

Brand Protection Stories Episode 19:

“On Music, True Crime and Brand Protection”



Leah Evert-Burks: This is Leah Evert-Burks with the Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection @ Michigan State University and *this is Brand Protection Stories* - stories about the practice of brand protection by those who live it.

Leah Evert-Burks: We are speaking with members of the brand protection community about notable cases in their careers. Stories that are *stranger than fiction*, but in fact real life scenarios where we learn about the practice of brand protection and the challenges faced by brand-owners, law enforcement, government authorities, and consumers among other members of the world community.

Jason Daniels: The industrial park had a security guard. You had to have a reason to be into it, to gain access to the industrial park. So we obviously did not have that at this point. And you're right. It goes back to *boots on the ground*. I know the world of brand protection has changed so much that you obviously have that online facet. But you still have to have that *boots on the ground*, or that human component, once you identify specific place or a target that needs to be investigated. So to make this was not a quick investigation at all. This took many man hours, many days, many evenings. Of Parking a car outside the industrial park in the dark and following various cars that we thought were coming in and out of that specific business.

Leah Evert-Burks: Jason Daniels is the US Intelligence Team Manager of Brand Protection at Corsearch. He has been recognized as a subject matter expert in the field of brand protection. With over 20 years of intellectual property theft investigations, he has worked with global law enforcement and private industry professionals, focusing efforts on combating the manufacture and distribution of illicit products. Jason began his career as a law enforcement officer in North Carolina and was introduced to the world of counterfeiting while conducting investigations at the North Carolina Secretary of State's Office. He successfully created the first state anti-counterfeiting task force which continues to be in existence today. He later went on to manage brand protection investigations for several global companies and has been published on several occasions, writing articles pertaining to the dangers of counterfeit goods. Jason has also written curriculum and trained law enforcement and customs agencies around the world. He is a graduate of Shaw University where he studied criminal justice and continued his graduate studies in justice administration at the University of Louisville. In addition he has attended several courses by Michigan State University's Center for Anti-Counterfeiting & Product Protection and received a professional certificate in performance leadership from Cornell University. He continues to be an industry leader as he lends his voice to brand protection programs seeking assistance.

Leah Evert-Burks: Today we are speaking with Jason Daniels, a well-known and well-respected member of the Brand Protection Community. I'm certain many of you have listened to him speak at conferences, or at other events, in that charming North Carolina accent, and most likely you have also sought advice and guidance from him. I thought I knew Jason well, and then, a few years ago, at an A-CAPP Brand Protection Summit reception, he sat down at a piano and started to play and sing, which reminded me of the question we have posed. Where do brand protection professionals

come from? Well, just about everywhere. Welcome to brand protection stories, Jason.

Jason Daniels: Thank you, Leah. I I was little worried when you said you thought you knew me well, I wasn't sure where we were going with that. No, I remember the, I remember the summit very well. It was, you know, always enjoy the networking activities, and you know, I think it's valuable for especially brand protection of professionals. With if you have law, enforcement, or prosecutors that are in certain summits and conferences and things. It's just so nice to be able to rub shoulders, exchange business cards, and and know that you have those contacts in your in your network for the future, so it's good to be here. I really appreciate you reaching out. And yeah, look forward to sharing some of my past activities. And and maybe we'll be at one in the future.

Leah Evert-Burks: Wonderful, wonderful. So let's jump right into it. And I mentioned music, and, in fact, when you started your education, you were a music major in college. Is that right?

Jason Daniels: I was. I was, yeah, I was actually a a voice voice performance major and a piano minor. And that's not - a lot of people don't realize that, they don't and they don't know that. But you know, over the years, if people pick up on it a bit.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah.

Jason Daniels: Yeah, So yeah, interesting to go to criminal justice from that right.

Leah Evert-Burks: It definitely is. But you know I have found it interesting through many examples that they're seems to be a link between music, the talent, the understanding, and the hard sciences.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: I have found it fascinating that many people that succeed in a scientific or technical discipline also have a musical talent. Brain surgeons who are concert violinists, coders who are composers, and I found that link so interesting. I'm wondering if you see the investigator role discipline that you have held throughout these years and your music ability as connected.

