

Kristen Burton - The Community Connection Analyst

Mindy: [00:00:00] Welcome to Analyst Talk with Jason Elder. It's like coffee with an analyst, or it could be whiskey with an analyst reading a spreadsheet, linking crime events, identifying a series, and getting the latest scoop on association news and training. So please don't beat that analyst and join us as we define the law enforcement analysis profession.

One episode at a time.

Jason: Thank you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason Elder, and today our guest has four years of law enforcement analysis experience, all with Branson PD in Missouri for being an analyst. She was a legal secretary and law clerk and has since left analysis to become a legal assistant.

She's here to talk about communicating to the public. Please welcome. Kristen Burton, Kristen, how we doing? Hi, Jason. I'm good. How are you? I am doing very well. How are things in Missouri?

Kristen: It's getting hot here. Summer's about to start, which is all the humidity and bugs.

Jason: Oh yeah. That's, that is bugs and ew.

Yeah, [00:01:00] it's funny, I live in North Florida and camping season is like January, February, I guess. It's not, it's not hot and there's no bugs. Right. It's camping is not July and August. That's, that's for sure. But anyway so we got a couple things to go over, I'm always fascinated with analyst journey to becoming an analyst and I definitely wanna get your perspective given the court side of things, how you started out your career and how you have recently gone back to the court as well.

Looking to get into all of that. So, how did you discover the law enforcement analysis

Kristen: profession? Well my path to analysis was a little bit different. I didn't decide to even get into the field until my very last semester of graduate school. So I went to graduate school after my undergrad because I really loved criminal justice research and I plan to teach, which I still hope to do one day.

My [00:02:00] master's capstone was a crime analysis research project for the Colorado Attorney Generals. Post division on marijuana enforcement. And so

my research project was on situational factors with driving under the influence of drugs. And this was right after the legalization of marijuana there.

So they were still learning a lot of enforcement techniques and developing training for officers. And I really discovered and fell in love with crime analysis during that, which was great because I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was done there. So during school I worked for Colorado Bureau of Investigation Processing firearm background checks and then Jefferson County District Attorney's Office as a legal secretary and a trainer.

And I really enjoyed being in the law enforcement environment. So that kind of solidified my decision to. Pursue crime analysis. After I graduated and we moved back to Missouri Branson Police Department had an opening for their first crime analyst. I was working, as you mentioned, as a court clerk , at the time for a little small city called [00:03:00] Sparta.

And decided I was ready to jump into the field of crime analysis and I was Branson's first analyst, so I got to build their crime analysis program there as well. Mm-hmm. My previous jobs helped because I learned how to thoroughly read criminal histories, learn how to communicate and build relationships with law enforcement partners.

Learned a lot about what's helpful, prosecuting a case and making it successful. So that really helped with my perspective and how I would help with cases as an analyst.

All

Jason: right. Good. Back to your cap Capstone project for grad school. As you were talking about this, I should know the answer to this question, but I do not, you know when, when folks get pulled over and they think they've been drinking alcohol, they get a breathalyzer.

Mm-hmm. What happens when they think they're high on marijuana? So

Kristen: in Colorado a lot of agencies out there have drug recognition experts. But then also different levels of officers are trained on [00:04:00] like. Different roadsides that you can do for testing for just impairment in general.

Mm-hmm. Some things are more indicative of drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol. Part of my project, it was like a seven phase project actually, so different. Semesters, different students did other projects, and one of the girls

part of our series did one on oral fluid devices. So they were testing out a couple different models of devices where people would spit in them roadside and it would turn a certain color if drugs were present.

I don't know the outcome of that and I wish I had looked that up. And everything we don't use. Anything like that here in Missouri, but that I know of. But I thought that was interesting that at least there's someone working on developing something like that.

Jason: So, yeah. And then you mentioned becoming a law clerk first, like how did that get on your radar?

Because that, that seemed a little bit different going from, graduate [00:05:00] school and studying criminal justice. I know you lo you said you enjoyed the research aspect of it, but that does seem like it's a little bit off the beaten path in terms of the projection. Yeah. So

Kristen: I knew I wanted to stay somewhere in the, the legal field.

And when we moved out here for my husband's job it was right after we had our first son. And so I didn't really have a plan on figuring out what I was doing right away. And that opportunity just kind of fell into my lap. My mom ran into somebody that was hiring for it and they were unable to find someone.

Mm-hmm. With any sort of related experience in the area. So I was, I took that position and that was really awesome. It was so sparta's so tiny. They only have court once a month. So it was really easy to learn something new when you didn't have to do it all the time, like you have time to learn in between.

