

John Fox - The Little Things

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 nine years of law enforcement analysis experience with Shreveport PD in Louisiana. He also had a 20 year career with the U. S. Air Force. He studied At Michigan State, Penn State, Ohio State, it must be a Big Ten guy.

Please welcome John Fox. John, how we doing?

John: I'm doing great. Thanks for having me on the show.

Jason: All right. So as I mentioned, , you got some Big Ten schools on there. So , do you root for ?

John: Well, I usually root for Ohio State because that's where I grew up and most [00:01:00] of my friends and family are Buckeye folks and you know, so that's who we follow normally, but I also Would be a mess if I didn't say I follow LSU also It's hard not to when you live here in Louisiana Yeah, no,

Jason: I get it.

So, all right, very good. So, we'll get into a little bit of that because I do want to, I do at least want to talk a little bit about Michigan State later because that's where you earned the prime analysis degree. And so, but I'm getting a little bit ahead of myself. So, let's first start with how you discovered the law enforcement analysis profession.

Well,

John: 2013, I was preparing to retire from the military and when you prepare to retire, at least at that time, they would put you through a bunch of transition classes and the transition classes I went to, one of them talked about business,

one of them talked about going back to school. And then [00:02:00] finally the last one talked about seeking a job or finding a new career.

And during those courses. The thing that I really took away was the fact that the folks that were most successful in their transition took the skills that they gained in the military and maybe skills that they picked up along the way from hobbies or. Previous careers to the military or academics something like that, and they took those skills and applied it to a career.

So I knew we were going to stay here in Shreveport. I met my wife in this area when I was stationed at Barksdale Air Force Base in 2001 and. We she wanted to stay here. Her family is from here. Mother was here. So we you know, that's so I was tied to the area. And then I started to look around with that idea that I mentioned about what am I going to do?

And it seemed like. I was going to look to get a job, but the jobs that I best [00:03:00] translated into were either law enforcement or some type of career in a DOD civilian world. And I knew that I wanted a clean break from the military at that point. So I looked to law enforcement. At first I didn't know anything about crime analysis.

So I was looking at becoming either a jailer or an officer. And when I say jailer, like up in northern Louisiana, the state has a penitentiary that's not too far away from here, a reasonable distance to drive to for work. And all of the parishes have like a parish jail or parish prison, if you will. So there's Opportunities there for somebody transitioning into law enforcement and then, of course, there were several departments at the time that we're trying to hire new people as well.

So, as I was looking through that search, and I was looking at applying to Shreveport, [00:04:00] I was looking at the webpage and there was a position, an open position for a crime analyst and I read the job description and It almost matched perfectly the skills that I already had. And I thought, well, should I do this or should I be an officer?

But after kind of discussing the situation with my family and thinking about, different issues that I had and the life I'd lived in the military. I decided I would go with crime analysis. So so that's that was pretty much it but it's now that I know a lot more about it. And now they've been doing it for a while.

I mean, it's it's a good career field to become,

Jason: I thought you, I thought you were going to say, I regret it.

John: No, the, the, the only thing that that's I guess it would be nice at my department, we don't have there aren't a whole lot of positions. You know, there's only one position right now, but so it's not like you can bounce [00:05:00] between different.

facets of crime analysis like maybe you would in a bigger, a bigger place like Dallas or Houston, New Orleans. So that's maybe the only downside to it, but I know

Jason: when we talked in the prep called, you mentioned you're gonna be limited in terms of what you can talk about in terms of your military career.

But I am curious, because you said that the analyst job fit some of the skill set that you already had. So I'm curious to know , what did you. learn or what skills did you have in the military that fit nicely into the analyst role?

John: Well I guess first of all, in the Air Force, I was trained as an intelligence officer and an information operations planner.

So in both of those things, there's a lot of basic stuff that you do that translates well to this type of work. So for [00:06:00] instance It wasn't unusual for somebody to come to me with a requirement for some type of information or analytical product. So I would when I was assigned to flying units and flying wings they might ask me a question and I'd have to go research, do a bunch of research, assemble Assemble some type of presentation, maybe assemble data files in a meaningful way and communicate that to them to support their operational planning.

You know, so that was one aspect that was useful. In addition to that, as a, as a information operations planner and a more senior Intel officer I did a lot of. Writing writing operations orders and policy documents and guidelines for folks to follow. And again, all of that stuff kind of translates here.

The job that I have at Shreveport, I've had to write, several different pieces that ended up going to the city [00:07:00] console. I've had to prep. Prepare graphics and presentations, both geographic type information and statistical that again, those were things that I would have to do.

Basic things I would have to do in the military that, you know again that translated well into this career field now now

Jason: when you were the information operations planner was it strictly for for war or was there a different purpose for what you were

John: planning. The work that I did in that I was attached to an air operations center and, and in that I was deployed to the Middle East during the, the conflict.