Jason Daniels: That's a very good question. You know, just to jump back a bit. I did have a professor years ago, and I remember this vividly. That said, if you keep music a hobby you'll love it for the rest of your life. If, if you make it your you know your profession, some of that love may not be there, you know, and that ambition and the motivation may, may falter over the years. So, you know. That's one thing - it is a great hobby for me. It runs deeply in my family. My son, my deceased father was, was a very good, who actually had his own independent record company, which is a totally another rabbit hole.

Leah Evert-Burks: Wow!

Jason Daniels: But to get back to your question, yeah, I think so. I think where it's helped me more than anything is being able to communicate to people. And you know if you're performing you have to be on, if you will. You know, if you're on stage or and you're performing, you have to have a certain amount of charisma or stage presence, if you will, to be able to communicate effectively with people, and one of the things that I have found over the years is, I feel, like this is one of my strengths, as being able to tell a story. And bring that to even present the case to a prosecutor, or even a law enforcement agency, telling a story with the appropriate facts you know, with your you know your intro, your body, your conclusion so I'm just like singing a song, right? And being able to present that in

an adequate fashion, so that you get the support that you need. Whether it's said, whether it be private sector or public sector. So I do think that there's a nexus there. I would say that's you know, when you ask the question. That's the first thing that came to mind for me.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah, we'll definitely, effectively engaging with people is is a performance, right?

Jason Daniels: Sure, sure!

Leah Evert-Burks: And you figure out kind of where you need to start where you need to you know, spike, in your information where you need to conclude so that that's very interesting. But from music you then switched to criminal justice.

Jason Daniels: I did. I did. It was one of those things where I thought about what really, really interests me. It was music and true crime. I read true crime books all the time, and as a matter of fact, I still do, and I'm one of those individuals that yeah record all the the 48 hours and 2020. And and all those things that a lot of people don't watch because it's, you know, it's negative but I've always been interested in the motivation of people and the criminal mind. You know you go back to the old triangle; you know you have intent, you have opportunity, and then a crime occurs. So just the mindset of what motivates a criminal has always been extremely intriguing to me, and even in the early days when you know, I came through the Police Academy and went into law enforcement, I always wanted to be a always wanted to be a homicide detective.

Leah Evert-Burks: Hmmmm.

Jason Daniels: Until I became one.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah, I could imagine, I can imagine, yeah, yeah, it's interesting that that tie with fiction, you know, because we say here on Brand Protection Stories that you know, it's crazier than than fiction. You know, the real life that we deal with in brand protection is stranger than fiction.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: So it's interesting to hear that pull for you toward criminal justice because of that so when you graduated college, as you indicated, you became a police officer.

Jason Daniels: I did.

Leah Evert-Burks: You mentioned your, your dad now he was a civil servant, or worked for the town?

Jason Daniels: He was. Yeah, I'm sorry. Yeah. So Dad was a city manager. He actually had around 40 years altogether and worked for 3 different municipalities. I think in the beginning, obviously had some musical talent, so he supported the music ambitions that I had at an early age, but he also would have liked for me to have gone into public administration. When I decided I wanted to work for the government, he was not too enthused when I decided to go to the police academy and become a law enforcement officer. So he supported it, but I could tell it was not what he really wanted me to do, I think that a lot of that was based upon, you know his interaction with the local police, you know, being a manager and seeing what had gone on, and you know here I am I say young kid, but you know, in my early twenties, you know, looking to embark upon this new career, if you will.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah. So what were your early days of being a cop like?

Jason Daniels: Oh, interesting! You know what I always saw myself being a chief of police in some small Southern town. I really did. That was, you know. That would have been it for me. That would have incorporated the public administration, wants for my father, as well. But yeah, I you know, I worked in Western North Carolina for this municipality. We, right now it's grown obviously over the years. But you know we had, a, you know, a little over 100 officers, if you will, and we saw everything. It was just general calls of for service. As a matter of fact, something that's interesting is actually I started as a public safety officer. So that all the police were cross trained in fire, suppression duties as well. So imagine having a police, a police cruiser, or car with fire gear, or turn-out gear in the trunk of your car. So essentially, you could very well be dispatched to a fully involved structure fire as well as a domestic, depending on where you were, you know, stationed for that particular tour of duty.

Leah Evert-Burks: Wow.

