

Podcast Transcript

Risk Never Sleeps

Episode 103

Ed Ricks

Ed Gaudet: Welcome to the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, in which we learn about the people that are on the front lines, delivering and protecting patient care. I'm Ed Gaudet, the host of our program, and man, I am pleased today to be joined by a good friend, a long-time friend, Ed Ricks, at Baker Tilly. Ed, how are you today, sir?

Ed Ricks: Hey, Ed, man, thank you for having me. You're right. We've been friends for a long time.

Ed Gaudet: We have been, yeah. I can't believe I haven't had you on the show sooner, which means that maybe we'll get you a shirt, too.

Ed Ricks: Oh, no.

Ed Gaudet: Have you seen these shirts? Have you seen these shirts that I have?

Ed Ricks: I'm sure they're awesome.

Ed Gaudet: They're tour shirts. They're like music, rock 'n roll band tour shirts.

Ed Ricks: Awesome.



Ed Gaudet: Not that this is a rock 'n roll program, but we are going to talk music. But let's start off with, you know, tell our listeners about your organization and your role.

Ed Ricks: Sure. Thank you. So, Ed Ricks, I am managing director at Baker Tilly on our healthcare IT consulting practice. And, you know, you know, my background, but I spent over 20 years as a VP and CIO in provider lands and health systems, primarily on the East Coast, and about three and a half years as a CEO at the last system I was at. So, coming over to this side is different for me. I thought about it for years, working on the vendor side, on the provider side, and I've been really happy. It's kind of a neat spot for me, so I'm not really a seller, but I can put on my entrepreneur hat in this role, which is good. I am, I guess, considered a subject matter expert to help support all of our sales team. And I guess, as you know, part of it coming over from the provider side is take advantage of all your friendships you've made over the years and start talking to all those folks about some ways that we can help improve the way they deliver care. So it's great. You know, we, healthcare IT, but Baker Tilly itself is a very large CPA advisory firm and just about 2 billion in revenue a year. So a large organization and growing and, you know, we do everything from accounting to audit to risk assurance, all those things across all industries and then in healthcare specifically all of those things and healthcare IT consulting.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. And you have a long, like you said, a long set of experiences.

Ed Ricks: ... but you got it right, man.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that span, I don't want to call you old; that span, many decades in healthcare. And we met when you were a CIO at a provider in South Carolina. Was it Beaumont? Is that who, or was it?

Ed Ricks: Beaufort.

Ed Gaudet: In Beaumont or no?

Ed Ricks: No.



Ed Gaudet: Not in Beaumont.

Ed Ricks: That's ...

Ed Gaudet: In Beaufort, in Beaufort. Yeah. I get confused, man. It's been a long day. It's been a long week. ... Are we Thursday already? It's like, I felt like I was at Tuesday for, like, four days, and now it's Thursday. Yeah, no. No, it, Beaufort, which is a beautiful part of the world.

Ed Ricks: I still live here. I mean, this is, you know, you can live anywhere in a lot of these roles, and we just like it in this area so much we stayed.

Ed Gaudet: Last time I saw you was, I think, in Beaufort. Or maybe it was at a conference, but I did see you at Beaufort. I know that, I remember that. Yeah, I think I was still smoking cigars and drinking back then, too.

Ed Ricks: ... we got some late lunch or something. Yeah, it was great.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, it was a good time. It was a good time. And, of course, we're going to get into music because we do share a passion there. But how did you first get into healthcare IT?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, I don't know. It's one of those weird progressions that I would have never expected, right? So I thought in high school, I was going to be an electrical engineer and went to a small engineering college focused on electrical engineering, and somehow through that time period, shifted into computer science. And so I did graduate computer science and physics degrees, which didn't do me a ton of good other than I worked for a small software company that wrote software, which just happened to be healthcare software. And so, probably seven years into that, I was sort of leading our R&D for that organization, one of our hospital customers hired me to be their CIO at the time, and that was it. That was a small, that was like a 60-bed hospital, but it was a great learning experience, you know, and the light bulb moment was a long before they hired me, you know, when I was working for that organization, trying to help support one of our customers and tell them, well, here's how this system works.

Ed Ricks (cont'd): They said, well, here's how the hospital works. You know, said, well, you're right. We're delivering this service to you. We got to, you know, think about this completely differently, which was a great thing for me. So that's how I got into healthcare. And then over the years, progressively, you know, different roles in health systems, in larger responsibility ended up with masters in Health administration. So at that point, I'd given up, I knew I wasn't leaving healthcare, I was going to stay in there, and I'm happy. I love the mission of healthcare and ... so much, you know?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, let's talk about the mission of healthcare, because I think for folks that are listening that really think they know healthcare until they're really in it and spend time in it, they really don't understand the power of the mission. What does that mean to you?

