

Nicolas Smith - The Analyst That Never Gives Up

[00:00:00] Welcome to analyst talk with Jason elders 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.

Thank you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason elder and today our guest has five years of law enforcement analysis experience. He is currently a crime analyst at N Y P D, but he comes to us from Trinidad and Tobago. He was an investigations officer with the police complaints, authority.

He earned a certificate of crime analysis and prevention and analysis from John J college here to talk about among other. Package thieves and what to do about 'em please welcome Nicholas Smith. Nicholas, how we

doing?

I'm fine. I'm fine today.

And yourself, I am doing very well.

So thank you for joining me. I [00:01:00] appreciate the time and, and looking forward to the perspective of your journey to N Y P D and we are falling in the footsteps of Alexander Lynch and Deb Piehl. So I'm fascinated to hear. The crime analyst, one position, and how that's treating you

so we'll start from the beginning. How did you discover the law enforcement analysis

profession?

Well, actually it was on my way back

into the United States to, to start back working. Initially my law enforcement

experience was with the tri and Tobago ministry, national ministry of national

security where I started there way back in 1994 as

a, a rating with the tri and Tobago coast guard.

The trend big old coast guard is a arm of the ministry of national security. And it is a

military arm. It's not to say a policing.

So [00:02:00] it's in line with the

it's equated with the, the Navy in the, in the us here. So I started my career in law enforcement there.

The thing about it in terms of

law enforcement, there's a,

a variation with the

arm of the coast guard.

It has a law enforcement entity rooted in the ministry of national

security the law,

the act itself where coast guard officers can intercept vessels, any vessels within the territorial waters of tri Tobago and search them if there's evidence or

any grounds to hold them bring them back to shore

and then do.

Investigation with the civil police there. And if charges are to be laid, it is laid by the police, but the coast guard officers will have to go to court and give evidence. So that whole probable cause and the stop and the search [00:03:00] is must be done according to the law. So that's where course got get the law enforcement badge then.

OK.

So is this mostly drug evidence that's being collected off the ships or is it other. Contraband.

Yeah. Drug illicit contraband immigration. Okay. You know, human trafficking. Okay. Arms as well because tri

tobacco is just about four north miles of the coast of south, south American coast, Venezuela.

Mm-hmm on a clear day on the Western peninsula. You can see on sudden peninsula, you can see Venezuela day. Oh, wow.

Yeah. Wow.

Okay. So then that sounds like with your work with the coast guard was it a smooth transition then to becoming an investigative officer with the police

complaint authority?

Well, that was,

like I joined the, the, the police complaints authority, which again is [00:04:00] governed by legislation mm-hmm . And that gives that authority, the power to investigate,

Police officers

for several offenses,

Be criminal corruption, police corruption, and against the

police injury and Antigo dare standing orders.

So serious police misconduct, according to their standing orders, the police complaints authority can investigate,

Matters that

arises say from the public or the authority can do true audit. Can look in and say this is something that we need to, to, to investigate. So the investigative tools were wide in terms of, of

data

Of the investigative authority in tri vehicle.

But I only, I started there in 2011 mm-hmm . So in terms of my career in law enforcement,

I was a member active member of the Chan Tobago coast guard up [00:05:00] until 2002, 2002.

And while in the coast guard I,

I was privileged to be in Special

unit, a unit that

specializes in, in special operations.

So that gave me the

opportunity to train with even the Navy seals and other of the us law

enforcement to say DEA and other sections

I could, would come and offer training.

That inspired me to move on from the coast guard in 2002 and go into an intelligence arm within the ministry of national security

that, that arm dealt with

operations as, as well as other assignments.

So delegated by the minister of national security.

So in,

in 2004, I decided that look in terms of my career, I was still. But I'm to entry level mm-hmm I needed an education mm-hmm cause I had just had a high school [00:06:00] diploma, ed and Tobago. And in order to be promoted

to any position, I would need a, a, a degree mm-hmm

Something traumatic

happened in my life. Well, I shouldn't say traumatic, but it's a pack of life. My father passed

away in 2000 and, and two. Oh, sorry.

And I saw that I needed to do something cuz when I looked at, you know, my father would every day mm-hmm , you know, grew both my sister and I up and I saw what was my mother was, was relatively young.

She was just like 48 when my father passed away and I decided, look, this is what my father left for my mother. It's just for my mother, you know, this is not gonna happen to me. And my father always inspired us to get that education or work harder. So I started to look out, I heard about

John Jay college and

I applied and was successful

in starting my degree there.

I

I started doing my bachelor's in, in criminology and. One of my professors encouraged me to join [00:07:00] the BA ma program where you do both the bachelors and masters at the same time. And I did that. I graduated in 2009

with my masters in criminal justice.

And I went back to Trigo to my older, but by that time there.

The government had changed and there was a little political riff in terms of that agency be

doing covert

operations. There were some allegations that was brought up against it. So that is when I I applied for the job in the PCA. I was hired because of my experience

in, in covered

and intelligence investigations,

but no criminal, no criminal investigation background.

I didn't have

that. I learned it on the trip. Okay. So I had to learn how to investigate things from a criminal aspect that in evidence.

Yeah.

So how did you like the covert aspect of it when you first started there ?

With the,

within the ministry 2002, it was, it was

[00:08:00] exhilarating.

It was exhilarating. I had training surveillance training with the French DST mm-hmm the director of,

Surveillance. They came down and they did courses with us. Mm-hmm it was, it was amazing how the information is used,

how using

the trade craft, they applied to acquire

intelligence.

It was fascinated. We had British intelligence officers training us. It was amazing just to get that trade craft after you see things like dead letter boxes and all these things, how,

, how you would run.

Your CI or agent as the case may be, is interchangeable in the

us and, and British

what they call their CIS.

