

Brennan Long - Crypto Formula

Mindy: [00:00:00] Welcome to Analysts 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, identify a series and getting the latest scoop on association news and training. So please don't beat that analyst and join us as we define a law enforcement analysis profession.

One episode ahead time.

Jason: Thank you for joining me. I have many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason Elder and today our guest has 25 years of law enforcement analysis, experience, intelligence, experience with

Brennan: Army, Navy,

Jason: Phoenix Police Department and the F B I. He is currently a licensed private investigator.

We're a security intelligence integration. He's here to talk about, among other things, cryptocurrency fraud. Please welcome

Brennan: Brennan Long Brennan. How we doing? Hey Jason. Thanks for having me on. I appreciate the invite to jump on your show. Yeah,

Jason: there you have quite a career here and there's so much to go over.

I am fascinated to get your journey and get [00:01:00] your perspective on a

Brennan: law enforcement analysis profession. Absolutely. I enjoyed the journey thus far. Still going.

Jason: Awesome. All right. So how did you discover the law enforcement analysis profession?

Brennan: Well, you know, it, it's interesting. , I almost fell into it, if, if you will.

So if you can take, go back 25 years and for those of us that are still in the profession I had graduated from Ball State University with a degree in criminal

justice and decided, you know, I, I didn't want to join the local sheriff's department and, and become a deputy. So what can I do?

And you know, throughout high school and, and kind of college, I'd always kind of thought I'd aim to get into the F B I I always wanted to be an F B I agent and so on. But I knew that you had to have at least three years of work experience in something after you graduated to even be considered or to put in an application with the fbi.

So, mm-hmm. [00:02:00] I thought, well, how am I gonna start this journey? And upon graduation, it's kind of a funny story. I was. Moving out to Phoenix, Arizona, and thought to myself, I gotta find a job. And I had applied to be a youth correctional drill instructor. And looking back, Jason, I I gotta say it was a blessing in disguise.

I did not get that job. Oh. And so I, I had to keep looking around and I saw an ad in the paper for a volunteer position with the Phoenix Police Department, and the volunteer position was part-time. It was in the researched in statistical analysis section at the, at the department there. And I decided, well, you know, I got, I gotta try to get my foot in the door.

I gotta figure out what direction I want to aim for. And I applied and luckily I, I got that volunteer role and Nice that kind of kicked off my career. Believe it or not, [00:03:00] and I was in that role for about six months. Again, I was working part-time on a volunteer basis, and that allowed me to kind of get a little bit of training in criminal intelligence analysis here and there from Reman from Rocky Mountain Information Network.

If, if folks know about risk net and so on. And so this is going way back when, but you know, about a week's worth of training and having my foot in the door. They had an intelligence analyst position open up in the gang unit about six months later, and I applied for it and that kind of started my journey back in 97, 98.

And so

Jason: then you were a civilian. Your whole time there at Phoenix Police Department? Yes. Yes.

Brennan: All right. And I've been a civilian my whole time, my whole career. And I'll kind of jump back into that if we talk about the private investigation side. But yeah, I was never sworn, never a badge carrier.

In and out of all the different careers I've had, I've [00:04:00] always been an analyst. Right. And so,

Jason: so I, I'm curious cuz we're gonna get to the impact on your career path with nine 11, but at this time when you're going through training and you're dealing with the risks centers and just learning the law enforcement intelligence analysis, Career And how different was it pre nine 11?

Because I tell folks, I was analyst exactly one week prior to nine 11.

Brennan: Yeah. I, it was interesting because, you know, again, we were, we were kind of discussing this yesterday, kind of getting ready for the show. You know, back then when I took that training with Raymond we didn't have a lot of software at the Phoenix Police Department or even in the field itself.

The only folks that really had some analytical software was the Department of Defense and, and some of these big police departments. And so when I went through training, we used to joke, it was pencils and [00:05:00] stencils. And so we went through scenarios and they'd say, okay, we're gonna, we're gonna create some link charts.

And they would hand out stencils and pencils and you would draw your circles. You would kind of use the ruler to get a straight edge to connect your entities and, you know, it don't cross the lines, right? So it was a, it was an interesting time and I think that back then, what I have realized is I've kind of made my way across the country in different.

Positions. The Southwest back then was kind of on the cutting edge of intelligence analysis. The, when my area, the Phoenix Police Department, Mesa Police Department, Tempe they all had analysts or crime analyst and, and had a chapter in AEA chapter. They had a A I A C H chapter. And so it was kind of cutting edge.

And the other major city close to us at the time that had analysts was San Diego. [00:06:00] And what I've realized, and we might get back to it, as I've made my way east I've noticed that, you know, not until recently, and we're talking 20 years plus years later are some of these major police departments bringing on professional analysts in non-sworn positions.

So it's been interesting to see and it was interesting to kind of be there. If you will in the beginning. Yeah. I, it, it's

Jason: fascinating when I think back to it because it's almost like buying a house in a neighborhood before the neighborhood just becomes really popular and expensive. Right? Sure. Picking the profession and getting into this profession, I, you know, you were just a couple years ahead of mine.

I was one week ahead and that initial right after there, obviously a lot of changes happened, a lot of money, a lot of training comes up in the, in the odds that, you know, we were on that, that beginning part of that wave. And yes, [00:07:00] just, it's just a, it is interesting to think about it and just how much has changed and how much spotlight has come on to the task of being an analyst at.

