



# Off Menu – Ep106 – Josh Gondelman

**Ed Gamble**

Welcome to the podcast that resembles a steak tartare, it's raw and delicious.

**James Acaster**

More.. different.. different beginning..

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah yeah, you like that?

**James Acaster**

Yeah yeah, that's absolutely fine.

**Ed Gamble**

Hey look, I'm always working off of the top of my head for these. Because even though we just recorded the intro for another podcast, I still forgot that I had to do this bit at the beginning.

**James Acaster**

Yeah you absolutely did forget, I see it in your eyes every time.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm always panicking. Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, we're in New York City. We're in an actual bar and that's why you can hear a coffee percolator in the background.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, that wasn't me doing a sound effect.

**Ed Gamble**

Although you are very good at sound effects are you? You're like the man from police academy.

**James Acaster**

Yep \*blurhhh\*

**Ed Gamble**

Yep. And when I say you're like the man from the police academy, I mean you're like Steve Gutenberg trying to do sound effects.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yeah. His character was not good at sound effects.

**Ed Gamble**

No, not at all. Very good at other stuff but not a sound effect guy.

**James Acaster**

Er, what's your name?

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, Ed Gamble, sorry.

**James Acaster**

I'm James Acaster.



**Ed Gamble**

Welcome to The Off Menu podcast. It's a food based podcast where we ask a special guest some simple questions. What are they James?

**James Acaster**

Their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink.

**Ed Gamble**

Indeed. And our special guest this week is the wonderful, wonderful comedian

**Ed Gamble and James Acaster**

Josh Gondelman

**Ed Gamble**

He is excellent... ooh sorry... just doing a very hissy fart. Josh Gondelman is a wonderful stand-up comedian, I've seen clips of his online. I've followed him on twitter for many years, he's very funny on twitter

**James Acaster**

So funny.

**Ed Gamble**

And turns out, he's a lovely man. We've heard lots of rumours

**James Acaster**

We were told by so many people. All we knew going into this interview is that Josh Gondelman is the nicest man on the planet.

**Ed Gamble**

Excellent. So, Josh Gondelman, despite being a nice man, we will be horrible to him if he says a secret ingredient that we have predetermined before the interview. James, what is the secret ingredient this week?

**James Acaster**

Chicken feet, Ed.

**Ed Gamble**

Chicken feet. I don't think I've ever had chicken feet.

**James Acaster**

Me neither. So really, we're just being very narrow minded about something that might be delicious.

**Ed Gamble**

We are. But, I don't want it.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, I don't want to eat it.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**James Acaster**

I guess it's, I mean, maybe I would still eat them and maybe I would like them, but personally they give me the heeby jeebies. I don't know... maybe that's a bad thing. Maybe that's reflective of...



**Ed Gamble**

Maybe we should try chicken feet.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, maybe we should try them. But we really struggle to come up with secret ingredients on this podcast, and so we're just gonna say chicken feet because Josh Gondelman's so nice we don't want to kick him out and we don't think he's gonna say chicken feet.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah. Exactly. Right let's hope he doesn't say chicken feet. This is the Off Menu menu of

**Ed Gamble and James Acaster**

Josh Gondelman.

**Ed Gamble**

Welcome Josh Gondelman, to The Dream Restaurant.

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you so much for having me.

**James Acaster**

Welcome Josh Gondelman, we've been expecting you for some time.

**Josh Gondelman**

Wow

**Ed Gamble**

Now, what do you think that sound effect was?

**Josh Gondelman**

well, I, were you appearing out of thin air?

**James Acaster**

Yeah, pretty much.

**Josh**

That's my first guess.

**Ed Gamble**

That's a great guess.

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you.

**James Acaster**

Yes, actually, I've got some, it was originally gonna be thin air but I got in especially some fat air.

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh, that's good!

**James Acaster**

I love, I prefer fat air personally. It tastes better.

**Josh Gondelman**



It tastes better, it's warmer to the touch.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah yeah yeah.

**Josh Gondelman**

I love a thick air.

**James Acaster**

It's what it's about.

