

TCIAA - Origin Story

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

[00:00:18] **Jason:** Thank you for joining me. I hope many aspects of your life are progressing. My name is Jason Elder, and today we are going to introduce and talk about the new Tennessee Crime and Intelligence Analysts Association, a newly formed association affiliated with the IACA. And we're going to get the genesis of this association and talk about what's next.

[00:00:42] **Jason:** With me are the president and vice president of the association, Caity Leemacks and Jessica Ellsmore. Ladies, how we doing?

[00:00:52] **Caity:** We're good. Now I'm nervous now that you said all that.

[00:00:56] **Jason:** Yeah, well, I didn't mean to sound so formal setting the [00:01:00] table here. So feel free to ease back and not be so formal.

[00:01:05] **Caity:** Okay.

[00:01:06] **Jason:** All right, Katie, quick intro of, who you are.

[00:01:09] **Caity:** Well, first off, it's wild to hear President in the same introduction as me, because if you know me, I am not the want to be the figurehead of anything. I'm more of a background player, I guess, as analysts can typically identify with.

[00:01:24] **Caity:** That's, that's our role, is to, to lurk in the background and be support, so. What'd

[00:01:30] **Jason:** you do, lose the bet to Jessica?

[00:01:32] **Caity:** I really did , she whooo me. She she was like, Hey, let's, let's create an association. I was like, cool, you're gonna be the president. And she was like, . So I'm having a

[00:01:42] **Jessica:** whole bunch of kids.

[00:01:43] **Caity:** I'm having so many kids. Anyway, so I have worked. In law enforcement for the past 12 years, I started off as a dispatcher for the Tennessee Highway Patrol in 2012, and it's crazy that it's been that long ago, but I started [00:02:00] with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation in 2017 as an analyst, and, obviously had no idea what I was doing, but now I feel like I've got some, some good training and some good legs under me.

[00:02:12] **Caity:** And I assist the Drug Investigation Division with their cases. And I do a lot of roles with the Tennessee Dangerous Drugs Task Force, which is where I'm assigned in TBI. And the task force if you've never heard of it. Boy, we have touched so many things around this entire state. We have several different programs that assist law enforcement, and one of those is the Governor's Task Force on Marijuana Eradication, which is what I'm assisting with now.

[00:02:42] **Caity:** So, busy, busy, busy is what I am. But Jessica and I are trying our best to balance everything so that we can just be a blessing to everybody.

[00:02:54] **Jason:** Nice, nice. All right, Jessica, I know I've had you on the show before and I will [00:03:00] put a link in the show notes for your episode, but just for now, give a brief intro for yourself.

[00:03:06] **Jessica:** All right. So I see first start in the beginning. I got I got my bachelor's degree and criminal justice forensic science and then masters and it's not security. And then after that, could not find a job anywhere. If you had anything because I was a sippy and I'm. I started out also in dispatch and, oh, that's painful.

[00:03:30] **Jessica:** So I started out as a dispatcher and then when my husband and I moved here to Chattanooga, I started at the Sheriff's Office Hamilton County Sheriff's Office in 2015. And I've been in and out a few times but this is my home and I helped found and create the Crime and Intelligence Analysis Unit here and it's My baby, along with other babies.

[00:03:52] **Jessica:** I did indeed hoodoo Katie because we had begun our plots to create TCIA and then I found out I was having twins. [00:04:00] I was like, oh, I'm sorry, sis. Good luck. No, I'm just kidding.

[00:04:06] **Jason:** Yeah. All right. Well, very good. So I think we're going, we're gotta talk about the beginning here, which is unfortunately sometimes you can't talk about a beginning without talking about an ending.

[00:04:16] **Jason:** And for those that maybe been around for more than just a couple of years, tennessee did have a, Crime Analysis Association. It was the Tennessee Association of Law Enforcement Analysts. And it recently, within the last couple of years closed shop. So let's start there.

