

Richard Browning - Addressing Secondary Trauma

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 20 years of law enforcement analysis experience, all of which with the U. S. Army CID in Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. He is a former Army National Guard chaplain. And he's currently on the Board of Directors for Health Steps Labyrinths, an organization trying to prevent suicides in the country.

Please welcome Richard Browning. Richard, how are

Richard: we doing? We're doing well. And how are you, Jason?

Jason: I am. Doing very well. I forgot to ask you if you wanted me to introduce you as Ricky Richard Rich.

Richard: Richard is fine. [00:01:00] That's how most people professionally call me.

Jason: Okay. So we'll go with Richard. So it was a pleasure seeing you again at the IACA conference.

I'm really curious. to get into your background here with CID. So let's just start with my normal question. How do you discover the law enforcement analysis profession?

Richard: So very much like most children, I had ideas in my mind as a child. These are jobs that I would like to have when I was an adult.

And interestingly enough, police officer, like many children was one of those. I never anticipated that that would happen. And so at the age of 19 as I was trying to make decisions on how to be an adult and break out from under my family's tutelage and grasp, I decided to go and join the army.

And so in 1990 I went to the recruiter and they handed me a list of jobs and I looked at the jobs and most of them were combat arms. And I [00:02:00] said, I

do not want to do that. I don't like to walk that much. Which is not the case now. I re I really do like to walk. And so I saw military police and I said, I bet you those people get to ride around in a car.

And so that is how I started my law enforcement career. And so in March of 1990, I headed to Fort McClellan, Alabama to learn how to be a military policeman where I spent the next seven and a half years going to different places California, Kentucky Germany, and then four deployments, including Honduras, Haiti, and Panama twice.

And so was that a lot

Jason: of walking or was that just

Richard: a lot of riding, a lot of riding? It was great. I got to ride in helicopters and, and I got to go to aerosol school where they let us hang on a rope and just slide down a rope out of a helicopter. So. So that was pretty exciting. And the army has allowed me to do a lot of interesting and neat things.

But toward the end of my time, I [00:03:00] knew in 1996, it was time for me to get out and go actually be an adult. So I was my, my platoon sergeant knew that it was coming close to my time and CID said, Hey, we need some people to come and help us you know, do surveillance. So for the next six months, I spent the rest of my active duty time there at Fort Campbell standing outside and watching pawnshops to see if people were selling military equipment to the pawnshops.

And so after I left the army in 1997 I. Had a couple of years where I was working as a security guard at a private company. And then in April of 2000 I started out as a security guard at Redstone Arsenal. And so I stood at the gate and I would help people come in and out. Which is where I found myself on September 11th, 2001, was directing traffic at the early morning.

When somebody came through and [00:04:00] said, Hey did you hear what happened in New York? And so we turned on our radio, just enough time to hear the second plane going to the world trade center. And so from that moment on, my life was really kind of changed. So a couple of years later the job I'm currently in came open as a temporary promotion.

And so I was not the first person selected. And the first person that was selected, he went over there and they told him all of the things that he was going to have to do. And he said it is not worth the amount of money that they're

giving you to do everything that they're asking you to do. He turned that down and I apparently was the second choice.

And I got to go over there and shortly thereafter, the job announcement came open for my current position and in January of 2003, I began my career with Army CID officially. And from there, I have been doing this for 20 years. Okay,

Jason: So this is a civilian [00:05:00] position. So even as you said, you finished up the last 6 months of being in the army doing the surveillance on pawn shops.

But once you were done with that. Task everything that you just described from that point forward was a civilian role.

Richard: That's correct. I am a Department of the Army civilian and fall under the office personnel management like any other federal employee would. Okay.

Jason: And C. I. D.

Criminal investigative division.

Richard: So it's yeah, that's the department of the army criminal investigation division and we recently have undergone a transition from strictly military leadership to we now have an SES Director who came over to us from from NCIS. And the last couple of years we've been going through transition which has been interesting as we're trying [00:06:00] to navigate that but like anything in the army there's always changes.

And so we always remain flexible and try to meet the challenges while we continue to support our customers. Hmm. That's

Jason: interesting. I, I. I don't know if you've talked to other civilian analysts that might be at police departments or sheriff's offices, but I'm curious to know there's always the, the civilian and sworn dynamic at these departments and you'll hear once in a while that there's sworn officers that are in charge of civilian units.

And there might even be transitioning to civilianizing that leadership role. With you talking about the, the switch over civilianizing CID, is it similar? Is it different? What do you, what are your thoughts on that?

Richard: So the, the. Analysis for it, I think in many ways, , badge holders [00:07:00] versus non badge holders.

There's always that tension police officers, detectives , go to different types of training generally than analysts go to. There may be some crossover, but , there's, I think in some ways the tension is, , you have this guy that's sitting at a desk or, , just going to meetings and interacting with other people coming to tell you how you might , improve your investigation and they're like, you're not on the street.