Ed Ricks: You know, healthcare is very unique. Well, you know, the business of healthcare is the craziest financial model in the world. But to me, the mission in healthcare, not for profit and for profit, doesn't matter. If you read the mission statements, they may say some in the for-profits about, you know, protecting the shareholders or what. But everyone's there to deliver better healthcare for the communities that they serve. That's just really what you're trying to do and make a difference. So all the clinicians that you work with, the support teams that you work with, I mean, they are really mission driven. They're not to them. It's not the financial model. It's a job for sure, right? But they're in there because they like taking care of people, and there's something really good about that. You definitely miss that when you leave the provider side. I left about seven years ago now, and so I did work for another organization for about four, and I loved that role, large IT integrator and, you know, get to work with a lot of hospitals on solving some of their unique problems. But it's different; everyone's got a culture, and even the culture I'm in now is great, but to me, it's just different. I miss, there are a few things I miss about being in Seattle. There are a few things I do not miss; we'll probably talk about some of them because they involve risk for sure. But yeah, I love the mission of healthcare. I really do.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's well said. You know, as you look out over the next 12, 24 months, what are some of the things you're, you know, thinking about strategically, and what are some of the challenges you're faced with?

Ed Ricks: You know, the biggest challenge for any vendor in healthcare IT space is the same one. You smile because, you know, there's just not enough money to go around anymore, and that's not going to change everyone's task to be more efficient. Reimbursement is not going to get better. You can get smarter with it, with some of your managed care contracting and some of the relationships that you have with, you know, providers in your area. But there's probably not more cash without more volume or figuring out how to get larger and scale and be more efficient, which I don't see very often. So, it is competing for the funds that are there. And, you know, as a firm who would traditionally be selling epic, you know, staff augmentation or ERP work or integration interoperability, we do a lot of that. You know, that still has to happen. It's an important piece. I think a lot of these organizations, and it's the bulk of what we do. We've sort of shifted the way we try to deliver that service and talk about it maybe more than anything else, and it's all-around optimization. It's like, how can we help you solve a problem that also has another line like built into the service? We're going to use the same kinds of people that we've been using, you know, that know the EHRs inside out or the ERP systems, but we're going to help you get more value out of the investment that you've already made and either reduce expense or improve workflows, which, you know, that's a little bit more qualitative and quantitative or improved revenue, you know, improve reimbursable revenue. And we've done a lot of projects around those three areas, that most of them also lead clinician or patient satisfaction. So those are all good things, and that's sort of the focus. We are still growing. We love that, you know, getting bigger every month. That, I think is kind of fun. And getting to meet new people every every week, which I really like that.

Ed Gaudet: You're still traveling a lot?

Ed Ricks: You travel a fair amount, yes, for work and personally a little bit too, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Did you go to the Epic user group?

Ed Ricks: I didn't because my wife and I were on vacation in Portugal. So, you know, I got a free pass, but ... for sure.

Ed Gaudet: How was Portugal?

Ed Ricks: First time there. It was beautiful. I love that area.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, I have a friend, a couple of friends that have actually walked the Camino de Santiago, the one from France to Spain. And I think it goes, I think it actually extends through Portugal as well. I don't really know.

Ed Ricks: Right on the border there, for sure.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, yeah. What was your takeaway from the trip? What was the thing you loved the most?

Ed Ricks: You know, I liked the wines. I like the port. I never really had much port before, so I got a lot of experience around that. It was just as beautiful. Like, their wine country is all mountainous. And we actually did, for one of the weeks, we did a riverboat cruise, and we were going up river, which I knew that, but literally, you're going up. So, we went through a series of locks over the course.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, no kidding.

Ed Ricks: Three days to raise your elevation, and it was just gorgeous. Some of those people, like the workers, I don't know how they do it. Those slopes are so steep; they tie off to go, like, pick the grapes or work on the vines and everything, but the scenery is beautiful from it.

Ed Gaudet: Did you go Viking? Did you use the Viking River cruise?

Ed Ricks: It wasn't, but it was very similar, yeah, ...

Ed Gaudet: I want to do one of those, so.

Ed Ricks: It was. It was nice.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. So as you're looking out, you know, obviously, you see a lot from the breadth of customers that you have in healthcare. What are some of the innovations that you're just blown away with recently that you've seen like that people aren't just talking about but actually implementing?

Ed Ricks: You know, I hate buzzwords. I just, I've never been a fan. But even back when I was the purchaser of all these services, like, I was just like, let's be pragmatic. What problem are you going to solve? And, how you do it ... I don't always like to talk about AI and generative and blah blah blah, but that stuff is real. I mean, I know that today that is very real. It does introduce other risks, right? And I think that governance around that is where people are coming in, but I love some of the solutions. Some of them, they improve the workflow. But you just like the virtual nursing, virtual sitting, the real winner, that has a camera and a microphone in every room. But if you let the AI and algorithms help, you also catch things in advance. And the computer vision part I think is awesome. I really I'm a big fan of that because I think it creates the efficiency and it helps with the nursing shortage and some of the other things.

Ed Gaudet: Well, in documentation and notes and summary notes.

Ed Ricks: For sure, you know.

Ed Gaudet: All of that. What about on the Epic side? They're doing a lot with AI, obviously at the product level. Have you seen anything that's like, you've got to see this? You definitely have to get your arms around this.

Ed Ricks: You know, again, for me, today, it's the pragmatic stuff, just what you said. So helping you do the notes, you know, up front and capture that they also have built in the capabilities to the computer vision, or at least the cameras and the mikes in the rooms, and improve some workflows around that. But yeah, that front end, let that clinician take care of the patient. Talked about that for years. Like I knew you from the past. One of the best things I ever did was purchase from your company.