[00:04:38] **Jason:** Maybe from your reaction. Talking about that, Katie, we'll, we'll start with you , and then we'll get why this new association came to be.

[00:04:48] **Caity:** Gotcha. So Jessica and I actually that was one of the first things that we did together was go to a Talia conference in Gatlinburg. And they always put on a heck of a conference.

[00:04:58] **Caity:** I mean, they, they did a [00:05:00] great job and had everything that we think we would want to see in a conference and more. And so her and I actually started talking the year after that, thinking we wouldn't mind being on the board of Taliyah. And just as we started talking about that and getting some plans together, they kind of announced that, that they were dissolving, which was really, really sad to hear.

[00:05:21] **Caity:** So, we shifted from, Well, if we're not going to be on the board, I guess we need to create something new. And boy, it has been, it has been a booger and a half, but it's been a great time so far. We are absolutely overwhelmed with the responses that we've gotten, and we feel like we're going in a, in a great direction.

[00:05:46] **Caity:** But we just need people to continue to believe in us and join with us and help us because I think it's going to be something that's really, really great and really special. So

[00:05:57] **Jason:** all right, Jessica, from there, let's go [00:06:00] into some of the things because you are starting from scratch.

[00:06:03] **Jason:** You have IACA and there's the, regional committees that will. Certainly help those that are looking to create a new regional association, but you still are starting from scratch all new bylaws, all new website, all new business, all new entity. So, go back to those 1st, couple of weeks, a couple of months of trying to get this association off the ground.

[00:06:30] **Jessica:** So, the 1st thing was. Kind of reaching out to people that we knew from Talia, like, hey what, steps did y'all take? We specifically spoke to Lindsay Witter. She's been such a great help to us. How do you get the ball rolling? So, we found out you need to be a 501 C3. You need to have an account. Easter Eggs: Party of Five

[00:06:50] **Jessica:** You need to have the bylaws. So we were able to get old copies of bylaws and we modified those access to some old membership stuff.
[00:07:00] So. That was really what kind of got us kick started was reaching out to the people there who had such a big part in Talia and to help us kind of like plant the seed for this.

[00:07:10] **Jessica:** And then from there, it's just a matter of like, okay, we've got this. What's our board going to look like? For us, it was just a matter of who's close who's interested. We asked a couple of different folks and some people just don't, like Katie said, analysts don't always want to be in the forefront.

[00:07:24] **Jessica:** So not everybody wants to be on board, which is absolutely fair. So just trying to piece together who we could connive into getting involved with us. And then basically just one thing at a time, got a list of stuff you've got to get done. So we go to the bank, we make the bank account, fill out the paperwork.

[00:07:43] **Jessica:** For getting everybody situated on that all the paperwork with the state. We're still working on getting our 5, stuff finished up. But I think we've made really good progress on that website. Looking really good.

[00:07:55] **Jason:** . With the 5 0 1 3 C, that is [00:08:00] a, essentially a government certification that you are a, nonprofit organization, correct?

[00:08:06] **Jessica:** Right. Yeah.

[00:08:07] **Jason:** And so you're still, still working on that. You got, as you mentioned, the, the website comes up and did you say you had to hire an accountant?

[00:08:14] **Jessica:** Well, that's still in the works. That's one of those things that yeah. We were going to need to do to make sure that once we start getting 1 day, we want to have a conference.

[00:08:22] **Jessica:** Hopefully sooner rather than later. We want to host some training to not to to put together resources for analysts here in Tennessee. And those things make money and eventually we'll have merchant stuff like that. So we just want to that was a solid recommendation by. Former folks just to keep us in compliance so that we don't get into trouble.

[00:08:44] **Jessica:** So if

[00:08:48] **Caity:** you're an accountant and you're listening and you would like to know, well, we, we've gotten a couple of names, a couple of recommendations and, and we're going through that. We just want to make sure that we're [00:09:00] good stewards of people's money and that we're doing the right thing by the letter of the law and and all that.