I don't understand why you're saying that to me. But, I think that, analysts as a whole bring a different perspective and also can certainly enable and encourage Different ways to solve crime and then C. I.

Jason: D. Just for our audience, some is the general description of C.

I. D. Because I think you say police department, you say sheriff's office, people know that and maybe they can even draw on their mind what their jurisdiction is and What crimes they're investigating, what [00:08:00] their purpose is, goals and whatnot. But army CID, there, there might be some confusion as to what's your purpose, what's your jurisdiction, how you get your cases, so on and so forth.

Richard: So really the difference is, is, is scope. And just like. You know you have a local law enforcement, you've got state law enforcement, and they've all got different authorities based on their function. Well, the Army and all the military criminal investigative organizations, we have to have a nexus to our organization.

So For the Army. Is there an Army interest? Are there Army people involved? Is there a loss to the Army that needs to be investigated? And so, for my office, our investigative our investigative area is the northern half of Alabama, from Birmingham to the Tennessee border, and about a third of the northern half of Mississippi.

So, anything [00:09:00] that the Army touches in that area could be something that we investigate. The Army CID investigates felony level crimes. So there's two different. Basically law enforcement organizations. There's, , the military police that falls under the office of the provost, marshal general, and they handle the misdemeanor crimes anything that, , has a sentence six months or less.

And then Army CID has felony level and crimes, anything that you might expect that the FBI will look at those are the kinds of things that we'll be engaged in. But we also have a protection mission. Part of our mission is to support Army in providing you know, information about criminal trends, criminal threats to Army assets and installations.

And so I think it just, it's, it's a broad range of things. You know, whether today we might be looking at a fraud case. Tomorrow it might be a theft case people stealing [00:10:00] government equipment, or tomorrow it might be a murder and or a death on the installation that we got to look at. So our agents have to be capable of responding to a variety of different incidents.

It's not as specialized at an office my size. Some of the larger offices are more specialized. Because I think,

Jason: too, in that jurisdiction that you just described, it's more than just army bases, right?

Richard: Absolutely. So what we do is we, we partner with other jurisdictions where criminal activity occurs and we Many times we'll determine whether or not we want to work if they would like to work a joint investigation with us, where we'll take care of anything that you know, acquiring documentation from the military identifying individuals who might have military affiliation and that kind of, that's a lot of what I do is I provide information about military affiliation Okay.

Bye. Bye. To different agencies whether they be state, local [00:11:00] or federal agencies, we find ways that we can assist one another.

Jason: So that's based off of the federal guidelines and laws. That you are dealing with, right? And then corrections as, as well as on the federal side.

Richard: That's right. So and, and we have the option depending on what the criminal activity is sometimes we work with a special assistant to the U. S. Attorney if it's a, a small level drug crime it might just go to magistrate court, federal magistrate court, or we work with the U. S.

Attorney's office and try to do prosecution that way. .

Jason: , as you're first starting out as an analyst then, and to this point, you had gotten your feet wet with doing the surveillance and of the pawn shops and then

doing security at the, at the different stops, but this is obviously analyst work, so it's a different animal altogether.

So as you look back when you start in [00:12:00] 2003, , what do you think of , as you're starting the role and trying to learn the role of analysis?

Richard: So my predecessor prepared a wonderful continuity book for me and laid out everything that I needed to do, but analysis was not part of that.

And so as I, I got into the job and began to understand there are ways that I can support the investigative effort. I began to discuss things with my supervisors and technical supervisors Analysts that work at the field office and, and try to understand how I can do that. And so my first real training was with ROCIC in Nashville.

And I went to their basic crime analyst course. And. Actually I moved offices recently, and as part of that, I found one of those transparencies that you put on the overhead projector, where it's my very first link chart that I learned in ROCIC, and so now I have it sitting up outside of [00:13:00] my office.

And I thought that was pretty neat. Drawn with a, drawn with a marker. It was, it was drawn with one of those little sharpies fine tip sharpies and yeah. And the stencils. So . And so it was from there really that I began to really get excited about the opportunity to provide investigative support as an analyst.

Now The thing is, is at the time I started we had trainees on our base and so much of our activity revolved around the training folks because you have young people whose impulse control may not be necessarily the best. So. We ended up doing a lot of cases with them but as I've grown as an analyst and experienced different things and began to expand and CID began to really beef up its analysis program over the last 10, 12 years you know, they began to really focus on [00:14:00] training.

So the first army analysis class I went to was the crime analysis and police intelligence management course at Fort Leonard Wood which really Was a week of ITU and then a week of link analysis doing the matrix and all of that other fun stuff that we do in the basic courses and and from there I've.

You know been able to go to a number of different training courses. And I've recently over the last five, six years began to focus on economic crime. And so Excel is really become the tool of my tool of choice. And I'm trying to really strengthen my open source intelligence skills. So at the I A C A conference,

they had that one capture the flag session that I thought was really fun and it really gave me a little bit more confidence in my skills.