Ed Ricks (cont'd): And when you have a doctor say, finally, you're doing something for me instead of to me, which I know that phrase has been used a few times, but it's powerful when you hear that, you know, and say, we're here for you because you're here for the patient. So we've got to figure out how to get the technology out of the way.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, and you're referring to the Imprivata tap and go, I think, right there. Yeah, I know, it's amazing. I used to go into hospitals or clinics, and I see it, and I always I always reference it. Hey, I worked on that product, very cool. So, you know, as you think about AI governance, you brought that up. What are you seeing from a macro trend, and really specifically, what can you share with listeners that may be just thinking about building out AI governance in their organization?

Ed Ricks: Well, first, think about it and do it because it's still probably fewer than 50% of people have built like an institution-wide governance model around AI. It's not an IT problem. Again, it's an organizational risk management problem. It really is. And if you're working on these applications that help aid clinical decision-making or literally make it, you know, for you, that means a lot to a lot of different people, right? If it's like you're using some of the AI tools to improve your processes of registering a patient or billing and claims processing, it's a little bit different potential impact. I think it's awesome. I mean, I love creating the efficiencies, but when you're in the clinical space, particularly, you know, around clinical decision-making, that's where it gets different. And so we were seeing places where pockets of departments were getting things in that the doctors wanted or something, and we weren't thinking about it organizationally. And so it's not that it's a brand new concept and governance. Probably been, you know, 14 or 18 months that people have talked about having something where AI has been real enough, you know, that it made sense organizationally. But I would say 50% of the people I talk with still haven't built out a governance model around that, so talk about it. And, you know, just the more you understand what your risks are, I think the better that you can stand up to them and know it's worthwhile.

Ed Gaudet: And is that a service Baker Tilly offers to folks? Will you sit down with organizations?

Ed Ricks: We do. I mean, I'm not even here talking about stuff that we sell necessarily, but we do. We do a lot of governance and we've got capabilities around that and help people. I just think it's important, from an organizational perspective, to have something in place so that you know that you can say no for the right reasons or you've got a pathway to do the right thing.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. I want to ask this question. It's been on my list. I haven't really asked it to anyone yet, but I know your background. I know your background, I know I know your background, so I know your background. I know you're really good at this. What advice do you have for IT and security leaders that are trying to build relationships with clinical leaders?

Ed Ricks: I mean, I used to have to say this all the time, right? Like, we weren't running an IT organization. We were running a healthcare organization. So no matter how big you are, how big your IT is, and how awesome, and some of them are, you are 100% there to serve the providers and the organization because you're serving the patients through that. And now so many of the IT applications of course, touch the patients directly, but that it's a service. I mean, that's what you're there for. And so it's you know, I hate no people, never like that. I don't like them in CFOs. I don't like them in IT leaders. I don't like them anywhere. Like there's a way to do the right thing, always. You just got to.

Ed Gaudet: Always.

Ed Ricks: Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, you have to talk through it. You've got to work through it.

Ed Ricks: Of course.

Ed Gaudet: You've got to come with facts, not feelings. You got to have a business case, right? Yeah. So no, that's really, really great advice I love that. See, I knew you'd be able to help folks.

Ed Ricks: ... I don't know.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. Well, it's a good answer. Yeah, no, I always find that organizations I'll go into, IT is still treated like a stepchild to some extent, right? You know ...

Ed Ricks: ... that.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. No, no offense to anyone that has stepchildren, right? But like, you know, they're not treated at the table with the clinical staff and, nor do they do themselves any favor. And so I'm wondering, you know, have you seen that where an organization's IT leader did these things, and it broke through, and it helped create the relationship? Is there anything that can help trigger that in a positive way?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I've tried to help, I guess mentor or coach or some a few different IT leaders where that's exactly right. Like always, the first indicator. And not that this should have to be a bad thing, but if IT reports up to the CFO and not through the CEO or the COO or even the medical officer or something, you know, you see some of those relationships now, then you looked at it as a cost center as opposed to a strategic part of running the organization. I was super lucky. You know, I would say three out of the four places that I was a CIO at, I thought just the opposite, right? Like, IT is going to be a differentiator for us, not that we're running an IT organization. We just want to utilize capabilities to deliver better healthcare. And so at Beaufort, you know, great leadership there. Great team. The entire leadership team was awesome to work with and everybody bought into that. So if I could give advice to anybody, you know, this sort of stuck in that rut of, you know, we're the keep the lights on kind of people and technical wonks or whatever, for lack of a better way to explain it is like you can change it, right? Go start talking to the doctors and nurses around every day. Talk to patients like, you would go into patient rooms, talk to patients about what was going on, and you learn so much from doing that. It's not always comfortable, but you can learn a lot. Talk to the nurses. You know, I got to be friends with. I always start this when I go to a new job. First, become friends with all the people on the food line or in the cafeteria, right? And then you figure out where the bathrooms are and all that kind of stuff. But after that, it's like the clinical people who are touching patients. I think that, you know, you will never waste a minute if you're spending it with people that are on the front line like that, and you'll learn a ton. And the more important because of that, the more you'll elevate the role in and elevate what ... IT.

Ed Gaudet: That's great advice. And I think, you know, in some ways, even though politics can be a dirty word to some people, you have to be a politician in a good way. For all the goodness that comes out of a politician, you have to be a diplomat. You have to be a politician. You have to be an advocate in a way that connects with the business. And if you're not, that's, I think, where things go wrong, right?

