

Alexander Gulde - Analyst Work is Police Work

Mindy: [00:00:00] Welcome to Analyst Talk with Jason Elder. It's like coffee with an analyst, or it could be whiskey with an analyst, reading a spreadsheet, linking crime events, identifying a series, and getting the latest scoop on association news and training. So please don't beat that analyst and join us as we define the law enforcement analysis profession, one episode at a time.

Alex: Thank

Jason: you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason Elder, and today our guest has 13 years of law enforcement analysis experience. He's had positions with both the county and state in Florida. He is currently the elections committee chair for IALEA, and every once in a while he gives us at the podcast an IALEA update.

He holds three master's degrees. He's the German boy who made his way to Florida via Montana. Please welcome Alexander Gulde. Alexander, how we doing? Hey

Alex: Jason, doing well. How are you today?

Jason: I am doing very well. This is a fellow [00:01:00] Tallahasseean and we could be doing this in person, but I guess it's just it's a lot easier just to do this , over Teams,

but , I guess before we get too far, I just wanted to quickly have you go through How you made it to the States, because , as we talked in the prep call here, you were born and raised in Germany.

Alex: Yeah, I grew up in a, in a small Bavarian village, not unlike what you might see or imagine.

If you've ever been to, to Epcot or so. But I started college , in Germany, studying political science. And I heard about the University of Montana through. a professor of mine and decide, Hey, it would be interesting , to go to Montana for a year, study abroad, and then come back to Germany, finish my studies in Munich, and then become a diplomat in the German foreign service or something along those lines, which is what I originally had intended.

And that certainly did not happen. I came to the States in May 1999. I attended a college in Missoula, Montana at the university of Montana. [00:02:00] And

out of that year turn became finishing my undergraduate degree. And while I was doing that, I met my now wife and the rest, as they sometimes say, is history. Yeah.

Jason: So, so how different was Montana as compared to

Alex: Germany for you? So in many aspects, it was actually pretty similar. The weather is not dissimilar, at least where I, where I grew up. I I grew up in the mountains, in Bavaria or in the foothills of the Alps, I guess is the proper term, but I could ski since I could walk.

I was certainly used to cold weather and snow. So in that regard, Montana was very similar. In other matters, Montana was extremely different. I mean, they call it Big Sky Country for a reason, and it is. The, the magnitude, the scope, the scale of the place is, is hard to describe if, you never see, if you've never seen it and it is a truly magical place.

All right. Good deal. All

Jason: right. So then how did you discover the law [00:03:00] enforcement analysis profession?

Alex: So I fell into this like many of us sort of by accident. I started my career working for the Montana legislature. My first quote unquote real professional post college job was as a performance auditor, and my job there was to look at government programs to see if they work efficiently and effectively and meet legislative intent.

I only did that for about a year. Then we moved to Florida. My wife is from Florida. That's where the Florida Connection comes in. And I worked briefly for Broward County as a management budget analyst using some of the same analytical skill sets. Again, looking for efficiencies, looking for effectiveness, helping the county run.

The business of governing the way it ought to be. And then we quickly relocated from Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, South Florida to Tallahassee so that my wife could go back to school and to law school specifically. And then I worked for the Florida legislature. That was the first job that I could get.

And again. Doing the same thing, doing research analysis on legislative [00:04:00] programs, legislative efforts. So I had a pretty solid research and analysis background, again, looking for efficiencies, effectiveness, and that's

what connected me. Well, this is where I was recruited into Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

They were looking for somebody who could help them write their policies and procedures who had an understanding of some of the deeper. Aspects of how to make things work and tick. So this was a little bit of an experiment and a chance they took on me. They knew I could write and they knew I could do sort of strategic analysis and, and research analysis.

And that's what they were looking for. And they brought me on as a policy and planning analyst to help them with policy development, with accreditation, and a number of other things that they needed. And this also included for me to then work on strategic intelligence issues over time. So in about like, like in late December 2006, I joined the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's division.

of law enforcement as an analyst, [00:05:00] and I worked with them for almost seven years on a variety of different things, but that's where I fell into the role of being a law enforcement analyst. I was a law enforcement planner. I was an analyst. I worked on policy planning issues. I worked on strategic intel things.

I wrote a grant that funded the first intel shop that we had at the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission that was then run by, by other folks. So that, that's something I'm fairly proud of. So I was always sort of at that slightly elevated level, looking a little bit above the, the tactical and operational things, but that's how I started.

Yeah.

Jason: So it's interesting your perspective because. It's bureaucracies and efficiency do not go hand in hand, so I, and it's almost a too easy, low hanging fruit to make a joke about the state of Florida government and probably some of the things that you're trying to do to make more efficient.

But as [00:06:00] a real question, when you start when you first joined , the Florida legislature. How either effective or ineffective would you rate it during your time in that position? So

Alex: the, the particular shop that I worked for is the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

And these are some of the smartest people I have ever had the privilege of working with. These are folks who specialize in public policy across the entire spectrum, right? So from. The business of government to healthcare services to criminal justice to business development, tourism, and so on.

You'll find some really interesting folks there. And their role is to advise the legislature and the legislators through their research to tell them what is feasible and what is possible. I think the research. Many instances speaks for itself. The challenge is what does the target audience do with that [00:07:00] information?

And I think that's where I'll have , to leave that particular question. I know the work is, is outstanding and it is above reproach. These are, these are like really highly educated people who have a lot of understanding and deep understanding of public policy issues affecting the life of every Floridian and.

They provide good advice to the legislature.

Jason: , part of the show, I, what I'm always curious to know is what people did before they were analysts, and then obviously what they do after they become an analyst and leave the profession. But from your point of view, and what you just described to me one of the challenges, particularly civilian analysts have, is , the communication.