[00:09:06] **Caity:** So we are a registered nonprofit with the state of Tennessee. But we're trying to get that federal designation just so that we're tax exempt and, and we can do the most with the least.

[00:09:17] **Jason:** Yeah. So now that you've gone through at least up to this part, getting this association off the ground, I guess with those that are listening or thinking about following your footsteps is what are some, some take home items or must do items that they need to consider?

[00:09:34] **Jason:** I

[00:09:38] **Caity:** would say be ready because it is a lot of work. That's one thing that Lindsay told us up front is it is going to be a ton of work and I don't know why I'd Didn't think it was going to be a lot of work. But yeah, it's, it's a huge commitment time wise and energy wise just [00:10:00] to make something happen, make something out of nothing.

[00:10:03] **Caity:** And it's still been a blessing and it's been great so far, but I was slightly unprepared for exactly what all we were looking at. I think we've rolled with it and done a great job. But if you're looking at doing this, Just be prepared to make sure that you have a team that is equally as committed to the same goals that you have.

[00:10:26] **Caity:** Because I think Jessica and I were on the same page of music when it came to that. And so that we just had to find other people that that share that same vision as we did.

[00:10:35] **Jessica:** Basically just have a good team behind you like Katie said.

[00:10:38] **Jessica:** And take, take good notes, keep your stuff organized. And maybe like outline your goals. I wouldn't say we had like a formal outline, but we had things in our head that we all just agreed upon. This is what we want to do. And then we set rough deadlines for it. And I think that was really helpful for us and kind of where we

[00:10:56] **Jason:** are right

[00:10:57] **Jessica:** now.

[00:10:57] **Jason:** So you mentioned the team a couple of [00:11:00] times. Who else is on the team? On the board, our besties.

[00:11:04] **Caity:** Our secretary is Katie Shields. So she has been a rock star with our website and getting that ready. And she's also keeping our minutes and keeping us on track, things like that. Our treasurer is Kayla Pearson.

[00:11:18] **Caity:** And God bless her. She's been keeping up with the invoices that we're having to throw at people because we really have had a huge response from our launch. We're almost at a hundred members. So Kayla's keeping up with all that and doing a great job. And then we have our membership coordinator, who is Christina Stinson.

[00:11:35] **Caity:** And Christina's doing a great job keeping up with, with all the new members and reaching out to them and making sure that we're keeping in contact, that we're not just taking your money in a vacuum, that you're actually getting some feedback from us. So yeah, without them, Jessica and I would be dead in the water.

[00:11:52] **Caity:** Lost.

[00:11:55] **Jason:** Were any of them part of Talia?

[00:11:58] **Caity:** No.

[00:11:58] **Jason:** Okay. So it is a [00:12:00] brand, just brand new. All right, it's you're getting great and everything from scratch, you mentioned the bylaws and I'm just curious. Was there anything that you think of? Think of that? That maybe you changed or was different.

[00:12:14] **Jason:** You took the Talia bylaws and now you made him these noon bylaws.

[00:12:19] **Jessica:** We tweak things to basically. To benefit analysts in the state of Tennessee. That's and that sounds real generic, but basically we just tried to clarify some things about membership and the types of memberships.

[00:12:33] **Jessica:** Like, we allow people in from other states to be members, but. We're not going to give them a whole lot of voting power just because, like, it is for the state of Tennessee. I'm trying to think. We, we tweaked a whole lot of things, and it got to the point where we looked at it so much, right? I didn't remember what anything was anymore.

[00:12:50] **Jessica:** Yeah, board members

[00:12:51] **Caity:** have to live in state. Live and work in state. Yeah, that was

[00:12:54] **Jessica:** it.

[00:12:55] **Jason:** Do you have any meetings that are in person coming up?