So over there, so I supported most of the work that I did directly impacted things that were going on over in the war zone when it came to that. Type of planning. Yeah.

Jason: So I mean, I guess don't take this the wrong way, but you almost [00:08:00] seem overqualified for the analyst role, right? Looking through some of the things you accomplish in the air force about managing, 20 different folks having a pretty big budget developing strategies. You talked about the planning aspect

John: of it. Well, I think that's 1 of the things, though, when you look to get a job after, your first career, sometimes you look for less stress, and I don't know, maybe I find this type of work to be a little less stressful than the previous work that I had.

The other thing is you kind of have to look to where you're at. So I'm geographically tied to this location and the skill set that I had would be useful in a bigger city, but that's not where we're at.

Jason: Yeah. Yeah, so I guess I'm more curious just regarding your Air Force career, because you know, most, most people go to the [00:09:00] military, they do their, their four years, they do their, their time and then leave, in terms of your case, you obviously stayed for a 20 year career.

What drew you to that conclusion that you wanted to continue to go on for 20 years, because it does sound like it got to the point where like, okay, this is 20 years. It's too much. I've, I'm, I'm tired of the military. I want to go do something

John: else. Yeah. Well I guess the first thing is with the military, you in my case, I grew up around people that were in the military and they looked at that as an opportunity Kind of grew me to go into that to an extent.

And then once I get into it I liked I liked the opportunity to be overseas because a lot of my time I was in overseas areas or getting deployed to overseas areas.

So I got to travel and see foreign cultures and stuff like that. But at a point you kind of get burned out and and, and.

And kind of get to a [00:10:00] point where it's time to go. And I think that was pretty much the way that most military people are. It just comes at different points in their career. So,

Jason: All right. So then when you get to Shreveport, is. This is a brand new position. Are you their first analyst or were you replacing

John: somebody?

No, I replaced somebody, but it was a weird situation. The person that I replaced, he had a medical issue that came up that forced it was unexpected medical thing that forced him to retire. And there was a, there was a void for a period of time at Shreveport where they didn't have an analyst and they were trying to use officers to fill the position.

So after a period of time they figured out that wasn't working for them. So then they, that was about the time that I saw this position listed. And You know, so I moved into it. So it was kind of [00:11:00] strange in that there was stuff already set up, but there was really no continuity as to what you were doing.

So in some ways I was creating processes. I was tweaking processes that existed, but there was no way to like, ask the person, why did you do this? Or why do we do these things? So. It was almost like being creating something from new, from the beginning. So I gotcha.

Jason: I see. And so then you're walking in for the first time and you're brand new to the field, you you're in a quasi semi new position, as you just described.

What do you ask to do when you're, you're first starting? What are your

John: goals? Well, I guess for me, I was just trying to figure out how everything worked. And, and along those lines the chief had things that he wanted me to produce. So the big thing [00:12:00] that the department was doing at the time that they needed my help with was comp stat.

So I essentially started keeping track of the crimes and generating reports and mapping the crimes and making sure their maps were updated that kind of stuff. So you know, but then for me, I started doing this work and thought, well, I need to understand more about crime and criminal justice and such.

And that's part of the reason that I started getting more educated you know, not just in degrees, but I spent a lot of time reading stuff from the Problem oriented policing center there their publications. And then I started, I joined the IAC and started hitting hitting the webinars as much as I could reading the papers and such, so I could figure out, are we doing what, what was being done in our department?

Did that make sense? Does it fit? What's the norm [00:13:00] now? In crime analysis, can I do things better? You know, is there anything I can do better? So and slowly I think I've made improvements. Here, I know there's still a long way to go. I would like more automation, but I guess that comes with more computer skills.

Jason: , the position is fairly new. In the grand scheme of things, right? But it is still interesting to me to talk to folks that you're you started less than 10 years ago, and it's just like, OK here's a computer go like if you need training, we'll send you to training.

Other than that, just kind of figure it out on your own. And let me let us know if we can help.

John: Yeah, and that's OK. That's pretty much it. So at least that was kind of the model that I dropped into. Now, my department over the years has been good enough to allow me to go to the IACA conference a couple of [00:14:00] times.

And that's been helpful and then with membership and I E C A, of course you have access to the training and I've taken a bunch of the, the webinars and stuff through them that made me smarter on how to do things. So, yeah. But now, now,

Jason: was there a particular training or maybe there was a couple of them that really you think Or really helped you out in terms of figuring out

John: the job.

Well, it's sorry if I pause here for a minute. I'm looking for a book that is on my shelf, or at least it used to be. It was about the the crime analysis. What was it? 60 steps?

