

# Carlena Orosco - The Policing Strategist

[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, Lincoln 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 at a time.

Thank you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason elder and today our guest has 10 years of law enforcement experience with 20 years of law enforce. Experience overall, she's got her PhD from Arizona state university studying the effects of dispatching and deescalation training.

She's a dispatcher turned the researcher to an analyst, turned analyst supervisor with Tempe police department. Please welcome Dr. Carlina Orozco, Carlina. How we not?

I'm doing well. Thank you so much for having me very excited to be here. All right.

Very good. You have a fascinating CV here.

Just so many [00:01:00] stops along the way, which isn't a bad thing. I like the colorful background that you have that you're going to bring to this interview.

Yes, it's been an interesting journey and many twists and turns, but I think have led to. I really a fascinating perspective and some insight that will hopefully be really beneficial to our field.

So how did you discover the law enforcement analysis?

You know, it's kind of a funny story. I think everyone has that moment as it, as a kid where you're like, this is what I want to do. Right. And mine was at 11 years old. I saw the silence of the lambs. Actually wasn't allowed to watch it, but I found a way to watch it and on the last and I thought to myself, okay, so I need to be like Clarice, because that's pretty cool.

And you know, being that this wasn't gonna age myself, but this was the time of public libraries being very popular. And so I went to the library and checked out

a book on careers in the FBI and pretty quickly realized that there were maybe three to five profilers in the entire country. And so that might be a little bit difficult in terms of that [00:02:00] path.

I actually started the forensic sprout. I went to school for a fingerprint analysis. I did crime scene photography. The whole shebang. And after a one week stint as a volunteer for the medical examiner's office, I realized probably not for me. And so I really liked research. I loved criminal justice and at that point I decided, you know, I can still help out behind the scenes in a research way.

And so that's how I kind of stumbled upon this and I haven't looked back.

So your first job as a, in a police department is as a dispatcher. Correct? So

my, actually my first job right out of high school, I was a fingerprint technician for the America county Sheriff's office, where I worked in the old it's not existed now, but it was the Madison street jail.

And I did. Fingerprints. And that was because I was on that kind of forensic path and wanted to get some experience with that. So that was actually my first job, but after I kind of realized that forensics wasn't for me [00:03:00] I thought to myself, and this is hilarious now that I think about it, but I moved to California from Arizona and I thought I still want to stay in law enforcement.

So let me find something that looks pretty easy and it pays well. And it was as simple as that. And I found the listing for dispatcher and naively said to myself, well, this looks easy enough. Let's do this. And I started dispatching with the Los Angeles county Sheriff's department when I was 21. And I soon realized it was probably the most difficult job to learn, but once you learn it, it's another language.

You can do it in your sleep. And it's a very, very important and so that's how I kind of started on the dispatch side.

So what makes it so

difficult? I think it's one of those things where. You really, there's so much unpredictability. And it's interesting because there is a lot of, there are a lot of routine aspects to that job as well.

I would say 95% of your dis your job as a dispatcher, mind you, I was mainly a radio dispatcher [00:04:00] communicating with officers in the field. I did take

some citizen calls, but mainly I was on the radio side. So the majority of your job is running inquiries on license plates in the system, looking at location history wasting calls, but that 5%, which is.

One in the morning and you're sitting there and it's completely quiet. And then you get a radio transmission that says I've been shot or I'm taking rounds or something to that effect. You have to remain calm, you have to remain level headed. And that's the most difficult thing to prepare for because how can you really prepare for something like that in your training?

There are some trainees that don't have any of that experience when they're training and when it happens, they freeze up or they decide this is too stressful. So you really have a lot of pressure. And you should too. You know, stay on top of things to stay level headed, to do a good job. You're keeping officers and community members safe.

And there really is a lot of responsibility and a lot of decision-making power that comes with dispatching. So I think that's what makes it so challenging. You're also learning another [00:05:00] language, radio codes, verbal formats you're learning very quick. Decision-making in terms of, do I send this unit code three?

Do I stop them from responding code three? And so there's really a lot of weight placed on the shoulder of the dispatcher that often we really don't think about right. Since we visibly don't see them. So once I learned it, I felt really confident. I loved that job. It's very stressful, but very rewarding and has really shaped kind of the rest of my journey.

Yeah. So it's one of those things that no matter how much they try to give you a scenario and training and nothing beats

the real thing. Right. It's really, it's true. And I think. You know, being that kind of over-prepared, study person than I am. I wanted to do my best to kind of come in with some type of experience.

So I asked my Lieutenant who was actually going to be overseeing the dispatch center. If he had any cassette tapes, I could listen to have actual radio traffic. And I remember playing that. On my cassette player at the time and [00:06:00] writing down as much as I could. And I thought to myself, all I hear is screaming.

I can't, how am I supposed to get details from this? And I think that's what was scary, but you know, now, I mean again, it's just, you become more comfortable. You become more confident, but you really can't prepare for it necessarily. You do have on the floor training, which is supposed to equip you with at least the basic skills to handle that.

But unfortunately, because of the type of the position nature of the transmissions, you get the turnover rate is almost 90% in some agencies, because some trainees say, you know what, this is just too stressful. And I can't, and I respect that, you know, if you realize I can't do this, it's too much, then you shouldn't do that profession.

Right. And so that's why it's really difficult to retain dispatchers is because of the stressful.

Yeah. So that makes it pretty impressive that you lasted nine years, the Sheriff's department. It was a, I definitely learned stress management. And I think now, you know, I think back to [00:07:00] those lessons learned in terms of multitasking and coping and managing my stress, like.

There's also the other stressors of shift work and overtime and 12 hour shifts. So now when I'm faced with situations, that may be a little bit stressful or really quick deadlines, I think back to that. And I just think I could handle anything because of the things I handled during those years, you know, in my career.

So it really has taught me a lot about life, honestly.

Now does any stories come to mind when you think back during your time then? Oh

my goodness. I mean so many stories, but I think, you know, what's funny is that. Depending on the jurisdiction you're in your agency, you know, some dispatchers, if you're maybe in a, a city that doesn't have a lot of activity or it's more suburban, for example it doesn't have a lot of isn't highly dense population wise.