Yeah, I

Jason: didn't actually go to that. So what, just for our audience and those that didn't go, what, what is that? Capture the

[00:15:00] Flag

Richard: event? So what it was is and I can't remember the that's. But they were out of Australia but they, they gave us a photograph and from the photograph, there were 15 different things and we worked together in teams of four or less, and we tried to use open source information, nothing that we have to go behind a paywall.

So we had to try to Find as many answers to the questions that they posed, but it all began with a photograph. And so we started out and we identified this real estate guy out in Texas, and then it began we, it asked questions about his children's middle school nurse. And so there's a lot of different ways that we were able to test our model as open source intelligence analysts.

Nice.

Jason: And then as you're starting out and you're going to this different training and you're, you're honing in your skills the office itself in terms of tools and [00:16:00] programs and how you're developed the office itself at the analytical unit at CID there. How is that changing?

First five, six years that

Richard: you're there. Early on our wreckage management system was Linux based. And so it, it, it didn't, it wasn't the most useful analytical tool. And it wasn't really necessary, the focus of what we were doing at the time. But as we began to transition to more web based databases and record management systems.

Those capabilities began to be something that were more important to what we do. One of the functions that we have is to inform our installation commanders about criminal activity at our installations that might impact army operations. And so having access to the statistics is important. We've begun to in, incorporate more of the into army operations as well as far as the security stuff.

And so we began to do more open source [00:17:00] and you know, excuse me, the consumer databases, access to, so based on some of our. Divisions, we have a cyber directorate and I am fortunate to have co located at my area, one of the cyber directorate analyst. And so recently I had the chance to go to Fletch's introduction to cryptocurrency class and.

And there they talked about chain analysis and some of the crypto tracing tools. And so we've begun having the ability as analysts to have access to more, some of the more sophisticated tools to be able to conduct our investigative activity. All right.

Jason: So you brought up RMS.

So I'll just ask now, I mean, is you have an RMS or is it RMSE?

Richard: Well, I guess it depends on who you ask, sometimes. So we, we interact with it using business objects to extract data and there's also an ad hoc query function within the RMS that depending on your search [00:18:00] terms, may or may not provide a lot of benefit.

We're also beginning to Branch out into Power BI and some of the dashboards there and use those for some of our trends as well. So I RMS is sometimes it's a little bit challenging because we have a worldwide mission get, and we have a transit population, military folks move every three, four years.

And so having the ability to ensure that we have. Good information on folks who are moving into our area sometimes is a challenge. And I think the Army tried to work on that a few years ago by passing on some of that information as individuals would move from base to base.

Jason: In terms of the event data that would be in your records management system, whether it be a crime or what other event is being documented in the records [00:19:00] management system, is, is that data the way that is captured?

Is that you? I would imagine that that's universal across all items. The CIDs across the country, right? Because it's going to be the same crime. And so, therefore, the, the way that's written up and documented should all be the same. Is that

Richard: right? Just like any law enforcement agency, our data integrity is based on the user how they're entering.

So, like location data, maybe they'll misspell the road or the wrong building number. You know, misspelled and that kind of thing. So there's still some of those challenges that we have, but like offense codes. And we also we have three different multiple different, so we fall under the uniform code of military justice for our military folks and our deployed civilians.

We also use U. S. Code 18 U. S. C. And any other U. S. Codes that might be applicable to criminal activity, and then also assimilated state [00:20:00] codes, so depending on where you're stationed. And Fort Campbell, this was one of the fun things, is because it straddles the Tennessee Kentucky border. As a military policeman, when I was stationed there, you had to know where you're at, because when you wrote a ticket, you had to use the appropriate state to write the violation notice.

So, yeah. See and see

Jason: and see today people like, Oh, that's not a big deal. Cause you just bring up GPS or whatever on your phone, but back in the late nineties, early two thousands, you did not have said that's

Richard: right. You had to know where the, you had to know where the state line was on the installations.

Jason: All right. No, that's, right. So I do want to get a better idea of some of the cases that you're helping to support. So this is brings us to. Your analyst badge stories, and for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge story is the career defining case or project that an analyst works. So your first one here, it's, it's 2021.

So you're 8 years in [00:21:00] there as, as being an analyst and CID and you're working on a helicopter

Richard: crash. Yeah. So, we, we got notified that an army helicopter had crashed in a nearby community and there at the time of the initial report, we weren't sure of survivors, but by the time we made it out there you know, there were no survivors of the three person crew.

And so part of my responsibility in that case was to try to gather as much information as I could about the crew members. And, and for me, one of the challenges specifically in this case is sometimes there are cases that stick with you for various different reasons. For this one, it was because you know, as I was going through their biographical information, I found out.

that the child of one of the victims had a birthday the very same day as my daughter. And so at that time I was also just entering into the chaplain world. And so I knew that [00:22:00] sometime in the next 24 hours a casualty notification team was going to go up to this home With a child the same the exact same age as my daughter and tell them that dad wasn't coming home.