Jason: Oh, yeah, the John Eck book. 6060

John: steps. Yeah, that. The courses were good to teach buttonology and some of the softwares that I was struggling with a little bit, but as far as, like, understanding what a [00:15:00] crime analyst needed to do and kind of what the daily grind might be or what it.

Maybe should be that was a key book for me. Yeah. Cause you could go through and read it. You could tab a page and come back to it when you needed to for you know, for reference.

Jason: Oh, I got the book just to, just for the. Listeners is to sure it up there. It's it's crime analysis for problem solvers and 60 steps and it's with Ronald Clark and John Akin and I seem to always remember John Echo.

John Echo was my professor at Cincinnati when I was there, but I always forget Ron Clark's name and that and that. So if Ron ever sees me, he's probably going to give me a hard time because I always forget to include him in referencing that. That book and the Sarah model and all of that, those two

John: accomplished.

Yeah. Yeah. And that it was those, it was that particular book that led me to the [00:16:00] problem oriented policing center and the guides. That was one thing that the analyst who was here before me, he had left behind a bunch of those kinds of books those little pop books. And I just would take those.

Read them every night.

Jason: I cut you off there. Was there another training that you were about to say?

John: Well, the other, the other thing, and it's not so much a training, but it was a book that that I pulled from the shelf that I read also, and it was a big help was crime analysis from first report to final arrest.

And that one was again, kind of yeah, the how to manual of What to do for me, so

Jason: interesting, so, you start off, you're doing some maps, you're, you're supporting ComStat, you come to the conclusion that I you need to become a better student of. Crime analysis and you educate yourself there.

So then [00:17:00] what were the, some of the things you implemented from there? Once you got some of this education, how did you improve either the position or maybe even ComStat?

John: Well one of the, one of the things that I started to do was to update a lot of my maps. I got some training in GIS and And there was some other GIS books that were here that I think it was like crime mapping or something like that.

It was some some course book that must have been left here and I read that and I improved what I was doing from the mapping standpoint and trying to automate more of it as much as I could through the creation of scripts that I would run instead of having to go through and do a whole bunch of Steps individual actions and software, but then as far as things to the officers, one of the things that I implemented was at the time they were only doing like crime update reports.

Twice a [00:18:00] week and I said, well, what if I automate this report stuff and then I give you a way that you can get an update every day and then I saw I implemented a process where every day I, I, I cleaned up data and put it into an access database, which then. There were automated reports that they could go into and click a button and open up the reports for their area and look at and you know, and all of that I put in place and was running fairly well up through COVID and COVID happened.

Are you self

Jason: taught in

John: Microsoft Access? IACA and self taught. Yeah. And along with what do you call it? YouTube. Yeah. Yeah. You know, the YouTube is amazing too. I guess that's something I should have mentioned as far as training. Cause I think a lot of times. You might not think of that as a go-to source.

Yeah. But pretty much anything you want to do, you can, you [00:19:00] can Google and YouTube and or search it in YouTube and find a video or five. Mm-hmm. It'll explain it. And at least one of them you'll get it. . Yeah.

Jason: Yeah. . Are you all still running

John: ComStat there? Yes, we, we still do that. It, it used to be a an two week program.

Every two weeks they would get together and have a meeting, but now it's pretty much is once a week. That we're, we're doing that, but that started once we were part of something called public safety partnership. So in 21, our department joined the public safety partnership. And with that came reporting requirements that were similar to comp stat.

The thing that was different though, is instead of working internal. With the members of our the members of my department, now I'm doing reports that are going to all of the law enforcement partners that we [00:20:00] interact with in Shreveport. So that was a new. Experience. So that's a local program then.

Well, the, the public safety partnership is actually a national program and it's run by a, I want to say the Department of Justice. Is it the Bureau of Justice support? Does that sound right? Just a statistics. No, it's not. It's not a statistics thing. It's, it's like a training. It's the, it's more of a training program, but it's but it's, it's a national program.

Your agency can, become part of, unfortunately, the unfortunate part though, is they're looking, one of the qualifying criteria is to be have a high amount of violent crime and unfortunately for a while we kind of had that in here in the city, so,

Jason: .

So then you're having to report once a week to. To the Bureau for this program. So you all moved your com stat [00:21:00] from biweekly to weekly. Correct. And it's interesting. The com stat process, because I certainly has evolved over the years. And I think, I think it was Eric Pisa. I'm going to give Eric Pisa credit.

I think he, he, when he was on my show, he said ComStat was, when it was developed, it was, it was really useful for a lot of different decision makers because they didn't have access to the data. They would come to the comstat and people would learn just the data wasn't readily available.

