

Karie Nordland - The Record Setter

Mindy: [00:00:00] Welcome to Analysts Talk with Jason Elder. It's like coffee with an analyst, or it could be whiskey with an analyst reading a spreadsheet, linking crime events, 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 ahead time.

Jason: Thank you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason Elder, and today our guest has over seven years of law enforcement analysis experience. She spent time with the Toledo PD in Ohio and the Lakewood PD in Colorado. She holds a master's degree from Michigan State University.

Here to talk about internships in social media. Please welcome Karie Norland. Karie, how are we doing?

Karie: Good. How are you doing today, Jason?

Jason: I am doing well. Appreciate you coming on the show with me here. , just so I don't confuse the listeners, internships and social media are gonna be two different topics.

They aren't one topic as I [00:01:00] read that I got, oh, people might think that's just one topic, but so we definitely want to get into those two topics here today. So just like I start most shows, how did you discover the law enforcement analysis profession, ?

Karie: So in general, I kind of started out very young wanting to work in the law enforcement profession.

My grandpa was a deputy sheriff back in Wisconsin where I grew up, and I remember early on it was actually during the OJ Simpson trial when I was really too young to kind of understand what was going on. But I remember sitting down with my grandpa watching the trial and he would kind of explain what was going on and that.

Fascinated me from a very young age and kind of as I grew up through middle school and high school, still continue to wanna study something in criminal

justice or psychology. I actually loved the idea of forensic psychology possibly studying serial killers and kind of what made their minds tick. I was always [00:02:00] fascinated by just kind of what we didn't know and what made them wanna commit crimes.

So by the time I got to college I wanted to do kind of a combination of both, and my university didn't have that, so I kind of forged my own path of studying not only psychology, but law, society, criminal justice, and then also throwing a little forensic science in there as well to get a well-rounded field of study to try and figure out what I might wanna do from there.

And my issue was always, I knew I wanted to work in law enforcement. , but I didn't wanna be a sworn officer, so it was kind of, I don't wanna say I was, I was treading water in the criminal justice realm, trying to figure out what I could do with my areas of interest without having to go full on into the sworn field.

And once I got to Michigan State for my master's program, started to take a couple classes and do a little bit of research, but it was [00:03:00] actually during the summer of, after my first year of grad school that I did an internship with the Las Vegas Metro Police Department and got to go spend a day at the Henderson Police Department, which is just a.

Suburb outside of Las Vegas and got to spend the day with their crime analysis unit. I had never heard of crime analysis. I always just thought it was kind of what academics did looking at crime. So when I actually got to sit down with the analysts there and learn what they did day in and day out, and that they didn't actually have to be a sworn officer that piqued my interest and immediately I'm like, this is what I wanna do for my career.

It combined everything that I loved. I got to deal with data, I got to work with officers. I got to help solve crime all while not having to go through an academy or actually be one of those out on the street.

Jason: So Hendersonville , Who were the analysts

Karie: there?

Oh, I'm blanking on her last name, but her first name was Erin. I don't believe she is there [00:04:00] anymore. Moore. Okay. All of the current analysts that are at Henderson were not there I believe at the time, so, yeah.

Jason: I was just curious. I think Albert Mesa was there at one, one point in time, but you, were you there at the same time that he.

Karie: I don't remember. Yeah, I spent the entire day with Erin and may have met people here and there throughout the day, but she was the main one that I sat with. Sure. So if Albert was there, Albert, I'm sorry, that , I don't remember you, but I'm sure you were a great reference if I did meet you that day.

Jason: Okay, good. All right, then continue. .

Karie: . So I got back from the internship and since I kind of figured out the career path that I wanted to go looked at taking more. Crime analysis specific classes. So I was able to take an online course from Matt White. He was an analyst at the time down in Jacksonville pd, and I believe he works for links now.

He's still down in the Florida area in the law enforcement realm. But [00:05:00] he was a phenomenal instructor that really kind of shaped my desire to continue to go on to crime analysis and continue to take classes. And after graduating definitely struggled to get into the field. And if kind of, I know we'll talk a little bit about like, pieces, advice for young aspiring analysts.

Wine to get in. I had to be patient, so I took the first job that was offered to me. Getting outta grad school. I didn't wanna move home with my parents , so wanted to somewhat work in the field. And I took a job with Target as their assets protection manager. So still dealing with a little bit of analysis, trying to figure out how to not lose as money products, what we could do to try and stop theft.

But figured out very quickly that retail was not the realm for me. And at some point while I was in between working at Target and I had an internship at the public defender's office, I got an offer from the Toledo Police Department to come [00:06:00] work for them as a new crime analyst. They had applied for a smart policing initiative grant, and they wanted an analyst to help run that program and work with their special invest.

Group to start tracking pro priority and prolific offenders. And I was able to jump into that role and that was kind of my first forte into crime analysis. So it was definitely a long road to one, finding out what crime analysis was, and two, actually getting into the field. But since then I haven't looked back and have continued in this career.

I've been at two different departments, like you said earlier, and. . I absolutely love it. It continues to be an evolving career, and it's, it's something different every single day, so you always have to be on your toes. Yeah.

Jason: Hmm. And you mentioned Matt White. Are you still in contact

Karie: with him? I believe we're still friends on LinkedIn, but I don't think we've talked in quite a while.

But Matt was really helpful when I was first trying to get into the crime [00:07:00] analysis field and would kind of help me, help guide me on where to look, what different departments to look for. And so I'm very grateful for his guidance and mentorship early on. Yeah. In my career. Yeah. I've

Jason: tried to get him on the show a couple of times now, and he I've Maybe, maybe you can help me maybe we can tag to nudge up nudge, yeah.

Yeah. Maybe you can help nudge him on for me, I find it interesting that you were in undergrad and to a university that didn't have a criminal justice program, but then you had several internships. . So how did you go about securing these internships?

Karie: So the first in internship that I had was back in Wisconsin, which is where I grew up.

