

## PROLOGUE

---

**M**y name is Adam L. Perkins. As a former traffic enforcement officer, I know firsthand the dangers of traffic stops. I've made hundreds, if not thousands, of them. I made mistakes. But thankfully, I lived to tell about it. Every day, thousands of police officers, from big cities to the small-town cops, conduct traffic stops.

Unfortunately, some of them left home, never to return. Why? In many cases, the officer simply made a careless mistake. Maybe they failed to notice the gun handle in between the seats or ignored the passenger in the backseat.

Regardless of the reason(s), too many officers are losing their lives. One life lost is one too many. No matter where it happens and to whom, it happens to the entire fraternal brotherhood of police. It hurts all of us deeply, and it hits home when you know the officer personally. I worked with an officer who was killed by a driver he was trying to help stop.

As he was placing out the stop sticks, the driver ran him over and kept going. The truth is, no one puts on the uniform thinking they will be killed that day. It's *always* the other guy. You will be wise to remember that whenever you put on the uniform, you are tentatively the "other guy."

Having said that, the occupation of law enforcement is an honorable one, but it's probably the most dangerous, in my opinion. The good news is despite the dangers, it can also be rewarding and fulfilling. More often than not, you will encounter little resistance during traffic stops.

The bad news is that there are people out there, even as you're reading this book, who are hell-bent on breaking the law, even if it means confronting you as a law enforcement officer.

I remember attending the academy. They call it in some states BLET, which stands for Basic Law Enforcement Training. Like basic training in the military, this training is just that...basic. The academy can't prepare you for everything you may encounter because it's not supposed to. Some things you're just going to have to learn by trial and, hopefully, not too many errors.

This book is your guide to traffic stops and the first book of its kind that I'm aware of. It's a needed tool, and I wish it were available when I was a rookie officer, as it would have helped me avoid a lot of mistakes.

Nonetheless, it's on time for the thousands of officers to come. Examine the many scenarios because you just may find yourself in one. Take *nothing* for granted. It's been said that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. What you're reading is your ounce. Consume it.

There's no way to write a book on the millions of possibilities that can come with a traffic stop. There are just too many "what-ifs." But there are some things that will always be the same, and learning what they are can help you identify quickly when things are not right and possibly save your life. After all, if all you had was a chance to survive, wouldn't you want it? I would.

You don't have to learn everything the hard way. The streets are a good teacher. But she can be both brutal and ruthless at times. Learning the hard way when you don't have to isn't smart.

So, in this book, I will share not only my own personal experiences and techniques but also guide you on how to conduct a traffic stop in the right and safe way. I'll show you what to look for and when to call for backup. I'll explain the red flags that may not seem so obvious.

After reading this book, from cover to cover, take what you want and create your own style. But a word of caution. There are some things you always need to do no matter what when conducting a traffic stop, and these steps must be followed to a "T." Skipping steps will make the traffic stop "routine," and routine in your approach and attitude gets you killed.

Call it following protocol, or call it common sense. I call it survival, and surviving is what you must do if you find yourself in an unfortunate life-or-death situation while conducting a traffic stop.

In either case, my goal is to prepare you to be on your best guard. There are no guarantees in life other than taxes and death. Be a good citizen and pay your share of taxes. But your death should not have to come during a traffic stop. My only guarantee is that if you follow this book, you reduce your risk significantly. And any risk, perceived or otherwise, is worth reducing.

Although the primary focus of this book is traffic stops, I will cover another important topic that has been in the news quite a bit, and that is racial profiling. It may not be your favorite cup of tea, but you must drink it because sooner or later, it may come knocking at your door. There are some important things you need to know, and you'll only get it here from me.

I am your portable Field Training Officer. It's my job to make sure you come home every night. So, read and reread this book. Keep it in your patrol car and review it when you have downtime.

Let's get started.