And so that has stuck with me that entire time. And, you know and so, and really it doesn't it's neither a rhyme nor reason why some of these do. That one's obvious I had a connection based on that birth date. But. That was, I think, one of the first times where I had to think to myself, you know what, I might need to go talk to somebody.

Yeah. Hmm. Yeah.

Jason: So, I guess in, in, in this case, it's, you, you're doing the workup, but I guess in the, in the initial stages are, Are you treating this as an accident or do you not declare it as such until you're, you're just gathering evidence and then you're going to determine whether it was an accident or

Richard: not?

Yeah. So really in those the [00:23:00] army safety board comes out and does those investigations, works with the national transportation security administration, and they make those determinations on, on the cause and manner of the, the. incident. So yeah, what we do we primarily go out there to do safeguards but we also have a documentation requirement as far as keeping senior army and military leaders informed of significant incidents that happen you know, in our area.

Jason: Yeah, now in this case was in an accident.

Richard: It was.

Jason: I'm guessing with this, that there's obviously there's going to be documentation as to who was on that air helicopter, what they were doing, what their purpose was. You're, you're following all that documentation up into the, the, the launch and subsequent crash.

Richard: Yeah. So really, Yeah. At that point, what we're doing is we're just documenting the, it's almost like documenting a [00:24:00] traffic accident. You are documenting what you encounter at that accident scene more than anything

else any evidence collection or safekeep you know but you know, as far as where they came from and all that, that's really something that the army.

Safety folks and the unit are responsible for taking care of.

Jason: Now, you, you talked about maybe going to talk to somebody. Did you eventually do that? Or did you obviously had that connection because of the, the birth date of the children there, but did this, how did you cope as you were the aftermath of working on this

Richard: case?

So You know, I talked to probably some of my chaplain friends just kind of talking through that, but also talk to the folks in the office. When you work in a small office you tend to develop relationships. And so it's sometimes easier to talk through those things and show, hey I'm struggling a little bit with [00:25:00] this.

Can we talk through it? Talk about it. And then over the last, you know I guess 10, 12 years you know, Army CID has really embraced mental health wellness. And so we have wellness coordinators throughout CID that we can reach out to, basically similar to, and there's also, the Army has an employee assistance program if we need to talk to somebody there but we also have our own assigned health wellness coordinators that we can talk to.

I

Jason: got you. No, it is the, and it's, I think when you go out on the scene and you are dealing, talking with people and working with people that are on the scene, that obviously makes it more real. It's way different than obviously just reading the records management. Report or the what's actually on paper or on a screen.

And so I, I would imagine that you actually going out to the scene that day [00:26:00] and start doing the work up, start doing all that work made it a little bit more real.

Richard: Absolutely. And then my own military history that just anytime we lose somebody in the military, it's a significant emotional event as we might say.

And so You know, it's just something that does come to the realization, Hey, these are real people. These are these are not just names. These are not just, you know words on a paper. These are people whose lives have been impacted in a very significant way with just that moment.

Laura: I am Laura Weaver and my pet peeve is to smile when people do not smile back. Just be kind and everybody's world is very busy. Sometimes we are not very happy, but take some time out of your day to smile at a stranger because you never know what they're going through.

Kyle: Hi,

Jason: my name is Kyle McFatridge and I want to talk to you today about merging in [00:27:00] construction zones.

You've probably understood merging in construction zones to be getting over as fast as you can. This is not correct. Merging lanes are designed to be filled all the way to the point they end, and traffic then merges one vehicle at a time. Think about it logically. Would traffic flow better if people randomly stopped, put on their turn signal, and tried to get over?

Or if both lanes were completely full? The lane is supposed to be full until the point you come to a traffic cone and can no longer fill it. So to the people that block that lane, swerve at cars, honk, yell, or flip off people trying to use the merging lane correctly, You were not only rude, you were wrong.

You do not get angry at people who pass you in the left lane a couple miles from that construction site, so why would you then be angry at them for passing you at the construction site? So next time you come to a merge in a construction zone, remember to go all the way to the end and merge one car at a time.

You will be doing it the right way and help make traffic flow much better for everyone, even for those angry

people. Thank you.[00:28:00]

Well, let's move on to your other story then, and it's, this is 2017 dealing with financial

Richard: theft. Yeah, so we got notified that one of our organizations on base had experienced employee theft. And so we began to go through the process,

and they told us who the employee was. But they also told us that this this person had just left the drug rehabilitation.

And so, as we're going through and I'm developing the information on it, I go to the agent, who I know is getting ready to interview this person. I say, listen. And this comes from kind of my chaplain side too is part of many drug rehabilitation you know organizations, they use a 12 step program.

And as part of the 12 step program, one of the steps is to make amends. And so I went to the agent and I said, listen as you go in there to interview him. Part, and I explained to him [00:29:00] about the 12 steps and where this is an opportunity for us to leverage that and see if he might tell us how he committed this crime.

