

# Deputy Tim Murphy

Tim Murphy's first and last job has been with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. "I had been 18 for 18 days when G.I. (Sheriff Johnson) hired me...August 12, 1980." Here it is 26 years and several sheriffs later and Tim Murphy is still with the department.

Asked if he will retire to focus full time on his dog and handler training business, he replies refreshingly, "Working at the sheriff's office is my first love. I've always loved it. To this day, I can't wait to go to work. It's really cool. I go in at 4 p.m., and I don't have a clue what I'll be doing tonight. If I did, I'd get bored and tired of it quick. I don't have any idea. I might be changing some 80-year-old woman's flat tire; I might be in a life-threatening situation. As long as I come home at the end of the eight, I'm fine with it."

His only regret is that as fourth in command at the department, Captain Murphy doesn't run a dog anymore and spends more time than he'd like behind a desk. "I find a way to get on the road," he winks. "You really can't supervise the guys from behind. You have to get out front."

Tim has seen law enforcement change in Orange County. "It's the usual stuff but it's times 10," he says a tad wearily.

In 1980, seven deputies patrolled Orange County. Now it's 12, plus three officers assigned exclusively to

schools. "All day long they're doing something," he notes. "Today, a woman called and said her daughter had been abducted. My God! That's terrible...a 17-year-old girl being abducted. Within 20 minutes she rolled up at school with her boyfriend, who the mother had seen her jump in the car with, instead of getting on the bus... But during that period of time, we're working an abduction...It's not what you think it is, it's what you can prove, and until you can prove it ain't, it is."

He concedes that the bad old days of the crack cocaine epidemic and the "wall" in Gordonsville have subsided, but cautions, "It's picking back up. We're seeing more and more marijuana, especially among the young people." Meth is not as much of a problem as it is in other communities, but, "We would be remiss to think that we don't have it coming. We can see our future just by looking at Spotsylvania."

Tim seems ready for it. Over the past 26 years, he has garnered enough experience that few things surprise him. Recently, he coordinated 50 law enforcement officers at the Montpelier Races. "I've done it for so many years that there's certain people that I look forward to seeing every year," he says adding, "The people of Orange County are great. They really look out for you. Everybody's got their knot-heads, but the nice people of Orange make up for it so much. We still have people who bring cakes by the office at Christmas time."



Captain Tim Murphy joined the Orange County Sheriff's Department shortly after his graduation from Orange County High School in 1982. Although he has been training police dogs for 20 years now, "working at the sheriff's office is my first love."

PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

These dogs are also trained to stop in mid-pursuit if ordered. And they are taught to let go and guard the suspect while their handler conducts a search. If the suspect makes any kind of aggressive move towards the handler, the dog will bite again. "It's the only time a dog can make an apprehension without being commanded... to protect the handler. It's the only time he's allowed to think on his own," points out Tim.

Sounds like serious stuff, but to the dogs it's all a game. "A dog is as smart as a seven-year-old child," Bryant points out. "But he reasons like a two to three-year-old. So, everything we do out here is a game. Finding narcotics is a game. Finding an article is a game. Bite work is a game. It's all a game."

At the center of this game is a toy, usually something the dog can tug, that the handler keeps at his side. Tim Murphy teaches his students how to reward a dog. "We're going to teach you this one day, but your dog is going to teach you this every day... not to stick your thumb out." One of the decoys, who has undergone the required 40 hours training before he can don the padded suit, is nursing reopened stitches on his left hand. It's a powerful reminder to keep your hands inside the sleeve.

Any animal trainer will tell you that at some point they run into a wall. That's when Tim and Bryant refer to each other. "It would be impossible without a partner for a lot of reasons," says Tim as he prepares to shower, change and go pull his usual eight-hour shift with the depart-

ment. "The biggest advantage is I'll see things in dogs that he misses, and he sees things in dogs that I miss."

Bryant nods and adds, "I think there's a huge misconception on the part of the public. A lot of times they think we go down to the pound and find a German Shepherd, run him through a few different training aspects and then he's a police dog. It's far from that. All of our dogs are imported and we get only the best drives. If you want to drive a Yugo, then get a Yugo. We want to drive Ferraris here."

