

skill to "lay the cards on the table" in such a manner that animosity is held to a minimum and the employee can identify where improvement is needed. Interviews of this kind should not be hurried and the evaluator must be an attentive listener.

The in-between or average performer is probably the most difficult problem for the evaluator. In my opinion, the officer who continually rates only "satisfactory" or "average" on our rating form is just as near the bottom, perhaps even closer, than he is to the top. I doubt that in this day of extreme work pressures we can tolerate mediocre performance for very long.

Much more could be said relative to the desirability of service ratings and their application; however, as previously stated, I would like to hear some discussion of this subject from the floor. I would like to state that it is much easier to ask questions regarding this subject than it is to supply answers.

## SPOTLIGHTING IN WEST VIRGINIA

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For approximately the next twenty minutes we are going to discuss the problems that we have had in West Virginia with "spotlighting." It is very possible that our problems may be somewhat different, but I feel that basically they are almost the same. So, if you disagree with what I am going to say, remember I am speaking about West Virginia and our problems with this type of illegal hunting, which we have had over the past years.

When we speak of spotlighting we are referring to the methods used to take and kill wild animals at night; however, "spotlighting" refers mainly to deer, since this appears to be the main wild animal that is being hunted. The term "jacklighting" is also used, but in West Virginia among the officers and local people, the word "spotlighting" is used more commonly. So, when I mention this word you will know what I am speaking about.

Prior to World War II, West Virginia had no problems with spotlighting; however, as veterans returned from service, it appeared that this type of deer killing was learned by the soldiers while serving in Europe. As veterans returned, night hunting of deer started to pick up, until deer were being killed almost every night. Also, black market of deer meat picked up and became a common occurrence. It also became evident that many people were getting in on the act, age made no difference, and people of all types of background were involved. Officers spent many hours trying to cope with the problem and many lessons were learned by our officers.

One of the problems that was very evident from the beginning, and still holds true today, is the fact of the mountainous terrain in West Virginia. Mountains range from 4,860 to a low elevation of 274 feet, almost everywhere in the eastern panhandle (where we have most of our problems with spotlighting), there are fertile valleys and fields where deer come at night to feed and browse and hundreds of miles of dirt back country roads, which in the wintertime require 4-wheel drive vehicles in order to get into the back country. Roads intersect and lead everywhere and it is impossible to get a spotlifter pinned up so that he cannot make a getaway.

Spotlighters working in gangs have very good and accurate radio communications with each other. One example of how radio communications work is where a vehicle is parked with a man and a woman along a road where the gang is intending to work. When the officer's vehicle or any strange vehicle shows up in the area, they simply radio ahead and advise those that are after the deer that an officer's car has been spotted. If the officer had received a call about this and knew where they would be working, by the time he has arrived, he would not find anything going on, simply because by communications, the spotlighting gang had been warned, and had ample time to get away. Telephones are also used where people watch to see if any officer's

car is noticed in the vicinity and then by coded telephone message, warn the parties not to go out tonight.

We have also found people calling the officer at his residence during late hours of the night to see if the officer is home. Even driving to his residence to see if his car is at the house. It appears that they go to great painstaking efforts to make sure where the officers are located.

Spotlighters use many types of operations. One that is common, is the use of a decoy. The decoy usually drives around through the areas that he knows an officer can hide his car, and believe me, they know every parking place. If no officer's car is located, they sometimes spot the fields and throw out firecrackers in order to try to get the officer to make his move and check the vehicle. If the officer does check the vehicle, he usually does not find anything that he can make an arrest on. The vehicle is usually clean and no weapons can be found. Of course, then the vehicle warns the others in the party and the deer killing for the night is called off.

Spotlighters usually cannot be trapped in a field, because there are several old roads leading out of every field onto a good road. So many make their getaway in this manner.