And so you know, the agent went in, he interviewed him and, and lo and behold, this this person told us that he did in fact how he use that to support his drug habit. But he, he gave us very specific information that I was able to take and match with the user's manual for that particular software product and prepare a, a crime prevention notice is what we call it, or a crime prevention bulletin explaining how exactly he utilized the functions within the system in order to create refunds for himself and.

enable himself to take some cash home at night. And so I prepared that and I pushed it out and we also were working with the U. S. Attorney's Office on that prosecution. And so because of that I [00:30:00] got contacted by an analyst in the public corruption division down in Birmingham, and she invited me to participate in a joint intelligence bulletin to talk about this method of theft using this particular software that is used worldwide for recreation activities and like parks and recreation and different facilities.

And so we did open source searching and found a number of. cases that involved theft utilizing that very specific software. So that was a pretty neat thing to do. And I was pretty excited to be invited to participate in that. So

Jason: what was the army using this software

Richard: for? We were using it for the same purpose.

It was for recreational facilities. They were using it for managing our you know, some of our parks Reservations and that kind of thing, as well as our hunting and fishing program.

Jason: But it's kind of interesting. I'm [00:31:00] not, how was he generating a refund when there wasn't an original sale?

Richard: Well, actually there were original sales. He just diverted those refunds at a delayed time. And so what he was using was some of the managed administrative functions within the software to divert those funds and in a way He was hoping he wouldn't get caught and there was, there was some separation of duty challenges.

So just some management functions that, you know we afterwards spoke with the organization and say, Hey, here's some ways that you can tighten this up and, and help prevent this type of theft in the future.

Jason: Yeah. So how, do you have any idea how much he. Was able to get before you get caught?

Richard: Yeah, it was a little over 30,

Jason: 000.

Okay. Yeah, man. I don't want all the

Richard: cocaine. It did. Yeah.

Jason: Can

Richard: you invest in it? Could have invested it and been doing a lot better now. Or at least been able to pay it [00:32:00] back. Yeah, it's

Jason: true. All right. No, that's a, that's a interesting there. And I think that's something that I think analysts normally, I mean, at police departments, we don't normally get down that in that minutiae, right?

In terms of dealing with software on a retail level, right? We'd certainly deal with a business that was doing that and would want that information, but not on the level that. Thank you. Obviously, the army would want to know.

Richard: Yeah, and I think it's not only that. I mean, local governments utilizing the same software you know if, if there, and one of the things that seems to be commonality in a lot of theft cases, if you don't have adequate

management controls it's easy for your employees to just take you to, take you to the cleaners.

Jason: Yeah. So, yeah. So do you think he figured this out or was he, did he learn it somewhere else or what, what are your feelings on that?

Richard: I think it's a little bit of both. You know he had been trained on the [00:33:00] software and so he, he was familiar with his functionality. And then I think he just figured out, Hey, here's some, here's something I might be able to do and get away with.

Oh, man.

Jason: All right. Good deal. So then let's move to your third and final story event. It's 2019 and yet another employee is doing something that he shouldn't be doing.

Richard: Yeah. So we had a civilian employee and he was utilizing his position because it was a trusted position and he was using, utilizing that to create fake travel documents that he would then use to either and actually he, he forged receipts to help justify those expenses that he was claiming.

And so over the course of about two and a half years he was creating fake trips that he would go on and not doing a great job of protecting the army interest as a trusted person. All right. So,

Jason: so was he actually [00:34:00] taking the, the trips or?

Richard: Some of them he was but he, he might, you know put.

You know, he might change the, the receipt to indicate a higher amount and that kind of thing. And there's a press release about this where the U. S. attorney's office along with us he was sentenced earlier this year. And so you know it's, and it's just unfortunate. And again, it comes down.

you know, management controls. You know, sometimes those separation of duties. So he had some familiarity with the systems because of its previous experience. And so he was able to take advantage of those systems in order to benefit himself. Okay. So I

Jason: think I understand how he would maybe forge some documents his basically turn in expenses that are higher than what he actually spent that.

And then, but if he actually didn't go on the, the travel, then how was he, how was he doing that? And how was he benefiting from, from that?

Richard: So what he would do is he [00:35:00] would create these, these trips and So, at the end of that trip's time, he would commit a, he would submit a travel voucher indicating and he would provide documents to support that, that he had manipulated to indicate that he was in a place that he was not at and, and he would collect the money.

Jason: Oh, , okay. So, he took it like to the next level. So, he'd still have a trip, but then he would add something, like another add a different destination. That he didn't actually go on and then turn in the expenses for that extra

Richard: destination. Yeah. And one of the ways that we were able to corroborate that information was by using his bank account and credit card information to show that he was not where he was.

Jason: Huh. And then so how much did he get away with before he got caught?

Richard: So he was prosecuted for just over 50, 000. The possibility exists that there was more, but those were the [00:36:00] ones that we were able to concretely show to the U. S. attorney and say, Hey these are the ones we are fairly certain based on the information we have available to us that , he stole from the army.