Ed Ricks: I think in any industry, IT's got to be connected to the business. Healthcare, I think, is a little different because the business is delivering healthcare to patients, right? But I agree, like the politician part; some people would have probably called me a politician, but I think it's different. I think it's more just understanding how people tick, right? We're all we all have our own personalities. Doesn't mean one is better than the other. They're just different, right? And understanding how yours interacts with people that have other personalities can go a long way, and I think, just improve the relationships.

Ed Gaudet: Yes, absolutely. All right. Good. Now we're going to get to the fun stuff a little bit about you. The man behind the curtain here. So, all right, so outside of your day job, outside of everything you've been doing over the last 20-some-odd years, if you weren't doing this, what would you be doing? What are you most passionate?

Ed Ricks: That you can make money from?

Ed Gaudet: No, no, I mean, I love poetry. I would be writing poetry and screenplays if I could do it, you know.

Ed Ricks: You do write poetry. Yes.

Ed Gaudet: I do, I still do. I do.

Ed Ricks: Yeah. That's awesome.

Ed Gaudet: Well, I don't sleep either, so I mean, Risk Never Sleeps, Ed never sleeps. So it's like.

Ed Ricks: Well, as I get older, I don't sleep enough either. I did write one haiku once and you commented that it was good.

Ed Gaudet: I did, yes. That's right.

Ed Ricks: But they didn't start. There once was a man from Nantucket.

Ed Gaudet: That's a Limerick, not a haiku.

Ed Ricks: No, no. Yeah, that's right. You know, I don't know, I love traveling. I like food, good or bad for that. You know, I like music. Love music. And then when we can combine, like, those things together, just from a personal perspective, it's my wife and I, it's one of our favorite things to do is travel for music and, you know, hopefully, enjoy food. So you know that to be true because I've seen you at events before that were nowhere near homes.

Ed Gaudet: That's right. We're going to get to that event too, because that was majestic on so many levels, like. So, no hobbies, no, like woodworking, nothing like that or?

Ed Ricks: Not a woodworker, you know, I don't like to dish all that much. I do like to golf. So we live in a golf Mecca in this area. We have an RV, so we travel in an RV. We're ... that, which is kind of cool.

Ed Gaudet: Let's talk about RV travel. I didn't know that. Maybe you told me. I don't remember, but, you know, it's. How long ago did you purchase the RV?

Ed Ricks: We started about three years ago. I remember we were complete novices, right? had never done and talked about doing it. You know, our kids are all grown out of the house, and we'll see grandkids, but we're like four hours plus away from the closest ones, you know?



Ed Ricks (cont'd): So it's an adventure to make that happen. And so we bought a motorhome, you know, for the first time and purposely bought one. It was a few years old. So, you know, I didn't know if we'd even like it. And we liked it. We were gone. The longest stint we were gone was six weeks. One time in consecutively.

Ed Gaudet: Whoa. Where did you go?

Ed Ricks: We were in northern Michigan, northern part of the Lower Peninsula. We're both from Michigan originally.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah. Like Mackinaw. Is that north?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, sort of battering the coast along Lake Michigan. We lived on the ocean right now. I think it's prettier there. You know, along the coast of Lake Michigan. In the ocean. Here's gorgeous. So, and we have family in the general area. So we've done that. We actually just traded a couple months ago to a different kind of RV. Just to get a little bit more space in it. So when we're traveling, and I'm working, I've got like some real private space now. It's kind of nice.

Ed Gaudet: Full shower, full primary bedroom.

Ed Ricks: Bathrooms, two bedrooms. You know, the outdoor.

Ed Gaudet: Like a house on wheels.

Ed Ricks: It's too big. If you want to laugh sometime, watch me back that thing up, man.

Ed Gaudet: It's just, I drove a U-Haul truck one day, and I almost literally took out a gas station. Like, I literally around the corner and knocked, like, you know how they have those steel, those steel reinforcement things. They do that for a reason because I just like literally crunched one one day.

Ed Ricks: It is. It's ...

Ed Gaudet: it's tough. I don't know how you how did you manage to do that?

Ed Ricks: Driving a motorhome wasn't too bad once you figured it out the first time. We changed to a Fifth Wheeler. If you know that setup, which I know it's not supposed to be as cool as motorhomes, but I'll tell you a living space. It's way more so. I had to buy a big old, you know, diesel pickup truck, and ... are trying to sleep in the bed, and that's a new learning curve. Backing that thing up is.

Ed Gaudet: It's like backing a boat up. It's counterintuitive.

Ed Ricks: 43ft long, and you have no visibility behind you, you know. You're exactly right.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. Oh, can you get cameras behind it, though?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, it's got a camera, but it's just hard to make it make ... You know, just the perspective is.

Ed Gaudet: That's awesome. The other thing I've thought about doing is traveling just, like, out of the house for a year and living in Europe and across Europe. And have you have you thought about that, too?

Ed Ricks: Yeah. It's less ideal when you're trying to work like US hours.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, you can't do it. You can't do it when you're working.

Ed Ricks: It's hard to do, but yeah, yeah, I could move to Europe, I think, you know, for family. I could see why so many people retire. And some of those places I love. You know, we love France, and a few other places that are beautiful. The weather.

