

Steve Bennett - The Counter Drug Cliffhanger

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 be 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 10 years of law enforcement analysis experience. It's experience with the Ohio National Guard, the Ohio Air National Guard, and the Ohio Bureau of Workers Comp. He's founded and runs his own company, ESEE, and he's here to talk about threat assessments.

Thanks Please welcome Steve Bennett. Steve, how are we doing?

Jason,

Steve: thanks for having me. I'm really excited to be on.

Jason: All right. Excellent. We got

a lot to go over here. I think you are going to bring a different perspective than [00:01:00] maybe some of the other guests I've had on this show. How did you discover the law enforcement analysis profession?

Steve: Well, yeah, well, first I hope it's different in a good way. Neither bad nor good. Right. Yeah. Yeah, I gosh I'll have to start with a little bit of a cliffhanger. I found a profession at a funeral. I was in a cemetery, and there was an interesting sequence of events that just sort of led me down a path that led me to that exact moment where I was in the right place at the right time in a cemetery that led me into this profession.

So I've always been sort of, like, interested in the world, and geography, like, as a kid I loved where in the world is Carmen Sandiego, and... That sort of noir detective thing trying to figure out what's going on and just learning geography and grew up, I, I love James Bond movies and spy films spy novels anything that has to do with, like, secrets or finding things, treasure maps, scavenger hunts, hide and seek that, that was [00:02:00] all my jam when I was a kid and so I think , I'm 35 now, and so that means I was in the 8th grade, I think, when 9

11 happened, and I had a sister living in New York at the time, and I, I, like, like so many people, it, it affected so many people who Who were there and who remember 9 11 in many different ways.

For me, having a sister in New York City that is, it especially touched home. I mean, I, I was pulled from school. I remember sitting three, four feet from the TV screen, just watching everything unfold. And I remember just being very thoughtful and contemplative and, and just sort of engrossed in, in the spectacle of this disaster.

And I remember everyone's reactions to it, and I remember how uneasy people felt how, how, how much fear or anxiety there was just in and among America. And I remember [00:03:00] September 12th. And I remember how unified the country was or how unified the country can be. And I, I think I was always sort of on that course to maybe sort of work with other people and work in the government, but I mean, happening or me witnessing nine 11, I think in the eighth grade.

And then the quote unquote, the nine 11 wars, Iraq and Afghanistan sort of happening really over the past 20 years those are really my formative years high school into college, and that had a huge effect on me. So I really just wanted to find something that was interesting to me, and it made people feel safe because I, again, I remember that fear, that anxiety, that uncertainty that feeling of not being safe all the way back from 9 11, so I wanted something in public safety something along those lines, but again, I was interested in like, The rest of the world.

So I graduated from high school and went into college just like everyone else did. And I declared my [00:04:00] major as international studies specializing in security and intelligence. And that was at Ohio state. And Ohio state, the international studies program it turns out it's a really robust program.

They got like 10 or 11 different specializations. Half of them are regions of the world. You could specialize in Latin America or Eastern Europe, for example. And then the other half are just sort of global issues. So mine was a global issue. It's security and intelligence. I'll be honest with you, Jason, I, I was not ready for school.

I was never really a good student. I had someone tell me once that I had a sailors report card, , and no offense to any, and no offense to any sailors, but I, I had seven C's . And so yeah, I was just never a great student. There was some stuff going on in my personal life at the time.

And a lot of my financial backing sort of went out the window. So I I, I left school, I left school and student loans came out of deferment and started paying on those and I just got a job. Just like anyone else. I I was [00:05:00] working for Sega, which sort of owned and operated like a big arcade and restaurant and bar, kind of like a Dave and Buster's sort of deal.

And did that for about two years when one of the assistant general managers or something of the restaurant he told me, you see, like sat me down and just gave me some guidance that I think I was, I was desperately needing. He was, I think, pushing 50 and he said Steve. You're not going to want to be doing this when you're my age, and I just sort of took that in and thought about it, and I said, you know what?

I think you're right. So I wanted to get back to what I started, and so this is where the series of events where that sort of led me down this path to what I'm doing now. I wanted to get back to what I started, get back in school, finish my degree work closer and closer and closer to that, that sort of public safety sort of career, so I joined the Ohio National Guard.

I joined the Army National Guard, and that was in [00:06:00] 2010. So I was 22 at that point. I joined the national guard and within a few months I was hired on as a like civilian employee for the national guard. So my Monday through Friday job was working as a civilian for the national guard in the finance office.

I was doing like audits and making sure people get paid on time, that sort of stuff. But I got that job cause I got a good reference just from the military side of things doing that drill. Going to drill one weekend a month someone his name was David Yeoman. He was like my first NCO, my first sergeant.

Sergeant David Yeoman, he put in a good reference for me and said, hey, he'd be a good employee. So I got set up with an interview, got that job and worked that job for about three years just in the finance office for the National Guard. But during that time one, there was a sergeant major who worked on the floor above me.

And he was making the rounds and he was looking at just some of the people who work in the office and he knew that I was actually in the Guard. I'm not just strictly [00:07:00] a civilian. And he asked me if I wanted to join the Honor Guard, do parades and flag ceremonies and funerals.

So you can sort of see the connection here to the cemetery. So I said, sure, I'll do that too. Why not? So I did some honor guard stuff for a few years just as

needed. I would go do funerals for veterans and fold the flag and present it to the next of kin. And that sort of led me to, let's see, about 2013, late 2013.

It was winter, maybe November or December. It was cold. It was a snowy, big, fluffy snowflakes. I was doing a two person detail for a funeral, and we're waiting for the funeral procession to arrive, and I'm talking to her, this, this other soldier, and she's talking to me about what I'm doing, and what I'm going for in school.

At this point, I'd gone back to school again, that's why I joined the National Guard. It just had the most benefits I could use the most [00:08:00] immediately. So I was back in school, sort of taking one or two classes at a time, and doing this National Guard thing, and drill, and working as a civilian employee.

And when I mentioned that I was working towards a degree in security and intelligence, she said, really? Because my full time job, aside from all this Honor Guard stuff, is working on the National Guard's counter drug task force. And I said, Well, what's that? And then the funeral procession arrived. So I had him out like, yeah.

So time out, I had to sort of store that thought in the back of my mind. And we had to do the whole funeral and play taps and fold the flag and presented to the next of kin and everyone had left and we were peeling off our gloves and taking off our hat and everything and I, I brought up that point and I say, Hey, you mentioned the counter drug task force.