And I'd done the prosecution office side of things, so I kind of had an understanding of what they would need for court and that sort of thing, which helped. But [00:06:00] I liked that position when we first moved back to Missouri specifically because I knew Colorado laws and Colorado processes in Missouri is very different.

So that was really helpful, kind of easing me into it and letting me have an understanding of Missouri systems. So and that significantly, I was only there for six months at that office before Branson's position opened up. But that really gave me a good jumpstart on learning Missouri processes.

In Missouri laws.

Jason: . No one else I'm curious about is that you have all these different positions with, with the courts. You, you know, you mentioned legal secretary or court clerk, or even though you're a legal assistant, I know there's paralegals in there. And what, what I really hope that you tell me is that they all don't get along and they all don't like each other.

And there's all this cattiness that goes on behind the scenes, but I'm just kinda curious like how these, what's the difference between all those positions and how do they all kind of work together in the system?

Kristen: Sure. So I'll [00:07:00] disappoint you. I got along everybody I know, but you know, court is trying to make sure that.

Our system has a fair process for the, the defendants and for the community for holding people responsible for their crimes. Prosecutors have the same job. They're working with law enforcement to prosecute their cases and hold people responsible. And there's a lot of work back and forth between legal secretaries and the court clerks making sure everything that's being reported on.

Their cases, like on online dockets and things is accurate and working through all the processes and requirements for discovery and for preparing for trials and different hearings and things. So it's got a lot of, you know, good communication and teamwork in order to make sure that the system overall is fair and does what it needs to do.

So I don't know. I know that's probably not what you wanted to hear. Not, not so dramatic. It's, it's different parts of the overall [00:08:00] picture, so,

Jason: No, I figured it was, but part of me was hoping for like the real housewives of the court system kind of thing.

Kristen: I'm sure there's some out there. It just wasn't the one.

Jason: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So so, but. When you decide that you want to be an analyst though. Mm-hmm. You gave me a pretty good stat the other day when we were on the prep call. So how many different law enforcement analysis jobs did you apply for before Branson came along?

Kristen: Yeah, so while we were still in Colorado, I applied to about 65, 66 crime analyst or. Analyst related jobs in the field, just trying to get your foot in the door. Denver is very saturated in the law enforcement field and they don't have a lot of positions, but there are a lot of people there. Mm-hmm.

So it really takes networking and connections in order to get your foot in the door anywhere. And even if you do have your foot in the door, it doesn't always [00:09:00] mean that you'll even get an interview or, or anything. Yeah. So and then when we moved, I. Got the first one I applied to, so it was very different.

Jason: Yeah. Yeah. So how many interviews did you get out of the

Kristen: 65? I didn't have any interviews

Jason: out of those. Whew. Yeah, that's, that's, yeah. That's, that's tough. Yeah. Hmm. Do they, now, what did they, did they even send you anything anymore? . I know I used to, when I'm aging myself, they actually used to send you a rejection letter in the mail.

Yeah.

Kristen: And it really depends on, What agency it was yeah. In Colorado, pretty much everyone uses the government jobs.com. Mm-hmm. And so mm-hmm. They'll just update your status every once in a while. Yeah. Some of them don't ever but like, you don't even get an auto email. You just have to sign in and check it five times a day and see if you were rejected or not yet.

Yeah.

Jason: Yeah. That's a bummer. Yeah. Cause I, I, I think when I was in my twenties. I, I, I don't know, I probably lost count. My wife always got mad at me because I was just [00:10:00] applying for so many jobs. I know it was probably up in the hundreds or whatever it is in my twenties. Before, I think I got my first job, I kept all my rejection letters, and then when I got my job, I.

I burn 'em all at once. Yeah. And this like unofficial ceremony kind of thing. But, but hey, they're

Kristen: good motivation until you get there.

Jason: So. Yeah. Yeah. No, that, that's, that, that is something else is like you know, we're It's, it is really competitive and good for you for sticking with it though. I mean, because geez, after I think, I think a lot of people might have quit after like 30 and you went twice.

Twice that amount.

Kristen: It gets discouraging, but, and that's a, a hard field to get into. I mean, I know a lot of your guests. Give advice on how to break into the field and everything. And so you just have to keep trying, do what works for you till you get there.

Jason: Yeah. Hmm. And I think we're actually going to Denver, I think, as a family this fall.

, my son wants to go to Casa [00:11:00] Bonita. Which is I just called the reopening soon. , yeah. This is the South Park creators bought the restaurant and are supposed to be opening it, it might be actually this weekend or something here soon. So yeah, he wants to, he wants to do that and go to the original Chipotle there, outside of Denver University there, so he Yeah, that's right.