And so.

Jason: That's, that's interesting. Oh, and you, created a

Richard: dashboard for this? I did. Yeah. So I was I did an Excel dashboard and I was able to show by year, just by using the dropdown you know, Where his most frequent locations were, how much it you know, we thought he would have taken based upon the fraudulent trips, as well as who are the people who approved his travel documents.

So

Jason: he was traveling a lot then.

Richard: Part of his responsibilities was to travel you know, maybe not as much as he said he was going to, but yeah, sure,

Jason: sure. , so it could be in you said 50, 000, but I mean, it could be that he was just maybe a couple hundred dollars each trip that , he was forging.

Yeah.

Richard: Some of them you didn't make a whole lot out of, but some of them, he [00:37:00] made a little bit more. Huh.

Jason: That's interesting. So. All right. And then yeah, it's like white collar

Richard: crime there. It is. And, and I really have come to enjoy white collar crime and how I get to use Excel like a puzzle master, trying to put all the pieces together in a, in a way that enables the investigators to see the picture a little more clearly.

But also when we go to present it to the prosecutors that prosecutors like pretty pictures, right? So, you give them charts and all of that other stuff to show them, hey, here's what we got.

Jason: So how did this case in particular get on

Richard: your radar? So we were notified by that individual's command that they found something in his Government travel card history that caused them to have some questions.

So they began digging a little bit further and they determined that the travel documents that you had submitted in support of that those transactions were fraudulent or they believe them to be fraudulent and that's how we got notified about [00:38:00]

Jason: it. So what did he plead to?

Richard: Well so he pled to theft of government funds and you know, over the course of. I think it was about two and a half

Jason: years. . All right. Well, very good. Let's move on then. And topic that is you know, obviously important to you is the idea of mental health and wellness.

So, I just don't really have a question. I just want to open the floor and you know, let, let you talk .

Richard: So you know, over the years 20 years long time and you get it you know, over that time you know, I've, I've dealt with some cases that really caused me to struggle.

You know, I, I remember the first time that an infant died after being left into a car and that was just really impactful. And, yeah. You know, military folks and first responders, law enforcement, firefighters, and all those folks we have this very you know, specific image about strength and, and all of these things.

And so sometimes we take our feelings and we eat them. And [00:39:00] so when I was a young soldier you know, I was really. willing to try to live up to that persona. But when I joined the National Guard and became involved in the chaplaincy program, but then also you know, as part of my job, I had a lot of interaction with social workers that work with the military as well as some of our mental health providers.

I began to recognize that there is a real need for all of us you know, no matter how strong we think we are, that we need to Take care of not just our physical health and, you know our spiritual health and all the other things, but we need to take care of our mental health. Mm-hmm. . And we need to be willing to you know admit that there are things that happen in our life, whether it's case related or it's personal related.

Because sometimes the things that we carry to work with us you know come out in negative or, or what's the word that I'm. Come out in destructive ways and that can impact how we [00:40:00] do our jobs. And so I think that really in anything, yeah, I think that every one of us needs to have access to a therapist.

I'm very fortunate with the army. That , we've got a wide variety of access to those things. And then also my wife is a social worker. And so I'm, I'm very in tune with all of that and how you know, therapy is beneficial and helps us to channel those negative emotions, hopefully into a more productive output.

So that we're not causing more harm by not. Dealing with difficult emotions and allowing them to just kind of explode, because even as an analyst, I think that there are things that we interact with you know, photographs, there are stories there, and it's, you know we call it secondary trauma in the mental health world, you're in, you're exposed to things that may not directly involve you, just as that helicopter crash You know, it did not directly involve me other than my association with it at [00:41:00] my job, but when I made that connection with that victim's child and my own daughter, then that opened up the possibility of secondary trauma.

And so there's those things that we really need to address and, and work on and try to ensure that we are taking the very best care of our mental health. So that we can provide the best support that we can to our agencies and to the communities that we support. I agree.

Jason: You know, I don't really have a follow up question or comment to what you said.

The question that comes to mind though, I'm, I'm curious to, in your position as chaplain with the National Guard you have that, You have the chaplain, you might have counseling, you might have social work but that is, might be dealing with one individual how was that managed in terms of you have one individual, but.

Individual maybe either talking to you as a chaplain or talking to another [00:42:00] person, social worker, seeing somebody else's therapy like that, that whole thing, trying to navigate all those , different aspects of trying to get the person help. Well,

Richard: 1 of the things that you look at is the multi.

Multidisciplinary aspect of our jobs. We interact with social services many times in our work and same thing's true in the army. So if there's so from a chaplain perspective we're there to help enable people. Thank you. The free practice of religion and religious expression, or the choice not to do that for all of the soldiers as part of the commander's religious support program.