[00:12:59] **Caity:** We would [00:13:00] like to get that going. So the Chattanooga region actually had a regional sharing meeting as well as Knoxville and we tried to attend both of those.

[00:13:08] **Caity:** We want to get those back going and then stimulate those types of meetings in the middle region and the west region. So we're actually going to be getting some regional association committee members going. So people that are going to represent the association, but also get together those people in those areas so that they can start sharing regional intel.

[00:13:29] **Caity:** Because what we're seeing in Chattanooga is not necessarily what they're seeing in Memphis or Nashville. So we, we felt like it was really important to have people that could get that going in the different regions.

[00:13:40] **Jason:** I mean Tennessee's pretty wide. So for those that that might not be a familiar with their geography, you got Memphis in the west, Nashville in the central, and then Knoxville and Chattanooga in the east.

[00:13:55] **Jason:** So they, those are the, the main pockets of the state.

[00:14:00] So it, it's different. Different territories, different people, different issues.

[00:14:03] **Caity:** That's right. And about 7 million people in between.

[00:14:08] **Jason:** All right, so then, and kudos to you both and the association for having 100 members. Already,

[00:14:18] **Jason:** do you have an origin date?

[00:14:19] **Caity:** July 1 was when we officially launched. So, yeah, not even a full month. Yeah, so

[00:14:25] **Jason:** this is we're recording here on the 22nd and not even just a couple of weeks in and 100 members. So that is fantastic. All right. So let's just get into what's new. Next

[00:14:38] **Jason:** what is the rest of the year? Going to look like for T. C. I. A. A.

[00:14:42] **Jessica:** One of the things is hopefully by the end of August or early September. We'd like to have at least 1 training event planned. We're working on that right now, getting with instructors and seeing if we can make at least a half day or a full day training.

[00:14:57] **Jessica:** The goal would be to have it like, where we could
[00:15:00] have people attend virtually, because we are a really state people from the Memphis area on the West side are going to come to chat and go for a 4 hour, 8 hour training. I mean, maybe they could, but we're not going to ask that of people right now.

[00:15:14] **Jessica:** So we're looking to get that training put together here soon. I think we set a loose goal at the 2025 conference, but we're just going to have to like, pray about it,

[00:15:27] **Jessica:** pray about it,

[00:15:28] **Caity:** pray over it.

[00:15:28] **Jessica:** Yeah, that's right. But, I mean, I think, honestly, we want to have trainings at least on a quarterly basis and we'd really like feedback from our members. And I think we've already gotten some feedback. Like, what kind of training is beneficial to them? What can we provide? To be a resource to them.

[00:15:46] **Jessica:** I know something else we're looking at doing is trying to get our website amped up where we've got message boards. A lot like how ICA

does they've got a great message board system. They've got a list of all their members. We're like I've got a case in this [00:16:00] random place out in the middle of nowhere.

[00:16:02] **Jessica:** Like, do I have a contact there? You can go search that and see. So that's something that we're, we've got in the works, but. We've had a huge showing of members and people that need to join, but we can always use more. That's 1 of the things that I think kind of ties back into advice. I would give other people or just like, or fair warning you have to.

[00:16:23] **Jessica:** Spend money to get this kind of stuff going and we broke. So that's been something we're trying to kind of walk before we run and we've we've got members and we want to put on quality training. So we want to keep the cost of things low, but also make enough that we can continue to offer those training.

[00:16:41] **Jessica:** So that's just something that we've had to.

[00:16:45] **Jason:** So how did you get the money initially? Well,

[00:16:49] **Caity:** we, so Jessica and I kind of contributed some to initial operating costs just because it's we, we just want to get it off the ground. And so then [00:17:00] the five board members, we all contributed our membership fee.

[00:17:03] **Caity:** So that we'd have enough to open the bank account and then just people that have, have already signed up and paid their invoice, which we thank you for. We love you for because we need it. But so we're doing fairly well. One thing that we want to do is when we do have training, we want to be free to members.