So it was an experience,

are you able to share any stories? Regarding your time there.

The agency that I used to work for is now debunk mm-hmm . At the time I was in the agency, we had to sign an oor secrecy, but seeing that the, the, the [00:09:00] agency's now debunked and there was a political fiasco.

Yeah. I would be

wary of, of, of sharing stories

there. Yeah. All I can say is that

what we did, it was in the interest of the nation as well as , the Americas. Yeah.

When you're dealing with surveillance and, and developing the CIS and, and going undercover was some of the training then involved in acting like.

Perfecting your, your

acting

skills,

you must, it was actually operation. It was actually planned. You have a cover story. You had a

cover officer that

would go over the operations with you. So, you know exactly. And most of the operations did not involve,

You being armed mm-hmm

okay. You know, you were there because you are actually dealing with people who themselves are armed, but you don't wanna walk in there without God.

right. So, because you would have to explain yourself.

Yeah, well, that's, that's

added [00:10:00] pressure. So not only do you have to be a great actor, you're unarmed. You don't have anything to back you up there. If you get yourself

into

trouble, your backup team has to come in and take you. Or you have to get yourself out of that.

Yeah.

Right. So, so did you find the, the acting part of it? Did you, did you find that easy or is that something you really had to work on to hone your skills?

As long as you embrace your trade

craft, it would be easy. Mm-hmm , you know, you go over, you study, you study your target the environment. It would be easy.

Yeah. It would be easy no matter where you learn yourself. And as long as you have a cover story and you stick it, it, and you have the mission at heart, you will be successful and safe.

Nice. Nice. So you go, as you mentioned, you decided to go get your education, John Jay, was that online or did you actually go to school in New York?

[00:11:00] Yes,

I I,

I went to school in New York. Mm-hmm . I applied for a student visa

and invested

all my

savings to be here,

to come. To New York and study it was not an easy experience. It was very expensive.

Mm-hmm but I paid my way,

you know? Yeah. How was that transition then, coming into the states, huge investment for you?

Certainly not wanting to fail, but also dealing with the culture and, studying. As you look back now as your first couple of months there, here in the states, what are some of the things you remember, maybe one of, some, some struggles that you had. But you overcame

you,

you said it, right there.

You said don't want to fail. I did not want to fail because I knew at that point in time by then I was an, an adult. I was like 29 years old. Mm-hmm so there's no room for failure. in, in that, in [00:12:00] that aspect, most people, 29 work in the, the years that I worked there already, they have a house, they have a car they're married, they got kids and, and, and they're settled in terms they know what they want to do in terms of the organization that they, or the, the, the feel that they chose with me.

I just knew I'm a person like this. As long as I,

I, I

want something I work for towards it. And I, and my father grew me up like that. Mm-hmm I qualify myself. My father always told me you want to be somewhere, qualify yourself and apply. So in terms of coming over here, making the investment, all I did was just numb myself.

Everything

that was around me. I

had a professor, my, one of my first professors was

professor Vincent Nicolosi. He was my, English teacher and he inspired me. It's like tough love. He reminded me of my father the first few weeks. I remember writing the first essay. I got like a, [00:13:00] a B plus.

I said, wow, I just, I can, I can do this. You know, write it second paper. I got a D and he said, all right, come the first paper. I just, you know, what's your first assignment. I don't wanna break you, but you have a lot of work to the, the, the English,

Lab, you know, to improve your writing. I

will personally, you know, look after your work.

I spent five years at John J four and a half years or five years, and I never left the writing lab. I stayed with professor Nicolosi throughout. My,

my essays were top in terms of his due tillage. And he always inspired me in that way. He didn't break me at first. And he told me when he gave me the D he said, listen, you got work to do, go to that lab.

You know? And he said, a lot of people wouldn't take it when, after I, I graduated. So a lot of people would not have took it as you did, but. Inside. I knew I didn't wanna fail. I knew

I had to, to [00:14:00] write properly in order to get good grades. So did

you, once you finished college, did you know that you, what you wanted to do and then decide to move back?

Or what was your decision process once you were about to graduate? I always wanted to go back to my country and

Go back to the ministry of national security and push policy reform, push, push on an agenda to keep public safety at heart mm-hmm , but it's not easy getting into the, the public service or civil service.

Where you have people there for years, people without

degrees people,

without that look on the outside of what criminal justice is. Cause in terms of tri and Tobago. Yes. They may talk the, the lingo of

criminal justice. But

you can see if you look into, to, to the country, the way the, the ministry is set up, right?

It's not criminal justice. As we know the, the, the police, the courts and, and

the prisons of [00:15:00] corrections

as,

as we call it up here. And that

is the, the criminal justice system, the, the, the

prison and police are attached to the ministry of national security. The courts is another section. So that communication, that transition.

Persons is not that smooth mm-hmm , you know, and, and that, I always say that's something that, you know, in terms of reform, they have to look at to bring these three entities into one ministry and to have that flow. ResSem in America

cuz Trinidad has a British background.

Okay. So a lot of the things that they they have government wise or constitutionally is, is more from the, from the British aspect.

Although we, we do a lot of interface with, with the us. It's like a little social confusion that we, we go to from time to time and it takes, it takes people to really do that, that brainstorming analysis and say, listen,

let's write public policy different, you know, to our benefit, [00:16:00] you know?

So

is this where you then have the position there where you're more like internal affairs investigating yes. Complaints against

officers? Yes. Yes.

So in 2010, they, they passed a law that they needed to have serious police oversight enter and Tobago. The law, the law basically gave the police complaints, authority who is,

Now run

by a gentleman by the name of David

West, my former boss, you know, mm-hmm

that, that organization as I said, invest police corruption,

serious criminal criminal complaints brought against officers

serious police misconduct and so on it also has a, a, a line where, as long as there's mentioned of our, of the police being involved.

