

# TheCrimAcademy\_54\_AltAc

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## SPEAKERS

Cherrell Green, Zach Drake, Jenn Tostlebe, Raven Simonds, Jose Sanchez

### **Jenn Tostlebe** 00:14

Hi everyone. Welcome back to The Criminology Academy where we are criminally academic. My name is Jenn Tostlebe.

### **Jose Sanchez** 00:22

And my name is Jose Sanchez. And today's episode is part of our grad Life series.

### **Jenn Tostlebe** 00:27

And for this episode, we have three guests on the podcast, Zach Drake, Cherrell Green and Raven Simonds to talk with us about their experiences on the AltAc job market.

### **Jose Sanchez** 00:38

Zach Drake is a criminologist and data scientist focused on the application of big data approaches to public safety, homeland security, and social justice problems. Zach is currently the Principal Data Scientist and head of research and development at Nuspire, a cyber security managed-service provider. Zach has served as a subject matter expert and consultant to a variety of political campaigns, non-profits, and government agencies including the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and candidates running for New York District Attorney. Zach is a PhD student at George Mason University working on a dissertation focused on how urban layout shapes crime concentration at place. His personal mission is to leverage the modern era of "data everywhere" to make public safety systems more equitable and effective for all.

### **Jenn Tostlebe** 01:28

Cherrell Green is a Research Associate at Justice System Partners (JSP) and earned her PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. Broadly her research examines the intersections of race, crime and justice and community violence and trauma. Her dissertation, entitled "I been through a storm a lot of people wouldn't have come out of": Examining resiliency among Black men exposed to violence (ETV)" uses qualitative methods to examine how Black men experience, respond to and make sense of their traumatic experiences over the course of

their lives. Having a passion for racial justice Cherrell draws on her extensive experience of community-based research and participatory methodologies for engaging vulnerable communities and justice-impacted individuals.

**Jose Sanchez** 02:13

Raven Simonds joined the New York City Criminal Justice Agency (CJA) as a Research Analyst in the spring of 2022. At CJA, she collaborates with various teams to provide practically useful and methodologically sound knowledge on pretrial issues in New York City. She recently finished her PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University. Broadly, her research interests include social support and social networks, reentry, and applied quantitative methods. Her dissertation looked at the social support networks of men preparing for release from prison and aimed to show the value of supportive actions during times of great transition.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 02:53

Thank you so much, Zach, Cherrell, and Raven for joining us.

**Jose Sanchez** 02:58

Okay, so a brief overview of today's episode. So we're going to open up. So a little while back, we did an episode on the academic job market. And so this is going to follow a similar flow in which we're going to begin with talking about preparing for the job market, what jobs were considered and how you go about considering those jobs, then we're going to move into actually interviewing, and then finally, about experiences once you decide which position you'd like to take, and everything that that entails. Okay, so with that being said, Jenn, go ahead and get us started.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 03:34

Okay, so, I believe, at least personally, that oftentimes, when people are thinking about doctoral programs, and people getting their PhDs, you know, the common conception is that they'll end up going into academia and teaching college students and doing research. And having served on two graduate student open houses, you know, I always got the question of, from prospective students of like, does your department value non academic or alternative academic jobs? You know, are they encouraged? Are they quote unquote, acceptable to the department? And so we're just wondering about when each of you decided you wanted to go all AltAc rather than into the university setting, and how that decision and your department kind of, you know, came about, like, was your department supportive of this?

**Raven Simonds** 04:29

I can go ahead and start. So I didn't really have like a super defined that I'm going into AltAc or industry or tenure track, sort of going into graduate school. I just knew that I liked graduate school and didn't feel like getting, you know, a job straight out of, you know, a master's program. So I actually applied to assistant professor and industry jobs. I was interested in both because I thought that both could be a good fit depending on sort of the position and each tenure track or an industry like position. So I was really open to to either, but I found that in particular, my mentors were all super supportive of an alternate academic position. They tried to help where they could and sort of provide resources and support, understanding that they might not have like, they're all obviously, in these assistant professor positions, so they don't have the experience or maybe some of the knowledge on some of the industry

specific nuances on navigating that job market. But I'd say that they're all really supportive, really helpful. And I never sort of heard anything about it being discussed negatively in terms of at my department, but I think quite a few folks ended up actually doing AltAc instead of Assistant Professor positions, at least in my experience,

**Cherrell Green 05:37**

I'll jump in. In my department, I feel like my advisors and mentors were supportive. I want to say by year two, I was like, Yep, I'm out of here. And I sort of made my way to sort of look for opportunities that would translate into more AltAc positions. And I found it a little bit difficult in the beginning because I'm a qualitative researcher. So that's another layer of like, Oh, crap, I have to figure out how to translate this into real life practice. And what does that look like? So a lot of my at least GRA experience involves community engagement, har, and things like that. And that's something that is like really blowing up now. So I'm super fortunate for those experiences. For sure.

**Zach Drake 06:29**

I came in with the explicit goal of not going into academia, from masters through PhD. I started at my current department as a masters student and stuck around as a PhD. And I was candid the whole way that I wanted to be more of a practitioner than I wanted to be a researcher. I at the time did not realize that there was a wealth of positions where you do both. And that's something I learned over time is that, hey, you can still be a scientist and a researcher in a practitioner setting. I thought I was going to be forced to choose and I had chosen practitioner side and I was gonna end up doing policy work or something like that. And early on, I think, at the masters level, that was like, super cool. And everyone's like, yeah, that's, that's great, because that's a typical path for our master's students. And even though I was candid in my PhD application, that that was my intention, I do think I got more confusion than resistance at the PhD level of why are you here? And what are you you're looking to do? And by that time, I did know that there was a wealth of practitioner scientist positions I was looking at and and I had a kind of better elevator pitch, for lack of a better word, about what I was trying to do. And then it started to click for a lot of people. But there was definitely some, I don't know how to help you because I don't really understand why you would get a PhD and not go into academia. To be fair, that was seven years ago. So things are drastically different now. And I don't know if I would get the same necessarily, you know, confused faces when I brought it up. But it was definitely, it was a little jarring for some some folks in my department, both students and faculty that I had just no intentions of going into academia.

**Jenn Tostlebe 08:04**

Sounds like a variety of experiences, which is good.