Jason Daniels: So it's interesting concept.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah, yeah, quite a variety. I mean, I'm sure you saw all the range of crimes, too.

Jason Daniels: Sure. Yeah.

Leah Evert-Burks: So you know, deaths, robberies, sexual assaults, you know children, crimes against children, you know small, wanting to be a small-town sheriff makes me, in the South makes me think In the Heat of the Night so like a picture you being that, being that sheriff.

Jason Daniels: Absolutely. Yes.

Leah Evert-Burks: So, being a police officer in that capacity and also a firefighter and everything else that was needed in that capacity, what skills, soft or hard skills, developed there that you think transferred to your career in brand protection?

Jason Daniels: Yeah, yeah. So you know, going back to I I was fortunate because I quickly became a field training officer. So that was my first, my first stint with any type of managerial position. So I supervised new recruits that came in from the police academy. That were new recruits to our agency, and being able to mentor those individuals, and of course we there was a complete structure. So if you had a new individual that came in from from the police academy, there was a completely structured organized process they had to go through before they were able to work independently. So I think, having that communication with them, as well as communication with the general public, and such a different facet of activity. You know there was there was something I read years ago on, you know, a law enforcement officer is, a, you know, a protector, a social worker. Anyway, there was a lot of bullet items all the different hats that are an effective, successful police officer needs during the course of their career, because if you're going to a heated domestic, if you're going unfortunately to a a death, investigation, if somebody has broken into a house, or it's just simple motor vehicle accident. You have to have the mindset to communicate with all those different individuals with all these different emotions that they're feeling based upon the specifics of whatever the call for service is. So I think that again coming back to that, I think that that is a a very needed, essential component for someone to be successful in law enforcement. Also and you know a lot of people don't think about that. The obvious thing is - Hey, this person needs to be a really good investigator, or this person needs to ask the extra questions. You know that you-You also need to be in tune with what's going on around you, your surroundings, your sixth sense, if you will. So, as my career developed, you know, I left being a field

training officer and moved into being an investigator. And again I was, it was in a rural community, and in Western North Carolina, and if you were the assigned detective, whatever came in that day, if you were on call, whether that's a bank robbery, or whether it's you know you know a death investigation, if you will, you're the lead investigator on that particular case. So, and you work independently unless it's something you, you know, require assistance on. So I think the investigative skills became polished during that time as well, and then I have the opportunity to move on from from the sheriff's office to the Secretary of State's office in North Carolina, where I became a special agent, and that's where the new realm of criminal activity that I had absolutely no clue existed as a local officer became very, very apparent.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah. So when you moved over to be a special agent for the Secretary of State. This was in a intellectual property investigator, position, right?

Jason Daniels: It was.

Leah Evert-Burks: Did you know what IP represented at the time?

Jason Daniels: I knew what intellectual property was. I had never had an intellectual property investigation, nor a complaint, because I feel like at that time, Leah, at the local level it was fairly non-existent. Especially in my region. Now maybe if you were, you know, obviously in New York metro or LA, I'm sure that you know they had complaints that would come in from different brands and and have other investigations. But in the world I lived in, it was something that were relatively brand new so there was a big learning curve with it. Yeah.

Leah Evert-Burks: I imagine so. And I think that's a case for a lot of people that get into this field. I think one of the other aspects is

possibly a reluctance of law enforcement to get involved in IP crime. Maybe not understanding the nexus with other criminal activities, and not giving it as much, as many resources or education on that.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: But that's very unique in in North Carolina. Right, because of your Secretary of State, and if we could talk about her a little bit.

Jason Daniels: Sure, sure, absolutely. Yeah. I was very fortunate to to work with Miss Marshall. Elaine Marshall was was the Secretary of State, and still is, who has been a wonderful advocate for intellectual property investigations and protecting brands and not only protecting brands but protecting people from potentially hazardous products that can get into big box stores -that are in mom and pop stores or open air markets or online. Of course, which is for those that are in brand protection and have been in brand protection for years you know how things have changed over the years from 40-foot containers being seized at custom ports to now, everything being dropped shipped. I mean the whole component of you know, illicit trade if you will, has completely changed.