Barriers at times trying to get their point across and so in that scenario, what you just described there. Yeah, the analysis, the product is good, but convincing people to do something is a little bit of a

Alex: different story. Absolutely. And I [00:08:00] mean, I've had the opportunity to testify before different legislative committees on the work that I produced, that I worked on.

And sometimes the audience will be really engaged. They would ask a lot of questions and sometimes they would barely look at you. And, and and you, sometimes that's, that's difficult to deal with, right? Yeah.

Jason: Now is, is, is that timed? Like, are you under a time limit when

Alex: you're testifying there?

So it's not like public testimony where that is often limited, right? So you were on the agenda for a committee and the committee staff will allocate you some time. They'll, they'll often say, how much time do you need? Will 10 minutes be

enough? Will be 15 minutes be enough. And then you just have to, this is not dissimilar.

This is a skillset that is applicable to virtually anybody who does oral briefings to command staff or to the public, or so you have to consider how much time do I have and how do I structure my message? So that's, that's, that's. Pretty applicable across the board, whether [00:09:00] you're talking to, to your agency leadership, to the legislature, to a public committee, or some or any variation thereof.

All

Jason: right. So then with the fish and wildlife, then, I mean. Is I guess at what point in time do you feel that you really started to put on the analyst

Alex: hat? So I would say that was probably around 2010. So the original work that I was brought on for was to, to help them with policy development and accreditation.

And I'm, I'm, I'm pleased to say that I was part of the team that helped Fish and Wildlife, Division of Law Enforcement earn its initial accreditation in 2009. So this is Florida State Accreditation CFA it's a fairly heavy lift for, for state agencies to do and I'm, I'm, I'm pretty pleased with, with doing that.

And so once we accomplished that leadership said, okay, what else can we do and how can we grow and develop? I had an opportunity to attend what is called [00:10:00] the Florida Law Enforcement Analyst Academy, there's a program run, run at FDLE, this was originally grant funded post 9 11, and the idea was to train Florida law enforcement analysts from state and local agencies on sort of the same set of basic elements for Law enforcement analysis, crime analysis, intel analysis, different techniques.

And so I had a chance to attend the academy in 2010. I'm, I'm a, I'm a graduate June, 2010 graduate of, of the analyst academy. And that's where I sort of acquired the, the skill sets. To be a law enforcement analyst in Florida and, and following that, I had an opportunity to then work in my role at Fish and Wildlife in various analytical roles that we would probably more traditionally associate with being a law enforcement analyst.

All right, good.

Jason: And so this brings us to the analyst badge story. And for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge story is [00:11:00] the crew to find in case a project. that an analyst works. And so for you, it's during your time here at Fish and Wildlife, it's around 2011, and a major administrative change is about to happen with

Alex: that deal.

Correct. So if you have any familiarity with Florida state law enforcement, it is extremely fragmented. There's a number of states that basically have The highway patrol and then another investigative agency and, and, and that's about it. That's not the case in Florida. Many, many state government agencies have a law enforcement arm.

Some of them are fairly small. And the legislature. I think in 2010 passed a, a bill that required the state law enforcement community to study whether there could be any efficiencies gained by consolidating, consolidating different law enforcement agencies in Florida [00:12:00] that work in similar or adjacent fields.

So for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement, That is the big natural resource law enforcement agency in Florida. And then you had the Department of Environmental Protection that had the Florida Park Police as a division of it. And then you have the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services that also has and still to this day has an Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement, but they had a small component of Wildfire investigators and investigators that dealt with commercial aquaculture.

So fairly specialized, but there was significant overlap with what was regulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. So the premise there was to study and see if there was an opportunity to consolidate some or all of these elements in one agency for efficiencies and effectiveness.

The legislature appointed a committee. I was the [00:13:00] staff analyst for that committee. And we did some really interesting work to develop and some recommendations to see whether we could consolidate these things and generate some effective efficiencies in doing so. So we worked through this. This was a fairly heavy lift.

I mean, this is what I would consider serious management analysis or administrative analysis as defined in the IACA textbook. But we're looking at staffing roles at regional distribution of, of personnel at management structures

and so on. And what we were able to do, this was the recommendation and the legislature then actually picked that up and, and, and made that happen in, in 2012, I believe is when the law passed, they merged.

The entire division of law enforcement of the Florida Park Police, which provided law enforcement services in Florida state parks into the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's division of law enforcement, which [00:14:00] patrolled all other natural Areas in Florida, other than state parks, and then took about 20 law enforcement officers who worked for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, who had fairly specialized roles investigative roles, and also merged them into the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Law Enforcement.

So, the result of that was that we were able to generate an approximate 10 percent increase of available. Capacity in, in terms of, of, of being able to have boots on the ground, I guess was the term that we always used back then half patrol capacity increased by approximately 10%.

The other thing that was really important to us at the time was that nobody who didn't want to move or leave their position had to move as a result of. These changes that were made in Tallahassee, if you've ever worked in and around state government it's always the capital versus the field. Right.

And, and, and, and so this was an important aspect [00:15:00] that we wanted to make sure that nobody who worked somewhere in South Florida or in central Florida, who was affected by this merger would have to. Pack up and move their family to get to some other position. So we were able to, to, to make that happen, that nobody had to move as a result of that.

And then we were able to generate some additional efficiencies in terms of training, professional oversight, think internal affairs think IT delivery services, some of the infrastructure and administrative overhead. We were able to merge systems and to reduce some Duplications that existed and were able to save quite a bit of money as part of that and and so to me that was a a a chance to really show some of my analytical skills and to also communicate what we were trying to to accomplish.

