

Doris Cohen - Mother Knows Best

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 27 years of law enforcement analysis experience. She spent 15 years working with the Palo Alto Police Department and the East Palo Alto Police Department in California. She spent the last 12 years with Sound Thinking, formerly known as ShotSpotter.

She earned a Crime and Intelligence Analyst Certification, and she is currently working on her Doctorate in Education. Please welcome Doris Cohen! Doris, how we doin

Doris: Doing well, Jason. Thank you so much for this opportunity. I appreciate it.

Jason: Yeah, [00:01:00] there is a lot to go over. I, interesting perspective. I think you're going to share with us today between what you did before you were an analyst and what you did after you were an analyst.

So. I'm definitely looking to hear your perspective and your story. Okay. All right, let's get to it. How did you discover the law enforcement analysis profession?

Doris: That story is interesting to me, at least in and of itself, because I was not looking for this profession at all, Jason. I actually was in the banking industry and the banking industry took a turn back in the mid 90s.

And so when my bank was Bought out by another bank i thought it's time for me to go back to school and so that's what i did started signing up for school and i also signed up at a temp agency so that i could take jobs here and there as they became available and [00:02:00] that's when palo alto police department came looking for me

Jason: So how did that.

Come to be then.

Doris: According to the temp agency, they Palo Alto police department was interested in someone with my skillset. So that's why they wanted me to work there, but I was not interested. I was not interested in working in law enforcement was not happy with previous experiences growing up with interaction with the police.

So I actually declined the offer. Wow.

Jason: All right. So was this a temporary position that

Doris: they were looking for? It was a temporary position. The person who I was going to be working in their place was on leave, on maternity leave, and they asked me to cover for six months.

Jason: So what

Doris: changed your mind? My mom changed my mind.

I told her, I told her that I didn't want to take the position because she knew about the many times. That I had been stopped by the [00:03:00] police for random stuff, supposedly I didn't I didn't stop at a light, I ran a light, I ran the stop sign, all of these different reasons they'd say they stopped me, never gave me a ticket, but would always stop me, and so my feeling about police was a little bit less than, than admirable, and so I did not want to take the position, and my mom said, you should, Give it a try.

Maybe you'll understand from the inside why they do what they do and how they do it.

Jason: . So I usually do ask folks what it was like the first couple of days when they're walking into the police department and for you. Given this, what was it like that first day walking

Doris: in?

It was really interesting because now I have access I am inside the department. I'm seeing people in their police uniforms. I'm greeting them. They're greeting me. So it was a very different feeling then. Being stopped by the police [00:04:00] multiple times and one time, in fact, Jason being stopped and there were eight police cars that that stopped me.

So that feeling was still in my mind as I walked through the doors. But just thinking just continuing to remember the story, remembering my mom. Saying just see how things work from the inside. Perhaps you'll understand what they do and why they do it.

Jason: And then, so what were you being asked to do, given that you have the banking background?

Doris: I was asked to work in the records department. So a lot of what I was going to do was. To greet people coming into the department, to enter information into the system, to work with our alarm data, and also to process warrant information. So there were a variety of different tasks and records.

Jason: Okay, and then, so, so I, I guess then what, what did, did you think it was comparable or [00:05:00] what do you think the skill set did for you as you were coming in from banking into what you were being asked?

I

Doris: didn't think it was exactly comparable i just wonder if maybe that was what i was told by the agency so that i would take the job and

Jason: i need somebody they need somebody

Doris: and so i learned a lot on the job and i was very eager very ambitious to understand more do more working in banking. Private sector is very different than public sector and so I, I felt like I brought the right energy and the right motivation to, to do the job that I was being asked.

Okay, so

Jason: then what happened after the six months?

Doris: So six months in, I was asked to be on a task force. Actually, there was this virus. To actually be on a yeah, it was a regional task force working with six different agencies. Yes.

Jason: Yeah. She doesn't want [00:06:00] to be here. So let's sign her up for this long term

Doris: project.

Exactly. Yes.

Jason: And so, Is it just another temporary position or did this move to a permanent position when, you're working with the task force? The

Doris: task force was temporary as well. It was supposed to be six months to a year and once it was completed, I was then back in records and then asked to come on permanently.

Jason: Okay. at what point in time do you feel That your perspective changed not, like 180 degrees, but at least to the point where you gained some of that understanding that your mom was talking about from working in the inside. At what point in time is it still within this LA first couple of years of you being at the police department?