Brandon Drain: The marketplaces where counterfeits are sold have expanded through the years as consumer buying habits have changed. Once sold on folding tables at flea markets, now the sale of counterfeits online is the biggest threat, and the most difficult to police and enforce against. Along with websites and selling platforms, counterfeits are now sold through social media and make appearances in the metaverse. Counterfeiters go where the consumer goes...Still many of the enforcement actions against these criminals takes place in the physical world, and as we learn in *Brand Protection Stories* are never short on drama.

Jason Daniels: And that's something that you know. I think, Miss Marshall was in tune to, and I kind of felt like in the days when I worked there that we were the leading agency, if you will, with trying to train local law enforcement. Trying to get in front of a global scale, if you will come at conferences and events to preach the message, if you will. But basically, to try to gain support and have advocates. And Miss Marshall's been instrumental in making this happen, and we were very fortunate that went when I was there. She supported the implementation of the first state Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force, which is still in existence today, and it has grown unbelievably since the first 10 officers were sworn in and signed mutual aid agreements geez probably what 2003 or 2004 so that's how long the task force has been in existence and continues to grow. And as you're probably aware, they have a yearly summit a training episode for for local law enforcement, federal law enforcement that brands come to and and network and train those officers who have little to no experience with intellectual property theft, so it continues to, you know it continues to be passed on, you know, which I think is fantastic.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah.

Jason Daniels: So, and I was fortunate to work for her. Yeah, she was great.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah. Yeah, I had the pleasure of meeting Secretary Marshall when she accepted the A-CAPP Brand Protection Hero Award back in, I think, 2019. And you mentioned her work and your work in the task force. And I think you guys have really become the model of how to do it correctly, how to understand it, how to bring in partners, how to educate. Yeah I hadn't realized it had been that long.

Jason Daniels: I almost didn't want to say!

Leah Evert-Burks: When we throw years out these days, it's a little startling. But but we should celebrate that. I mean you helped establish it. It still continues. It's the model for other states. Other secretaries of state go to her, you know, and ask for advice on on how to combat IP crime. So it's a great accomplishment, great accomplishment.

Jason Daniels: Yeah, yeah, it's yeah. It's growing quite, quite a bit and very pleased to have been a part of it. For sure. Yeah.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah, so jumping into one of your stories. After you worked at the Secretary of State's office, you then started doing work with the Recording Industry Association of America. Can you explain what that organization is?

Jason Daniels: Sure. Actually, the RIAA is a trade association that represents the record labels in the United States. So it's also the entity that gives out a gold and platinum records to artists based upon sales. So next time you're in a Hard Rock Cafe go up and look at one of the gold or platinum records, and you'll typically see the RIAA trademark or logo that's also located there. But I worked for the anti-piracy unit, and you know Leah was really interesting because if you had told me years ago that I would have left law enforcement to move to the private sector to investigate bogus goods, you know, that was something that that wasn't even on the radar, but through having the task force in North Carolina, one of the missions that we had was to go out and train law enforcement on how to adequately investigate intellectual property theft and some of that training was done with multiple brands that would support those trainings and also attend. So got a cold call one day from the RIAA that asked - *Hey, would you be interested in potentially, you know, moving to Atlanta and overseeing investigations in the Southeast for us?* And I thought about it for about 5 min, and went sure, happy to do it.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah.

Jason Daniels: So I never thought about it. So I moved to Atlanta, and we had a team that that was there that worked right outside, actually, in Marietta, so the greater Atlanta area. But we oversaw anti-piracy investigations from North Carolina down to Florida, over to Texas, back up to Oklahoma, through Kentucky, back to the East Coast. So we had a team of investigators that worked with law enforcement. Local law enforcement, federal law enforcement in those area specifically for anti-piracy and investigations. Now it's commonly known for those that are in brand protection, and it was the staple for a while, but it's common to know that a lot of the proceeds from the illegal distribution of counterfeit goods goes to fund your your local gangs, your local organized crime chapters wherever they are, and and there has been moneys, you know, that have been tracked back to terrorist sympathizers and and other groups that may not have the the best involved for you know the United States, and that, and that's been proven. But yeah, so we worked anti-piracy investigations. At that time it was dealing with physical product, which sounds it's kind of funny. Now everyone's stuck on Spotify, or iheart Radio, or what have you. But yeah, there was still a lot of money that was made in in physical product, and it wasn't only music industry. It was also a motion picture association product as well as software. Software was that had been ripped off was very prominent during, in those times, as well.

