

## Another “Task Force Multiplier” for Highland Beach Police

John Shoemaker

In a continuing effort to recognize those military Veterans who live in Highland Beach or serve our community, we share a short story of each and post it on our town website: [www.highlandbeach.us](http://www.highlandbeach.us) and specifically [Veteran Heroes of Highland Beach | Highland Beach, FL](#)

Please visit this tab to read stories and profiles of our citizens who have served or are serving our country and our town. Prepare to be amazed by the incredible stories of our Veterans. Whether their enlistments were dramatic or routine, their contributions came with sacrifice and hard work to maintain the security of our nation. Without exception, they all served with the utmost honor and dedication, for which we are deeply grateful.

About a year ago, our Chief of Police, Craig Hartmann, and Major Jon Michael Oh, made an important decision to hire a new police officer from Lighthouse Point. David Keyes has a unique background that will greatly benefit our small town.

David has a compelling story to share, with an impressive career.

Originally from Morristown, N.J., David attended Morris Hills High School, Rockaway, NJ, and went on to study civil engineering and business at Widener University in Chester, PA. He then attended the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, FL, to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting.



He comes from a family of law enforcement officers, including his father, who served in the Morristown Police Department in New Jersey. Breaking somewhat from family tradition, David joined the Army Reserves in 1988, despite several family members having served in the Navy and Marines.

As luck would have it, he was selected to serve in a Military Police Unit: the 449<sup>th</sup> MP Company. He attended MP training at Fort McClellan in Alabama. He was then stationed as an MP officer next to the Willow Grove Naval Air Station at an

Army Reserve Center. After the first Gulf War, he was assigned to a transportation company in North Florida that dealt with shipping containers being transferred from rail or trucks to ships, going to the Middle East.

His Army career as an MP spanned six years of active duty and two years on “Individual Ready Reserve,” totaling an eight-year commitment.

He was at the University of North Florida when he met a recruiter for the IRS. It was a pivotal moment in his life. With his technical and accounting background, combined with his family history and Army MP experience, the offer was not to join the IRS to manage tax returns, but more appropriately, he was chosen to join the IRS-CID, or the Criminal Investigation Division of the IRS. This allowed him to combine his accounting and policing skills to focus on national crime concerns, including tax evasion, tax fraud, money laundering, drug enforcement, and other related financial crimes.

Immediately, the IRS-CID sent David to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (known as "FLETC") for nearly six months of comprehensive training.

And so it went from 1996 to 2022 – a lengthy commitment to the IRS-CID working out of an office close to Fort Lauderdale. Much of his work, success, and experience are confidential. He spent his first six years dealing with tax fraud-type crimes. Then, he was assigned to work with an incredible organization called HIDTA, or the "High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area" (HIDTA task force, specifically the South Florida HIDTA).



Created by Congress with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, HIDTA, with elements of the DEA, ATF, IRS CID, and other agencies, provides assistance to Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical in 33 drug-trafficking regions of the United States. HIDTA plays a very active role and has more than 1,500 authorized special agent positions dedicated to the program. At the local level, the HIDTAs are directed and guided by Executive Boards composed of an equal number of regional Federal and non-Federal (state, local, and tribal) law enforcement leaders.

David worked with HIDTA in the South Florida area for twenty years. Members of HIDTA are comprised of personnel assigned directly by Federal agencies and local law enforcement authorities. During his twenty years in South Florida HIDTA, David worked in the IRS-CID Financial Investigative Strike Force, working cases jointly with the FBI, DEA, HIS, and other Federal, State, and Local law enforcement partners.





Retiring from the IRS in 2022, he spent a year as a private contractor for the Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, working on asset forfeiture and money laundering investigation support for passport fraud, visa fraud, and human trafficking investigations. After a year, he left to manage family time and priorities.