Various law enforcement entities throughout the country.

Brennan: Yes, absolutely. And, and there were, there were folks around, like Arizona, DPS back then had analysts. And again, when I got hired with the Phoenix Police Department, there were already two analysts. But, you know, a lot of it was, again, we were doing link charts, but a lot of it was maintaining databases.

Back then, gangs was a huge issue. Mm-hmm. And so we were not only. You know, creating charts and connecting dots and so on and so forth. But we are also maintaining game databases and being responsible for the purge and maintenance of that. Mm-hmm. And that, you know, kind of develops and comes into play as we get through our conversation today in, in information sharing and so on.

And [00:08:00] so, you know, we kind of had hybrid roles a little bit. And I think departments didn't really know how to use us and you know, we would create a lot of hierarchy charts and take down charts and that sort of thing. And I remember as an analyst, well we know this guy knows how to use a computer and we know he can hook up a projector, so let's bring him to court so he could push buttons and show a slideshow during a homicide trial.

And so he put me out a

Jason: poster.

Brennan: He put me out a poster on that plotter. Exactly, exactly. And you know, and trying to get the money to pay for a plotter cuz everybody kind of looked at you like, what do we need that for? But it, you're right Jason, it has

grown leaps and bounds in the professionalism and the career paths is just exploded and it's kind of an exciting time and it's exciting to see.

You know, when we first started the training, that was kind of offered just in law enforcement circles. [00:09:00] Universities now offer programs and classes and, and so it's good to see. Yeah. And the data, it's funny,

Jason: I haven't really heard that concept of data silos in a while. It's, it, yeah. It's something that definitely in the, in the early ti two thousands, right after nine 11, that was, that was something that you heard probably almost every conference that you went to, every training that you went to.

And it is, it is different today, although there are similar problems, right? You have, you have a ton of data now, and now you have to figure out which even finding out about the data and still getting access. To all this data. It's so, it's, it's multiplied in some, in some ways trying to navigate

Brennan: through all this.

Yeah, I agree. And I think that from an analyst perspective, to have access to your department's data is huge. And again, you know, we talk about some [00:10:00] departments are on the cutting edge, depending on who. Really, and let's be honest, it comes down to who's head of the IT department and how they build their tables and so on, and how you can access it.

But I still think that when you start to talk about multi-jurisdictional crime, I think we still have data silos. And you know, it, based on my experience, when I would go out and about when I was in the FBI and go to local detective meetings I could still hear the, the pains of, you know, we don't have ways to share data or ways to track people across.

Multiple jurisdictions. And even if a county went to one records management system, it was still up to each police department within that contract whether or not they'd share their data. So I think in some aspects, Jason, I think you're right. We're at a, at a, at a time when technology is available and easily put into place I think we still kind of run into a little bit of [00:11:00] data silos.

And I think I've come to the realization after 25 years that we may never get to a hundred percent. But what I've noticed is as analysts, we tend to. Understand each other and have no issues in sharing data. So I think that's, that's always our banner to take into battle between analysts and Intel shops to get that done.

Yeah, it

Jason: that is a good point because you still have those barriers with different departments. Cuz there's what, 17, 18,000 police departments in, in the United States, so you are still dealing with that and I still have people on the show saying like, yeah, we didn't get all the, the crimes in the series because the person was jumping around from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

. All right, well, this brings us to your analyst badge story. And for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge story is a crew defining case or project that an [00:12:00] analyst works. And for you, this is.

2001, you're at the Phoenix Police Department and you come across a baby formula

Brennan: case. Well, right. Again, I was. I was more thrown into the baby formula case. So yes, it was, it was soon after nine 11 and it was an interesting time in, in Phoenix because if you know the history of the 19 hijackers and how that case kind of came around and, and.

What took place there afterwards, there was a cell that flew into the Pentagon that lived and operated around the Phoenix area, and they actually got their flight training at Emory Riddle University, north of Phoenix. And so as nine 11 had occurred, and the police department basically, again, it was fairly new, stood up, kind of a tactical operations center to start taking in leads and [00:13:00] citizen tips and so on.

There was a bigger and a, what I want to say, a stronger tie than with the F B I in Phoenix. Prior to that, gangs was a big issue and we had a couple detectives from the Phoenix to police police department over on a task force, but they had been working gangs in violent crime. Mm-hmm. And suddenly we found a lot of us found ourselves thrust into working terrorist cases.

Overnight. There was only so many squads at the F B I that that could do things, so many analysts. And so the defining moment for me is they brought me over there to help work a case. And it was a task force of Phoenix Police Department detectives, Tempe detectives, and they assigned one agent to kind of oversee us.

And, and it kind of interesting, fast forward, real quick. That agent's name is George Piro, who later in his career, he was the one that interviewed and [00:14:00] interrogated Saddam Moe. Oh, wow. So this case was kind of a, a

kind of a. Badge case for a lot of us back then. So they assigned me to the Phoenix Police Department to work this case.

And what we had found out and it was based on a, a case that had been opened over there there was a group of gentlemen who were. Selling stolen baby formula through, they had a WIC store, if you're familiar with wic. Mm-hmm. And they were selling baby formula and proceeds from that were being used to support different terrorist related activities and going into kind of that terrorist finance.

