

Episode #33
 A Cop Leaves The Force For Corporate America
 (1/23/2018)

Who	Audio Segment
Steve Paz	<p>But it wasn't till later when I started really getting comfortable in my job that started realizing that something was missing, that I didn't calculate into, you know, my original decision. And that was purpose. That was the big revelation that came to me several years later, was the purpose that was important to me, which was always helping people.</p>
	<p>INTRO MUSIC</p>
Andy Levine	<p>Welcome to Second Act Stories, a podcast that looks at people who have made major career and life changes and are pursuing more rewarding lives in a second act. I'm your host, Andy Levine.</p> <p>Before we get started, I have some outstanding news to share. Every week, I closely follow, the iTunes charts for the reporting of the top podcasts. And in the month of January, 2019 Second Act Stories has consistently cracked the "Top Ten" podcasts in the highly-competitive, business/career category.</p> <p>So thank you to everyone who has been spreading the word about Second Act Stories and please keep up the good work. Share, Share, Share is our mantra. And one of the best ways to do that is to join our Second Act Advocates group at SecondActStories.org.</p> <p>To date we've completed 32 episodes of the podcast. And many of our episodes follow the pattern of someone leaving the corporate world for position in public service or with a non-profit.</p> <p>Today's story is the reverse. Steve Paz spent 18 years as a police officer. First with the U.S. Marines, then with the Honolulu Police Department and finally twelve years on the police force in Dallas, Texas. In Dallas, he was on the front lines of the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1990s and encountered a number of dangerous situations which he describes in the podcast.</p> <p>In 2004, a family friend offered him an excellent corporate position – a role that he admits he was completely unqualified for at the time. He took the job which paid more money, dramatically cut his commute time and offered his wife and family piece of mind. But he also misses the camaraderie of the police fraternity and the sense of purpose that he felt in law enforcement.</p> <p>Here's our interview with Steve Paz. We also speak with his wife Judy about the change.</p>

Andy	Do you have like an early memory as, you know, a seven-year old that something stuck with you or what you watched on TV or something that sort of drew you to law enforcement?
Steve Paz	Adam-12.
	PLAY 1-ADAM-12 PROMO
Steve	Reed Malloy. Oh yes. Yeah. That was it. I watched all the cop shows, watched all the army shows. But what really sold me was that "Adam-12." To me, it seemed realistic.
Andy	Well, how old would you have been at the time?
Steve	Gosh, 10, 8, 10.
Andy	And where did you grow up?
Steve	Well, I was born in San Francisco, was there a couple of years and my family moved in New York, Long Island, New York, where my mom's from. So from San Francisco to New York, Long Island and then to Chicago. And then finally from Chicago, I was eight and we moved to Duncanville, Texas.
Andy	While Steve was in Texas, he met a family friend who will become relevant later in the story. His name is Marty Rinker. He was a dentist and everyone called him Doc.
Steve	I wasn't doing so well in school, didn't have any direction. He said something to the effect, "Well, I'll put a boot up as...you know, and get it straightened." Sure enough, he did. And one of the big things, he knew I loved the military stuff, you know, because one of the things was he would help me study and he would really force me to study. And one of the rewards was if I got everything right, I could get home and watch "GI Diaries."
Andy	Doc was kind of an adopted uncle and helped guide Steve through his high school years.

Steve	I was still kinda rudderless after I graduated, didn't do so great in high school, didn't have many college options, definitely no scholarships. I went to him, went to my parents and said, "I think I'm gonna join the Marines." And he said, "I think that'll be good for you."
Andy	Steve enlisted and at the age of 19 ended up being stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii – not a bad assignment. He was a military police officer. And after leaving the Marines he landed a two-year job with the Honolulu Police Department.
Andy	How did you get to Dallas?
Steve	Dallas was really huge in the 80s as far as technologically advanced and process advanced. They were in police magazine. You know, I got police magazine as a kid. I subscribed to law enforcement news. Dallas was always at the forefront. They're always on the cover. They always had something really cool going on. So I decided, you know, if I'm gonna be a cop, I wanna work for Dallas PD. You know, I wanted to come back home and come back to the mainland.
Andy	After an eight-month training period, he was assigned to Southwest Dallas, at the time one of the most dangerous sections of the city.
Steve	It was during the crack cocaine wars, so in Dallas, we were actually number one for murders in the country per capita and then either one or two or three for several years then. I mean, it was crazy. You'd get to work at night 11:00 p.m. and have a page, you know, 7 to 10 major disturbances holding. You'd have shootings holding on the call sheet, stabbings holding on the...It was wild.
Andy	Maybe just to make it real to our listeners, can you give an example of a incident or an episode, something that was maybe a little scary?
Steve	There was lots of shootings just over crazy things. Stabbings on Thanksgiving or families take the carving knife to one of the family members, shootings, showing up, seeing a guy just falling back in his chair with a bullet hole through his forehead, you know, and the domino table scattered all over the place. You know, just one night being shot at by a kid, arresting someone for a violation of protective order. It was nighttime, it's a big drug dealing area. We show up, we get...you know, we found out later it was a Mac 10 submachine gun. Unfortunately, the kid, A, wasn't a good shot and B, it was very inaccurate weapon. He was a young kid, which is sad, but he was a pretty active dope dealer, you know, trying to make a name for himself.
Andy	It sounds like a little more violent than "1-Adam-12."
Steve (17:53)	A lot more violent.

