

Audio file

[HoTM episode 62a.m4a](#)

Transcript

00:00:04 Wynne Leon

Welcome to the sharing the heart of the Matter podcast, where we spend time with authentic and creative people willing to share their stories.

I'm Wynne Leon and in this episode Vicki Atkinson and I are talking with author, podcaster, publisher and former radio producer Rick Kaempfer.

Rick has recently published the Loop files, an oral history of the most outrageous radio station ever, the celebration of a time when radio, rock'n'roll and comedy all came together. We talked about how Rick prepared to meet celebrities as a DJ and producer in the pre Internet era. He tells us about his regimen to subscribe to all the magazines he could and read 7 newspapers a day.

Rick, who claims he is fueled by eye rolls, tells us great stories from his book. Father knows nothing that pulled from his weekly column when he was a stay at home dad of three boys. We recorded this conversation right after opening day for Major League Baseball, which was a great segue to his book Every Cub Ever.

And we talk about his fiction and his work as a publisher, supporting authors and encouraging the full publishing life cycle, including promotion.

This is a great episode with an incredibly prolific author, supportive publisher, and powerful presence. We know you'll love it.

00:01:47 Vicki Atkinson

Well, good morning, Rick Kaempfer, how are you?

00:01:50 Rick Kaempfer

I'm well. How are you?

00:01:52 Vicki Atkinson

Good. Wynne and I are thrilled to talk to one of our favorite authors. We've been busy kind of catching up on all the good stuff that you've been doing, but the fact that you've got some time for us to record a podcast and fill us in on what you've been up to is a real treat. So we're grateful for the time.

00:02:10 Rick Kaempfer

Happy to do it.

00:02:12 Vicki Atkinson

Well and and by way of introduction, when one of the things that we wanted to lead with as we talk to Rick is his latest book, which is called the Loop Files. And you know I'm in Chicago right here in the Chicago area too and.

00:02:29 Vicki Atkinson

Generationally, we're around the same age, and this is it's like a firestarter of a book about what we would identify as, like the golden days of radio in our youth. But you had the privilege of being in the middle of the mayhem, and then you wrote this amazing book.

00:02:49 Vicki Atkinson

That really as you describe as kind of an oral history about everything that was unfolding and and I think in one place in the book you talked about the station being similar to a lot of crazy high school kids with too much money, right? Yeah.

00:03:03 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, yeah, that's that's the way they used to describe. It is high school with money because none of us really came from money, but suddenly we were working at the the top radio station in Chicago and money was everywhere because the ratings were huge. Everybody in Chicago.

00:03:09 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:03:23 Rick Kaempfer

Listen to this radio station.

00:03:25 Rick Kaempfer

And the talent level was through the roof. Some of the best radio personalities in history worked there all at the same time. I described it as the.

00:03:37 Rick Kaempfer

1927 Yankees in the same hallway at the same time basically is what it was.

00:03:44 Rick Kaempfer

And you know, you walk down the hall and you've got one Hall of Famer after another. And I was the producer of Steve Dowling Gary Meyer show, which is a a a Hall of Fame show.

00:03:54 Rick Kaempfer

And you know, every day.

00:03:58 Rick Kaempfer

Was something exciting and it was like that for all of us there. And I was there for seven years. The book covers about 30 years of time that actually 20 years, really 20 years of time. That is like the heyday of that radio station.

00:04:16 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, when I.

00:04:18 Vicki Atkinson

The thing that's so cool is is how you tied it all together, because when someone looks at a book like that and reads the synopsis. This and we we read that it's going to be an oral history just when and I are like enthralled with the organization of it, you know and how you put all of it together. So we'll have to ask you about that. But when I think I just stepped on you. Sorry.

00:04:36 Wynne Leon

Well, no. I just for us. Non Chicago and it it the loop sounds like, you know, just one of those legendary. Rock stations of the late 70s early 80s. Is that right? Do I have that?

00:04:51 Rick Kaempfer

Yes, it was a rock station and in the 90s.

00:04:56 Rick Kaempfer

It became also a talk station, but like a comedy talk station, which is something that has never really existed before or since. It was the only thing of its kind throughout the entire country.

00:05:10 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah. And irreverent and crazy. And, you know, when I remember being a high school student and going to like one of the popular concert venues like Poplar Creek to see Jackson Browne and just I think for so many people that are of a certain age or generation, I was unprepared. Even though I I know you. I was unprepared for how many memory lane moments we're going to be served up just by listening to the stories that people have to tell about being there.

But we all went, you know, had our, you know, black, you know, grungy before it was grungy, like, looped T-shirts. I had a loop bumper sticker on the back of my orange Pinto, right.

00:05:53 Rick Kaempfer

I had a 71 duster.

00:05:58 Vicki Atkinson

But it was a thing, right? And it was like if you were a cool kid.

00:06:02 Vicki Atkinson

That that's what you were listening to. And and we thought we were all pretty like, you know. Oh amazing, yeah.