You may not have a lot of the same things. So for me having a pursuit on a Friday night, it was just another Friday night. Whereas to someone else they can go their whole career and never have a pursuit. So I think it [00:08:00] depends on that too. To me, it's really not that exciting. I know there's audio of me on

YouTube handling a foot pursuit, and there's also audio of mine handling a vehicle pursuit.

And to me, again, very common things. But apparently not that common because one of them has over 11,000 hits. So, but I think, you know, one story that jumps out is there was a shooting at a nightclub and three different individuals were shooting and they went in three different directions and I had officers going three different ways.

So I simultaneously had a vehicle pursuit, a foot pursuit. And an officer in a fight at the same time and I have to handle them simultaneously. And so I think the whole incident lasted about 35. But it worked out and everyone was safe and they were able to find the weapons and everyone got the help that they needed.

So but I remember that as being like, well, I'm wiped out and we'd go ahead and get out.

That happens in the beginning of the shift, like

it kind of wiped out at that

[00:09:00] point. So in terms of the car chase, I know that LA county, that's a pretty big jurisdiction in terms of square mileage, in terms of the area.

Do you think that lends to this idea of why you had so many car

chases? I absolutely do. I think it was just you know, it's a huge, massive area and, you know, there's a lot going on. Especially if you're thinking about a weekend or anything like that. I mean, it's all there's variation of course, but it's a massive jurisdiction and, , numerous Sheriff's stations and, the policies have evolved over time, of course, but , if you've got anything that's very high level or crimes against persons or a particularly violent or something to that effect, I mean, you think about the scale of LA county and how frequently those things occur.

And, and that's not to say that. They just went on forever, obviously. Pursuits can be shut down pretty quickly. And so you have a long process in place with the [00:10:00] station and those responsible and the watch commander and everyone to really evaluate the variables and say, this is not authorized.

Or, you know, this person is a threat to public safety because of A, B, and C. So we'll allow this to continue because it's 1:00 AM and there's no traffic and so

on. So there's a lot of variables to consider with something like that. But I definitely think it has to do with like the size, the scale and all the different dynamics and things in LA county.

But that really can be anywhere, any, you know, highly dense, urban centered or jurisdiction

or. Leave being a dispatcher and LA county Sheriff's department to transfer across country to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and temple. Right. So that's quite a

trick. Oh, it is. It was very shocking for someone who's used to Palm trees and flip-flops, and in the winter, nothing more than a light card again.

So it was definitely interesting, a [00:11:00] very different, never before did I have to parallel park until I moved there and I was like, I knew this was going to come back to haunt me. Right. And it did, but at the same time, when I was a dispatcher, I became really fascinated with data and just all of the different data systems.

And I was going to college the entire time that I was working as a dispatcher, my undergrad, my masters, I used to work weekend graveyard shift. To be able to go to school during the week. And so I was like, you know, I really like research. I like data. I love, you know, analytical writing, you know, crime analysis seems pretty cool.

And I was really interested in that. And so that was my trajectory at that point was to be a crime analyst. And I, decided after my masters, I actually applied for crime analyst position, but I did not get it because I was told they did not have enough experience, which is true.

So I didn't get the job. And I thought, well, they don't have the experience. Let me get a PhD. And maybe they can you know, get more skills and experience and [00:12:00] work with some agencies. And my mentor in my master's program when she Rutgers, but she recommended temple because of the focus on policing and on spatial analysis, which I really enjoyed.

So that's why I went to Philadelphia completely and utterly unprepared.

So you get your master's and then you eventually , become a research analyst with the Arizona gang threat aside.

So actually you know, got my masters at Cal state. So lived in California the whole time. And then I went to Philadelphia to start my PhD, but I had some family emergencies and things.

And so on really positive terms, I left temple and I moved back to Arizona and I was like, well, I really want to do some research. Here's the state of Arizona criminal justice commission and they're hiring a statistical analyst. It sounds great. And I applied for the position and I got it. And. In that role, I was responsible for the Arizona gang threat assessment.

I [00:13:00] also worked on the Arizona youth survey. I worked on a number of different projects that do a lot of grant writing, and those are skills that I didn't have previously, particularly the grant writing and kind of working on federal projects and things. So that was really great experience.

And, you know, obviously working at the state level, you're working with so many different agencies , and so it's a really wonderful experience to kind of understand across the state what's happening and the extreme variation right. In the way we do things. So that's how I came about that state position.

And then I stayed there and worked my way up to a senior analyst role where I was training entry-level. And kind of overseeing project completion, checking products and things, doing a lot of the writing. So it was a wonderful experience, very different from what I was used to working in law enforcement.

So then what data are you studying at this time?

So the data that you're working with at the state level, it really varies. You know, I think this highlights the importance of having really wonderful and solid relationships with other [00:14:00] agencies because in my opinion, you have a really great opportunity if you're a state employee, especially in a research capacity to kind of bridge all these gaps and say, yes, we're looking at problem a, but we have all these agencies that are also looking at this.

Maybe we can work together and pull our data and kind of understand what's happening, big picture across the state. So a data for me, given the projects I was working on ranged from survey data, from law enforcement, you know, questions about how they handle specific types of data or how they address certain issues.

Also working on the Arizona youth survey, a biennial survey with different schools, about a variety of, you know issues related to Juveniles or, you know,

adolescent adverse childhood experiences substance use, et cetera, and that's widely used. So I worked on that. In addition, I worked on the opioid misuse and abuse initiative for the state and I am not a public health expert.

That is not my background. Right. But [00:15:00] I quickly learned and I'm thankful for it. Kind of the intersection, right? Between public health and criminal justice and was able to work with a lot of complex data related to you know prescription databases and public health data, and a lot of epidemiological data that I was not familiar with.

And so I found myself in that space too which I'm very thankful for now, but at the time I was like, okay, so I'm used to, you know, you see hard data or I'm used to looking at calls for service or something like that. So it was very, very different and challenging, but in a good way. So and then, a lot of offshoot requests, I mean, looking at really anything.

And if we didn't have the data, we would try to reach out to other agencies and see if they'd be willing to collaborate. Create a data sharing agreement. I've you know, when I left, I was working on a project with probation in another county. And, you know, that was a great experience too. So it was really a variety of things, but I think most consistently working with opioid data, [00:16:00] also the Arizona, you serving in the gang threat assessment with law enforcement.