In forms of briefings, in forms of discussions, in forms of engagement with command staff, but also the, the folks that were affected by it to a certain extent, once we were ready to roll this, this project out.[00:16:00] But I think this is one of those examples where we were able to actually provide good service to the citizens of Florida, and I really cut.

My teeth and some analytical skills doing that particular product. I'm fairly proud of that. Actually. Yeah, I appreciate

Jason: you looking out for the common man and woman not forcing them to move. So what I'm thinking about just from my perspective as an analyst, it's administrative analysis.

And what were some sources, what were some data that you were crunching? Because that's probably different from what most analysts would

Alex: study. So one of the, the first things that we had to do was to get, actually get an understanding of the different jurisdictions.

So without trying to get into too much detail, but you have wildlife management areas that are managed for, as the name implies, the wildlife that lives there and exists there, then you have. State forests that are managed among other things for [00:17:00] recreation, but also managed for the timber and, and, and the timber that's there.

And then you have state parks that are managed very differently. Well, the reality is when, and this is what we found out when we started actually mapping this. So we had, we had a beautiful. Maps generated by our GIS specialists that showed us the overlap of these areas. And there were many places in Florida where you have a state park within a state forest that is also adjacent or overlapping with a wildlife management area.

And that was what helped us make that point that you had parcels of land in, in the state of Florida that were subject to three different law enforcement agency jurisdictions. And once we were able to actually, show that graphically by, by putting these maps up was like, huh, there's a lot of opportunities to make that work and then you have to start looking at, okay, how do our administrative regions run.

This may not be a huge surprise to [00:18:00] anybody who's been around Florida for a while, but while every agency is divvies up Florida in six or seven administrative regions, most of these regions differ from agency to agency. So one region may include region two is for most agencies as Tallahassee and surrounding counties, but region two for FDLE may look different than region two for another agency and so on, because they add a county here or remove a county there and so on.

So these were some, some interesting data sets that we had to look at. How do these things align? How do they differ? How would, and then we had to look, for example, at personnel at spans of control. How many people does a Lieutenant in FWC supervised versus a lieutenant in the park police. How would we restructure these spans of control to make sure that that we had sort of equal and not just equal but also equitable distribution of workload in [00:19:00] some of these areas.

If somebody all of a sudden also inherited a state park as part of their responsibilities. So these were, these were some, this sounds like small decisions, but in, in context, they were interesting because if you made a mistake on one or the other that could affect the final product and it would be hard to reroll that or go back and, and, and, and fix it if you didn't do this right in, in, in one of the earlier steps, if that makes sense.

Jason: Yeah. So, so the areas that had. Three different law enforcement agencies in them when the merger happened, did they still continue to have three different functions in, in there? Or was that something where the, the maybe one group was now responsible for

Alex: that? So, so you would still have the different agencies.

So the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission would still manage the. Wildlife management area, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services [00:20:00] would still be responsible for management of the state forest, and the Florida Park Service would still be responsible for managing the park. But law enforcement services for any of these areas were provided by one agency, and that was the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Division of Law Enforcement.

Jason: And so then, how were you able to measure success?

Alex: So we defined success loosely in the sense of, because we weren't quite sure how this would, how this would work out. But one of the things that we were able to quantify was really sort of the savings in, in, in cost and the increase. We, we knew that there, we would be able to, and I don't remember the exact numbers at this point, but we would, we would be able to say, okay, there are a certain number of, positions that we will be able to turn back into patrol positions because FWC, for example, had a [00:21:00] fairly large training unit and we looked at, okay, so with these four lieutenants responsible for training, will they be able to accommodate another 160 full time equivalent

positions coming in, or do we need to attach another training lieutenant or two to that particular squad?

And DEP, for example, had two or three people responsible for training, where, whereas agriculture didn't have anybody assigned to that particular group that we were looking at. So, we were able to make this decision, and don't quote me on the exact numbers, but just as an example, All right. So we'll DEP has three people assigned to law enforcement training.

FWC already has four. We only need one of those positions from DEP to continue working with training, which allowed us to take these other two positions and put them into the field. Now, this sounds like we were telling people who had a role and responsibility. In, in, in, in training that they were no longer [00:22:00] doing this kind of work and that they had to go somewhere else.

And as I was saying before, nobody had to leave a position that they didn't want to. We were able to manage this and there was an element of luck there as well. We were able to manage that through regular attrition. Retirements and just people moving around in an agency. So we were able to, to measure it that way by saying it's like we took all these agencies, put them together and were able to dedicate 90 additional positions to providing patrol services across the state of Florida, for example.

And that was, that was one way where we would measure success. Yeah,

Jason: that is interesting. People that were against the merger, what was some pushback that

Alex: you were getting? So we didn't hear, I mean, people don't like change. And so one of the things that we wanted to make sure that we managed was what I guess now I call sort of operational security and rumor intelligence.

We have to make sure that we didn't let anything slip that wasn't completely set in stone [00:23:00] already so that people wouldn't. Talk about it's like, Oh, do you hear what they're doing in Tallahassee? Now they're moving us all over the place just because they saw like a a draft of an org chart that wasn't finished or something along those lines.

So we, we had to be really mindful of that. I think the most interesting and poignant point I've ever heard was from a park police officer. Who left shortly after the merger. And I knew him socially as well. And I asked him, so why are

you leaving? And he said, well, if I wanted to be a fish and wildlife officer, I would have become one at the beginning of my career.

So this was a personal choice for, for him. So that was And that was some pushback. I'm sure there were some others that said, Oh, well, I, I wanted to be a park police officer. And that's why I joined DEP. Now I have to learn all those fish and wildlife regulations on top of, of the role that I have.

So, because it did expand responsibilities for some of these officers. So those were some of the pushback may not [00:24:00] be quite the right word, but these were voices that came up.