00:06:09 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, it's true. I I mean, I think the secret to the success of this book and it's our, it's our top selling book ever is and it's only been out since October. But I think the secret to the success of the book is the trip down memory lane. It's, it's nostalgia, it's.

00:06:30 Rick Kaempfer

You know it, it ties into everyone and that's why I did it as an oral history because I thought the story was too hard for me to tell.

Because I just in one perspective and all the people that were there were, I know them all personally and they were all willing to participate in the book. So I called them all individually and did interviews with them. And I got their memories too and that, you know, brought up stuff that I hadn't heard before or things that I had.

Forgotten about and and then I did it. I put it in chronological form after those interviews and there were probably 100.

Plus interviews that I did, maybe even 200.

00:07:10 Vicki Atkinson

Well, I mean.

And you know mine is so marked up because they're great continuing threads, you know, and voices that come through at different times. But just the organization of it is it's unlike anything I've ever read.

00:07:11 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

No, thank you. It was a. It was complex to do that, to be honest with you. But it was worth it to me. I just wanted this story to be told because the radio station is gone now completely. It's a Christian music state in.

And you know the last song they played was highway to Hell by ACDC before they switched.

Switched over so it just it was always irreverent and it was just such a big part of my life. I met my wife there, you know my my first son was born when I was working there. It was a big part of my life and I wanted to share it with everybody.

00:08:06 Wynne Leon

Yeah. Well, it's so neat. Just, I mean, first of all, the music and I think they talk about our ages of 18 to 25 holding that sort of reminiscence bump where we really store that music and it brings us back to that time and but also just to see how things come together at a radio station for those of us that.

00:08:16

Right.

00:08:27 Wynne Leon

Or outsiders.

00:08:27

All right.

00:08:29 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, there's a lot of back story. There's a lot of insider tips and things that you don't really think about when you're just listening to the radio station.

00:08:39 Wynne Leon

Right. I like the story where there was a rumor that the station was going to be sold and the management brings everybody together. It says no, that is absolutely not going to happen. That's like on a Friday afternoon. And then Monday comes.

00:08:54 Wynne Leon

Yeah.

00:08:55 Rick Kaempfer

It's a great business. It really is. That's why I'm not in it anymore.

00:09:01 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, but it all felt like it was, you know, to wince point like, just a wing and a prayer away from either. Like being at the pinnacle of the best thing ever.

00:09:12 Vicki Atkinson

Or completely like obliterating, like falling in on itself. Right? It was like, so close. But that's dangerous. Yeah.

00:09:15 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

00:09:18 Rick Kaempfer

It was like a high wire act. Yeah, it. Yeah. Dangerous is the right word. Dangerous is the the word I used to describe what it was like working there. Cause you never knew it was gonna happen. Anything could happen.

00:09:29 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:09:32

00:09:32 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:09:33 Vicki Atkinson

Well, and I.

00:09:34 Vicki Atkinson

Love when you.

00:09:34 Rick Kaempfer

I was there. I was there the day that members of the Chicago Bears came in, they were like four or five of them. And they they took over the show. Kevin Matthews was the host. They they they duct taped him to a chair and they duct taped his mouth closed and then they left him on Michigan Ave.

00:09:45

Mm-hmm.

00:09:54 Rick Kaempfer

And they took over his show, and he was just sitting there in a.

00:09:57 Rick Kaempfer

Chair.

00:09:58 Rick Kaempfer

We had to go and rescue him.

00:10:01 Vicki Atkinson

But there were so many things like that that you you described also from your vantage point because you you saw these crazy things happening. But I think it was Kevin Matthews show where you would, you know, you're producing for Steve and Gary and you're.

00:10:15 Vicki Atkinson

Seeing this like parade of, you know, famous musicians and icons, and at one point in the book you talk about just kind of like hanging out in the hallway. Going, hey, buddy, you know, you wanna come over to our show and you that takes a little bravery to do that because you probably thought at any moment you could be like, you know.

00:10:26

Yeah.

00:10:29

Right.

00:10:35 Vicki Atkinson

VOA, right?

00:10:36 Rick Kaempfer

Well, yeah.

00:10:37 Rick Kaempfer

I mean, I mean, I remember a couple of incidents one time Aerosmith was there, Steven Tyler and Joe Perry and they were just walking down the hallway to go to the FM station. And I was part of the AM station at that time. And I just tapped him on the shoulder and directed him into the AMS.

00:10:37 Vicki Atkinson

Easy.

00:10:57 Rick Kaempfer

Video instead. And we did the interview and then the FM Jack, who was Bobby Skafish was like, hey, you know, but he he ended up getting the interview also.

00:11:11

Ohh my gosh.

00:11:12 Rick Kaempfer

But there was another there was another time where we had the actor Dennis Popper.

00:11:15 Vicki Atkinson

You're making me cry. I just want you.

00:11:17 Vicki Atkinson

To know that, yeah.

00:11:19 Rick Kaempfer

Do you remember Dennis Hopper, the actor?

00:11:21 Vicki Atkinson

Ohh my gosh.