Doris: Yes, definitely. I started understanding more about what the role and [00:07:00] responsibility. And what I learned was of not just the sworn personnel of them protecting and serving communities, but also all of the different guidelines, all of the different rules and regulations they have to follow, as well as being a civilian employee, what my role was to the public and to the community and to taxpayer dollars.

So for me, I started to appreciate more what the people in law enforcement did and how they did it. So, yes. Definitely within those first couple of years, I had a different outlook and respect for the men and women of law enforcement.

Jason: Okay, on this task force then, what were you asked to do? I

Doris: was asked to be the regional analyst that was responsible for compiling Data and information from the different departments.

And these were six departments that worked across two different counties. So in San Mateo County and Santa Clara County, we had these departments.

[00:08:00] And my role was to get all of their crime information, namely their part one crimes their murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, theft, and motor vehicle theft and arson.

So focusing on those crimes and seeing if there were any commonalities, seeing if There any of the victimology any of the suspect information was related. And so once I compile that data using very scarce resources, because in 1997, we didn't have a lot of the same types of resources that we have today.

And with that information, the crime information, as well as the tools that I. I was able to assist each of those departments, along with several other folks that joined me in those departments, and we really helped our agencies to solve some crimes, clear some cases, make some arrests, and really make those areas of the community safer that were being plagued mostly by [00:09:00] these robberies that we were having, as well as some burglaries and motor vehicle thefts.

Jason: So I normally say that this is your analyst badge story, but we're kind of past that. So this is your analyst badge story to bring the audience back up to speed. So the task force itself, what was the goal of the task force? Cause these are a variety of crimes that you're tracking and over.

Different jurisdictions. So what was the actual goal of the task force? We

Doris: had some amazing leadership in the department. And so my lieutenant Lieutenant Bob Brennan, he was really focused on making sure that we were Exhausting every possible ability to deal with crime and Palo Alto. And so he started thinking of creative and innovative ways of doing that.

So him, along with another Lieutenant Elena Forrest, they were really kind of spearheading this effort, talking to other agencies [00:10:00] throughout the area. So we really wanted to surround ourselves with interacting and communicating with agencies that Palo Alto kind of sat with Northern most in one county.

So all of those kind of southern most agencies in the other county as well as those to the south of us. It was very important for us to keep those lines of communication open because we know that people that commit crimes. Don't always follow jurisdictional boundaries.

Jason: Yeah, I mean, especially if there isn't a natural divide there, like a river, mountain, something like that, that divides the two, that if it's just flat land, it just happens to be one's, he's Palo Alto and the other one's Palo Alto, that people aren't going to be paying much attention to that in terms of the crimes that they commit.

Yes. So. in terms of , the data that, you collect, then do you start to see patterns and trends? Do you start to get more into the[00:11:00] analysts mind set?

Doris: Yes, absolutely. And so what we were able to do was take, we first focused on robberies because we had a really phenomenal, at least in my

department, I worked with a great detective who was really good about making sure that he was on track and Keeping just an eye on all of the different types of robbery cases that were happening.

And so this was then Detective Mike Denson. He is now a chief at UC San Francisco. And he definitely wanted to know what was happening across other I'll see you later. Other jurisdictions. And so what we would do is take that data and just compare the case information, the methodology, the time, the date, the location, the types of items that were being taken.

So kind of applying some of those kind of Steve Gottlieb types of. Work that he encouraged us as analysts to do looking at date, time, parameters, location, [00:12:00] methodology. And so that was one of the ways that we were able to really start digging into these robberies. And that was probably our biggest success was seeing that these robberies were related and how they could focus their attention on getting to those who were

committing those robberies.

Jason: So the data itself or is it just excel spreadsheets that you're all sharing or do you have a Database that you're all

Doris: are working from at that time. We were mostly using excel.

Jason: Yeah. Yeah That's what I figured. And then so the the robberies themselves, what are some of what's the characteristics of these

Doris: robberies?

Oh my gosh

I don't remember all of the specific characteristics. I just remember we had a bunch of armed robberies that we were working on with my department, Palo Alto. And then we saw that they were also connected to several around us, Mountain View Stanford [00:13:00] Department of Public Safety and a couple of others specifically though Mountain View was the main connection and there might have been one or two in East Palo Alto and they were the same subjects and we had identifiable information on many of them And so we were able to use the suspect identified information as well as the types of items that they were taking.

And that's how we realized that they were connected to the same group of people.