Jason: you recommended Jessica Phohl for the program. So we, we I talked with her is again, Florida Fish and Wildlife and a law enforcement analyst within that, that division.

So it's obviously Florida is that. Fish and wildlife has a bigger role in Florida than it does in most states.

Alex: So fun trivia fact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Law Enforcement is the largest natural resource law enforcement agency in the United States and possibly in the world.

We have more officers than I think even the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So,

Jason: all right. Well, hey let's, let's move on then. Cause I do want to get into some of your other roles here as you move away from fish and wildlife and get [00:25:00] into more under. The guys of the Florida Department

Alex: of Law Enforcement.

Yeah. So the reason why I left Fish and Wildlife is, is probably a reason that other analysts , can recognize as well. If you are a. Non sworn or civilian in a in an agency that is under sworn leadership. Sometimes there are very few opportunities for you to grow, especially if you want to maybe become a supervisor or so.

And so I was looking around and. There were no opportunities for me at FWC in the division of law enforcement. So I stayed at FWC for another four years, but I switched division. So I left law enforcement for a while and I worked in a, in another division as a supervisor dealing with human wildlife conflict.

So I had a biologist reporting to me and we provided. Education, outreach, and technical assistance on human wildlife conflict [00:26:00] issues throughout the state of Florida. So thank nuisance wildlife hotline. So bears, alligators, coyotes, various snakes and birds, people Would call about them and my team and I, we would respond to these as, as appropriate and, and manage them.

So they could call center, as I said I did that for about four years, but I really missed working in law enforcement and there were no opportunities at FWC at the time. And so I decided to do something different, and I basically left the job without having something fully lined up, knowing that there were some things in the works, I knew I had some opportunities at FDLE, and the first opportunity that came up was working as a research and training specialist in some opportunities at FDLE, and the first opportunity that came up was working as a research and something fully lined up, knowing that there were some things in the works, I knew I had some opportunities at FDLE, and the first opportunity that came up was working as a research and And so I decided to do something different, and I basically left the job without having the Bureau of Curriculum Development where I worked on developing the textbook about every one or two years, the textbook for basic recruits in law enforcement gets updated or revised.

And so [00:27:00] I worked , on the team for a hot minute and then got into accreditation at FW at FDLE. And it was in that role only for about a year before the. Training director for the analyst training programs. Remember that, that law enforcement analyst academy that I mentioned earlier the position to run all these training programs became open.

And because I was a certified analyst, I was a certified instructor. I, I, I had all the basic requirements and it made sense for FDLE leadership at the time to choose somebody who was a little bit of an outsider because I, Hadn't spent a lot of time at FDLE before and so it was a chance to have a new perspective, different perspective in that role.

And, and I, I really enjoyed that opportunity. So that is a

Jason: little bit serendipitous. It sounds like you were just there just at the right time from the sounds of it. Now, had you done much training? Up

Alex: until [00:28:00] that point. So as part of my role starting at FWC Division of Law Enforcement, at some point I went through the instructor development training program and became certified in Florida.

And I would do occasional training at our, training academy on things like policy development and ethics, no super heavy lifts. I also had some responsibility for a, a, a software program that we use to deliver policy documents to the members. So I would do some training on that. Nothing, nothing super involved at this point.

And then I did quite a bit of training in that non law enforcement role, maybe not so much training, but a lot of outreach speaking to community groups being the wildlife official from Tallahassee traveling the state and talking about why you shouldn't let your cat out cats outdoors or something along those lines.

So I had a lot of public engagement, even if it wasn't necessarily always teaching or instructing in that [00:29:00] traditional sense, but it certainly wasn't something that I, I, I struggled with. I, I enjoy. Talking and teaching and connecting with an audience.

Amanda: Hi there. I'm Amanda Bruner, president of the Carolinas Crime Analysis Association, and I'm thrilled to invite you to our upcoming training conference in the historically rich city of Charleston, South Carolina. Join us from February 27th through March 1st for an immersive experience aimed at honing the skills of crime and intelligence analysts in both the public and private sectors.

With over 125 attendees expected, it's a prime opportunity to learn and network with other professionals. We are proud to announce that Dr. Rachel Santos, author of Crime Analysis with Crime Mapping, will be our keynote speaker. Plus, don't miss masterclasses hosted by renowned experts like Dr. Eric Pisa.

Alex: Charlie Giberti and NW3C. But that's not all. We have a student poster session, proctored IACA exams, and more. [00:30:00] And guess what? Your registration includes two full conference days plus the master classes. And it's not just about learning. It's about creating lasting memories. So enjoy lunch on us, indulge at our ice cream social, and join in our networking events, including ghost tours.

Registration is a steal at 225 for members and 275 for non members. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity. Join us for a conference that combines professional development with a touch of Southern charm. I look forward to seeing y'all in Charleston. Register today at CarolinasCrimeAnalysis.org.

That's CarolinasCrimeAnalysis.org.

Michele: This is Michelle Snow and just want you to remember to build trust with integrity.

Alex: So the certification

Jason: to be a law enforcement instructor, what are those

Alex: involved with that? So in many states do this, they do this through their post set up. Usually the, . Their body that certifies [00:31:00] police officers. And in Florida, it's the same approach. It's the criminal justice standards and training commission.

They require you to complete, I think it's at least a 64 hour training course. And there's a lot of hands on elements. Associated with this particular course, you learn how to connect with adult audiences because it's usually adult education. This is not we're not talking college level, but really, how do you teach and connect in a vocational environment?

And so then you complete that training course. You need to pass it both. There's a. a teach back component and a written exam. And then, once you have that, in order to actually become certified, an agency needs to hold your certification or your application, basically, and then you need to teach on behalf of that of that agency.