I actually had a seventh grade teacher whose wife worked for the Department of Justice. And going back to how I was interested in this as a young kid in seventh grade when we had the option to go to career days, I wanted to go up to the Department of Justice. And I [00:08:00] actually job shadowed his wife who worked in the internet Crimes against Children department.

So come time I kind of always kept in touch with her throughout the years. And when I got to college and. For an internship, actually reached out to her and said, Hey, do you guys have anything for an undergrad student? And so I was able to get in and work. Didn't work specifically with her, worked with the other person who was in charge, Jennifer Price, and got to work in the internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, which was extremely eye-opening for a

I believe it was the summer between my freshman and sophomore year in college. And this was kind of my first real forte into criminal justice and just different task forces and man, what can I Internet Crimes against Children was definitely a hard pill to swallow. Mm-hmm. . But it. got me very interested in

looking at areas of criminal justice that are often not looked over, but because they are difficult [00:09:00] to investigate just because of the content and the clientele that's in there.

That kind of had a light bulb moment of I can handle this stuff like it. It was hard pill to swallow, but also it was kind of a rush to know that you were helping these young children. Couldn't help themselves. You were giving them a voice. And that really put me on a trajectory of wanting to help the victims help these people that can't always fight for themselves and don't always have the strength or the do that.

And I, that was probably one of the most profound internships I had just because there were a couple cases that I worked that were hard to deal with. But I continue to remember those to this day and just try and factor that into my work ethic of never wanting to give up because the work that I do is trying to bring justice to someone else.

It's not bringing justice to me to get case closure. I'm trying to help those out there that have been victims of

Jason: crimes. Yeah, I think when you [00:10:00] do the analyst job for so long, it's you're, it can be, you can forget that all the data that you're looking at, there's a victim behind that. It becomes easy to just look at it as data, but I feel that once you are working with either sexual assault cases or child endangerment,

That aspect of it is key pieces of evidence. When you're working those types of cases, , it's easy to remember that the, these are all victims and it's not just data.

Karie: Yeah. And I think that helps sometimes. It does help also to kind of become desensitized to that, but to always remember that there is a face, there is a victim behind what you're looking at, and that you are working toward bringing them justice, like you said.

And they're not just a number and. That helps me fight for them every day. Yeah. And

Jason: I do. That's seventh grade, you [00:11:00] might be the youngest person I've heard that established a contact at it's in seventh grade that they used later in life. That I'm not sure I can think of anybody else off the top of my head that have had those show, that had quite that

Karie: experience.

That's yeah. I know a lot of people get to college and they don't know what they wanna study. I'm like, I. exactly what I wanted to study and even take that outside and be able to have that as a career. I know that's a rarity nowadays too. So I I definitely feel like I'm a unique creature in that for

Jason: Yeah. And you know, there's certain high schools now where you can pick a path of criminal justice or pre-law or something to that effect. Mm-hmm. . So that, I find that interesting, that that's even as early as high school now they have career paths for criminal justice. That's awesome.

You got through some of these internships and man, that's just, all of 'em are unique [00:12:00] and all of 'em , given you a different perspective

and as you mentioned, when you went through Las Vegas, that's when you knew that you wanted to be an analyst. And so I guess when you go through the, in interview for Toledo, how did all these internships help you secure that job?

Karie: So just to kind of describe some of the other internships.

So I also worked in Albany, New York with the Attorney General's office in the Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau. And then in Las Vegas I was with their Metro Police Department and kind of got to work in a bunch of different areas. So not only with investigations patrol crime analysis dispatch, kind of getting a wide breadth of experience.

And I think what that helped me bring to Toledo was I knew how. Law enforcement agencies worked. I'd had experience kind of working in so [00:13:00] many different areas that I was able to kind of talk about what I could bring to the table and not just focus solely on patrol, but knowing that investigations is also gonna need in crime analysis help.

And I also know that what helped me get the job in Toledo was having gone to grad school and had so much experience working with different professors on different projects. So I was a grad assistant for mm-hmm. , two different professors and working on research projects for them. And because the position they were hiring in Toledo was so focused on academics, because they were doing the smart policing initiative and they were gonna have to write a paper deal with all the data and kind of transform all of that into a package product to submit for after.

The grant proposal. Coming with that academic background and having the experience of the internships in law enforcement in different areas of law enforcement, I think was what definitely helped me secure the Toledo spot. [00:14:00] So I, I know there's kind of an argument on whether or not getting your master's or going for further schooling can help you in crime analysis.

It definitely helped me and I think just having the experience of working on so many different data projects and having those internships that set me up for success. But it was also Toledo's opportunity was specific to. That type of prime analyst where other department might not. So academically

Jason: No.

No. I went to school until I found a job and I, I know that's not necessarily what professors or advice advisors would suggest, but you get that right opportunity and you get to get a little bit of experience under your belt that you may not get as undergrad.

And, and I think I had an internship at [00:15:00] undergrad, but. , it was with a law office because I was flirting with the idea of going to law school and w at, by the end of that internship, I realized that I didn't want to go to law school. So then I was a little bit stuck in a way that I didn't have that clear path anymore.

And so I went to school , until I found that path. , just imagining the Toledo pd, the hiring folks there when they're looking at, at your background with these, not only four different internships from various disciplines, but it's all across the country too. It's building all those networks from all these different stops along the way is it had to be of value to them

Karie: as well.

Well, and I think kind of going along with what you said, you were trying to find your path, I think that's what I was trying to do too. And by trying so many different areas [00:16:00] and going to school, working on. Like the research projects I worked on were on two completely different ends of the spectrum. So one was PSN project Safe Neighborhood looking at gun violence in Flint, Michigan.

And the other one was looking at online pedophile forums to classify the different users and the comments that they were looking at. So when you look at my resume, it may look a little bit schizophrenic, but I think what I was trying

to do was, one, I had interest in all of these because I find just so many different realms of crime and criminal justice fascinating.

But I was also trying to forge a path so that whatever position I was going to get, I would be able to speak in a lot of different realms and not just be pigeonholed into having worked on one type of project and one type of area. And I think that's a really good piece of advice for future analyst or anyone who's looking to move up is try and be as well-rounded as you [00:17:00] possibly can, because that's going to make you more marketable to different departments, different agencies.