Umbrella. And so it, this was all fairly new to us. I mean suddenly as from the Phoenix Police Department, you were thrust into kind of an international case certainly one that touched on the cell that was operating around Phoenix, but also one that funded and, and provided funding for [00:15:00] terrorist activity and, and groups around the world.

So it was an interesting case and as we worked this case and, and got rolling on it and looked at the financial aspects of it and went through bank records, and we had an IRS agent that joined our team so we could start tracking where this stuff went. The detectives were working on an undercover baby formula case with Walmart, and so we brought in an investigator in from Walmart and, you know, kind of cut to the chase of all the details.

We ended up. Standing up a controlled buy of quote unquote stolen baby formula. It was a pallet of baby formula that Walmart had donated and they did this controlled buy to this criminal network out way, way out in Courtside, Arizona. And I don't know Jason, if you know Arizona well, no, I don't in California, but court site is right on the border and it is literally in the [00:16:00] middle of nowhere.

The only other thing court site's known for than the desert is, I guess about a month out of the year, they have a huge RV gathering That's kind of like a, a flea market kind of thing for a month. Yeah. But once that's done, there's nothing but sand in Courtside, Arizona. So they did this controlled buy of and transferred stolen baby formula over to this network who eventually took it into California, to LA to a store in la and they were able to get 'em for interstate transportation of stolen goods.

And that kind of kicked off my career in intelligence. Certainly nine 11 was. Was a catalyst. But this first case really got me going down the road that kind of led, you know, 23, 25 years later through all these different agencies and assignments and so on. Yeah. Now are you

Jason: even at this time you mentioned bank records.

Are you looking

Brennan: at anything [00:17:00] with the phones? Yes, yes. We certainly had phones. We had bank records. They didn't, I'm trying to think back to some of the other activities that we had. But yes, we definitely had to analyze all the communications and the phone toll analysis that we did again, the financial records and bring that all into the case for sure.

I gotcha. ,

Jason: so did this particular group, did they have

Brennan: any ties to terrorism? They did, they, they had monetary ties. I, I will put it that way, where they donated money and that money eventually went into a pool that helped fund these different groups and then went on, you know, as it as it goes overseas, it disappears.

You can only assume after it goes beyond the United States that it's funding different things. But that was their main tie, was the monetary donations that they had made to support the cause.

Jason: . So how does this case change [00:18:00] your, your path, because it's about a year later that you, you moved to Colorado Springs.

And for a new position. So did that steer you in a direction like, oh, I want to be doing more types of tactical analysis, or did, it was just one of those things, the Colorado gig was just something that came across your

Brennan: desk one day? No, I think that obviously I started off my career in gangs.

Which was certainly exciting in and in and of itself. But adding the terrorist cases and the work with the, with the federal government kind of opened up a different path for me. I had started looking around, you know, I thought after nine 11 I've kind of got a, a, a feel and an interest in working more international sort of cases, more federal cases, if you will.

And that having that experience at the FBI kind of gave me that put that idea in my head. And of course, nine 11 [00:19:00] kind of broke open the intel field for more. Career paths. And so as I started looking around and seeing what was

out there I knew I wanted to work with the federal government and I found these law enforcement analysts positions as what they were titled up in Colorado Springs with the Department of Defense.

And I'm not sure if you know much about. US Northern Command, but that was similar to like dhs, US Northern Command was built essentially and developed as a response to nine 11, and they decided that they, the, the Department of Defense wanted a, what they call a combatant command that was in charge of Canada, the United States and Mexico.

And because of that obviously you've got the United States in there you've got some interesting Department of Defense and law enforcement overlap. And so they brought in law enforcement analysts [00:20:00] to kind of come into that sphere to help them figure out almost like a liaison position, how do we work with law enforcement and how do we work with law enforcement intelligence?

And also kind of augment the Department of Defense that had the responsibility of safeguarding Canada, the United States and Mexico. So that's, that's kind of how that, that f FBI kind of the dabbling with the F B I there in Phoenix kind of led to opening up a new path for me. So it is

Jason: fascinating cuz not only is you're coming in new, it's a brand new position.

It's all multiple jurisdictions who, it's all new to everybody else. And so I guess when you look back at it, just what were some of the things that you remember about how the whole thing came together and then maybe some setbacks or some success. what do you think about when you think about this

Brennan: time?

Yeah. And certainly [00:21:00] it was different and it was trying out, again, these new relationships that have really never been levied before. And in the Department of Defense, obviously you've got N C I S and Air Force OSI and, and so on, and Army c I d who likely had worked with law enforcement in their own capacities.

But now we're looking at law enforcement and the Department of Defense working in a capacity around international terrorism, and that was barely new. When I go back to the Phoenix Police Department the greatest threat on our radar were patriot groups that were anti-government patriot groups. And we

were looking at within, because the last major had vent had been Oklahoma, Cindy bombing.

And so, you know, as we all do, we kind of react to the last major thing and no one had really considered. The first World trade center bombing as a [00:22:00] significant threat to the rest of the nation. And so again, this was all new. Then nine 11 happens and you have to kind of figure out that suddenly local law enforcement is thrust into a position where their close, closer to international events and closer to international crime, closer to international terrorism.