So

when you're studying this. Is it mostly descriptive statistics that you're using to analyze this data? Or is it getting into something a little bit more complicated in terms of statistical

tests? So, I would say that for what we did, it was largely descriptive. I think there was more complexity when it went into sampling methodology or different things like that.

We did some, kind of more inferential tasks, but, largely the products that we were developing at the state level were translational in nature. So we were trying to really develop products that were still very insightful and informative, but, you know also something that a community member or someone in.

A group in the community that was trying to help out kids, for example, could, could read and easily interpret and have visuals if they wanted to present those. And also be able to take that and , corporated into programming or policy. And

[00:17:00] so while we did do some more complex analyses, it was largely descriptive in nature.

And I think it's because we wanted to make sure it was palatable and as translational as possible we also partnered with Arizona state on a few different projects and that kind of gave us the space to kind of do more complex analysis. But at our level it was mainly descriptive in nature.

I think that looking back I would have loved the opportunity to kind of do something a little bit more fancy and kind of look at something some more predictive analytics or something a little bit more intricate than I did, but you're also thinking about limited resources and, and being spread across a variety of different projects.

Yeah. A lot of people who really want your expertise through your assistance. So you're trying to balance all those with your kind of nerd heart, right. That wants to call these school things. But I think that that is, you know, looking back something I would've loved to carve out a little more space for quite [00:18:00] honestly.

Okay.

So as you mentioned, you eventually become a senior research analyst there where you're teaching the newbies. And so what did you find that newbies really struggled with in terms of this position?

Honestly, I think it's always intimidating when you're coming into this new space and you don't have a lot of experience and you're trying to learn these different datasets and different types of analyses, I think.

But I think that that is the, was the easier part, honestly, was doing the actual statistics or running the analyses and being able to interpret data. That's that wasn't so much a challenge as it was orienting your products to different audiences, being able to present to different audiences, to develop products for different groups of people.

I think that can be a little bit challenging initially, especially if you don't have the experience presenting to a variety of. You know, maybe it's something that you've never presented to you, a room full of police [00:19:00] chiefs or to a community group that's looking to reduce opioid use. I mean, if you've never done that before can be incredibly intimidating and you don't really know where to start.

And so I think teaching them the ropes about, well, this is the presentation we're going to be doing. And what do you think this needs to look like? And kind of teaching someone that handing someone a table with raw numbers is not appropriate and why? Right. You know, how do we best equip them to implement this or to incorporate this into their programming?

What can we provide that will make it easy to understand and something that they can use moving forward. So I think that was one of the biggest things that I really tried to teach. And I think that just comes with experience. I would say finally having. And your work, it's very intimidating when you come into a position, especially working in government and you're given this responsibility of developing a product or conducting an analysis that you know, someone in leadership will look at and that can shake your confidence a little bit.

You want to do a good job. You don't want to make a [00:20:00] mistake, but ultimately you have training. You're learning, you have experience, you've studied this, you've read everything. You can, you know, you are ready for this challenge and you don't have to be perfect. That's why I'm here to double-check or that's why so-and-so is here to review this with you.

But instilling that confidence because that makes you a better researcher, a better scholar, a better presenter. And it really is heartwarming to see someone start out a little bit nervous and not really knowing their place in this. And then moving on to do a presentation in front of 200 people where.

They're really confident about what they're doing. So I think those are the skills that are beyond kind of the tangible analysis skills that are incredibly important for your career.

The analysts that work with this commission, what do they mostly go on to do? Or are they continuing on more of a research path or are they eventually making it to more of a practitioner

side of things?

I think it's mixed honestly. I've had interns go [00:21:00] on to pursue academia. I've had some go on to crime analysis careers. There was one analyst who is in public health and doing that now another analyst who went on to an entirely different fields. And so I, I really think it just depends, but I that's what I love so much about analysis, whether it's, you know, research crime analysis, any type of analytical training is that it really is applicable to so many things.

Your ability to analyze information, synthesize information, do assessments, evaluate those skills are incredibly vital regardless. Right? And so I think that's why they've gone on to so many wonderful, different things is because that skillset is something you can use anywhere you go.

Regardless you're going to be presenting to different people or developing products and, and you need to have that confidence. And so I feel as though you know, we're not perfect. Obviously I was very, very busy in my senior role. At one point I was the only lead person in my agency for a bit in research before we had a director over [00:22:00] me.

But I did my best to have that mentorship where I gave him confidence. And there were skills that were beyond just doing this calculation. How do you take this simple calculation and turn this into a policy implication? And I think that's a skill that is really important. So that's why they're kind of everywhere to be honest.

Yeah. Okay. So you leave the commission to go to Tempe police department as a police research slash data analysts to yes. And so I'm always fascinated with the paths of how folks become analysts. And certainly with you, you went back to fingerprinting, you were a dispatcher, did research on various levels, just talk a moment about how those different experiences. Helped you become an analyst.

I think my first exposure [00:23:00] to data and the various data systems and things was as a dispatcher, because that's what you're constantly in. Right? You're running inquiries. You're looking at these data fields day in and day out.

And I was fascinated by that and then kind of mixing that with my academic training and working at the state level. And I thought, how can I best kind of bridge those two together? My dispatch experience, my research training. I really do like working in law enforcement, but I still want to do the research.

So I thought, the state position was wonderful. I learned so much. And how. I really built some great relationships, but what I was missing from that I think was the direct impact on police operations. And so that's why I applied for the job in Tempe. I knew based on the job description that it was going to be more of a strategic position, but that's where my strengths reside in terms of my training, going in without any tactical training, I thought this is a great way to kind of bring my practitioner experience to the table as well as my research [00:24:00] experience.

And that position just seemed ideal for that. And that's not to take away from anyone who goes right out of school and doesn't have any experience in a police department. But I know for me, I felt that coming in with policing experience or law enforcement experience would help me as an analyst to better.

Translate my products accordingly, and to really provide some takeaways for leadership or for officers in patrol about this is what we're seeing in the data, and this is how it could potentially impact operations policy, et cetera. And so that's kind of why I came back into the law enforcement space because I was missing those kinds of direct impacts and really having a seat at the table in terms of this is our plan moving forward, operationally because of these data.