These four-legged Ferraris come from Belgium. They're mostly German Shepherds and Malinois, with the occasional Dutch Shepherd thrown in. They are not particularly pretty to look at, and nobody cares. They are definitely not cuddly. The supplier has screened them. "He tests them for ball drive, for temperament, for environment, like slick floors and stairways, and for bite work...The only thing the dog has to have is a really good ball drive," says Tim. "He really has to want a ball."

But I wouldn't play catch with him if I were you. "It's really not good for a working dog to have everybody pet him," says Tim. "We usually explain to them he's not a pet, he's a work dog...I want a little uncertainty in that dog with every stranger he meets, I don't want the dog comfortable with strangers."

Tim used to have his own breeding program, but gave it up because "there's only one or two dogs out of a litter that is work dog-quality, and then you're faced

with what to do with the rest. I didn't want to see my dogs on a chain somewhere or being abused...The biggest advantage is if we buy an imported dog and he fails out, I can have another one at the airport within two days."

In their careers, Bryant and Tim have made numerous "apprehensions," with their dogs, but Tim's favorite police dog story took place in the Town of Orange one night. "We had been trying to catch this guy for months, and finally we had cornered him. I knew he was back in this alley, and I sent all the guys in one way to where he had to come through the alley. He did and I made two announcements and he didn't stop. I sent the dog and the dog hit him in the back. He (the suspect) threw his arms back and the dog took his coat off."

Murphy watched as the suspect, coatless, ran down Railroad Avenue with a service dog in hot pursuit. "There must have been 80 people there and up through the middle he goes with the dog right behind him. He took him down right in the middle of everybody. So after that we didn't have a whole lot of problems when they saw the K-9 in the car; everybody who was witness to that became believers."

Tim looks around his training facility with obvious satisfaction. "We try to go the extra mile on training," he nods. "It's not about dogs. I'm not Dr. Doolittle. People think I'm a dog whisperer, but I'm not. It's just about catching bad guys."



## IT'S JUST ABOUT CATCHING bad guys

It's one of the hardest things to train...sending a patrol dog after someone, and then calling him back before he can finish the job...

"Sheriff's Office K-9, you in the field, stop now or I'll release the dog," barks Orange County Deputy Brandon Tidwell to a man dressed head-to-toe in padded clothing 30 yards away. Tidwell's German Shepherd, "Arco," a quivering mass of sinew, muscle, and teeth, is locked and loaded. "Sheriff's Office K-9, you in the field, stop now or I'll release the dog," repeats Tidwell more urgently. The padded man does not obey...starts running.

Police dog trainer and Orange County Sheriff's Department Captain Tim Murphy is crouched behind Tidwell. "Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready," he goads both dog and handler. "SEND HIM!"

Tidwell gives the command and Arco explodes after the decoy from a down-stay. When he has almost reached the running figure, Tidwell calls him off. "Arco, come here. Nay. Nay. Arco let loose. Come here." But this time it's too much for Arco; he latches on to the decoy and hangs on.

"Bring him right back," says



Top series, Dave Thompson of the Stafford Sheriff's Department sends his patrol dog after decoy, Ray Pittman of Spotsylvania County. Vlad hangs on until ordered to release. The idea here is to attach an 80-pound weight to a fleeing suspect. Above, Brandon Tidwell of the Orange County Sheriff's Department prepares to send Arco as Tim Murphy watches.

PHOTOS BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Murphy tersely. "Hook him up." They attach Arco to a long lead, the other end to a bungee cord on the fence. The chase scene is repeated, only this time the bungee cord gradually prevents Arco from reaching his target just as Tidwell calls him off the bite. It's one of the hardest things to train...sending a patrol dog after someone, and then calling him back before he can finish the job; it's like recalling a bullet after you've pulled the trigger.