The police complaints, authority can investigate any person so long, as long as the police has interaction with that person. And there's an allegation brought about that. They can do it. So it's, it's a it's wide, [00:17:00] it's a wide

ambit they have. So there, I

was not knowing anything about criminal evidence having to take statements from, from people that is evidential and not

knowing what to do.

I'm writing. Like if I'm still an intelligence

officer, you know, just their

facts and whatnot. And I had a,

A supervisor by the name of Alan Miguel. He's a, a lawyer. He now works for the policy, the national security policy office. Intro and Tobago now he has, he, he moved on. So he took me, he was a former police

officer and he took me and he said,

this is how you write a statement.

You know, he made me again. I, I always meet people like that. I

always appreciate

that. You know, I always appreciate that, you know, that tough love, you know, they make you spell out what, what you do in front of people, you know, and then show you and mold

you the right way. You know, that's something that's how I grew up, something that I

appreciate.

I don't know how [00:18:00] younger people are. You know, being called in front of your room to read your work, but a Miguel played an integral part in getting me, you know, where I'm at in terms of investigations and it was not difficult because of my education with John, Jay, you know, it was, it was, it was easy, you know, that, that those classes with criminal law and constitutional law,

I, I, I I really

took them seriously and was able to apply aspects of policing that I courses that I did in, in

a John Jay and apply at home.

Wasn't it wasn't different, difficult, you

know,

mm-hmm so what were some of the, the changes? Cause I certainly, you know, every industry has a certain way that they want folks to write. And, and so you

had mentioned that you were writing more like an intelligence report, but then he sat you down and said, this is what you needed to do.

What were some of the tips or some, some techniques that he was suggesting that you do when you're [00:19:00] writing these reports that are more investigative at nature?

Well, his Twitter started with the statement. A statement is actually evidential it's, it's a sworn officer taking a statement from a person, right.

It could be a person, a suspect a weakness, right. Or a latter case. It would be a suspect, but more so weaknesses.

And that has

the four I'd be written. With rules,

right. Judges rules, right.

That the courts would recognize. So certain things must be mentioned the date, the time in terms of the witness, if it's a witness, they must be able to recall that day.

They must say something. If it's, if it was their, their daughter

birthday or, or

the rain fell heavily that day, you must bring these things into the statement and then whatever they describe, and they must be able to say, there must be key things. Key statements that you, you inspire the person to say, was there anything [00:20:00] in your way, did you have a clear line of sight?

How was the lighting on that day? So, and then

they describe what they

saw or what you, as the investigator is hoping they add to your case, right? That to build your case against the perpetrators or the alleged defaulters or perpetrators as a case, maybe you have to write these things in a statement and it must be concise and clear, and it must go with the judge's rules or the law once as the courts recognize it in terms of a statement and it's actual evidence.

So, so that's like an investing. It's a, a statement intra Tobago is actually an investigative tool used quick statements. It's a ma it was one of the

major things, you know? Right.

Mm-hmm besides the writing, are there any other aspects of the job that you feel that you struggled with in the beginning, but pretty much mastered by the time you're finished.

Four or five years in. I

[00:21:00] wouldn't say I was, I was always keen. I, I am a customer with the outdoors. A lot of investigators get bogged down into the office. Right. Because they have a lot of paperwork to do. I found ways to do my paperwork. Right. Is getting out there and, and, and really looking as to see what happened.

Most investigations, I believe is a, a freeze frame. It's a, Piter, it's a still Piter that you take a moment in time or a couple are still pictures. And you as the investigator, when you see that you look, and then you pull out why is this like this? Why is that like that? And you ask yourself question and that gives your line of inquiry.

So that for me was easy because I always like to be outside, you know, mm-hmm and knowing the country. Or know any environment is, was helpful,

you know? So it wasn't that hard for me. Lastly, just, just bringing all of that back in terms of making your notes, bringing it back to the office and pushing it [00:22:00] on paper mm-hmm and then analyzing what you put on paper.

If they are actually finding that's evidential to to proven. The allegations made against the person. Okay. That's that's it? That was it since spoken there for six

years. Okay. And you started when they were just really creating , this concept you talked about laws changing in, in 2010 .

So when you're coming on board and you're doing it for six years, do you think that you really saw a lot of change during that time in terms of corruption and how it was treated at. With

the unit, I wouldn't

say, but I wouldn't say there was a lot of changes, but the PCA gets into, they, they try the invest.

One of the

things that I was a little frustrated by and always, I always, they didn't, they had an, they had a legislation. The legislation is much more pointed than say the CCRB in New

York.

Civilian [00:23:00] complaints, review board in New York. The legislation just stopped short of arresting. Just have, have

any powers of

arrest.

Right. Mm-hmm in both cases, but in terms of investigation, the PCA could investigate criminally. So they had powers of search and seizure working with other entities in law enforcement, you know asking for evidence in a timely fashion and it must be produced. Otherwise the person could be taken before the courts.

So, but as I said, what was frustrating is that they did not operationalize the act in terms of, do we have a procedure for such, do we have a procedure to work with this entity? Do we have a

memorandum

of understanding with certain entities? You know, mm-hmm, , that's where it stops short and that's where policy is important.

And I'm a stickler for policy and I hope one day I'll be able to work in a, in a, in a entity where I, [00:24:00] you know is at the wheel of policy, you know, policy evaluation or policy creation. Okay. You know?

All right.

So let's move on then getting into you, becoming a crime analyst with N Y P D.

So what goes into that decision? You're back home. You've been doing this for six years. And the opportunity comes up with you moving to N Y P D one of the biggest cities in the world to become an analyst.