Andy	<p>So Steve was 38 years old. He and his wife Judy had started a family. And he received a call from Doc, the man who helped him in high school. Doc had moved from being a dentist to starting a fast growth company called Careington International.</p>
Steve	<p>So he owns this company. So he came and said, "We need somebody. We're gonna take the fulfillment center, which, you know, mail room, printing, all that kind of stuff, you know, for the members of the company, of the healthcare company. You know, we're gonna take that in-house. We currently have it outsourced, we're gonna take it in-house, we need somebody to run that and I think you'd be great for that."</p> <p>And then when I asked a couple of trusted people, you know, my chief and all that end that I was working for a couple of other people, I was like, "Man, I have this opportunity." They're like, "Man, take it. Get outta here. You gotta get so much better on the outside." The focus was on money. The focus was getting rich, you know, and doing all this stuff and, you know, you can travel, you can own all these cool cars, you can get a huge...you know, it was so money focused and I didn't even realize because I'd been in public service for so long.</p> <p>And so I thought, "Okay, well, man, this is a no brainer."</p>
Andy	<p>Tell us about the job that you were taking in the company and what you do here and what you did when you started here.</p>
Steve	<p>So I came to Carrington and I ran the fulfillment department. They hired me on as the vice president. I didn't know at the time, but there were some people that were not real happy about that. You know, here I am. I'm buddy of the owner and I knew a lot of the people. I'd met them at parties and things like that. And then when I joined, I didn't realize the animosity that that was gonna be there at the time and I didn't realize how, you know, that just didn't happen. You just don't hire a VP from outside. You work your way up and there were people waiting in line for a job like that.</p> <p>And it was pretty uncomfortable for a long time, I mean, for years. And I did not handle it well either.</p>
Andy	<p>So the initial adjustment to Corporate America was challenging.</p>
Steve	<p>It was very, very political and as I found in a lot of corporate jobs, incredibly political just over the years dealing with other companies. I mean, corporate America is a very interesting animal.</p> <p>And that kind of led me to my realization on kind of, you know, purpose and teams. So I was so used to being on teams from the Marines to Honolulu PD to Dallas PD that everyone was there to really help each other, they were just designed like that. And that was the mentality. It was there to really succeed. You got up every day knowing what your purpose was, whether it was, you know, in the Marines, you know, protecting America and our way of life to the PDs where you waking up,</p>