Leah Evert-Burks: Wow, so I think one of the skills, probably, that you brought back to life when you're working at RIAA was your undercover skills. So playing a role trying to kinda infiltrate the, either the location or the network. And as I understand this operation operated out of like an industrial park that was gated, and it was you guys did surveillance but it was difficult to get into the actual facility.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: So what steps did you take to accomplish that?

Jason Daniels: Oh, yeah. So just to give our listeners a little bit of background. We had been involved with an investigation, with law enforcement actually in Southern Alabama. There were several locations in Alabama, and it literally started at open air markets and mom and pop stores. And you'll see where you know this rolls back to, you know, working, working the individuals that you know were selling and distributing the products illegally and being able to develop a rapport and communicate with them to gain more intelligence and more data based upon the investigation. So you start with one single entity that may branch out to 5, 10, 12, and you're looking for the big fish if you will. So yeah, this investigation actually initiated in Alabama, there was multiple our entire team was involved with it, and as well as numerous law enforcement agencies. But we had gained information that a major supplier to Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia, that the product that was manufactured illegally was coming out of the greater Atlanta area. When we were able to develop that information, and prove that indeed, that was what was happening. We track it back to an industrial park, and you're right. It was a gated industrial park. The industrial park had a security guard. You had to have a reason to be into it, to gain access to the industrial park. So we obviously did not have that at this point. And you're right. It goes back to *boots on the ground*. I know the world of brand protection has changed so much that you obviously have that online facet. But you still have to have that *boots on the ground*, or that human component, once you identify specific place or a target that needs to be investigated. So to make this was not a quick investigation at all. This took many man hours, many days, many evenings. Of parking a car outside the industrial park in the dark and

following various cars that we thought were coming in and out of that specific business. And this, there were many of us we had like, I think, in 1 night we probably had 6 different cars that were all manned and set up in different places. We had contact with one another through radios and through cell phones. And you know we would start our surveillance, and we would follow some vehicles when when they would leave. Luckily we were able to identify that the product was indeed coming out of the specific location where we thought. So back to the drawing board. So how do we get in? You know there's we've got to be able to be able, to be able to substantiate this information so we can work with law enforcement to hopefully have a criminal investigation and support that we were fortunate enough to find out that there was a trucking company that delivered to this specific location. So I actually make contact with with the trucking company and asked, "Can I tag along one day when you have your next drop or delivery, if you will, to this location?" And they were all about it. They gave me. They gave me a uniform, even. Yeah, yeah, so, so this, you know, we were all sitting around joking, is this really gonna work? And so I was able to walk in with the delivery or riding in with the delivery guy. So we got past security. When we made the delivery, and you have to understand the delivery was a lot of raw products. So everything from DVDRS, DVD, Recordables CD recordables, towers of what we refer to as burning labs.

Leah Evert-Burks: Right.

Jason Daniels: So towers where you had multiple burners, jewel cases, and things of that nature. So as we're unloading, you know, the individual that is working at the the business invites me, invite me in to make the delivery, and as I walk in, I see the entire manufacturing facility in plain view, where all this raw product is being turned into bogus product, and then being distributed through those states I had mentioned earlier. So just that alone gave us the

opportunity to approach law enforcement which we had a very good rapport in the area with, and searched warrants were were executed at the location, and if I think we we ended up taking a several tractor and trailer loads of bogus product and trailer loads of bogus product and raw material, and also manufacturing equipment away from and arrest were made. So yeah, that's it. That sounds very simple. With this conversation.

Leah Evert-Burks: No, it doesn't.

Jason Daniels: But it took a long time to put everything together.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah. It reminds me that good police work involves patience, which is is pretty hard to maintain for a long period of time. As you said you had, you know, multiple cars just waiting to be able to figure out how to access and who to follow, and how to bring this network down.

Jason Daniels: Yeah.

Leah Evert-Burks: The trucking company I find interesting. You said that they were very cooperative.

Jason Daniels: They were!

Leah Evert-Burks: I don't know if that's always the case. But you know, I, yeah.