Ed Gaudet: Are you going to retire anytime soon?

Ed Ricks: No, sorry. I am old, but I don't. I'm not; I don't feel that old yet, so I don't, I don't think so.

Ed Gaudet: I tried it once, and it was just, I just need, I need, I think I have ADHD, severe, and so I need multiple like stimuli to keep the day interesting. Yeah, I know.

Ed Ricks: We do have the hobbies, and we do have stuff. This will really crack you up. You know, traveling in the RV. And we always take our dog and we usually take we have a bird. And so we usually take the bird, you know, and you know, with the virtual backgrounds is so funny. Like I was in a Teams meeting once and this bird was on my shoulder, but no one could see it because that stuff is really good. Like, it just blocks it out. And so yeah, at one point, I was like, decloak the Klingon ship or whatever, and there's a bird on my shoulder, and people get cracked up about that.

Ed Gaudet: And they probably think it's not real. It's part of the whole Zoom thing, right? Yeah. That's right. What kind of bird is it?

Ed Ricks: That one's an African grey. We've got another bird that's too big to take so we don't take him.

Ed Gaudet: Wow, look at you, Birdman. I didn't know that about you.

Ed Ricks: That's a yeah. Don't ever ... that.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. What kind of dog do you have?

Ed Ricks: He's a lab mix. You know, we've had labs for 30 years.

Ed Gaudet: Labs are awesome. Yeah, I agree. All right, so what would you tell yourself if you could go back when you were 20 years old? What would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Ed Ricks: Don't get married. No, wait. I don't, have that part edited out.

Ed Gaudet: I'm leaving it in. Sorry, this is too far in. Have that in. I'll edit it if you want me to.

Ed Ricks: No, that's kidding. So, literally.

Ed Gaudet: I think ... would laugh.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, she would slap me and then laugh. But we just celebrated being together, getting ready for this 40 years.

Ed Gaudet: Whoa, dude. That's, congrats.

Ed Ricks: It's incredible to me.

Ed Gaudet: That's amazing.

Ed Ricks: I was like, nine when we met, but, you know. But, you know, here's.

Ed Gaudet: She was three.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, that's right. The thing that everyone's dad tells them or you read about, you know, like, save some money early when you can. I didn't, you know, because it was just the circumstances. They had a couple of young daughters that are my daughters now, and, you know, it's just different. I was, you know, we were both young and if you can and, you know, I've sort of convinced my kids to try to figure that out. That's one thing. So that's a very personal thing. But you're going to probably have to work, right? Nothing wrong with that. Find work that gives you energy. Don't find work that takes energy away from you.

Ed Gaudet: That's right.

Ed Ricks: If you ever end up where it's drawing energy away from you, it's time for a change.

Ed Gaudet: That's right. I think Charles Bukowski, a poet, said, find what you love and let it kill you, or do what you love and let it kill you or something. No, I agree. Absolutely. Life's too short. And if you can't get up every morning and love what you do, why are you doing it? Just go find what you love to do.

Ed Ricks: And not everything's a picnic, right? It's still work, right?

Ed Gaudet: Nothing ever is a picnic.

Ed Ricks: Got it? Enjoy it. And you got to get energy from it. And? And people can tell those people who get energized by what they're doing, it's, you know, it's sort of rubs off on everybody, versus those who ...

Ed Gaudet: Absolutely, absolutely. Okay. Riskiest thing. I have to ask this question. Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. Ed Ricks, what's the riskiest thing you've ever done? And it can't be back a trailer up either. I'm not going to take that.

Ed Ricks: Oh, you should see me do it. But, you know, like, professionally, I'm going to land right in your sweet spot, right? Here's the one thing I do not miss about being a CIO. That 24/7 fear that something bad is happening from an information security perspective. That has so much risk. I don't miss that a bit. I feel for my colleagues who are in the role; you know, we try to help. We also have some services around IT security, but it's more around assurance and assessment, things like that. We're not a technology company necessarily, but that's risky. I think, you know, taking our new leadership roles that expanded what I did. I think when I left a smaller scale than a lot of the giant health systems, but it's still a big operation. I think when I left Beaufort, I had 44 departments that rolled out to me. So it was like all the ancillary departments that were clinical and business, all the service departments.

Ed Ricks (cont'd): So everything from security and food and nutrition to laboratory and imaging services and even some nursing areas, which is kind of weird, but what a great opportunity to learn, you know, it was so good for me to learn what I didn't really do anything. I think you knew that part. But so we had good leaders in all those areas. But to learn, you know.

Ed Gaudet: I don't believe that. I've seen you at work, my friend. I don't believe that. And by the way, to listeners like, don't think you're going to get 44 times the pay either when you take on that.

Ed Ricks: No, no, no. It doesn't scale like that.

Ed Gaudet: It doesn't. No, no. That's good. How about personally skydiving? Hang gliding. You know, shark hunting.

Ed Ricks: I have not done, I've done the hot air balloon. I've done ... We actually know ... picked up from our wedding reception in a hot air balloon and taken away.

Ed Gaudet: Whoa.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, which is kind of cool.

Ed Gaudet: That's very cool, yeah.

Ed Ricks: That was interesting. That's not super risky, unless.