Well, that starts with my wife, Kisha Smith. She's a, she's a sworn officer. Mm-hmm with the Y P D.

Oh, okay. She allowed me to pursue my dreams and know, go back home and know, leave, leave New York in 2011 and go back to tri and Tobago. You know actually the contracts are at the PCAs is three years. So the first, the first three years, I said she asked me you coming back home. I said, no, I wanna, I wanna stay because I want to get [00:25:00] promoted.

Mm-hmm I must get promoted. Mm-hmm so I got promoted,

After, at the end of the,

the, the, the first three. Contract. So I had, I had a, a small team and I have investigators that I supervised. So I decided,

listen, I can't stay away

from my wife for so long. I won't, I don't have all that leg room . So in 2017, the end of my contract, I came back up.

So it's like, what am

I going to do? Right. Mm-hmm what am I going to do?

So

my wife joined the department in 2016, right? And I'm back here in 2017, not knowing what to do, having a master's degree,

you know, or my law enforcement

experiences

more or less injur that actual.

It's in Atlantic Tobago.

So she, she was the one that saw this opening on indeed for
a crime analyst, for the [00:26:00] N Y P D.

There was no chance of me ever becoming a sworn officer because I was, I
already aged out. Right. Cause they, they, you have to be 35 to write the exam.
You could come on a job after, but you must have written the exam at 35. So I
said, all right, let me apply. But I'm not sure if I'm gonna get this job but I
really,

I really hope

I do.

So I applied. And I

Left to go to triad. I was actually an electrical mechanic doing electrical work.
Mm-hmm for a company called

control spec run by a gentleman called Kenneth Tiech, you know, kinda just
again, another guy that showed me tough

love,

because I

didn't know anything in terms of electrical

work.

And he gave me that break until I, I worked my way up to a

foreman in his company. So when I came back, he took me back. So I'm there
doing a job

and I get this call for,

[00:27:00] For an interview to come into the N Y P D for an interview. So I'm
elated. Because I'm actually going to one PP, one police Plaza.

Yeah. I always wanted to walk into that building so I said, even though I don't get this job, I'm going to get to be in that building. I hope I pick up some, some, some pebble or some, some stone and put, put, put it in my pocket when I'm leaving. So I went to the interview and I met Deborah Piehl. I'm a female Lieutenant for the interview.

And

Deborah, I call

her Deborah. She, she asked me, what

do you know about crime analysis?

And again, I had to go back to. The PCA, which has a, a part of the legislation where they have the account for their annual activities. And I worked on that project, you know, mostly Excel, you know, putting the complaints

[00:28:00] together, having the variables

and just making a couple tables in

terms of pivot tables and percentages,

and submitting that, doing the right up and submitting that I did it for more or less five of the six years I was there.

So I, I, I sold, I saw myself as that at that interview. I, I didn't think it was much in

terms of, you know, when, when I read what an analyst

does, a crime analyst does the different aspects of crime. The crime analyst feel, I didn't think it was much but 45 minutes of leaving. One PP feeling proud that I was able to go up to the, the level floor at one PP.

I got a email with a job offer. Nice. And, and I immediately replied. Yes.

and I tomorrow I, I, yeah, I still that it was the, the, the interview was

in the end of November, I believe. And I started the 17th.[00:29:00]

Hey, this is Don Rey. I'm here with adjacent elder on analyst talk. And I wanna share with you that there is a new book coming up for supervisors called building a crime analysis legacy. This is law enforcement supervisors, roadmap to building long lasting high quality analytical capacity. August 10th is the day that it comes out.

Don't miss out tools, strategies, everything you need to build. Quality analytics is in this book. So be sure to get your copy on August 10th.

Hey, this is Freddie

CRAF

Lieutenant with HPD. My public service announcement is to encourage people to get a team model of skill acquisition, learn a broad set of skills across many different things, and then find one that interests you and dive deep into that learn and become a subject matter expert in it doing that will allow you to be extremely successful

in your career.

Hi,

my name is Brian Napolitano and I'm here [00:30:00] to talk about name badges. When you're attending a training or a conference, please make sure your name badge is at an appropriate height and is legible enough. So that strangers won't be staring where they shouldn't just so they can figure out your name.

Thank you for

listening.

So with the job of crime analysts, you know, you have the data that you, talked about that you, you had become accustomed to when you were there in Trinidad and Tobago. And what other aspects of the job when you first started, did you find maybe particularly challenging for you that you had to overcome?

It was the technology, the, the in depth, the, the way how things were coming at you and a vast amount of data. And actually in the YP after we did our first,

Couple weeks in the academy

they sent us back out. I didn't initially I didn't go to a precinct right

away cuz

they I wasn't placed in [00:31:00] one right away.

I worked for two weeks under Deborah at one PP mm-hmm . But after coming to the precinct, you were not really sure about what to, to give, what role you play in, in terms of current prevention and that's, that's the whole beauty of probably how it

was set up. It was set up, you know, in a way that

not all the analysts go in the same, same place and it still is that way.

Mm-hmm , you know, some analysts were together, some. Out on the field, out on the field, working, finding your way. I appreciated that. Mm-hmm I appreciated that concept because what, what Debra allowed us to do was to grow on our own and communicate what we, what we were learning, you know, mm-hmm, by way of reports, you know, she didn't, she didn't give us, okay, this is what you all do.

She, she, she made our minds grow, you know, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's a pity that she's not with us because I really believe that [00:32:00] how her view on things, we would be. You know, much more elite than we are now. Although we are elite, don't get me wrong.

We do our work.

You know, if the commanding officers ask us for things we produce, you know, mm-hmm , but that, that whole thing, amount of information and what to give your sergeants, what to give your, your lieutenants.

You

know, mm-hmm, what to give the

co this is the commanding office of the precinct.