**Jose Sanchez 08:08**

Yeah, thankfully, for I think, for Jenn and I, our experience, so we have the same advisor. And I think, Jenn, this is true for you, too. But like the very first time that I met with him, he asked me, So what is it that you want to do? And I didn't really know anything, like, I know, they tell you that I did pretty much what you're not supposed to do. And I just kind of have been stumbling into my positions as as a kind of, you know, I'm making up my journey as I go. And so I was like, I'm not really sure. He was like will you can go, what we're doing now, what I'm doing now, you can be like a professor and do research at an R1. You can be a teacher at a teaching school, or you can just not even go academic and go

industry. And so it was nice to that he was, you know, he gave me those options. Because from what he's told us from his experience, his department when he was getting his PhD over 10 years ago, it was frowned upon, right? Like if someone wanted to go non academic, that department frowned upon that like they wanted to reproduce more researchers going into the academic route. So So I think that's part of the reason why I think Jenn and I wanted to do this episode is to kind of show that there's more to this than just becoming professors. But the one thing that we do want to get into is and this wouldn't be a Crim Academy podcast if we didn't ask a definitional question. Yes.

**Zach Drake** 09:36

Can we make a point on something you just said because I think it primes the questions you have up here about academia often like is looking to like basically replace themselves and like spur other academics out there. But the linear rate at which they do that and at which there are tenure track, faculty positions do not match. And so it's, there's an inevitable like, disparate paths there that one of the two would have to be filled right? I don't mean that'd be like a knock on the academic recruiting process. It's just that we're either over accepting PhD students or under creating academic roles, because those two things don't line up. But the mission is to create more academics. Then something and that supply chain is broken. Right?

**Jenn Tostlebe** 10:14

Totally. Yeah, that's a great point. I hadn't even thought about that. But yeah, just looking at the job market, it seems very clear that that is the case.

**Jose Sanchez** 10:23

Yeah, I mean, you end up with like, several 100 students applying to the same several dozen jobs. Right. So that means a big number of those students aren't going to get academic jobs. So what are they going to do? I'm sure we all know someone that wanted to go into academia, but ended up going industry, because they had more job opportunities there right.

**Zach Drake** 10:45

Even in academia, like the tenure track is, tenure line positions are even smaller. And I mean, my department's not like this. But I've heard stories of like, if you don't get tenure line, in your first academic job, or even your second or third one, then it's also like, not quite, you didn't do quite as well as the ones who got tenure line, even if you got a full time academic position somewhere.

**Jose Sanchez** 11:04

Yeah, absolutely. Alright, so let's talk about what exactly we are talking about when we say AltAc. This question stems from a conversation that we had with Zach while we were exchanging emails. And Zach, you kind of touched on this a little bit about some of the positions that you can find in the AltAc world, but you know, what kind of employment opportunities does this encompass? And where do you see yourself falling within this--what appears to be--really broad umbrella term of attack?

**Zach Drake** 11:36

I think I mean, from my perspective, having been like a true practitioner practitioner, where I did nothing research or science at all, to now a more like practitioner scientist, where my job is very much almost

identical to what a academic researcher would do, just not in academia. I think a lot of people hear AltAc and they think that it's like, think tank or like, specifically, you're like you're an academic, just not in academia. And I think that, you know, just from on the technology side, the explosion of what I call that data everywhere mindset, where there's just ample opportunities to do science everywhere. Social scientists are being hired by like Walgreens now to study in store behavioral science stuff that I don't understand. But there's just so many opportunities out there that look absolutely nothing like academia, that don't get brought up in this conversation very much. Because largely, like, unless you know about them, you don't know about them, right? There's the problem. But it's one of those things that like, AltAc gets thrown around so often to mean like, think tank, or academic very, very close, or like nonprofit, and there's just a whole other slice of the cake there that just doesn't get talked about.

**Cherrell Green** 12:44

Yeah, I'll just add in. Definitely, when I first started, I think I started with exactly that mind frame that Zach is talking about. I'm like, Alright, I want to go to a think tank, not knowing what a think tank even is. I'm just like, I don't want to be here. So I'm gonna go, right. And then as I started to, like, read things, see more opportunities. I'm like, oh, there's a whole bunch of stuff I could do. But I think for me, I intentionally looked for a place that involve both research and advocacy, because that's something really important to me. I know since like, getting into CJ, even from my undergrad degree, I'm like, I want to touch people, I want to change the system. That's something I want to do. But I also love research, right? So it's like, if I could mix research and advocacy together, that will be a perfect place for me and my home at JSP right now is just awesome. I love it. I love going to work. I love the people there. They're supportive of me, they support my creativity. And they listen to me, I can ask questions. It's just an amazing experience to feel valued. And I really appreciate it.

**Raven Simonds** 13:48

Yeah, I would definitely agree with your point in terms of being able to merge sort of research with other aspects of different disciplines. So where I work is primarily it's like primarily research and service. So in addition to having a research arm, there's also a service arm that does client facing work to be able to do outreach and talk to people that are involved in the justice system in some way. So I wanted to have that sort of connection between real world direct services while also being able to do a research part of it. So it's really nice that it was got to be a little bit of a blend of both worlds. But in terms of sort of what AltAc employment opportunities look like, I feel like I don't even have sort of like a surface level understanding of the different opportunities and jobs that you can do when you have a PhD or like an advanced degree because I think the skills are really applicable in a lot of different other positions that we don't even think about yet. Like the Walgreens thing I also saw that email with like the Talk to a PhD who was like working at Walgreens as like behavioral scientist was like, so wild and stuff that I wouldn't even think about because like, in sort of like in your program, people are like, yeah, you can be an assistant professor or you can like go work at Vera or like Urban and those kind of seem like your only options, but there are so many more like local like organizations and like consulting firms that do CJ-related research or even sort of like Social Health Sciences related research, where you can sort of put the skills that you learned in your program, just not necessarily only publishing papers and things like that. So I think there's a lot sort of left to be explored and talked about in people's graduate education in terms of what different options there are.

**Zach Drake** 15:19

Yeah, like in that light, like, in my current role, I work with software developers who are building cybersecurity products. And my role is to be how do we take scientific thought and research to make that better, right, whether that's learning about new cyber threats, or building statistical models that they can use as part of the software. I'm not a software developer, most of what they say sounds like Latin to me, to be honest. But I'm able to take all the skills I learned as a scientist from a PhD program and do something that adds tremendous value to what they do. And it ends up making, you know, businesses safer down the road and all that stuff. But it's just in, not remotely, no one would ever tell, hey, you can go get a software engineering job when you finish your PhD, right? Like that never comes up, or would ever come up in the conversation unless you knew those types of roles existed.

**Jose Sanchez** 16:02

Yeah, that's good to know. Because yeah, like all I ever hear is like things like, you know, like you mentioned, Urban, Vera, Rand, or like, the, like, the smaller ones. I'm from Los Angeles. So we have like, our smaller ones there like the Urban Institute. And then the like, the other one that I learned about, which is very adjacent to academia is like the research professors, or associate researchers, you know, they have, like different little titles, but they're essentially just doing research without the teaching load. Which, sounds attractive. But you know, just knowing that there's so much more out there that you can do is great.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 16:03

Totally.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 16:40

So at this point, let's say you've made the decision to go all AltAc rather than into the university setting, and you're ready to go on the job market. And we know from different people and Zach, we know, you've done this, that sometimes people enter the AltAc world before actually graduating and getting their PhD. So if you have that experience, feel free to talk about that as well. But in what year in your PhD program, did you feel prepared to enter the job market? And kind of what does that timeline look like? Because I know what it is for academia, I have no idea what it is for all that.