00:11:22 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah. So it was right around the time that that blue velvet movie came out and he was huge. I think he was nominated for an Academy Award for that.

00:11:31 Vicki Atkinson

David Lynch, right. Is that a David Lynch thing? Yeah.

00:11:34 Rick Kaempfer

Correct, yes.

00:11:35 Rick Kaempfer

And he was on our show and I had booked him for a 10 minute slot, cause that's all they were gonna give us, cause they had to do a TV interview across the street. Mm-hmm. And so after the about the 8 minute mark, the PR person said, wait, I need you to go in there and get him out of there. I said, yeah, I'm not going to do that. What do you mean you're not going to do that?

00:11:54 Wynne Leon

Yes.

00:11:56 Rick Kaempfer

I said he's in there now. If you wanna go in there, you can get him yourself. But I'm not gonna go in there and tell Steve and Gary they have to end the interview. Yeah. And they did, like, 45 minutes.

00:12:06 Rick Kaempfer

With.

00:12:06 Rick Kaempfer

Him and he missed his two TV interviews and.

00:12:09 Rick Kaempfer

Net PR person I would see over the years and he was still mad like 10 liner.

00:12:17 Rick Kaempfer

Wasn't my fault.

00:12:19 Vicki Atkinson

No, but I I love that you know mix of, you know, appreciating the creative types, but also being an opportunist at the same time, right. You're like, yeah, yeah.

00:12:27 Rick Kaempfer

Exactly.

00:12:29 Rick Kaempfer

It was a cut throat world, so you had to kind of play by the rules.

00:12:33 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:12:35 Wynne Leon

Yeah. Did you have any tips or tricks for meeting these famous people? Like how you prepared or yeah.

00:12:42 Rick Kaempfer

Well, now it's easy with the Internet, but back in those days, this is pre Internet. We we couldn't do that and you know, just preparing for an interview was difficult. You'd have to go to the library or, you know, to get information.

00:12:59 Vicki Atkinson

The card catalog.

00:12:59 Rick Kaempfer

You know, right. I mean I subscribed to like 1000 magazines just to. So I had as much information as possible, I you know, read 7 newspapers a day. I spent all my time gathering material that was like a 24 hour a day job.

00:13:13 Wynne Leon

Yeah.

00:13:17 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, when you wrote the book and we didn't mention this, but you've also, I think your first book was like the Producers Handbook, the producers Bible with another author about.

00:13:26 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, the radio producers handbook.

00:13:28 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. So were those some of the secrets you revealed there about how to prepare and be nimble as a producer?

00:13:34 Rick Kaempfer

Yep, Yep. That's what the whole book is about. It's available still at Amazon. I came out about 20 years ago. That was my my first book.

00:13:35 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:13:43 Vicki Atkinson

Wow. But I bet all of it's still relevant.

00:13:44 Rick Kaempfer

Wrote it.

00:13:46 Rick Kaempfer

It is, except for it was kind of pre Internet also. I mean it was.

00:13:52 Vicki Atkinson

Right.

00:13:53 Rick Kaempfer

Really not pre Internet but pre social media.

00:13:57 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:13:58 Rick Kaempfer

So and social media is an easy way to book guests now. I mean that we I still host a podcast, actually several podcasts, but the way we get our guests is through, you know, Twitter or.

00:14:11 Rick Kaempfer

You know some sort or Instagram where you just directly contact the the celebrity. It's much easier now than it ever was.

00:14:18 Vicki Atkinson

Really.

00:14:19 Vicki Atkinson

Well, it's one of our questions too. You know, when and I being kind of newbies at the podcast game, you know how your podcast with David Stern is called Minutia Man. Yeah. So one of your tips is go big. Don't be shy.

00:14:29 Rick Kaempfer

Yes.

00:14:34 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. It's really not that hard. You'd be surprised.

00:14:39 Vicki Atkinson

Really, I think we imagine that everyone's got like 19 handlers, you know, between us and them.

00:14:40

Yeah.

00:14:45 Rick Kaempfer

Well, I mean, you're not going to get the pulp on, you know something so worth the president, but if you want to get.

00:14:51 Wynne Leon

Well, certainly not the week before Easter. Will we scratched all about timing?

00:14:59 Rick Kaempfer

But as far as getting stars on it, it's really easier than ever because there's really no such thing as a huge movie star anymore. That the way there used to be. Like I remember we we got Harrison Ford on the show.

00:15:13 Rick Kaempfer

At that time he was just, you know, a mega * and having him on it took months and months to get him on. And then he ended up being a complete jerk. So, you know, maybe it's not worth it sometimes to do it.

00:15:28 Wynne Leon

Right. Yeah. When you were reading, you know, 7 newspapers a day and subscribing to all those magazines, was it to get the background or was it to get the ideas of who?

00:15:38 Wynne Leon

To talk to.

00:15:39

Both.

00:15:40 Rick Kaempfer

Both because you know we didn't do just interviews. We did bits, we did comedy. I was a comedy writer. I'm still a comedy writer. And so I was just constantly looking for material. That's that's the reason I started. My father knows nothing. Column, you know, I just.

