

Podcast Transcript

Risk Never Sleeps

Episode 63

Jason Elrod

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 today, I am pleased to have Jason Elrod, the CISO of Multicare Health System, with us from the great state of Nevada. Welcome, sir.

Jason Elrod: Thank you very much. Happy to be here. Yes, and you can tell a great state of Nevada by the aliens, by the, you can see. So my boss is here. So we got to be careful about abduction, ... to that.

Ed Gaudet: Let me get that tinfoil hat. Hold on one second. ... We started. Well, there's this great risk, one, be prepared, be prepared. Were you in a production by design? I know, I told you, I never know where this is going to go. So did you play Atari when you were a kid?

Jason Elrod: Atari? Yes. Atari 2600.

Ed Gaudet: Ah, very good.

Jason Elrod: There we go. Cartridges and all.

Ed Gaudet: So, do you know the story of ET? Do you remember when the ET game came out?



Jason Elrod: I remember the ET game game.

Ed Gaudet: And it was a flop, and there's a documentary on it. I actually had the inventor, the designer of ET on the show, Howard Scott Warshaw. Yeah, and he talked about it, but there's a documentary about the burying of the ET cartridges that came back from retail. Supposedly, Area 51 is where they buried them. So check out the documentary.

Jason Elrod: I can neither confirm nor deny.

Ed Gaudet: Can never. Yeah, that's right. So let's kick off with a little bit about you, your organization, your current role.

Jason Elrod: Great! Hi, I'm Jason Elrod. Glad to be here on the speed-dating, Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, I am the CISO for Multicare Health System. I've been here for two years. Previous to that, I was with Sutter Health in California. Gosh, I've got a long tenure. I've got a non-trivial tenure in technology at this point.

Ed Gaudet: Probably over 40 years.

Jason Elrod: And the last 25 or so focused specifically on information security, probably the last, I think it's 13 now, really in the vertical of healthcare. So, yeah, that's sort of in a nutshell.

Ed Gaudet: How did you get into healthcare?

Jason Elrod: You know, I had the opportunity to step into healthcare. And like I said, just about 13 years ago, and it was funny, I had a chance to audit the organization as an independent auditor or join the organization. And so I actually went with the latter. And the rest is kind of history, I guess they say, because in the vertical itself, in healthcare, it really resonates with me, the mission. So there's not many other places nerds like me can actually ply their trade in the faction that has an immediate and measurable impact on people's lives.



Jason Elrod (cont'd): So it really for me, I didn't actually plan to be there that long, never plan to that. And so my short tenure is a decade, apparently, I thought ..., but that shared mission they'll be right over. That kind of gives you an indication how quickly it'll be.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, yeah.

Jason Elrod: Like I said, you get a chance to help people, and this is what really came out of it. Why? I've kind of stuck with healthcare for the last decade or so. You get a chance to help people when they're, I'm going to say, not feeling real secure, not feeling real confident. Maybe there's a little uncertainty, maybe there's doubt, maybe there's, like I said, fear. I mean, you have people at their most vulnerable. And when you do technology or information security in healthcare, you get a chance to actually help people feel more secure, help people feel safer, really, actually get out there. And when people are most uncertain, most vulnerable, you're one of the ones that gets to stand up and says, you know what, the fire is that way, I'm gonna run that way, and I'm gonna stop it.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: You get to say, hey, you know what? Stand behind me, I'm going to take this. I'm going to jump up there. That really resonates, that sort of defender mindset, and it's just, it's stuck with me for a long time.

Ed Gaudet: And a real direct impact to the lives of patients, right? And employees who are serving, right? Exactly. And we're all patients. We're all patients. Exactly.

Jason Elrod: We're all patients.

Ed Gaudet: The alien.

Jason Elrod: I want somebody like me defending me when I'm a patient.



Ed Gaudet: Yes, that's a great point. That shared mission is unlike any other industry in healthcare, which is why when you do eventually come into healthcare, you never leave, which is a great point.

Jason Elrod: Well, it resonates with you. I mean, I used to run data centers for financial organizations, different mission value.

Ed Gaudet: I don't want to say soulless, but.

Jason Elrod: I don't know.

Ed Gaudet: You know, I was, like I said, I don't want to say ...

Jason Elrod: Your words. But I think, different mission, right? Different mission.

Ed Gaudet: Different mission.

Jason Elrod: Different North Star and those play into things, so yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Paid well, I bet.