**Cherrell Green** 17:15

So for me, I started applying to jobs, literally right after I defended my dissertation proposal, and that coincidentally was like, when we first started COVID. So obviously, everything was a nightmare. And I'm like, yep, gotta make some money now, let's do this. And I think I applied to woof, maybe 20 jobs, like not having any inside networks, anything, just literally going online, searching for hours. Oh, this looks good. Let's apply. And I know we're gonna get into the details of that later. But definitely took time to like reorganize how I write about myself and market myself, particularly to these types of jobs. I think when you have a CV and it's like, 10 pages, you feel like, oh, yeah, I'm great. And then you go on this side, and they're like two pages, otherwise, I don't care. You know, save it for yourself. Man, even writing cover letters about yourself and things like that, just being more strategic. Took some time for sure. And I didn't anticipate it taking as long as it did, quite honestly. But I'm happy now. But it's definitely it definitely was a learning curve. In the beginning. I'm like, Oh, wow, this is a whole other job on top of school.

**Zach Drake 18:34**

In my, my search, because I did start as like a true, I say true practitioner, because I wasn't doing anything research, I was managing a Policy Center at DOJ, right as a contractor, and I hated it. It was awful. Because I think in my heart, I really like I was still like, I like doing science, right. That's why I even wanted to do a PhD. And I had fun in a PhD to begin with. And I was still in my PhD program. And same time, I was like, I'm learning all this stuff that I'm not using here. But as I started to learn about other roles, I was already kind of like in a non academic setting where I could just be like, Hey, I see you guys are doing this, like what would I need to do to get over there. I was able to like kind of network my way in a little bit. And they'd be like, oh, yeah, well, you need to learn how to do this. I'm like alright, I can go learn how to do that. Or it's like you need learn this. I'm like, Oh, I learned that in grad school already. Like one of them was like, Oh, you need to know how to use R because we don't use SPSS. We do everything in R. I'm like, Oh, cool, we learned R in stats one, I just gotta go do a refresher on that real quick. And those are things like, I wouldn't have even known that it was a useful skill unless I had like, had the opportunity to talk to someone which then I was like, well, most people wouldn't be able to just be sitting three blocks or three doors down from someone who could tell them this stuff. And if you're just looking at applications on the internet, you just get a mountain of information at you. That may not necessarily be like super informative. So for me it was the networking of people who are involved in the space already was the only reason I was able to actually pivot.

**Raven Simonds 19:55**

Yeah, I'm not sure if there's ever like a point when you're like, I feel like so ready to go on the job market? Whether that's you know, tenure track or industry. I, since I applied for both tenure track positions and industry positions, I sort of followed the traditional tenure track timeline in terms of when those get released. So, for me, at least what I found it was typically starting in like August, September. So that's when I really started looking and like prepping materials. So like, in addition to like, cover letters for industry positions, doing cover letters for tenure track positions and stuff like that. But I will say that I'm not sure if this is always necessarily true, but something for people to maybe think about if they're interested in industry positions, is that at least in my organization where I work now, the job postings come whenever. It like doesn't follow like, traditional academic timeline of like, they get their budgets in September, August, and then they can like open up some lines, it's like, at any time. Like, I think the I think when I applied for my current job, I think it was October when it was posted. And then I sort of went into that process there. But I'm seeing that they're they have openings that started you know, several months ago. So the timelines a little bit different. I think if you're interested in industry to just sort of constantly look for stuff. It's just something to maybe think about. But yeah, for me, it was it was after my it was going into my fourth year when I started prepping materials, and doing all that fun stuff. And I will agree that it's definitely like a second job like you have finishing your dissertation and then being on a job market is just like this whole other beast of like phone calls, and like prepping materials and like you're writing more than you ever had in your entire life. It's it's a wild experience. And I'm very happy to have it over.

**Zach Drake 21:28**

To Raven's point there is one like I think for people. There's one time in the year where things pick up if it is federally adjacent. Federal fiscal year ends September 30. So starting September one, every

federal agency is in a spindle or lose it mindset. And you will see a spike in both like federal contractors, federal funded research centers and federal agencies will post last minute jobs that they themselves were not even planning to post two weeks before that because they had to like spend money. And that is like a prime window to get in on stuff. Is that like September to like early October window. But that's only if you're interested in stuff that's federally adjacent.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 22:09

Yeah. I'd always heard of like the job postings being all the time. And it just made me think of like your normal, more normal jobs where you're just looking instead of that one particular time point. But Zach, that's good to know, I had no idea about the kind of federal if you're looking for federally funded things, the uptake there. So thanks for sharing that.

**Jose Sanchez** 22:31

Okay, so Cherrell, you kind of talked about this a little bit where you kind of just started going like Googling and kind of applying to all these jobs that you mentioned, like 20, something jobs? Did all of you apply to just a bunch of jobs. And how did you kind of identify the ones that you might be interested in? And how to maybe start organizing them? Did you do the stereotypical academic thing where you had like your spreadsheet color coded with different tabs?

**Zach Drake** 22:59

I wish I was that organized. I spam applied on Indeed. I spam applied. I mean, I had like, a pretty decent semi universal resume that I could make real quick ad hoc changes to when I saw job posting. And then I would like, drill out a cover letter super quick to like Cherrell's point like I cover letters are, they're hard because you have to write a unique one for every role. And you have to like sell yourself. And it's like, if we were in a room, I could do this in 30 seconds, but you're making me write two pages about it. And yeah, so it's Yeah, so I would just like have my resume template and just grind out a cover letter and hit send. And then honestly, forget I applied for a job. And then every now and then I would get a call back and be like, Hey, you went interview like, oh, yeah, yeah, do Yeah, yeah. Yeah, let's schedule time.

**Cherrell Green** 23:45

Yeah, Zach, that was literally me. Only thing that was probably different. I had like, my top five places. I'm like, these are the places I would love, love, love to go. And I stalked them forever. I'm like, Okay, what is the position? Who works here? What do they do? Are they happy? Are you know, and I, for me, like intellectual creativity is top number one. Because I, I like to push back on things. I like to asked questions, and you know, things like that. So I needed a space that was like, we, you know, support that type of thinking and not a bureaucratic space. So spaces that were a little unconventional, were definitely top for me.