00:15:40

Hmm.

00:15:47

Yeah.

00:15:59 Rick Kaempfer

The material was here in my.

00:16:00 Wynne Leon

House, right. There's never been an easier time than when your kids are young.

00:16:03 Rick Kaempfer

And but we used it.

00:16:07 Rick Kaempfer

Exactly. And when I was with the John Landecker show, which is another book I wrote called Records, Julia's my middle name. I was his producer for 10 years.

00:16:15 Rick Kaempfer

And he had my kids on the air all the time. In fact, all three of them were born on the air. Literally.

00:16:23 Wynne Leon

Oh my gosh. Yeah.

00:16:25 Vicki Atkinson

Bridget deserves more credit. Just tell her we said hey later. Yeah. Oh, my gosh. Well, and. And so she, well, she is. And and our listeners will need to read Father.

00:16:29 Rick Kaempfer

Exactly. Yeah, she's a St.

00:16:36 Vicki Atkinson

There was nothing you know to get more of those, you know, glimpses and glimmers, but we loved that book because it it's like every parent should read it, one for survival, right, to kind of get through and to laugh. But there's so many relatable anecdotes, and it's also.

00:16:53 Vicki Atkinson

So.

00:16:56 Vicki Atkinson

Just like poignant about why writers write, you know, to preserve who you are as a parent, but also your dad died very unexpectedly and and you know, you and Wynn kind of have that in common a little bit. And if you could roll back in time to be with him, you'd do it in a heartbeat. But you were writing.

00:17:00 Rick Kaempfer

Oh, thank you.

00:17:16 Vicki Atkinson

As a way to extend yourself into the future with your boys, right?

00:17:20 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, that's exactly cause I was about 2524 when my dad.

00:17:24 Rick Kaempfer

Son, and you know wasn't apparent yet, and I wasn't really an adult yet. If looking back on it, if I'm gonna be totally honest. And I'm really once I became a parent wanted so badly to ask his advice on how to be a dad and he wasn't around.

00:17:44 Rick Kaempfer

And you know, I there's no guarantee that I'll be around when they have their kids. And that was really the impetus for me starting to write it just to have.

00:17:53 Rick Kaempfer

Of.

00:17:55 Rick Kaempfer

Not only their own lives that they can read about, but what was going through my mind while I was making these decisions, just so they know.

00:18:05 Wynne Leon

Yeah.

00:18:05 Rick Kaempfer

That you know, I I was just doing the best I could. That's really my goal, was to keep them alive every day.

00:18:15 Wynne Leon

Could just start with that. Yeah, I I like the moments where you you have to leave the room because you're laughing too hard or or, you know, like ohh yeah.

00:18:24 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:18:25 Rick Kaempfer

My youngest son, Sean, was so hilarious. I mean, so hilarious. You know, when he was four or five, six, he was just a a master manipulator and he he used his brothers like a puppet. I mean, it was just hilarious. There's a the the youngest one, and he seemed to have.

00:18:44 Rick Kaempfer

All the I don't know the human relations skills he was gifted in that area.

00:18:50 Vicki Atkinson

Gosh. Well, would you tell this story? We're kind of springing this on you. But when? And I love this story about it was Johnny and his Boy Scout master.

00:19:00 Vicki Atkinson

There and him being like reprimanded a little bit for, you know, having a little bit of an an anger issue and you had a conversation about short fuses.

00:19:09 Vicki Atkinson

And he had a a really good quit back where he well, I'll just say it that he he the scout master and you're sitting right there trying to keep a straight face is kind of asking him how he's improved or like, you know, having command over his emotions and this like short fuse.

00:19:13 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

00:19:24 Vicki Atkinson

And he says something like, you know, I made it a little longer. You know, my short fuse, I'd say it's only medium short now, right. How do you like when said, how do you, how do you stand by when that's happening and not like, die inside?

00:19:41 Rick Kaempfer

Well, you know.

00:19:43 Rick Kaempfer

We got a call one time when they were on a Boy Scout trip. The two older boys are only two years apart, so they did a lot of stuff together and the Scout masters.

00:19:52 Rick Kaempfer

Said yes, we need to talk to you about something between Tommy and Johnny. I said. Ohh. Really. What happened? Well, it involves a a Golf Club.

00:20:03 Rick Kaempfer

To the head.

00:20:07 Rick Kaempfer

It said miniature golfing gone bad or something like that. Like, wow.

00:20:12 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, I said. Welcome to my world. That's what it was like here every day. It was just, you know, breaking up fights. I used to. This is kind of embarrassing to tell now in retrospect, but I used to put up a sign when I did radio interviews like this.

00:20:30 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:20:30 Rick Kaempfer

When I was promoting my books.

00:20:32 Rick Kaempfer

Which was a picture of a boy with no legs and I said if I hear noises during this interview, I'm gonna come up here and one of you will be this boy with no legs.