And you need to have somebody else evaluate your teaching effort. Usually that's done through, you know student surveys and so on that. Did [00:32:00] you learn something? Was the instructor qualified? Did you have enough breaks? Did the room work? And so on. Yeah. And then based on that the CJSTC evaluates whether you are ready to be a instructor and then issues you that, that certificate.

Jason: Yeah. 'cause yeah, I, I did mention that you had three master's degrees in the intro, but I forgot that you actually have four certifications as well. So ,

Alex: yes, I do. . Yeah,

Jason: so you have the, as mentioned, the instructor certification, but then you have the law enforcement planner and then the Florida Law Enforcement Analyst Certification, and then you recently in 2021, you got the IALEA Law Enforcement

Alex: Analyst Certification.

Correct. Because I love having extra letters after my name.

Jason: Can't fit it all on your name tag. No. All right.

Alex: Good deal. So then when you

Jason: look back at your time then [00:33:00] running the training program there for law enforcement. Yeah. Analysts, what, what sticks out or what, what stories do you like to tell? What what do you, what do you think you accomplished during your time?

Alex: So one of the overarching elements of my time this was during, during the pandemic, during lockdown. So we had to make some adjustments for some existing courses and, and find ways to accommodate our time going from a classroom environment to working remote, learning. Different adaptive technologies, learning how to use teams at this point.

Most all of us are somewhat comfortable with zoom, with, with teams, with the different platforms while that wasn't the case then we had to, we had to figure out how to make these things work. There were a lot of compatibility issues. So those were some challenging times. And I had an academy class.

So the academy is, is a six week program. Delivered over the course of six months and you once once a month you come [00:34:00] usually to Tallahassee But sometimes we deliver it in other locations as well You come to a location for a week at a time and then you have different instructors teaching on different topics and You are constantly being evaluated.

You're you're taking tests. You're you're writing Sample intelligence products or, or analytical products. And you also have to complete a capstone element that has changed a little bit over the years, but when I went through it and when I was running it it was a strategic assessment on a topic of your choice.

Usually people would choose something that was of benefit to their agency, a project that I always explained it as. Take a project that you wish you had time to do because we'll help you as part of the academy to find the time to work on this project. And, and, and so, and some people were able to do this.

Others came into the program with a fairly specific directions from their leadership to work on a, on a, on a [00:35:00] project. And then others wouldn't necessarily have an idea on what to do. And so we would do some brainstorming and help them develop a. A good topic and so we, we had all

kinds of topics covering all of the analytical disciplines from staffing analysis to patrol zone mapping to threat assessments for special events to.

I mean, whatever you can imagine somebody would do a strategic assessment and there was some really creative and interesting projects out there.

Jason: All right. Well, I just heard recently that Arizona is creating their own law enforcement analysis program with similar to what is already been established in Florida.

So that is what's the saying? Yeah. The invitation is the best form of

Alex: flattery. That's exactly right. . So, they met with my with the Bureau Chief, that's Chris Johnson, who's the, the Chief of Professional Development [00:36:00] at FDLE, and my successor, Kyle Christensen, who, who took over that role from me, and Arizona visited, looked at our curriculum and our approach here in Florida, and I think Kyle actually traveled out to Arizona, and I think they've delivered their first training under their academy by now, if I'm not mistaken.

Jason: And you mentioned in the prep call that you're thinking that. The Florida program has over a thousand analysts. Is that correct?

Alex: So I don't know if we had a thousand yet, but I think we're getting pretty close.

And so impressive. And so, I mean, the program started, the charter class, I think, ran in 2003, and, generally speaking, we try to do two classes a year, and so there's been a few years where that didn't quite work out, or there has been a little bit of delay. I wish I could remember What class is currently running?

I have a feeling maybe in the low thirties somewhere, the class number. And when I [00:37:00] was leaving the certificate numbers that we were awarding were in the 700 somethings. So I, and that was, that was almost, it was almost three years ago. Two and a half years ago, so no,

Jason: it's a, it's a wonderful program and the networking alone, you go through, spend all this time, have that cohort established and then you go back to the office and then you always have those people from your class.

To lean in on

Alex: whenever you need them and that's absolutely right correct i mean not everybody i was that was in my class now granted we're talking this is 13 almost 14 years ago it's still in the profession they have moved on they've promoted they've they've they've they've left the state done other things.

But there are several that I'm in contact with to this day and that I actually work with fairly closely now at FDLE and that is a bond that is hard to break. I mean, because this is a very intense time to go through the Analyst Academy and anybody who's [00:38:00] listening to this and, and who has gone through it will know what I'm saying because this is You're doing this on top of, of everything else that you have going on, and it doesn't matter whether you're in town for this or if you're traveling for it, your job doesn't stop, your life doesn't stop, and this is intense training.

This is not just you sit down and let it wash over you. You have to engage, you have to, you have to almost produce the idea is that you maintain a high grade point average. You need to have 80 percent across the board in order to pass and be able to claim that you have been certified. So this is not an easy thing to do.

Yeah, I get that. That's

Jason: a good program. Very good. So let's just finish up to where you. Are now, cause you're still with FDLE and you are now a strategic intelligence analyst. So what types of fun things are you into these days?

Alex: So I'm a Intel analyst in the Florida Fusion Center. So [00:39:00] we are all hazards, all crimes fusion center.

But I work in a strategic intelligence unit where we conduct a lot of networking across. The different agencies that are part of our Fusion Center. So a lot of our partner agencies are not traditional law enforcement agencies. We partner with the Department of Health, with emergency management, with juvenile justice, and then with a number of federal agencies across the board.

We are co located or rather The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI have, have analysts co located with us, and we, we work very closely with them across different areas, whether we're talking counterterrorism narcotics gang issues, some cyber issues. So whatever whatever the, the topic area might be, we're trying to cover it all.