What's that? And she explained to me what she specifically did was more on the prevention side of drug abuse. [00:09:00] She was involved with like community coalitions and stuff, but she said by and large, the vast majority of national guardsmen on the counter drug program. Our crime analysts, they work for the National Guard at civilian law enforcement agencies, and they kind of work as an intelligent as an intelligence analyst.

And I said, That sounds really cool. How can I get on that? She said, Well, let me talk to someone says, Okay. So I was set up for an interview. I interviewed, I think in We're Like maybe January or February time frame. And I started with the counter drug program in February of 2014. And that was my first job as an intel analyst at a law enforcement agency.

So that's sort of how I got to the career and how I sort of found out about it. Just the sort of series of events. And really that's the whole reason I joined the

National Guard. I wanted to get back to what I was doing. Get back in school, , get in the right crowd. And so far so good. ,

Jason: quite a story.

You had me on the edge of my [00:10:00] seat because you started with a funeral, you went to nine 11 and started talking about your sister. And that's right where my head went. I was like, Oh, he's at his sister's funeral kind of thing. That's where I like, I went, I wonder how many of our listeners thought the same thing.

. So I, I think it's interesting your journey here because when you were in high school, when we're 17, 18 years old, we're asked to go out on our own and Set out this path to do. And I I'm a big believer in that college isn't for everybody. Military isn't for everybody. Trade schools aren't for everybody, but they are right for certain people, all those things.

And so I think from your perspective, it's interesting because you go to school, and it doesn't work out the way you think. And it's a setback. [00:11:00] And. So that decision to leave school had to be a tough one, right? And then you go and have some, maybe a little bit serendipitous you talk to your manager there that correct your path, if you will.

And then you join the national guard at 22 and. Am I wrong to think that probably you're 22 and the rest of the people that are joining the National Guard at that time are 18?

Steve: Yeah. I, I was on the old, I was on the older side. Yeah. Not the oldest. We did have a 41 year old in my basic training platoon.

We called him private Moses. Yeah. But yeah, , I was on the older side at 22. Yeah. So

Jason: That's different. And it can make you feel self-conscious. Right now i think is what i'm getting at and i think this is might be a little bit more of a maybe it's an american trade i don't know but i think we're too tough on our failures but we should all realize that it's all a learning [00:12:00] experience.

Right. And yeah, learn by you learn by doing right. And some, it's not always going to be pristine game winning shot. First try, get everything right. It's not always going to be pretty. Yeah.

Steve: And that was a tough lesson. I think for me to learn, I, I had, so those first few years when I started college before I left I was doing naval ROTC.

Yeah. I was going to be a naval intelligence officer. That was the goal. That was the dream see the world and do Intel and all that. But I, I was doing it as an extracurricular. I was not being paid to do it. I was not on scholarship from the Navy to be doing that. It was just something extra on top of my already.

On top of my own challenges with school and some of my best friends, I got two best friends. I've been best friends with them since like swim lessons when we were three and four years old, I'm serious. And two of my best friends, they're [00:13:00] twins. They both went to ROTC program and it was really sort of tough when I saw them get their commissions and graduate on time.

And. Even now they're both still in their active duty army and they're out doing army things and they're being paid as an officer and they're doing officer things. And that's still something that I never really accomplished, but I, I was chipping away at my degree.

I, I came back to school several times just sort of doing it one or two classes at a time. And so sometimes I would even go a semester or two taking no classes just because it just didn't work with my schedule and I always sort of had a chip on my shoulder.

I'm an international studies major, but I can't really go to a study abroad because I'm in the National Guard. I got to be in Ohio one weekend a month for drill and seeing it was really tough. If you're in school long enough, you'll see, you'll meet people as freshmen and then you'll see them graduate and you're still working on [00:14:00] it.

So yeah, I, it took me I did finally get my bachelor's degree in 2018, just chipping away on it slowly, but surely, and it got to the point where I didn't really need it. So much. I was already working as we discussed as an analyst, but

I always saw it as a, as a disadvantage that all these other people just get their degree and get out and go out into the world and do great things. And here I am trudging along. And it wasn't really until the last year or two of school, that final stretch, maybe 2016. Yeah. 2017 even where I really began to see how all my work experience and all the experience from the military, I can actually bring that into the classroom and it's not a disadvantage.

I actually have a huge advantage just in school. And it took a, it took a very long time for me to sort of realize that it's not a race, it's a journey. And [00:15:00] My journey was worth having

Jason: you did it your own way, which is, I think, is, is important and a little bit of the lesson learned that there is multiple paths to the same destination and I find it fascinating.

I was just, talking it was nikki north on the podcast and how you're going through this process maybe it's always something with its early adulthood early twenties and you have these two sets of people one there one folks are going through college and maybe the other one don't have college but or don't in in the workforce.

And it seems that both of them are wanting what the other one has or is working on right if you're if you're if you don't have that degree and you're working you're getting real life experiences but that that idea of not having a degree can chip away at you and something that you'll [00:16:00] yearn to have and then when you're in college and you're going through all these classes is You yearn to have some real world experience, so when you go out to the job force, it's not just, hey, I know how to read a book, take a test, and write a paper.

And it is this balancing act between the two as you get into your mid twenties that you have to somehow resolve. Between getting practical experience and getting the education.

Steve: Yeah, it's it's, it's a challenge and I think right now with this job market people are looking for people, but the job market comes and goes and there's always that problem where you need experience to get the job, but you can't get the job.

Because you don't have, because you don't have experience sort of this like cyclical problem, you know? Yeah, I sometimes I get asked, how did you get into this profession? Because there's a lot of people who would like to get into the, into [00:17:00] this or something like this, something in Homeland Security or public safety or something like that.

And. The best thing that I can tell them is just work on getting closer don't focus on the finish line, focus on the next step and you'll be there before you know it. If you are, if you are consistently getting closer and closer, maybe you go take this class, maybe you attend this webinar, maybe you get hired as a records

clerk or something at a law enforcement agency start somewhere, just get closer.

You got to think of it in, in, in. In inches, not in miles. And as you get incrementally closer, I mean, before long, I mean, you'll just, you'll be a shoe in you'll, you'll be happier and happier with every step closer.

Jason: So let's let's go on to the national guard and talk a little bit about that because I think Haida.[00:18:00]

And so I knew that there was these analysts that were in the National Guard that worked narcotics investigations. So I am familiar with it, but I think the general audience may not be familiar with this. So maybe let's just go over just generally speaking how the National Guard fits.

And to the overall maybe narcotics investigations in Ohio. Sure.

Steve: Yeah. Yeah, it's, it's kind of weird. It's kind of wonky like, what is the military doing here in my local law enforcement? Yeah. Yeah. And why, why is there an analyst? Yeah. It's kind of weird. There are many, many analysts throughout the whole nation who.