00:20:48 Rick Kaempfer

And of course, they didn't pay any attention to that. I'd be in the middle of an interview. I would do it in the basement, and I'd hear this crashing sound upstairs. I'm like, ohh, my because they knew I had no control at that moment. So.

00:21:03 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, they did. Ohh my gosh.

00:21:04 Rick Kaempfer

It didn't work it.

00:21:08 Wynne Leon

But you know, my dad was a minister, and I remember being up in the balcony while he was preaching, knowing the same thing. You know, I'd be putting things along the very edge of the.

00:21:23 Vicki Atkinson

Right. Walking that line, right, walking that line.

00:21:24 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

00:21:26 Wynne Leon

Can't find out how where the line is.

00:21:28 Vicki Atkinson

Now, yeah, yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. You were dealing with all that before there was so much, you know, COVID related work from home, parents trying to like, find their way through. So I think you've got some good tips there for parents that are still doing that from home stuff.

00:21:37 Rick Kaempfer

Right.

00:21:43 Rick Kaempfer

And I was an early. I was an early dad doing it too, you know, cause this we're talking about 15 years ago, there weren't that many dads. I when I would go to preschool pickup. I was literally the only dad.

00:21:46 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:21:49 Wynne Leon

Yeah, yeah.

00:21:55 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:21:56 Rick Kaempfer

So a lot of times and this is kind of funny, the the moms.

00:22:02 Rick Kaempfer

Would like drop their own children to help me because they.

00:22:06 Rick Kaempfer

How pathetic I was. Like I was there one time and it's like preschool graduation gone. I gave him pants to put on and I gave him Johnny's pants by mistake. Which is the kid that's four years older than him. And he walked onto the stage to get his diploma and his pants fell down to his nickels.

00:22:20

Oops.

00:22:26 Rick Kaempfer

And he's from the stage, looked at me and said, dad, these are Johnny's panties.

00:22:34 Vicki Atkinson

Oops, yeah, yeah.

00:22:37 Rick Kaempfer

I got a lot of pity which really helped.

00:22:41 Vicki Atkinson

I know, but it didn't slow you down because you also and you know we're recording this just a little bit before Easter, but you also, you know kind of gave as good as you got because there was a story you tell about doing crafts, you know, and religious education with one of.

00:22:57 Vicki Atkinson

Boys, right. And you kind of shot back a little retort when it was time to make the palm leave crosses. I don't know. And and you you asked the teacher. Well, could we just resurrect the one from last year?

00:23:11

It's just like.

00:23:11 Rick Kaempfer

It was thematically appropriate, wasn't it? It wasn't.

00:23:16 Vicki Atkinson

Right. Yeah. You're not responsible if it doesn't land well, but you know.

00:23:21 Vicki Atkinson

We enjoyed it.

00:23:21 Rick Kaempfer

I did get a lot of eye rolls. I did get a lot of eye rolls, but that's like my fuel. I eye rolls are my.

00:23:28 Vicki Atkinson

Fuel. Yeah. Ohh my gosh. Oh my gosh.

00:23:32 Wynne Leon

Well, I love the ones where it's the, you know, the father and son equation where, you know, the sons, like, I kicked more soccer goals and.

00:23:36 Vicki Atkinson

Yes.

00:23:41 Wynne Leon

That and then you reveal the secret between behind how the Father feels about it.

00:23:42

Oh yeah.

00:23:47 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, right. Exactly. Some of my favorite things.

00:23:49 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:23:51 Rick Kaempfer

From those from that book is when I would like overhear a conversation. The two of them, and I would immediately go grab a pencil and paper and start, you know, jotting it down because there was some gold. There's one in there where they're talking about the color of snow and what causes various different colors of snow.

00:24:10 Vicki Atkinson

Oh yeah, yeah.

00:24:11 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:24:11 Rick Kaempfer

I almost.

00:24:14 Rick Kaempfer

Choked. I was laughing so hard at that one.

00:24:19 Rick Kaempfer

You know, and there were times when things would go bad in the house and the boys knew I was writing a column about them and and they'd say, Dad, dad, don't worry about it. It's a column. They go. Yeah, that's a good point.

00:24:26 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:24:34 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, it's everything is material, right? It's all material.

00:24:37 Rick Kaempfer

Right. That's right.

00:24:38

Oh my God.

00:24:40 Vicki Atkinson

Your your boys now, when they look at what you're doing in the loop book, do they and and forgive me if this is insulting to you, but do they give you, like geezer, you know, because it's a time period that they can hardly relate to? Or do they look at it and go wow, Dad, this is really cool. It's not about us, but it's about like, this really impactful.

00:24:59 Vicki Atkinson

Time period in history.

00:25:01 Rick Kaempfer

I think they didn't realize.

00:25:04 Rick Kaempfer

That I had done stuff like that, you know, I was just dead right. They didn't know.

00:25:09 Rick Kaempfer

That, I mean, even John Landecker, who they do know, cause that, you know, they kind of grew up on his show. They didn't realize he's in the, you know, the National Radio Hall of Fame or in the rock and Roll Hall of Fame and National Association of Broadcasters, Hall of Fame and to them to them, he's just John.