And so again, you know, Jason, as we talk about the beginnings of this, it was a learning environment for just about everybody and trying to figure out how, how do you work in a world where the Department of Defense can't necessarily collect or do cases on US citizens because of the Posse Act, but how do they work with law enforcement so that.

They can track individuals overseas. And so it was a defining time where we had to invent, if you will, a means of, we talk about data silos, [00:23:00] information silos, break that down for Nation national Security. So was it wasn't that part of the

Jason: Patriot Act that Yes. Established that communication between law enforcement

Brennan: and defense?

Yes. And finding out a way to do that without stepping on the rights of US citizen. And so it was an interesting, again, it was an interesting time and interesting decade right after nine 11 of trying to figure out that all out. And one of the things that I kind of a funny story, I'll take you back to nine 11.

Mm-hmm. When I was pulling out of the driveway, the second tower was being hit and I rushed to work. And again, we stood up a tactical operation center at, in the, through the organized crime Bureau, and we were bringing in information and tips from citizen. Well, the FBI sent over as a liaison, an FBI agent, and we kept seeing on cnn, N N.

Hey, there's 19 hijackers. We're looking for 19 hijackers, and that's [00:24:00] going across ticker tape and, and the reporters are talking about it. And we turned to this FBI agent and we said, Hey, can we get the list of the 19 hijackers so that we can start to look for them in the Phoenix area? And he reached back

to his office and his office replied, we'll reach out to headquarters and we'll, we'll get you an answer.

Well, we waited about an hour and we saw the names flash on CNN before the F b I was able to get permission to share that with us. Fast forward to now, I think that that information is shared almost immediately depending on the situation and what's going on. And so, I saw that develop as well. You know, we talk about information sharing.

It has gotten a, a lot better than what it was in the early 2000. And I think from an intelligence standpoint, sharing that information as well. So again, we kind of go back to where, where are we and where, where are we now? I think that we leaps and bounds are much better at

Jason: [00:25:00] that.

Yeah. Well, let's fast forward a little bit then, and so you are with the department of Defense. Therefore till 2009, and then you're finally going down. What you, what you originally dreamed of was working with the F B I and so at, at this time, you get assigned to the Chicago Field Office as an intelligence analyst.

Brennan: Correct. And yeah, my contract came to an end with the, with the Department of Defense, and I decided I, I had to find a new career and at the time the FBI was direct hiring Intel. Mm-hmm. Those with Intel backgrounds. And the bureau was expanding its intelligence capabilities and bringing on a lot more analysts.

And so I landed in Chicago and my first assignment was with the human intelligence squads. And these squads are agents that go out and basically collect information and also are really trained [00:26:00] in developing sources for different criminal programs, terrorist programs, counterintelligence and so on.

And so as an analyst, I wasn't necessarily doing the link charts, flow charts, telephone toll analysis and that sort of thing. I was reviewing. Backgrounds of individuals and creating almost what I would call interview packets and then going out with the agents in, in interviewing these individuals, bringing questions that we wanted to answer for different programs out with them on interviews and, and then ultimately developing those individuals for either you could call 'em informants or sources for different squads.

And so that was a unique experience as well in learning kind of what the operation side does, what, what a, an investigator does, a detective or an agent does in terms of sitting in with them during an interview. And I I think that was a very [00:27:00] rewarding experience. Yeah. That's

Jason: a, you're getting out of, out of the data realm a little bit, getting into human intelligence there having to actually talk to people.

Brennan: Yes, yes. Right. And you know, it's kind of funny because, you know, I say this in jest with 25 years behind me, you know, analysts, we tend to want to sit at our desk and get behind the computer and, and move data around and so on and come up with conclusions. But I always encourage my analysts when I became a supervisor to get out there and do anything you can to get in a car, go to a crime scene, go to an interview, whatever it is, with your investigators, with your, your detectives, with your agents, because it gives you a window into operation and how they operate, how they develop cases, what they would need from you when they get back to the off.

And I think that makes you a very well-rounded analyst. And st you start to think proactively even [00:28:00] before your investigators or detectives need the information you've already. Done the work and have it for them. And I think that's a really big pro key to success is, is maintaining that and learning how to do that.

Yeah. But it really

Jason: goes back to the, the data explosion too. Like you just have to develop network and understand what's out there so when you need it, you know, that you, you have it. Yes. If that makes any, if that makes any sense. I don't know if that's the best grammatically correct way of saying what that, but that's definitely what you need

Brennan: to do.

Yes, you have to expose yourself to just about everything that's out there. And you know, again, when you go to conferences and you see these vendors that are selling different tools, stop and, and play around with it or see if they'll give you a free trial and play around with it. And even if your department can't afford it, you at least know it's out there and you know what its capabilities are.

And eventually, you [00:29:00] know, you hope that you can bring something on board that if, if it's not that software, it's something similar and gives you an idea on how to dig through the information that we're kind of overloaded with.

Scott: Hi, this is Scott Eicher and I am a retired F FBI agent, and I just wanted to point out that f FBI agents are people too

Erin: This is Erin Wickersham from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office and my public service announcement is to go on a court along. You may have been on a ride along and I think someone else recommended a 9 1 1 operator sit along. So find a prosecutor in your jurisdiction and see if you can go to court with them.