And in my unit, again we're, we're trying to take a look at it from a more strategic, higher level perspective. So my colleagues and I, we don't necessarily

work cases. We look at trends, [00:40:00] we look at developments. We're trying to look ahead and into the future and try to, to help agency and our partners be prepared for what might be coming down the pike.

And for me, I work in domestic security and counter terrorism. Which sometimes feels like a catch all for everything else that is not captured in the other more defined fields. Yeah. So,

Jason: is there any, any trends that you're allowed to talk about at this

Alex: point? Well, you watch the news, you see a lot of what's going on.

There's sadly a lot of violence that isn't always a, isn't always a clear reason as to why it's happening. The Israel Hamas conflict has certainly elevated our threat picture, and this is not something that, that you wouldn't know if you were watching the news. A lot of threats against Jewish houses of, of, of worship, not just in Florida, but across the country.

Also against Muslim houses of worships of course, but the numbers aren't quite the same. So there's, [00:41:00] there's certainly a lot happening. So

Jason: from your perspective as, as an analyst the you obviously have open source. Yes. In terms of a resource there. But I'm always, I'm always curious about maybe, More closed sources, or I, I always feel that maybe not as much is written and documented as it was I remember talking with former military or former CIA, FBI analysts, and , they were just reading.

Federal report after federal report after federal report, and I, I feel that sometimes at the state and local level for, for analysts that there may not be as much documented as. They see at

Alex: the federal level. So, yeah, I think there's, there's some, this is an interesting conversation to have one of the, the challenges that, that we might have at the state level.

And [00:42:00] is that it's harder for us to direct collections the CIA or the FBI, any of those big Intel intelligence community agencies, they have dedicated collection efforts. They have people whose job it is to actively generate intelligence. To, to identify those things and then feed it back to the analyst to, to, to sort through that.

And I don't think, I mean, I, this is not something that, that, that to my knowledge, most state agencies have. Intelligence, well, Information that that may become intelligence is often generated almost as a byproduct because we don't have collectors. We have agents and investigators that work in the field, and they are certainly informed of what our standing information needs might be.

And they work their cases, and if they come across something that might be of interest to analysts, then they hopefully pass it along. But. I feel that as an analyst myself, I often have [00:43:00] to be my own collector and there are some limits to what I can do sitting behind my desk, if that makes sense. It does.

It

Jason: does. And I think we talked a little bit about this on the prep call is I think American law enforcement is still pretty reactive, right? Basically the call for service. Or discovering the crime itself leads to a lot of the work that law enforcement does. And the idea of the intelligence led policing model it's, it's still, while it's a popular phrase, it's not necessarily there's, there's very few agencies actually doing it to where, They're being actually proactive and not reactive.

Alex: I think that's true. I think the, maybe I'll, I'll get some, some flack for this from the audience, but my read on this is that, that for many agencies, the statement, we are an intelligence [00:44:00] policing agency. It's an aspirational statement rather than a descriptive statement. , and I think that's, that's, that's okay.

The reality just is that there's, there's limited resources and when a chief. Or a law enforcement executive is asked to, to deliver results to the community. They tend to focus on putting boots on the ground, adding patrol capacity before they add analytical capacity. Because that's something real and that's measurable where they can say, it's like, Hey, I added five additional patrol officers to deal with this particular issue.

And I'm not saying this is wrong. This is also a way to, to deal with, with crime, but it just gives you the opportunity to, to react faster rather than anticipate what might be coming. No,

Jason: I think it's I just envision that you, you can put so many resources in so many different spots and, but you still have to make sure that the, the calls are being answered in a timely manner.

[00:45:00] And it just takes one case for the media to run with that. The police arrived too late and somebody suffered for it, for that to be the, the new narrative there and it's back to being reactive type of thing.

Alex: And that's exactly right. And I don't, I don't fault any agency for, for, for doing this.

It's just the reality of, of, of the field that we are in. Some larger agencies may be able to dedicate more resources to and analytical component and and some do really, really well. I'm actually quite impressed when I look at at what we're seeing with the real time crime centers that that have been emerging over the last few years.

They sort of bridge that gap a little bit between what. Patrol might need in terms of, of being super effective and, and what an analytical component is. Now, real time crime centers to me are still extremely tactical. They're very focused on providing services right in that moment to patrol officers, and I do think they [00:46:00] probably make quite a quite a difference.

But I also think that the data that they generate as part of their work might be a very rich field for. More strategically minded analysts or data analysts to, to start digging in there and seeing some patterns that might not be readily apparent to those that are just responding to call from call to call to call and not necessarily have the time or the wherewithal to sit back for a second and see that bigger picture.

Yeah,

Jason: it's also tough too, because all those things that we're talking about tactical, whether it's answering a call, making a rest, those are all stats. Those are all something that you can put in a report, you can, you can trend, , you show , here's what you want to know what we're doing.

This is what we're doing. , whereas when you, you kind of talk about future planning or being proactive, That can be difficult to sometimes quantify.

Alex: Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, there's, there's no doubt. I mean, this is, [00:47:00] it's, it's difficult to sometimes show the value of strategic intelligence work when I can't attach a concrete example of what success might look like, well, nothing happened.

So is that because we were able to provide superior analytical services that helped guide decision making or nothing happened because nothing happened. So these are, these are some genuine questions and that, that can be hard , to communicate. I think I do, I do want to

Jason: get into moving on a little bit.

I do want to talk a little bit about. Education. We Mindy Duong and I, in the year end episode got into talking about training versus education and Mindy had put together a, Got a bunch of feedback on the idea of is a master's degree necessary and it's probably a [00:48:00] loaded question or maybe not loaded, but I didn't want to get your perspective on on that.