Are sort of in this situation. They work for the National Guard's counter drug program. Many people often work with them, not even realizing they're actually there at the law enforcement agency on the National Guard's payroll. Their, their paycheck is coming from the [00:19:00] Department of Defense. So what's up with that?

Yeah, it's a great question. So you almost have to think of the National Guard as 54 different national guards 50 states and four territories, and they each have their own counter drug program. And it's a part of the national drug control policy to implement the whole of government resources.

And there is. And I forget the exact title, the Undersecretary of Defense for, I believe, counter narcotics. So there is a part of the Department of Defense that, that does this sort of thing. And that's sort of where we get direction from in the National Guard. So each state has their own program, and their needs are sort of based on demand and risk to that particular state.

Ohio is last time I checked was on the bigger side as far as programs go. They're yielding results, and good results, and the drug threat is [00:20:00] high. So they tend to get more funding not the most funding I would have to imagine. That

many border states or people with big drug inter interdiction issues to get more funding.

But yeah, it is on the bigger side. So Ohio has a very robust program. We had when I left the counter drug program in 2022 yeah, I believe we had close to 50 analysts in the whole state. And again, they're embedded with civilian law enforcement agencies. And that's something that's unique that the National Guard can do, that the reserves and the active duty military cannot do.

Then that's because the National Guard is state controlled under United States Code Title 32. The federal military under United States Code Title 10 cannot engage in domestic law enforcement like this. So it's a unique position for the National Guard and Through the way that the United [00:21:00] States code is written allows the National Guard to do this, to use these quote unquote, state assets to do this mission, to assist law enforcement.

We're not acting as law enforcement. I think that's a very important point. We're not door kickers or we're not, we're not putting hands on suspects or we have no authority to detain anyone. We are working as analysts, by and large to assist law enforcement in everything that a crime analyst or intelligence analyst would do.

So, At a high level view. That's sort of what the program is.

Jason: So let's get into some of the stuff that you're you were doing specifically. So you get there. You're just at around 2014. What kind of tasks are you doing where you're located? Where you part like a multi jurisdictional? Authority or what just kind of describe describe the position.

Steve: Yeah. So everything that we do had to be drug related So we were all we I was [00:22:00] working narcotics and I trained up at At a height of funded task force for like just two or three months, just to work with a very experienced analyst and learn, learn the job because it was all new to me. They did a lot of package interdiction and the packages would come in and they would get processed and I would assist by taking photos or entering the information into a database, seeing does it connect to anything else?

Where was the courier going? Where are they coming from? All that. Stuff that you do with narcotics but I was only there for like three months getting trained up. And I mean that that was a heck of an eye opening experience for someone who's never done this before. I, I think one day on the job when I was there for

those three months K 9 alerted to a Xerox machine, like a big like office Xerox machine.

There were drugs apparently hidden inside. And the detectives handed me a hatchet [00:23:00] and they said, all right, you're going to help us. Yeah.

Jason: Toner is not supposed to be white.

Steve: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And yeah, I mean we, we put on all the PPE and everything and we went all All office based on beat the crap out of this thing and open it up and got these bundles of weed and I think some black tar heroin out.

So yeah, I mean, very eyeopening experience and, so, before long I got to go to the Highway Patrol's Intelligence Unit that was just a few months later there in 2014, and I worked at the Highway, the Highway Patrol's Intelligence Unit for almost two years and what a place to learn it. To be an analyst.

It was rigorous. It was fast paced. It was in Ohio. That's the only 24 7 intelligence unit for law enforcement. It's like an Intel call center and it's available 24 7 at staff 24 7. You would work something if you don't get it done by [00:24:00] the end of your shift, you pass it on to the next shift and it would it would usually be done By the next morning.

So fast turnaround times and you work whatever comes in. You kick it back out, and you usually don't hear how it turned out or how it impacted the investigation, which I think is a normal problem for an Intel analyst to not get some feedback, but when you're working in that kind of environment where it's like an Intel call center, really yeah, I mean, I think that's especially prevalent to not hear how it turned out or how useful what you worked on was.

So yeah, I did that for almost two years. Again, just fast paced churn and burn before long we had a, so the highway patrol had a couple analysts on special assignments who were not like physically in this 24, seven Intel unit, they were out doing other things and one of them was working in.

What the highway patrol calls criminal patrol. That's like the [00:25:00] plainclothes task force officers. The they, they do the interdiction and do all the investigations and everything, the drug interdiction and everything that goes along with that, the bulk cash and human trafficking, everything. We had one analyst assigned to one trooper in particular and that one analyst, I believe, got hired on as a manager at a HIDA out west, I think one of the HIDAs in

California, and I asked if, if I could go if I could fill in, if I could go do that and to my surprise, they agreed.

And I thought that was really cool. Like I'm not even their employee and they're trusting me to like, go do this. I'm already working for the military, but I don't work in my uniform. I don't work with anyone from the military. So I basically have no oversight from my employee I have no oversight from the military and then for the.

For the highway patrol to send me somewhere where I have no oversight from the Intel. I mean, I was really on my [00:26:00] own, you know just me and this trooper. But that, that was a cool experience and it's like the complete opposite of the Intel unit. Like, yeah, of course I'm still doing Intel, but now I'm working cases start to finish.

And I have essentially one customer and I just work all of her cases. And, and that was a really cool experience. That was a really cool experience. So that lasted about 20, like late 2015 to about 2017. So, yeah.

Jason: So I guess what what are you seeing at this point in time? Cause it's, as you said, you're, you're, you're doing a lot, a little bit of fast pace, getting to more case support.

But you really have your, you're out and about, right? When I talk to a lot of analysts, they're behind the desk, they're behind the computer, they're not out and about the office. And so I'm curious in terms of patterns and trends that you're seeing during this time.

Steve: Yeah yeah, with Criminal Patrol, I was definitely out and about [00:27:00] more than when I was at the intel unit.

Whenever my trooper had to go interview someone and typically it would be someone who got pulled over, canine alerted then .. The probable cause search yielded some drugs or money or something. And then they needed interviewed by my investigator that I was supporting. So that's typically how I would get involved.

And oftentimes, yeah, I, I would go out there and do the interview with them. Well, not with them. There were very strict rules where being, being with the National Guard you can't like have contact with the suspects. But yeah, I mean, I would sit in the same room and take notes or I would be doing that real time Intel as the suspect is talking, I would be verifying details.

And there've been a couple of times where I I found something or found. An inaccuracy or a lie, and I would just sort of pivot my laptop over to my trooper and point Hey, take a look at this, and she was very, very smart, very savvy. She would pick up on what I was putting down and she [00:28:00] would go back and she would ask the suspect about that.