Jason: Yeah. So for the, classification chatter that you mm-hmm. So I could see where that could be valuable in that you're trying to quantify some qualitative data there. Mm-hmm. . So then you can know as you're targeting certain, certain individuals, you can have that scale a little bit of, you know, how many times they hit that certain threshold of, okay, this is, this is moderate to severe, or what, what, what you may have was there a scale like that?

Is that, was that the , end goal there is to quantify and, and categorizes types of communication. So you could give it out to police departments to then say, Hey, if you, here's some of the more serious types of behavior that we found. Yeah. That

Karie: was definitely what we were [00:18:00] trying to do.

So we were trying to take the. Definitions from the DS i m and go a little further into quantifying what type of language they were doing to kind of know, like you said, what scale of the spectrum that they were on. And this was very early on. I was working with Dr. Thomas Holt, who he's still up at Michigan State.

Does phenomenal stuff with internet crimes. And we, like I said, we're just kind of starting to scratch the surface to start to look at the depths that they would use specific types of languages. And it was. Very interesting. It was very hard to read day in and day out. But again, I think going through a project like that has definitely helped me get to where I am in my current position where I'm able to work very serious crimes, I'm able to read extremely disturbing case information and just kind of take it at face value and not [00:19:00] be personally distracted, personally offended.

I try not to personalize anything or take it home. I know that can be very difficult in this field where you see the worst of humanity day in and day out, but I do try to just kind of look at it and see it as, Facts and evidence and be able

to apply that to the cases. So having done that in grad school definitely helped prepare me for future endeavors.

Hmm. ,

Jason: let's talk a little bit about , the smart grant that you worked on when you first got to Toledo. What was the goal of that

Karie: SMART grant? So the goal, it was called ppo and we were looking at priority and prolific offenders. I can't remember the exact stat, but it's a small percentage of criminals commit the majority of crime.

Mm-hmm. . And so you have your repeat offenders through the revolving door of the system. And what they wanted to look at was if you strategically not target, but look to get these. [00:20:00] Criminals off of the street is crime in general. Not only going to decrease, but are you also going to see crime in their general area?

Decrease. So looking at both incidents and calls for service. And so we had a list of a hundred offenders that we were tracking, and this was based on, they were ranked on a point system, so based on their criminal history how long they'd been in prison, the severity of the crime, they were all given points.

And then that was the ranking of how we got our top 100. And then looking at. , each one of those where their main areas of interest were, so where they slept, where they work, where their significant other lived, where their families were. And for two or three years, we would, if any of them got arrested, we would start tracking, okay, when did they get arrested?

And then start looking at the number of calls for service, the number of incidents prior to arrest and after arrest, and start [00:21:00] comparing the numbers to see if we did see significant or just even a little bit of a drop from them being taken away out of that environment. And ultimately what we ended up finding was there was a statistically significant decrease in both calls for service and overall incidents when these individuals were taken off of the street and also fully prosecuted for the crimes.

So it was. Very interesting to kind of see the entirety of the project. I actually, I left Toledo a little before. We'd finished the study portion and they were kind of into the research analysis and the writing of the paper. But I got to see that fully come full circle and see the significance of what we did.

And so that was really interesting to see. And I've kind of brought a little bit of that to Lakewood and looked at kind of who our frequent flyers are [00:22:00] and being able to. Take them off the streets and kind of see the significance of getting them

Jason: away. , in Cincinnati, when I was there, they had a program where they did something similar.

They targeted certain individuals and based on some social connection analysis, and they did two different steps. Number one, they worked with prosecution and judges. to, to establish that hey, these are folks that we believe will, if we could, curb their activity, we can see a significant decrease in our violent crime.

And the second thing is that they worked on was with counseling, is they brought in each one of these individuals and acknowledged that, Hey, you're our targets. Well this is why you're our targets. And really what we want you [00:23:00] to, we want to give you help. So here is all these opportunities that you can take advantage of in order to curb your behavior

into a more acceptable path. Path. Yeah,

Karie: kinda. We kind of did the same thing as well. So we sent a letter to every individual that made it on the list and said, Hey, you've been identified as a priority and prolific offender. If you would not like to continue on this path, here are a list of services provided by the city.

It can be a. And offered that out to them. We did work with prosecution and judges, but I think that was ultimately our biggest hurdle. And I think that's a hurdle that a lot of departments deal with is we work so hard to track these guys, to arrest them, to get charges on them, and then it gets handed to the judicial side and a lot of times charges get dropped.

There's plea deals, there's a whole plethora of things that occur [00:24:00] that now they're out on the streets and we have to start all over again. And so that was definitely the hurdle that we had in that research project and also hurdle that we deal with day in and day out out here in Colorado, as I'm sure most agencies throughout the country are also dealing with.

Jason: Yeah. So if, if an individual. Took more of the, the service route. Mm-hmm. , were they removed then from your list? They

Karie: had to have not been contacted by officers or had any interaction with any type of incident, I believe for it was either six months or a year. Okay. I don't quite remember the exact timeframe, but they were given kind of a leash on that as long as they were able to go and try and get help.

And I believe not many of them took advantage of it. I would say it was , most of them probably took the letter and crumpled it up or never got it. But I believe we did have like two or three individuals that did end up reaching out to try and get [00:25:00] some services to change

Jason: things. Yeah. Yeah, that's, I think that's usually.

Po folks running certain programs like this find as well and, that brings me up just to a topic in general , because I feel that when analysts hear about research studies, I, I, I do feel that there's a portion of analysts that don't want anything to do with an academic study.

It could be for a whole number of reasons. , it's the whole process of getting a data ready. It's , the testing, the statistics, , I'm not exactly sure what it is, but it sounds like you really had exposure to these studies that really impact the practical side of police work.

And I think that's what I think maybe some analysts would, who don't want to be part of these studies might miss out on, is like, this is an opportunity to really [00:26:00] help the department as a whole. So, just wanted to get your take on this. Like, did you feel the same way or did you, what do you think about that idea?

