



ORANGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Sam Kittrell
Chief of Police

M. W. Broussard, Major

S. M. Jones, Major

January 12, 2006

To: Whom it may concern
Re: SA Tracy L. Baldwin

The citizens of Orange, Texas and especially the members of the Orange Police Department have gained a tremendous amount of appreciation, respect and admiration for SA Tracy L. Baldwin of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In the first few days after Hurricane Rita devastated the City of Orange on September 24, 2005 we, as the law enforcement agency responsible for protecting the city, struggled to maintain the resources and manpower required at that difficult time.

Within a few days we realized that our officers were experiencing mental as well as physical fatigue. The majority of the officers working had homes that had been damaged by the hurricane. This presented a psychological aspect relating to the response that in all honesty had not been anticipated. Not only did we have to be aware of physical and mental exhaustion of our officers but we also had to deal with a psychological trauma relating to citizens who returned to find their homes and businesses damaged or destroyed.

In addition to other agencies that provided assistance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation provided much needed support for our department and our citizens. When the first of your Agents arrived I originally anticipated asking them to monitor and assist in the management of the Emergency Operations Command post housed at the Orange Police Department.

When SA Tracy L. Baldwin arrived she offered to help in any way she could be of assistance. She and I discussed the assistance in the Command Post and she volunteered her expertise in that area. During the course of our talk she also seemed to recognize the psychological issues relating to our officers and our citizens as well as the physical issues that we had to respond to. Because of that I asked her, and the other agents that were sent over, to not only monitor the activities of the command post and to make recommendations for improvement, but to go out in the field with our officers and view the situation from that perspective.

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It was the genuinely sincere concerns expressed by SA Tracy L. Baldwin that caused me to re-think and to appreciate the assistance offered by the FBI even more. I was expecting professionals who would participate in the process but I was not expecting such a level of expertise coupled with caring and compassion about other officers and the citizens that we serve.

SA Tracy L. Baldwin spent a week with us and each and every day she impressed the command staff, the officers in the field, and our citizens. Almost immediately she reported to me that she saw an unmet need in the community. FEMA, charitable organizations, and churches had set up Points of Distribution or "POD's" for the distribution of food, water, ice, and other items to assist in the recovery effort. Every day long lines of vehicles could be seen driving through the lines to take advantage of this help. SA Tracy L. Baldwin recognized that we had a portion of our population that was elderly and poor that did not have transportation, or in some cases were not physically able, to go to the "POD's" for assistance.

The element of our community that was the most vulnerable was not being recognized or cared for. I immediately reported Agent Baldwin's observations to our Emergency Management Coordinator. Plans were implemented to dispatch a fire department unit in a large box van that contained items of the POD's that would be delivered to the impacted segment of our population.

Given our still limited resources at that phase of the recovery effort it was obvious that we still would not be able to meet the need of our citizens. SA Tracy L. Baldwin and Captain Charles Stephenson of the Orange Police Department volunteered to change from a standard police vehicle to a truck so that they could have those supplies available to distribute as they saw a need in the community.

Special Agent Baldwin's caring and compassion did not stop there. She told me that with no electricity the elderly were not able to take advantage of the ice that was being distributed. This population also does not normally have access to "coolers" that probably are abundant in most home of means in the community. We purchased every Styrofoam cooler that we could find but we found them in short supply. SA Baldwin offered to purchase coolers when she returned to Houston in the evening. We did some reimbursements for her expenses but I know that she purchased far more commodities than she was reimbursed for. She did not seem as concerned with reimbursement as she was in providing assistance to a very vulnerable segment of our population.

It should also be noted that the ambient outside temperatures in the Orange area in the days after the hurricane hovered around the 100 degree mark. In addition the humidity was so high that it was a miserable environment for our relief workers, as well as for our citizens to live in without electricity and the air conditioning that it generates. The city had no electricity, therefore no air conditioning. The only relief from the heat (and darkness) came from generators.

The absence of electricity, and the fact that it was several days before many of our citizens returned, resulted in a tremendous amount of spoilage of foods and other items left in refrigerators and freezers by those that evacuated. Not only did this create a horrendous stench in those refrigerators and freezers, the odors permeated into the

residences and into the streets themselves. Citizens that stayed behind, or that returned shortly after the devastation, found themselves in very difficult circumstances.