Jason: Now you mentioned Steve Gottlieb. Had you... Either read the book or had you done anything at this point in time in terms of following some of his teachings?

Doris: I only knew about him at that point. And then I finally got to meet him later on.

I read the book and bought it twice.

Jason: He thanks you.

Doris: Yes, I have two copies at my home. So yes, I, I am very familiar with Steve Gottlieb's work, but at that time I had not gone through any of his training. Thank you.

Jason: Okay, [00:14:00] so then were you able to catch these folks in the act or how did this series

Doris: end? So yes, the, so my detective, my robbery detective, he actually was, robbery and homicide, he was actually able to make a few good arrests based off of the information that we provided and what he did was he used that with some other intelligence that he received from people CIs, confidential informants, and was able to make some really successful cases.

So that's how it ended. It ended in a few arrests and we cleared some cases. So it was really a win for our department and our neighbors because they were able to do the same with some of their cases. All

Jason: right. Good deal. And then, so... So that only lasted six months to a year, you said, so then you go back to records, is that correct?

I

Doris: went back to records. There were so many relationships that were built, we [00:15:00] kept the lines of communication open, and we're still supporting each other beyond the task force, and we're able to continue to communicate, and so so yeah, so I, I had those relationships forged because of that, that task force.

Jason: Yeah, you were somebody's contact at Palo Alto, I can see. Right, and, so, at that point in time... Are you starting to think that this is going to be more of a career or is your mindset still is like I'm not sure the law enforcement world's

Doris: right for me. I was starting to think about it, but I was in school also completing my bachelor's degree and so I really wasn't sure if, you know.

If law enforcement was still for me, but I really liked that task force. I really enjoyed just gathering data, learning what the information was telling me and then sharing that information out with others. I think that whole process is, is very rewarding. And [00:16:00] so I started looking at crime analyst opportunities.

I started looking at ways to engage with analysts across agencies, and so I started going to the Bay Area Crime Analysts Association meetings and started getting more involved. And then our position opened up. Our crime analyst position and I applied.

Jason: And so did you get it? It's funny. Sometimes I've talked to analysts.

I wasn't their first choice kind of thing. Or I didn't get it the first go around. So good, good deal. So

Doris: There were seven of us who applied internally. So I was really thinking, wow, I'm up against some serious competition, but yes, I did get the job the first time.

Jason: All right, very good. So then when you do become an analyst, then where are you stationed?

What's your

Doris: tasks? So I am stationed in the investigations division, and most of my [00:17:00] work is with the homicide and robbery detectives. And then I also did some work with our gang unit. And. Again, with the Part 1 crimes, we're always focused on those, at least back in the 90s, early 2000s, it was all about, let's look at and deal with these, this really tells the temperature about what's happening in a community, let's focus on these, get these crimes down, and then it will definitely help with the other types of crimes that tend to follow.

Yeah,

Jason: but this is getting into more violence, right? Right. This is getting into homicides, obviously, gang. Can be dealing with a lot of violent crime. So this is a transition for you as well, because now you're getting into tracking and Reading Intel reports, , reading cases on, violent crime.

So , how did that impact you? Was that a transition for you? It

Doris: was because Palo Alto is sits right next to Stanford [00:18:00] university. They have about one homicide every about two years. And so not a lot of. Quote unquote violent crime, not a lot of homicides, not a lot of armed robberies per se.

There were a few robberies that we were dealing with and and I worked on, but definitely not as many as I would with the other types of part one. So we had a lot of a lot more motor vehicle theft and burglary, but definitely working with the homicide. And robbery detective, I was working on some of the cases that were fairly recent, but then also a lot of older cases because of the fact that we just didn't get a lot of, for sure, homicides in Palo Alto.

Jason: So We're going to eventually get to you leaving Palo Alto. So the question is, is when you look back at your time there as an analyst in Palo Alto, what are some things that you're proud of? Maybe what were some sticking points that you were able to work around those types of events.

Doris: I'm proud of [00:19:00] the work that I did there. I like to say that I learned how to do my job in Palo Alto, because that's also where I was when I started going to a lot of the crime analyst types of training. That's where I was when I got certified as a crime and Intel analyst. And so I like to say that I learned to do my job there because we didn't have as many crimes against persons.

I didn't do as much in that space. space to the extent that I would when I moved over to East Palo Alto, California, where we had a different type of crime scene, if you will. And so I like to say I learned how to do my job in Palo Alto. I applied it in East Palo Alto. All right. So

Jason: let's talk about that transition.