Right by my, my school. . So what do I need to do when I get out out to Denver?

Kristen: Oh, well just be prepared to sit in traffic for a while.

Jason: Yeah, I think we're gonna be there actually, I think we're gonna be there Thanksgiving week. You

Kristen: guys, if they're open, should venture out to Red Rocks and the little town of Golden.

It was the original capital city. Mm-hmm. Of Colorado. And Golden is just the cutest little historic town right along the creek at the Foothills. And Red Rock says right near there, it's a huge concert venue, but also a huge outdoor venue. Yes. And it's, it's beautiful.

Jason: Nice. All right. Yeah. I think we're staying the whole week, so we won't have time to venture out, so yeah.

Good, good, good news.

Kristen: That's my favorite breakfast [00:12:00] place. We finally have a couple in Missouri now. But they're, they're originals in downtown Denver. Oh,

Jason: that's the best. Yeah. What was it? Snooze, snooze. All right. Sounds good. All right. Let's go to Missouri then, because we're Branson, and as you said, it's a lot smaller.

So when you get to Branson what are you trying to tackle? Do you have goals in mind or is this a blank slate? What have you been tasked to do? You mentioned you're the first one. So they're just getting established.

Kristen: So it was kind of a rough start. My lieutenant that I reported to was gone in Texas for. A training for three months. So I just kinda dove right in with the detectives trying to figure out what I was doing. None of them really knew what a crime analyst was. So I started with just kinda learning about their processes and doing a couple ride alongs with officers to learn the city too, because we had not lived here very long.

And then I scheduled an expectations meeting with command staff to kind of see what they were [00:13:00] expecting of an analyst and what, you know, what they wanted. And both of my chiefs at the time came from much larger agencies. One was from. A large city in Texas and the assistant chief came from a neighboring city out in Colorado actually.

And they both came from an agency with crime analysts, so I knew that they would have kind of an idea of what they were used to, what they wanted to see moving forward. And then also talking to the other commanders that didn't know what what exactly the crime analyst position was gonna look like.

So we started our expectations meeting in the first, probably four or five months. We're just trying different work products and different things for administrative statistics and reports. To see what, what they were looking at. And at the same time trying to get my footing in investigations, which is where I was mainly housed and work with detectives to see where I could jump in, what I needed to learn and what I could help with.

Hmm.

Jason: And then what, I guess what, what are the problems there that the police [00:14:00] department's trying to solve? I mean, you know, I did a quick Google. Search, I mean, you know, I know you have the Dolly Parton stampede, you know, dinner theater. I don't know if that gets kind of crazy when it lets out, but what are you, what kind of problems are you trying to solve?

Kristen: Sure. So Branson's a tourist town, we've got tourist season is usually like April or May through about August or September when schools are out and. It's kind of known for just being a family friendly destination. We've got a ton of different attractions and theaters and shows and things. So Branson's main crime problem is property crimes and having so many hotels and theaters where

the cars are in empty for a few hours, that at nighttime we have a lot of vehicle break-ins and you know, thefts from hotel rooms and things like that.

So property crime is really the. The number one thing. And that's harder when most of you know, the tourists are targeted a lot because they either don't notice till they get home that something's missing or [00:15:00] you know, they leave all of their stuff from shopping at the outlet malls in their car while they go to the shows or things like that.

So it's kind of challenging because you have, you know, your local community that you can. Communicate with regularly on what issues you're seeing and how to, you know, crime prevention for that. But then also reaching the tourists that don't follow you on social media or local news and things like that.

So you also have to make sure, you know, you're out there doing enough extra patrols or putting enough other stuff out there to let them know like, Hey, lock your cars, put all of your valuables in your trunk, or leave them. You know, somewhere else. So that I think is probably the, the biggest challenge that the department faces.

Jason: That's interesting. I mean, I guess it's, it's nice when property crime is the, the biggest problem is yeah, certainly. A lot of other police departments have the issue with violence. Mm-hmm. And, but that actually leads us to your analyst badge story, which for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge [00:16:00] story is the career defining case of project that analyst works.

And so yours is a rarity there In Branson, you had a double homicide in 2021. Mm-hmm.

Kristen: Yeah. So we had. A double homicide and it was the first homicide and I think it was five years. I didn't write down my notes. I think it was five years since our last homicide here. I was the first one since I'd worked at the agency.

Okay. So it was, you know, really shocking for the community, really unsettling to feel that that violence is there when, like I've said, we've had mostly property crimes and there's not, not a ton of violence and violent crime. And so that, that case was Really cool on the processing of it and the investigations behind it because it was the biggest case that our unit had worked for, for at least a very long time and used a lot of resources.