Ed Gaudet: Hot air balloons are very risky.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, maybe. Don't smoke. You know, there's a few rules, right? But, you know, it's funny, like, I love roller coasters and that kind of stuff, but it's got this weird fear of heights. I think a lot of people probably do. ... Fear of falling or hitting the ground, you know? That's probably it. But I'll do anything.

Ed Ricks (cont'd): She's even in Portugal, and we were in Lisbon and wherever we in, Porto and this really, really high bridge that was both a bus or a train track and, you know, walking. I was like, wow, this is pretty cool. But the ledge is only about this high, you know? And so you're walking over that. And here's probably the riskiest. I don't know if it is or not. Probably ten years or so ago, one of my other hobbies that I didn't mention is I like to ride motorcycles, and I had a group of friends we always go on trips with, but Though. I had to go. I got to go to Vegas to I think I was speaking at an Hfma conference, ..., it was an IT work. And, but I went a few days early and rented a bike there and rode to the Grand Canyon. And I just always, for some reason, I wanted to do that. I was like this solo mission and did that, and it was all great until you get to the bridge going over the Hoover Dam, and I don't know what it is. It feels like it's 30,000ft high. It's probably a little less than that. But you're up there, right? So, don't fall down here. But it was awesome. It was a great trip.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's cool. And that's, those are risky, by the way. Those are like, you checked off all the risky. I think you might be the riskiest guest. No, I'm just kidding. But let's go into music. Let's start off with, you're on a desert island. You can bring five records with you. What would they be?

Ed Ricks: All right. This will tell you my age a little bit.

Ed Gaudet: I'm glad you didn't ask me what a record was, either.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, I know, I don't I don't know what a download is, but I know what a record is. You know, just some of the things that I really like, like.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, you're on an island. So remember five of them. That's it. No greatest hits either. Don't cheat.

Ed Ricks: I'm assuming you got some sort of a vinyl player.

Ed Gaudet: You, all vinyl, oh, yeah. All vinyl.



Ed Ricks: Right. One of my favorites. All time, Wish You Were Here means, like, just nice. Yeah, I'm a really bad hobby guitar player, but I'm a David Gilmore fan and love the music. Love his style. You know, I think so many people also LED Zeppelin, all that music. This one might crack you up a little bit, but this is my sweet spot for age. Mario Speedwagon I'm a big fan. We just grew up.

Ed Gaudet: Tuna Fish.

Ed Ricks: You can tune a piano, but you get Tuna Fish.

Ed Gaudet: A great, great album. Great. And a lot of amazing breakup songs that I've had from personal experience, and not me breaking up either, by the way.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, no. Definitely one of my favorite all-time albums for sure.

Ed Gaudet: Time For Me to Fly, great song.

Ed Ricks: That's on that album. Roll With the Changes, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, my God, it's so good.

Ed Ricks: Also a great guitarist who has passed away. But, you know, I mean, the guy playing with him now is great, but Gary Richrath was the original, I love that. Here's a more recent one. I don't even think I've told you this. I mentioned, you know, we like to travel for music too. Two years ago, I think, and I traveled to London and saw Peter Frampton in Royal Albert Hall.

Ed Gaudet: Wow. That's, I heard that was an amazing show.

Ed Ricks: That was amazing. And there is an album of that. In fact, PBS filmed it, and it's supposed to actually be his last live show ever. He's got this degenerative condition, and he can still play and sing, but he has a little trouble walking. He had to have somebody support him walking, and he sat the whole time. It's awesome.

Ed Ricks (cont'd): So we got like right up front tickets because I wanted to see it right and experience it right, and he's one of my heroes. And it was awesome. So there is an album of that.

Ed Gaudet: And do you remember what band he was in before he became.

Ed Ricks: Humble Pie?

Ed Gaudet: Yes, yeah. Not many people know that. Exactly, yeah.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, I'm a fan.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, he's awesome. And Frampton! Frampton comes alive! Like, first of all, like, I would hide things in that album, but I won't go there. But I would play that incessantly. That album was like. That was part of my childhood.

Ed Ricks: I hope I'm not telling a lie. Last I knew, this was still true. The last I knew, that was the highest-selling live album of all time.

Ed Gaudet: I think that was true for a long. I don't know if that's still the case. It may not be true for the longest time. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Do you feel like we do with the voice box? Come on. That's like.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, he still does those, and it's awesome. He's got his old Les Paul back that he lost in the plane crash in the fire. And somebody found that, like some person recognized it for what it was, and Gibson refurbished it. But it looks, like he let the body stay kind of dinged up because it's a cool retro look and then redid the electronics. And he still plays that guitar. He loves it.

Ed Gaudet: I hear that song I travel back to, I don't know, '70 something, and I smell the incense, and I see my black-light posters on my wall. Yeah, it is just, what a great album.

Ed Ricks: ... time, man.

Ed Gaudet: Nah, it's a great, great album. Okay, so that's three, three good ones, by the way. Three good ones right out of it. Yeah, two more, two more.

Ed Ricks: Wow. I get five, huh? I mean.

Ed Gaudet: I thought you were going to say, like, Catfish and the Bottlemen or something crazy like that.

Ed Ricks: No, but, you know, like, I love, like, the old Fleetwood Mac, like the Peter Green years or whatever. Yeah, that stuff is awesome to me. Not that the more current, like 1970s.