When you look back at it now, does it feel like it was still research at this point or is this more analysis at this

point? So I think and this is gonna sound silly, but I think, you know, research is in your blood. I [00:25:00] think it, it, even if you're not doing it day in and day out, it's just part of a fabric of who you are.

I noticed for me. So I kind of came in research minded, but it is definitely more analysis. You know, I again, what I did for the state, what I've done academically is more research-based. But when I came here, it was definitely more analysis. You know, we're looking at longer-term trends, we're looking at any emerging kind of patterns we're looking at.

Evidence-based interventions, things like that. But what I tried to do with that though, is incorporate more evaluation and things that have. And my research background in terms of, okay, so yes, I can provide this trend data. Yes. I can provide this overview of, you know, crime a for example, but perhaps with this intervention that we're going to implement as a result of this data, maybe we can evaluate this, right.

Maybe we can look at if there are direct impacts or outcomes as a result of this intervention. So I tried to kind of incorporate research into it, but not force it to the point [00:26:00] where I was doing it unnecessarily, but I wanted to make sure that we had those components in place specifically when it comes to deployment of resources.

You know, we all know that those are very limited. And so I wanted to make sure that I at least try to get the ball rolling with maybe doing some evaluation and also being involved in research projects, particularly with other research partners to really not only Add to our knowledge and hopefully provide us with

some guidance in terms of next steps in our department and our initiatives, but just overall, just being able to kind of have those partnerships in place and work collaboratively to really make a difference.

And so while it is definitely crime analysis and strategic analysis, I think that research is still very important and plays a significant role in what we do here.

Hi, I'm Charlene . One question that people ask me a lot is how to get respect and buy-in and an agency. And I always tell crime analysts [00:27:00] on day one. The most important thing to do is find the biggest police officer in the department and just knock his ass out in front of everybody. And that way they'll all have more respect.

What I mean by that is find the people who are your leaders, your informal leaders, your high IGE, and value people and win them over one at a time. Wow. Then knock them out with what you can do and how you can make your life easier. And then there'll be the ones who go and get all of the buy-in before you.

Hi, this is Eric Piza,

John Jay college. It's been a last, a rough couple of years. Salacious all be, be kind to each other. I've been on social media a lot lately and you're not being kind. So let's all just be kind to each

other.

This leads us to your analyst's badge story. And this is some strategic work. You did a problem oriented policing project that happens in 2020.

So in [00:28:00] my doctoral program, and I'm not sure if, if people are aware of this, but we have the center for problem oriented policing is through arrows and a seat.

We have Michael Scott is a professor and just an incredible background and you know, running the pop center and he offers a clinic for graduate students where you can take a class with him and you can either update a problem oriented policing guide, or also you can do a project. And so I chose to do both classes with him.

And I thought this is a wonderful way for me to work directly with this expert in primary and policing, and also create a project. That will benefit the department. And so I got approval from leadership from ESU, and I decided to use Chula

Vista's project as a framework to address some issues that we were seeing in one of our budget motels.

So the budget motel project in Chula Vista is incredibly successful and there's a lot of material available. The analyst is really helpful and willing to assist if anyone wanted to, [00:29:00] to chat with her. But I thought to myself, let's incorporate some of these same approaches to the problem that we're facing in Tempe.

And this was a persistent issue is consistent over time and. What I did is I really used that as a guide to kind of understand first and foremost, what is happening with this budget motel repeatedly, that is not being addressed. And, you know, we know that it goes beyond just looking at the data, but I really wanted to understand what it was about this motel that was so problematic.

And so make a long story. Short, did a lot of assessment with, you know, a lot of fields work with officers who have dealt with this particular location. I've talked to our crime prevention folks. They did a lot of that, and it came down to kind of shifts in management. And different priorities for that particular budget motel, a willingness to collaborate with the police department on kind of attacking some of these issues.

It was really difficult to have any long-term [00:30:00] relationships because the management was changing so frequently. And so we realized pretty quickly that we needed to develop, or I needed to develop in collaboration with two lieutenants and the police department, or really holistic approach that was framed in the Sara model and rooted in problem policing.

And that included evidence-based practices from the Chula Vista project, but also was collaborative and kind of a partnership with management at the motel. It was really rooted in educational components and providing resources. There were some environmental issues in terms of You know, various cues of disorder and things also signage and visibility from the police department.

And so it was all those things kind of together to create a plan that included patrol, included crime prevention, included management from the motel altogether to really watch this initiative. And I try to approach it educationally internally as well. I made infographics for patrol. I went to briefing.

I did [00:31:00] everything that I could to really educate our department about what was going to take place in this different approach we were taking that was not merely rooted in enforcement. And so I was really proud of that just because

I felt that it was innovative and something that we had done before in terms of the approach I was taking and was happy to see that it was very well received.

And actually there was another iteration of this project that launched at the beginning of the year that they're continuing to work on. That is again, very much collaborative with management and it's using those same components. And so that's one that I was really, really proud of because they think it, caused everyone involved to really look at things from a big picture lens in terms of.

Multifaceted responses to consistent issues. And although it's not super glamorous, it's not necessarily crimes against persons or violent crime, but it's a persistent issue. It's a community issue. That's affecting residents and. And so it was still worthy of attention and, and resources. So, all

[00:32:00] right.

Well, you mentioned Michael Scott and you can't mention Michael Scott on this program without mentioning the office. And so I find it funny that I heard him speak years ago and he said I had a perfectly good name until that show came along. And then everybody asked me now watch

that show.

And you watched

that show. And so now forever, his name is connected with that show.

It's true. But I guess in our worlds, you know, we know which Michael Scott,

so in terms of this hotel, what were the. Marching orders, if you will, to really influence this problem.

There were several across the board, I think with , in terms of the management from the motel, you know, we really there's actually one of the resources that Chula Vista developed.

For this project had a management checklist with different actions that management could take to curb these issues. And [00:33:00] so we really used that as a framework and said, Hey, these are some ideas that you can implement to help with this problem. And we talked to them a little bit about, you know, why is it that you're seeing this issue and what is it?

And honestly it management side, we're kind of scared to be here and, we really do want to make a difference, but it's really difficult because we weren't supported before, or, you know, we have this issue. And so it wasn't so much that they didn't want to implement those practices, but they felt that they didn't have the resources or the support to do so.