But then we're also there sometimes we're a voice because we were assigned at a battalion level. And so we, we had the interactions with those soldiers. Preferably on a daily basis where we would walk around and we would go out and we would go talk to them and we would be basically a gateway into some of the services and then if I got to the point where I [00:43:00] realized that this is a problem that's beyond my own capabilities, I might provide, I might send them to the combat stress clinic.

Where they have access to some mental health workers there, or I might prefer refer them to our behavioral health folks and get them access to some of the services through that process. Then also we would provide suicide prevention training and be available to answer questions about some of those things too.

But really a lot of it has to do with trying to help. People manage the challenges of day to day life being a person that is in the military or affiliated with the military, whether it's a soldier, family member, or civilian.

Jason: All right. I'm looking over your resume here.

I, I see that you have been busy. You've done a good job of educating yourself since you became an analyst and I was curious as you're looking through this if there's particular training [00:44:00] that you really liked and would recommend to our listeners.

Richard: Absolutely. So during the, the COVID times obviously in person training was, restricted. And so I began to look at opportunities that were no cost that would enable me to enhance my skill sets. And so one of them I was able to get into was the Department of Homeland Security Data Analysis course. And what I really liked that, and that's where I learned how to do the dashboards but it really takes a focus of figuring out ways to visualize data.

That would enable you to provide a product to your supported agency to your prosecutors or whatever it is you know, to enable the, to be able to paint that picture that as an analyst, sometimes we try to paint You know, as a chaplain, obviously I'm a storyteller and there's different ways to tell a story.

And visually is one of those ways. And like I said earlier prosecutors and juries like pictures a lot more than they like tables [00:45:00] and numbers. So when we can present information in a visual manner, that's something I think that is really going to benefit. And so that's one of those courses and I did it online.

Now, did that go

Jason: through, like, graphic design

Richard: principles? A little bit. It talked a little bit more about you know how to present information in a way that was visually appealing. Not a whole lot of graphic design, but it does talk to you about here's some things that will benefit you as you develop slides and or visual aids.

Jason: All right. Good. And then was there another one?

Richard: So, yeah. So also I decided at the same time you know what, NW3C, the National White Collar Crime Center offers a lot of cool classes. And so, I started taking all of their financial investigation. Classes. And so I think I've

taken all of them with the exception of the [00:46:00] elder abuse class of elder financial abuse class.

How can

Jason: you, how can you avoid my people?

Richard: Well, the problem there is a lot of my customers are not in that age group. And so while we do have the opportunity to it's not necessarily an army nexus. So I didn't know how beneficial that would be in my financial crimes. But NW3C does a wonderful job and those are resources that are out there generally at no cost to the agency.

All right. So,

Jason: and then how do you feel about taking them online? And then was there practical

Richard: exercises? So so actually I did both my Bachelor's degree and my master's degree online. And I think one of the biggest shortcomings in that is the, the, you miss out on the chance to network with your classmates.

So online, you log in, you're there, and you're just staring at the screen, and it's the you and the instructors, and there's those chat boxes, [00:47:00] but there's not that time at lunch. During breaks and all of the other stuff where you have a chance to just interact with your, your classmates and find out how, what are some ways that you can network?

You know, one of the things about the IACA conference that I love is that networking you know, capability and that networking was opportunity. So I think that, while I enjoy being able to take them from either the comfort of my office or the comfort of my home I do miss out on those interactions in the breaks and outside of those class periods.

So it's

Jason: funny because I've been on a little bit of a soapbox recently about training and I, I think there's too much training and law enforcement analysis. That's just lecture base. And so you go there, you listen to a lecture, talk, and then you go home and there's not a lot of substance. There's not a lot of X's and O's.

It's a lot of times it can be for awareness purposes only. [00:48:00] And then the student may struggle with what actually to implement when they go back to the office. And there's been training that I took. Over my years as an analyst where networking was the only thing that I really got out of the training, right?

Because what they were teaching, I was just like, it was good for awareness, but the people that I actually met in the class or the instructor, I could at least use as a resource. Moving forward, if I had questions on something on one of my cases,

Richard: absolutely. And that's one of the reasons why I like the classes that I highlighted is because every one of them is hands on.

There's you know, you're in there and you're doing whether it's Excel, you're looking at financial statements. I learned a whole lot more about you know, international financial. Show. Transactions and money laundering. So it was really need to really pick up on those things and, and try to figure out how can I best support my agency in the area of financial crimes.

Jason: [00:49:00] Good. Let's get your advice then for our. Listeners how about a return on investment? What's something that an analyst can study today that five years from now will be important?

Richard: So in my head and it's, it's popular in, in many of our news things, but you got chat GPT and these generative AI capabilities that are being developed and, and pushed out into the open market.

And I think that if we don't jump on that and try to figure out how to protect. Protect our communities against now in my mind the, the simplest thing is the fraudulent because some of these AIs are very good at even, you know impersonating your own family members or public figures.