So, yeah, that was very cool. I would still say, by and large, I was definitely in the office more, it, but I was definitely out of the office more than when I was at the Intel unit. So yeah, it was definitely a interesting time. So I think that was the first time I got to go on a search warrant.

Jason: Yeah. It's always cool. Right. Yeah. Always different and different, totally different experience I think that's really what it's about. We talked about all this, a different way of gaining experiences is just being, being exposed to these different events and what you get out of it as, as you just see and learn and

Steve: observe.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah, a lot of vehicle interdiction, a lot of vehicle concealments and all the sort of trends that go along with that saw some interesting stuff, really weird places you can hide drugs in a vehicle, really weird places, yeah.

Jason: So I'm curious to know, or at least get your perspective on, if you don't know this outright, is [00:29:00] if, if somebody is, Interested in being an intelligence analyst, being a crime analyst.

, is one , pretty straightforward path is you could join the National Guard and be... Could be put into this path to something similar that you experienced, or is this something that it's pretty highly competitive? It's really difficult to get in to be in an analyst like you.

Steve: Hmm. Well I think the it once you're in the national guard, I think that's the biggest challenge is Getting in the national guard. I mean to be able to get into the military You got to be physically fit. You got to be qualified to do the job that you're doing you there's all those things that go with just getting into the military but after that, yeah, with the national guard both army and air.

It's a joint program both army guard and the air guard can join the counter drug program in every state and four territories have this counter drug program. So no matter what sort of National Guard you're in, [00:30:00] yeah, I think once you're in the National Guard, you could absolutely seek it out, and so many

people that I know from the National Guard, including other states and territories it, the program has served as a launch pad, as it has for me, into other things it definitely leads to other things, I mean, if you think about it I didn't get my degree until 2018, but I was working as an analyst at a law enforcement agency since 2014.

I mean, that's four years of experience working full time at a law enforcement agency before I even have my degree and. I can't think of anywhere else where you could really pull that off. I mean, I've heard of dispatchers or records clerks becoming analysts and that that's great, but they, they have that prior law enforcement sort of experience.

And coming into this with like no law enforcement experience yeah, I, I feel very privileged to do what I have done with the counter drug program.

Jason: Yeah. And you, and you mentioned in the beginning [00:31:00] about when you decide to leave school that student loans. Right, that, that, that aspect.

Yeah. So, I mean, yeah,

Steve: I yeah, I so I, I mentioned sort of my financial backing sort of fell out from behind me what, what it was. So my gosh, I was 18, 19 and my parents divorced. My dad, he was working for OSU but then he left and went. Worked for a different hospital. He's working at the hospital at Ohio state, but as an OSU employee, even at the hospital that meant my tuition was 50 percent off.

And so I, I was sort of living the dream, right. Where you just sort of live off of student loans. So I'm taking out student loans and, and at the time I didn't really feel the need. To hustle or work. And, and I, I was young and dumb. I didn't have a great financial understanding of how these things work.

Or I just assumed that that's what everyone does. Everyone gets student [00:32:00] loans, right. And you get a job and then you pay the student loans back. Right. That's how it works. But I, yeah, I left school because everything going on with the finances and personal life. And now my student loans come out of deferment.

Oh my gosh. And I was in no. put a position to pay for them. Yeah, I mean, again, I mentioned I joined the national guard. Yes. To get back in school, but yes also to get me in touch with the right crowd and the right people to get me on the right track because I was off track. I, I think when I enlisted in the national guard, I put down Intel analyst as my first choice.

That's what I wanted to do for the military. And as they were screening me we came to finances and I mean, Hey, I, I owed student loans. I had a lot of debt. Some were very nearly in I think three different loans were in collections. Like my credit rating was like 400. And they, they told me that I can, I cannot get a security clearance, a top secret [00:33:00] security clearance.

So they asked me what my second choice was and I said, military police, they said, well, you need a secret clearance for that. So I couldn't even get my second choice. So I, I ended up working in logistics, which did not need a clearance. But I mentioned I got hired on in the finance office a few months later.

I think this was March. Of 2020, or I'm sorry, 2011. So I get back from basic training. It's like August, October, I get in, in time to start school that's that semester. And then, yeah, I mean, within five, six months I was hired on full time by the national guard and all of a sudden I needed a clearance for that job.

And I had to demonstrate that I'm, I'm on track with these loans and. Here's some proof of payment. I'm on a payment plan. I'm getting all squared away. Yeah, I mean that, and that, that, that was a big step forward for me who really just had no understanding of finances or the The, [00:34:00] the hurdles that you can put in front of yourself when it comes to finances, especially in this career field, where you do need to worry about things like financial disclosure statements and security clearances.

And, and your, your personal life really does come into play when you're being evaluated for these law enforcement positions. And yeah, you. You gotta keep that in mind, that's just not something some, like me, some 18, 19, 20 year olds are thinking about.

Jason: Let's go on then, and I wanna spend some time talking about you becoming a cyber intelligence analyst.

So yeah, they open up a new 179 cyber operations group and you join the Air National Guard as an intelligence analyst.

Steve: Yeah, yeah, that was pretty recent. It, it's making national headlines. It's attracting a lot of people and a lot of talent from all over the. Air [00:35:00] National Guard nationwide.

They were looking for a site to establish a cyberspace wing which is roughly it's like, it's like an army or Marine Corps terms, a brigade or something. So it's a, it's a really big size. It's really big element. And this would be the first one

nationwide in the National Guard. And they decided on Mansfield, Ohio is where the one 79th airlift wing.

So it was a C one 30 unit. They would pick stuff up and move it. And they are converting from a C one 30 unit or have converted just last month, they read, they officially re designated the one 79th airlift wing as the one 79th cyberspace wing. And like I said, yeah, it's attracting a lot of attention just making national headlines.

The chief of staff of the Air Force has come out to Mansfield, Ohio. And for everyone not familiar with Ohio geography, that's about an hour's drive north from Columbus. So sort of north central there in the state. But [00:36:00] yeah, it's a really cool, really exciting opportunity. And after 13 years in the army national guard, I transferred to the air national guard and I am slotted to be a cyber intelligence analyst.

I wish I could tell you more about the air force, but honestly, I mean, this is pretty recent. I, I only transferred just this past March and to be honest with you, Jason it feels like I've only been in the air force since breakfast, you know but. Yeah, it's a very exciting mission. I'm excited for what they're going to be doing.

A lot of people, when I tell them this, they're thinking, Oh yeah, cyber security is like a really big deal right now. And it is, it is, but I think that's thinking too defensively. You got to remember this is a military unit and we are going to be on the offense. We are, we are the cyber threat.