Well, now, today, I mean, the data's readily available. You're not waiting to the comstat meeting to make a decision on what to what you're doing. And, and so the kind of, the, the main purpose of con stat, at least from the beginning, is kind of lost it's luster do you have a, a similar or different take from that?

John: Well, sometimes it feels like we're [00:22:00] doing statistics to do statistics, but I think the biggest thing, though, that comes out of CompStat is the fact that you have all of these different senior officers in the department, at

least this is how we do it, come together at One place at one time for a set set period of time every week to talk about what their problems are in their particular area in our, our city.

We have a divided up into 4 operational areas. Senior officers assigned to it's in charge of that area, but these, these officers get together with the chief and some of the special units to talk about their their issues and problems and I think to me, that's probably the greatest value of it.

The numbers, especially during COVID sometimes I wasn't super comfortable that the output that I was giving [00:23:00] was really indicative of what was happening. And that was in our department, we do paper reports and then those reports are, are entered into our records management system while there was a lag, there was already a lag in doing that.

But when COVID came around, unfortunately, the, the people that entered reports, they were in a fairly confined space. So every time there was a wave of sickness there was a at least a few of those people were going to be out for a period of time. So what's your lag now? Well, it's, it's, it depends on the crime type, but most of the major crimes get into the system within two to three days now which is still not perfect you know, for analysis, but and that's part of the reason I, I I can't remember if we talked about the, the different types of analysis that I normally do as the [00:24:00] loan analyst, but you know, that's primarily why I concentrate more on administrative stuff than tactical.

'cause they're just, the data just doesn't come in a timely manner, so. Hmm. That

Jason: is interesting. So for your ComStat, do you normally, what day do you normally have your ComStat and do you usually like cut it off so you, you have it on Wednesdays, but it's you're studying data, data as of the end of Sunday or something like

John: that?

Yeah, it's pretty much like you described, I set the period two week periods. Running from Sunday to Saturday. And then it's, it's, it's a comparison of the two weeks you know, the, the previous two weeks to the current two weeks, but, but then the meeting, the physical meeting where folks are getting together isn't held until either Wednesday or Thursday, depending upon which which meeting we're talking about if it's the, if it's the internal [00:25:00] one, it's on Thursdays.

And if it's the, the external one and it's on on Wednesday. So, All

Jason: right, huh? And it looks like you just my quick google search here. You got about 500 officers

John: there Yeah, that's what's on the books. But it's like At least louisiana has been having issues with keeping enough officers on the staff so like our department is we we have Almost 500 positions, but I think there's about 100 or 100 plus that are unoccupied as again after the whole COVID business, it just kind of changed the landscape of the department.

You know, and reduce the personnel drastically. So,

Jason: yeah, yeah. Hmm. Oh, even once you get up to full strength at 600. I mean, that's still, man, that's still a lot of reports being written. And I'm just going on in terms of just the [00:26:00] data entry folks. I mean, that's, that's a lot of work for them all to be doing with trying to keep up with 500 officers.

John: Yeah. Yeah, well, and COVID had greatly reduced the volume of reports that that were written, but post pandemic, we're starting to come back to normal levels and it's it's a struggle some days to keep up, so.

Jason: Yeah, but, yeah, I didn't, yeah, so it's. You know, that's obviously one of the things you don't like to see come back, right, on post COVID.

Like, that's one of the things that

John: I am... Yeah, hopefully that doesn't happen again, and hopefully we don't have any more pandemics while I'm a part of the department, so.

Jason: Yeah, so, yeah, somebody asked something I forget. But it was exactly how it was put, but when your grandchildren ask you about the pandemic you know, what's the worst thing that you could tell them?

[00:27:00] And I was thinking which 1 we had more than 1 pandemic when you're talking to your grandchildren, like, which 1 that would be the worst? Because I can't imagine going through that even something similar again. So, yeah.

Nick: Hi, my name is Nick Lutens. I'm a crime analyst, and I'm here to tell you that nobody deserves to be a victim, but lock your doors and put your stuff where people can't see it. Thank you.

Adrienne: Hi, this is Adrienne Galbraith. Have you ever received an email on a giant list serve and started to hit reply all instead of just reply?

John: If so, you're not the only one, and just always pause and double check before you hit send.

Jason: Well, let's get to your analyst badge story. And for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge story is a career defining case or project that an analyst works. And for you, it's [00:28:00] 2018 and you're Dealing with a sex offense that really turns into something a little bit more.

John: Yeah I took the time last night to go back after talking with you to look at what I had done.

And first of all, I'm going to correct the dates a little bit. So the event happened in 17. Okay. So I, I had been an analyst for a couple of years by that point, and after going through all the training and the different guides and stuff, I knew that one of the things that I needed to do was to look at different categories of crime and look for concentrations and.