**Ed Gamble**

It's just there, you can take a slice off.

**James Acaster**

Yeah yeah. A lovely slice.

**Ed Gamble**

So James is a genie, he's just appeared from some thick air.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah.

**James Acaster**

I have an amuse bouche for you.

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you.

**James Acaster**

Obviously.

**Josh Gondelman**

I hate a bored bouche.

**James Acaster**

Yeah yeah yeah.

**Josh Gondelman**

If my bouche isn't being entertained it's like no thanks.

**Ed Gamble**

Especially, you've just arrived at the restaurant. You don't want any any boredom in the bouche.

**James Acaster**

A sulky little bouche there. Waiting for ya, stroppin'.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah. You gotta hit the bouche fast, you gotta hit it hard. Tickle it. Tickle the bouche.

**James Acaster**

Tickle the bouche under the chin.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Straight away. Now this is a new format point that you invented yesterday James



**James Acaster**

Yeah I just decided that we don't do enough amuse bouches on this podcast.

**Ed Gamble**

So, what's the amuse bouche because

**James Acaster**

Pizza!

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, a full pizza?

**James Acaster**

Yes

**Josh Gondelman**

A full pizza?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Josh Gondelman**

Do I have to eat the whole thing?

**James Acaster**

It's an amuse bouche, it's up to you, you know. Absolutely I thought you'd like pizza before your meal.

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you. What kind of toppings are we talking?

**James Acaster**

Fish

**Ed Gamble**

Fish?

**James Acaster**

Fish pizza

**Josh Gondelman**

Like an anchovy?

**James Acaster**

It's just all kinds of fish. Just like, a, it's a bunch of different kinds of fish. But I didn't have time to cut any of them up, so they're all whole.

**Josh Gondelman**

Whole fish?

**James Acaster**

But like, it's fish pizza.

**Josh Gondelman**



Shrimps with the shells on.

**James Acaster**

Yeah yeah yeah. They're all there. The whole sea bed on top of your lovely pizza.

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you

**Ed Gamble**

It doesn't really sound like an amuse bouche, it sounds like it's gonna make the bouche quite confused.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah yeah, it's a confused bouche.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, a confused bouche, that's quite nice.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, see this is the number one podcast for confused bouches. When you said you don't think you do enough amuse bouches on the podcast, I still feel like however much you were doing it's still more than every other podcast.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah yeah yeah exactly. Amused bouche is a great name for this podcast. It's too late now but

**James Acaster**

Yeah, we should've done that.. that would've been a good name.

**Ed Gamble**

We should've called it amused bouche.

**James Acaster**

Ah well, too late

**Ed Gamble**

Josh, are you a foodie?

**Josh Gondelman**

Well, I'm, I like food. I'm not pretentious about it, I will, I have like my taste is incredibly broad. I eat most things and I'm like, that was pretty good. I like, basically eat everything. I used to get teased at an old job because we would have sometimes they would bring in lunch and some of the writers I worked with were like "eh, this isn't my favourite" and I would be like "er.. I dunno.. it's lunch, I'm into it".

**Ed Gamble**

I've eaten it now, it's nice.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah it's good. It's in my mouth, it's got textures, flavours, all the things I like in a food.

**James Acaster**

So when people are like, you go around someone's house and they say, "is there anything you don't eat?", and I always feel bad that I'm just like, "no, there's nothing I don't eat".



**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, right, you want to give them something, so they can be like, "Oh we'll take care of you".

**Ed Gamble**

Well, sure.

**Josh Gondelman**

I don't eat, I'm not into tomato. Like a big slice of tomato.

**Ed Gamble**

Like just raw tomato? yeah

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, yeah. I'll eat it in things, it doesn't put me off as an ingredient, but like as a component, or like, what's that salad? it's just, it's not even a salad, it's just basil and cheese and..

**James Acaster**

Is it a caprese?

**Ed Gamble**

Caprese? Yeah

**Josh Gondelman**

Caprese yep that's the one. Yeah, I like two thirds of that. And then we can just leave the tomatoes.