**Raven Simonds** 24:26

I definitely had the spreadsheet. I don't know how you guys did it without a spreadsheet. It's like the only way I stayed sane on the market. I had like different like sheets with different like dates and timelines and like everything that it needed. There was also a good way to organize like dates for if you have reference contacts that they need to submit something by a certain time, but I actually I looked a



lot at the ASC job posting so my current job was posted on the ASC website. And I think another place that's potentially good to look for places is ASA has like a job bank, the American Sociological Association, and they post industry apps as well, I think you have to pay like \$5 to have access to like their job bank for the year. But it's so worth it because you get just like a whole list of any sort of social science position anywhere, and you can get some of the information on there. So that's another good place to look for it. But I think certainly like indeed, LinkedIn is also a good place. I've heard some people have had really good luck on LinkedIn, and being able to sort of find open positions that way as well.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 25:23

Okay, so you've mentioned this a couple of times, but as far as the materials then that you need to apply to these postings? Is it just a resume and a cover letter? Is there more? How long are these because you know, the CV that academics normally have one page to 700, depending on how long you want to make them. And do you have any tips for actually preparing these application materials?

**Cherrell Green** 25:49

I would say generally, it's just CV and resume. But some cases, like if you actually get called for, you know, a phone interview, or first round interview, they'll give you a specific topic, or like do a presentation on XY and Z. And that takes some time. And it differs, how much time they give you. Like some jobs, I think, one was about 48 hours, another job was like, here's a week to do a bunch of stuff. So it definitely depends. I will say my CV, well, CV, translated to resume was two pages. Cover letter, a page-ish. So I know that's something hard for traditional academics to do to just get straight to the point. But here, you definitely have to get straight to the point very quickly.

**Zach Drake** 26:38

And in some of these positions to that point of like, what do you put on that, like, if you're condensing down, is look at what they say they're prioritizing, because some positions prioritize, like, oh, we want to see your publication history and stuff that you would like expect a more sciency job. And other ones just want to see that you have the skills because like, there's not a translation of publications to it, right. And they're also going to be interested in like your position. And so it's gonna look, you're gonna make a resume that looks way more like something an MBA made, then a PhD made, but that's just what that role is asking for, as opposed to like a more CV, and then maybe only include like one or two pubs and one or two presentations. And that's all you list on there, because you just want to show you're active in that, but they're not even really reading that section.

**Cherrell Green** 27:21

I would add double check who you're addressing in your cover letter or anything. OMG. I had like, several times, you know, you're applying to so many jobs, and you're just trying to get it done and see, you know, it's addressed to the wrong person or to the wrong, you know, company like, crap. Thank God, I found that before I sent it out. And to Zach's point, like making sure that you really tailor your CV and resume to that specific job is super, super important.

**Zach Drake** 27:51

Yeah, I can still taste my foot from where I did not proofread something that went out for a job application. Yeah, I did not get the job, obviously.

**Jenn Tostlebe 27:59**

That's like my biggest fear.

**Zach Drake 27:51**

Yeah, I didn't, yeah. Uh, one of the things I mean, this was already brought up, but sometimes you'll have to do like a presentation, right? Don't be surprised at how serious that can be at some places. Like we know, like, your job talk for an academic job is like super important. Everyone knows, like, that's a big deal. I missed out on a job I really wanted because I underestimated how much weight they're gonna put on that presentation part, right? Because it was, it was a science job. But it was it was like a very applied like, almost like engineering kind of public policy job where they were looking for social scientists. And I was like, oh, yeah, so like, they're not super interested in more of like, the research I've done and stuff. I was way wrong. So I do think like hindsight, I wish I'd asked more questions about like, Hey, what's going to be in this presentation? Because they tore my presentation to shreds. And it was all stuff that I could have prepped my way around, right. And it was like a role I really would have loved that I didn't get because I was just like, oh, yeah, this is you know, it's not academia. So this isn't going to be as weighted and stuff. That that was that. Learn from my mistakes, folks, that was wrong.

**Jenn 28:06**

That's also like, my biggest fear is like during questions, just getting totally destroyed during the questioning part or the them giving you feedback.

**Jose Sanchez 29:11**

Okay. So since we're talking about, like, presentations and interviews, I think we can start jumping ahead to that point, where you've received some invitation or an invitation to interview. And so how did you start prepping for your interview? Zach, you kind of gave us a little insight to one of yours. But like, overall, how'd you start prepping for it?

**Zach Drake 29:39**

Well, that was one of my blunders. So that is not an example of where I've done it right. Outside of what was just said about like, if you have a presentation, be ready for it to be very, very, very, very, you know, structured and difficult. Outside of that. Be able to talk specifically about your low level skills. I think that's one difference of like academia is all about, like high level findings and theories and these like publishing. And on the industry side, like, they're going to ask you about, like a specific, like, how do you get around this one little thing in a data problem, right? Because those little day to day skills can actually be sometimes way more important in industry roles, depending on the role. And it's not enough just to say like, oh, yeah, I know how to like clean data, or I know how to, like, you know, do some statistical tests, be prepared to talk about like, either how you've specifically done it, or how you specifically learn that thing. Because it'll come up. I got asked in a regression model, there's another term for R2, or r squared. It's like coefficient of determination or something like that. I had never heard that until an interview and someone whipped it out trying to test my statistical knowledge. And they got

me because I had to go learn what that was after the interview. And then I realized I knew exactly what it was. I just never called it that thing.

**Raven Simonds** 29:59

Yeah, I think preparing for interviews is always like incredibly, like nerve wracking, and I'm not sure if anybody else but I like anytime I'm like on an interview, I like completely like blackout. And I don't remember anything. It's just like, all on autopilot. So hopefully, all the preparation goes in somewhere. I particularly when I was prepping for interviews, I tried to learn about the history of the organization, to have a little bit more sort of knowledge on where they've been, and where they might be going to be able to sort of contribute to those conversations. I will say to Zach's point, I did get asked, you know, certain questions about like, how would you solve this type of problem? Or like, how do you approach this type of problem, like, what's your typical, you know, method of going about this, to be able to show that you can solve problems, and that you can work independently and work as a team. I think something was really important for people who maybe have like the, because I had like, several stages of interviews. And like, it sort of got like more and more people. But thankfully, I got to see on the invite, like, who is invited, so I like screenshot people's pictures on the website, and like, wrote down, like all of their like history, like on my iPad. So I'd like be able to like see, like their picture. And like who they are like what they do, because I was so nervous, I was going to call someone like the wrong name. So if people have like the time to really sort of flip through your organization's website, I would recommend it because it was nice to be able to bring up things that people might have worked on, or different projects and stuff like that, because I feel like people will take notice that you took the time to sort of look through that stuff beforehand.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 32:19

That seems like genius. Were your interviews, in person over zoom?