How did that come to be?

Doris: Well, I am from East Palo Alto, California. I grew up there. I spent most of my childhood there as well as in Parts of my childhood in Palo Alto as well.

And so I knew many people in the community. East Palo Alto [00:20:00] is a 2.5 square mile city with a population of 36,000 people. So not a very big city.

And so I definitely was very familiar with the city knew about all of the the, the, The wonderful things about being from East Palo Alto the strong community aspect in East Palo Alto, but also the criminal aspect. And so when I was called by the police department and they asked me to come over from Palo Alto, part of it was because of the work that I had done on that task force and those relationships that I mentioned.

And so They asked me if I would come over and at the same time I was being asked to do some work by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department. And so I did both. I did some contract work for San Mateo County, helping them with a lot of their crimes. Specifically, they were looking at a lot of their crimes against persons.

And then when I went over to East Palo Alto, I went over as the crime [00:21:00] analyst. And so, yeah, I transitioned from Palo Alto after 10 years to East Palo Alto. All

Jason: right. So then, but now you said you, this is where you applied all your knowledge. So it must be a little bit. More activity over there on the east

Doris: side?

Yes. Yes, yes, yes. East Palo Alto was murder capital back in 1992. And it's interesting 'cause then when we get to the point if we get to the point, Jason, I get to tell you about why sound thinking then Shot Spotter is so near and dear to my heart. It has everything to do with. You know what was happening in East Palo Alto in 1992.

And so I wasn't in law enforcement at that time, but We'll talk about how kind of that history tracks, but definitely I get to East Palo Alto in 2006, and this was right on the heels of us losing an officer in East Palo Alto. It was the second officer that was lost there, Officer Richard May, and before that, [00:22:00] Officer Jerry Davis who was killed in 1988 but yes, they, they, I got to East Palo Alto a year after that.

We had supported East Palo Alto and made sure that they had all of the, the help that they needed with staffing when they were going through this loss of their officer in 2005. But I get over there in 2006 and a lot of the work that I'm doing is to help any number of folks with different types of analysis.

And so the biggest, I would say my biggest customer, the person who needed the most information when I first arrived was the police chief, police chief Ron Davis. And so he was the person that I did a lot of administrative types of analysis for. And then I was working also with our patrol and investigations teams.

Right,

Jason: so then an administrative analysis is a whole different animal all together. Working with patrol is a whole different animal working together, all together. [00:23:00] And so it's, it's interesting. You're covering all your different pieces of the analyst pie, so to speak. And so, so what did you, in doing the work with the chief with an administrative task, what, what did

Doris: you learn?

I learned that the passion that A department has the passionate people within the department has a lot of times comes from the top. It's nice when it's bottom up and you see people caring about a community that work there, but it's also, it's interesting when it's from the top down.

And so my police chief was not from East Palo Alto. He actually worked for Oakland Police Department for a long time and then went over to East Palo Alto. And for him, it was very important that the relationship between the department and the community was intact. And so he used data a lot to make decisions where he wanted to know where to focus his attention because we had a [00:24:00] city that felt like it was constantly being watched or people were constantly being stopped and scrutinized.

And so he wanted to change that narrative. And so he asked me to put together a lot of different pieces of information that would help him. Okay. To engage the community to have community meetings, which he did regularly to speak to city council about the needs of the department so that we could change the relationship between how people in the community viewed law enforcement as as they did in East Palo Alto at the time to a more open relationship where there was trust.

Jason: That's a tricky situation there and and where my head is going just right off the bat is yes, you want to have that open dialogue that communication, but stuff like field interviews and traffic stops. I mean, that is stuff that the, the police department is going to do. And so , was it a matter [00:25:00] of the

community and the police chief coming to an agreement on how the community would be I guess, for lack of a better word,

Doris: patrolled?

Absolutely. That's exactly what it was because for a long time, East Palo Alto had support and help from other agencies. So it wasn't just East Palo Alto officers who would engage with the community. It was all of these other outside. Agencies and so there was no trust or or there was a perceived lack of trust based on the interaction as well as some of the information that came back from the community because a lot of times other agencies that would stop someone or would talk to them.

They always either had their hand on or near their weapon, or they were more inclined to draw their weapon when they would engage with people in the community, which was very different than the East Palo Alto officers who took a different approach. And so [00:26:00] the chief had to work very hard to regain that trust.

And, of course, he enlisted the support and assistance of the entire department, which consisted of 41 sworn and 11 non sworn.