Jason Elrod: It's super great. ... great.

Ed Gaudet: ... Mission.

Jason Elrod: There we go.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. So as you think about the next 24 months, what are those top-of-mind priorities for you and your organization?

Jason Elrod: Taking coffee and doing cool stuff.



Ed Gaudet: Cool stuff is good.

Jason Elrod: I know. Sorry, but yeah, drinking coffee and doing cool stuff, while concentrating on some maturing areas of the organization. In fact, I'm gonna I'm, I slowed it down. I'm going to say the biggest focus for the next 24 months is again really shoring up identity, identity, access management, identity proofing, AI, and deepfakes, and although that surrounding ecosystem right now is challenging, really good identity programs requires a focus on identity as a program. Identity is the perimeter ..., I mean, it's who or what should have access to where, when, why, to what extent, and for how long.

Ed Gaudet: It's certainly more important than ever. Did you have experience at Sutter on the Imprivata platform? Were you on the Imprivata platform at all or?

Jason Elrod: Yeah, yeah, we ran Imprivata here.

Ed Gaudet: You do. You run it. Yeah, so that combination with the identity is the identity travels obviously, and making sure it's protected wherever it goes is really, really critical these days.

Jason Elrod: Or it's like the idea of one entity, one identity. So I, even though I may transfer around various systems, solutions, capabilities should still be me and recognizable as me and provable as me. So, and it should be done in a frictionless way as possible.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: That's probably the harder, let's make up some terms, technical fandango that's going to have to go on behind the scenes. So I think that kind of ecosystem and I kind of have another two. I've got one that's not sexy that absolutely is a concentration, documentation.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, not sexy but.

Jason Elrod: Document, documentation. You know, how do you do that? Why did you do that? Where do you do that? Hey, you no longer have that job. Somebody came in here. Hey, this is how I did it. I don't know, it just says stuff. You did cool stuff and then.

Ed Gaudet: That's right.

Jason Elrod: But that's not really documentation, that's like a mission statement.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: I don't need intention statements. I need really good documentation. So I'm going to say probably the other aspect there is just, and I think most organizations have this one documentation. I mean, if you really want to mature a program, document it in such a fashion that if I got up today and walked away, let's just say for a vacation, like a 60-day vacation, could somebody pick up my documentation, my runbooks, my ..., my flow charts? Could somebody pick it up and do the job? Could somebody pick it up where it's rationalized?

Ed Gaudet: Great point, yeah. And how do you measure it if it's not documented? How do you improve upon it if it's not documented? Yeah, really good points. I noticed you didn't mention AI, like everybody else.

Jason Elrod: Didn't mention quantum computers or blockchain.

Ed Gaudet: Oh well, quantum, thanks.

Jason Elrod: Blockchains. Blockchains pass.

Ed Gaudet: That's like last week's.

Jason Elrod: You know that's so block not.

Ed Gaudet: So block not.

Jason Elrod: Okay, so AI, we're not getting away from it, and it's very emergent right now in its current form. So we've used AI in various form factors that weren't so interactive and easily adopted and easily used and modified. And so yeah, I would so much in the public ecosystem. So AI has been around for a while. I think it's just advancing at breakneck pace right now. So it is it's going to have to be part of everything we do. So when I talk about its identity, I mentioned deepfakes. Deepfakes are AI-enabled at scale because of AI. So maybe I should give AI due to my documentation. We'll take that one, right? That one.

Ed Gaudet: That's right. There you go.

Jason Elrod: Watch what Jason does. Write it down in coherent documentation. But it brings up a point. I mean, we're going to see aspects of AI in every aspect of business and healthcare and those things. And I see two, two sort of diverging. I see the impact on cybersecurity of AI. So how does that impact how we detect, respond, recover, protect, enable organizations from a legacy standpoint and a modern and going forward? So what's the impact of AI on that, on cybersecurity? And how do we ensure the cybersecurity of AI? We have the impact of AI in subject, in how are we securing our AI? Yeah, I think that's another deep component. So those are kind of the big tranches I look at risk in AI right now. It's those two areas, because here I want to make sure that this is running in a fashion that has high integrity, high confidentiality, high availability. And over here, I want to ruin a hacker's day because we're trying to ruin my day, at the same time, how do you, I need clarity of technology there.

Ed Gaudet: What else keeps you up at night?