00:25:25 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:25:29 Rick Kaempfer

You know.

00:25:30 Vicki Atkinson

Uncle Johnny. Yeah, yeah.

00:25:31 Rick Kaempfer

Right. Yeah, very much like that. And he he acts like a 14 year old anyway, so they.

00:25:37 Rick Kaempfer

And got along great and you know the they didn't know that I was part of a a huge show like that. They didn't know that they were part of a huge show like that so.

00:25:48 Rick Kaempfer

I think they're kind of secretly impressed, although they would never say so.

00:25:54 Vicki Atkinson

No, they're they're not in an age where you're gonna get that for a while, it'll come. But not yet. No. It might come. Yeah.

00:25:58 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it might come right.

00:26:02 Wynne Leon

Yeah, I don't know that we can count on that.

00:26:05 Rick Kaempfer

Right, exactly.

00:26:05 Vicki Atkinson

That's true, no.

00:26:06 Vicki Atkinson

Promises, but when it does come, it's like time stops. It's like you. Yeah. The Angels come and it's it's glorious.

00:26:10

So yeah.

00:26:13 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:26:14 Rick Kaempfer

I'll just have to take your word.

00:26:15 Rick Kaempfer

For that.

00:26:16 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I I I can testify. Yeah. Oh, my gosh.

00:26:20 Vicki Atkinson

Well, but when and I are curious too about back to your radio days.

00:26:25 Vicki Atkinson

There, there's so much like.

00:26:28 Vicki Atkinson

Politic stuff to navigate and personalities and all that. But you did it and didn't lose your mind, and then you propelled all that into these other careers. You are a publisher, you're an author, you're a podcaster. You're kind of. And we're not pandering to you at all. We we think you're kind of prolific at all these things. But how did you like?

00:26:48 Vicki Atkinson

Do that and and not lose steam along the way about the importance of writing for you and and sustaining it. Cause it's not easy when you're a creative right.

00:27:02 Rick Kaempfer

Being trained in radio, the way I was and every day you have a new show and we had to fill 4 1/2 hours a day, every day. I just learned how to do it. I I I don't know how to describe him. I was raised by Germans, you know, and.

00:27:20 Rick Kaempfer

I don't know how.

00:27:21 Rick Kaempfer

Just to say it, I just kind of learned how to do it and then once my radio career ended, I couldn't stop.

00:27:27 Rick Kaempfer

And it just.

00:27:28 Rick Kaempfer

It just keeps coming, so I had to. I would go crazy if I didn't.

00:27:29

Yeah.

00:27:35 Rick Kaempfer

Do all this stuff and along the way I dealt with all these, you know, very say large egos. I I got to know how to do that that that came naturally to me. I just am a very laid back person. I have a my personality is almost nonexistent.

00:27:55 Rick Kaempfer

You know, I can adapt to the situation around me. Yeah. And so, you know, being a publisher.

00:28:04 Rick Kaempfer

Is not difficult for me either because I I have all these authors.

00:28:09 Rick Kaempfer

That I deal with and some have huge egos and some don't and and some need encouragement and some don't. And it's something that I actually enjoy doing because I'm an author myself. I know what they're going through and I try to be as helpful and you know, supportive.

00:28:29 Rick Kaempfer

As I can, yeah.

00:28:29

MHM.

00:28:32 Wynne Leon

There's a lot like parenting, yeah.

00:28:32 Vicki Atkinson

A little vulnerability. Yeah. Yep. Yeah, definitely.

00:28:36 Rick Kaempfer

It's, you know, being a being an author is a tough thing when you you're in a room by yourself, you have no feedback for months or maybe even years.

00:28:47 Rick Kaempfer

And you, you're not sure if you've got something, and then even after it comes out, you're not sure you wait for the reviews or you wait to hear from friends and. And then sometimes it's hard to get the word out and you know it's there's so many steps.

00:29:01 Rick Kaempfer

My co-author or my Co publisher, Dave, thinks authors are kind of needy. I'm like you just don't understand. You know, he's the business end of the of the perspective and I have to handle the the other parts of the the creative parts, the acquisitions of the projects and everything. And I read every book and I go through all the books that we published and.

00:29:22 Rick Kaempfer

I love it. I mean, I really do.

00:29:25 Wynne Leon

It the loop is your top selling book, it was at least in October. You've been going around talking about it. What's the you know, what's the question? The most interesting question that you've gotten asked, what's the question you haven't been asked?

00:29:40 Rick Kaempfer

Boy, you know, I think it's different for every interviewer because I have not done the same interview twice. I never get asked the same questions because it's such a nostalgia thing. Everybody has different, different things that appeal to them sometimes. You know, if someone was like a Jonathan Brandmeier fan, for instance, or.

00:30:01 Rick Kaempfer

Matthews or Stephen Gary or, you know, these personalities that are mentioned and there are people that are really into the music and they remember this, this particular concert and or the disco demolition thing where.

00:30:02 Vicki Atkinson

Mm-hmm.