Ed Gaudet: No, I get it. Like like Chicago Transit Authority, the original Chicago. Yeah.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, man. You got that right. You know, I'm a Zeppelin fan and a Zeppelin Four album. I still, that's.

Ed Gaudet: Four? Okay. Yeah, that's good.

Ed Ricks: One of my favorites.

Ed Gaudet: I Love Presents, that's like, I don't know why. Something about it. It's still contemporary, but I love, I'm a huge Zeppelin fan as well. That was, yeah. Doors, Zeppelin, Dead, sort of my three.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, yeah. You know, it's funny, I was never a Dead fan. Like, I like the music, and I appreciate it. And just, what I'm not, I've never seen even one of the ... company show ...

Ed Gaudet: Oh, really?

Ed Ricks: I know, how many you've been to?

Ed Gaudet: Well, I just, I, well, probably over 100 shows, but I just did. I went to the Sphere in Vegas. Let me tell you, I did three back-to-back shows with my. I turned my girls on to the Dead, so they go now with me, which is great. And, my middle daughter is having a baby, so I'm going to be a grandfather. And I just ordered today all this little Dead stuff for the bibs, Dead bibs and little onesies and things. And The Sphere, Ed, you have to go. Seriously, if you've never been to a Dead show, but. Oh, you have?

Ed Ricks: I saw U2 there.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah.

Ed Ricks: And get this. And like, I mean almost exactly a month, it's later October, the day before the HLTH conference starts, I bought tickets for the Eagles there.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, you're going?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, yeah, I'll be there.

Ed Gaudet: Are you going? Are you going alone or.

Ed Ricks: No. Jane's going to come down.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, good, awesome.

Ed Ricks: She's never been to Vegas. I've probably been there 20 times, and she's never been.

Ed Gaudet: She's never been to Vegas?

Ed Ricks: It'll be her first time to see the biggest thing, but we're going to see the Eagles this year, yeah.



Ed Gaudet: Well, I might go because I'm going to go to HLTH. Now I'm trying to figure out my date. So if I go, I'll let you know.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, definitely do that. It would be awesome. She loves Eagles.

Ed Gaudet: Are you staying at the Venetian or?

Ed Ricks: Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, cool. That's my favorite hotel.

Ed Ricks: We could, you know, I'd rather get Marriott points, but they had these, like VIP packages or whatever.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, I love that.

Ed Ricks: Tickets, and you stay right there, so easy.

Ed Gaudet: I even like the 200 seats. Yeah, that's the best place. Because if you get too close, you won't be. I mean, you, you know, you've already been, so.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, yeah. I'm almost in the same spot I was when I saw U2, and it just worked out beautifully. It wasn't their first show, but it was like the second weekend in The Sphere was open, so it was still like that new car smell.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. Oh, we did three back-to-back. I was blown away, not only by the visuals, obviously, they're just, I can't even explain. For listeners, if you can get to The Sphere, get to The Sphere, especially if you love music, and it's like no other concert experience but the audio. Did you notice the audio? The clarity, the fidelity of the audio was like it was nothing. Nothing I've ever heard, so incredible.



Ed Ricks: No, that was a great experience. I was super happy, though.

Ed Gaudet: All right. Best concert.

Ed Ricks: You set me up for the slam?

Ed Gaudet: No, I don't know. I mean, I'm just asking. Well, before we go there, before we go there, we've been. Did you see the Killers at the VMware show?

Ed Ricks: I did not, no.

Ed Gaudet: Okay. Did you see Bon Jovi?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, I saw it, at VMWorld once. It was, they had the San Francisco. The baseball stadium. And it was Train, I think.

Ed Gaudet: I was there with you. You and I were together. Yeah, I saw you there. Yeah.

Ed Ricks: That was actually really good.

Ed Gaudet: That was a great show. That was I love Train, I love. I've seen them probably dozen times. They're always good. Have you seen The Killers before?

Ed Ricks: I have not.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, that's great. That's a great show. Okay. Favorite show?

Ed Ricks: All right. Probably the best experience, I'm going to tell you this, like the full experience, whatever. And you know my answer to this. What's it been? Has it been eight years now? Maybe eight years?

Ed Gaudet: Yes, it's been eight years.

Ed Ricks: Oh, God. That desert trip series. Palm Springs area or Indio? I guess Indio. It was Coachella.

Ed Gaudet: Old Coachella.

Ed Ricks: Coachella.

Ed Gaudet: Why haven't they done that again? I don't understand why. That was, by the way, a fluke that I even saw it and was invited to. That was an amazing. I agree with you, by the way. And I've been to Live Aid in Philly, which, by the way, was probably, you know, either the first or second best experience, but I was a kid. That desert trip show, that three days. I mean, people don't when I tell people about it. No one's even heard of it. Like, yeah, it's crazy.

Ed Ricks: Like the crowd was huge. Obviously the bands were all legends, right? So three nights, two concerts.

Ed Gaudet: Every, two full concerts a day. Yeah. And we had, let's see, Dylan, Stones, the first day, right? We had Neil Young and Paul McCartney the second day, which was. That was fantastic.

Ed Ricks: Neil Young impressed me.

Ed Gaudet: The third day. The Who and Roger Waters. Was Roger Waters like? I mean, he got a little preachy there, but he was. Was he amazing? Yeah, that was that was incredible.