We saw, when there was a change in leadership above them in terms of, decision makers for this motel, when they had a more supportive leader in place that really was like, Hey, I want you to feel safe. Mattel to be in better shape and so on. And it was very supportive.

They felt more empowered to kind of implement those practices. And so I think that worked out in our favor but we started implementing this educational component and the signage, and we just wanted them to really stay in contact with us and [00:34:00] kind of ensure that they were doing their part to as far as screening and reporting things.

I think that was one of the big issues was, you know, if you see something, please report it to us make sure that the signs are visible. If one of the signs is taken down, please let us know make sure that you're doing this, this level of vetting at the beginning. And there were so many outcomes and so many action items.

It would take a whole episode just on that project, but. Basically, we just wanted to make sure that they were on board with us. And it wasn't so much us saying, you must do this, but let's work together because we want to help you, which is true. They were very much a huge part of this and very onboard.

And so that was not a concern whatsoever. I think on the PD side it was, you know, having a presence and checking on this facility also keeping an eye out, right, for the signage, for the lighting. Do you see a lot of trash, you know, whatever it is in place that's maybe signaling that there's disorder and so on.

And that was kind of the patrol side. And then we had crime prevention [00:35:00] who was responsible for working with surrounding businesses and the community. So everyone had. The same objective, but different responsibilities. And I think that that's what works so well with us is that we all had our role and we were all doing something important, but ultimately we were trying to achieve the same objective.

So a lot of different marching orders, but it was really rooted in education collaborative partnerships and providing resources and going about it in an, again, an educational way.

Okay.

So now you get promoted, you are the strategic planning analysis and research center supervisor. So that's SPARK supervisor.

I always liked the clever names.

How many folks are you working with, and what's the objective

of the position? So right now funny that you mentioned that we actually just opened up a position last week for my old position is now open FYI. But so we're supposed to have to spark. [00:36:00] At all times

and I think that you know, we are very, very busy, but and I would love to have another analyst. I think every analytical unit would say that. Right. But with two analysts, we're kind of tasked with looking at any type of long-term issue that can be crime. It can be close for service, but we're also doing a lot of other tasks that I think would fall under the administrative umbrella.

So for example, we do patrol staffing for the department and for year we've also assisted with staffing analysis overall. We've done a lot of strategic planning. I've presented to city council on a number of different topics. I've helped out with the development of performance measures. We've also done some research on a number of different issues for maybe for something that we're looking to implement, but we really want a good understanding of best practices.

So we really do, a lot of analysis with data, but we also do a lot of research. We design evaluations. I mean, really anything that falls under that [00:37:00] administrative or strategic umbrella is what we do here. And then other things that maybe I wouldn't consider either, but you know, it falls on our plate and do the best that we can.

So I would do a lot of the mapping and things like that, but, you know, that's an, a spark unit. We also have a phenomenal tactical unit crime and Intel center, the CIC, and we work collaboratively with them on different issues, particularly when we're preparing more comprehensive. We want to include the short term and a longterm overview of things.

But we are stationed in our substation. That is where our patrol leadership is situated. And that's because we do a lot of work with our patrol attendants and patrol sergeants and commanders to assist with their long-term assessments of their specific areas. So I would say that's kind of the gist of it.

Although one day to the next it can change. You know, you really don't know what to expect other than the typical monthly analysis. We get a lot of requests for different things. So I think we have really good [00:38:00] training and a good set of skills to kind of. Anything that comes our way. So

good.

So you recently earned your PhD, so congratulations. Quite an accomplishment.

I'm exhausted.

So, as I mentioned in your intro, The dissertation was regarding dispatching and deescalation training.

So I obviously was a dispatcher for many years and I remember being 23 years old and thinking to myself, wow.

You know, yes, I'm a dispatcher. And I'm sitting here with my five screens and my three keyboards. Right. But I really have a lot of decision-making power at my fingertips in terms of the units that I assign and directing units to specific calls and so on. And when I did take citizen calls, being able to calm the citizen down and handle their issue appropriately.

And so it always occurred to me that that was a very integral position and a critical one in [00:39:00] terms of decision-making and that was never lost on me. And when I started my PhD program, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Mike White, who has been my mentor. Really my academic role model quite honestly, and had the pleasure of working for him, my entire PhD on this deescalation project, where it was through the bureau of justice assistance smart policing project that was established to designed, deliver and evaluate a customized deescalation training for law enforcement which we did do.

And I will, you know I believe the full report will be linked. So can read about that and kind of the outcomes that we achieved, but as the research assistant on that project for four years, I noticed that we were, and not intentionally, it was just, this was focused on the sworn part of it, but, you know, dispatchers when

we think about deescalation or are missing from the conversation, we often frame it in the context of officers when they arrive on scene, because.[00:40:00]

They are interacting with the citizen at the location. You know, they are tasked with deescalating, this individual potentially right. Or on a traffic stop, for example. So that's what we really think of with the escalation. But I thought to myself, we're missing the front end of this. And that's the dispatcher because the dispatcher is talking to the citizen before anyone sees them in person.

They're that first point of contact in most cases. And they're also talking to the officer on the radio all day long. And so if we can really understand the ways in which dispatchers deescalate, whether it's a caller who is kind of elevated because they saw something very traumatic or they're scared, understandably are frazzled, right.

Or even an officer who's dealing with a critical incident and is a really in, a very emotional state because of what they're seeing or the call that they're responding to. This is really the missing link here. If we can, you know, look at the way dispatchers, keep themselves calm, keeps citizens [00:41:00] calm, keep officers calm, and the potential for honing that expertise and using it to guide future training and the development of policy and protocols.

Then perhaps we can incorporate deescalation on the front end. And have some continuity from start to finish until an incident is resolved. And so that's really what I wanted to understand with my dissertation. And I did. So I'm using a mixed methods approach that looked at some survey data just to understand kind of the tactics that are used, how frequently they're used to deescalate.

But I also did some observations. I also did interviews with a group of peer nominated, top dispatcher de escalators, considered the best of the best to understand what are the strategies and techniques that dispatchers use to deescalate, and then really focused on the implications for policy for departments.

And I'm very, very proud of it. You know, to my knowledge, it was the first time that we looked at deescalation in this way particularly with officers included in the mix as [00:42:00] well. And you know the deescalation literature that does look at dispatch, it looks mainly. Crisis negotiation or the ability to triage calls.