Jason Daniels: Probably not. We had. We had. We had a good relationship with them. Yes. Yeah.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah, very interesting and just visualizing the tractor trailer loads in the amount of either movies or music or what they were copying. The volume of that is pretty startling.

Jason Daniels: Right? Yes, it was substantial, and it was to the point that we did see a major reduction, in the adjoining states, when we were out doing additional investigations. So we do know. It took a toll on that distribution network, for sure.

Leah Evert-Burks: Very interesting.

Brandon Drain: Counterfeiting is a violation of trademark rights, one of the intellectual property rights granted to innovators and companies along with patents, copyrights and trade secrets. Trademarks tell the world who a brand is, building on the trust, quality and reputation of its name; for consumers, it designates the origin of the product bearing the trademark in word form and/or logo - in other words where the product came from, and who produced it.

Leah Evert-Burks: One thing. And I just wanna mention because you, as we were starting out this, podcast you were talking about being a criminal justice major another case that you worked on was Secretary Marshall I think, involved counterfeit handbags or no, or counterfeit watches.

Jason Daniels: Yeah.

Leah Evert-Burks: I can't remember which one it was, but one thing that I found interesting about that is, some that we talk about in brand protection is, you know, the true need for education across all lines, and I think the individual that you guys brought an action against was actually, a student that was studying criminal justice.

Jason Daniels: That's correct.

Leah Evert-Burks: But yet, selling counterfeits.

Jason Daniels: Yes and using a good way to pay for studies through the distribution of counterfeit goods. Yeah. Yes, so there was an investigation that I had that were numerous complaints had come in that an individual was selling bogus designer watches on an auction platform that we're all very familiar with. And first of all for someone to buy designer or watch, unknowing, without seeing the product. That's just, you know, that's that's more money than I've got, anyway.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yes.

Jason Daniels: So anyway, there were numerous. There were numerous complaints that came in, and once we found you know, the username and and did some research into the individual and being able to see that that sale history. Yeah. I began to reach out to each customer. You know, that had purchased, and it was amazing. You know those that automatically said, Yeah, I'm I'm an avid collector of this style of watch, and these are bogus watches. And this is why, so ended up furthering our investigation. Gaining this much intelligence as we could, and I found out who the individual was, and had an interview with the individual who stated that you know they knew that it was not real, that the products were not real. They were, they were knock offs. I love that term. Oh, they're knock-offs. Okay.

Leah Evert-Burks: Sounds so innocent when that term is used. Yeah, yeah.

Jason Daniels: Right. So there was an arrest that was made. Obviously the individual admitted to doing it and during the interview process. The question was brought up is, you know, what are you doing this for? Well, I'm currently in college, and I'm studying criminal justice and this is how I'm you know, paying my

way through school. So it did happen. You can't make some of this up.

Leah Evert-Burks: I know absolutely you can't, and I know I know we've had this discussion as as many brand protection professionals have on on this subject, also very related, of family members or friends that will admit to possibly buying counterfeit or exploring it and I think our response. I have found my response many times saying, *Do you know what I do?* Let me explain why you should not be buying pharmaceuticals off of a Canadian pharmacy.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: You know why the price of this item on selling platform is so low.

Jason Daniels: Yes.

Leah Evert-Burks: Why, the item that you can't get in stores is all of a sudden available online.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: And you know it kind of goes back to that. That criminal justice student of that kind, of naive nature, of not understanding this crime.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: So I think we find even personal challenges

Jason Daniels: Absolutely, yes.

Leah Evert-Burks: in educating people about the dangers of counterfeits. One very effective way of educating folks is is, you know, through writing about it, teaching on it, and I know you have done a number of writing curriculum courses.

Jason Daniels: Right.