For our, for our foreign adversaries and any more, any more specifics, I think I'll have to leave to the imaginations. Yeah, I see that, but

Jason: I [00:37:00] do find it fascinating. You, you, you have an army experience. You talked about the Navy and now you have the Air Force. So, I mean, if you want to. Finish the round robin.

You're going to have to get the Marines and Coast Guard in there sometime during your lifetime. Yeah,

Steve: I I'm working on my bingo card for sure. All right.

Jason: So then let's talk about you going into well, let's do it this way. Let's, let's talk first about you being the threat assessment coordinator.

Sure. And then we will get into your consulting company. How about that?
Sure. Yeah. Sounds good. Alright, so then , in 2022, you joined the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Comp as the Threat assessment Coordinator, which is is I think as you mentioned in the prep call, as the is a unique, job for for an analyst to be doing.

Steve: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I I came off of my active duty military orders with the counter drug [00:38:00] program in 2022 in January. So I spent a lot of last year doing a job search for analyst positions. And yeah, I interviewed for this position at the Ohio Bureau of workers compensation and what attracted me to it is that.

In the state of Ohio, the job is classified as as a public safety intelligence analyst, PSIA. And I said, gosh, I mean, that's like everybody I've worked with at the highway patrol and other state agencies. I know exactly what that position is. Jason, I thought I was really familiar with the job description.

But the job description and anyone can Google it, the job description, it has two paragraphs. The first paragraph is like all the usual stuff that you would expect. Prepares briefings and reports, you know combines information from many different sources to produce new actionable information.

All that stuff. And then the second paragraph is the one I was not aware of.[00:39:00] . It begins or at BWC and then it lists all the stuff that I'm doing in my current position as the threat assessment coordinator. So yeah, in the public safety intelligence analyst position, I am the only one in the whole state of Ohio that that second paragraph in the Job description applies to and it's pretty new, pretty different.

And it's kind of cool to be honest. Yeah, I, I've never worked in a job like an Intel position where everything I do is so clearly reactive or proactive. It's so clear. It's so neatly falls into one of those two categories. On the reactive side, as an analyst, I conduct investigations into threats.

I work as a part of our security team and I investigate threats. I investigate workplace violence. I make investigations into I make, well, not recommendations, but I give my findings to labor relations or human resources to determine what next steps that they need to do [00:40:00] on their end based on my findings.

As an investigator, I, I interview people involved and I interview witnesses and it's very interesting for an intelligence analyst to be, to go direct and to do that.

Human intelligence collection, you know and then on the proactive side, I'm constantly evaluating and reevaluating our security measures.

I'm on the lookout for any threats to the agency or facilities or our people. I'm making recommendations On security improvements I'm working with Ohio Homeland Security and other Homeland Security professionals just to be on the lookout for trends or anything that might affect our business operations.

So in the private sector, I've come to learn this is called corporate security is what I'm doing, corporate security, and I've also learned that this job. At least in the past is really like a retired cop job [00:41:00] so for me to come to it as someone who's not retired from law enforcement I'm coming to it mid career if that and, as an analyst, not not as a former cop, I'm coming to it as as an analyst. I think it's really interesting. And I'm hoping that I'm making a difference to the safety and security of the people I work with. Yeah, it's it

Jason: is. It makes me laugh because there's so many people that I knew.

The, they were double dipping, right? They were collecting their pension from their time in law enforcement and now had that next job, either in the private sector or consulting or whatever it is. And they were just living the good life, collecting two paychecks at once. Oh yeah. So, is it strictly, like, investigating, writing reports, or are you guys doing any, like, active mock situations where you're, you're testing out? Your response to a [00:42:00] particular

Steve: threat. Yeah, we so continuity of business operations or the coop or the co op or whatever the continuity of operations is something that's sort of in the wheelhouse.

We do have to think about well, what if there's a power outage? What if there's a pandemic, how do we keep this going? So we do work on that and we come up with a plan. We're actually going to be updating our continuity of operations binder, I think, next year. So in the coming months and I believe when COVID happened, there was no plan for like a pandemic working work that's going on.

Not in the cards. There was no plan. So it just was not conceived of. So I again, coming to this from as an analyst and thinking about these low probability, high impact possibilities and scenarios, and it may be even doing tabletop exercises with some of the senior leadership.

I think that would be interesting. A really cool, like fun idea [00:43:00] that maybe hasn't been tried before sort of give them the, the information drops. All

right, here's the situation and just go around the table like, well, what are you going to do? What are you going to do? What are you going to do?

And yeah, I think there's room for that for sure. Yeah.

Jason: So, yeah, I, do it. I once applied for a job in Tennessee. I didn't get the job, but part of the task, was to, travel around Tennessee and assessing vulnerable spots for threat assessments. So anywhere in Tennessee that may be a target of a terrorist act.

That would be in play and so you would have certain places, certain sites in Memphis at certain sites in Nashville and then Knoxville or Chattanooga and just dealing with all the different varieties of weak points. That terrorists could could attack and it's it was just like I'm sad [00:44:00] that I didn't get the job because I really do think it's a fascinating topic and it would have been just so much to learn about the infrastructure and just different vulnerable spots and and and just assessing each point.

Steve: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah, it was definitely eye opening for me coming into this position. Because I, I had worked I, I talked about the highway patrol and then I was at the Ohio board of pharmacy after that for a little over four years. I, I had never heard of any sort of state employee doing anything like this.

I mean, it was totally new for me. Mm-Hmm. . But it, it it reminded me a lot of a psychology class that I had to take as a part of my degree in security and intelligence. And it was like the psychology of security or the, the psychology of fear is what it was. Mm-Hmm. and sort of really understanding what makes [00:45:00] people feel safe.

Mm-Hmm. . And I've since come to understand that security. And I'm being very specific with that term. People often say safe and secure. And it sounds redundant, but they are different things. Safety is protection from accidents, unintentional harm. Whereas security is protection from attacks, which is intentional harm.

And whatever you're trying to protect your assets whatever assets you're trying to protect they're. Security is an objective reality. Your asset can objectively be secure or that you can assess it to be secure. But if your assets are people, there's the subjective side of security too, which I think is so fascinating that security is a reality, but it's also a feeling the worst case scenario is when someone feels secure, but they're not objectively secure, you know and it's really to sort of

[00:46:00] think about security issues and sort of this logical sort of way and trying to remove any sort of fear or anxiety from your mind just like any good analyst would try to remove bias and try to remove that illogical thinking and to think about these things beyond fear.