Jason: All right. And then, so how long did that take, do you feel? I mean, obviously it's ongoing. There's not exactly a start time and end time, but I do feel for you to really see improvements in that relationship that it might have taken, took a long

Doris: time.

It took a long time. I left the department. Five years. I left in 2011. So I was there for five years. And my chief was there for eight years and was still continuously working on those relationships. But there was a lot of progress made because he was honest. And he he was available and he was visible.

And so he made sure his whole leadership team was that way as well. I mean, people would actually No question. [00:27:00] Walk down the street and talk to people in the community. A lot of the police officers. There was also a fit program that was started where we got out into the community and showed people that we're available.

We're going to take back these areas that have a lot of gunfire crime and start being more available so that people would feel comfortable coming out of their

homes, but also talking. To law enforcement, so it was very successful, but it definitely took a lot of time, a long time and is ongoing for sure, as you say, and so now there's a new police chief, Jeff Lou, and he definitely has to do the same work to continue to let the community know that there is communication and trust and openness and safety in doing so.

Yeah.

Jason: So I even with your time and even since then, what's the crime look like in, in East

Doris: Palo Alto? It looks a lot different than it did in [00:28:00] 1992. It's much better. In 1992, we were murder capital of the U. S. Because East Palo Alto had 42 homicides that year for a 2.

5 square mile city with a population of 36, 000 people at that time. And so that is we had more people killed in East Palo Alto than then they had officers. And in addition, there were an. Another 160 people who were shot, not killed. So you didn't just have homicides, you also had assault with deadly weapon, aggravated assault, those types of cases.

So there was a lot of activity. Today, there's about two homicides a year. Oh,

Jason: wow. Big change.

Metre: Yes. Hi,

Doris: this is Metre Lewis, and I want to say, make friends with your other analysts. Don't just stay in your own little world, [00:29:00] in your own little bubble, but hey, meet the other analysts who work in your jurisdiction, who work in your county, who work in the jurisdictions around you. Have lunch! Go play cards together, do something together to get to know each other.

It will benefit you in the long

Metre: run.

Jeff: Hi, this is Jeffrey

Doris: Vandersip, and I'm going to tell you about a couple of my pet peeves. Pet peeve number one is the size of parking lots at grocery stores. They create

these parking lots for you goes, and yet everybody is now driving a Ford F 150 and you can't fit in anything.

Or if you do, you're banging the doors of your neighbors. Pet peeve. Number two is the little button in cars that opened the fuel filler door seems to be in the most oddest of places. And whenever I go somewhere else and I rent a car and I have to go to the gas station for the first time, I spent a half hour trying to figure out how to open the fuel filler door.

Pet peeve. Number three is just. Packaging generally with things that you get in the mail. It's like Russian nesting dolls. [00:30:00] You've got a box and inside that box is another box inside. That is another box side. That is a bubble wrap. And then you get to like a little piece of whatever, which is the thing actually sent.

And finally, and again, betraying my age here, the screen filters that people use in their social media, everybody kind of looks like somebody out of avatar. I what's up with

Jason: that.

All right, so let's move on to your transition to shot spotter, which is now known as sound thinking. So how did that transition come to be?

Doris: Yes, so that transition was because I wanted to go back to school. By this time, I had also completed a master's program. So now is looking at doing doctoral programs.

I wanted to go back to school full time work part time. And so I started looking at opportunities there and because of the amazing work that ShotSpotter was doing in [00:31:00] East Palo Alto and the service that they gave, I thought if I ever leave East Palo Alto Police Department, which I never thought I would, by the way, but if I ever leave, I would want to work for a company like ShotSpotter, now SoundThinking.

And I told them that I was leaving and I was looking for part time work and they said, Let's interview and the rest is history.

Jason: All right, so then you mentioned the connection to 1992. So let's go back to that. Like, what is the connection to 1992?

Doris: Absolutely. So in 1992, when East Palo Alto was murder capital of the U.

S., Dr. Bob Chauhan, who is our founder, along with Dr. Rob Calhoun and Jason Denham. Well, first, Dr. Bob was really trying to think of ways to help cities like East Palo Alto deal with the issue of gunfire. He worked right up the street in Menlo Park and thought, wow, I keep hearing [00:32:00] about this gunfire, I see it on the news, I hear it.