**Raven Simonds** 32:24

They were all over zoom. So I had like an initial interview. And then I had a research presentation. And then I had an interview with like different heads of department. And then I think I had one final interview after that, but like the research presentation, so I'm used to like sort of the Zoom environment where like everybody has their camera on like most of the time. No one had their camera on. So it's just me and my PowerPoint presentation. I'm like, I hope everyone's receiving this well, but I really don't know. But yeah, my experience was exclusively virtual because it was, I would have been starting out at a remote position. And because of COVID and things like that.

**Cherrell Green** 32:58

Just adding to what everyone else said, I was like Raven, I definitely scoured the website to see who was there, how long they were there, you know, what they do, also looking at research projects, what they're working on, and also trying to see if I can identify a gap that I can potentially fill. So I think that's something you need to think about when you go into interviews, like, okay, they called me so they think I'm marketable and they want me here. So my job in this 30 minutes or an hour, or however long it is, is to convince them that I'm that person. So if you can sort of look at the website and get a sense of what they have going on what you can add. And also similar to Raven, like, before I get into interviews, I get really antsy and anxious. And I know I'm fine, like whatever. But I definitely give myself a pep talk. I'm

like, Cherrell, you're great. You're awesome. You got this, you can do this. They called you. You're amazing. And those sorts of things, like just fill my head. And by the time I get to the interview, I'm like, Yeah, what's up? What's going on? And even if it's fake, like I believe it, I'm like, we're fine.

**Zach Drake** 34:05

But to your point, Cherrell, like they, especially about time you get the final interview, they already like you, right. And that's something that you have to remember is like they're not, you don't get brought in through a resume screen, and then a phone screen and then a virtual interview, and then an in person interview, and then maybe a presentation somewhere between if they don't already have a good sense of the idea that you're probably a good fit for this role. So like, at that point, it's much more like, relax. This is fine tuning. Are we all sure this is a good fit, not like a hot seat of like, I've got to prove my worth right now. Like it's definitely not that way by the time you get to the to the end, for sure. In fact, I had a final interview that turned into a consulting thing, and I also did not get that role and I did not get to bill them either. And I'm not appreciative of it, to be honest.

**Jose Sanchez** 34:50

That's terrible. Okay, so we've talked a bit about some of the questions that you should be prepared to answer during your interview, but kind of flipping that, what are some of the questions that you felt maybe were important to ask of the people interviewing you, during that interview?

**Zach Drake** 35:09

Culture. I cannot say this enough. Culture, culture, culture. This is the one thing we get over academia, because you don't really get like you, the university picks you and universities are all a little bit homogenous, like cookie cutter ish, with minor differences in departments. Of course, companies are drastically different run, and like, literally tear apart questions on the culture there and make sure it's a good fit. Because everyone I know, who has hated an AltAc job has hated it because of the culture, not because of the job. Because they get in there. And they're like, Oh, this is not what I expected. Also, like, Who are you reporting to? If you're reporting not to other scientists, be prepared for that to be a harder job, because you're going to have to also explain a lot of stuff that you would not have to explain or work around if you're reporting to other scientists. That doesn't mean necessarily you have to report to a PhD. But just remember, like, there's a big difference between reporting to an MBA and to an MA or a PhD as far as like, understanding what you do, understand your worth, understanding realistic expectations of your work. Those are all really important for how well you're gonna like that job.

**Cherrell Green** 36:13

Totally agree. I think work culture was like, number one on my list. Because you want to be in a space that you feel valued, you feel comfortable, and that you can, like you enjoy going to work. There's nothing worse than going to a place that you're like, oh, man, it's Monday. You know, even those days that you're tired, you're like, I get to work with great people is a totally different feeling. So yes, I'm definitely echoing Zach's point. But number two, for me was opportunities for growth. Definitely highlighting like, Okay, what opportunities do you have for me to grow intellectually? What supports do you have? Things like that I think I didn't consider in the beginning. And then I'm like, Yep, we're going to ask for this. We're going to ask for that. And if you like me, you'll figure out a way to make that happen. Yes, you will. Yep.

**Raven Simonds** 37:03

No, I think that's a great point. Because I feel like it's not as like, clear what the opportunities for advancement are in industry positions, because you know, in tenure track positions, you're on a tenure track line, and then you you want to get tenure, and then you want to be full professor, it's like very, like, you kind of know what to expect, but sort of hard and certain industry positions, what it looks like, if you advance in your role, does that change? What can you expect in terms of like a timeline for advancing within your organization? And I think that's always like really important to ask, because it might be unclear what that looks like for that particular place. I think one thing that I also asked sort of related to that was where do you see the organization in like, five years? And how do you see me or people in my role, being able to contribute to that to that vision that the organization hopefully has for itself? And then one thing I always ask that I always just think is like, it's interesting, because it's fun to hear people talk about their work, but like, what's been like a favorite or most meaningful project that you've worked on here? And why was it important or impactful to you? Because I feel like you can sort of gauge maybe the interest or like the love that people have for their work by how they might talk about it, and what they were passionate about what they got to work with. But that's one thing I'd say is asking them what they love working on, I feel like you always get an array of really awesome answers.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 38:17

So I kind of want to go back just for a second and talk about the presentation part, because I'm just trying to wrap my head around what this would actually look like, you know, I've seen an academic job talk. Is it similar to that where you're presenting like your research just going maybe more in depth into like the practical skills? Or does it look like insanely different? Entirely different?

**Zach Drake** 38:38

So referencing the one I failed, because we're just going to keep stabbing that wound today?

**Jenn Tostlebe** 38:43

Sorry!

**Zach Drake** 38:43

No in that, I was asked like, pick one particular project you worked on, it didn't necessarily have to be like research, although this was like an r&d firm that I was joining, so like obviously, it was research oriented. And it was much more low level than an academic thing. So instead of being like, Oh, here's like the story arc of my research so far. And here's what we found. And here's, you know, my different thoughts on these various perspectives. It was very low level of like, here's how we collected this data. Here's how we controlled for this. And here's how, like, literally down to here's how I coded this and like, like, programmed it in R like getting down to like nuances of that, like it was very low level compared to what the job talks I've sat in on at the university have been for sure. So, which is very different, because it's not necessarily something that we're used to preparing because even at academic conferences, it's much more about the findings and the structure and how you collect your data and thoughts. And rarely do we get into the whole like, Hey, how did you you know, control for this in your code, right? We rarely even talk about that in an academic setting, but from practitioner setting that matters because there's a

whole bunch of efficiency and do you I work similar to the way they already work and stuff like that was baked into it, for sure.