And that's very, very important, but I think what we forget is that before you can triage a call, you still have information gathering that you have to do, and

you need to deescalate to get better information in the first place to know where to send it. So that's why I kind of embarked on this journey to, to look at something that hadn't really been examined before.

So in your research is the deescalation for both the citizen and the officer?

Absolutely. Yes. Yes, definitely. There's and it looks a little bit different. Right. I mean you know, when you're thinking of an officer, it's not so much that, you know, an officer will have that, that internal knowledge of processes, they know exactly what you're asking questions.

So it's, it's very different from interacting with a citizen who is thinking to themselves and understandably thinking, why are you asking me these questions? I just want some help, you know? But you know, on the, [00:43:00] on the dispatch side, we know that we have to ask really critical questions to make sure we're getting the right units.

We're getting them there quickly. We're getting resources. Do you need the fire department, et cetera. So these are questions you have to ask. But it's really your delivery. It's your communication. It's your transparency. It's your tone. There's so many things that go into. And the ability to keep the citizen calm and engaged to provide that information, but also providing them comfort that you're getting them help.

And I think with officers, we're looking at it a little bit differently in that it's also your tone, right? It's your delivery. It's your ability to stay calm. It's your ability to stay on top of things and kind of know where your units are to anticipate questions about inquiries and maybe do those a little bit proactively.

So you kind of have that information. It's kind of minimizing the load that rests on the officer, right. Of things that maybe they can do to assist with resolving those incidents outside of being in the [00:44:00] field, because we're not, but. There are certainly ways that you can keep the situation, calm, provide information and again, keep it running smoothly.

And that's what deescalation looks like with officers. It's a little bit different, but it's still deescalation in that you're preventing or preventing it from escalating rather. So that's why I kind of looked at both because I think they're both incredibly important. And, you know, I know I can think back to my years as a dispatcher and think of certain officers who, you know, sometimes sounded really elevated or they were upset.

And I didn't know why maybe they just had a bad day, you know, but, but I think that that's where this comes into play. Especially with these conversations and literature that has come out about dispatcher priming and the tone of the dispatcher and the way that it influences, you know, the officers and their response.

I think that anything we can do to keep it calm and resolve it peacefully is, is a win. And so why not look at the way that we deescalate on the radio as well? So

in this scenario, [00:45:00] you have an officer and a potential situation and he, or she starts to escalate a little bit.

Did you get to the point where the recommendation is like, Hey. You're going to pull this officer back a little bit and bring it to their attention, how they're coming

off. That's actually a really good question. And so we're still developing a training for dispatchers based on my findings from my dissertation, but on the sworn side of this training, that's already been developed and evaluated and delivered.

There's an emphasis on being able to kind of to tap out as the best thing I can think of. And it's recognizing in others that they may need to step away and someone else needs to take over. And this could be because whatever reason, right, the call is, is very high stress. It could be something external to the incident altogether that's causing.

That's potentially getting in the way of the ability to effectively deescalate, whatever the. There's that, you know, awareness that you need to [00:46:00] have. And I would say as a dispatcher too, to be able to say, I think someone needs to step in and take over, or, you know, this person needs to step away.

And I think that this also applies to dispatchers because there as a dispatcher, if you think about it, your no, one's calling 9 1 1 because they're having a great day. They're calling because they need help and they're stressed or they're emotional, or they saw something very traumatic.

But even, so those things cumulatively, they add up and it's very, very stressful. And so I'm not perfect. I consider myself an, a great dispatcher, but there were days when I just was really frustrated or very frazzled. And although I wasn't, you know, necessarily aware of it and I wasn't trying to be that way.

It's inevitable that will, it will affect your work. And so even as dispatchers, one of the top DSP leaders that I interviewed mentioned, you have to be really self-aware and be able to say, you know, I'm really having a bad day and I don't want it to impact my job. So I need to head home or I need to step away.

I need to take a break, [00:47:00] whatever it is. Not only do you need to have that self-awareness but awareness of each other and have that relationship where you can say, Hey, are you good? Do you need to talk, whatever the case, but it really is the ability to say, I don't think this is a good day for me to do this, or, you know what, I'm not getting anywhere with this deescalation that I'm trying to do.

I'm going to step away and let person B do this because I know that they're really good. And let's see if they can turn it a little bit, for some reason. And so that really is a big part of this recognizing in yourself and in others, when maybe you just need to take that person, tap them on the shoulder and say, Hey, you know what, let me give it a shot.

And then kind of stepping in and maybe using another approach that might be more effective. So I do think that that's definitely a foundational component to deescalation both on the dispatcher and the officer's side.

All right. Let's, let's talk about research and police department partnership now.

And you mentioned that. There's always a communication disconnect between how you write a paper in the research world and how you write a [00:48:00] paper in the police department. Well, and the same thing with communication and presentations. So, let's do a scenario. Let's say that you have the chief's ear at Tempe and he, or she's given you the full gamut of power over the police department.

What are you implementing research wise to really help the partnership between the research and police department?

So I think that's a huge question and a dream question, right? I think I would even take this back a second and take it back a level and say your analysts are kind of embedded researchers in the department.

We are intimately familiar with the data. We're intimately familiar with the caveats of our data. And a lot of us have training in, we have coursework in different areas of criminal justice research. And I think the first step is to make sure that your analysts always have a seat at the table.

I think that's the first [00:49:00] thing. So we need to take it back from the research academic partnerships first to say, are you giving your analysts a seat at the table and a voice in these decisions? Because when you do that, your analysts will be able to speak to. The design and delivery of initiatives, how we can properly evaluate them, maybe things that we aren't collecting data wise that maybe we should, when your analyst is also equipped to discuss limitations of what we can do and kind of the resources that perhaps we don't have a need.

And that's where those partnerships come into place is being able to recognize when, yes, we would love to do something like this, but we don't have the capacity because of this reason. Or, you know, we actually don't have training in this, but we have Arizona state down the street and they have, researchers who have been examining this issue or topic for years have extensive training capacity.

They're ready to jump on board with their research assistants and do this analysis for us. But you have to kind of have that awareness to even know, to build those relationships in [00:50:00] the first place. And so I would definitely yeah. Make sure that my analysts have a seat at the table. And then with that establish a protocol for these research partnerships and make sure that we have really good relationships built.