Yeah. You know,

With the other side of the coin there with that question. So there was that aspect that you kind of over had to overcome, but was given your experience and your personality, was there aspects to the job you were just really comfortable with and picked up really

easy?

Yes. The, the being part of the military before

and working

in, in, in that sector was easy. I had a great, I had a great Sergeant. He moved

on now to another branch, still a Sergeant, but he was [00:33:00] great. Ram Rambo Rios

was my Sergeant. He really worked with me. We were. Like partners,

I would say

in terms of, because he was interested in the analytical part of it, as well as,

hi him doing the, the administrative part

and being a police officer at the same time, you know, being a supervisor, he was always open

to, to

my ideas, you

know, always work up with me

with developing reports.

So with him, I found my niche in

terms of analyzing the ground for, for the majors, the set majors, putting

out reports in a way that's digestible for deployment for the cot use for deployment. And also picking up on cluster analysis in terms of

vehicle crime, cuz we have a. The precinct I worked

with, actually, I was just doing that

report, the vehicle crime report.

When we look at the, again, the big, the

bigger picture [00:34:00] and start true, our P codes, our internal PD codes

start

pulling the PD codes that speaks the vehicle crime mm-hmm

right. So we would

use a number of crimes, use the PD codes to pull it. And then we hone in on them on our map and then do these reports.

So it gives us an idea of what what's going on in terms of vehicle crime. We, when we do that, we're able to see the going what's going, what, what's the condition? In terms of

vehicle crimes, because at times where we get things like window bricks batteries being taken from, from scooters

catalytic converters, and these things are not in PCOS.

There's no P code for

our arrival battery, but within

the narrative is that's where we pull it out.

Mm-hmm so we use our keyword search, pull

these things out, makes layers. And then we say the tele commanding officer, or the, the Lieutenant responsible for deployment, this is what's going [00:35:00] on here. And it's here.

Probably it's on the border with another precinct so that we could say, listen, we are sharing

information. You all are getting hit with bra batteries. We're getting

hit as well in this, in this area. So that's what it came to. And it came with who came with a Sergeant that is, you know, Comfortable, you know, working together.

Mm-hmm, giving you a chance to do your analysis as a SIL, you know? Yeah, so that, that, that was, that was a good thing I had

at a great Sergeant.

all right. So I think this brings us to your analyst badge story then, and for those that may be new to the show, the analyst badge story is the career defining case or project that an analyst works on.

And for you, as you're looking at all this data and identifying big picture opportunities for prevention, you hone in on the [00:36:00] idea of package thieves. And this is certainly something that every, every municipality in America I believe is struggling. In one form or fashion, because there's so much more packages being delivered straight to the houses now and given opportunities for what they call porch pirates people to, to steal the packages before the recipient can even bring them into their residents.

So let's just start by from the beginning , identifying the issue and some potential solutions for this

phenomenon.

Well, well coming up with the issue again, I, we, I always,

I, I do it every week, you know, at the precinct.

But the whole idea to frame it, to make it make sense in terms

of a project came from me going back to John, Jay to get some more training.

In terms of

academia in crime [00:37:00] analysis. So John J offers an advanced certificate
mm-hmm in crime analysis

and crime prevention. So I

enrolled in it, it sixth courses. I believe,

That you would take. And, but it opened my eyes to environmental criminology
and

going back to the work of rational,

Theories like rational choice, grand patent Terry and, and, and

novelties on, or work by individuals in terms of crime prevention, things that
many people are not sold on, you know, at first,

and, and if you're doing criminology especially like rational

choice, you know, they just think that just simple, but it gave me another look
into the way how these

theories Could be used

for crime

prevention.

The problem oriented

policing came interview.

So now looking at the, the great

Herman Goldstein and his work and seeing that there's a whole [00:38:00] entity
out there, there's a whole body of work and I'm sitting in the N Y P D with all
this data. , I do a package theft report every week. Let's see if I can make one
for New York city.

So that prompted me. To do the, the, the the project. But in terms of the data there wasn't much to go on because as you said, people, most of the package stuff,

Research was done in the suburban center and they referred to them as PO pirates, but here in New York city, it's something different.

Yes. There are, there are single

unit houses and whatnot. People have porches in the city. Yes. There's some houses like that. But the majority, what I found the majority of incidents

were in residential apartment buildings, not public housing or large apartment buildings, that's, you know, has a staff,

a janitorial staff, you know, that has a doorman and all of these things.

It's more so in

five or six story buildings. So the data [00:39:00] speaks to that. So I decided to, to go that way and do,

Problem orient. Police and guide for package stuff in the city.

And it sounds like that what you described, there was a, lack of a suitable guardian . , you're getting to a situation where if they had a bellhop or if they had, I shouldn't say bellhop, but if they had, if they had staff members.

On site there at the facility. Not really as much of an issue with these package thieves, but when you go to scenarios where there's not anybody there on staff and the packages are left alone, this is where you're, this is the environment where you're seeing the most problems.

Exactly. So, you know, the, the

theoretical

framework lies with the routine activities theory, you know, which allows, , the foundation for us to just think in terms of package stuff, the [00:40:00] motivated offender, while engaging, while offenders engaging is everyday activit.

Will encounter a vulnerable

target. Right. Also

. The rational tri theory provides,

Like the decision making process.

Of a highly motivated offender where he or she, you know, contemplates the benefits and potential risk mm-hmm of taking that package. Mm-hmm right. All in the urban setting and

also the Branton homes, deary of crime Ary, where there's this, this travel

between both offenders and victims. Right. But in this case it's more or less the offender and the victim or the target be in the package.

So just movement.