"If we send a dog and the suspect gives up and surrenders, we have to have the power to call that dog off without engaging in a bite," explains Murphy's business partner and fellow trainer, Bryant Arrington, a 27-year veteran of the City of Manassas Police Department. "If you give up you're not getting bit. He's going to stay there and he's going to guard you by barking. If you take one step or try to flee, then he's going to engage."

Tidwell and Arco try it again. This time the lesson works, and Arco is recalled without biting and without the long leash and bungee cord. Tidwell rewards

...it's like recalling a bullet after you've pulled the trigger.

Arco with his toy. "Usually correction is followed very quickly with a reward, so the dog doesn't have long to think about the negative part of it," explains Murphy.

Welcome to week number six of the semi-annual training school, hosted by Murphy and Arrington at Murphy's home near Unionville. But if you think this is just a bunch of macho cops playing with dangerous dogs in the backyard during their spare time, think again. Professional Canine Services, Inc. is just that...professional. It is the realization of a dream hatched 20 years ago when Murphy and Arrington first met at police dog school.

Today, PCS Inc. is a fully-accredited, licensed and certified comprehensive police dog training facility second to none. Outdoors is a fenced training yard with agility equipment and search boxes. Over in a glade of trees are the drug and explosives training walls and an abandoned car. Kennels are located behind Tim's garage, and then there's the brand new 100-x-40-foot building with student and trainer bunkrooms, a work-in-progress kitchen, and a classroom with computers and video equipment, among other things. "We are one of the few canine schools in the country that actually has a classroom," points out Murphy. "A lot of the other places teach you how to work your dog, but it's all in the field. Here we'll cover legal aspects. We cover how to testify too, because it's not just about catching the guy; it's about convicting the guy."

Tim's partner, Bryant looks around at some of the unfinished walls with pride and adds, "This was a dream of ours to do this one day...little by little, the money that we make will go straight back to the 'black hole,' as I call it. But it's a nice training center for these guys and that's what it's for."

Police dog training, especially bomb dogs, is a hot item ever since Sept. 11, 2001. But Murphy cautions, "There's also a greater number of people trying to train them out there. And you get some questionable-quality bomb dogs out there." Like the guy near Front Royal who scammed several law enforcement agencies by selling them "certified" bomb dogs who couldn't tell the difference between a lollipop and a stick of dynamite.

Arrington shrugs that off. "We work off our reputation. It's all about credibility. We have an Internet

site that we don't advertise. Word of mouth to us is what it's all about. We are one of the few schools in the country that will fail somebody."

And in fact, the fall school, which started with 10 students, was whittled to nine. "They're gonna have to step up and work a dog that me or Bryant would work or they're not going to make it," says Tim. "It's usually about one man in each school who throws the towel in. If you go to get the ball from the dog and you're tentative and he sees that you're afraid, he says, 'Wait a minute, I can tell this guy what to do.' And the next thing you know, the dog's driving and the man is in the back seat."

It's been a tough six weeks. "We didn't realize it was this much work," Arrington quotes one of his students as saying. In this school, deputies from



Ados goes after decoy Chad Brubaker because Brubaker shoved handler, Darrel Shores. It is the only time a patrol dog will attack without being ordered.

PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Fauquier, Spotsylvania, Stafford and Orange commuted to the Orange County facility daily, pulling 10 and 11-hour shifts at all hours of the day and night to learn and train a wide variety of police dog techniques. "The end result is when school's over, they leave here with a trained dog," says Tim confidently.

The training doesn't end on graduation day. "If we don't train, dogs can go backwards," cautions Bryant. "You have to train these dogs every day or every other

day. You have to do something with them." And so, every other Wednesday, Bryant and Tim host retraining sessions for all their graduates. Sometimes 40 teams show up!

In the classroom is a bulletin board with press clippings showing PCS graduates making arrests and finding drugs. Last spring, one graduated in the afternoon and made a drug recovery that very night. Another tracked and caught a fugitive within two weeks of certification.

It does not come cheap...\$8,000 for the package of trained handler and dog, but Bryant points out that his last dog made that much money back in a month and a half in narcotics recovery. "They're worth their weight in gold," he says as he cues up a video that shows just what a law enforcement department's money will buy.