And and try to figure out what was causing the problem. So on while I was doing that, looking at sex offense issues one day, I noticed a concentration and then as part of my process, I would go through and open each [00:29:00] one of the reports and read each report to see, well, is it is this being caused by a single offender.

Do we have something like that going on? Or is it just kind of a place based kind of thing? But when I was reviewing the report, I noticed that it sounded a lot like something I'd heard before or read before and one of the other tasks that I had, was

one of the jobs I had was to do the UCR reporting Numbers to the state. And as I went through that, that reporting for the state I would have to review each homicide every month and provide certain bits and pieces of information for the UCR report. And. I remember encountering a report where some remains were found that we couldn't identify and it was in a particular house in a particular [00:30:00] location.

And as I was reviewing the report that I mentioned before, I was like Okay. Where does this I was reading the details, and one of the things that it talked about was a potential homicide that occurred. Well long story short, I was able to put both incidents on a map, kind of step through the timelines in each one,

and lo and behold, the two were related, and as a result that Went to I forwarded that to the investigator assigned, both investigators, because there were two separate investigations, and it, it turned out that the information that I noted, it put the investigator on a path that allowed both cases to be closed, and, and it identified at that point with Remains that were unidentified, so it was you know, for me, that was like the first big, big event that I'd been a part of as [00:31:00] a law enforcement analyst because you go through this crime stats stuff and and and.

And you do your daily grind and you don't necessarily see a big result. But in this case this situation, I yeah, I got a win and the department got a win because we closed to actually ended up closing three cases cause I was looking at the letter that was I ended up getting a letter of commendation from the chief of police for the stuff that I did as part of it.

And you know, but it ended up closing three cases and both violent offender off the streets. What was the other case? There was a missing person report because the the, the unidentified remains were actually somebody that had been reported missing six months or so prior. To the discovery of the remains, what exactly

Jason: are you reading out of this sex offense report [00:32:00] that made you think of that of that body?

John: I guess the fact that the, the, the person. Claimed to have been present at a homicide. And then she kind of described where it happened. And I started looking at the address and, and then compared it to you know compared it to the address for the sex offense.

Jason: And she was and she was a victim of the sex offense.

John: She was, she was a victim of a couple of different. Offenses. Okay. Hmm. Now

Jason: , was the victim sexually

John: assaulted as well? Yeah, I, I don't know the details of that. Mm-hmm. and

Jason: you can't speculate. I don't want, yeah. I don't wanna speculate there.

But no, I think that is because

John: because it, because I guess that's the one thing in this as an analyst I don't normally do investigative. Analysis work and so I was just doing my normal stuff looking for patterns and I [00:33:00] identified this and I sent it to the investigator and they took over from there but it was just that little so and I guess that for me, that's probably the biggest thing that I take away from it.

You might go through your day thinking, well, what I do some days you might think, well, what I do just doesn't matter but on that particular day, the, the basic grind resulted in in a big win, so, yeah, no,

Jason: well, it is really important for analysts, I think, to read reports, right, but usually some of these departments, they're so large, you, you don't have time to read every single report in a day, it's, it's,

John: it's a lot.

Yeah. And I, I don't really have that either. That lecture is a you know, as a the single analyst in the department, but, but when I get a concentration, I will take the time to read that because you're not talking about reading A thousand reports you might be dealing with 10, 15, even 50 [00:34:00] becomes reasonable depending upon the project you're, you're working on, you know?

So,

Jason: Yeah, , in this case though, , you were able to connect. These cases because of just your administrative work that you did for was it? You see our diapers. I can't remember which which

John: one. Well, it was it. It was used to your at the

Jason: time. Yeah, so I mean, there's definitely something to be said about having that broad access to.

To the data that you're reviewing all the homicides and they go to the state and have aware of some of the details. Yes, all right.

Well, let's I'm actually curious because you are my first analyst from Louisiana. On the show, what crime trends that you see there in Shreveport and maybe even Louisiana?

John: Well, I guess the, the first thing I would say is that you know, [00:35:00] Louisiana has a reputation for Being a fun place to be, but we also have some

issues with criminal behavior and it's at least where I'm at in Shreveport, the crime sometimes passes right through town.

We live here on the intersection of two interstates and you know, that connect Dallas and you. And Atlanta and then the North South connects us to to South Louisiana down to I 10 and sometimes people pass through here and some crime comes to town. But and we also have folks from here, like I mentioned, going over to the Dallas area.

It is not unusual to have folks from here you know End up being part of criminal problems other places. So, yeah, so,

Jason: so some of the stuff that's being traffic to drugs,

John: guns. Yeah, they're they, they [00:36:00] certainly have drug activity that comes and goes through here. And then you know, firearms have, have been a problem more so over the last few years.