Think about these things in a very logical, coherent way. And then the real trick is communicating and convincing other people to get on board with your ideas. Yeah, I think being real in reality, objectively secure is my number one priority. And once we, part of me wants to just say, Hey I, I don't give a flying flamingo about your feelings.

I just want to make sure you're safe. But the flip side of that coin, Jason, is that fear or anxiety, it's kind of the same thing it weighs on your body. So feeling safe, feeling secure is also very important. So sometimes I just have to do, do things that show that we as an agency are doing things [00:47:00] sometimes, even if in the back of my mind, maybe I don't know necessarily if it's objectively making.

Are people more secure or not? Yeah, I mean, it's this sort of constant balancing act between making sure people are really in reality secure and making sure people feel safe and secure because fear or anxiety, it does weigh on the body. There are physiological reactions to fear and anxiety and, and it becomes real.

Yeah. It's very

Jason: interesting. It reminds me of. Different studies that they've done at police departments and at cities where they will do citizen surveys. And compare it to the actual crime rate and how sometimes you might have an area with a high crime rate thinking that, oh, these the citizen surveys are going to come back with a high level of fear.

And sometimes it's not sometimes there's a huge police [00:48:00] presence that they see during the day and that's makes them feel safe when they're out and about and they're not necessarily out and about at night when maybe some of these crimes are taking place so they don't match and the same token on the other side is you could have an area that is primary wise is relatively safe but citizens will report not seeing enough cops out.

Not enough police presence. As an example, and then say that they don't feel safe. So people are so fickle that it's really hard, hard to say. Satisfy them, right. And that's that's especially if you're a police chief that you're you're working to lower the crime rate and all this other stuff.

And then you, you see a situation where people even with in the areas with low crime, you're telling them that you don't feel safe. So it can be frustrating. I can imagine. Yeah. Yeah. I

Steve: mean, the, the textbook example[00:49:00] Is the creation of TSA after nine 11 and sort of the, the, the foundations of the whole department of Homeland Security.

I mean, on the one hand DHS was kind of a bunch of organizations that were already existing, sort of brought under one umbrella. And yeah, the obviously there were nerves about flying and just fears about flying and. So the objectively secure side of things could private security or airport security have done the same job.

Yeah, probably, but if it's brought under a national umbrella and this whole new agency and with all this motivation and, and sky marshals are new. And I think at the time they actually had the highest physical fitness standards out of any federal agent. Was it necessary for objective security?

No. But did it make people feel a lot safer? Yeah. And it had real consequences. It probably saved or accelerated the return to normal for the aviation industry in this country. So, yeah, I mean, [00:50:00] you got to acknowledge the real effects of the subjective side of security.

Jason: Yeah. And I think it was too. It was, it was fascinating because there are some times when you will see a customer and might get irate with, with a government employee if you're at the post office or you're at The DMV or something like that and you just see the situation play out where maybe there's no sympathy for the government worker.

I remember the first time I flew on a plane post 9 11 and this was after the shoe bombing. And the, like the, it was like they had just implemented the, you taking off your shoes. And I remember there was a lady in front of me that did not want to take off her shoes and it was zero tolerance.

It was like the, the person said. Just raised her hand and, somebody else came over and took that [00:51:00] woman off to the back room. It was like, she was removed, she was removed from the line, no questions asked. And I think everyone, I don't think anybody behind

Steve: us was going to complain about taking off their shoes.

Jason: It was like very swift and that's not normally what, what I see, as I would say in some of the other government offices.

Steve: Yes. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. There's just something about an army of these bright blue shirts at security checkpoints it and, you know there's a.

Security writer by the name of Bruce Schneier who wrote, I think in his book, beyond fear that came out about 2002, 2003 he, he talks a lot about he calls it security theater, just doing things to increase the feeling of security when it objectively doesn't even make you more secure.

Jason: Staying on the subject of airlines.

Yeah. I went to [00:52:00] Chicago last year and got flew in, landed in the Chicago. And got my bags and they had situated the, the turn style where you got your luggage. So there was only one way in and one way out. And when I left, there was a security guard there checking tags to make sure that your luggage match, you had a tag and it matched the luggage.

And which is the first and only time I've ever seen that. Ever, but I concluded that they must have had some kind of issue with people coming in and stealing people's luggage. Yeah, I, I don't know how much that diverted folks from doing that, but it was still a, like a security checkpoint ish.

Type thing that people went through , to make them feel

Steve: safe. Yeah. I I would say that's a good analytical assessment. Yeah.

Jason: Yeah. Interesting. So, all right, let's move on then to your [00:53:00] consulting company. And just, so , what is

Steve: that? Well I had worked in government for most of my working life.

So starting a business was something new for me. It was S C Bennett and his associates LLC, but I got to working with that name and like, man, that's a mouthful. So I got a registered trade name and I just call it S E S I E for short. So S E yeah, I I offer training and consulting.

on a contract basis. It's really just more of a side job. But it's so far so good. One of my collateral duties, I guess you could say with the National Guards Counterdrug Program was working as the training manager and I became the

training manager. For my region of Ohio in 2019, and then, of course, there was a shutdown in 2020 with COVID.

So it fell to me to figure out how we're going to train all these different analysts who [00:54:00] are working at all these different agencies with different missions and different capabilities. And how can we, in some measure, some way, train them and train them remotely when some people don't even have like a work computer they can take home with them.

Yeah, so that that was the challenge. And I somehow got through it. We standardized training and within our own region. And that was a group of maybe 15 analysts. And the way the Ohio National Guard program worked we had the state divided up into three regions and Yeah, I got tapped to implement this new training program nationwide.

I mean, I've always loved training my, it's always been something that I've always thought was fun to do. And just to sort of spark some inspiration in, in others. So yeah, I started a little company as a side job and I, I can do like bespoke training if there's a department that wants some special training.

Specialized training. I've recently been contracted through NW3C.[00:55:00] I've worked with Randy Stickley and yeah, he's recently moved on from NW3C pursuing greener pastures, but yeah, I met him. He was my trainer in a class, I think in 2019 and he was teaching in person. In Ohio. And that's how I met Randy.

And we just sort of stayed in contact ever since. And yeah, I've contracted with them. And I'm teaching intelligence, writing and briefing. I'm teaching NW three C's Fiat class, the foundations of intelligence analyst training. And I'm teaching to a national audience, which is pretty cool.

So aside from that just working through yeah. Maybe consulting or working with departments who want to create an Intel unit or establish an Intel Intel unit or improve their Intel unit. That's something else that I offer also. And again, just because I have so much experience through the National Guard program working with all these different analysts at all these different agencies, federal, [00:56:00] county, local state.