Jason Elrod: What else keeps me up at night?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: Oh, no, it's a good question. I think probably it's the caffeine I drink.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, man. After the old espresso.

Jason Elrod: I mean, there's always going to be something happening. Threat actors, threat activity, that's 24/7/365. So you have to be able to compartmentalize it and know, what am I going to do? How am I going to do this? Be rational about the prioritization of efforts and resources. So like I mentioned that. So documentation is probably not keeping me up at night. Identity, and the aspects of that security perimeter, those are a little bit. I would say that, and nowadays I would say that probably the increase of insider threat activity.

Ed Gaudet: Interesting.

Jason Elrod: And I throw that into three categories. So I have malicious actors, those are bad guys getting in, And then I'd worry about getting compromised. Do we have a an insider threat that's going to propagate something malicious. But two-thirds of insider threat occur from after accident, like something goes, I shouldn't have done that. I knew I shouldn't have done that. Oops, right? So there's accidental And there's ignorant. I didn't know I wasn't supposed to do that. it just seemed like a good idea. I see an increase there, and it's really trying to help mitigate two-thirds of that insider threat, which I think we can put some control over. And we can assist, and we can enable, and we can champion. Hey, let's get everybody trained. And if there's an accident that happens, accidental threat. Is there a way can we can learn from that then can we technically prevent it? Can we protect those folks from doing that accident again?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, limit the blast and the impact.

Jason Elrod: Yeah, exactly.

Ed Gaudet: Really important. So last couple of years with the pandemic been difficult on a lot of folks. What are you most personally and professionally proud of?

Jason Elrod: Personally and professionally proud of.



Ed Gaudet: And/or, and/or.

Jason Elrod: I'll keep it on the professional side.

Ed Gaudet: Okay.

Jason Elrod: Where it is, I think the last couple years have been very dynamic, and professionally say, I'm proud to have been able to effect good change in security programs in healthcare. So I have seen measurable improvements in capability and in maturity and in the teams and then talent profile. And it's absolutely not my fault I got to participate. And so I'm proud to be surrounded by the team that I have and the people that are actually doing a lot of this work. So I have a lot of, I have an immense amount of respect for the folks that I work with, that work for me and that I work for. So I'm very proud to be part of an organization that and a team that's aligned and I would say shares a North Star and does it without being a bunch of, well, being nice to each other.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, I like that.

Jason Elrod: Or being professional. So I'm proud to be able to cultivate that and champion that and help move culture that way. Because I think culture.

Ed Gaudet: It's so hard to get it right. Yeah, no, it's great. No, it's a good, yeah. And I love that you brought it up because a lot of people take it for granted. But it's so difficult to get the culture right.

Jason Elrod: Yeah, you know when it's not there, right?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. You certainly do.

Jason Elrod: Yes.

Ed Gaudet: So outside of healthcare and IT and cyber, what are you most passionate about? What would you be doing if you weren't doing this job?

Jason Elrod: Oh gosh. I'm a voracious reader. No, learner. I read, so I mean, I'm reading all sorts of stuff all the time.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, you probably have five books going like I do.

Jason Elrod: Well, I try not to do that, but I'm not saying I haven't. So I usually try to get I try to get something in the fiction category.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, nice.

Jason Elrod: I like it, you know, it takes me back to my, you know, my fantasy and science fiction roots.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, science fiction roots.

Jason Elrod: Oh, yeah. So I love all that. And so.

Ed Gaudet: Did you read Cryptonomicon? Do you ever read that? Neal Stephenson, just I, so many people have read it. It's such a great book.

Jason Elrod: Well, what kind of podcast is this? I'm looking for the camera. I'm looking. Of course I have.

Ed Gaudet: Yes. Okay, good.

Jason Elrod: So again, if you have classic, you have similar works that I think are awesome to get involved with Neuromancer. How about that one?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: Five?



Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: Right?

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. That's where we got the word cyber from.

Jason Elrod: Yeah, that's cyberspace.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: So all that, all sorts of like-range stuff. And so I'm reading a bunch of,

Ed Gaudet: Like Stranger in a Strange Land? How about that one? Did you read that?

Jason Elrod: Stranger? No, I don't think I've got that one.

Ed Gaudet: Robert Highland. Highland?

Jason Elrod: No, I haven't read that one.

Ed Gaudet: Okay, that's a good one. That's an older one.

Jason Elrod: Send me that one.

Ed Gaudet: 1950s.