And I, [00:17:00] myself and another detective, and then a detective from a partner agency had actually just completed an inac training on cell tool analysis.

A couple weeks prior to us getting data back that would help us in identifying our suspects. It was months and months of police work and interviews and door to doors and researching the victims and trying to get some sort of lead on the case.

And then we finally got Some data back that was able to help us identify the suspects. And I don't wanna talk too much about it cuz the case is not complete right now. But I really wanna emphasize on the importance of learning new, new technologies, especially emerging tech technologies that we're gonna continue to see with location data for through social media or through.

All the modern vehicles or like the Google geofence because those things that you have to kind of think outside the box on, Hey, we don't have a ton of physical evidence or video evidence or witnesses, like, what else can you use to solve that? [00:18:00] Cause otherwise you end up at a dead end. So that was a really cool case.

Getting to work through and process with detectives, you know, learning different techniques. To help further the case.

Jason: , it was in that training though that you learned about geofencing, right? And then you were able to apply it to this case? Yeah,

Kristen: I'd had a previous training on geofencing from our local risk center.

But that was, Probably the most detailed training I had gotten on it and was able to apply it directly to the case, you know, a couple weeks after the training. So it I'd had some overview trainings before and you know, how to request geofence as in process through that. But it, that training was phenomenal in how detailed it was and what else it can do beyond just the location data.

So that was, you know, really integral in. Solving that case for us. And once we were able to process that data too one of the detectives actually linked it to a robbery that we had had a few days prior to the homicides. So that ended up, you know, solving two [00:19:00] crime, two violent crimes that we had had that were both out of the ordinary for our community.

So it took a few months. To, you know, get through everything, locate the suspects and take them into custody. But after doing that, , we were able to let our community know that, it ended up being , a random incident unfortunately.

All

Jason: right. And I know you can't talk specifically about this case, but maybe just in general talk about geofencing and some of the stuff that you learned. Cuz I don't know if that's well known in to our listeners sure.

Kristen: So like I said, I, we first learned about it just in a small, like breakout training after an intelligence meeting with our risk center.

And I. One of the analysts up there was talking about it, and so it the big misconception with it is that it, like it tracks your phones and everything, but Google Geofences are any device that has a Google account on it. So even if it's an iPhone that has Google Maps on it. It would show up or if you have a Gmail account on [00:20:00] any of your devices.

So it's a very long process with Google through their law enforcement portal. It took three months to get through the warrant process and all the different stages that they have. Cuz they do a very good job at protecting privacy. So they make law enforcement really work for the information and narrowing.

Narrowing down the search zone and the geofence for the cases. And I thought it was really interesting cause there's a couple different court cases that are being challenged nationwide. And getting to see the ones that have been upheld using this technology have been very, very cool because it is a great tool and resource when.

Like I said, there's not always going to be evidence that can help you in your case. So you kind of, you, you do your search warrant on a specific location in a geofence, so like around a building or a parking lot. And then you send it off to Google with the PC and then they give it back to you with like a map plotting different data sets.

But they don't give you any personally identifiable information at that point, and they make you narrow it [00:21:00] down through a couple different stages until they're happy with how far you've narrowed it down that it's. Probably gonna work. And it doesn't always come back with data. It doesn't always come back with data that's relevant, but it is good lead information.

So then after you finally get to their final stage and Google's happy with it they'll give you the subscriber information for the Google accounts on devices within that geofence. And then from there, that just gives you an additional lead as if you had gone, you know, Door to door, seeing who was in the neighborhood or whatever.

And can kinda look into different potential suspects or persons of interest that way. And it'll give you some new leads that you may not have gotten otherwise.

Jason: You'll give them a location, maybe a date and time. Mm-hmm. And they will give you a data dump per se, but it doesn't have any identifiers really in the data. Yeah. And then you'll completely cleaned. Yeah. And then you can go through there and kinda see what's what [00:22:00] and be able to whittle it down a little bit further to then say, okay, may we have 1, 2, 3, or X, Y, z, or whatever it is. And then that's mm-hmm. That's when they come back with the, the information there.

And then you can kind of follow those folks and see. How they are maybe part of the incident in question.

Kristen: Yeah, and we've actually used it in several cases. I've helped neighboring agencies learn it as well, so it's been successful helping like overnight burglaries. Because at, you know, with your narrow timeframe businesses are typically closed and if there was a phone in, you know, or a device found in there, that's probably going to be your suspect or at least give you a very good lead on it because that store was not open at 3:00 AM when there's a little now on the map in there.

So it could be used for a lot of different things. One of the things it's not good for though, is heavily populated areas cuz it'll pick up, you know, people driving by on the [00:23:00] street and things like that, so. Sure. And, and then you just also have to hope that they have a device that has Google, you know?