I,

Karie: so it's interesting, I've never kind of. of it that way. But I definitely have kind of worked on both sides of the spectrum and it's made me respect the academic side of it instead of being, I guess, annoyed or mm-hmm. turned off by their studies. I think the important thing to look at when you're seeing these research studies come out is the data that they're looking at most of the time is going to be from one department.

So what, and while they're trying to generalize it and say, this might be able to apply to your department, it's not always going to work that way. I know when I came here, Lakewood was all a loving hotspot policing, so they kept wanting to say, Hey, can you give us hotspots? Can you give us hotspots? And they're, I

know, tons of [00:27:00] research over the last four, five decades looking at hotspots.

And after doing a little bit of analysis here and kind of looking and seeing like our different hotspots, , it was kind of becoming very clear that this type of policing was not gonna work here in Lakewood. Our hotspots were continually the same, even when I looked at 10 years of historical data. And when I tried to explain to them, they're like, well, but all the academic research is telling us that we need to do hotspots.

It's like, yes, that's great. Yes, this is a great concept and in certain areas this can really help curb crime and kind of tell you where to do your policing. It's based on my analysis and my recommendation that looking at our infrastructure and geographic location, everything that hotspots are most likely not gonna work here in Lakewood.

And I think as long as you're willing to kind of read into the academic research and kind of see, okay, what are they trying to establish? Would it work here? Yes or no? Is it [00:28:00] something we're willing to try? How much manpower is it gonna take to try and apply these concepts? To your department. They can be of great use, but I wouldn't always take them as Bible that it's may not work or what they may find success in one department may not be successful in another department.

And that's been useful. Just like I said, having been on both sides of it. That's kind of the approach I take and the approach I would tell other analysts who might be a little fearful of looking at these is give it a chance, kind of do your own research and then see if it might be something you'd wanna apply or kinda looking in other directions if something else might work.

Hmm.

Jason: Why do you think that the hotspot didn't work there in Lakewood?

Karie: So our biggest hotspots were our downtown area, which is very clustered with apartment complexes. And our other hotspot is our Colfax corridor, which [00:29:00] is a large. Road that kind of connects us to Denver, to Aurora and also where like our CD motels and everything kind of crime-ridden areas.

And I think the biggest, we've, we've gone to other measures to try and address the issues that were going on because it wasn't just that crime was clustering

there, it was kind of looking at the overall structure of everything and why, why what was there was causing the crimes. So one of the initiatives that we started about three years ago was we started our lodging ordinance.

Project, and that was once we got approval from city council. Now all of our hotels and motels throughout Lakewood are under this program that they are constantly tracked for their calls for service and the incidents that occur at their locations. And they're given a year and every Time on their yearly renewal, their numbers are counted up.

And if they're over a certain threshold, our agents will go out [00:30:00] and tell them, okay, you've gone past this threshold, you're now gonna have to come before city council and explain why you're over this threshold. And they will be given certain sanctions. And then they're given a three month, six month checkup time.

And then if they continue to be over their threshold further steps are taken to the point if they, again, continue to not fix things and do what's suggested by the agents and city council. They have the possibility of getting their license revoked and having the motel shut down. Mm-hmm. , and since this has gotten started, we've had two motels that have shut down and we've actually seen a decrease in crime.

And kind of the hotspot in general has alleviated that. So I believe it wasn't just saturating patrol in those hotspot areas. It was looking at what about those hotspots needed to be changed from the ground up. And I think that's been more of what's been helping us versus, like I said, the saturation into the hotspots.[00:31:00]

Matthew: Hi, I'm Matthew Zacharewicz and I have something for you to think about. Be grateful for what you have. The grass is rarely greener on the other.

Shawna: Hey, this is Shawna Gibson from the Pacific Northwest. This is to all you crazy PIMCO drivers out there. Do you know what a zipper merge is? It is when you let somebody else get in front of you and then somebody comes in behind you.

Karie: You really don't have to push everybody out. So man, you all learn the zipper merge. And may a 4 0 5 and I five be a little bit more pleasant to drive down. Good luck with that. All of you crazy drivers.

Jason: Before, we transfer over to Lakewood. Is there anything from your time in Toledo that you want to

Karie: add? I don't think so, other than I I made some great friends there and I still keep in contact with a lot of 'em and I continue to see their success and it [00:32:00] was, I was very sad to leave, but was looking for a new opportunity and that's what brought me out to Lakewood.

Jason: All right. So how did Lakewood get on your

Karie: radar? Lakewood was on my radar, as my husband and I wanted to move out of the Midwest and Denver was kind of one of our top areas that we wanted to move to, so started applying for jobs and I ended up getting the Lakewood one, beginning of 2018.

Jason: Okay. And then if, how did that compare or contrast to.

What you were tasked to do in Toledo. So

Karie: toward the end of my time in Toledo, I actually had transitioned a little bit out of working specifically on the p o project and actually got to do more generic crime analysis. So it was nice to kind of get a little bit, get my toes wet, doing that by the time I came out to Lakewood because Lakewood structure is, we have two crime analysts and they kind of have to be the Jack Ball trades.

[00:33:00] Neither one of us are assigned specifically to patrol or investigations. We just kind of work with everyone and based on the needs of the department, try to insert a helping hand. In that realm. So in Toledo we actually had a crime analysis center.

There were force sworn officers, there were two analysts. There was a sergeant and a lieutenant that was in charge of everything that was going on. Coming out to Lakewood, it was just two analysts and a cubicle in the middle of all of our investigative detectives, and it was kind of a free for all. So for when I first got to Lakewood, , I kind of, I didn't dive right in.

I wanted to be an observer and kind of not only get to see how the department functioned, but where I might be able to insert myself instead of just jumping in and spewing crime analysis all over the place. So probably for the first three to six months, I just kind of observed the current analyst who had been there for quite some time and just kind of [00:34:00] got to know everyone that I was working with.