**Raven Simonds** 39:58

Yeah, I think similarly, I was asked to present on like one particular research topic that I felt the most comfortable in. So thankfully, I was able to sort of take a product that I've been working on through my RA job at ASU. And I was able to sort of translate that into a research presentation. I think it was like sort of getting to like the technical stuff, I think it was probably like 15 minutes on Zoom. So it wasn't like, so long. I'm not sure if maybe people had like, really, really long presentations. But thankfully, it was a little bit on the shorter side, it was just sort of going through like the purpose of the project, like Zach was saying, some of the methods. I think, for me, in particular, I wanted to focus or highlight what the implications of the work might be, or how that might be translated into different contexts. Because that might be something that the place that you're looking for a job for, might be more interested in, if they do make policy recommendations as being able to, to understand how you might take your findings and how you might translate them.

**Cherrell Green** 40:49

Yeah, I have two examples. One, it was about an hour presentation, and maybe about 20 minutes of questions afterwards. And that was like a more senior qualitative position. And it was more concerned with like, Okay, how do you collect data? How do you ensure participants are safe? How do you code things? So it was more technical, in that sense, making sure like, Okay, I know what I'm doing. Whereas JSP, I originally got hired as an associate. So doing a lot of technical assistance work. So I think they gave me about three days ish, something along those lines to create a presentation--it was 20 minutes--speaking to law enforcement officers about deflection programs. So the question were more geared to like, how do you manage uncomfortable conversations? How do you negotiate those things? So those sorts of soft skills? Were really important there.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 41:42

Okay, yeah. And that helps me kind of put it together. I just keep thinking academic job talk all the time, because that's the only one I've seen. So

**Zach Drake** 41:51

I will point out like...

**Jose Sanchez** 41:52

Like ASC style.

**Zach Drake** 41:55

I will say for at least for me, personally, I don't know if Raven and Cherrell had this. But the number of applications and interviews I was up for that I had to give a presentation is the slim minority of roles. And actually, to be honest, all the roles that I have taken except for one of them so far, that I'd have like fulfilled or gotten an offer or anything like that, only one of them actually had that as part of the process. The rest were much more conversational and interviewee. That being said, that might just be because I'm more aligned in the tech sector that I am in, like the the policy sector. And so that might be a nature

of just kind of where I sit in the AltAc space. But for me, it's most of my stuff has just been several several rounds of interview, I've done a few take on projects, similar to what Cherrell was mentioning, but the presentation was the minority of my side.

**Jose Sanchez** 42:41

Okay, so, and you, Zach, you kind of touched on this just a little bit about one of the positions. But one thing that Jenn and I have heard from other people is that sometimes they get asked to do like sample analysis, like, here's like some data, we want to see how you analyze it in the next 30 minutes or whatever. Did you have to do something like that? Or like a demonstration of practical skills?

**Jenn Tostlebe** 43:07

Was that 30 minute timeline terrifying?

**Raven Simonds** 43:13

Absolutely not. I did not have to do that, thankfully.

**Zach Drake** 43:14

So yeah, but not 30...30 minutes, wow, I'm still stumbling through that. Because that's, I don't even think you can be creative and analytical in 30 minutes. Like, that's not fair to anybody. Right. So I've had to take homes. And to be honest, I'm in a position where I hire now. And we do take home analysis, where we'll give them sample data that has been blessed by the people who technically own the data to be used for that. But it's just it's very, like, find interesting things in here. And so it's, it's not just Can you analyze this data and answer a question I give you, but can you take what I tell you about this data, and the purpose it was there and ask interesting questions of the data and then go through and obviously, you're not going to, you know, do a randomized trial right here, like, overnight, but do some kind of interesting descriptive analytics, or maybe a small small model that can that can tell us something interesting. At least when I, when I'm the one reviewing these, what you actually find matters almost nothing. It is how you go about it, and and how you approach it that matters way more, because, again, it's a small take home with sample data, right? It's not it's not anything super critical. But that might be more, you know, I don't know everyone would have that personal, that particular persuasion about like the importance of what you find, I do care that you represent things statistically accurately, and that you use appropriate methods and that you you handle statistical assumptions well, and those are the things I'm looking for that you approach it well and you form your question, and use the appropriate methods and such.

**Cherrell Green** 43:17

Yeah, I don't think I had any, like 30 minute, do everything you could possibly do. But I think to Zach's point, I had a take home that required, not necessarily qualitative analysis, but how would you design a qualitative project right. So I don't care what you're finding or you know, I don't want you to write any quotes for me, but how would you design a project in three different states and three different counties? You know, what are the safety precautions? How often are you meeting? So things like that, to really sort of think through how this person would design a project, as opposed to what the person is going to find analyzing. Because I think if you're applying to this job, you have that skill, it's just like, can you actually do this work in real time.

**Jose Sanchez** 45:23

And I just want to clarify, so I just threw out 30 minutes, because it's like, the first thing that popped into my mind, that wasn't actually the time limit that person got, from what I remember, they were interviewing for, to be a data analyst for a police department. And it was, like, they wanted to see like, here's the data that we collect, like, what can you do with it, you know, like crime trends and spatial analysis and all that? I don't know, the 30 minutes just popped into my head. So it's, so I didn't know it was gonna, like shock everybody that they said, 30 minutes.

**Zach Drake** 45:55

Like, we're all seasoned pros. And the idea of having to do an analytics analysis in 30 minutes shook us to our core. So like to do that to somebody in an interview, especially for a junior level position, that's borderline cruel, to be honest.

**Jose Sanchez** 46:08

I mean, I'll do it. I can't guarantee it'll be done well.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 46:12

Or correctly.

**Zach Drake** 46:16

Numbers will go in and numbers will come out.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 46:18

Yes.

**Jose Sanchez** 46:18

I ain't gonna clean no data.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 46:23

Okay, so the final stage then would be receiving your job offer and the negotiation process. So how did you approach this negotiation phase? And was there anything that was super critical for you to ask for? I know Cherrell, you mentioned kind of asking for multiple things, because at that point, you were hoping to get those since they wanted you to have the job. But any details or elaboration on that process?

**Cherrell Green** 46:50

Yeah, I think one thing, before I say the actual stuff. Oftentimes, I think we're nervous to ask for things, especially women, especially women of color, I want to say ask for everything and ask for it before you sign that contract, period. It definitely lays the foundation and you can spill out what you have and what you agreed to from the very beginning and the very start, it wouldn't be a surprise for Cherrell to say, hey, I want to do this, when it's not even in the contract. I never brought it up. And for me, if you never asked the answer is always no. So ask anyway. And I am the question girl, everyone that knows me knows I'm going to be the person to ask the question. So good, bad or indifferent. So the things I did ask for at two separate places were one opportunities for growth, for sure. Professional Development, if



I wanted to take a class somewhere anywhere, like it will be supportive. And then also, quite frankly, I asked for more money, because this is 2022. And we're going to ask for more money, because things are expensive. And I think I gave a percentage. That's another thing people also question if you should ask for a range or certain percent. I think I just asked for a percentage, maybe like a 10% increase. And then they met me in the middle with a 7%. I loved the place anyway. I'm like, Yeah, sure. You know, and the fact that they were even willing to accommodate something, I was super appreciative of, and if I didn't ask and just accepted because I thought it was a good offer. That wouldn't even be considered. So definitely, always ask.