SA Tracy L. Baldwin advised me that if charcoal was made available to the citizens that they would be able to use that charcoal to address many of the problems related to that odor. I had known that to be true from situations I had encountered in the past. Charcoal works to absorb foul odors. We have used that in places where bodies had been found days or weeks after death. SA Baldwin told me that her father had passed that tip on to her from his military training.

We immediately acquired a large pallet of charcoal and started making it available to the elderly population experiencing those problems. FEMA representatives operating out of the police station with us became interested in this effort and observed how it worked and the satisfactory results. I was told by those representatives that they thought that would be a valuable commodity to add to their own arsenal of supplies that they provided in the emergency relief efforts. Many people are not able to just discard a refrigerator or freezer and having the ability to remove the noxious odor in such a cost effective manner not only addressed a very serious problem but it could ultimately save many dollars that would be expended replacing those items. To further expand on this idea, FEMA is possibly developing Charcoal Filters to use for any disasters that may occur in the future.

There was an added benefit that we had from having FBI agents working in the field with our officers. Our citizens seemed psychologically "soothed" when they learned that FBI agents actually cared enough to perform the most basic police services to our citizens. They felt safe and secure with the FBI presence. That is difficult to describe but I heard it so many places in town as I traveled about the city myself.

No one made a greater impression on our citizens that SA Tracy L. Baldwin. There are still times that I talk to people in town and they speak highly of the "Lady FBI Agent" that gave them an MRE or a bag of ice.

Even after SA Baldwin completed her tour of duty in Orange helping after the devastation of Hurricane Rita, we found that Agent Baldwin continued to help us in ways we had never thought of. During the hurricane recovery process we focused on the task at hand and were not actually giving much thought to historical preservation of the process through the recording of the events. Some photographs were being taken of "obvious" things but the subtle things that really told the story were going unrecorded.

We were so pleasantly surprised when we received a DVD relating to hurricane damage and recovery efforts in the City of Orange. When I first viewed the DVD I thought it was a professional produced program that tracked and recorded our recovery and response efforts in the City of Orange, to include transitions/dissolves and background music. I provided SA Baldwin with some aerial photographs and some of our PD photographs, but to view the DVD you would not know that almost its entire contents was recorded by SA Baldwin utilizing a compact digital camera that she carried with her as she went about her work in the City. Not only did she capture the images, she produced the DVD herself and made it available to us.

The national, state, and local news media neglected the City of Orange for the most part. Today, you can purchase a similar DVD based on the efforts in neighboring Jefferson County but the only comparable DVD was the one provided to us by SA Baldwin. This was personally produced by her and she has encouraged us to copy that DVD and share it with the officers and other responders in the area. So many people are thankful to her for putting together such an accurate and touching account of the recovery and response efforts.

I could write page after page of the contributions SA Tracy L. Baldwin made to the Orange Police Department and the citizens of this community. I hope you can detect my sincerity and appreciation to the Bureau and especially to SA Tracy L. Baldwin. I have always maintained a close relationship with the FBI agents assigned to the Beaumont RA. In my 30+ years of law enforcement when I count my best friends and most respected colleagues the majority are FBI agents. In one short week SA Tracy L. Baldwin earned the same level of respect that I have a couple of the most special FBI agents and a retired Texas Ranger that was also a friend and a mentor.

As Chief of Police I saw the physical devastation in the community but that was not as difficult to deal with as the psychological devastation that I saw taking place in the department and in the community. The FBI and especially SA Tracy L. Baldwin did so much to raise the level of psychological stability in the department and the community. I know when that help was offered that no one expected that result but it truly was a success story.

In closing I also want to say that on two or three occasions SA Tracy L. Baldwin has called to ask how the recovery effort was going as we entered the various phases of recovery. There have been times she has talked to me and times she has contacted the people she worked with in the department. That shows her sincerity and her commitment to the bureau and to our profession. The FBI is truly fortunate to have an agent of Tracy L. Baldwin in that most respected organizations.

Sincerely,



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