Thank you. And, and of course, gun crime, I think most places in the, across the U. S. during COVID saw some spike in gun crime. And Louisiana wasn't left out of that. And Shreveport itself had unfortunately some pretty high counts of homicide in the last couple of years. So.

Jason: You'd mentioned that, shreveport was part of that program and they were had higher than average violence and other crimes. So, so why do you think Shreveport is above average in terms

John: of crime? Well, I guess one of the things when you, you look at Shreveport as a whole you have a city where It, it, it used to be 30 or 40 [00:37:00] years ago, a manufacturing hub, and there used to be a lot of a lot of kind of that heavy make things industry manufacturing industry, but over the years, a lot of that has dried up and gone away, and so now you have.

People that live here in a city that's, we have about 180, 000 people you know, with not as much opportunity to find good paying jobs that's some of it and then we also have I guess just a culture that everybody here has a gun, you know and, and, and that doesn't mean that you're going to Use the gun in a bad way, but I mean, it's just the availability of firearms here is probably higher than it might be in other some other places.

So

Jason: well, it raises, it raises fear. And when people are scared, they, Not always think clearly. Yeah, right. So they might may do stuff that they normally wouldn't do if they if there was no [00:38:00] guns present.

John: Yeah. Yeah. So I think all of those have a little bit to contribute to the to the problem, but I don't know that anyone.

Any one issue though is the key to the whole thing. So

Jason: you mentioned in a prep call that you have 180, 000 people that then there's, did you say there was 40, 000 reports?

John: Any year? Yeah, that was prior to COVID. We were averaging about 40, 000 reports. The last couple of years we've had closer to 25.

But this year we seem like we're on a, an upward trend. So, yeah,

Jason: and that, that got me thinking too, because is, is those reports indicative that, You actually there's, there's reporting the crime issue that's indicative of like, that's, that's how much crime you actually have.

But it also could be a situation [00:39:00] where you have those reports to where, because people are comfortable coming to the police. When certain issues arise, so they're going to make if you're comfortable with the place, you may go and report a, a low level crime, for instance, a theft, for instance, that may be other places that, you know what, that's not the, I'm not even going to bother.

I don't even want to get the police involved. So it's it's interesting. It's interesting because you could see that high report rate as. Indicative of crime, but it also may be there's something that you have a city that is okay with coming to the police when they have a problem.

John: Yeah, and I think that's one of the things the balance that.

The officers here, I have to work through is you always want less crime, but then you, you don't want the the people in the community out there taking care of crime themselves and and sometimes that itself can [00:40:00] lead to. Violent encounters.

Jason: Oh, yeah. Well, back to your point about everybody carrying a gun, right?

John: Yeah. So,

Jason: Okay. Well, then let's see here. You know, you talked about being the soul Alice. At your department for nine years and, , you're seeing more and more police departments get analysts in Louisiana. , we had a little bit of a discussion yesterday about regional associations and what you would want to see from a regional association in Louisiana.

So I just wanted to get your get your take on that a little bit in terms of there's currently not a regional association there in in Louisiana. But what would you want 1 maybe to look like? Or maybe you would want to see about joining a neighboring.

John: Well as we discussed, I had joined the text lean [00:41:00] association when I was at the most recent IACA conference which I did that to basically expand my network.

So that was one of the things that was recommended to me through the. That PSP thing I mentioned before and part of that process, they do assessments and and they came in and looked at the analyst function and that was one of the things that recommended to me was to reach out and make. More connections with people.

So that regional analysis group over there in Texas I just added a whole group of people now to my to my network a little closer than just being part of the IACA, so, yeah. But yeah, but from the regional standpoint, it would be great if we had something regionally in Louisiana, because then we could get together on a regular basis and, and talk about [00:42:00] Louisiana problems and you know, get training on things that are happening Maybe more applicable to Louisiana.

So but again, I don't, I don't know if we'll ever have enough people to really get to that regional analysis organization here just in the state of Louisiana. Now the area that I live in, in Northwest Louisiana is referred to as the arc latex. And that was something I thought about was, well, maybe.

Maybe there should be a regional Arklatex association. What is Arklatex? Well, basically, if you look up here in the northwest corner of Louisiana, Arkansas, I mean, from Shreveport, I can drive 10 miles, 15 miles roughly west, and I'm in Texas, I drive about 50 miles, I think it is, and it's about a 20 30 minute drive up I 49, and I'm in Texas, I'm in Arkansas, [00:43:00] and then if I drive a little further and cut to West out of Texarkana.

I can also be in Oklahoma. So that's kind of what they refer to as the Arklatex, that kind of corner region where all these states come together. But it a lot of things happen across borders and boundaries here between the different states. So since it's so easy to just jump on one of the interstates and be somewhere else and you know, in an hour, yeah.