You'll learn a lot about the process and about the work that they're doing.

Michele: This is Michele Snow, and just want you to remember to build trust with integrity.[00:30:00]

Jason: Speaking of conferences, , more and more I'm seeing on, on analytical conferences, analysts presenting on live events and whether that is a, a riot or active shooting, some kind of active event going on and the analyst role for that. Your other analyst badge story deals with working , the 2012 NATO conference for the f b.

Brennan: Yeah, and I think that's Jason. I think it's a great point. You know, again, we go back to the late nineties. We were doing link charts and flow charts and hierarchy charts and so on. And, and again, using the plotter, that guy knows how to use the plotter. Go ask him, right? Mm-hmm. And I think the role has turned hybrid as more and more departments and agencies are looking for not only the lead up to, but during the event realtime monitoring [00:31:00] of threat activity.

And, you know, my experience with the F B I, they're in Chicago. Obviously Chicago has tons of major events that take place in the city. This particular one was the NATO conference in 2012, which required us. To spin up and kind of prepare 12 to 18 months in advance. And a major component of that was intelligence.

And we knew prepping for this event that we were gonna have a lot of protestors. It was actually supposed to be the NATO and G eight summit at the same place, one right after another. But during I, I can't remember if it was about a year out, they decided to move the G eight summit to a more secluded

location because they got such a massive amount of threats that we knew were coming to the city from all over the nation.

Protestors and so on anarchists. And so there was a lot of prepping for that and [00:32:00] gaining a better understanding of is this, it's not necessarily again working a case, but now I'm working a threat. And because of that and because of the chances of individuals coming from the suburbs, we started to bring in analysts from suburban police departments.

I think a major one was Naperville pd, which is about 20 miles, give or take, west of Chicago. There were some analysts up north from other suburban locations. And so they all were brought in and brought into the intelligence committee essentially. And we were looking at threats quarterly and then leading up to the event monthly.

And then they were brought in to monitor things real time. With us. And I think that's really exciting that that role kind of takes on different nuances as we've gone or, you know, and grown as an intelligence professional over the last 20 years. [00:33:00] So,

Jason: with that, what did you take away from that? What was something like, oh, if we do this again, we need to do X, Y,

Brennan: and Z?

Sure. I guess this is my pedestal or my soapbox today information sharing was huge. And so we learned that we have to share information. Early and off, but then also identifying and working. And I think this is important to reach out to the analysts that are in your area, create that relationship so that when you have an event that's multi-jurisdictional or you have an event that's a major threat in the area, you can reach out to each other and you can, , I like to say you have the intel speak, where the investigative arms in these agencies and departments don't necessarily know, again, the data and the techniques, where in the intelligence side is an analyst.

You know that you know what you can get, where you can get it and you know, the network of other analysts to help you out. And so I think [00:34:00] that's a, that's a lesson learned that, you know, there's a lot of chapters of Alia and so on and i c a out there. I think it, if nothing else, you get together with these chapters, join these chapters.

Get to know each other because if there is a major event, you, you can pick up the phone and you know who to call. Yeah. Hmm.

Jason: All right. It was about last year there that you decided to leave the F B I and get into the position that you are now. , you went on to become a supervisor of analysts and had a great career .

With the fbi, I if there's anything you want to add to that, you certainly can, but I'm also curious, , how'd you know it was time to leave the F

Brennan: b I? Sure. There were certain things that when I was in the fbi, the last two years in Chicago and the last few years in Cleveland where I was going out.

And going to gang meetings and detective meetings in the suburbs. And I'm sure many of the listeners have, have done that [00:35:00] themselves. And I realize that when you're out there and you're sitting with these police departments, one of the things is they don't have the if they don't have an assigned analyst, they don't have that capability to do that kind of work by themselves.

They may dabble in it. But they've got so many cases and so on and so on. I really wanted to kind of focus on helping local law enforcement with intelligence, and that kind of drew me out of the F B I and into the private sector to work with different departments and work on cases, if you will, as a private investigator, to kind of help that.

Where I saw an overwhelming issue where these detectives work in multi-jurisdictional crime were kind of buried, and that kind of drew me out. Into the private sector as a private investigator. You know, what's interesting to me is, again, I kind of go back to if you're an [00:36:00] analyst in the police department try and get one foot into operation.

Understand how cases are developed, see if you can go to an interview, if they'll, you know, if they'll let you go. Go out to an interview see how evidence is collected, see how the case is put together. Go sit with them as they present it to the prosecutor. And again, I think that makes you a better analyst in that you know what is needed.

But then when you get into, and again, I wasn't afraid to get my private investigator's license because one, I knew the databases. We have databases just like law enforcement had. Databases that we can run information in. So I knew I

could learn or get access to those databases. And I had stepped into and knew the operational side even though I wasn't a sworn officer.

And so I felt confident that I could do the work of a private investigator. And I'll give you an example. So, you know, just in the last [00:37:00] month I was called out to work an insurance fraud case. And I had to sit down and, and do recorded statements and interview these individuals, write that up, submit the the files do the research again, go into the databases and find that information that would.

Enhance the case. And so I think it's an, an interesting career path. And when I started to go out there and network with other private investigators in other states, I'm seeing more and more former law enforcement, intelligence analysts in this profession. And so I think that you don't necessarily have to narrow yourself to just intelligence or being an analyst.