**Zach Drake 48:25**

On the money thing, pulse, what other people doing similar jobs at similar firms are making and be candid, right, like I am, I understand why there's, like taboo around talking about salaries. But like, if we don't talk about salaries, nobody gets ahead, right. So I think if you have people that you trust, and you want to have conversations with, ask around about, hey, I know you're in a similar role. What do you make? Or what did you make when you started this role, or something along those lines, makes a tremendous impact. I've had friends who have left PhD programs, and did not know how much they could be paid until it was too late. And they were already in the role. And then, you know, just talking over drinks, they'd be like, oh, yeah, and, you know, I thought it was a good offer. And we'll just be a lot more candid, be like, now you got a bad offer. And you know, by then it's too late. I mean, they can go back and ask for more money, but they've already taken the offer, they're in the job, right? So they can go back on the job market or try and, you know, have an awkward conversation afterward. And a lot of that is just again, it's because there's not information out there of like, here's how much you should make, right. And this is where going to our academic advisors will not be helpful, because they went through such different process. And to be honest, they make such different salaries than what you do in industry, that it's not... what they'll think is an amazing offer, you will not realize it's not an amazing offer until you talk to other people who are in that space. And it also depends on like, locations of where you're at, and things like that. So just get multiple opinions on a number before you accept the number. And if you're in the nonprofit space, you may not face this. I've been in like the truly private sector space. They're a for profit business, which means the first number they give you is the one that benefits them, not you. Right? That's just how businesses approach salary negotiations. And it's not, no one will be offended if you say, I think we should do better, right? Or I think oh, I know you can do better. No one be offended because they probably have a second piece of paper that they can pull right out that was already prepped in case that question came up.

**Raven Simonds 50:15**

Yeah, I would definitely agree with everything that's been said. Negotiations are always like, very uncomfortable. And I don't think we're taught properly how to advocate for ourselves and our skill sets and in a variety of different positions, whether that be you know, an academic position or an industry position. Similar to what what Zach was saying, I had a hard time sort of being able to talk about negotiations, because what I had learned about negotiations was only for tenure track positions. So like, you can negotiate for course buyouts, you can negotiate for technology, or like all these different like very specific things that an industry job isn't going to have or isn't going to be able to provide you with. So I think, if possible, something that I wish I had done was to talk to other people in industry positions who have been there for a little bit, and just sort of like ask them, How did you approach

negotiations? Do you think you did it well, and things that you wish you had known or wished you that you would ask for that now that you're in your organization in your role that you think would have been successful? Just because I don't think there's a whole lot of discussion on what negotiations look like in a non traditional space for people with PhDs?

**Jose Sanchez** 51:15

Yeah, and I think, and then you guys can tell me if I'm wrong here. But so my wife was recently looking for a new job. And she got an offer. And she said, she looked up what they were offering her for her salary. And she was wondering, do you think I can maybe ask for a little bit more? And I told her, yeah, go ahead. Ask for what you think is reasonably more or what you feel comfortable asking for, and they've already made you the offer, the chances of them saying, No, you're asking for too much, we're taking our offer back are probably pretty low, right? Like the worst that they might do is say, Sorry, we can't give you that. Maybe we can give you this or that's the best offer we have. But chances are that they're not going to rescind their offer. Right?

**Zach Drake** 52:01

And going to the culture conversation we just had. An organization that does get upset over you wanting to have a frank conversation is not one you want to work for. Right? If if you're coming to them and saying, for grounded reasons, here's why I want more, right? Obviously, if you're coming in be like I want \$350,000? No, okay, like you're the one in the wrong. But like, if you're coming in, like here's a reasonable salary, I think this role, and they're the ones saying, How dare you even ask for more, we gave you a great offer. That's not a place you want to work with. And that actually can honestly be helpful for you now, because I would walk away from that if I were you.

**Jose Sanchez** 52:31

Alright, so now we want to talk about like your actual job. And so this first question is going to be for Cherrell and Raven, did you have any pause between graduating with your PhD and beginning your new job?

**Cherrell Green** 52:47

No, that was the hardest thing I've probably ever done in my entire life. And I do not recommend. Because you're, it's so many things going on. And I think especially because for me anyway, the timing of COVID. And everything happening, it just felt like the world was ending, and I'm trying to find a job. And I'm trying to do this dissertation. So there's just so many competing factors. I just felt overwhelmed. But in general, it was hard. I mean, you're applying for jobs, nonstop, you're going on interviews, maybe you're not hearing a call back, maybe you're not hearing anything, it's radio silence, you go on interviews, you get to step two, and that's it, you know, so it's, it's definitely a lot of work and mental fortitude that I did not anticipate. And for me, I bounced around quite a bit. So I applied to a few jobs, as I said, after a little after, I defended my proposal. And then I got a consulting gig and it required me to move out of state. And I was like, ah, the world was ending. I think I want to do remote. Let's try this. So I started looking for jobs again. And that took maybe like, four months, and then like, Okay, this seems cool. The interview process was very, very, very, very long, like five steps, five hour interview. Every. Yeah.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 54:13

Five hours?

**Cherrell Green** 54:15

Five hours. Five. Hours.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 54:18

Sounds terrible.

**Cherrell Green** 54:21

It was an experience. I stayed there for like a year and I realized the work culture didn't quite fit me well. Then I'm like, Alright, we're gonna go again. Try it again. And now I'm at JSP. And I love it. So definitely know that it takes some tries. And if you don't like something, it's okay to move on. It's okay to switch. Don't try to force yourself to fit into a box that you don't feel comfortable in. It's okay to say this isn't working, and I can move on. You're capable, you're worthy, you're accomplished. Everything will be fine. Just move forward and do it and if you have the supportive networks to lean on, take advantage of that.