**Ed Gamble**

You can pick the cheese, you could pick the cheese out quite easily.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, yeah, it looks like the cheese has been raptured.

**James Acaster**

I got into it again, a couple of years ago, tomatoes.

**Ed Gamble**

Really?

**James Acaster**

Yeah yeah yeah

**Ed Gamble**

When did you fall out of tomatoes?

**James Acaster**

Just got bored of them. Feels like it's pretty boring, I don't get what the fuss is about. Why is it everywhere? You know, I really didn't understand it.

**Josh Gondelman**

That's how I feel, you know, it shows up in every sandwich. It's like it follows you everywhere.

**James Acaster**

I thought, overhyped. But then I went to a Chef's Table restaurant, so it's one of the chefs from Chefs Tables and I just wanted to go because of that show. And one of the dishes was this amazing tomato salad with like a tomato jelly as well that they'd made, and it really made me appreciate the flavour at the core of a tomato. And I'd like taken it for granted for so long and then it suddenly made



me see it all again in a new light. And now, I love it. Any time there's any tomato in anything, it reminds me of that dish and I can find that hint of that flavour in there and it takes me back to chefs

**Ed Gamble**

You had a tomatapiphany!

**James Acaster**

I did have a tomatapiphany actually!

**Josh Gondelman**

I love it, it's like, the tomato's been hot the whole time, it just took off its glasses and shook up its hair.

**James Acaster**

Exactly! It was exactly like that.

**James Acaster**

We always start off with still or sparkling water Josh?

**Josh Gondelman**

I'd go with still with a meal, please. Or tap if you have it? I just, even in a Dream Restaurant I'm like, we should keep the cost down.

**James Acaster**

Does it make you feel better?

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, it does.

**James Acaster**

Yeah you feel bad if you're getting, like paying for still water.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah just I don't need like 6 dollars for like water water.

**Ed Gamble**

I always ask for tap as well but I always feel bad when I do it like I'm a horrible piece of scum.

**Josh Gondelman**

But they don't... you know... it's not harder for them

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, but they always say, 'do you want still or sparkling', they never say tap, no-one ever offers tap so then you have to, it's like a secret code, it's a hack when you have to say tap.

**Josh Gondelman**

And I always worry that like, when I ask for that, that they feel like I will not be a good tipper.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah

**Josh Gondelman**

That's the thing

**James Acaster**





Right

**Josh Gondelman**

That they're like, oh, he's really cutting costs from word one.

**James Acaster**

All tap no tip

**Josh Gondelman**

All tap no tip!

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, cos that's where I was gonna say you really save money tap and tip.

**James Acaster**

Tap and tip.

**Josh Gondelman**

T and t. Any consultant will tell you, I like a still water with a lot of ice. I like my beverages as cold as possible at all times.

**Ed Gamble**

How much ice? Because I don't want to, look, I don't want to come to your country and start flinging around accusations, but I think Americans over ice.

**Josh Gondelman**

I over ice.

**Ed Gamble**

You over ice.

**Josh Gondelman**

I mean I prefer, I prefer, I mean I'm drinking iced coffee currently, in the winter. And I like it, not mostly ice, but I like it cold top to bottom. Sometimes you get ice that's just on the top and the bottom is still room temperature. That's not fair.

**James Acaster**

Sure, that's not nice.

**Josh Gondelman**

No thank you. I work hard, I deserve the beverage at the temperature that I prefer.

**James Acaster**

You want it stacked

**Josh Gondelman**

oh yeah, stacked. I don't need it dense but I need it stacked. That's the word for it.

**James Acaster**

Do you have ice in your home?

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh yeah. Always. If you come to my home you will not be disappointed by a dirth of ice. If you go to the freezer, it's in there.



**James Acaster**

In the freezer. Yeah. but do you have one of those little machines on the front of your freezer?

**Josh Gondelman**

No. It's on the inside though, so it makes it by itself.

**James Acaster**

That's nice

**Josh Gondelman**

Yep, and I take it for granted fully. Like the tomato. I just think it'll be there. Yeah if one day I open the freezer and it hadn't made it, I wouldn't know how to fix it, I would be very disappointed. I wouldn't know who to call to get it fixed and then I would just drink warm beverages until I moved and just feel disappointed.