So in terms of GIS, my GIS trade, you

know, and crime mapping, which I, I got

from John J that GIS our GIS foundation from John J. It allowed me now to look [00:41:00] at when I get collected my complaints in terms of package stuff of my PD codes. Cause we have internal PD codes for packages in terms of grand last and pet.

Last days, we have PD codes at the YP for insider Berlin, unattended package, insider building unattended package,

outside building grand last, the difference between our grand last and our pet

last minute is the cost. Grand

Lastee is,

1000 over \$1,000. The, the, the cost of the property, they consider a grand
Massine, but we also have burglaries where burs,

right?

Burglary pubs would target,

Packages. Right? Which

brings me to, in terms

of how I analyze

the vulnerable areas of the building and that fits into the, the environmental
criminology aspect where the packages are left or kept, and it would be in
lobbies. So in the suburban setting, you would [00:42:00] have what we call
porch pirates, but I'm hoping that I'll be able to coin a phrase for the urban

setting.

that would deal with something with lobbies, you know? Yeah. That, that's
where, that's where we have the

incidents, you know, where, you know, there's the front door, as you said,
there's no capable guardian. The front doors are sometime left, unlocked, , and
start poor lighting, , or even in the lobbies where they leave the

packages people coming

out, they can't see if somebody is hiding behind it.

So in terms of, of the, the problem oriented policing guide, , I had to develop a
crime script, you know, as to how packages, how the perpetrators, right, in
terms of their, their journey too, where packages are kept, how they, how they
steal it. And that's also important in, in, in terms of selling it to the department
or

anyone who's interested in in the project, you know, enhancing the project.

I have

to [00:43:00] show you how these things. I could, you know, in terms of the crime script, which is a, a, another theoretical framework, I use to develop that in

my presentation, you know, how the individual will,

will case the area, what, what they, what, what they would do

when they take it, how they would make good, they escape and on, and all these things, because, and where I got that from again, is from the data, because

the officers in writing their narratives would bring these things out.

Also as an analyst, you can't be afraid, especially at the precinct level, you can't be afraid to ask officers certain thing, or in terms of our access to ECMs and video look at video or ask detectives what what's the storyline, you know, so that's how I was able to develop the crime script and they did the crime mapping shows.

And I would say at face value, you know,

The crime pattern Terry,

because [00:44:00] most of my pu perpetrators, when I study the perpetrators, they

have drug,

Abuse. Mm-hmm most of them, most of their, their backgrounds,

They have their pattern burglars, right. Or they've been

arrested for pet, you know, shoplifting and whatnot because of their habit.

And the, the analysis shows I, I had to hold me and my analysis to my precinct, which is the, the 90th precinct in Williamsburg. So study the area, the

demographics the layout of the

building, which I got from city data and pulled them in to, to my GIS analysis. I also used census data to show to population as well.

And I was able to, to, to show. That that route in terms of a diagram

of how,

A perpetrator, where he lives, isn't packaged as scared.

It's, it's really, when you

do cluster analysis, there isn't much activity where he, where most of them live, [00:45:00] which is

primarily

in public housing. But as you go out into the residential apartments, you see, and also with the mix

of drug people

who were arrested or were police mixed up for selling narcotics, you see, along that route where the individual makes that perpetrator makes that trip to get drugs where the concentration of package that are.

In the precinct. So, okay. The analysis shows

crime Ary in effect. And I have a diagram in terms

of my presentation that I was able to, to put on paper.

You

talked about the journey of this crime. The lobby, we can't call 'em lobbyists , but,

We can't, the,

the, the lo going into the lobby and stealing the package, I'm just thinking rationally in terms of a thief, he or she has no idea what's in that package normally.

Right? So [00:46:00] you have no idea what you just got your hands on. In terms of value, but you do know that you wanna score, right? You want to then get to the drugs. And you talked about the, the distance between your thefts and your open drug markets. And so I, I would think the first thing you would go to is the pawn shop.

Right, because they're the ones that are going to give you the money. If you want that quick turnaround, knowing that you're not gonna know what you have outta your package until you get to a spot where you can open it and see what you just got. Yeah. So I would imagine then, too, it's the proximity to the pawn shops in this as another location factor as this, you walk through step by step to this

journey.

Yeah, definitely. Paw shops would be looked upon in terms of that. So in terms of a recommendation reviewed

by, you know, visits by the special

operations Lieutenant, the [00:47:00] pawn shops, all these are part of departmental procedure in terms. Property crime, we do that, you know, mm-hmm, from time to time.

So that's, that's why a pop project who a pop guide for

analysts, you know, analysts mission to do these things and understand the departmental procedures in terms of crime prevention or investigations are very important. You must, in terms of your solutions,

right? You must be able to marry wherever, wherever you work at enter your, your recommendation.

So paw shop visits and

enforcements. Are part of the solutions.

Right. But in

terms of in terms of selling it, I had to do, I had to do these, these diagrams and these maps to show that, look, you have a problem. You have a problem. And

there are solutions that are not always hard and fast. Police and solution, you know, where [00:48:00] you say, okay, because you identified,

There's a drug that access your package stuff.

We should go and do count on narcotic

operation all the time.

You know, it's much more than that. My solutions with, with, with Mary interlock or marry into

reaching out to landlords, reaching out to tenants that pub public education re island. You know, which might be expensive, but

it, it could

add employment reaching out to the schools, having,

Having

competitions, poster competitions, or making signage that, you know, children could put up and, and, and, and appeal to perpetrators that project package theft is wrong.

These things come in and where the N Y P D could be play an

important role in crime prevention, you know, instead of just, you know, we

doing reverse buys or looking to, to be on, on, on, on the, on the corner, right. Even offering

alternative the

incarceration or [00:49:00] prosecution, because there was one or one perpetrator

that was always hitting

us in the nine.

