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# Rob Fried, Senior Vice President, Forensics & Investigations, Sandline Global

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## Let’s start with a little bit about you. What first brought you to digital forensics?

While a student at the University of New Haven (UNH), majoring in Forensic Science, I enrolled in courses related to computer forensic investigation and information protection and security. I always had a knack for computers and technology, and while studying, I found that the topics of science, law and technology complemented well with my personal interests. Confucius once said, “chose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” I feel fortunate to have been blessed with a career, where this saying still holds true for me, after over twenty years in the industry.

## How has your career evolved, and what did you find was important to your professional growth?

I began my career as a Computer Crime Specialist with the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C), where I trained local, state, and federal law enforcement personnel. Early on in my career, I learned to convey technical concepts in a variety of ways, whereas it can relate to students of varying skillsets and backgrounds. I focused a lot of time and energy on how best to present the content from our Basic Data Recovery and Analysis (BDRA) and Advanced Data Recovery and Analysis (ADRA) courses. For example, there was an analogy that involved hopper cars of a freight train to understand how the File Allocation Table (FAT) worked. The use of such

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analogies and concepts, with context, has proved to be successful, and is a strategy that I still use today when speaking to clients as a forensic consultant.

Your most recent move was to [Sandline Global](#). Tell us more about this new opportunity: what does your role involve, and what are you looking forward to most about being here?

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I transitioned to Sandline Global earlier this year, after being offered the opportunity to help further grow and lead their global forensic practice. My role as Senior Vice President involves providing thought leadership and strategy in the areas of digital forensics and investigations as well as heading up the global operations of the digital forensics services that we provide to our clients. I am currently leading several initiatives, including building out our New York office, which will feature a state-of-the-art digital forensics laboratory. Our goal is for the laboratory to obtain ANAB accreditation and to provide our clients with the best-in-class technology, processes, and procedures. I join in the excitement with my colleagues and welcome the many opportunities that are in store for the talented team at Sandline Global.

What’s the advantage of digital forensics to e-discovery? How has this changed over time — and how is it the same? How do you see it evolving over the next 5-10 years?

Digital Forensics is a vital aspect within the early stages of the eDiscovery process. Most specifically, digital forensics is relied upon during the Identification, Preservation and Collection stages of the Electronic Discovery Reference Model (EDRM). Over the years, the types of Electronically Stored Information (ESI) have evolved from collecting full, forensic images of computer hard drives, exporting email items from local container files or server mailboxes, and forensically preserving folders and files from network file shares. We have seen more data sources becoming relevant today. There has also been a shift towards targeted collections. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on data stored on mobile devices, cloud-based services, social media accounts, web sites and document management systems. It has become important to consider data stored in locations, other than local devices and identify all the various resources that users may have access to. Also, at the forefront of many discussions is the potential of commingled data as BYOD policies become more prevalent. Although much has changed over the years, we often apply the same foundational forensic concepts when identifying, preserving, and performing data collections from the wide array of data sources that we encounter today.

You’re also spearheading the new CyberSleuthing department at [PI Magazine](#). As a licensed PI, what’s important about reaching this audience?

Being a digital forensic investigator is rewarding, and I am happy to share my knowledge with fellow PIs within the pages of Professional Investigator (PI) Magazine. As with any profession, many private investigators have specific areas of expertise and we collaborate in several ways, including professional organizations, industry events and publications. PI Magazine has different departments and “CyberSleuthing” allows me to share my knowledge with PIs who may or may not have experience in digital forensics or cybersecurity. I have always enjoyed writing and hope my articles will be helpful and raise awareness regarding important and trending topics that I encounter as a cybersleuth.

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**You’re an advisory board member, as well, with EC-Council. How did you come to be involved, and what does this entail?**

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Some of the most rewarding things in life can be encountered when you devote your time and energy to something that you are passionate about. A couple of years ago, I was invited by EC-Council to become a member of the Global Advisory Board for Computer Forensics. It has been a great opportunity and I have connected with other leaders in the digital forensics community. As board members, we collaborate to guide EC-Council in their ongoing efforts to raise awareness and provide training and certification in digital forensics and cybersecurity to individuals around the globe.

**What one piece of advice would you impart to recent graduates and/or people looking to make a career change into digital forensics?**

The field of digital forensics is constantly evolving, and different areas of expertise have emerged. It is important to understand where your interests and skillsets are best suited as you enter your career. Do you have an interest in performing data collections? Do you have an investigative mindset? Are you fascinated with cybersecurity and incident response? There is a lot to think about. Once you identify what role may best suit you, seek out an opportunity at an organization that offers such services. Remember, every opportunity is an experience. After some time, and now with some experience under your belt, identify where your passion and expertise reside; is it within mobile forensics? cryptocurrency investigations? the forensic collection of data from drone devices? Whatever it may be, do your best to become the go-to-person for it. You may not know where it all may lead but if you sustain that passion and drive each day, without a doubt, you will achieve success.

**When you aren’t working, what do you like to do in your downtime?**

It is important to have a good work-life balance. When not at work, I make sure to spend downtime with my wife and our two toddlers. Being a father to a 5-year-old boy and a 2-year-old girl, keeps me on my toes. While not running to ballet and music classes, or chasing them and our hens around the backyard, I enjoy writing poetry and compiling information about my family’s history. Several years ago, I wrote a book, *From Generation To...* which contains poetry and a compilation of photographs, documents and interviews related to my four grandparents’ experiences during the Holocaust; the book is available in museums, libraries, and bookstores around the world.

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