**Ed Gamble**

But you'd move quickly right? You'd immediately put it into action

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah yeah yeah. I'd tell my wife, I would say honey, we're gonna get out of here.

**James Acaster**

We have to move house, preferably into an igloo, so that I can eat the walls.

**Josh Gondelman**

A house that I could drink slowly. It's my favourite room in Raymond Chandler short story, Raymond hart's short story a house that I can drink slowly.

**James Acaster**

I wouldn't know how to, who would you call to fix the ice machine?

**Josh Gondelman**

I guess, we have a landlord and I guess I would call him, but then I don't know he would call, would he call the company that makes the refrigerator, is it a plumber? It's not really a water issue, it's a pipe issue?

**James Acaster**

Yeah, it would be weird if the plumber, if you were a plumber you would probably be annoyed.

**Ed Gamble**

Does a plumber deal with ice as well? Or just water?

**Josh Gondelman**

Just liquid water?

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, is there an ice plumber?

**Josh Gondelman**

I dunno, and then a gases plumber. If you've got a steam problem then that's gonna be a different guy.

**James Acaster**

An ice plumber. I like the thought of an ice plumber. I think that's



**Ed Gamble**

He wears sunglasses. He's cool.

**James Acaster**

Really cool. Poppadoms or bread Josh?! Popadoms or bread?!

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh, bread please.

**James Acaster**

Bread please.

**Ed Gamble**

Very polite as well.

**James Acaster**

Very polite. We already knew, me and Ed haven't met you before but your reputation precedes you as a polite, nice man.

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you that's very kind

**James Acaster**

I don't think I've ever heard one person get so many compliments before I've met them before.

**Josh Gondelman**

That's very kind. I appreciate that so much.

**James Acaster**

Oh, I knew you would take it nicely like that. Look how nicely he took it.

**Josh Gondelman**

Well, I've been trying not to be like, like when people compliment, which, you know, happens from time to time. I've been trying to not be like one of those guys that's like, 'oh you think something nice about me? Well you're a fucking idiot. Only an idiot would say something nice to me', cos that's you know

**James Acaster**

The ultimate test is to tell a nice person that they're nice and then you get to see, see the truth

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah then you see how they really are. I could just be really good at facades, just facades in general.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah! But then you see, if you've taken it that far, the nice facade, then you're basically nice I think

**Josh Gondelman**

Right, right. The facade has penetrated into the inside.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, it clearly matters to you.

**Ed Gamble**



If you don't tell, if you don't show to anyone that you're a nasty person and just are nice to everyone then I think you're nice. Yeah you've gone so deep undercover

**Josh Gondelman**

I'm practically in the mob at this point.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, you're the godfather of nice.

**James Acaster**

It depends what you're doing in secret though I guess. If you're being nice to everyone but you're poisoning everyone.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh but that's not being nice

**James Acaster**

The facade is there, nice to everyone's faces, but secretly poisoning us all.

**Ed Gamble**

With ice

**Josh Gondelman**

Killing them, not with kindness but with poisonous ice

**James Acaster**

yeah sending the ice plumber round to the house

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah he's got the sunglasses on cos his eyes are shifty

**James Acaster**

He knows what he's doing, that ice plumber. You know, some people in this city. Obviously New York has a reputation for some people really yell at each other, stuff like that. Well on night one, we saw some classic New York brashness.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh yeah it was great, it was like they'd welcomed us to New York by having an argument outside our hotel.

**Josh Gondelman**

Like that's a concierge service.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, could we have a New York argument outside the room please.

**James Acaster**

Two men, arguing by a car, I assumed one of them owned the car, dunno what they were really arguing about. But one of them was saying, 'you can suck my dick, just suck my dick, bend over and suck my dick' yeah he said 'bend over you suck my dick'.

**Josh Gondelman**

That's a classic New York City insult.

**James Acaster**



Yeah, in England, by the way, that would get you punched in the face, saying that.