And what can I do? And so he started building the technology that ShotSpotter became. And so three years after we were Murder Capital, Dr. Bob had a solution that he wanted to provide to East Palo Alto to deal with the issue of gunfire. So ShotSpotter was started. Mainly on the hills of what was happening in East Palo Alto.

And

Jason: then I guess for those that might not be aware of ShotSpotter, I can just generally go into what what the program maybe was, and we'll get into what it is now.

Doris: Yes. So ShotSpotter was really designed to provide gunshot location information to law enforcement in a very quick manner so that.

law enforcement personnel could respond as quickly as possible. Today, we say within 60 seconds because what we do is we put [00:33:00] sensors in designated areas within a city based off of data, based off of information that we use to determine where it's most important for our solution to be within the city.

And so we provide that information to our law enforcement partners and we say, Based off of your previous gun related crime data, let's Place your solution. Let's place this area, this coverage area here. So we do that. Those sensors are listening for things that go bang, boom or pop specifically that are gun related.

And that information is reviewed by a team of folks 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And that group of people informed the Law enforcement personnel, the partners of ours, that, that here's the location of where a gunfire just occurred so that they can respond safely and informed so that hopefully they can get to the scene, find the crime scene, help save someone's life, [00:34:00] speak to people who may have witnessed what just happened.

Jason: So then they're reviewing the indication because there might be a chance that it's not actually a.

Doris: Well, we definitely want to make sure that we have a second set of eyes and ears on that location information. So the technology is very capable of doing the alert, we just like to have a second set of ears to listen and to provide that information to our police departments.

Okay.

Jason: And then, so I guess, but back to you starting then with ShotSpotter at the what was your task? What were you doing when you first started? Crime

Doris: analyst. Yeah. So, the, the, the company, so ShotSpotter did not have an analyst at the time and they really wanted to, Have someone in that role because they realized that it was good to start taking a lot of that gunfire data [00:35:00] and for us internally to start making sense of it to make decisions, but also so that we could support the departments that we were working with at the time in ways that they might take this information and use it to basically be better informed and Make intelligent decisions based off of the information.

Jason: So what did you discovered when you start analyzing this data? Well,

Doris: A couple of things. One is that. If you remove high celebratory dates and take those out of the equation, then you can really start seeing where people truly are focusing their time and attention on shooting guns.

It's not always what we think. It's not always Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, which those are high volume for sure but it's going to vary by area. It's going to vary by department. And then you take those celebratory Dates those New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and Independence Day, which [00:36:00] specifically Independence Day applies to our U.

S. Customers and you look at why people might shoot guns on those days and where it's happening so that you can focus on where to respond and and remind people that when you shoot a gun in the air, it may seem harmless and celebratory in nature. But what goes up must come down and people have been harmed and killed when gunfire falls back to the ground.

Yeah,

Jason: that was something that I didn't discover until I started working in law enforcement in my 20s. I had no idea that that was a thing actually to fire a gun off in the city. To celebrate those events that you talked about it was one of those things that when I was at Baltimore Police Department, they actually had task force building awareness, trying to get that Type of behavior reduced.

Doris: Absolutely. And that's really what we want to do. I mean, our mission is to make [00:37:00] neighborhoods safer and, and improve community confidence. And so that is what we aim to do with for sure our shot spotter solution, but several, many others that we provide, we have a host of services that we now offer to law enforcement with the goal in mind to help them be better informed to make better decisions.

Jason: Good. And then, so are you, so you started part time, you said, so you could go to school full time. Is that correct? That I asked for.

Doris: Yeah. That's not what happened. So, I ended up working full time here and I put my doctoral program on hold and now, it's funny that we're talking about this. Today, because I am six months away from completing or actually I would say walking across the stage and then another few months before my final class and [00:38:00] so yes, I get to walk across the stage before I actually complete the program.

That's that's the way it's designed. They only have one graduation a year. I got you.

Jason: Okay. And I do want to get to your doctorate, but let's bring the listeners. Thank you. Up to speed and where you are now with the sound thinking because now you're analytics director, right?

And you've climbed your way up to this ladder here. Obviously doing more than just the typical analyst worker.

Doris: Sure. So I like to say that I now work for almost 200 agencies as opposed to working for one at a time. And that's six that we did the task force on. But now we have a lot of agencies throughout the U.

S. and then some international customers. And so a lot of that journey started with first that role as an analyst here at sound thinking and then Moving into other roles where I was able to work with departments and provide training for [00:39:00] them as well as to help them with their analytics. And then as we

grew as a company and had more staff, we were able to separate out those training roles and the analytics role.