Jason: there's different reasons to have an association, right?

If you're looking to network and looking for training, looking, looking to get together versus if you might want something more locally, but if you're looking for something bigger where you're holding, like, Conferences and yours don't you're getting together maybe on an annual or biannual basis that's a different different type of association but you know so you could if you didn't want to get into the mix of [00:44:00] creating all the.

The legalese work that would be needed to create your own regional association. You still could do something like join text lane and then talk to text lane and then still organize a group locally where you would meet more locally to discuss local problems like what you were talking about with, oklahoma and Arkansas and whatnot so it's might be just something that you, you create that meeting more organically than as opposed to creating your own rack. Yeah,

John: well, I know the the, the tax lien part is already paid off just from. Meeting with people that and having people to reach out to that you you trust or you know who they are.

So,

Jason: , let's talk a little bit about your education here, because I do want to talk about some of the degrees that you've got as mentioned , [00:45:00] you went to Penn State, And then got a postgraduate certificate on geospatial information systems and I was, I, I made a joke about nobody geocoding anymore and you said, yep, nope, I still geocode and so which I, I didn't know anybody was really doing anymore.

John: Well, maybe, maybe I still haven't caught up to the modern world. I don't know, but and I don't always geocode, but. Yeah. One of the. Issues that we have with the the data that I get there, there are coordinates that are generated by the records management system and they don't always drop the point exactly where you where the address is.

So I just found it better. To Geocode, you know? Mm-hmm. , but, and with the more modern with Arc, arc, G i s pro, I don't know exactly what Esri did to their software, but it's, it, it's like [00:46:00] it's on steroids. 'cause you can geocode so much faster. Mm-hmm. ,

Jason: well that was time consuming back in the day, so I'm sure they're trying to cut into that.

Yeah. So and I'm I, I always wondered what. More could be done with GIS in, in law enforcement, because we put the, the data up on a map and, and that's certainly, it's always an important question to answer where something happened, but with all the theory and tools and techniques that , go with.

G. I. S. I always wondered, is there something law enforcement analysis is missing? When it comes to applying G. I. S. to law enforcement

John: analysis? Yeah, I, I sometimes think about that, I guess myself. I, like I said, I try to read a lot about the the latest techniques and different theories and ideas that are out there.

[00:47:00] And sometimes I read stuff or I see presentations by people and it, it makes me wonder if they're applying the technique, if, if the output is valid. And I don't know if that gives, if you understand what I'm saying there, but it's, it's very easy to run a script for a hotspot or you know, to run some algorithm to show you where activity is happening.

But at the end of the day, I have to take that output and explain it to officers who some may get may. Understand it very simply and then others want you to explain. Well, what is it? What did what did it really do? And what are you? You know, and I wish I was an expert some days, but you have to at least get it to a point where they can accept your output.

You know, your result is something valid to use in there in their planning. In our case G. I. S. [00:48:00] is. Is used not is used primarily by the patrol people to to show where they need to have directed patrols a lot of times because crime crime happens in certain places, you know from all the different theories that a lot of times if If an area has a burglary the next a burglarized again.

So just by tracking The crimes a lot of times it gives officers the anticipation to realize, hey, maybe I should be looking for burglars hanging out in this block in a couple of next week when I'm on patrol. So but you know, so I guess one of

the things that I question though, sometimes is I do I need to take just a set of crimes and run it against.

The like a hotspot, for instance you know, what am I looking for? And I don't always have the right answer to that. And of course, the distance when you try to do a hotspot [00:49:00] calculations what really makes the best sense for how far away I should look at the other incidents around it. So.

Jason: Yeah, I do. I do think there's some danger for Alice when it comes to some of this software and Azure is no different in there that it's very easy to click a couple of buttons and get an output and because the software is really good at what it does, Alice may or may not truly understand what the output is saying and that's that can.

Obviously it can be difficult to truly understand like okay what did this software just do what are all the calculations that are going on behind the curtain and how am i going to now explain this output to decision makers

John: yeah yeah and that's. I guess that's the struggle you, when I was newer and somebody came and said, well, can you tell us where there's [00:50:00] concentrations of crime?

And I started looking in the books that I had and it said, well, run certain algorithms and do this. So and, and that all sounded good at first, but then I was thinking, well, Okay. It gives me a location. How do I know that that's really valid? So, and that was one of the things I guess, because I wasn't as confident in the output of some of these tools.

At first I would always follow up with the officers. So, if I knew a special unit was assigned to go run an operation in an area, I spent you know, 5, 10 minutes, a few days later with one of the key people that planned it to say, well I said that this was the area to go to. Did that turn out to be accurate?