I wouldn't call his name, of course. But I asked about it, I say last year.

And

he said, he's in the react. He took the, no, it

was offered to him by the judge. And I haven't heard from him yet,

you know, mm-hmm, , I haven't heard from him and he lives where most of the perpetrators

live in, in in one area of the, of the, of the precinct.

You know, I wish I wish this

this, this interview could have put up the slide to show or the data speaks to

because it's it's great. Yeah.

Are, are we able to publish this information that you, that you sent your presentation? Are we able. Publish this,

I would have to

seek department or approval, but I'm trying to sell it through the department.

Okay. I'm trying to, to see right now it's on the CO's desk. Cuz I work for the co it's his information, it's his data. So I wanna give

him a chance to, to look at

it,

you [00:50:00] know,

add any, you know, add on or anything like that.

And

then probably send it out to my department where all the analysts come under which is the

chief of crime control strategies.

I want to give it to the chief as yet

and go over my CO's head. Yeah, I understand.

Yeah. Okay. Well, Hey, if we do get approval, by the time we publish this, we'll definitely put in a link into the show notes. So you can get more information on this presentation that Nicholas is referring to. So. I guess. So there's obviously some, some, some things you recommended in terms of this, whether it be education for, bringing to their attention, the impact of package stuff, improving.

The lobbies . And certainly I know the sender of the packages, right? The Amazons of the world. Yeah. Right. They have scenarios where sometimes it requires a signature [00:51:00] or yeah. You know, they've put it in certain situations where they just can't deliver anymore to certain locations because.

There's too much theft. There there's too much reporting of theft that they're not going to just leave the package in the lobby anymore. And so it's definitely multifaceted and definitely something that will continue as long as number one, the package are just gonna be left there and unattended and number two, they can get value for whatever they're stealing.

Yeah. You know,

and most of the solution, the responses come from situational situational

crime prevention, that theory, you know, you know, by way of,

you know, increasing, perceived effort to by the pu perpetrator to get their package

in increasing perceived risks, reducing the rewards and removing excuses,

you know, those, those headlines.

In a [00:52:00] situation like crime prevention and because of the transcript we're

able to get these solutions out. So definitely Amazon FedEx,

things like package lockers

in vulnerable locations, if they want to, if you know, we,

we could talk, you know, everybody, bring in the

stakeholders and talk about putting it in.

Or even when we read these design lobbies, if landlords want to do it, or if there's an incentive by

let's say representatives political representatives or even,

The banks who might want to assist. You know, in terms of building up

their their environment or the neighborhood design, these lobbies with package

lockers and them where

the

tenants could, , use them, , make it affordable.

Things like doors. I've been doing some research with, with people that make security doors right

in Brooklyn, you know, with cameras.

That's, you know, it's more for security in terms of their [00:53:00] explosive proof, Bulletproof and all these things, you know, people could get out there and we, you know, to see if you could have an incentive for landlords to buy or design one that is followable to know, to prevent these things from

in terms of current prevention.

So that there, Amazon and FedEx definitely I'd really love to sit and talk to them and see if they would be interested in You know?

, yeah, I'm almost, I guess it's probably more difficult than what I'm thinking it would be, but I'm actually surprised there isn't like some kind of service out

there that will take your FedEx package and then deliver it whenever you want it delivered.

Because FedEx is not going to deliver it at a certain time. Right. It's gonna deliver whenever it makes it to your location. Right, right. If you wanted to make sure that you were home, when the package arrived, then you could have that service say, okay, you're going to get my package.

And then I want it delivered at 8:00 PM [00:54:00] but it's all about convenience. Right? Cause you could have it sent to somewhere where it's a locker. Like it's a PO box somewhere like at the FedEx store. You could go then, but then you gotta go there.

At a word, I get it. Find the FedEx store when they're open, get it and then bring it home. And that's super inconvenient. Yeah. So, but something where they're actually still delivering it to your home, but it's at the time that you want it, , there might be something to that. Yeah.

But there, there

are other solutions where actually the, the, the landlord and the tenants could work or make an, like to make an available space.

Mm-hmm , and that's that's for our

crime prevention officers,

all officers to get in there and have that community relationship get in there and say, look, we are gonna educate you. We're gonna train you in terms of what's the going rate in order to secure your package.

You know yeah. That is part of the some of the solutions as

well.

Yeah. There's definitely something [00:55:00] to that. You talked about apartment supervisors somebody needs to be around during the day. That's what it comes down. Even

it almost

comes down like the summertime, like now you'll see, it's busy people.

And, and this is the thing that the data speaks to the data speaks to, I, I analyze the months and September where, except August, September, where people are going, kids are going back to school and there's this influx of buy and stuff for school. Mm-hmm, , that's where we, we get hit a lot. So even though in the summer where kids are home, you know, you can, some, as they say, working with the community, put putting all those ideas there, just have kids just working.

Or just

doing something in the, in the building or even on a

elderly person, just doing their, their duty. Some people, would take up the offer, some might not, but it's just different solutions,

It makes me think of, you know, camp sites [00:56:00] have that right.

Where they'll have a person on a campsite, that's there camping, but they are the person that's responsible for any issues at that campsite during that time. And people that are camping there can sign up to be that person. And so in a way it's almost that model there where you're trying to find someone or a group of people on a rotating schedule to, to be available there.

And certainly certainly takes some coordination, but if it was easy, everybody would be doing it.

Right. Yep. And you know,

the whole thing about,

A pub.

You can make it for any crime because I'm, I'm also interested in another

project with, in terms of violence.

I know a lot of people comes into the job, you know, they're always interested in guns and guns and, , especially gun violence

now mm-hmm

But I came

about I came about

a week in, in New

York. We have a problem with certain gangs that arrive us because. [00:57:00]
Drill drill music drill

that originated in Chicago mm-hmm I did

some research in terms of that. And I

I, in the initial stages of identifying the groups, right, because the groups go
under two banners.