Jason Elrod: I'll watch it. I'll subscribe to this podcast because it's fantastic, so I can get that name and that book.

Ed Gaudet: There you go. Exactly.



Jason Elrod: But I'll do that, and then I'll usually have something on the business side or a technical side if I'm interested in a specific technology and, you know, and I'm like, oh, I've got to do that. That's some great blinky lights and nerd knobs, I want to learn about that or management or business type of stuff. So I usually have like kind of one that I would say is more escapist and one that is more directed on it. It's because I like both. It's not because I'm thinking, oh, you know, a learner should split his time up, you know, exactly 38% over here. And I just, I kind of like that kind of stuff, you know? So I'm gonna do that.

Ed Gaudet: But is there a writer or a novelist in there?

Jason Elrod: You know, I'm not going to mention anybody specifically today, but if you're happy to connect with me later on at the end, we figure out how to do that. I'm happy to share some of my current reading lists. How's that?

Ed Gaudet: All right. I didn't know if you'd like to write or thought about writing a book or any of that. If you, again, weren't doing this job because there's only so much reading you can do, right?

Jason Elrod: So there's reading and I am currently, I'm a co-author with a few other folks on a book on cybersecurity, cybersecurity, marksmanship. Yeah, we are we're working on that one right now.

Ed Gaudet: Cybersecurity marksmanship?

Jason Elrod: Cybersecurity, the Cybersecurity CISO's Marksmanship.

Ed Gaudet: Love that. Do you have a publisher?

Jason Elrod: Coming to a bookstore near you.

Ed Gaudet: You're working with Wiley or?

Jason Elrod: Gosh, I shouldn't, I should actually know the publisher. I dumped on my head. So I don't know the publisher name off the top of my head, but yeah, we're working on that. We're hoping to, next year for that one to come out.

Ed Gaudet: Okay, cool. Very good. Congrats.

Jason Elrod: So I'll read and write.

Ed Gaudet: And write. Yeah, yeah. That's great.

Jason Elrod: We play both kinds of music here, country and western.

Ed Gaudet: We're going to get some music shortly. Let's not skip ahead. We'll go back in time. What would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Jason Elrod: Wow, 20-year-old?

Ed Gaudet: Hmmh, are you surfing?

Jason Elrod: Don't roommate with those guys.

Ed Gaudet: Ah, sorry. Best answer so far on the podcast. Don't roommate with those guys.

Jason Elrod: Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: That was great, Jason

Jason Elrod: Life lessons you needed to learn.

Ed Gaudet: That's awesome. Okay. Anything else?

Jason Elrod: I guess I'd also give myself some financial advice, like. Yeah, I know you don't know what Bitcoin is, you can figure this one out, collect some of that. And you know Microsoft, Microsoft too. You know when I say Fang I mean the following, you know?

Ed Gaudet: Exactly, exactly.

Jason Elrod: Early enough.

Ed Gaudet: That's good I love it.

Jason Elrod: There you go.

Ed Gaudet: That's, yeah. No, that's good. That's good. Well, that's a mic drop moment. So let's move on here. So I have to ask you this question because this is the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. Jason, what's the riskiest thing you've ever done?

Jason Elrod: What's the riskiest thing I've ever done that I'm willing to talk about on the podcast?

Ed Gaudet: Exactly.

Jason Elrod: Oh, you know what comes to mind? One of the riskiest things I ever did was one of those most rewarding things I ever did, but it's probably also one of the scariest things I ever did. When I was newly married and we had our first child on the way, my first son, I started a business with some friends as the sole provider for the family. And so jumping into that, that's risky.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Jason Elrod: Huge risk.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.



Jason Elrod: Huge risk. And just sort of really diving into it. I would say that that was probably one of the riskiest things that I did. It turned out well, but it was risky, scary. And while it really does test a lot of things, especially on new marriage, a new father business.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah.

Jason Elrod: It was what kept me up at night. Everything. I didn't sleep, I just waited. That's right. So the next.

Ed Gaudet: Jason never sleeps.

Jason Elrod: Jason never sleeps either, yeah, exactly.

Ed Gaudet: That's great.

Jason Elrod: So, yeah. So probably that. That was probably it.

Ed Gaudet: See, I thought it was going to be like surfing in Santa Cruz or something like that.

Jason Elrod: Oh no, no, no, I ride a motorcycle. That's pretty risky.

Ed Gaudet: What do you have?