We've networked with our neighboring research institutes, whether it's a university or otherwise to talk about how they can help us, maybe how we can help them. I think you also need some kind of decision making model in place to determine which research projects you actually want to do and why, you know, how will they benefit operations?

And are we doing it just to do it, ? And also, you know, how we feel about having our department as the focus for a different study. And I think there's incredible benefits to it. Even if the findings are not what you expected or perhaps they're not as favorable as you would, like, that's still an opportunity to learn and an opportunity to grow as an agency.

So I think, we have to really elevate and [00:51:00] showcase the importance of research, the importance of having our analysts included in all of these discussions and having an ongoing partnership between crime analysis research institutions, to be able to say, this is a really good fit for the project.

And also, I think, you know, once those partnerships are established giving your analyst a place in those projects, I know for me working on the deescalation project, yes, it was part of my PhD program, but I was also kind of a conduit

between ASU and between my police department. I was able to speak to police operations, but also speak to different research activities that we were doing and answer questions and, you know, kind of a champion for the project and such.

And I think that's incredibly important, but the only way you're going to have. It's by including your analysts in all of your research partnerships moving forward. So I think that's kind of what I would try to drive home to the leadership in any department. Because I think that, and not always, and I don't think it's ill [00:52:00] intention, but I think sometimes as analysts, we're kind of looked at as data producers, as opposed to someone who is really a research expert or an analytical expert that can truly help to, to kind of guide our initiatives and our operations in the department.

, so with the study, I think the first thing that comes to mind is that's going to take a long time. And that's one thing that executives are going to say that we don't have.

We can't tell the public that it's going to take 12 months to 18 months to study this phenomenon and figuring out what to do about it. And that might not be an accurate statement, but I think , that's what I think of when I say, oh, let's do a study on that. And there's academics

involved.

Well, I mean, good research does take time. I mean, that's not a lie. It does. And it should, because if you are doing this, obviously looks a little bit different, perhaps if you've got secondary data you're using, but if you are doing something, crafting this from scratch or collecting data, that takes time and it takes, [00:53:00] it should take time because you want to be very thorough and you have to be mindful of methodological limitations and general kind of approaches to analysis and such.

That is true. But therein lies another benefit of having partnership with, academic institutions, because typically, you know, an academic institution has that time or the ability to invest those resources and time and doing something. And it doesn't mean that it's not going to be beneficial along the way, because I can speak to the fact that during the deescalation project, as we're progressing through the project, we're providing updates data.

Hey, this is what we found general themes from this part of the project. This is what we discovered with this first wave of the survey. So you're still providing actionable information as you progress through the project. And that can be one

of the stipulations of the partnership is that yes, we realize it'll take two years for [00:54:00] us to really do this study, but we would love to see kind of incremental.

data briefs on what's happening in anything that can be actionable for us in the department. So I think that's one way to kind of look at it and present it. And it doesn't take away from the daily analysis that you're doing in your crime analysis unit. You're still doing those things. You're still analyzing your data, providing reports and such, but this is just another opportunity to really do some, you know, for lack of a better phrase, some cool things, and look at some really interesting questions that we maybe wanted to look at or understand, but haven't had the ability to do so, because again, as you mentioned, maybe we don't have that luxury of time, or we don't have the advanced training that someone may have in a specific method, whatever the case that gives us an opportunity to really add to our kind of repository.

Right. And while still providing the kind of daily products that we need to keep our department running effectively and efficiently. So it doesn't take away from [00:55:00] anything and enhancing. Well, we're able to provide in what we're able to understand in terms of police operations. So that's kind of how I would approach it.

You're kind of running on two tracks, you know, it doesn't take over the track. It's running in conjunction to the day-to-day analysis that we do. And then as an analyst who wouldn't want their analysts to kind of gain more expertise and skills. And more research experience by being a part of these different partnerships.

That's only going to benefit you in terms of what you're able to do moving forward in your department.

Okay. Well put, so for the analyst part, if this is, this is again my vision, and if it's, if you think it's wrong for you, feel free to tell me, so you have an analyst and they're looking at data and there's a couple of different paths that he or she can take.

Right? They, see a pattern they're like, oh, who are the folks that are responsible for that? And maybe take a more investigative tactical intelligence path from that [00:56:00] there's others that might take this data set and look more strategic. Find the hotel. Just like you mentioned there, that's driving the numbers and go research the pop center and come up with a strategy that's already been tested.

With those two realms, those might be palatable to analyze. Then there might be a whole set of analysts there that don't want anything to do with being at the research table. I don't mean that offensive. I don't mean that offensively. I just mean that I'm thinking I was like from talking to analysts and the way

they stopped and I was like, look,

what they like to do.

And don't like to do, and, and whatnot, there's probably a disconnect between analysts and researchers

as well, I guess, is where I'm getting a hundred percent. And

just, what do you think

about that? I mean, I respect that. I mean, I know a few analysts who are like, I don't even want to hear the word research, you know, I want nothing to do with it.

That's okay. That's [00:57:00] okay. I think that the beauty of crime analysis is that there's a place for everyone and maybe it's not research, you know, maybe you don't want to look at, you know Five years of data and look for things like that and develop research questions and write a grant. And that's okay if you don't want to do that, you know maybe I, I feel like there's so many different things that we do.

We wear so many hats that you don't have to love research. I do think it's important though. Even if you're not a fan or you're not at the table. To understand what we're doing and why, and understand the importance of the research. Even if you yourself don't want to do it. I think it's still very important to know the why behind it so that you can speak to it so that if you're looking at data that maybe your focus is more tactical, and you're not really interested in the research side, if you see something emerging and you know that there's this, project that's taking place and there's this there was something that was just delivered to all of sworn that may have impacted this.

You're aware of it, right? Because you may see it emerge in other places. And so I [00:58:00] still think it's incredibly important to be looped in across the board to kind of understand what's happening and the importance of research. Even if you yourself don't want to do it, it's still really necessary to know why we need to do it more collectively.

And the importance of it just like it's important for. Research partners on the academic side to understand why we need to look at short-term analysis and why we look at things tactically. They may not have that knowledge if they've never worked in a police department. So they also need to understand why we have certain expectations or certain things that we require moving forward as well.