I don't wanna call names, but

they're affiliated to older gangs,

right? That's identifiable mm-hmm . But because of our

record keeping how we, how we identify gang members, ,

which goes, , to federal guidelines and whatnot, they do not fit the mold of,

Of a gun.

But they still go under the umbrella. So some of them, we can't find them in the
system and , I had to do some research. I read some work by forest steward.

I think he's out of the,

the university of Chicago. I believe. But

anyway forest Stewart roots,

The ball of the bullet, this, his research helped me to understand , you know, so much so [00:58:00] that I saw, he, he spoke up of rappers in Chicago, early, you know, the corner boys.

He called them in his book and how they fascinated when you look into the problem. Yes. Everybody would talk about violet, you know, but when you dig deeper into the music, into the the way or what these individuals want in notoriety,

right.

The whole thing about social media pops up, right?

And you see now where there's this underworld economy,

that's driving this aspect. So again, if you look at it from a problem oriented,

Viewpoint, you can make using data, you can make. Crime prevention strategies out of that. And it deals with alternatives because forest forest, Europe didn't say, okay, we need to have more, more police on, on, on,

on the street.

More

gun suppression units stuck on stop on first he spoke [00:59:00] again or. Alternative. And the whole thing is understanding your

environment, understanding your problem, right. That exists in your environment as an analyst

and put forward, you know, the data of course. And if, if the department allows you current prevention, strategies, that's meaningful and you can operationalize within your department because it's investigative tools or policy,

you

know?

Yeah. I was trying to think of the word . When you talk about folks that maybe not violent, don't have a lot of arrests, but they seem to always be there when

stuff's going down. and I think the word, I think the word that I'm thinking of, I just Googled it real quick. Is crime facilitators?

Yes. So, , these are folks that are helping. The situation, but aren't necessarily. The folks committing the crime. They're just helping the act of the crime be completed.

[01:00:00] They would forest start outline in terms of J and the violence he outlined in the key players. You outline the people who are on the street, you know,

how they operate.

The rappers hit himself.

Most of time, the rapper is

not the violent one. It's his, his buddy or his

buddies,

the ones that go around with him. Normally they're the ones that carrying, carrying the gun and they're sometimes nothing to pit you at all. They would do the shooting and you wouldn't even know then there's other people like who do the videos, they're those that make the beats.

Cause first, first you had spoke of the people that make the beats itself and put it out into the web. They're not even in this, from this country. They don't, they never even met a real rapper, but they just have the, the mechanism to do so. Even the people that have the studios, you know, to just have

the money, to have the recording

studio and these rappers.

Money to come in and, and record. And sometimes it's their [01:01:00] last dollar they have. And it's an industry that some people are profit

from

and some people are paying with their lives. So it's very important for us to understand where we are at, because

it's a problem that we been having in New York city.

The mayor, the new mayor Eric Adams, he mentioned it a couple weeks ago. Not a couple, a couple months ago. He spoke about your rap. I even spoke to David Kennedy, he's John Jay, very famous researcher in terms of the Boston

cease fire project that he was instrumental and was successful.

Another pop project. I

spoke to him and he gave me some point as asked to start, you know, my work and encouraged me. He gave me the blessings. He said, Nicholas, this is a great.

Avenue, you wanna go down, but

it, it would take, you know, a lot of research. It's just putting it together. That's one thing is I hope to put it together because I, myself, I don't go out on the street, you know, I don't go out [01:02:00] on the streets.

You know, just getting the blessings again, it had me, I may just have to pull data analyze and just sell it, you know? And that's, that's, that's how it is at working at the precinct level. You know, you have your ideas, which you have to sell it from inside the

precinct, and then it goes out, you know,

you just can't send your work all over the place, just like that.

People don't have

time

for

that, you know? Yeah. Well, you told me that your ultimate goal is to influence policy, right? Yeah. And to do that, you have to sell ideas. Definitely. Definitely. Very good. Well, I look forward to see you in your name, on pop

guides in the future, and certainly a very interesting story, Nicholas, thank you for sharing your insight and your story with us.

Gonna wrap up the show now with words to the world. And this is where I give the guests the last word. You can promote any idea that you wish, Nicholas, what are your words to the world?

[01:03:00] I, I would really like to see individuals coming in into law enforcement and really dedicating their time to service.

You know, I, I look back on myself as someone in law enforcement. I've never been a sworn police officer. I, you know, I may have wanted to be,

I aged out when the opportunity really arise,

but what I see is a lot of people. Coming into law enforcement, or if people are influencing public safety that are not keeping in line safety and service to the people, you know, it's, it's being driven by a lot of ideologies, be it wherever it is, you know, Andrew Carmen, at John Jay spoke of that ideology.

You know, one of one, one of, in terms of how society sees itself and police law enforcement officers must always maintain independence. I want to see that and that would bring out service. Cause look [01:04:00] at me, I'm 49 approaching 50, you know, one of the things I always do is get up in the morning and go to work.

I do my little, I can't arrest anyone. I can't when we knock on the door and tell the, my chief that. So this is a good idea. I think we should, you know, push, push for this. We should do the, the deployment, but just getting up in the morning, doing that service coming in doing my reports is my little part, but there are people who have the opportunity to make changes.

For public safety. And I employ these people that act on the independence of your institution and your office for degree target that's that's, that's my word to the world.

absolutely very good. Well, I hate to say this because I, I have one back line that I always say, but it really doesn't fit with you. I say, well, I leave every guest with you given me just enough to talk [01:05:00] bad about you later.

But thank you Nicholas so much appreciate your time and you be

safe.

Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

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