returned to find the city in ruin along with our own homes damaged and sometimes uninhabitable adding to a feeling of gloom and despair. We were living at the station, trying to maintain order, and helping in providing basic needs to our citizens. Many agencies sent help to assist our city in its time of need, among which was the Federal Bureau of Investigation which sent three agents daily for a week at the end of September. Which days these were I don't remember because of what was going on, days just seemed to run together. I was advised by our Chief, Sam Kittrell, that one of the three agents would be assigned with me and the other two to other captains. I was advised that we were to do whatever we felt best met the basic needs of our citizens, as patrol was being served adequately by our patrol officers and DPS Troopers sent to assist. As usual I was somewhat apprehensive about working with someone from another area and another agency, especially in this situation. I learned later how very wrong I was.

I was introduced to Special Agent Tracy Baldwin of the FBI and told that she would be working with me. In speaking with Tracy, I found her to be very intelligent, outgoing, and personable. I asked her what she had been sent to do and she advised that she had been told to assist our department as was needed. As we drove through town, we began to see many people who did not have the basic needs for survival nor the transportation to obtain it at the FEMA distribution site. At this time the temperature was well into the 90's each day. We decided that we could best serve the citizens by transporting water, ice, and food products to those without transportation. We started by going to the FEMA site and loading the back seat of my car with any products we could obtain for distribution. As we drove around town, we began to observe more and more people needing help. The areas which we traveled to were housing projects, the poorest of poor neighborhoods, known crack houses, and high crime areas. As we delivered these goods to these subjects, I learned how much Tracy genuinely cared about and for people and trying to help them in their time of need. Besides not being able to carry enough products, and the fact my car seats were becoming wet from the melted ice, I told Tracy that I would try to obtain the use of one of the seized trucks that our department owned. We were able to obtain the use of a truck to deliver the goods, but the air conditioning was not working very well. This inconvenience did not deter Tracy in her enthusiasm, "To help the people!".

Each day for a week, Tracy drove from Houston to Orange to spend the whole day loading ice, water, and food into the back of a truck and delivering it throughout town. Each day we found more people in need besides our regular routes we would deliver to. When people would see the red truck driving up they would come running out of their residences to receive these goods. During this time, Tracy never wavered in her desire to help those in need and to serve the citizens of Orange. She maintained a positive attitude even in the worst situations. There were other officers from other agencies who had very negative attitudes about their assignments, but Tracy shined like a star surrounded by the darkness of night. If there were people that we told we would bring goods back to after we had ran out of our load, Tracy would always remind me to bring these subjects supplies even if she didn't know geographically where they were she would describe the location and we would bring them goods. She was determined that we would keep our word to the people once we told them that we would do something and we did. This showed me Tracy's strong belief in being honest and truthful.

Tracy realized that some of the subjects we were bringing ice to had no place to store it to be used effectively. She brought a carload of styrofoam ice chests from Houston to hand out with the ice. She presented her idea to Chief Kittrell and he was able to obtain another 100 ice chests for us to distribute to those in need.

As we drove about town, we observed many dogs and cats that had been abandoned by their owners. At this time, I learned how much Tracy cared for animals and their needs. The next day she brought cat and dog food which she had purchased to feed to these abandoned animals. She has a caring heart not only for humans, but animals as well.

During this week, Orange was visited by a Congressman and a Three Star Army General who had flown in to observe the damages. Tracy and I were told by Chief Kittrell to go to the airport and observe the press conference. During this time, I was able to observe Tracy interacting with these government officials, showing me just how versatile she was in communicating with any level of society. An hour later we were back delivering goods in the housing authorities and she never missed a beat.

One day during lunch in the break room at station, I observed Tracy in conversation with some older State Troopers, who one could tell had very negative attitudes toward Federal Agents and women in law enforcement in general. Tracy was able to maintain a positive attitude and not be baited into any argument with these subjects. I feel that through her responses to their questions and the composure she showed that she gained their respect and was not challenged by them again.

As I rode with Tracy each day, I learned of her strong faith in God and her love of him. I also learned of the dedication she has for her job as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I became aware of her interest in acting in dramas at her church and her strong love of her parents. Tracy told me of some of the other jobs she had while in college and before becoming an agent. I began to refer to her as the "multi-talented" Tracy Baldwin.

I feel that my life has been better due to the short time I spent working with Tracy. It was a joy to see someone that cared for mankind the way she does and about "Helping the people!". Even in the worst conditions that she was presented with Tracy remained positive and enthusiastic . Tracy never flinched when we would bring food and water to subjects who were known "crack dealers", "crack addicts" and prostitutes. Some of the other officers and agents said they couldn't find areas where people were in need, but they were there, they just didn't want to deal with them. Not Tracy, she did not discriminate in helping anyone.

I consider it an honor to have been able to work with Tracy for the week she was in Orange. I feel that I am a better person for just knowing Tracy and what she believes in. In my years in law enforcement, I have never met anyone so passionate in their desire to help those in need, do her part to try to make this world a better place to live in by serving in law enforcement, and keep her faith in God.

Even after Tracy finished her assignment in Orange, she was still helping in other ways. While traveling about Orange she took many photos with her digital camera. She also obtained other photographs from different sources while here. Tracy on her own time compiled these photos onto a DVD and added background music to the presentation. She sent several copies to our department and everyone who has seen it has wanted their own copy to remember the devastation caused by Hurricane Rita and the start of the recovery that followed.

I will always remember a comment one citizen had about Tracy after only talking with her for a short time, her comment was " I bet her mother is proud of her!" and I agree with her completely.

Sincerely,



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