Ed Ricks: It was almost like listening to the album. It was so good, the quality of that music and everything. And I love the Stones.

Ed Gaudet: And I love that Animals album was one of my favorite Pink Floyd albums. I mean, Wish You Were Here is amazing too, but, and they played a lot of cuts off of the Animals album, which I thought they did great. Yeah, no, that was amazing. And talk about motorcycles. We rented Indian Chiefs, and I think I told you that, right? We went out there.

Ed Ricks: I remember the pictures, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Almost died because the winds were so crazy. We had to turn around. We were trying to go to Joshua Tree Motel, where Graham Parsons died, to pay homage, but we clearly didn't make it, so. I'm glad, because we probably wouldn't have made it back for the show, in retrospect.

Ed Ricks: That weekend was really good. The weather was awesome. It's a great place for a car like that. And you know, I'm too old to be in the lawn back there. There were a ton of people. I mean, it went back, but I know at least of people, but, you know, having seats up where you could see what was going on was pretty nice, too. And it was a great experience.

Ed Gaudet: Wasn't it amazing? And it's like you tell people and they're like, yeah, never heard of that. Then you tell them the bands and they're like, what?

Ed Ricks: The one that I just was the least interested in out of them, not that I wasn't interested in it, but it was Neil Young. He impressed me the most. Oh, he was show was phenomenal.

Ed Gaudet: He's one of my favorites. I mean, all those bands were like my favorites. So it was I thought the stuff and I actually, I was with my buddy. Remember Vinnie that you met?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, sure.

Ed Gaudet: We ranked them. And because I've seen the Stones probably 25, 30 times, I thought they mailed it in. I was not impressed. I thought actually, Roger Waters, The Who, Neil Young, like, those were amazing shows. I don't know.

Ed Ricks: They said something about, you know, Paul McCartney was singing and then said, it sounds like he's losing his voice. I said, listen, you still want the Beetle? And he's right there. I mean, you know, he's right in front of us.

Ed Gaudet: He's right there, and he's playing amazingly. Yeah, yeah. And then he had Rihanna On stage, and I actually was asked to leave the pool that she was swimming in because her entourage came and they were staying at the same hotel we were staying at.

Ed Ricks: Awesome.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. So we had to move out of the pool and go into the. Yeah, they were, but she was great. I thought she was fine.

Ed Ricks: We did. I've seen the Stones a handful of times, not 25, but we just saw them. You've probably seen them on this tour too, but there's maybe 2 or 3 months ago up in Chicago's Soldier Field.

Ed Gaudet: You went to that?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, that was a great one.

Ed Gaudet: No, I haven't seen them. The last show was probably 2 or 3 years, I think. I don't think I've seen him without Charlie.

Ed Ricks: They pay homage to him, for sure. The show, you know, a little bit. And at the end, they were all wearing t shirts that had his picture on and stuff. That's kind of cool.

Ed Gaudet: That's so cool. Yeah. Yeah. And it's amazing. I mean, I watched the live show. The ... live show from the. Yeah, yeah. I mean, that was a few years ago, obviously, but still, just to watch Mick Jagger, like, do what he does at his age.

Ed Ricks: He still dances. I mean, he does a really good job. All of those guys, 80 years old, and they're standing there for three hours. I mean, that's pretty impressive in and of itself, so.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. There's this meme. I don't know if you've seen it. I love it, but it always comes up, you know, on Facebook or whatever. At some point, we have to ask ourselves what kind of world we're going to leave Keith Richards.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, it's incredible.

Ed Gaudet: Because he's not going to outlive us, all right.

Ed Ricks: Yeah, and they'll ... You know, they actually, I think they were better this year than that year for sure. Just the quality of their performance, I thought, was spot on. I was very impressed.

Ed Gaudet: We've gone long, Ed, I just want you to know this is probably the longest recording I've ...

Ed Ricks: Oh, sorry.

Ed Gaudet: No, no, no, no, no, it's all good. I could talk to you for hours, but, I mean, I want to be respectful of your time. Any last comments, or guidance, or advice to individuals coming out of school looking to break into healthcare, or cyber, or IT?

Ed Ricks: Yeah, I still think they're all great, obviously great careers. I'm a healthcare fan. I just can't imagine having worked in any industry. And I'm not a clinician, as you know. But it's interesting that so many, like CIOs, now are clinicians, Ed, makes it tougher for just dumb old people like me to, if you want that job again, but I love that. I think the world is an IT world now, right? Like you learn how to take care of people, your technical skills will get better all the time, right?



Ed Ricks: If you're taking care of people, you're going to go far. And your world is the risk, and managing risk, and knowing risk, and understanding it. You know, a lot of people think that information security is a technical problem. It's not. It's a risk management problem. And, you know, if you put the focus on that, you're going to be far further ahead than just buying another widget, you know.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent. Yeah, no. Excellent advice. And remember that empathy. Remember to keep that empathy front and center because we serve, right, and serve alongside. Don't serve in spite of, right? Always remember what you do and why you're doing it, and the mission of healthcare, which is where we started and where we'll end. Thank you, Ed, for your time today. It's been great to host you on the program. This is Ed Gaudet from the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. And if you're on the front lines protecting patient safety and delivering patient care, remember to stay vigilant because Risk Never Sleeps.



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