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh yeah, in New York, that's kind of like the opening salvo in a negotiation. It's like, oh, you want me to suck my dick, that's not really what I'm into right now. Let's see if we can reach a middle ground.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, cos there was no threat of violence, they were stood like, quite far away from each other and the guy was just taking it. And, well, the worst come-back in the world.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, the worst but also my favourite come-back. The guy was just like, 'well, why don't you get your wife to suck my dick'.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, 'why don't you and my wife share an intimate moment?'

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, 'we hardly know each other, this is too much give in our relationship. I'm mad at you so I'm definitely not gonna do you that kindness you're suggesting'.

**Ed Gamble**

Also it was like 'bend over and suck my dick' it's not even 'get on your knees'. Like, 'fully bend at the hips'.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, 'just bend at the waist'.

**Josh Gondelman**

'I know you have back issues so this is not gonna be comfortable'.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, 'we're in the street, I don't want you putting your knees in any dirt. Just bend over'

**Josh Gondelman**

'There might be puddles. Just bend over standing. We don't have the time'.

**James Acaster**

'That sounds like something your wife should do actually'.

**Ed Gamble**

'This is a thing for the bedroom. This is a private moment'.

**Josh Gondelman**

'You seem very lonely, I can't meet your needs'.

**James Acaster**

Yeah that was the opposite of, the opposite Gondelman.

**Josh Gondelman**

That's so funny

**Ed Gamble**

An opposite Gondelman.



**James Acaster**

Yeah an opposite Gondelman.

**Josh Gondelman**

That's just, yeah, that's the sex position. It's the reverse Gondelman that guy unsuccessfully demanding a stranger suck his dick

**James Acaster**

Yeah, while bending at the waist

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, so bread.

**James Acaster**

Bread, what bread would you like?

**Josh Gondelman**

I'd like, does a roll count as a bread?

**James Acaster**

Oh yeah yeah

**Josh Gondelman**

Okay, so kind of a, some kind of grain, a whole grain, a dark grain roll. With, there's like a honey salted butter. Yeah, the butter is the thing. Any soft bread will do really, it's just a vehicle for the butter. That's gonna be a theme through my meal, I think, is a vehicle for the butter.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, butter vehicles.

**Josh Gondelman**

Butter vehicles, it's like oh they look good from far away but are vehicles. Just a horrible car.

**Ed Gamble**

Have you had this honey salted butter anywhere in particular?

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, there was this place that closed. This is gonna get wistful. My wife and I had this favourite restaurant, it was where our parents met each other, we took both our parents out to meet at this restaurant called Rye, in our old neighbourhood, we lived in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and they just had the greatest butter. And my wife is diabetic so she doesn't eat a lot of bread, because, you know, it just turns right into sugar which you know, she has to count it very carefully.

**Ed Gamble**

Type one or type two?

**Josh Gondelman**

type one

**Ed Gamble**

I'm type one

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh! I didn't know that.



**Ed Gamble**

I'm type one, but I've just eaten a cookie, because I'm in New York.

**Josh Gondelman**

Fuck my blood! I'm in New York City baby. Suck my dick blood!

**Ed Gamble**

Bend over blood and suck my dick!

**Josh Gondelman**

So she, so, but she will, for this salted butter, this kind of sweet, salted butter, she would get, she used to get excited and would, you know like budget for that health wise

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, you've gotta give some things a pass I think. You can't live your life denying everything.

**Josh Gondelman**

No. Agreed. And so, it was terrific and their restaurant has since closed and we miss it but we don't live there anymore. We moved because our last ice maker broke so we're in a different neighbourhood now.

**James Acaster**

Did your wife fall in the Hudson?

**Josh Gondelman**

No

**James Acaster**

Oh.

**Ed Gamble**

Now, just to let you know Josh, this is a running joke where James claims that I got type one diabetes because I fell in the Thames.

**James Acaster**

It's just a good question, I thought it was interesting. Cos like, I thought, probably not the Thames right, cos you guys don't live near it. So maybe it was the Hudson that

**Ed Gamble**

But im glad, im glad to hear that your wife coincidentally hasn't fallen in the Hudson because that would really, like that would back up his theory too much,.