And because of that, I started to see that there was a, not a lack of open source networking or social media analysis being done, but it was definitely something that meant a lot of our detectives weren't comfortable with and didn't have access to or didn't know how to do it. and I actually had been taught a little bit of that in Toledo and was kind of honing my skill.

And so when I got out to Lakewood and saw that that was a field or an area that I might be able to help with kind of started to get them set up with how this could help their investigations and started to show, Hey, I'm really good at this. I can help ID your people. And based on doing that, I've kind of become the.

Guru of social media analysis to the point where I will randomly come into work and there will be a post-it note on my desk that just says some random Facebook name and they say, start the timer because they want me to time [00:35:00] how long it will take me to actually find who this person is. , and they have bets.

On how long it'll take because it's, there've been times where I've been able to figure out who someone is in under a minute. Oh,

Jason: man. . I like it though. Find a need, fill a need. I, I like that attitude.

Karie: Yeah. And it's kind of like I said, that's how I've kinda become the go-to person with a lot of this stuff.

And I think that's kind of how I got their respect of just kind of sitting back and seeing where the need was. And especially to take something off of their plates that like all of them can go onto Facebook, Twitter, all of that. They all know what they're doing. But if they're in the middle of a homicide investigation and they have to go out doing video canvassing, interviewing people, writing search warrants, I can't do any of that.

So the social media realm was something. I could take off of their plates and also that I was very good at could solve very quickly so that we could move on to the next person and kind of build our case with suspects, witnesses, evidence, [00:36:00] everything like that.

Jason: Okay. So this brings us to your analyst badge story.

And for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge story is the crew defining case or project that an analyst works. And for you it's 2020 and you are working on a serial rapist case.

Karie: Yeah, so I believe it was the summer of 2020 we had actually been able to come back into the office or I told my supervisor I was coming back in because working remote was just mind numbingly crazy.

And we'd gotten a couple reports, we'd seen bulletins from different neighboring agencies saying that they were getting these sex assault cases coming in and they all had the same mo where our suspect was picking up prostitutes. Vulnerable women on the Colfax corridor and picking 'em up in their truck or in his truck.

He would drive them out onto I 70, which is heading into the Rocky Mountains, and he would pull off at it was called the Chief Hosa [00:37:00] exit, which again is in the middle of nowhere. He would sexually assault them while in his vehicle, and then he would dump them on the side of the road, leaving them there in the middle of the night with no way of contacting anyone.

And we had three or four of these cases, one of which was assigned to Lakewood because the woman was actually. Technically kidnapped in Lakewood and then driven out to the Chief OSA exit. And one of our patrol agents decided to kind of take it upon herself and research our traffic cameras to see if the night of the kidnapping we might be able to get better vehicle description.

So all the women kind of gave the same general vehicle description. It was a truck, it had like a LED screen in the front. They would get little bits of information that all seemed to. Check out, even though nothing was distinct enough that we could pull a specific vehicle, specific suspect, anything like that.

So she did a lot of [00:38:00] research the night of our kidnapping and actually was able to find what we believed was our suspect vehicle. And we tracked it on traffic cameras. We actually had it going through one of our license plate readers and the adrenaline got going. We were all excited, went to go look at that time, and it read the vehicle before it read the vehicle, after it didn't read our suspect vehicle.

And that got really frustrating and made us think, okay, is there something on that license plate that caused it not to be read? Most likely some type of film or cover. Something to try and evade law enforcement that way. So that door closed, so we had to try and figure out another way to ID who.

Suspect who this vehicle might be. And we found another bit of video as our suspect was pulling into one of our local motels. We actually can see the back

of the truck and there were, I think, three stickers on the rear view [00:39:00] mirror or the rear view window of the pickup truck. There was also one on the back bumper of the truck.

So again, not enough to ID what the vehicle was. making it more distinct that we might be able to idea it somehow. And I know a lot of people say you get these weird gut instincts. Mm-hmm. , I definitely had one on this case and I just kept thinking this guy kept picking these women up in the same area.

His vehicle had to have been red at some point on one of these license plate readers, whether it be during the day at night, it might not have been during a specific incident, but I'm like, this vehicle is somewhere and I'm gonna find it. So I decided to go to our license plate reader system and I was doing week chunks at a time, and I scrolled through thousands.

of pictures of vehicles that had been red while having one pi or having the picture from the hotel up on one screen and scrolling through different vehicles on the other. I probably sat for hours [00:40:00] just looking, like I said, having this gut feeling that we have this vehicle somewhere. We just need to be able to look through the data and find it.

And at some point during that day, I got a. That matched every single sticker that was on that truck on the bumper. Decided to look up the vehicle and look up The registered owner, found him on social media and again, we didn't have enough evidence based on that alone. But his description, looking at his picture, looking at the vehicle and everything, everything was matching up to what our suspects were describing from their incident.

So we were able to take this information and we actually side note too, we looked up his vehicle and him, and about a month prior to our incident, he'd been listed as a victim. Of an assault when he had a gun pointed at him because he actually tried to pick up a woman that night and a random passer buyer [00:41:00] thought that he was trying to kidnap this woman and pointed a gun at him and ended up being.

The victim in this case, but actually it was his exact mo of what he was doing in the past of picking these women up. So it actually kind of helped us. Okay. It puts him in this area doing the exact same thing that we believe this other suspect is doing. And when we sent agents out to his house they were able to find enough evidence that this was our guy and we were able to charge him.

I believe we had eight or nine victims that came forward and after trial, he ended up getting him for all of sex. Wow. So this was, it was a really cool case too, kind of. I talked earlier about giving a voice to those victims that don't always, or aren't always able to speak for themselves. And the women that he was assaulting, they had rough lives.

Like I said, they are, they were ones that were not going to go to police, and he knew that. So he strategically picked a vulnerable population. Knowing [00:42:00] that he was probably gonna continue to get away with it. So the fact that we had so many victims come forward, we actually had some even willing to come testify in court and I was able to go to those.