Mm-hmm. Google's feature on it,

Jason: so, yeah. Hmm. All right. And, and did you say that training, I think you mentioned this the other day, did that training that you took or those couple trainings, were, were those free, did you say?

Kristen: Yeah, so our fusion center in the area M O C I C host regular trainings and they hosted Indic CAC to come Deanna and do that training.

And it was. The F B I cast VI team that came down for that. All

Jason: right. Yeah, that sounds great. So we'll put a link in the show notes if listeners will wanna look into that training and I'm sure that maybe you get a

opportunity to bring this training. To your department or your, at least your risk center.

So

Kristen: yeah. And there there's a lot of other geofence training and webinars out there as well. But I highly recommend the inac one cuz it had resources beyond just location data, it had cell toll analysis and other things that would be useful for like narcotics investigations.

Jason: You [00:24:00] had another story as well, just one that happened earlier this year. A 2023 vehicle breakdown. Yeah.

Kristen: So we had a vehicle break-in series with an offender that we deal with all the time and.

Had another series of, of break-ins. And then officers located a stolen vehicle and it matched the description of some of the suspect vehicles from the other cases. And they were able to take the subject into custody and someone we deal with frequently for break-ins of different sorts, from machines to cars, to, you know, a variety of things.

And we were able to take him into custody and then, The next day I got an email from a corporal at the Department of Natural Resources who sent me a picture and was like, Hey, do you recognize the suspect at all? We've had a whole bunch of vehicle break-ins at all of our trail heads, and I'm like, yes, actually that is the suspect.

We arrested yesterday wearing the same clothing for the same crimes. So I just really like that case cuz it's not like, A [00:25:00] major case, but he impacted a lot of victims through that series and a lot of jurisdictions and agencies. So I love that it highlights the importance of, you know, networking regionally especially, we're a lot of small agencies out here so limited resources and just, we deal with all the same people.

So I just thought that one was really fun. How, how easily it was connected and it solved five cases for them, so, yeah.

Jason: Yeah, it's always nice when they make it easy. Same clothes and everything, so, yep.

Jessica: Hey there. This is Jessica Elsmore and this is your friendly daily reminder to remember why you started. Keep your passion, stay involved, and just remember what got you interested in crime analysis

Jason: podcast recently just had their third year anniversary and. [00:26:00] In thinking about that, I realized that I haven't done enough to thank those that have helped me over the years. Kyle McMullen, who's a longtime friend, has designed most of the logos for the podcast and his website. Modern type.com sells planners, business forms, signs and calendars.

All profits from the website go to U P M C, children's Hospital Foundation in Pittsburgh. So if you could shop on his site and help him out, that would be greatly appreciated. And then the song that's playing now, the Ruffin Tumble, Mallory and Scott, my sister-in-law and brother-in-law, the Music and Sound Bites for the podcast they created.

They have a new album only this far. They are touring between Michigan and Colorado this summer. Find their album and their tour dates at the ruff and tumble.com. [00:27:00]

Jamie: Hi, I'm Jamie Roush and I have a really important public service announcement for you. No one wants to hear your conversation on speaker phone in a public restroom.

Kristen: It's awkward for you and for anyone else who comes in. No conversation is that important.

Jason: This does lead us to the next section I want to talk about because Branson is small and you're the only analyst there, it seems like when you, you get this situation where single analyst, small department, that analyst wears many hats and it's almost to the point where they're a little bit like whack-a-mole.

They're just gonna go wherever the the need is. And the, in, in your case you, you got to the point where you were [00:28:00] running the social media account for the police department, and so you got, you dealt with a lot in terms of communicating with the public. Mm-hmm.

Kristen: Yep. I a couple months after I started was given all of the social media to take over because they didn't have anyone to do it regularly.

And it kind of turned into a full-time job in itself. It was a lot of fun and I loved seeing how transferable the skills were between communications and marketing and analysis. So I had a lot of fun with it, but it is also time consuming. Yeah, I bet. So yeah, I, I took over as communications.

Coordinator for all of our social media platforms including adding additional platforms as time went on and really trying to grow their engagement and their audience. So with that, I just wanted to focus on community engagement. And once you build up that community engagement, you create another platform for transparency with the department and building that good [00:29:00] public trust.

With the agency we have. A wonderful community here in Branson that is so supportive of law enforcement and first responders in general. And getting to see the interaction build on social media was really cool. Getting to see more people sharing their stories with us of different incidents that they saw you know, an officer stop on the side of the road and change someone's tire or you know, all the little stories.