In all these different analysts and agencies with different abilities and missions. So, yeah, I mean, it's, it's been a great side hustle and I'm happy to do it. I, so

Jason: one of the things with law enforcement analysis, and this is a topic that I've kind of been on a little bit recently here is just trying to have some more hands on training and to have it less, it'll be less lecture and, and just be able to be as an analyst, have training to take home and implement.

I think you had a, you had a fascinating point yesterday when we talked about this a little bit is the challenge is as you just mentioned, you have different jurisdictions, you have different tasks, you've got different functions of all these. These analysts and even different tools and so how the question that becomes how do you create a [00:57:00] training that is is going to be beneficial across the board when the analysts are so different or I guess take it another way is.

Are there, have you found that there are some common core function skills that you can teach that will travel across the board? Yeah

Steve: yeah, skills based training is a really tough thing to achieve for a class of analysts. You could probably. Do like a small class, like a workshop or something with like five or six, if they're like from the same department and they're all working with the same tools, but let's say you get up to like classroom size, let's say you get 30, 40 students or you're teaching online or some webinars, something.

I mean, how can I teach you to go hands on and do something working remotely, or even if we're in person how can I like walk you guys through how to use a specific program or tool or to make something or all [00:58:00] right, everyone, we're gonna take this data set. We're gonna import it here and follow along.

And I mean, half the class wouldn't keep up. And it's very difficult to do. It is a challenge. I think in analyst training right now is How do you get the right depth? How do you get that hands on skills based training in? As you say, Jason, something that they can learn and they can use, and they can take it back with them to their agency and implement it and say, Hey, check out what I learned.

I learned how to build this awesome chart, and I think it'd be perfect for this case that we got going on. Yeah, that's really. Difficult to do it. That's just a matter of balancing breadth and depth. If it's too skills based or if it relies too heavily on like a certain program or something or a certain type of case not everyone has that type of case.

Not everyone has that mission or if it's based around software or program, not everyone has access to that. So it is difficult to build training that is skills [00:59:00] based that does teach you something like that. But is broadly applicable to everyone in the training that that's a tough challenge in law enforcement training.

So you asked me for some examples. So some things that I think are good to just generally learn and take back. That are hands on writing and briefing is always good. It's always important any sort of communications class. Again, communication is a skill and as a skill, you can practice communication.

You can hone that craft. And honestly, it's one of my favorite topics. Like as an analyst, like that's your creative outlet, right? You are making something. You are crafting a message. You are analyzing your audience and you know their needs inside and out. And you hit a home run slam dunk with whatever message you've crafted.

I mean, that's just the best feeling in the world when, when your customer makes a decision based off something you've written, even if it's a text message, you know what I mean? So, [01:00:00] yeah, any sort of like skills based I would start with communication. Communication is a skill and it's something that you can practice in a classroom setting that would be broadly applicable to all analysts.

Another skill, I think. Would be, and this is probably trickier to get hands on, so to speak but broadly speaking, I would say thinking, but how do you get hands on with thinking? I would say structured analytic techniques would be a great way to learn analyst thinking. Even if you don't sit down at your agency, So And have a, all right, we're gonna have a brainstorming meeting or whatever structured analytic technique you want to choose even if you don't sit down and like actually do that, attending a class where you do, I mean, you're going to be a great analyst.

When you go back to your agency, you, you'll learn all about biases and how these structured analytic techniques are intended to overcome bias. You, you'll be a, a, an analyst who is [01:01:00] able to think about these law enforcement situations in a much clearer way. So if I had to pick maybe two examples, I, I would say structured analytic techniques and communications.

Those are probably two that could be skills based that you can take back to your agency. All right.

Jason: Good. All right. How about a hot take, an unpopular opinion? You got one of those? Yeah,

Steve: I would say so, and I don't know how popular or unpopular it would be when I was on the Counterdrug Program we talked a lot about interdiction and working with the highway patrol.

But really, that was only half my time with the National Guard. The other half again, eight years in total. The other half I was with the Ohio Board of Pharmacy and we would go after pill mills and doctors, anything that you can do with a prescription. That's bad. We, we, we were all over it.

For whether it's a pharmacy, a doctor, a patient, whatever, we were all over it. But in Ohio, we also regulated or implemented Ohio's medical marijuana program, or had a big hand in it. So my [01:02:00] hot take is regarding medical marijuana, or the legalization nationwide of medical marijuana. I, I would have to say that...

No medicine, marijuana or not, should ever be made a medicine because people voted to make it a medicine. Whether it's a legislature, a population you, you should not vote to make something, anything, medicine. I, I didn't get to vote whether or not oxycodone became medicine. Right, Jason? And, and we, we've ended up with this patchwork of legality, different leality, different jurisdictions. We ended up with this patchwork public policy towards marijuana. In my opinion, and only my opinion, I, I w I have got to say that I would love to see the FDA step in and at the federal level either.

Do the research, do the clinical trials, and either make marijuana a medicine [01:03:00] or not. It's not fair to law enforcement, it's not fair to the citizens of this country to have such a crazy patchwork of all these different laws and regulations from state to state. So that is my hot take. I think we need to clean that up and that would help law enforcement.

A great deal and it would clarify things for the U. S. citizens nationwide.

Jason: That is a different take. I didn't know where you were going with that. I mean, well, hey, if I'm sure Pfizer has a pill that you can take that's marijuana based and then, but that would be a whole other ball game there.

It's fascinating when you said it the way you said it, because you are right. , either it's medicine or it's not. It's not the opinion of the public.

Steve: So exactly right. It's crazy. Like if you truly think about it as medicine, well, and side note. I don't think any medicine should be smoked.

I'm [01:04:00] very happy. I live in a state where our medical marijuana program does not allow for combustion as an approved form. But some do, and, and again we got to clean that up. We, we, we can't exist in this sort of patchwork existence where it's, I mean, it's still illegal at the federal level.

I mean I think, I think we really need to clean this up. Yeah, it just

Jason: makes me wonder. Could you imagine if we took a vote on whether we were gonna wear masks or not?

Steve: Oh, I know. Oh, gosh. Wow. Yeah, that's a,

Jason: that's a whole

Steve: ball of wax there. So. Yeah. All right.

Jason: We'll leave that be and let's go on to personal interests as we finish up the interview.

And so you are a dad and, and your wife is deployed. So you are the dad taking care of the two small children, six and three years old. And it certainly reminded me of my situation years ago. And then when my wife got a new job [01:05:00] and moved to the new job and for a couple of years there, we were traveling back and forth and I was taking care of a three year old and a six year old. So I had certainly the challenges of being a father, a single father, or however you want to want to put it. Taking care of the two small children is certainly a, quite a task and a, and a unique experience.