	<p>you know, keep people safe, put bad guys in jail, you know, take the predators off the street. You knew what your purpose was.</p> <p>Coming to corporate America kinda realized the purpose was to be successful and successful typically had a bottom line associated with it. And that bottom line, you know, was achieved...basically had to be achieved. And then you realize also that people are really, you know, scratching and elbowing, you know, trying to get their way to the top.</p>
Andy	So it was a difficult transition, is what I'm hearing you say in the early years, your first couple of years here at Carrington?
Steve	Yeah, it was pretty tough and I didn't help the situation either. I was a little taken aback and yeah.
Andy	But I'm assuming you've adjusted and found your way?
Steve	Yes. Yeah, I had a lot of growing up to do in that respect.
Andy	In a separate telephone conversation, I spoke to Steve's wife Judy about the transition.
Judy Paz	<p>It's led to a lot of personal and professional growth for him. I think he's learned so much. He's a very well-rounded person. And so he was really able to push himself and explore different opportunities. It was definitely challenging. I think the first two years were very challenging. I think that was a little bit unexpected for both of us probably a little bit more for Steve than myself. I had worked in the business world before.</p> <p>Minuses, I think he would definitely point to the camaraderie at the police department. And just working with people in that line of work. That's a strong bond and I don't think you find that very often in the business world.</p>
Andy	Did you find yourself missing the police work?
Steve	<p>I did. Early on, I was thinking, "Oh, what did I do?" But it wasn't until later really because I was so busy. When you're learning, I mean, that's kind of your purpose, that's taken up a lot of time, really getting up to speed with the businesses and the people and the relationships, you know, all the vendors and just really learning how the processes work. But it wasn't till later when I started really getting comfortable in my job that started realizing that something was missing, that I didn't calculate into, you know, my original decision. And that was purpose. That was the big revelation that came to me several years later, was the purpose that was important to me, which was always helping people, that wasn't...and I still get to help people, you know, every day, because, you know, we respond to requests for, you know, work orders and things like that, you know, repairs and issues with the buildings and all that.</p>

Andy	But on the other hand, I guess you don't have people shooting at you occasionally and that kind of thing.
Steve	Yeah, that's true. That's true.
Andy	<p>Now you may remember back on July 7, 2016, the Dallas Police Department did come under attack.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PLAY START OF NBC NEWS CLIP</p> <p>A protest against police violence turned violent when a sniper opened fire from above. I asked Steve about that day.</p>
Steve	<p>My family and I were in Colorado. We were up in the mountains enjoying, which is beautiful, beautiful weather up there. We'd gotten back from, you know, a little hike or something. I sat down and actually opened up Facebook and I saw it on there. And just my stomach and my heart just sank. Because I knew Michael Smith not well, but I knew him. You know, we'd worked with him in narcotics. He was a great officer.</p> <p>He got killed exiting his vehicle and, you know, as he arrived, as he was responding to the shots fired. That's the kind of guy who he was. These are all officers, all the officers there and the pictures still come back to my mind, you know, they're the officers that, you know, they run towards the shots. They run towards danger. That's the way they're trained.</p>
Andy	<p>Steve and I talked a bit more about purpose and how he has been able to achieve that feeling through his community work in the Boy Scouts, the local chamber of commerce and as president of his home owners association. But he admits that it's still a bit different than being a police officer.</p> <p>As I always do, I asked him to offer advice to anyone considering a major career change or life transition.</p>
Steve	<p>I would advise them to really look at what they're doing and really think about what their purpose in life is and just say, "Hey, you know, money is no replacement for purpose." There are a lot of jobs you can do that don't make as much money as you will make, you know, in the private sector. But the thing is if you really don't have goals, if you don't know what your purpose is, money never fills it in because money is never enough. It's never enough. Whereas, you know, teachers and firefighters and police officers and military, you know what your purpose is. You wake up and you know you're educating the next generation. You know you're keeping people safe when you're saving them from fires. You know you're protecting the country. You know, you know what your purpose is.</p>

Andy	So it kinda sounds, Steve, like you faced a choice in 2004 and, you know, it sounds like you are at peace with your decision, but there's some regrets in the back of your mind in terms of saying you miss police work. Am I reading you correctly?
Steve	I miss the fraternity. It's definitely a fraternity. It's, you know, definitely the purpose, the people, you know, just knowing what their... You know, everyone was a little different, but we're all on the same team. That was the thing. We were all rowing in the same direction and it was, you know, you miss that.
	OUTGOING MUSIC
Andy	<p>Steve's story is the reverse of many of our profiles. In his 18 years in law enforcement, he felt a sense of purpose and pride in serving first in the Marines and then in the Honolulu and Dallas Police Departments. He loved fighting the bad guys and helping to build a safe community.</p> <p>But he also knew the stress that being a cop brought to his family. And he couldn't ignore the "you'd be crazy not to take this opportunity" that came from his fellow police officers.</p> <p>So what do we learn in today's episode? Sometimes a career change isn't a black and white decision. There are shades of grey in Steve's second act - and I hope that has come through in today's podcast.</p> <p>Special thanks to Steve Paz for taking the time to meet with me and being so open about this experience. And our thanks as well to his wife Judy for speaking to me by telephone.</p> <p>We hope you'll keep listening. There are more second act stories just around the corner.</p>