A, a sergeant going out and shoveling snow for. A little old lady that couldn't get out of her house and, and things that just, that's their day to day. Like the officers think, nothing, don't give a second thought to it, and they just jump in wherever they're needed. But a lot of that's not seen by everyone else.

So it was very cool getting to see that engagement increase and The opening, that line of communication with the community. And by building that we were able to have an additional platform for crime prevention and updating for crime and safety updates or you know Arrest successes or different resources that we have for the [00:30:00] community.

So I really loved that aspect of it. Getting to help with what trends I'm seeing on the analyst side and making sure we're pushing it out to the public immediately. Like, Hey, we've had an increase in counterfeit bills. Here's what to do if your business gets a counterfeit bill. And how to, you know, how to check and see if something is counterfeit and things like that.

So I liked how much they tied together as well.

Jason: Good. And you, and you mentioned the other day, it was from the time you took over till the time you stopped doing it your followers had grown from 3000 to 15,000. So that's just in a couple of years . Mm-hmm. , what different platforms are you using for social media here?

Kristen: So Branson is on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. LinkedIn next door, neighbors by Ring and YouTube. And you did '

Jason: em all? Yep. Holy cow. Yeah. Oh man. So that is, it was busy. Yeah. Now, [00:31:00] did you use any, Software to help you post maybe similar information to all those, or did you have to go into each one of those one at a time to make a posting?

Kristen: So, my favorite tool that I discovered probably about halfway through. Was Canva which you can make really awesome social media templates quickly on. So that was a life changer and a time saver for me. If you just make a regular Facebook template, it meets the dimensions that you need for every other platform.

So Facebook's business suite allows you to link your Instagram to it. So if I posted that it posts to both of them. And they also allow scheduling. So I just plan my month and schedule out posts so that. All I had to do otherwise was, you know, press releases or anything urgent or like road closures cuz of accidents pop up.

But I just, once I developed kinda some generic templates and things that made it go a lot faster. But then I did have to individually post to Twitter and LinkedIn [00:32:00] and. Next door. But a lot of them now allow scheduling options, which are new within the last couple of months. So that, that helps with, you know, you could schedule 'em all on Facebook and Instagram originally, and then once they eventually post, then you gotta go still manually post 'em to the others.

And I know there are programs out there that you can sign up all your accounts and, and do that, but we're a small department with limited resources, so we did not look into that and just kinda managed it on our own. We also have a communications team for the city, so like, if I was gone or something the communications manager would jump in and help a lot too.

And she actually took it over now that I'm gone.

Jason: , it cracks me up Next door is one that. I, I always laugh cuz I've been part of a couple of different neighborhoods with Next Door and it just seems like that can be the most bizarre postings that you see on all these different platforms.

Yeah, which is amazing to me because of all those different platforms. Nextdoor is the one that [00:33:00] ties you to where you live. Like that. The other ones can, you could be posting and not even be in the same state, but this one next door, it's literally your neighbor that you're maybe talking trash on or that you're commenting on or anything else that it next door gets

Kristen: a little heated.

So we've got Brighton's. Got a huge retirement community here too, so a lot of people aren't on Facebook or Instagram. So that's why the city's had different next door accounts for so long too. That's an easy one to teach people that, you know, are technologically challenged or not interested in social media.

I'm teaching them to get on. So we use that when we have National Night Out and different community events to share it as like a, a digital crime watch and encourage them to just use it that way. But you know, obviously with a tourist population and a changing and growing younger population, we had to get on, get on a lot of other platforms too.

Yeah.

Jason: So, you know, this does oppor great [00:34:00] opportunity for feedback from the public. And we certainly can get into problem solving and, and and whatnot. Do you have an example maybe of a, a really good suggestion that assist then brought to your attention that you all implemented?

Kristen: You know, most of our suggestions and things come in through a, our website.

Website link and not necessarily online. So I don't think I have anything specifically for that. Alright.

Jason: All right. So not that you know, a lot of analysts might not have the luxury to take over the police departments social media accounts, but I did wanna get your advice on. Maybe communication with the public because there certainly might be opportunities for analysts to communicate with the public, whether it's a bulletin or Any kind of advice crime prevention project, for instance.

So why don't [00:35:00] just get your advice on what you've learned over the years. Maybe some dos and don'ts, some advice on basically how to use social media and communicating with the public.

Kristen: Yeah, so I wanna say you should encourage open communication with your community. That's, You know, that's your number one partner for public safety and your best resource.

You know, the. The department serves the community. And so if you encourage that open communication, they feel comfortable to bring problems to you that you may not be noticing or seen in the stats. So building that building that and encouraging that communication and being responsive to it. Can go a long way.