And so I think that in my mind, if we, if we want to have a good return on investment in the next five years, we need to get on the stick about AI. Mm hmm. Yeah,

Jason: I I've said a couple of times now on the show [00:50:00] that you had mentioned social social media research and investigations at conferences.

And it seems like there are there are certain topics at every analyst conference that you're going to see, whether it's social media or maybe crypto, maybe link charting. There's certain There's certain topics that you're going to see every

year, and it becomes almost a trend. And AI next year, I think almost every conference next year that you go to, you're going to have some kind of AI component.

Richard: And I think that'll benefit us.

Jason: Yeah. I mean, nobody's really figured it out yet. So it's a little bit like the wild, wild west. So we're going to, I think everybody's going to be tripped. Tripping there for a while until we establish some get a better idea of what it is and what it's not.

Richard: When I talked to one of my computer crime investigators and I [00:51:00] posed the question where he thinks that AI will.

Be utilized for criminal activity. He said, don't worry about the technology itself, follow the money. And I thought that was an interesting you know, thought that it's not necessarily the AI itself that we need to concern ourselves with, but it's, how do we, how do we follow where that's going to benefit the criminal?

Jason: No, no, find a way to do. All right. . Let's finish up with personal interest then. As I mentioned, you are on the board of directors for the healing steps labyrinth and I guess, how did you get. Involved with this organization and I guess why do you why is this so important to you?

Richard: So last year about June, January, I was talking to my pastor and I said, I think that on World Suicide Prevention Day, we need to have a suicide prevention vigil.

And resource fair. [00:52:00] And we have this Healing Steps Labyrinth, which is right next to our church that we join, that we manage jointly with the church right across the lawn. And I think that that would be an excellent venue to do that. And so over the next few months, I began to work with local community organizations to try to plan the event.

The first time I ever wrote a press release, I thought that was exciting. Transcribed by <https://otter.ai> And I did generate a good bit of media interest from that and I got to be interviewed by a number of local media outlets but also the opportunity to talk about suicide awareness and prevention for such a long time talking about suicide was just a taboo topic you know, even more taboo than talking about mental health.

You know, because we don't want to admit that there are sometimes people get in a place where they feel like they're trapped in a, in, I like to call it a box. And it's a box of their circumstances where they forget that while they're [00:53:00] trapped in that box of their circumstances, that there are resources outside that box that can help move them past this crisis.

And so I just wanted to bring awareness to that. And so. As part of that I was invited to become a member of the board of directors for the labyrinth which is a wonderful thing. If you ever get a chance to look at it Veritas Veritas, I'm sorry, V E R I D I T A S is an organization that really advocates for the use of labyrinths and you know, as a sacred space, but also as a way to help.

process some emotions that we might be carrying with us. So and so the last two years we've had that vigil. This year it was a little bit scaled down because there were some other events surrounding it that we just didn't have the emotional space to be able to try to plan everything all at the same time.

And

Jason: then, so it's on World Suicide [00:54:00] 10th, correct? That's correct. That's right. And then so what I guess what was the reception to this? I mean, especially last year when you put it on the first time. So you know what was the turnout like? Did it meet your expectations or what was the results

Richard: of that? It didn't meet my expectations.

So I worked with community mental health providers and tried to bring them in and, and give them a venue where folks who might be dealing with suicide, suicide survivors, and that kind of thing would have access to services in the community. I'm also a part of the North Alabama Mental Health Coalition.

And so I think that really, as we begin to work together to try to access services. One of the things in our country that is severely lacking is the, the access to mental health services. We don't have enough providers. Some of these folks don't get paid enough. And then the wait list to get to see a psychiatrist in some locations is just [00:55:00] absolutely nuts.

It takes months to get in to see a psychiatrist. And so, you know. Any way that I, I thought, any way that I can help you know, bridge that gap, I thought that it would be helpful to our community.

Jason: So this event then gave resources, more information on suicide to help those that are in need, but also it, Gives builds awareness for those that may have some misconceptions about suicide.

Richard: It did. And it does. And, and I think most importantly, it gives a a place for us to. Remember those who have died by suicide, and I think it's important for us to tell those

Jason: stories. Very good. It's a good cause. I I commend you for being a part of that. It's certainly not an easy topic, and it sounds like you're doing some really great work [00:56:00] there, so I really appreciate all that you do, Richard.

Richard: Thank you so much. All right. I'm glad to be a part of it.

Jason: All right. My last segment to the show is words to the world. And this is where I give the guest the last word. You can promote any idea that you wish Richard.

What are your words to the world?

Richard: We're only alone if we choose to be. And so I encourage everyone to. Create a network, create a community and don't choose to be alone and then be upset when it

Jason: happens. Very good. Well, I leave every guest with you've given me just enough to talk bad about you later.

Indeed But I do appreciate you being on this show richard Thank you so much, and you be safe. You as well, thank you.

Mindy: Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analysts Talk with Jason Elder. You can show your support by sharing this and other episodes found on our website at [www.](http://www.leapodcasts.com)

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