**OBEDIENCE:**

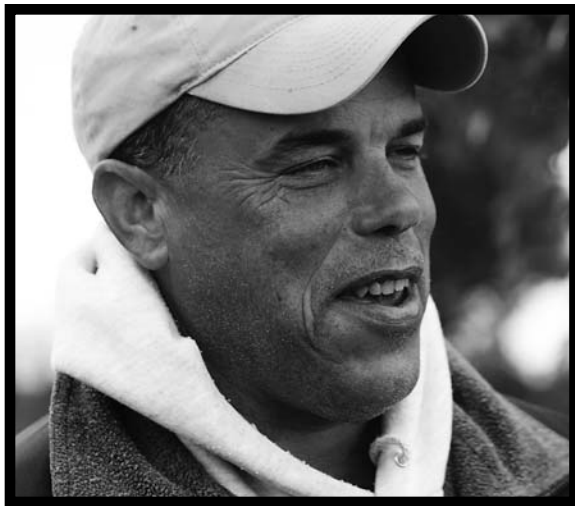
On lead at first, then off lead, then at a distance, it all starts here. Tim points out that most of the dogs are trained to heel on the left, not because the AKC likes it that way but because most officers are right handed and hold their sidearm in their right hand. On their left is this other weapon, the four-legged one, which, by the way, is the only weapon that, if taken from an officer, cannot be turned against him.

**AGILITY:**

Dogs are trained on six obstacles: jumps, car window exit, catwalk, A-frame, barrel climb, and tunnel crawl. Bryant points out that dogs have poor depth perception. "They know they are elevated but feel somewhat uncomfortable." So, they train them over a catwalk and to jump out of a police cruiser window. He shows a video of his Malinois, Smoke hurdling in two strides a pyramid of 55-gallon drums stacked three high. "They're absolutely world-class athletes," says Bryant in awe. "Not every dog can make it through this program. The selection process is very difficult."

**ARTICLE SEARCH:**

Dogs are trained to find personal items at a crime



Bryant Arrington of the Manassas City Police Department, left, and Tim Murphy of the Orange County Sheriff's Department met 20 years ago at a police dog school. The partners now host a six week dog training school of their own near Unionville every six months. They also host retraining sessions twice a month.

PHOTOS BY PHIL AUDIBERT

scent discriminatory. In other words they don't need to sniff little Johnny's pillowcase to find little Johnny.

**BOX AND BUILDING SEARCH:**

Six boxes, one man in each. Five leave, one stays. The dog must find the "hot box...find where the human odor is coming from, find the scent, he's going



Arco is trained to detect explosives. Here he indicates which hole in the training wall contains black powder by squaring up to the scent source, pricking his ears, and sitting.

PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

to stay, bark at the box, let us know where he is," says Bryant, adding that a dog's sense of smell is truly miraculous. "If you walk into a pizza joint, what do you smell. Pizza right? If a dog could talk, he could walk in there and tell you how old the crust was, that the sauce was from a week ago; he can break it down."

**NARCOTICS:**

Dogs are trained on nine different drugs: cocaine, crack, heroin, opium, marijuana, hashish, ecstasy,

scene that exude the freshest human scent. Keys are a typical candidate. "They (the dogs) lay down, they put it between their front paws so that at night, we know where it is located. They will not pick it up. They will not carry it; they will not alter, disturb or contaminate it," says Bryant confidently.

**TRACKING:**

Skin particles called "rafts" fall off of us all the time. Dogs are trained to follow this trail of crumbs. They are also trained to follow crushed vegetation. In either case, they are not

PCP, and methamphetamine. Tim Murphy opens a plastic bin full of rolled up hand towels, covered with a suspicious looking powder. They are pseudo-drugs, "that have all the properties of cocaine except the intoxicants...Each scent of narcotic is mixed together in that. And because the dog has the ability to scent-differentiate, at the end of the week we can take any of those scents individually, and he'll alert on it." By this time, they are no longer using pseudo drugs; they're training with the real stuff, which, by the way, is issued to them by the DEA and is kept in a safe.