It took, , four years for us to go up 12,000 followers, and that was just on, on the Facebook page. But that, that's higher than the Branson population. The Branson population's about 11,000, so that's 4,000 more followers outside of our area that are on there.

And so that, you know, opens up a whole host of new connections and [00:36:00] resources for you that. You know, may not be beneficial now, but down the line may kind of be key. And when you do put out a public request for assistance for solving a case or things like that so investing in that and investing in your community is very important.

Say you should share relevant information early for crime prevention. If you're noticing a trend pop up like, like I said, like the counterfeiting or vehicle break-ins and you wanna get that information out quickly cuz that'll help either. People have more awareness and be looking for suspicious activity that they can report to you.

Or, you know, helping be that reminder that they needed to take their phone and their purse inside overnight that they'd usually just leave on the front seat or something. Mm-hmm. And then, I think just connecting with your community, like get involved. Analysts are often a behind the scenes type of job just working with officers and not the public.

But some of my favorite things that I've done as an analyst and we'll [00:37:00] continue doing in my legal assistant job is getting out and volunteering at the different department events and community events. And then like I taught in the police citizens academy that we host. Hmm. And so that's a really cool way to, you know, show the community different perspectives in different parts of the department and helping them see what other resources there are for them out there as well to make a difference in their community.

Jason: I like that idea of the community outreach and just showing them what's there. If, if anything else, and I didn't even think about that, would you, your comment about next door. Where, you know, they might not want to venture into the other social media platforms, but they still do want to know what's going on within their own neighborhood.

So they'll be willing to. Take on the next door module there. So that's fascinating. But you have like five or six of these things there too. [00:38:00] Like one of the things that I am just, and this is probably an old man elder comment, but what I get you.

Frustrated with is all the different ways that you're supposed to post, right? Mm-hmm. So Twitter's only so many characters, so you're limited that way. And you know, Snapchat, they're expecting a picture and, and then, and then Facebook, you got one way and maybe next door you got a other way.

, sometimes it can get challenging having this. Same message, go through like five or six platforms.

Kristen: Yeah. The best way to combat that is you make a graphic that says everything you need to see, you wanna share short and sweet like an infographic. And then like on Facebook, people are not gonna just scroll through and read like pages and pages of a post.

Mm-hmm. Or a comment. They want information quick and fast, so they're gonna stop and look at the eye catching graphic, and then you can just have a short little caption or link to a press release or more info, things like that. And [00:39:00] so then you can use that same graphic on Twitter with the same very short and sweet caption and link to a press release with more info.

So it's very easy to cross post if you, if you kind of set it up that way. Yeah,

Jason: I'm sure. When when Jennifer, the. My social media person for the podcast listens to this. She'll be shaking her head cuz she knows that I am, I am old man elder when it comes to all this posting stuff, and so, oh man.

, let's hit on. Your new endeavor. Cause as we mentioned in the intro, you have left law enforcement analysis and you are now a legal assistant. So I'm curious, what made you transfer out and take on this role? What's your goals? Sure.

Kristen: So I'm still with the City of Branson.

I just moved to our municipal prosecutor's office. I was not, Intending to leave and this position was newly created. Our prosecutor is a former Branson police officer as well that [00:40:00] I'd worked with her for years. And when the position opened, it just seemed like a good combination of some of my past experiences a way that I can still help the community, help with, you know, moving forward with some of the cases the officers.

Have built and are working on. And, you know, just kind of a, a change of pace for me. Different types of projects to work on. But I still get to do, I'm still going to be doing the community outreach and my goal is to do like quarterly crime prevention and community education meetings for the public.

So like my first one coming up is in July. I'm gonna do. A senior fraud presentation at the local library. Hmm. Good. So I'll have more time for that sort of thing with this position too. So I'm excited for

Jason: that. Yeah. So that's, that's interesting because when you said legal assistant, that's not something that I think you would venture into to get into crime prevention.

Yeah.

Kristen: And you know, kinda, I still loved doing that from my time involved in the police department. Mm-hmm. And the. [00:41:00] Prosecutor's office that I worked at in Colorado was huge. They had 26 different agencies that, you know, their cases went through that office. And they had a different, a couple different units that had Community resource teams and they'd reach out, you know, to have a shred day for the seniors in the area wanna come and shred all their paperwork with personally identifiable information, educate them on preventing fraud and identity protection and things like that.

Or they'd have a. They'd help host with local law enforcement a day on internet safety for kids and educating parents on how to keep your kids safe on the internet and especially with how fast technology changes, things like that I think are awesome topics to partner with. Prosecution, law enforcement and the community.