There are a lot of things beyond law enforcement where you're still working in, in the field that you can do. So I, I kind of, if you're looking to have a varied career track, you know, certainly keep it in mind.

. So are your clients

Jason: that you're working with, are they private [00:38:00] citizens

Brennan: hiring you?

Is that how that works? Yes. Or private companies. Mm-hmm. Now we didn't really touch on it and, and we certainly can on the cryptocurrency side. I started to get an understanding of cryptocurrency and cryptocurrency fraud, and there is a huge gap between what local law enforcement knows, is able to do in terms of tracking and tracing cryptocurrency and what the federal government is able to cover.

Right now we're at a period where there are so many cryptocurrency fraud scams going on and cases. That it's overwhelming the federal government and they just can't cover it all. So as a private investigator, you're able to have the tools, do the tracking and tracing where you are hired by a victim.

You put the case together and then you are marketing, if you will, or presenting that case to local law enforcement and to prosecutors. And so I say in, in some cases, [00:39:00] obviously we're hired from the private sector side, but you still have a lot of interaction with law enforcement, even as a private investigator.

So let's get into

the

Jason: cryptocurrency aspect of it, because it just makes me, you know, as we've talked about this, it just, you, you talked about what was in front of you in the late nineties, early two thousands. You just, one of those things that how far we've come to, you know, studying something fraud alone is, has always been there, but now you have this whole other element, and as you said, just cryptocurrency fraud alone is, is too big for the

Brennan: feds to handle.

Yes. Yeah. It, it's interesting, and again, I kind of go back to seeing this evolve over the last 20 years. You know, when I worked gangs in the LA late nineties on the streets of Phoenix, if you will. A lot of the gangs were street centric. They would hang out on their street. They [00:40:00] really didn't go to other streets.

They, they maybe a neighborhood, but you were focused on crime within Phoenix and nine 11 kind of broke that open, where now you have to have, your aperture has to widen where you are more cognizant of what's taking place on an international level. And I think cryptocurrency has is another. Door that has opened that is making those international connections to local communities and local police departments that we've never seen before.

It's so easy for someone overseas in Thailand or Singapore or what have you, to scam somebody in a rural town in Indiana. Mm-hmm. And how does that local police department respond to that? And, you know, it, it's been an interesting year or so as I've started to work this issue and speaking to different police departments about it.

Again, a lot of them don't have [00:41:00] analysts. One, they don't know what cryptocurrency is, which is fine. I mean, it's fair. It's a fairly new Way to exchange assets and so on. So not a lot of people know how it works, if you will. And then how do I investigate it when the, again, I'm the rural community, rural police department in Indiana, and the individual that's committed this crime is sitting in Laos.

I mean, this is federal government stuff. Mm-hmm. Well, going after the criminal is one, but going after and trying to recover the assets is another. And that's where. Local county state law enforcement can get involved and they can

understand one cryptocurrency and how it works, but understand the tracking and tracing tools in trying to find the assets that were fraudulently taken from these victims that are in their communities, and then present that to their local prosecutor who files the court order to a [00:42:00] cryptocurrency exchange to get that those assets returned.

So I guess as you know, we, we discussed this, it's not only getting a better understanding of it and as an analyst, you know, if you're an analyst on a department, you're gonna be the first line that one they're gonna come to, to gain a better understanding of what this is. And two, how to track and trace it.

You know, how to do toll analysis, you know how to manipulate data, how do you find these assets in the crypt, in the blockchain? And so I think a as kind of a suggestion and as we kind of move forward, I think, I don't think it's on the agenda for this conferences this year, but I think it certainly will be in the next couple years, is as an analyst working cryptocurrency and understanding who is owns different wallets and where these assets are going.

And again, I think it's another catalyst of local communities, local departments now [00:43:00] having to be more aware of things that are taking place on an international level, like transnational organized crime. Yeah. So

Jason: is it easier to recover the cryptocurrency or get the perpetrator punished. Cross, cross overseas?

Brennan: Well, it, it certainly is easier to get the recovery. Mm-hmm. Especially when these exchanges have either satellite offices in the United States or they are in the United States. It's simply getting, I say simply quote unquote, getting a court order and submitting that to those exchanges to identify the fraudulent activity, identify the assets in question, and then getting that pulled back from those wallets that those exchanges have, that are, they're responsible for.

And then getting that back to. The victim finding one, finding a perpetrator overseas. I think Laos is a good example and [00:44:00] everybody's heard about the Nigerian schemes. I think those are good examples of, you know, if you can even identify the person, getting the extradition to bring them back to the United States to prosecute them is probably a huge endeavor and not something obviously that, that someone from a rural police department, again in Indiana or even the Chicago Police Department for that matter, is, is going to do, they're gonna push that responsibility over to the federal agencies to take care of that.

So

Jason: one of the advantages of cryptocurrency is that you do see the history of Bitcoin, so to speak. Yes. And that you can sit there and look at the entire history of who had this cryptocurrency throughout its life. And so I would imagine you, you talked about the recovery and getting , that aspect of, getting it recovered.

But I would imagine that as these. Folks are [00:45:00] frauding folks and getting this, that they're instantly selling that cryptocurrency. It's not like they're holding onto it. So probably by the time you get around to saying like, okay, this is the fraud. It needs to be recovered back to the original person, that cryptocurrency could be traded multiple times to , people that have no idea that it was r obtained illegally at

Brennan: some point.