00:30:15 Rick Kaempfer

They had to forfeit the the baseball game and you know, there's so many cool stories like that, it's kind of hard to narrow it for me. It's.

00:30:28 Rick Kaempfer

The things that I did not know about are the most interesting to me, and it's a lot of that stuff that happened before I got there in the late 70s when it was really crazy and I I had. I had dinner with three or four of my fellow loopers the other day.

00:30:44 Rick Kaempfer

And I heard stories.

00:30:48

Like.

00:30:49 Rick Kaempfer

That I couldn't even put in the book put it that way. Like I I could not believe what I was hearing, and that's what it was like. It was rock and.

00:30:52 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:30:56 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:30:58 Rick Kaempfer

Roll man it.

00:30:59 Rick Kaempfer

Was rock'n'roll. It was, yeah, it was way out there.

00:31:03 Vicki Atkinson

Well, and did you have anyone who you know and? And we hope that folks will will buy the book and read it because again, how it's organized and threaded together is just like.

00:31:12 Vicki Atkinson

Cool, but did you have anyone who gave you a story that was maybe borderline, like, uh? Should I be like putting this in writing and telling it? Did anyone want to pull back after they gave you stories to tell? OK.

00:31:25 Rick Kaempfer

Yes. Yeah. Well, my rule was I wanted no one to end up in jail or divorced.

00:31:33 Rick Kaempfer

OK. So no, so there are no stories like that unless the statute of limitations has run out before something.

00:31:34 Wynne Leon

That's good.

00:31:41 Rick Kaempfer

But there and also the other rule was, if you're gonna tell a story about yourself, that's OK. That. And when you telling a story about somebody else? Yeah, that is, you know, unsubstantiated, you know, they're, believe me, these stories are plenty good without that.

00:31:46 Wynne Leon

Yeah.

00:31:56 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah. Well.

00:31:58 Wynne Leon

I think that was a surprise for me, which is, yeah, you know, it's a rock'n'roll station, but I didn't really understand how.

00:32:04

Which?

00:32:05 Wynne Leon

Radio was rock'n'roll.

00:32:08 Wynne Leon

If that makes any sense.

00:32:08 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

00:32:10 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, well, we all consider ourselves rock and rollers. I mean, that was the rock'n'roll dish, Jackie. And you know, I had the long hair and the, you know, I I remember at one point I worked for a radio station for CBS where they instituted a dress code.

00:32:25 Rick Kaempfer

And and I came home and and told my wife, I said I.

00:32:28 Rick Kaempfer

Think I have to quit I.

00:32:30 Rick Kaempfer

She goes. What do you mean they're going to make me wear khakis? What? Outrageous.
No.

00:32:37 Vicki Atkinson

No, no pleated pants. Oh, my gosh, right.

00:32:41 Rick Kaempfer

That is unheard of. A tie. Never. That's how we felt.

00:32:46 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah, but it it was. I I think this the stories that are told about everyone. Kind of what Winn said before. And you've said too about walking a tight.

00:32:56 Vicki Atkinson

Rope. You know, it was you needed all the liberty to dress like you wanted. Behave like you wanted to because you were making money and and that that was part of it. If you were to like khaki wearing button down that that that's not what the listeners were looking for, right?

00:33:05 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

00:33:10 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah.

00:33:13 Rick Kaempfer

No, no, we were rebels, we.

00:33:14 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:33:16 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:33:17 Rick Kaempfer

People tuned in, you know, I I used to joke that if you the one way to guarantee your memo will be read on the air is to start it with do not read this memo on the air.

00:33:30 Rick Kaempfer

Because that's the sort of, you know, attitude that we had. I think it's why we were so popular, because people would listen to that, you know, wishing that they could do that at their office or or wherever they were going. And and I've got so many emails and letters from people that were like truck drivers or salesman, and they were in their car.

00:33:51 Rick Kaempfer

All day long and and this radio station was their companion. Yeah.

00:33:52 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

00:33:57 Vicki Atkinson

Well, and was there a worry that you had when the book made it to publication, that there was going to be someone, like, lurking that didn't come forward, that was going to take exception with anything? And don't tell us anything that could get anyone in trouble. But are you breathing a little better now because.

00:34:15 Rick Kaempfer

Yes. Yeah, yes, I I there were. I won't say who, but there there was one in particular. I was worried about.

00:34:15 Vicki Atkinson

That ship sail.

00:34:23 Rick Kaempfer

But everything everything is fine. I got a note from that person thanking me and congratulating me on the book and.

00:34:31 Vicki Atkinson

Nice.

00:34:31 Rick Kaempfer

So knock on wood. So far everything's fine. And you know how bad can it be to have someone tell how great you were in the book? You know what I mean? That's, I don't know why I was worried.

00:34:45 Rick Kaempfer

About it, to be honest with you.

00:34:47 Vicki Atkinson

Well, people, in the end, all they have is their reputation, right? Stuff comes and goes. You know, people come and go, but in the end, some people that may have been a little naughty, you know, want to reframe, you know how it was and.