Jason: All right. So I guess since we're talking about all the social media, how, how can someone find you if if they want to contact you? Yeah,

Kristen: so I'm on LinkedIn. I think my LinkedIn's public. And so that's probably the easiest [00:42:00] way. I'm also our, the marketing committee chair still for the Men America Regional Crime Analyst Network.

So shooting me a message on there. I'll be able to connect that way too.

Jason: Good deal. All right, well let's finish up with personal interest then. And so we hit on it a little bit in the intro. , you made the comment that it's hot and sticky and buggy outside, but I know you're an outdoorsy person, so, What do you like to do in the outdoors?

Kristen: So we loved moving to Branson because it has all the outdoorsy nature stuff that we loved about Colorado just with a few more bugs. Mm. But we have two little kids and love to take them to the lakes. We're surrounded by three lakes here in Branson and. Go fishing. They've, the boys have both been learning how to fish lately.

So just kinda enjoying the outdoors, spending time at the lake. We started a garden this year, so we're trying to grow. So far, only the pumpkins are doing well, but [00:43:00] hopefully the rest does something

Jason: soon. Yeah, no, I think it should be a good Halloween, right? Yeah. So, so do you, when you fish, do you keep 'em or is it just for fun?

Nope. We just set 'em. Me? Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Cause I don't, yeah, I was gonna ask you if you've gotten into cleaning the fish, right?

Kristen: Yeah. I don't think I wanna do that, so maybe we'll wait until the boys are older and they wanna do it.

Jason: Yeah, yeah. Now, are you just normally fishing from the shore or do you guys get into boating?

We've

Kristen: gone out on boats. Everyone here has. A boat. Yeah, so it's been easy to hop on a boat with friends and, and go out, but usually just from the shore right along table Rock Lake.

Jason: Very good. And then what are they normally fishing for?

Kristen: Table rock has a lot of bass and trout and sunfish. So

me

Jason: think, did you see that story about those people competing in Ohio and they put weights in the fish?

Did you see that story? No. That's crazy. Yeah. So these guys had been winning all these tournaments, these fishing tournaments, right? [00:44:00] And they like, people were complaining because their fishes didn't look nearly as big, but they were outweighing the competition. And so some guy finally had it and he just took the guy's.

Fish right there at the tournament and cut it open. And here they had these like ball-bearing weights , in the fish. , and they had already won hundreds of thousands of dollars at tournaments. Right. Wow. They just prosecuted that case.

They got like, I wanna say they got like two months, maybe it's two months in JR. Or so, or, and then it was suspended sentence or something like that. But they got their boat seized and of course they, they're banned for life from like, yeah. Ever holding a fishing license in the state of Ohio.

Kristen: That's crazy.

We have a ton of fishing tournaments around here cause we're fast Pros. Headquarters is. About an hour north of us in Springfield. Oh, okay. So they host all the tournaments and things down here at the lake. Yeah.

Jason: So now, now they're gonna have to throw all the, they're gonna have to watch out. Yeah. Yeah. All the, all the fish have to go through [00:45:00] metal detectors now, apparently.

Or something. Or X-ray. X-ray all the, the, all the fish to make sure nothing's in there. So, But anyway. All right. Well, very good. Our last segment to the show is Words to the World. This is where I give the guests the last word. Kristen, you can promote any idea that you wish. What are your words to the world?

Kristen: I wanna share that people should take time to take care of yourself. Departments need to prioritize this too, but the only way that you can. Be certain that you'll take care that you'll get taken care of is if you prioritize taking

care of yourself. Everyone in public service fields are used to fast paced, go, go, go doing anything to jump in and help anyone at any time.

You're gonna get burnout. You're not gonna properly process your experiences if you do this. So I just strongly encourage departments to prioritize this and share this message with their people and focus on it. Our department is very cool in the fact that they started up one of our sergeants, Tanner Mauer, started the Ozark Mountain Peer Support team a couple of years [00:46:00] ago.

It was grant funded and it has taken off and helped a lot of first responders in the area. And it's connected to, you know, law enforcement, EMS, fire. And I just, I love seeing how that program's evolved and seeing departments that are taking care of the mental health of, of all of

Jason: their staff.

Very good. Why leave every guest with, you've given me just enough to talk bad about you later, but I do appreciate you being on the show, Kristen. Thank you so much and you'd be safe. Thank you, Jason.

Kristen: You too.

Mindy: Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analyst Talk with Jason Elder. You can show your support by sharing this and other episodes found on our website@www.elliottpodcasts.com.

Kristen: If you have a topic you would like us to cover or have a suggestion for our next guest, please send us an email@elliottpodcasts@gmail.com next time analyst. Keep talking.