[00:17:21] **Caity:** as much as feasibly possible just because that we feel like that's probably one of our biggest benefits is training and besides the getting to know people in your area. And we want to look at it like what training would benefit us. I mean, we're doing this job every day and we don't want to provide junk training the same old thing that we've rolled our eyes at that our agency sent us to or we found and thought was going to be good and then was we.

[00:17:48] **Caity:** We have the experience to know of those things that we want to avoid, and we want to really provide quality training that people are going to get something out of to be able to take back to their agency [00:18:00] and the mentorship. Oh, sorry, go ahead.

[00:18:02] **Jason:** No, no, go ahead.

[00:18:03] **Jessica:** One of the other things that we talked about is.

[00:18:06] **Jessica:** Like a lot of us, when we get into the world of analysis, you go into an agency and you're like, all right, do a trick, like, analyze something. And you're like, I have no idea. What, what do you want? And I think there's a lot, analysis is really growing as a field and there's a lot of new folks coming in who have no idea what to do.

[00:18:21] **Jessica:** So, again, kind of like ICA, we had looked at having a mentorship program. It would be really

[00:18:27] **Jason:** good. All right, good. In terms of the training is online training something that is attainable now, or is that something that's going to come to have to come down later down the road?

[00:18:38] **Caity:** I think both. I mean, I think that we can do some preliminary on, especially with this one that we're trying to set up in the next couple of months. We want to provide that option where we have , an online option for those that across the state that they, that they want to join. But we're not quite to the point yet where we can do like a monthly online training.

[00:18:56] **Caity:** We'd love to get to that point. Something like some of the other state associations really [00:19:00] have this figured out and they have like a guest speaker once a month, like a lunch and learn. We would love to get to that point. We're just not quite there yet. But we also have found that there are blockades to that as well.

[00:19:13] **Caity:** Some of these free tools will only let you have so many people join at a time without buying a subscription. So we're kind of weighing options on that as well to figure out what's the most cost effective but beneficial tool to use going forward so that we can get a larger audience.

[00:19:31] **Jason:** All right, very good.

[00:19:32] **Jason:** So if you're listening and you want to contact these ladies with questions or concerns or recommendations you can email them at tciaa.president@gmail.com and or tciaa.Vicepresident@gmail.com All right, jessica. I'm gonna start with you to give the last word and then we'll give katie as president the last [00:20:00] word So what do you got jessica?

[00:20:02] **Jessica:** Oh, man basically right now. We're kind of like those little aliens from the toy story one of us come on, join in, get in on this fun we'd love to have you as a member, no matter where you are help us get this thing up and running and hopefully do something that benefits not just Tennessee, but and so

[00:20:19] **Jason:** good.

[00:20:19] **Jason:** And Katie

[00:20:20] **Caity:** well, I just want to say, thank you to everybody that's already joined and supporting us. Basically, when we're trying to build this thing from the ground up, we would not be anywhere without you. So we hope that we can be good stewards and. Follow up and give you all the things that we want to with the training and the mentorships and all that kind of stuff But we still need your help So we're going to be opening up some committees and all that stuff for people that want to get involved So get involved with us Be one of us join our cult And help us to make this A, a great statewide association.

[00:20:59] **Jason:** Very good. [00:21:00] And again, congratulations for making it this far , like I I can only just imagine abstractly what time and effort that you all and the rest of the board have done just to get to this point. And it sounds like you're off to a great start and good luck. in the future and hope everything works out well.

[00:21:23] **Mindy:** Thank you, Jason. Thank you for making it to the end of another episode of Analyst Talk with Jason Elder. You can show your support by sharing this and other episodes found on our website at www.leapodcasts.com. If you have a topic you would like us to cover or have a suggestion for our next guest, please send us an email at leapodcasts@gmail.com.

[00:21:43] **Mindy:** com. Until next time, analysts, keep talking.