**James Acaster**

I would have really landed on my feet there if she had.

**Josh Gondelman**

Small sample size but it really would have busted the study.

**James Acaster**

If your wife had fallen in the Hudson it would have really done me a lot of favours in the long run of this podcast.

**Josh Gondelman**

I could see if she'll do it, she's very nice.



**James Acaster**

Any body of water, if you could ask her if she's ever fallen in a body of water there and then we could find out.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, we could find out.

**James Acaster**

Cos I'm trying to, it's for the good of everyone really, if I could find out, get to root of it all.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, it's good research

**James Acaster**

I like reminiscing about places that have closed. I think that's very nice and like, I like it when people bring that to the podcast.

**Josh Gondelman**

Do you have like favourite, do you think about places that have closed often?

**James Acaster**

Yeah there was a place in Auckland in New Zealand where, I'd only go there once a year for the festival, the comedy festival, and there was a place called Honey Trap and they did this sandwich and it was the best like beef brisket sandwich and, there was this amazing coleslaw in it, and pickles. My favourite sandwich ever. And it's shut.

**Josh Gondelman**

It's gone. I also have a favourite beef brisket sandwich at a place that no longer exists. A barbecue place in Boston called Soul Fire that's gone. Talking about places that have closed is like the ultimate New York City past time. I think until you don't know, until you have a favourite place that closed, that's I think when you become a real New Yorker. It's like, when every neighbourhood, when you can point at any bank and just be like 'ah, I used to get a tattoo there!', that's like truly the New Yorkist thing when you can look at a thing that sucks and remember when it used to be good. And that's like everybody's favourite hobby, which you can't recommend to tourists, you just have to be like, 'oh I guess, go to the Whitney, see some art'. Because you can't reminisce about a place you're visiting but have never lived.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, you have to stay here for like, a few months, and see the full life cycle of a restaurant first.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah yeah yeah

**James Acaster**

Because, like there's a lot places that don't last long here, right? Like, cos it's like quite impressive if you manage to keep a restaurant going for a while, in New York.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, it's really impressive. There's a restaurant in our neighbourhood, I don't want to blow up their spot but it's so bad. And it's been open for like six months and we walk by it all the time and just go, this place, how, it must be a front. They must run numbers in the back, some kind of gambling programme because it's not, it's not enough to be... It's like, does this restaurant have rich parents? Who pays its rents?

**James Acaster**





That's when you know you're a bad restaurant. If you're such a, your food is so bad that you get investigated by the FBI because everyone, it's like it has to be a front.

**Ed Gamble**

This can't be a real restaurant.

**Josh Gondelman**

No, what is it here? What are you trafficking?

**Ed Gamble**

Have you been to the restaurant?

**Josh Gondelman**

Yes, we've gone a couple times. It's like one of those, it's a coffee shop and restaurant, but it only seats like four people, which is a red flag. That's not enough people to keep a restaurant open.

**Ed Gamble**

especially if you can get a seat immediately.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yes, yeah, they're like, 'we'll take the table'. 'It's open sir'. But they do prepared food, it's not just like a small, you know, it's not just like a window coffee shop. Like they'll serve you a warm meal, and that's a bad sign that it's like 'well, we don't expect people to sit and eat at our restaurant.

**James Acaster**

Yeah it's like with four seats you're either a horrendous restaurant or you're the best

**Josh Gondelman**

Right, the best restaurant. there's a documentary about you. It's called Four Seats. You serve each person one quail egg.

**Ed Gamble**

And they only have a landline. That's the only way that you can book.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, you can't make reservations online, yeah you call their phone

**Ed Gamble**

There's a sushi restaurant in London where they've only got a landline but they put on their twitter account, we have one seat available for 5pm next Friday, call now, and they plug in their landline and as soon as they've booked it they unplug their landline.

**Josh Gondelman**

that's incredible. that's so, oh, I hate how much I love it. I wish I could just be like, oh I guess I'll never go there, but now im like, oh I want it so bad

**Ed Gamble**

I've never been there but the only people, they're the only twitter account I have notifications for, so whenever they tweet I'm like, I gotta call.