I'm joking that you really do have three master's degrees and you really do have four certifications, but I guess

Alex: those

Jason: aren't true, but I just and. From, from your perspective, given all what you've seen and part of the planning process and, and everything else, what's your perspective on this

Alex: idea?

So I don't, really think that education hurts anybody in the sense of having a master's degree is, is detrimental to your career prospects. I don't think that's the case ever, but before, you know future graduates rush out to, to earn a master's degree immediately following their, their bachelor's degree hold and, and consider that for a second.

Everybody's decision is a little bit, and, and, and path is a little bit different. I earned my first master's degree immediately following my, my undergraduate degree, because this was [00:49:00] 2001, there was a recession and nobody was hiring a Political science graduate from the University of Montana who spoke with an accent.

So it felt like there was, there was no opportunity for me to get my foot in the door anywhere. So I was very fortunate enough to be able to, and I was only able to go to graduate school at that point because I was able to secure a graduate assistantship, which covered my tuition or it was a tuition waiver.

And I got a small stipend to, to work and, and, and teach as part of my graduate education. So I did a master's degree in political science at the University of Montana following, immediately following my, my undergraduate degree. And while I was doing that, I was able to then secure a position with the, with the Montana legislature.

I wouldn't have been able to do that without that master's degree because that was a critical element that helped me secure that particular job. Again individual mileage may, may vary. So this was the path for me. And then this is one of the perks of working in [00:50:00] Florida working for Florida state government.

You can take as a state employee up to six credits a semester, a semester for free at any of the state colleges or universities or community colleges. So this is not restricted to graduate classes. You can also do undergraduate classes. And so over the course of, of my career working for the state of Florida, I was able to Earn a master's in environmental engineering because I was interested in it and I was able to earn a master's in criminal justice because I felt that it helped me grow in my, in my chosen profession because there were elements of the criminal justice field that I had not had prior exposure to, and I may not ever have.

Like real life exposure to probably won't ever work in, in a prison or , in a probation office, but those are elements that I didn't know about before studying for my master's in criminal justice. So that's how that came about too. So to me, those are valuable and I [00:51:00] think they make me a better analyst because.

In graduate school, you write a lot, and this is what I do as a strategic Intel analyst. I write a lot, and the only way you get better at writing is by writing. Yeah, and so, so to make a very long story short, this is where having a master's degree can be helpful. Because the process of going through graduate education forces you to become a better writer, oftentimes, depending on your discipline.

But certainly in our field where we are talking social sciences that is our primary medium. And if you work in Intel analysis in particular, chances are you're going to be writing a lot and you will be evaluated on how well you do that. Well, what about the

Jason: certifications? What do you, what do you think was your, your return on investment

Alex: with them?

So when I started as an analyst for Fish and Wildlife, which is traditionally, which is admittedly a rather [00:52:00] conservative organization, analysts were not necessarily regarded as full professionals there, but rather as administrative support staff. And I've seen the attitude change both at that agency and at other agencies over the years.

And if you've spent any time around me, you will have heard me say in a training class or in conversation that analytical work is police work. And I stand by that and I will, that is a hill that I will die on. But I think we've moved a really long way in that regard to, to, to, to have that kind of, of recognition and acceptance within the law enforcement community at large.

Again, individual experiences may vary a little bit but that's certainly what I've had the chance to observe. So certifications to me allowed me to Sort of make that point that I am a professional as assessed by an external body who tested me, who evaluated me and my skill [00:53:00] sets and said we are we, we are okay with, with awarding this credential to this person and, and, and lending.

Our association's credibility to, to that person's work product and so on. So that's, that's what that means to me. It helps me stand out as a professional, not so much in comparison to other analysts, but rather as a representative to the people I interact with. When you, when you testify in court, sometimes they may ask you, what is your training?

What is your experience? What is your background? This is one of the things that I can say. , I am a. Criminal intelligence, a certified analyst certified by the international association of law enforcement intelligence analysts. And I think that's a cool thing. Yeah.

Jason: That's interesting.

There's 17, 000 law enforcement agencies in this country, and a lot of them have analysts, and they're all a little bit on an island in terms of they're free to do whatever they wish. And from your perspective, you've [00:54:00] seen a lot to where the analysts is, Is doing, is doing a lot of clerical work and then you see different other areas where the analyst is, is really having a big impact on the organization and doing real analysis.

Alex: I do think that's, that's true. And I mean, some of it has to do with how analysts were recruited in, especially at the state and local level when, when. The profession emerged oftentimes analysts were recruited from existing staff within the agency. So when you're looking around, there's certainly a generation

of, of senior analysts who started their careers by being duty officers, by being administrative assistants and to then moved into these analytical roles over time, because that that's what the roles were.

So if you wanted to work for police. Then there were three pathways, right? Basically, either you became a police officer or a [00:55:00] deputy, or you became a duty officer, a dispatcher, or you worked as a, as a record specialist or administrative specialist and so on. So when the analytical profession started to emerge and agencies started to figure out, okay, who do we assign to these roles?

You, you had , a cadre of people established within the agency already that were trusted and, and, and maybe had the abilities to jump into those roles. So the early generations of analysts came from administrative or operational support roles. Whereas when we're looking at analysts now and supervisors now at FDLE, for example, but many other agencies, there's a number of civilian analysts, supervisors who came up, who came up through the ranks as analysts and have never really done anything else.

So they weren't duty officers or dispatchers, but have always worked in an analytical role and sort of established a analytical. Career path, [00:56:00] and I think that has certainly helped with credibility with professionalization and with sort of changing of attitudes towards us as a profession.

So I think we've, we've come a long way, but I'm sure there's still agencies out there who do think of the analysts as. Administrative support rather than professional staff. All right,

Jason: let's move on then, you do some translating.