00:35:01 Rick Kaempfer

The way I look at it is the people that were naughty were much naughtier than they are in the.

00:35:08 Rick Kaempfer

Book.

00:35:09 Vicki Atkinson

There you go.

00:35:11 Wynne Leon

There you go. I love that. I love that. So what's your next project? Where are you putting all this creative energy?

00:35:19 Rick Kaempfer

Well, today as we record, this is opening day for baseball and my new version of every cub ever came out today, which I wrote a book about.

00:35:30 Rick Kaempfer

Every person that ever played for the Chicago Cubs, it's in a book, comes. I redo it every year for opening day. So this is my 6th edition of this book.

00:35:42 Rick Kaempfer

And so it's available now on Amazon, I think on next week it'll be available at Eckhart's press also.

00:35:49 Wynne Leon

Grow well and one of our favorite podcast interviews that we've done has been with Bruce Boor. Yeah, we also published with you. Yeah. Yeah.

00:35:55 Rick Kaempfer

Oh yeah.

00:35:58 Rick Kaempfer

Bruce is interesting.

00:36:00 Rick Kaempfer

The guy that his his book about being a Wrigley Field Usher is interesting. It, you know, covers 10 years of tubs lore.

00:36:09 Wynne Leon

Yeah. And he's a great storyteller too.

00:36:12 Rick Kaempfer

He is, in fact that book. My favorite parts of that book is like the little petty arguments between ushers. Like, you know, I can't believe Betty is taking section C again, this, you know, that that was my favorite stuff.

00:36:29 Vicki Atkinson

And if it hadn't been?

00:36:30 Vicki Atkinson

Or Bruce, I don't think I would have met you. So you know, shout out right to Bruce Borer, right? Or surviving. Sue wouldn't live to, you know, be anything. Yeah.

00:36:32 Rick Kaempfer

That's right. Yeah, right.

00:36:38

That's right.

00:36:40 Vicki Atkinson

But we're we're grateful to you for your your time. We'll make sure that we put links to all the books, but one that we didn't mention was back in the DDR. Did you wanna mention

anything about that, Rick? Because you joked about your German ancestry, right? But there's a spy novel in your suite.

00:36:54 Rick Kaempfer

Yeah, that is it.

00:37:00 Vicki Atkinson

Of.

00:37:01 Rick Kaempfer

That's right, my my father worked for the Department of Defense as a engineer is what we.

00:37:02 Vicki Atkinson

Looks right.

00:37:11 Rick Kaempfer

But but as as we learn more about him.

00:37:15 Rick Kaempfer

We're wondering because we would do our our vacations would be at places like East Berlin, you know where places that no one went and.

00:37:28 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, not Club Med.

00:37:30 Rick Kaempfer

No, not Romania. We went to Romania, things like that. So you know, when I grew up in Germany at that time, so a lot of that stuff takes place there and it's it's a story about a kid who has, like, a fish out of water.

00:37:44 Rick Kaempfer

Story a kid who's taken out of America and and dumped right into that and and there might be some spy overtones.

00:37:55 Vicki Atkinson

Just saying, right. And if people don't like that, they can read and Father knows nothing about you and your sister being dropped in Austria for a month when you were 10 or 11. Like where am I?

00:38:05

Yes.

00:38:07 Rick Kaempfer

Yes, that's another story, right. Like you start putting this all together. Like why would they have done that? They sent us. They just put on us on a plane.

00:38:16 Rick Kaempfer

And sent us to Austria for the summer.

00:38:18 Wynne Leon

And your first plane ride ever.

00:38:20 Rick Kaempfer

And my first plane ride ever.

00:38:21 Wynne Leon

That is shocking. That would only happen.

00:38:23 Rick Kaempfer

And that's when I discovered that I had air sickness.

00:38:25 Vicki Atkinson

Yes. Oh, my gosh. Well, that and then the connecting threads about you recently had a ski injury, but then everything that you write about related to your, you know, boys and broken bones and ski injuries and all of that, it's sort of like, do you have a family Crest or ski injuries part?

00:38:41

Yeah.

00:38:42 Vicki Atkinson

Of.

00:38:43 Rick Kaempfer

Well, you know the name Kemp for.

00:38:45 Rick Kaempfer

In German means a warrior or fighter, and my joke is it was probably sarcastic, like like Curly from the Three Stooges, you know, or or a short guy named Stretch.

00:38:59 Rick Kaempfer

That's that's my theory.

00:39:01 Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah, an old gag, right? Yeah. Oh, my gosh. Well, this was fun.

00:39:04 Rick Kaempfer

Yes, exactly.

00:39:09 Wynne Leon

So much fun, so much fun to.

00:39:09 Rick Kaempfer

I enjoyed it.

00:39:11 Wynne Leon

Talk to you.

00:39:12 Rick Kaempfer

Thank you very much for having me on.

00:39:14 Vicki Atkinson

Well, thanks for making the time.

00:39:16 Rick Kaempfer

Sure, absolutely.

00:39:23 Wynne Leon

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