In 2024, Major Oh of our HBPD, who retired from the Lighthouse Point Police Department after a distinguished career, discussed David's next steps and brought him to Highland Beach for interviews. Chief Hartmann immediately recognized the advantages David would offer our town. David was enthusiastic about the idea and worked to become certified as a police

officer, continuing his work representing the Town of Highland Beach on a "Task Force" with HIDTA as a full-time task force officer (TFO) for Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the investigative agency for ICE, in the HSI El Dorado Task Force South (EDTF-S), a task force focused on money laundering and financial crimes.



David works on cases involving money laundering and asset forfeiture, immigration and customs-related financial crimes, elder fraud scams, elder victimization, and common criminal activity, including phishing, spoofing, passport and ID fraud, and similar schemes.

Hint: If you are asked to make a payment (i.e., for your granddaughter who is in jail or a tax penalty due) by using a Crypto ATM, you must recognize this as a crime in progress, and YOU are going to be the victim.

Another lesson: nearly 90% of such elder scams are committed by perpetrators in foreign lands.

Importantly for Highland Beach, by having an officer as part of this Task Force, it will provide our Police Department with direct access to intelligence, resources, training and assistance from the largest federal law enforcement agency in the country.

And the payoff for Highland Beach with such an officer assigned to a HIDTA Task Force is that the town, at the end of the year, gets a percentage of all the seizures, forfeitures, and other assets recovered from criminals investigated by the HSI EDTF-S.

The successful exploits of the HIDTA include two of his cases that were featured on the CNBC television show, American Greed, in which he was filmed. One of those cases, the George brothers' "pill mill" case, was also featured in a CNN Films documentary entitled

American Pain. That case was also featured on another episode on the Discovery TV show "F.E.D.S."

Wow! We wish David every success! When he wins, we all win.

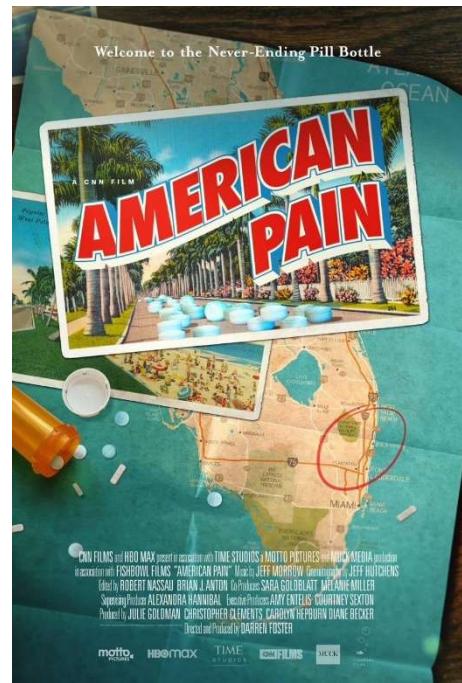
When asked about Highland Beach, he views our town as something quite special. It is a quiet community that is welcoming to our law enforcement officials, as they are to our firefighters and paramedics. Our residents show their gratitude and generosity in many ways, and it makes everyone feel good about their roles and responsibilities. David does not view his assignment as a job, but a trade, and he is highly impressed with the level of professionalism and seriousness of the dedication of the Chief's department to the community.

We have a department with personnel who love their jobs, are highly experienced and skilled, and have extensive contacts within Florida's law enforcement organizations.

David lives today with his wife, Christy, in Lighthouse Point, and she is the Director of the Town of Lighthouse Point's Library.

This writer must admit that, in all the interviews with our Police and Fire personnel to date, it is truly remarkable to see the level of experience, expertise, leadership, and professionalism in such a small town. We all truly benefit from it

Highland Beach is said to be "three miles of paradise". I would extend it by saying Highland Beach is a **safe and secure three miles of paradise**.



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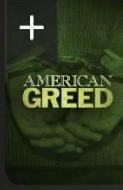
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## Pain Killer Profits

Episode aired Jul 7, 2016 · TV-PG · 42m



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