**Raven Simonds** 54:56

I started my position like I think a week after I defended my dissertation, so it was very close. But I had gotten the job offer in like, in January, and they were willing to wait until I finish my PhD because I was like, I cannot work and finish this dissertation at the same time, there's absolutely, I'm just gonna be, I'm just never gonna finish. So they were very kind. And they let me you know, have several months to, you know, finish my dissertation, which is very, very nice. So I really wanted to start sort of like as soon as I could. So that's why I ended up doing it so close to when I finished finished the PhD specifically, but it was a little it was the transition was like very short. So it's like defending doing your, like revisions and stuff like that, then immediately starting a new position. And it wasn't a whole lot of like break period. So I'd say that you can maybe build in like a buffer week for yourself to celebrate that you, you know, finished a really big document that took you several years to write. But yeah, so mine was fairly short. But but it was nice, because I got to work remote before moving. So I was able to have, you know, several months where I was still in Phoenix before moving to New York, which is really nice.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 56:02

Alright, so then our final little bit of questions is about your current role. And so can you each kind of describe, you know, what you do on a day to day basis, what your job looks like, and then any advice that you have, based off of your career path so far, for people wanting to enter the industry. Raven, you can go first.

**Raven Simonds** 56:25

So like I said, at the beginning, I'm a research analyst with the New York City criminal justice agency, we primarily work in the pre trial space. My day to day is a lot of like data related things, which thankfully, is something I really enjoy. So it's a lot of like problem solving, being able to work with these really big datasets that we get from different partners around the city, to be able to sort of better understand the pre trial process here. So that also includes like applying for grants and things like that.

So we can run different pilots and different studies within the city for different problems. A lot of it sort of like I'm trying to use my SQL skills, which is not something that I learned in graduate school. So I think it's a lot of learning new skills that are more applicable to industry like positions. And in terms of sort of, I guess, maybe like advice for people that are interested in going into industry spaces, I think it's always just like, everyone's always super willing to talk to people that are interested in industry positions. I think we always get like, maybe a little scared about cold emailing people. But I think people are always super willing to share their experiences and share their insight because it is so so hard to find in certain departments. So I think just like ask everybody that you can like what their experience was like, for their materials because it's sometimes hard to know what your cover letter should look like or what your resume should look like. So I think asking, asking anybody for their materials is something that's really helpful. And then divisions of corrections and sentencing, which I'm sure you guys are all, you know, get the emails about the AltAc stuff, but they have really great workshops and stuff like that, that I always thought were really helpful and speakers that were willing to talk about their experiences as well.

**Cherrell Green** 57:56

Yeah, I would say for me at JSP, I do a little bit of research, qualitative research, and also providing technical assistance. So on the qualitative research projects, I tend to visit different sorts of jurisdictions across the country and sort of like work with them hand in hand, on particular projects, one project we have right now in Chicago, and a few other counties, focusing on bond courts, and things like that. But generally, my position is talking to folks all day, quite honestly, which is why this is meeting number seven, and start to think through how jurisdictions can make their systems better for people who are actually experiencing the system. So I really enjoyed doing the work, it's really rewarding, it's tough, but I enjoy trying to make change wherever I can in the system. So I definitely enjoy it.

**Zach Drake** 58:43

Like we said, at the top I'm I'm in a very different space, because I'm much more in like the tech industry tech space. But so my job title is data scientist, which if you Google, you'll find out is really just the Silicon Valley term for statistician or social scientist. But my job is to do social science really, or statistical analysis, but just with really big datasets, like hundreds of plus terabyte sized datasets, and so you just have to use different methods and different tools to do that. But it's the same techniques, we still have to think about internal external validity and construct validity. And the models that my team creates are either informative to analysts that are using them like cybersecurity practitioners, and helping them do their jobs better. Or they are some kind of predictive model that will, like I said, will actually get embedded into some kind of software tool and become part of some, for lack of better word AI system that some marketer will run with. And so we're not publishing papers. In fact, I haven't written like not in this particular role, I have not written a paper that was more than like a two page white paper that's just kind of like here's how this works. And here's how we collected the data. We're not publishing papers, no one on my team is really trying to publish papers. We're just trying to do science and then we we finish the model or we find our insights, we put some slides together and move on to next thing. But the skill jump is that my role requires technological understanding that we don't teach very well in social science grad schools like Raven's mentioning SQL, you got to know SQL. SPSS and Stata, and these other programs can't do the size of data we do. So you have to write code from scratch: R, Python, Julia, there's lots of scientific languages, but we have to write our code from scratch, we have

to understand, you know, a little bit deeper understanding of how like technology itself works and how servers and databases work, because we have to run into technical issues just as much as we run into data issues and data quality issues. So there's a little bit of a skills gap. But there are tremendous and I say tremendous and ample programs out there, many of them free on the internet for people with PhDs who want to transition to that. And it just teaches you the techie part, where you've already learned the science part. And here will give you the two or three months it takes to get the techie part that there's tremendous resources out there that can that can get you ready. If that's an appealing job. The difference is to Raven's point, policy recommendations, nobody at Homeland Security is ever going to see my work and be like, Oh, this would be helpful for the country, it's going to go into a software platform that some MBA is gonna go sell and, and make money off of right.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 1:01:18

Awesome. Well, those are all of the main questions that we have for all of you. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences and your advice. And then if people want to reach out for if they have questions, or anything about your experiences, where can people get in contact with you?

**Zach Drake** 1:01:35

LinkedIn, I am on LinkedIn more than any other social media platform, which is sad, depending on your worldview. But I have responded to a ton of messages of people trying to make this transition on LinkedIn. And I've got some resources that I can send people's way if they find me on there. And I've also hired a few people who are like, hey, I want to do this. And LinkedIn was our open communication of how we started that conversation. So if you message me on LinkedIn, I'll probably respond. If you don't have a LinkedIn and you're interested industry jobs, I recommend you get a LinkedIn. So that can also be your first first foray into that, if that's the right word. So

**Raven Simonds** 1:02:09

I think email is always just like the best and easiest way to get a hold of me. I like have a Twitter but I'm, like very inept at like using it, I just kind of like click around and that's about it. So So email is always the best way to go. It's the most reliable.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 1:02:21

Same email Cherrell at justicesystempartners dot org. I'm always happy to answer any questions.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 1:02:29

Awesome. Well, thank you again, so much. And we'll put your contact information into the episode descriptions that way people can find each of you if they would like to. All right.

**Cherrell Green** 1:02:42

Thank you guys so much.

**Jenn Tostlebe** 1:02:45

Hey, thanks for listening!

**Jose Sanchez** 1:02:46

Don't forget to leave us a review on Apple podcasts or iTunes. Or let us know what you think of the episode by leaving us a comment on our website, [thecriminologyacademy.com](http://thecriminologyacademy.com).

**Jenn Tostlebe** 1:02:56

You can also follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook @TheCrimAcademy. That's THECRIMACADEMY.

**Jose Sanchez** 1:03:07

Or email us at [thecrimacademy AT gmail.com](mailto:thecrimacademy@gmail.com). See you next time!

**Jenn Tostlebe** 1:03:13

See you next time.