Spotlighters work in gangs and also work as a single lone hand. When working in a gang, they usually have a meeting place. The first car travels the area in which they have previously picked for their night work. He tries to locate any officer's car, and then locates the field in which the deer are. If the area is clear, he then reports back to the meeting place and advises the second car where the deer are located. This car goes directly to the field and from this vehicle the deer is shot. The car leaves immediately with the weapons and man involved in the shooting. After they get back to their meeting place, a third car comes along and lets one man out; this man cleans up the deer in the dark. Later at a pre-arranged time one of the other cars comes back and picks him up, along with the deer.

Then, there is the spotlights who works by himself. This is the type that usually no one knows about and he never lets anyone know. He is usually the hardest to catch. He never makes a deer kill very far from where he lives and is the least suspected.

We have instances where a party had called the officer and reported a deer killed in their fields. Investigation by the officer proved that the person had killed the deer and then became afraid and reported someone else had shot it. We have found that deer meat being transported out of the state at late hours of the night was being carried in side-pockets on a motorcycle with only the best of the deer meat being transported.

One other problem we have found is that it is usually hard to tell exactly who may be in with gangs killing deer at night or who may be working by themselves. Records show that some of the finest citizens have been caught at night killing deer. Educational background and one's personal conduct has not entered into the picture. Also, we have found that even those with money or wealthy people down to the poorest person have been found to be engaged in spotlighting.

Expensive weapons and vehicles are no longer being used. Usually old cars or trucks and single barrel shotguns, which can be quickly taken apart, the barrel thrown out one window, the stock out the other side and the forearm another. So therefore, even if they are caught or apprehended they haven't lost any equipment of any value if it is confiscated.

Another important item we have discovered is that it appears when the deer herd seems to be plentiful, then spotlighting really picks up. When few deer are seen, then spotlighting appears to decline. This may be an indication as to the size of the deer herd, but no study has been made to substantiate this theory.

In closing, I know it has been impossible to give you all of our problems, because they are many and it would take quite some time to really speak on this subject. There are many phases I have not covered, but two things I would like to stress: (1) Spotlighting is a very dangerous game, the officer usually catches himself feeling that this is just a routine type of work, and forgets the real danger of the situation that he is confronted with. We have had officers beaten up and left for dead, shot at, tried to

be run over with a vehicle, had articles thrown out car window at them and many other instances where the officer could have easily lost his life, or been seriously injured many miles in the back country and alone. It is not a good idea for an officer to try to apprehend spotlighters by himself. He should learn how to use his sidearm and be very efficient in handling his weapons. I am not saying this is a very good idea, but where some officers carry a double-barrel shotgun with them and have it in their hands at night while trying to stop a spotlighter's car, he apparently has no problem with getting the car stopped or runs into any difficulty. For some reason the shotgun appears to have a good psychological effect. I know of one instance where an officer had no problems when working alone as long as he had his german police dog with him. So it is very possible that anything that can have a psychological effect on other people really may be a great asset to the officer.

(2) Public Realtions is another one of the best ways that can help an officer in apprehending spotlighters and all other types of game law violators. We have had an instance where the officer has been called to arrest a man's brother (who was a schoolteacher) for killing deer at night. This case was one where the farmer warned his brother that if he ever came onto his property and killed another deer, he would call the officer, and this is exactly what happened. We find that most landowners and farmers are the finest people to deal and become acquainted with and when an officer really becomes their friend, the farmer will depend more and more on the officer and usually in most cases begin to help him. Also, it is almost impossible to have a trial in court that does not have a few farmers and landowners on the jury. Many cases have been won in court because of good evidence and the fact that the farmers and landowners on the jury knew the officer and knew his reputation as an honest, respectful enforcement man. So it appears in lots of cases that how far an officer can go on an arrest and the final disposition of the case usually depends on the reputation of that officer.

It has been a pleasure for me to have had this opportunity to discuss briefly some of our "spotlighting" problems and if anyone has any questions, I will try to answer them. Thank you very much for your kind attention and consideration.