Days in court and see them testify and it just talking about like that moment in life where it's like I helped give these women closure and help them during a very difficult time in their life. This case will always stay with me. And just the teamwork that went into it, and a lot of women worked on this case and I just feel, especially today being a International Women's day I just felt like that case was all the women were trying to bring justice to the other women and to get this guy off the street and it was a very badge worthy case I would say.

Jason: Yeah. Nice. Yeah, a lot there. So a couple of follow up questions then. So you're the police departments. License plate readers, are they only on vehicles or do you have

Karie: stationary ones? No, we have both stationary [00:43:00] and mobile ones. Mm-hmm. . So we are actually able to capture him on a stationary one. Okay.

Jason: And then did he end up having some kind of anti scan film or anything on his license plate?

Karie: Yep. So he actually did have a film over the license plate, which Okay. Made sense to us as to why it got missed. Mm-hmm. and when we did actually read it, it's because I. Believe there was a light shining down on it, so it gave it extra illumination and we were able to read it at one point, but mm-hmm.

it evades a lot of cameras, especially if it's red during the evening hours. I got you.

Jason: That's interesting. Cause I would, I was. I've been curious, do, how often do the license plate readers do miss a plate? Cause I don't, I wasn't, I don't think it's all that often, obviously, but I was curious to know, do, do you know any?

I

Karie: would say it depends on the system. . Mm-hmm. . Sure. I know ours because a lot of them do read off [00:44:00] of reflective surfaces. If there is anything messing with that, there can be difficulty in reading it. Same thing with tech tags can be very difficult. Colorado does have a reflective surface on theirs.

A lot of people go through Texas because you can actually print it off yourself and put it onto your vehicle, which means you're just printing it off on normal paper and you're not gonna have that reflective surface that the cameras are able to read. So we have a lot of difficulty in getting temp tags, which a lot of our criminals seem to have.

So again, that's when we have to go to other outlets to try and figure out whose vehicle or who might be driving the vehicle, or if it's stolen or anything like that. Yeah.

Jason: Hmm. So by the time it gets to Lakewood, this series, how many of the known. Assaults were, was it up to two? I believe

Karie: there were four that we knew about.

Mm-hmm. . And then after further [00:45:00] investigation, they were able to get, like I said, I believe eight or nine victims to come forward. I believe there were more based on interviews that they did with the suspect's ex-girlfriend, family this behavior had been going on for quite some time. and he had even been I believe he was Army but there was also indication that this behavior had been done all the way back to when he was in the service as well.

How

Jason: many police jurisdictions were involved in those eight or nine cases? I

Karie: believe probably five or. based on where he would pick these women up. And then because where he was taking them was out of a jurisdiction as well. It was Jefferson County. So, yeah. Yeah. It was a large group effort too, to go through everything.

So a lot of info sharing back and forth and trying to put all the pieces together that way was made it a little more difficult too. But it was very similar to the unbelievable case that had happened. Mm-hmm. Years [00:46:00] ago with

Danelle and Yeah. All of that. I truly believe if he wouldn't have been caught as early as we got him, it would've continued to progress at gotten, but we were.

Lucky to get an early hit and to be able to stop him pretty quickly.

Jason: Yeah, and I think that's what I'm thinking of as well, because that's one of the downsides to our system. When you have 17,000 police departments in this country and they all have their own data in a database, you have this situation where depending on where the, the crime is committed, and here you have two locations.

You have where it was the victims were picked up and then where, where they were dropped off or even, and also could be where they actually called. Yeah, the police. And so, but when you have that situation there, this series like this won't get connected together because it's, [00:47:00] you're only from your perspective, this was just one case.

Not, it wasn't until you started looping these other jurisdictions on together that you realized that you have eight or nine victims here. Yeah.

Karie: and I would definitely say, I don't know if it's like this in any other state, but the analysis, connection and communication info sharing out here in Colorado is pretty phenomenal.

The amount of bulletins that we get from neighboring jurisdictions and like I just got an email about a potential spree involving dark colored Tahoes, and this is in Denver and Wheat Ridge Inva, and potentially all involving us. And just to be able to have that communication and info sharing definitely helps us identify that these sprees are happening and , it kind of gives us leads and be able to work with different jurisdictions.

And then it's kind of, once you've established that you have 10 different cases and four different [00:48:00] jurisdictions, then you can kind of decide, okay, who's gonna take a lead on this? And then pass all the information out that way. But it's definitely very good to have the communication to know, especially when you do have serial rapists out there like this, to get the info sharing very quickly, to be able to start to figure out who's doing this and how to stop it.

Jason: Yeah. And you mentioned going to the trial for the suspect, and you told me yesterday during the prep call interesting take by the defense attorney.

Karie: Yeah. So we were at closing arguments. His defense attorney, who was a woman actually brought up that all of his victims , they knew what they were getting into and all of this was consensual because they had had their hair in a bun or a ponytail.

And everyone knows that when you wear your hair up in a ponytail, that you are basically consenting to doing certain sexual behaviors. [00:49:00] And let's just say this hit a nerve on all of our ends. And so not only did we print off pictures and we all have them framed that say, my ponytail is not consent.

All of the women that went to sentencing decided to come with their hair in ponytails that day in solidarity for all of the. That day and I know defense attorneys will go to lengths to try and save their client, but that one was definitely a little below the belt. And like I said, this was a very female driven case from the start to the finish.

And I feel like that was kind of the cherry on top of all of us showing up. And we didn't even do it on purpose. It was because we all knew that , we all kind of came wearing the same badge of solidarity.

Jason: Great work, great case. All right, let's move on slightly cuz I do want to talk about open source social media.

I, I know you teach courses on [00:50:00] this for, for law enforcement, so just wanna generally get your advice, get your take. Maybe some dos and don'ts for other analysts that want to use social media or open source in their investigations.

Karie: So a lot of what I teach people, and I like to show this to police departments, so not always analysts specifically, but those that may not have experience in social media is the information is out there.

I would say 98% of the time I can figure out who someone is or find identifying information on someone based purely on what they're providing on different social media platforms or different open source. Networking outlet. I go through a lot of case examples. So a lot of the individuals that we deal with use monikers.