So I think it's that mutual understanding and having that open dialogue and that transparency and good communication you know, I, I preach this to everyone when I was a dispatcher. I still see it. The best way to learn is to do some ride alongs and that could be with an analyst. An officer, a dispatcher, but maybe increasing the understanding and awareness would help to bridge that gap.

I think it does certainly do that [00:59:00] in other areas. So there's an opportunity for us to enhance understanding. And that's definitely the case with you know, working in a research practitioner partnership.

I mentioned the other day when we were doing the prep call, that when I visited Chile, the police department down there showed me one of their reports in which it was calculating the Z score of the various crime types to establish how predictable the data was and which I found fascinating because.

I don't think that is done anywhere in the U S I could certainly be wrong on that, but I was really surprised to find that. And I think from their vantage point, they thought it was a standard, so they implemented it. Right. And so seems to me that with analysis at the police department, we are still looking at the same metrics.

Yeah, 20, 30 plus years later that there has not been much [01:00:00] movement in terms of key indicator metrics in this profession,

I agree. I think, Again, it's, it requires some uncomfortable discussions at times, right. To be able to say, you know, this is what we've been looking at historically, but why, why are we doing this?

And what is it that, about this metric that we feel is so important? What does this really inform? What is this telling us? And also, you know, what action is coming out of this? I mean, it's just, I think we, again, they don't want to speak for everyone, but I think we get comfortable, right. With certain things or certain ways of doing things.

Change is always a little bit challenging, particularly in government. And I also think we haven't really, you know, maybe from the analyst side, I will say I don't know that we've been given the space. To really think innovatively about outcome or measures or performance measures or whatever the case that you're thinking about.

There's a lot of different approaches we can take in terms of looking at issues and, and kind [01:01:00] of those metrics and things. But we have to be given the space to have a little bit of creative freedom to kind of look beyond or outside of the box to understand the different ways that we can look at things.

And that can be a little bit scary. It can be scary if it's not something we've done in the past, but there's so much research and evidence and different, you know, agencies that have done really remarkable things that we can use as, as a framework for looking at things a little bit differently. It's not as simple as looking at increases in decreases, right.

Are we really doing a deep dive to look at key themes? The nature of these increases and decreases. Is it specific types of crimes? Is it, you know, we don't, I don't even know that we're going into that detail for kind of outcome measures. So I think there's a really wonderful opportunity for us to be innovative and creative, but I think that that requires giving some kind of autonomy and creative freedom.

To say, let's look at a different way that we can approach this. And that requires having a lot of confidence in your [01:02:00] analyst team in being able to kind of do something different. You also have to kind of be able to showcase the benefit of doing that to various levels of leadership that relies on those metrics for, grants or different things.

I mean, there really is a lot of moving parts to it, but it's so important because are we really understanding the full scale of issues we're facing our communities or if changes are effective or programs are effective, I mean, were putting different resources into these, approaches, but can we really see that they're effective if we're not looking at all the possible ways we can measure efficacy?

So I think we definitely have some room to grow in that arena because. You know, it is like you said, pretty standard and it hasn't changed a whole lot. So I think it's time to have some fun and be creative with it.

All right. Well, let's finish up with personal interests and you like to travel for concerts.

Absolutely. And so what are some places that you've [01:03:00] traveled to for a concert?

I mean, I've, you know, I have yet to go to Europe for a festival, but that's on my list. I've gone all over the U S to see different concerts. I am admittedly and again, aging myself, but it's okay. Admittedly a fan of like eighties and nineties alternative or rock.

And so I've probably seen the cure about 10 times. I've seen Depeche mode, a different Morrissey, like a lot of bands like that. I've seen all over the U S And with when COVID hit, I mean, I obviously took the concert thing the hardest, but I'm very excited to have a full concert agenda for the summer and next year.

So I'm really excited to get, to see some other shows in different states and hopefully go to a festival internationally in the near future.

So for you, when you look back at the places you have traveled, is it, is it more the venue or more the band that you saw?

Oh my gosh. I mean, I think it's a combo because, you know, bands go to so many different locations.

So if I know I want to see a certain band and [01:04:00] they're on tour, then I will, you know choose accordingly. I know, for example, I went to see the cure in New York city. It was the kind of remodeled beacon theater, historic theater, and they played three full albums. And I knew that was the show I wanted to go to.

But there are some venues that I would love to see that I would be open to seeing other. The ads perform because I want that experience. So for someone who maybe hasn't been to California before, you know, going to the Hollywood bowl or the rose bowl might be one of those types of experiences or, you know, something like that.

So it really just depends, but I would say first priority is the band. Cause that's, what's gonna determine from going to a show in the first place, but if I'm visiting another location, I really prefer to kind of go to like the little divey kind of. Small venues to see local music. I think those are my favorite when I'm just traveling for work or something.

I love to kind of check out the local music scene when I do stuff like that.

Alright, here. I hope you make it to Europe someday soon. [01:05:00] All right. Well, our last segment to the show is where to the world. And this is where I give the guests the last word Carlina. You can promote any idea that you wish.

What are your words to the world?

I would say my words to the world would be to advocate for yourself as an. You are incredibly brilliant. You have extensive training, you have incredible valuable skills that are integral to, you know, police operations. And you deserve a seat at the table for various discussions that affects police operations.

And so really being an advocate for yourself and kind of, I don't mean this in an aggressive way, but put yourself out there and say, I, I would like to attend this planning meeting, or I would like to sit in on this command staff meeting, that's discussing performance measures because you have just as much of a contribution to make.

And so. That would be my, my kind of words of advice is to advocate for yourself because you deserve to be at the table and bring your expertise as an analyst, to every part of the department. Very good. Well,

I leave every guest with you've given me [01:06:00] just enough to talk bad about your lawyer, but I do appreciate you being on the show.

Carly, thank you so

much.

And you'd be saying you for making it to the end of another episode of analysts. Talk with Jason elder. You can show your support by sharing this and other episodes found on our website at [www.leapodcasts.com](http://www.leapodcasts.com) if you have a topic you would like us to cover or have a suggestion for our next guest, please send us an email at [leapodcasts@gmail.com](mailto:leapodcasts@gmail.com).

Till next time analysts keep talking.