The dogs are trained to scratch at the source of the scent. "When he's looking for drugs, what he's actually looking for is his toy or the towel. We can teach them to find anything we want them to find by making the toy smell like it. They're not looking for the drugs; they're looking for the toy."

**EXPLOSIVES:**

It's the same thing, but dogs are not cross-trained in drugs and explosives; it's either one or the other. Dogs are trained to detect up to 20 different military and civilian explosives, which actually boil down to three or four shared compounds. Murphy pours black powder into a PVC tube. The handler then runs the dog past a row of tubes, all empty except one. "As soon as he sits, someone else will bounce a ball right

across here, and within three or four times, the dog realizes 'Okay as soon as I smell the powder, if I sit, the ball comes.' For obvious reasons, "an explosives dog has to be passive." He cannot scratch at a bomb; he sits instead.

**CRIMINAL APPREHENSION:**

This is the bite work. Tim explains, "They have to have a decent bite, not showing any stress or anything. They're just going to bite and hang on. They're not doing it out of meanness and they're not doing it out of fear. All we're looking to do is

attach an 80-pound weight to somebody. At 40-plus years old, it's hard to catch everybody out here, but if I can attach 80 pounds on someone, I can probably catch him."

Some of these dogs can actually knock a man down. Bryant shows a video of Smoke hitting a six-foot tall, 200-pound man in the chest. The impact sounds like a pro linebacker making a hit. The decoy is knocked flat on his butt.



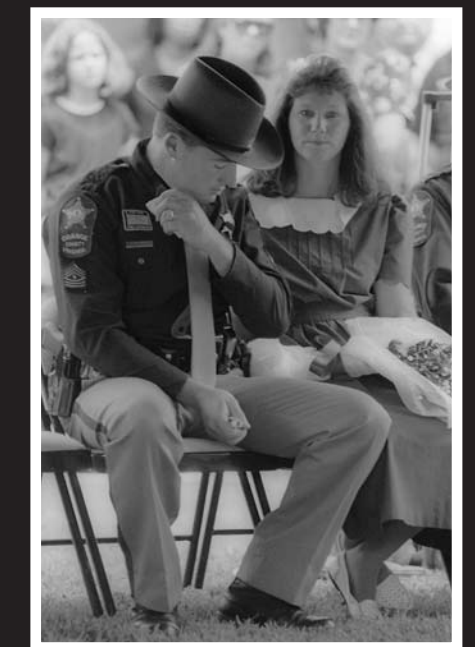
July 26, 1996 is a date Tim Murphy will remember forever. It was the first and hopefully last time he had to fire his sidearm at a suspect, and it was the first, and hopefully, last time he watched his patrol dog die while performing his duty.

He tells the story of Bodi in flat, unemotional terms... almost like he is testifying in court. But you can tell he is still deeply affected by what happened that day.

"It started off as a pursuit through the Town of Orange. Deputies got involved down in the Mountain Track area, and the guy bailed out on foot. I was called to the scene and began tracking him. We tracked him for over an hour and a half and came up on him in a wooded area and gave two announcements to surrender, and he took off running straight away."

"I released the dog. The dog caught him right about at the hip. He rolled back up and pulled a pistol out

of the back of his shorts and fired once. When the pistol came out I started calling the dog, but before I could call him off, he'd fired once through the dog's side, through his ribs. By now the dog hears me, releases, starts to come back. When he releases he fires a second round right between his shoulders which killed him right there."



Tim pauses a beat and says, "And then he turned the gun towards me. I returned fire at him and was able to knock him down. It was a standoff for about 30 minutes, where he wouldn't put the gun down. I'd hit him in the leg, knocked him down. We ended up making the arrest and getting him out of the woods after about a half hour. I think the need for medical help kind of persuaded him to give up and let us get him to

some help." All this time, Bodi, his friend and protector, was lying dead on the ground in front of him.

**I AM A WORKING DOG**

My eyes are your eyes to watch and to protect you and yours.

My ears are your ears to hear and detect evil minds in the dark.

My nose is your nose to scent the invader of your domain.

And so you may live, my life is also yours.