Yeah, I, I, and I think, you know, to some extent you'd be surprised that And I'll put it in kind of simplistic terms. Some of these international networks are pushing this cryptocurrency, a lack of a better term, into a holding tank. And you'd be surprised at where those holding tanks are and where they sit with national and international exchanges.

So sometimes you can trace it back to a wallet that's sitting on an exchange where you can send that quarter to the exchange [00:46:00] and, and get the amount recovered. Because it's, you know, Jason, you kind of go back to the, the eighties and nineties were drug. Cartels were having a hard time converting money, dollar bills into legitimate funds, right?

They were having a hard time getting that money converted into a banking system where they could then move it around and legitimately use it. It's not that much different in the cryptocurrency world in the blockchain and why some of these locations are kind of a storage site for Bitcoin or Ethereum that they have collected from all of these victims, because they're still trying to figure out a way how to get it out into hard currency.

And so not a, not a, you know, and a hundred percent of the cases, but a lot of cases you can track it too. Kind of a holding tank again, if you will. In a simplistic term, but the other way is monitoring [00:47:00] those wallets that are current, often being used to move this and be ready to pop that court order when you, that the number of losses come through there that you can recover from the individuals ex conducting that fraud.

All right, good.

Jason: So, couple more questions on this. So what do you wish police chiefs knew about cryptocurrency?

Brennan: Well, I think, I think one thing that you know, when I would go to chief chapters, if you will, that they have a lot of communities or counties have chiefs of police chapter.

I think the one thing that I notice is it, it's hard, again, you're, you're a superintendent level to understand the tools of the trade. After you've not done investigations for a while, you're now in the admin. Part of that department. And so I think what I would [00:48:00] push to police chiefs is to have an open mind to one, bring in individuals that can provide presentations on what cryptocurrency is and how it would affect your department and your community.

And then allow for your analysts and detectives to go to the training and get a better idea on how to track and trace this. And then see where there are ways to, you know, and obviously it all depends on how many cases are coming through, but see what are the ways to either work with the software, the tools that are available or to exploit the ways online for.

For your cases. I think as the world moves more and more closer to digital currency, it's gonna be a major issue and it's gonna hit almost every police department. We talk about fraud, but let's talk about illicit funds being gained from drug trafficking, gun traffickings, other schemes that are then [00:49:00] funneling back into the community and they're using cryptocurrency to do that.

I'd be willing to bet, Jason, if I, if I plugged your, your hometown into, into Google, I could probably find at least one cryptocurrency ATM that's available in your community where. You can take these illicit proceeds from drug sales, throw it into that atm, send it into the blockchain, and now move that easily wherever you want.

So I think understanding those techniques and how they're being utilized is is gonna be important in the next several years. Yeah. Okay.

Jason: I guess similar question, what do you. What would you tell Als about,

Brennan: Cryptocurrency? Yeah. I would say anything and everything that you can find to at least get educated on what it is and how it's used and how it functions and the methods that are being used to, to move it around.

There's certainly articles out there and I think there's a lot of stuff on YouTube these days to [00:50:00] get a, at least a, a cursory level understanding of it. And I think, again, you're gonna start seeing it pop up at conferences and things, but if you can find training that's one day to a, you know, a week and you can get your department to pay for it, it's well worth gaining that knowledge and to be in front of that threat.

As the digital currency comes online.

Jason: Yeah. It's funny, I was just watching somebody, and I think it was a comedian. He, he says it's the biggest pyramid scheme ever. That's what, that's what he called, that's what he called cryptocurrency, is like, who's gonna be left holding the bag at the end?

That's what words, that's basically

Brennan: what this, what they think this is.

Jason: So, I don't know. It's got more legs than I thought it would, I would've thought it would've collapsed years ago, to

Brennan: be honest with you. Yeah. Well, and I think what's interesting is, you know, in law enforcement we tend to be skeptical by nature.

Mm-hmm. And of course, in the [00:51:00] news, anything that involves a scam or something you know, going south is gonna be in the media and, and gain a lot of attention. You know, I was talking to a detective about cryptocurrency and we had a phone conversation for about an hour and he was not familiar with it at all.

And I said, well, remember, we're exposed to probably one to 5% of the frauds and schemes and everything else that people. Are using cryptocurrency for 95% of the blockchain and cryptocurrency is legitimate transactions that we're not exposed to because we don't see the crime. Mm-hmm. And so I think what you're gonna see is countries take this on.

The leaders right now I, I think the UK Dubai, I think Singapore are really pushing this. And here in the United States we're trying to come up with

regulations to help with it. But you know, if you Google it, there's already conversations taking place in research being done on how to [00:52:00] digitize the dollar.

So it's. As much as we want to think it's going away. Yeah. And again, you know, I'm not a young man anymore and, and sometimes technology hurts my brain, but I, I have to understand, you know, how to program the vcr. Yeah. Or else I'm gonna be left behind. Yeah.

Jason: Well you use vcr so that shows your age already.

Brennan: Right, right.