And now for the last couple of years, I've been able to focus more on the analytics. And so I have a team of colleagues that work with me to assist our agencies in that way because We definitely want to continue to keep our departments informed about specifically, this team works a lot with the shop spotter data.

And so we want to make sure that we continue to assist and inform our customers about ways that they might approach the issue of gunfire that is happening in those coverage areas within their city. Okay,

Jason: good deal. And then and I should have looked this up. So shame on me for not doing my research.

But is sound thinking a rebrand or was this a merger? What? How did sound thinking come about as a [00:40:00] formerly known as shot

Doris: spotter? Yes. Thank you for asking the question. . We changed our name because we have more than the shot spot or product. And so we really wanted to make sure that the host of products and services that we provide our customers and partners are a lot more visible and fall under this.

Umbrella of this new name that we have and so sound thinking was chosen because it does just that. It does a few things. One in particular is it pays homage to the shot spotter by having the sound in the name of the company and then thinking is about all of the intelligence led decision making and products and services that we provide to our customers.

So that's how we got the name sound thinking. Oh, all

Jason: right. Very good. Alright, so let's move on then to your doctorate , because it's you're, as you mentioned, , six months away. So [00:41:00] what are you focusing on? What's your thesis?

Doris: Yes. So. My thesis is focused on employment opportunities for black men who were previously incarcerated.

So that is my focus. That is what I've been studying and researching for the past about a year. And I am just about to get into the part where I actually start to do surveys and interviews with, This group of individuals, black men previously

incarcerated, because I want to look at how their incarceration has affected their ability to find employment, as well as how it's affected, as well as whether or not education plays a part in that effort, education

Jason: before they were incarcerated, or it doesn't matter whether it was before or during.

They were

Doris: correct, just whether or not it affects their ability to find employment. In addition to them having this record [00:42:00] of incarceration is would it be more beneficial for them to have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree? Would that help them? In addition to having criminal record? Now,

Jason: how are you laying out in terms of your, your sample size?

What's the criteria to receive the survey?

Doris: Yes. And so my sample size is it'll be interesting because I would like to interview. Well, I would like to survey a hundred. Plus people, but this is across the United States. So I believe that I'm going to get more than 100 individuals. And so that's fine.

Whatever data I receive, whatever information I received back, I will definitely use that information for for the. Quantitative part of my mixed method study. And then from that group, I'm hoping to have individuals who would be interested in speaking more about their journey, their lived experiences with [00:43:00] navigating getting employment past incarceration.

Jason: Are you targeting folks that have been. out of incarceration for a certain period of time?

Doris: Yes, I'm looking at a couple of groups, so under five years, under ten years, and then more than ten years.

Jason: Okay, and then are you focusing at all in terms of what they were

Doris: incarcerated for? Not specifically not from the standpoint of whether or not they qualify to take the survey, but from the standpoint of how those different types of incarceration may affect the types of employment that they can receive, that they can.

Jason: Yeah, and where my head's going is drugs, for instance, is that how that especially when you get into folks that have been out a longer period of time. And, of course, as a society have changed our perspectives, sometimes some people would say too slowly, but it changed our perspectives in terms , of drug [00:44:00] incarceration.

, absolutely. And then, what are you hoping to achieve with, this?

Doris: Well, what I'd really like to see is definitely ways to make sure that between prison systems and hiring programs, as well as reentry programs, if there are ways to make sure that these individuals can find gainful, sustainable employment, and really jobs that are long term, that are that That allow them to take care of themselves and and their family.

One of the things that I saw quite a bit in my work as an analyst is that black men were arrested and incarcerated at higher rates than any other demographic proportionately. As well, and so it just became something that I was very interested in understanding more about. How do we deal with the issue of making sure that, okay, if this is the demographic that gets arrested [00:45:00] and incarcerated at such higher rates, then what do we do about it?

Right. And why is it happening? And how do we change the narrative so that these recidivism rates go down so that if these individuals can get jobs so that they would be less likely to reoffend and find themselves back into this cycle of arrest and incarceration and unemployment.

Jason: Yeah, I'm sure it's out of your scope of what your, your doctorate, but it'd be interesting employers are a big part of this, right?

Because they're the ones that are hiring folks, or at least in, in many people's case, not hiring because maybe they have an arrest and an incarceration. So, to get employers to be more open folks that have been incarcerated is also a key for this.

Yes.