Did you find the behavior that I said was there? You know, so it could have just been a lack of confidence on my part, but at the same time, I, I [00:51:00] wanted to have confidence in the tool that I was, that was telling me something. So that was my solution. Oh,

Jason: no, no, that's that, that works to corroborate what you were, what the data was telling you.

So, all right. Good. And then let's Michigan State, you, you got the c was it a certificate in law enforcement

John: intelligence analysis? It was actually a master of science degree, if you can believe that. Yeah. So

Jason: What do you think you got out of that?

Would you recommend it to others?

John: Well if the program hasn't changed, because I caveat it's been two years since I left it they haven't significantly changed it. I think it's a great program. You know, the first thing that was interesting to me is I had read a bunch of these different books and the, the pop guides, like I was mentioning, And when you read them, one of the things I would read is I would check to see you all who the author was and who was involved in the project.

[00:52:00] And when I went to Michigan State and looked at their program, I was pleasantly surprised that there were a whole lot of names in the faculty that were showing up. In those books and such I read, so I thought, well, if these are being published used in the law enforcement community and the crime analysis community specifically, well, maybe this is a serious program I should be looking at.

So. Yeah but once I got there and started getting into the work you know, it was a mixture of a little bit of theory, but then a lot of a lot of kind of crime analysis focus stuff how to use certain softwares to an extent. Discussions of different types of analysis some of the same things that you would read in either Mr.

Gottlieb's book, and there was, I think trying to remember the lady's name, she's, she was at Central Florida for a while. A professor. Her first name [00:53:00] was Rachel. You probably know, is it Santos? Does that sound right? Oh, Rachel,

Jason: Rachel Boba Santos.

Yeah, Dr.

John: Santos, yeah. Okay, Dr. Santos, yeah. So, so there was one of her books that was used in one of the courses. Yeah. And a couple of the courses kind of stepped through it. You know, so it was a really, to me it was a good. You know, good program and then I learned a good bit of stuff that it's not that I

didn't know it because I read it in these other books, but it just kind of solidified what I knew some of the things I knew already and of course, that increases your, your confidence when you're.

You know, you start to feel like, well, what I was doing makes this is what they're telling me I should be doing. So. All

Jason: right. Good deal. Let's finish up with personal interest then. And you are learning to play the mandolin.

John: You know, the, the mandolin is a string instrument that it's got ties back to Europe, but it's more commonly probably thought [00:54:00] of here in the States with bluegrass music.

So, I'm not very good at it yet, but I'm learning how to play. And it's also an opportunity for me to spend time with my youngest son. Cause he he likes music and specifically he likes playing the guitar. So so it gives us a chance sometimes to sit down and just kind of play together. Things

Jason: we do

John: for our kids.

Yeah. So how long have you been working on the mandolin? It really hadn't been that long. It's, it's less than a year. I've been thinking about it for a long time, but I guess I started thinking, well, if I keep. Just thinking about it, I'll probably never do it. So maybe I just need to do it.

Jason: Now, is this the first instrument that you've ever learned how to play?

Or

John: did you play when I was when I was a kid up through high school, I played the, the cornet and the trumpet. [00:55:00] So I, I already knew music a little bit. I say and, and then I kind of dabbled a little bit with the piano. My mother was, she was a music teacher and, and gave piano lessons and which it's kind of funny.

She did. She never taught her kids how to play piano. She, she taught everybody else how to play piano, even though we had a piano in the house. But so I just kind of learned tinkered with it and learned a little bit play little simple songs but yeah, I

Jason: gotcha. All right. Well I was trying to figure out like what voice , you sound like, and what keeps coming to mind

John: is

Jason: , the Chris Farley skit about Matt Foley they live in, in a van down by the river.

I, I don't know why it does not quite of it, but for whatever reason, I just picture you ending the show, saying I'm living in a van down by the river. So if you would, [00:56:00] if you would indulge me, maybe to just to say that I'll see if that's what it is

John: living in a van down by the river.

That's a little bit, it's

Jason: a little bit about that's what. That's what you sound like.

John: Yeah. Well, see, in, in, in Shreveport, we have a homeless population, but those folks, some of those folks live down by the river and a couple of them might live in a van, I'm not sure, but yeah,

Jason: but all right. All right, John, let's go 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. What are your words

John: to the world? Well, I think for analysts I would just say to keep on learning every day I spend a little bit of time trying to learn something new. Sometimes it might be music.

Other times it's something about the [00:57:00] job and you know, with. With that, you need to learn about your community, learn about the leadership you're working for, and of course, the latest tools and research. I try to spend at least an hour a week, maybe not all at one time, but throughout the week spend an hour learning something new that you can apply to your job, and that hopefully will keep the job always interesting and improve your skills.

Jason: Very good. Well, 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, John. Thank you so much. And you be safe.

John: Yes, sir. Thank you.

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