Leah Evert-Burks: You were also an author for us, for the Brand Protection professionals, Professional, excuse me, talking about counterfeit, hoverboards when those were very popular, talking about a popular item that the counterfeits proved very dangerous. So your background in, or your activities in educating. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Jason Daniels: Sure, absolutely. Yeah. You know. I've always thought that. That's the best way, and I relate everything back to to law enforcement. And it's just easier for me, you know, when community policing became a big deal, community policing, and it wasn't a new concept. It was something that had always been around. If you were an effective law enforcement agency, you know the mentality is to educate your community on what to look for, you know, even comes back to like the community watch programs which I I know some jurisdictions still have that and advocate for it, or something very similar, but it's having active law enforcement in a specific community being able to train them on what's happening in that community. So they can keep their eyes out because there's only so many law enforcement officers. But if you train your community appropriately, they all support you, and work with you and collaborate with you. And so, you know, I take that and move it directly into into what you're asking about with educating the law enforcement and community on the negative effects of counterfeit goods. You're right. Some people feel like they get a deal on certain things. And wow, you go brain dead, hey? I got it for this much. Okay. Well, you should be careful, because it's a pharmaceutical, or it's a

lithium-ion battery, or something that could potentially be dangerous for you, case in point, kind of going back to what you you had stated earlier about how we need to educate our families, even, and I told you this story, and I think it's appropriate to share, based upon this. Several years ago, my lovely wife purchased a designer watch for me for a holiday, and I had wanted it for quite some time. However, you know, I wasn't gonna purchase it for myself. You know there were some housing things that needed to be taken care of, right. So anyway, loved it, it was fantastic, and I had a hard time asking. *So where did you get this do you mind if I ask? You know. Where you got this, you know, and we went to a website and and you know, I thought it was authentic. You know but doing what I have done for a long time. I was. You know I was curious, and I I didn't wanna act like, you know. I didn't care, you know. And I wasn't appreciative if you will, so I snuck to a jeweler.*

Leah Evert-Burks: Oh!

Jason Daniels: She didn't know that. So I snuck to a jeweler and it's authentic which was nice to hear. But you know I because when he comes down to it this is, it's not the world she lives in.

Leah Evert-Burks: Right.

Jason Daniels: So you know, but it's funny, cause you're right. We do need to educate even the ones we love. But you're right. It's been such a thing to go out and train law enforcement and see like their eyes open. Wow! You know how many felonies in progress can you walk up on? I mean, if you look at the different states' statutes, and of course they're all different, and especially the federal statutes, are different as well but yeah, I mean, it's out there. It's happening. And if you want to be in an assertive officer, you know, do all you can to learn about this. And obviously the the Department of Justice has the grants that are given out each year to law enforcement agencies that

can focus their attention and efforts on intellectual property theft. So if you're a law enforcement officer and you're reading this, go to the Department of Justice website and look specifically for that, grant. It's a great way for your agency to get involved with this type and it really opens doors for you as well to learn and be engaged with the brands they want to support you. They can't do anything without your help and those two entities have to work together to be successful.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah. Yes, absolutely, absolutely. Thank you for bringing that up cuz I don't think a lot of people know about those programs and that partnership is absolutely essential.

Jason Daniels: Sure!

Leah Evert-Burks: It doesn't work without partnerships.

Leah Evert-Burks: For those policing agencies who don't have resources to build-out their knowledge and be prepared to combat IP crime, there are resources available from the US Department of Justice as Jason indicated, specifically the grants provided under the Intellectual Property Enforcement Program: Protecting Public Health, Safety, and the Economy from Counterfeit Goods and Product Piracy and also under the Bureau of Justice Assistance in Leadership and Service to Achieve Safer Communities be sure to visit bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities

Leah Evert-Burks: So as we're winding down, Jason, there's a few things that I want to be sure to ask of you, and one is you've you've been in, you know, law enforcement, brand protection profession for for a while.

Jason Daniels: Thank you.

Leah Evert-Burks: As you've seen the evolution of brand protection and the training of law enforcement over the years. Is there an element that you think really stands out as essential for success of any type of program?

Jason Daniels: Yes, I can talk on this. Yeah. Yeah, regardless if you're a brand, or if you're law enforcement, the commitment has to be there. I understand now. That's easier said than done. I mean, if you're I mean because, even regardless, if you're public or private sector. The focuses change. Priorities change, you know. If you have violent crime in your neighborhood, you know, I can imagine as a chief of police, you probably that's your focus. It's not, you know, prioritizing someone on a street corner, maybe selling illicit goods. I get that I get the real-world issues that come. If you're a brand, you know, things change as well, and that leadership may not be there that supported you at one point to where you know you're able to, be able to accomplish what you were able to do in the past. I think it's important for people, entities to be successful again, private or public, is to be able to look in the future and what's gonna happen? What's gonna happen to brand protection in 5 to 10 years? You have to be visionary. I was having this discussion with a colleague of mine last week when you recognize that there's an issue. Oh, there's been an issue. You're already behind the 8 ball at this point so there's a need to be assertive in protecting your brands. There's a need to be able to show that return of investment, the value you bring to your company, and and sometimes that's not easy, either, because you need to convey it in a manner that is receptive from senior leadership to show what your value is. So I think that forward thinking is a major component technology is gonna continue to change.