Yeah,

Steve: absolutely. Yeah. I the. National Guard as I've already discussed, it's given me so much. It also gave me a wife. I, I met my wife in the military and my wife is currently deployed. So yeah, I'm, I'm at home right now with my six year old and my three year old and we are living life and the, the kids are alive.

My wife's plants, maybe not so much. She's the green thumb. Me, not, not, not so much. So I'm, I'm, I'm struggling with the plants, but yeah, it is an experience. It is an experience. I think it definitely helps [01:06:00] that I am in

the national guard also. So I kind of get it and I can, I can also look forward to getting her back one day.

Yeah. .

Jason: Yeah. And so I then, I spent time in Ohio, so I know what it's like. Yeah. That unfortunately not every male restroom has changing tables. Oh gosh. Yeah. So I have some quite stories of changing the kids on various spots in men's bathrooms.

Steve: Oh yeah, for sure. Yeah. My, my three-year-old is not yet potty trained.

That, that's a whole different topic, but yeah. You gotta think hard before you decide to leave the house by yourself with two young kids. Yeah.

Jason: Yeah, so it's it's I it's Probably not easy For mother or father, but it is certainly a unique experience. That's right for for us So, all right, you are an Eagle Scout, and you mentioned that you were only asked one time in one interview about your Eagle project.

So I want to make it at least twice in your [01:07:00] career that you were asked about your Eagle project and what you did.

Steve: Yeah, yeah, you're absolutely right. This is the second time that I've been asked in a professional setting about my Eagle project. So as I was super into scouts. I was a super scout.

My first job was with the Boy Scouts. Even I was teaching Wilderness Survival merit badge at the summer camp. So again, teaching. I'm always teaching. Yeah, I they always say, Hey, make sure you put that on your resume. That's going to look good on a resume that you're an Eagle Scout. And I'm not joking.

No one, not a single person has ever asked me about being an Eagle Scout except for one job interview. And that was the job interview for the counter drug program with the National Guard. It was a military board. There were five or six people on this board, all on one side of the table, and I'm on the other side of the table, and we're wrapping up, very formal interview, there's, it's set questions, very [01:08:00] standardized, and you're graded on the questions, I think, like, one through five So we're all wrapped up and the lieutenant colonel, the president of the board, he asks me, well I think that about wraps it up and I hear this sort of, from the end of the table, he says excuse me, sir the sergeant all the way down at the end of the table, he sort of raised his hand and said sir,

can I ask one more question and the whole rest of the table who all out rank this guy, they all sort of look at him like yeah.

Okay, like this is weird and he says so Sergeant Bennett, what I see here, you're an Eagle scout. What was your Eagle project? And I was taken aback. I was like, finally. Yeah. So I I was 17 years old and working on my Eagle project. It's a service project. You sort of have to lead and manage and I, there was, I, so our, our boy scout troop, it met at a VFW post a veteran's organization and they [01:09:00] had this whole sort of area between a Creek and the sort of back parking lot.

They sort of had an event space where they did like weddings and stuff which is where our troop met every week. But there was this sort of like ugly overgrown, just covered in brush and garbage and my Eagle project was clearing it out. And planting grass, making it usable space. And I'm thinking they can really use this space.

They got weddings, people could take pictures and all sorts of stuff. And it's, it is kind of nice. It's like right next to this like babbling brook, you know? And so yeah, that was my Eagle project. I took a small piece of land, I cleaned it up and put a little path that went down the middle and that was that.

And I think he was pretty, I think he thought that was pretty cool. Turns out as I got to know the guy since I got, I got hired and he trained me so I got to know the guy and his name's Tom Dewey and I found out he's super involved in Boy Scouts as a Boy Scout leader and his.

His kids were going through the scout program. So I thought that was pretty cool, but yeah, you're right, [01:10:00] Jason. I was never asked except for one time. And the one time was the job interview that got me hired in my first job as an analyst.

Jason: There you go. Full circle there. And that's so I, and I, my son I've mentioned on this show too, is currently working on his Eagle project too.

But I have volunteered for scouts for years now. So. All right, Steve, I do want to just mention that, you're a good student of analysis. Like you you've talked about , the different experiences that you had, you talked about working on your bachelor's, you went on to get a master's degree and you read up and you studied on fiction, current events, and , that's just a good thing to be is to be well read and up to speed on, on current events. And as I, I do this job as a podcaster for law enforcement analysts.

I, I've kind of have this list of things of what I [01:11:00] lacked as an analyst and, and certainly things that I know that I , had my deficiencies on and that was like current events was one of those. things like I don't necessarily like to read up on on current events and and whatnot. I when my time when I punch out the clock, I do not want to watch crime shows or real life documentaries or the news or anything to that thing.

I'd rather go do something else. But for you, I, I I think the path that you have taken certainly has enriched your, your career, so I just wanted to give you kudos for, for all that you accomplished and for, for being such a good student of analysis.

Steve: Well, thank you. Yeah, and I appreciate that. And I think, as I've explained it is a long and winding path.

So, yeah, I feel very fortunate. To be doing what I'm doing [01:12:00] and I really do love what, what I do. So yeah, I, you could almost say I do it for fun. I do it in my free time.

Jason: All right, , let's move on to words to the world. This is where I give the guests the last word.

You can promote any idea that you wish Steve, what are your words to the

Steve: world? If you want to be an analyst or if you have any sort of interest in this field or improving your situation or status in this field, my advice to your listeners would be and I've already mentioned it earlier, but keep working hard to Get closer and closer to what you want to be doing.

And every step closer, you will be happier that that you are that much closer. Don't don't look at your goal way off in the distance. I think, gosh, how am I going to get there? And just focus on the next step. We began. Jason, just by talking sort of about my journey and I sort of made the first step and that led to many more steps I joined the National Guard, then I got hired, and then I joined the Honor [01:13:00] Guard, and then there I was in a snowy cemetery, and I was getting recommended for a job as an analyst, and somehow I just sort of found my way, so words to the world yeah, don't be afraid to say yes to opportunities, you don't know where it's going to lead, and your opportunities may just lead you to where you want Always wanted to end up anyways.

Jason: Very good. Will I leave every guest with you giving me just enough to talk bad about you later? But I do appreciate you being on the show steve, thank you so much and you be

Steve: safe jason It was a pleasure. Thank you so much

Mindy: Thank you to the show your support by sharing this and other episodes found on our website at [www. leapodcasts](http://www.leapodcasts) If you have a topic you would like us to cover or have a suggestion for our next guest, please send us an email at Till next time, analysts. Keep talking.