So, being from Germany, it has its perks in that, that you can do some translations into German, right?

Alex: Correct. I actually do that mostly for IACA. I'm a, I'm a member of the what is that, translation subcommittee. And, and the work comes and goes, but I've had some interesting opportunities to translate both announcements of the association, but also newsletter stories really any number of things that, that leadership had an interest in translating in multiple languages and.

So I'm one off, I think we have two other German speakers. We have, I think, two French speakers. We have a fairly big number of Spanish [00:57:00] speakers. And I think we may have one or two Portuguese. I think those are the

languages that we currently cover. But yeah, so the effort and the idea behind it is that in translating Documents of the association into other languages, we might be able to increase the international footprint of the association, help with recruitment, help with, with outreach and generate some interest.

I think there's some efforts underway to translate some of the courses, the training opportunities into other languages. I think the primary focus there is Spanish. The reality is a lot of people who speak German also speak English fairly well, certainly well enough to be able to follow a training course.

So this may not be the first priority of, of, of the association to do that. But I've also had a chance to use that skill set professionally. It was actually, Just earlier this year where I was asked to [00:58:00] translate a German court order into English to help our sex offender unit determine the appropriate classification for a sexual offender.

And that is based on a prior convictions among other things. So I had a chance to, to. Translate a court order by a German issued by German court into English. So that was, that was pretty interesting. I always thought this was be one of the, the great assets that I bring into the workplace.

And it took me almost 20 years to actually use that in a true professional setting. Oh,

Jason: yeah. Well, thank you. If you're around long enough, anything can happen, right?

Alex: Absolutely.

Jason: So before we get off the German subject, do you have a favorite German saying?

Alex: Yeah so the saying is Glück ist, wenn die Katastrophe eine Pause macht.

And that translates into you are lucky when catastrophe takes a break around you. [00:59:00] That quite eloquently and awkwardly captures sort of the German approach to, to life.

Jason: I like it. I like it. All right., one of the things, I try to get as many people from the different associations on, on the podcast as I can, but I've had a little bit of difficulty getting folks from the Aaliyah side on, on the show.

I had getting probably gotten more nose on that side of the fence than I do for most, most other associations. So And I know the nature of the beast kind of thing. You get into the Intel side of things and it probably might be better for them, their career professionally to be seen and not heard type of thing.

But I did want to just get your perspective and see if Maybe if you had some, some advice

Alex: for him. I don't know if I have any advice. I think you, you read on, on the situation [01:00:00] is, is, is probably spot on. It is interesting when you think about the, the, the different expressions of being a law enforcement, law enforcement analyst.

And I think that, that, that would probably be worth having a conversations standalone this. This notion that somebody is a pure intelligence analyst, a pure crime analyst, or in some agencies, you're filling whatever role needs to be filled at that particular moment. And you're doing anything and everything.

And I think IACA captures a lot more of these jack of all trades that are a little bit more open about what they do then ILEA, and I think we are I don't know if I can say we, but ILEA members that there might be more quote unquote pure or, or only Intel analysts and operational security keeping a low profile is certainly something that's, that's talked about in Florida.

Everything is open to public record. Anyway, you can look up how much I make with, with a quick Google search. Because that's how [01:01:00] much we believe in government in the sunshine, for example. So , there's very few things that I can't talk about now. This might be the point where I do say anything that I've said here in the podcast, on my views alone, they do not represent my agency.

I think that goes , without saying. So, so that's, that's certainly true, but so I don't necessarily have a problem talking about what we do for, for work or from an Intel analyst perspective. I'm not sharing anything that I couldn't talk about either in a court of law or on, on the capital steps.

But having said that maybe you just need to be a little bit more persistent. I don't know.

Jason: I'll see what I can do. All right, let's finish up with personal interest then. You're a reader. What book are you reading

Alex: these days? So I am currently working on a new book that I actually need to look up the title. It's a crime novel that my daughter just gave me.

I think it's called Criminal. I just got that for [01:02:00] Christmas, so I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm pretty excited about that. I just cracked the cover and it's called Criminal. It's by Karen Slaughter. So crime novel and the other thing that I'm trying to work my way through in preparation for some some training I'm trying to put together is Methods of Inquiry for Intelligence Analysis by Hank.

I think he's an Australian dude, and this is really good stuff, but it's, it's a dry read. Let's put it this way.

Jason: You got to mix it up. Exactly. I got to mix it up. All right. Very good, Alex. Well, our last segment of the show is words to the world and you can promote any idea that you wish. What are your words

Alex: to the world?

Learn the difference between equity and equality, and I think that's especially important for supervisors. Equality means providing the same resource opportunity to every individual or group of people, but equity recognizes that each person has a different, has different circumstances and may require different opportunities or [01:03:00] resources to reach an equal outcome.

I think it's really important to wrap your mind around that as, as supervisors, we want to make sure we treat everybody equal, but the important part is actually to treat everybody with equity and equitable, because not everybody requires the same approach and, and handling. And once I realized that when I was a supervisor myself that different.

Folks working for me respond differently to different approaches. I became so much better as a supervisor. My job became so much easier. So my, my encouragement to supervisors will be wrap your mind around a situational leadership and learn the difference between equity and equality. Very good.

Jason: Well, I leave every guest with you.

Give me just enough to talk bad about you later. But I do appreciate you being on the show, Alex. Thank

Alex: you so much

Jason: and you be safe.

Alex: Thank you, Jason. It was a pleasure.

Mindy: Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analysts Talk with Jason Elder. You can show your support by sharing this and other [01:04:00] episodes found on our website at www.leappodcasts.com.

Alex: leappodcasts.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 leappodcasts@gmail.com. Till next time, analysts, keep talking.