Leah Evert-Burks: Hmm, that's a given. Yeah.

Jason Daniels: I mean look at what's happened since COVID, I mean, you know, with everything going online, you know, I had mentioned earlier. You know, these 40-foot containers are no longer packed we're getting drop shipments now. Anybody can be a seller, whether it be on any social media platform. It's afforded us the opportunity to all you know. Be your own businesspeople, and then you choose what you what you wanna sell and distribute. So that's not gonna go away. Applications are gonna be more complicated, you know, when you start thinking about, you know, you know, artificial intelligence that's coming in. You know, artificial intelligence can be used for bad or good. Yeah. Yeah, you know. So there's a lot lot of forward thinking, I think, needs to be addressed. I think it's imperative for brand protection using to be able to assess that and work together, and even with other brands, on bringing the appropriate stakeholders together to identify the challenges and the possible challenges that may be experienced in that arena in the next 5 to 10 years, and how you're gonna work together to combat it. That was long-winded. I'm sorry.

Leah Evert-Burks: Great, that was no, but that that was wonderful, and it kind of leads in, and you may have already answered my last question, but or it or it may be even a bigger challenge. If you could select one word to describe either the cases you've worked on, or your involvement in brand protection, what would that one word be?

Jason Daniels: You know what you stole my thunder, but I'm gonna be honest with you right here I have the word "evolution" written down right there.

Leah Evert-Burks: Ah! Okay.

Jason Daniels: Yeah, I would say, evolution. And again, the reason I would define it that way is, I remember when prosecutors would not

take my cases as you know, as an agent, because they had never prosecuted a you know, a counterfeiting case I remember when certain law enforcement agencies did not want to support investigations because they didn't understand intellectual property theft. And you know it was viewed, as you know, putting someone out of business that's just trying to put food on their family's table. I remember going to certain conferences back in the day as a sworn law enforcement officer when I was the only one that was there, the only law enforcement officer that was there and it was a multitude of brands basically they would talk about challenges but I have seen everything evolve. This was before The IPR Center, right but look how much things have evolved over the years! Now you have the Center. You have the grants that we talked about earlier. So the momentum.

Leah Evert-Burks: That's a good word too yep.

Jason Daniels: That may be a good word, too. "momentum." The momentum is really moving forward. For for this type of investigation and being able to network with the appropriate authorities to have some big wins and some success. And I think it's gonna continue to evolve. And I mean you can even go into how the mechanisms have changed, the distributions networks, so that we've talked about how it's so easy to lay in bed on Sunday morning with your phone and order whatever you want and it's here in two days.

Leah Evert-Burks: Yeah. So accessible? Right? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Jason Daniels: You know, yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So, yeah, yeah, so evolution, we can switch to momentum.

Leah Evert-Burks: Those are both great words. Great. Well, Jason, I wanted to thank you for being here today on Brand Protection Stories and thank you for doing the hard work.

Jason Daniels: Yeah, my pleasure. I really appreciate you. And the relationship with the Center over the years. It's been a great thing. And I consider, considering you guys friends and really appreciate it. If there's anything I can do, please feel free to reach out, be happy to help.

Leah Evert-Burks: Alright, thank you.

Leah Evert-Burks: Jason's path to brand protection through music study, a love of true crime and an understanding of the performance aspect required to get the right people and entities involved and engaged, is a reminder of what we say at the ACAPP Center...

Brandon Drain: Successful brand protection takes a village and as such is multi-disciplinary by nature, *and* necessity. That is one of the reasons the A-CAPP Center works across disciplines and opens its student internships to a variety of majors including packaging, engineering, law, criminal justice, psychology, and International Relations.

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Leah Evert-Burks: This is Leah Evert-Burks with A-CAPP. Until our next session, keep protecting your brands, and the world's consumers. Keep it real.