Jason: So, alright, so in terms of some other advice for. Our listeners, we talked yesterday, you had mentioned target centric approaches in law enforcement analysis for intelligence analysts based on a book from Robert Clark. Yes. So just talk a little bit about that and why you recommend it for our listeners.

Brennan: Yeah, absolutely. I think one I think not only the technique, but I think the mindset that comes with understanding target centric approaches, and Clark really does a [00:53:00] really good job of, of going through and explaining the technique and how to utilize it. And I'm a, you know, I, I hate to say it, Jason.

It, it makes the, the here in the back of my neck kind of stand up. I, I'm not a big fan of the law enforcement words, buzzwords that are out there, intelligence led mm-hmm. Or data driven. And I, there's a reason behind that if you've picked up on it, I, I really emphasize a lot of collaboration with operations and your detectives.

And when you come out with a term and, and most of the. These folks by nature are type A personalities. So when you come into a room and say, you know, this is an intelligence led endeavor, you're automatically going to one, close their minds down and, and lose a little bit of some coordination there because they're thinking you're running the case, okay.

Or you're running the, the [00:54:00] program or what have you. And so I'm not a big fan of those buzzwords. What I am a fan of and what the target centric approach does is it really kind of builds upon intel and operations integration where. Everybody is, is part of this team. The analyst doesn't sit off in some other room.

Everybody's part of this team mentally and maybe even physically, and feeding this case, feeding this problem from both sides. And it's, it's integrated in the center and that's where that target centric approach comes from. The analyst is feeding from one side, the, the investigator detective, feeding from the other, and it's all.

Centered on one problem. And I think that's a much better approach and easier to integrate with your operations than some of these other methodologies. And a lot of these, you know, I'll throw this out there. It, it's F three [00:55:00] e a d and I won't go through what the acronym stands for, but you can look it up.

It's a military methodology of doing that exact same thing. And it's interesting if you're to Google that and just read through it again, it's, it's military centric, but it's not, you know, I'm not asking someone to bring in a military operation into their department. What I'm asking you is to understand the mindset and the methodology.

And then apply that into your department at whatever level. And I think you'll find that you start to meld a little bit better with your investigators if you have that approach.

Jason: Oh, good. And we'll put some links in the show notes if folks are interested in some of this stuff. And they can also help them get more information.

So,

Brennan: all right, Brennan, let's finish up with personal

Jason: interests. , beyond being a family man, now

Brennan: you.

Jason: Y you describe yourself as a [00:56:00] Dungeons and Dragons gamer.

Brennan: So, yeah, so, you know, this is going way back again. I'm dating myself a little bit but in the in the eighties and early nineties, Dungeons and Dragons, so where I grew up in Wisconsin, the creator and developer of Dungeons and Dragons was at, lived close by.

And so it actually came onto the scene in our state a little bit faster, maybe the so than others. But I started getting into Dungeons and Dragons when I was in

middle school and the role playing games. And what I found interesting when I look back, you know, and, and again, I, I say this in jest you know, not a lot of guys that were in sports were into Dungeons and Dragons, so we were kind of labeled for a while.

As you know, those are the guys that, that played board games and, and they're not into basketball. Mm-hmm. But where I appreciate. Having gone through that phase is the ability to use your mind, the [00:57:00] creativity that are in those role playing games and the interaction you have with people. And I think, you know, Jason, you had mentioned a little bit earlier it, you develop human intelligence skills and I, I missed those days.

I, I wish I had the time again outside of the family to, to sit down and, and play. Those role playing games and strategic games and so on. But I think that's, it's an interesting way to get your mind thinking in a certain direction, certain techniques and ways to interact with other people are those games.

Yeah. Yeah.

Jason: It's interesting. My, my son started playing it a couple years ago, and he actually did, was the Dungeon Master to a couple of his campaigns. And I, I told him, I just think keep the end in mind, whatever it is, like if you want whatever, wherever you want them to go at the end, have that end in mind because it's, it's something that takes.

Multiple [00:58:00] meetings usually to get through an entire campaign. So you wanna make sure that you keep the end of mind for that.

Brennan: Yes. Yes. And I think it's it's an inter and, you know, just like everything else, you know, we go back to the eighties and nineties, but I think that that Dungeons and Dragons and role playing games, I think all of that has exploded.

And I think, again, it gets you out of a, and I'm, I love video games too, without a doubt. But I think it gets, forces you to have a different interaction with people and to get your mind thinking in more creative ways and problem solving that certainly enhances your analytical skills as you become an intelligence

Jason: analyst.

All right. Very, very good. Alright, last segment of the show is Words to the World. And this is where I give the guest the last word. Brennan, you can promote any idea that you wish. What are your

Brennan: words to the world? Well, I think we touched on it a little bit, Jason. One thing I, I want to. To circle back to is [00:59:00] understanding operation and as a good analyst, certainly get you know, build your foundation on your analytic techniques and your intelligence methodologies and your databases.

And when you got that all figured out, figure out a way to get another foot into operations. Whether that's, again, going out with them on ride alongs working cases going to court, what have you start to understand the mindset of an investigator and then you can proactively provide the support for those cases even before they know they need it themselves.

So I think that's that's something to to grow on is for the analysts that are out there.

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

Brennan: later,

Jason: but I do appreciate you being on the show, Brennan. Thank you so much. And you be safe. Thank you.

Mindy: Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analysts Talk with Jason Elder.

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