No one's using their real name anymore. So we have a case where dealing with a bunch of gang members and it's like, [00:51:00] oh, we have so-and-so, so-and-so, and all these names that make absolutely no sense and we need to figure out who these people are to be able to go talk to them. And so I usually get a list

of full alphabet soup, we'll call it, and trying to figure out and ID, who these individuals are.

And I teach in my class looking for specific details of what could help you. ID them. So one of the big ones I say like, details matter. I had one case where started to look through pictures and this guy was sitting on a vehicle and you could make out, I believe three of the. license plate characters.

And I'm like, Hmm, is this guy stupid enough to post his own vehicle? Let's go see. So took that to one of our databases and did a wild card search, found the vehicle and sure enough, a few years ago a juvenile was pulled over for driving without a license, found the picture, matched the guy on Facebook, able to get an ID with him.

Another example that I say is family members [00:52:00] are the best. So while a lot of our individuals are trying to mask who they are or disguise, they can't stop grandma from making comments on their Facebook page. and I actually use an example, I dunno Facebook anymore, but I use one from my old one where I have a picture of me and my dog and my grandma made two.

Completely innocent, but I asked him, I'm like, okay, what can you guys figure out about me just based on the comments that my grandma made? And it's a list of like 10 things that you could start to dig into databases and be able to figure out who I am, who my mother is, my maiden name, all sorts of information.

And it's very useful. And I actually use the family thing a lot because they will give you potential last names, potential locations, potential siblings. I just had a case where we had a screenshot of a Facebook profile that had been taken down and was able to. Find [00:53:00] find the page that had been tagged, found out that her mother had passed away, went and looked her mother up on an obituary, found who the daughter's name was in the obituary, looked her up and was able to get a date of birth and figure out who was in the shutdown profile.

So just I it seems like common sense, but it's just these little puzzle pieces that you're trying to gather together that you're able to figure out who these people are. And I'm doing these not in just little podunk cases, like these are major incidents. So our homicides are sex assaults robberies, anything like that.

It's proving very worthwhile. Like our most recent homicide, I believe we've preserved. At least 25 to 30 Facebook pages and have been able to ID all of them just based on doing those little tips and tricks. And once you kind of learn the ins and outs of how to do this, it becomes very second nature.

You know what to look for and you can id them very quickly. And that, like I said, that's what leads to getting post-it notes and bets as to how [00:54:00] long it'll take you to Id, who someone is. All right,

Jason: good. And so one of the things that I find interesting or in social media, certainly investigations certainly weren't, weren't the same when I stopped being an analyst, you know, years ago.

But I always found it an intriguing concept of when to stop. And what I mean by that is , you're gonna have names, addresses, something to start from when you're doing your social media research and that can send you down various rabbit holes. You could just keep on finding more information, finding more information, and before you know it, you might have this very, very loose network and struggle to join it all together.

Do you have maybe advice on know when to say win type thing on some of this stuff?

Karie: I always say that is it worth the amount of [00:55:00] time that you're putting into it? So if you're looking at your number one suspect in a homicide or a witness, you're trying to locate like the importance of figuring out who that person is.

That one I would have a really hard time giving up on unless I knew that I had exhausted every outlet that I. Disposal. There are definitely times where I'll get a bulletin from a neighboring agency and they'll have some social media stuff on there, and I'll start to play around with it if I have some free time and I'll hit a wall and I'll realize, okay, I just spent an hour looking for someone that isn't even related to my agent.

And that's usually when I have to be like, okay, you need to back off. It's not worth the investment versus outcome of what you're able to get. And being able to kind of stay up, like I spent outcome type stuff, but the majority of the time I, like I said, you can find out who someone is. It's very rare that a page is so locked down.

Or there's [00:56:00] so little information that you can't find one little piece that can take you to who you need to find. But I do know the Facebook rabbit hole. That's when I have 30 tabs opened up on top. , just trying to keep track of who's part of what family and so on and so forth. And it is a little self-control, I would say, but for the most part you can kind of figure out like, is this, and even ask the detectives like, I can keep going.

I'm struggling with, I deem this person. Like, do you want Milan? Do you think this is the person going af? And so kind of getting a little outside respect of you out of the rabbit hole too.

Jason: Yeah, I like that advice. How about I don't be that analyst when it comes to this type of work?

Karie: Oh, far as social media stuff, I would say don't be that analyst that gives up too easily.

Jason: Kind of the opposite. Okay. .

Karie: No, I, and I actually kind of, I know you said was what was an unpopular opinion. Yeah. So kind of going back on what you said with [00:57:00] going down the rabbit hole. So I always say become single-minded to the point of reckless, and it's one of my favorite quotes from a movie.

And I will say, like a lot of people tell you, it's just a job. Don't obsess over it. But I have found that becoming obsessed with trying to solve a lot of these cases, social media has valuable, not only helped me, helped solve the crimes, but helped catapult me forward in my career to become the go-to person with a lot of this stuff.

So I may not be the best person to tell you don't come down that rabbit hole because I end up doing it a lot, but it's kind of become. My niche and mm-hmm. , what I'm known for doing, and I've shown that I'm quite good at it and it's made me become the go-to person, both sworn and civilian in a lot of our major investigations.

So if we have homicides that occur in the middle of the night, I often get called and say, Hey, can you come in and start doing some social media analysis for [00:58:00] us? And I take pride in that. And I say a lot of that is being that obsessive to the point of reckless person. , like I said, I do know when to reel it back, but I do also think that being that obsessive and trying to put together that puzzle is what makes me good at my job and what helps our agency be able to have such high closure rates in these cases.

Jason: Yeah. I guess the two things that I'll add to that is one, know the rules so you know the line and know . When you're about to cross it mm-hmm. and just stay this side of that line and two. But I feel, and well, let me ask you this, because I, I've see, I have observed this at conferences a little bit when talking to other analysts of when they're doing social media mm-hmm.

analysis, it seems like once they're doing social media, Research, it seems like that's where they stay and they, it seems like they're not [00:59:00] necessarily taking information that they've gathered through social media to then look for information in other locations, other data sets. I mean, certainly they'll run it through maybe their rms when they find a person.