Doris: So, that's actually one of the areas that I'm looking at. So, I am looking at reentry programs, [00:46:00] prison systems, and hiring organizations. So, those are also part of my study. All right.

Jason: That is, no, that's, that's a, that's an interesting topic. And I I look forward to Hearing how it all pans out. So you'll have to keep me posted when you, when you walk in six months and then when you finally finish in

Doris: nine months.

Absolutely. Absolutely. I'd love to. Thank you.

Jason: Let's move on , to our advice section. So I, I usually ask my guests on what advice they have, maybe for new analysts or maybe for experienced analysts or both.

Doris: So for me. What became important for me as an analyst and I would pass this on to others is to find your why why do you do what you do and in doing it?

Do you care? And so show that you care. Use your voice and your platform so that you can be that representative of yourself as an [00:47:00] analyst, but as a in the analyst community, because I think our individual voices make a difference. As well as collectively as analysts as well as I do Jason, that this field is fairly new.

I mean, crime analysts did not become a name or a thing until about the mid eighties, even though we've been doing a lot of the work for a long time. And so I. I would finish with or say the advice that i would give in addition to that is dress for the job that you want not the one that you have and what i mean by that is not just in your appearance physically but also in the way that you.

You know conduct yourself in the way that you speak to people even in the way that you answer the phone even the way you talk on a podcast is there a smile in your voice is there excitement is there do you care about what you're doing. And so I think that's important.

Jason: No, I, I like that advice. That's good advice.

And I, [00:48:00] I, it's funny that I do that. I, when, when I do the introduction to the inner, to the podcast, I actually make sure that my smile, why I am saying the introduction. So that's one of the things that I've come custom to doing. Another topic just saw on your resume that you got a data analytics certification in 2020 from the University of Cal Berkeley.

So I was I was curious on on that to see just what that is and what your thoughts on that program are. Would you recommend it to our

Doris: listeners? I would absolutely recommend it with the caveat that you should know that when you go into the program it's more leaning on a data scientist certification than it is on a data analytics.

And so I stayed in the program Because I was curious and it just so happened to be that I [00:49:00] applied at a time when we didn't know that the world was about to change and we were about to have a pandemic. And so I was home anyway. And so I had a little bit more time on my hands. And so I started. stuck with the program.

But if I had known that it was more data science focused, I probably would have shied away from it because I consider myself a data analyst, not so much a data scientist. And it was definitely grueling. I would say that there were times when My doctoral program is, is less challenging than that certification program.

Jason: You're not selling anybody on this. I'm not selling.

Doris: Well, I like, I like to make sure people know what they're getting themselves into. Let's put it that way. So I'm selling it to you with honesty. How about that?

Jason: All right. Let's finish up with personal interest then. And I asked this yesterday in the prep call and then felt funny [00:50:00] asking you that. So I asked about personal interest and you said, well, I'm reading about books on prisons, of course, because you're getting your doctorate.

So that's what you're spending all your time on.

Doris: Yes learning so yes it's it's a very important topic for me for sure

Jason: so is it is it all just nonfiction are you getting into any fiction as well

Doris: I guess I'm getting a little bit of fiction from the standpoint of. You know television right every now and again i'll turn on tv and say let me watch a cop ish story let me watch something about you know people being incarcerated in their lives how it affects their lives so yes it's not all non fiction yeah

Jason: yeah so i mean yeah a little bit of entertainment you can watch the orange is a new black.

Doris:

You can watch. I've, I've heard about that.

Jason: Yeah. I haven't watched it yet. You can check that out. I do recommend it. There's some seasons that are better than others, but I would recommend that show. [00:51:00] All right, Doris well, I will say this is before we get to words to the world. I am Thankful for your mother for steering you to law enforcement because this is a fascinating story and I thank you for your contributions to the law enforcement

Doris: analysis profession.

Thank you. I also am thankful for my mother. She knows best. Of course, they always do, right? So, no, thank you, Jason. I appreciate the opportunity. All right. So, our

Jason: last segment of the show is Words to the World, and this is where you can promote any idea that you wish. Doris, what are your words to the world?

Doris: I would say kindness. Kindness is still in. In fact, yesterday was kindness day. Be kind to someone. And so I think that we can still do that. Treating our neighbor as ourself, in the way that we work and play and act. And so I will. I'll say that I'll give you an acronym for kindness, which is keep inspiring noble deeds, nurturing everyone's spirit and [00:52:00] selflessness.

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

Doris: you be safe. Thank you, Jason.

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