Jason Elrod: Right now, I'm riding a KTM adventure bike, so.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, okay. You ever ride an Indian chief?

Jason Elrod: I've looked at them.

Ed Gaudet: They're nice.



Jason Elrod: Just saying. I'm just saying.

Ed Gaudet: They're nice.

Jason Elrod: They're nice. They're there.

Ed Gaudet: All right. Cool. So, desert island, you can take five albums with you. What are your top five music?

Jason Elrod: Top five albums?

Ed Gaudet: Yes.

Jason Elrod: I think we talked about this earlier, you know. Do I get an album player?

Ed Gaudet: You do you get a record player.

Jason Elrod: Yeah, I get a record player. You get a full solar.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, it's a macintosh. It's beautiful, the thing is beautiful. It's a sight to behold.

Jason Elrod: Okay.

Ed Gaudet: You're gonna love this.

Jason Elrod: Delivered by my little alien friend. I have no idea how it works. It sounds awesome. I'm like, why didn't you take me? You delivered this thing to play the albums, that I happened to have packed with me.

Ed Gaudet: Exactly, exactly.

Jason Elrod: On the desert island. Gosh, albums. Okay, so it's kind of a metal head in the.

Ed Gaudet: Ah, there it is. There it is.

Jason Elrod: I'll talk to that. So I like early Metallica.

Ed Gaudet: Metallica black.

Jason Elrod: Well, Metallica I actually go a little bit for that, right, the light.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, very nice.

Jason Elrod: A little bit for black ... Awesome too. Yeah. I'm not gonna get.

Ed Gaudet: The Jason Newsted years when he was the...

Jason Elrod: Yeah, exactly. See, man knows his music.

Ed Gaudet: I do, yeah.

Jason Elrod: Queensryche, Operation Mindcrime.

Ed Gaudet: Whoa. There's a pattern here listeners.

Jason Elrod: So that one, that was phenomenal.

Ed Gaudet: That's good, yeah.

Jason Elrod: Bowie. David Bowie, Changes.



Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'm a Ziggy fan. I love everything Bowie, though. Everything. Bowie, anything Bowie, and everything Bowie, yeah.

Jason Elrod: I will say, the first Beatles album. The one that had, I Want to Hold Your Hand.

Ed Gaudet: Okay, wow. Old school.

Jason Elrod: Four there.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, yeah, that's four.

Jason Elrod: I don't know what's number five. Gosh, there's so many, you know? I'm gonna have to go with an Eagles. The Eagles.

Ed Gaudet: Okay.

Jason Elrod: Good album. I don't know which one I would put on there.

Ed Gaudet: See I thought maybe Radiohead with that alien over there.

Jason Elrod: I mean, and I did skip out all, like, the sort of the Chris Cornell, the whole grunge phase I had. That was, I mean, there's some like Alice in Chains, phenomenal, Soundgarden, you name it.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah.

Jason Elrod: So I've only got five, and so, I think those have those are good picks me and those would be the ones that I would.



Ed Gaudet: Those are good. Those are excellent picks. All right. So coming down to the stretch here last question. What advice would you give to folks going into healthcare or cyber or both as they think about that path towards that profession?

Jason Elrod: Don't do it for the money. You can make lots of money at it. Yeah, I'm sure in various organizations, I mean, they don't do it for that. Find a connection with it and then don't let anything stop you. Then don't. I mean if you want to get out there and want to defend folks, you want to go out there, you want to help people, you want to apply your talent profile in a place where you can provide measurable difference to the good for people, 100% go do it and don't let anything get in your way of that. I don't care if it's a degree or a certification or a belief in yourself. Get out of your own way if that resonates with you. I think we need people where that resonates with them, not doing it transactionally they're doing it with purpose.

Ed Gaudet: Mission-focused purpose.

Jason Elrod: Mission focused on, if you want to do it, then just do it, and there are plenty of folks out there to help you. There's plenty of resources. I mean, heck, connect with me. I'm happy to chat about it.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent. Well, that's great advice. Thank you very much, Jason. This is Ed Gaudet from the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. If you're on the front lines protecting patient safety and delivering patient care, remember to stay vigilant because Risk Never Sleeps.



Censinet RiskOps[™] Demo Request

Do you want to revolutionize the way your healthcare organization manages third-party and enterprise risk while also saving time, money, and increasing data security? It's time for RiskOps.

SCHEDULE DEMO