Mm-hmm. . But it seems like once they're in that realm of Facebook or whatever it is, social media wise is like, they almost get a little bit of tunnel vision and that's, that's where they stay instead of as they're gathering all these little tidbits of information, then going through other avenues outside of social media mm-hmm.

to help solidify some of these

Karie: leads. And I think that's an issue that I try to not do that. I think the great thing about social media, it's free these. people are putting their entire lives out there. We would be stupid to not utilize this to the best of our advantage. But also it, you [01:00:00] do have to draw a line of, okay, once I, ID who this person is, I'm really not gonna get any other information from this page.

You can sometimes go back. I love to look at friends list, kind of build link analysis based on that. But as soon as I find one bit of information on social media, I'm now going to t l o or LexusNexus and looking up where they might live. I'm now going to our R m s and looking up that address.

I'm trying to figure out what their phone number might be, because we may have to write a search warrant for. CDRs. And so definitely kind of utilizing the little bit of information that you do find on social media. And like you said, don't get tunnel vision because you can only find so much. You're not going to fully solve a crime based on what's going to be put on these social media unless they are live streaming a murder

And you're still probably gonna have to go to other outlets to put together all the information that you need. And that's kind of what I try to do with mine, [01:01:00] is I utilize the free information that they're willing to provide, but then also utilizing. All of our other resources to put

Jason: everything together.

Yeah. Well I encourage you if you're, it's not on your radar to put in for the conferences and to teach this stuff, cuz social media isn't going away and it's, you're almost guaranteed to get accepted because there's, there, there's always

going to be several classes presentations on social media at the analyst conferences.

They used

Karie: to, I actually did I presented at the IAC conference that was in Las Vegas and I did a little bit of social media and then I've also partnered with. Pluses Academy, Kirby Pluses, and I've done some presentations with her and kind of that's the repertoire of what I'm trying to build is not only educating analysts, but educating officers or smaller departments that might not be able to [01:02:00] afford an analyst but can still do social media analysis themselves.

Kind of showing them these very easy tips and tricks that they can do that could help them in a lot of their investigations. All right.

Jason: Thank you for looking out for the little guy, . All right, so let's finish up with personal interest then. So for you, you are a marathon runner, so we have that in common.

And so how many marathons have you

Karie: run Officially? I have run 12, well, 13 actually. Nice. The covid years get a little wonky with some of the virtual runs.

Jason: Yeah. Now, so do you get super competitive with it or is it a social event for you? I

Karie: would say a little bit of both, so, mm-hmm. , a lot of the friends that I've made over the years because I've moved so often, have been through running clubs.

Mm-hmm. You find that you spend a lot of time with people while running and they kind of Yeah. You form friendships. Cuz I [01:03:00] always say misery loves company , so I see all of the training hours definitely as. social time. And as far as competitive, I don't get competitive with other people. I get competitive with myself.

Oh yeah. I'm a very type A motivated personality. If you haven't figured this out for this interview, and again, I've become a little single-minded to the point of reckless and really kind of put everything that I have into my trainings, my races. It's really hard for me to go out and do like tempo runs or anything like that and not try and give 110% on it.

But I definitely started running marathons. I thought I was just gonna run one as a bucket list. And then that was seven years ago, , and now we've racked up the total .

Jason: Nice. Yeah, I I ran. Tallahassee's half marathon a couple weeks ago, and the thing about that Tallahassee marathon is you start the first mile going downhill [01:04:00] and my plan was to just cruise and do it.

and not go into it competitively. And I found that I struggled to do that because once I got going at that fast pace with that first mile, I was like, Hmm, I wonder how, what if I can keep up with this? Like let's push this, let's push these 46 year old legs a little bit and see where, see how far we come type of thing.

So I found myself, I was like, I can't even do this socially. I have to, you know, push it to the limit, so to speak.

Karie: Yeah. Come races, it's definitely a little more. Competitive. And I would definitely say moving out to Colorado, it humbled me because Midwest Hills are not the same as Colorado Hills, aka a mountains

And I was I had a month of marathon training when I moved out here and then was trying to run the same pace as I did living in Ohio. And I said, I just kept feeling like I was breathing through a straw and [01:05:00] couldn't understand what the heck was going on. And well, you had 5,000 feet and some very steep uphill and that'll do it to you.

So I like to say I'm trying to do some doping out here in the altitude to try and go back to sea level and do some good races.

Jason: Yeah. Now, do you have a bucket list in terms of. A marathon that you want to do? Not

Karie: really. So I have had the opportunity to run the Boston Marathon nice. Numerous times.

So that was once I kind of got close to qualifying, that kind of became my bucket list to try and get there. And I've proven that I was not a one and done that I've been able to get back there a couple different times, but, so I'm running Boston in about six weeks again and then I get to run Chicago as well, which I never have run before.

And I'm excited. A friend of mine who's never run a marathon is gonna run that with me. So I'm excited to get to run with her and see her be able to [01:06:00] accomplish that goal and get across the finish line. So kind of that race, I'm looking forward to, to kind of take the focus off of trying to run fast and get a specific time and.

That more about getting someone else to the finish line and change the focus.

Jason: Nice. Well good luck with that. And that is really great that you ran a couple of Boston marathons, cuz that is obviously quite an accomplishment. So good

Karie: for you. I feel like it's the everyday person's Olympics.

Jason: Nice. Yeah. Oh, so. Alright. Right. Well our last segment of the show is Words to the World, and this is where I give the guest the last word. Karie, you can promote any idea that you wish. What are your words to the world? All

Karie: right, so I'm going to quote the ever wise Billy Joel and say, it's all about soul.

Whatever you're passionate about, be it your job, your hobbies, your family or your friends, whatever it is, make sure to put your heart and soul into what's important to you in life. And having soul will help you [01:07:00] through those tough times and remind you why you enjoy doing something in the first. Nice.

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

Karie: appreciate getting to talk with you. This has been fun. All right, great. You be safe. All right, thanks Jason.

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

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