**Josh Gondelman**

how often do they tweet?

**Ed Gamble**



I'd say like once a week, once a week they'd tweet and it's like next week we've got one seat, but it's always one seat

**James Acaster**

and then they throw their phone out the window,

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah and then they're getting through a phone a week

**Josh Gondelman**

What do they tweet from? Do they call, they have a guy they call and they're like, do the tweet

**James Acaster**

And then unplug the phone

**Ed Gamble**

Do you remember that, when twitter started there was a thing you could text your tweet? It was crazy

**Josh Gondelman**

It was a literal game of telephone.

**James Acaster**

We've come to your starter, very exciting, the main show, well the start of the main show

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, the start of the main show. For me it's the main show, I love starters.

**Josh Gondelman**

Do you have an all time favourite?

**James Acaster**

It's not about us

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh sorry, I don't mean to pry

**James Acaster**

Yeah, Josh, keep your fucking nose out of our business, okay?

**Ed Gamble**

The facade has started to slip

**Josh Gondelman**

So, I'm gonna start with a particular salad, there's a restaurant called Rucola in Brooklyn that has this great salad. It's escarole goat's cheese, toasted almonds and this light dressing, it's like, I looked it up this morning, it's like a honey elderflower vinaigrette. But it's not too sweet and it's not too tangy and they don't overdo it, it's just right. I'm sometimes against a nut in a salad because it's hard to fork; you've got to scoop it, you can't just spear an almond. But it's so good and I always like to start with, I eat the vegetables first whenever I'm eating because then I will always have eaten the vegetables and it doesn't matter. Cos I know that if I get a steak or something and there's vegetables on the side then it's like, you know, that spinach might linger. But if I start with the spinach like I'll finish the steak.

**Ed Gamble**



Yeah yeah, there's no way you're gonna get half way through the steak and be like, oh I overfilled on the spinach.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, oh, I should have thought this out better.

**Ed Gamble**

Every time josh, every time you always overfill on the spinach.

**Josh Gondelman**

I know, they're like, oh stop eating so much spinach, you're gonna fill up on spinach. And. oh, and may I ask, this is another question. For this meal, is there an occasion? Cos I realised, when I was thinking about it in advance, I was thinking about it as a last meal, which feels like a very American concept right, cos we still allow the state to execute people barbarically and then we give them the last meal first. Well, so, at first I was thinking about that and then I was like oh well then I might as well choose a meal that I would think afterwards I wanna die, and then I would die. But I've reimagined it as a meal that I would want to eat, and then continue living.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yeah yeah. Okay, so I think, you know, it's the Dream Restaurant so it can be whatever you want it to be, the occasion can be whatever you want.

**Josh Gondelman**

I'm gonna go continue living because it feels a little depressing to go like, my Dream Restaurant, they murder me after the meal

**James Acaster**

yeah, that would be the worst

**Ed Gamble**

I think that this is a continue living party

**Josh Gondelman**

You would have one of the best comments (?)

**James Acaster**

They all continue living occasion

**Josh Gondelman**

You would have to tip huge if they murdered you at the end of the meal

**James Acaster**

What?

**Josh Gondelman**

you would have to just give a real impressive tip

**James Acaster**

oh, so that they didn't murder you?

**Josh Gondelman**

Or if you were like, well you're gonna have to murder me when I finish eating so here's an extra \$7000

**Ed Gamble**



Off Menu – Ep 106 Josh Gondelman

So you're paying a hit man essentially?

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah essentially, right right, it's a chef/ hit man. It's a Bradley Cooper film.

**James Acaster**

So you're thinking that if you tip them if then they'll make it painless and quick

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah yeah they'll dispose of it, it's just like it's a lot of effort they have to go to

**Ed Gamble**

so you're starting with the salad, which it's a lighter start to the meal

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah, it's a lighter start

**Ed Gamble**

Cos you're continuing living

**Josh Gondelman**

I would like to continue living

**James Acaster**

I love your reasoning for, you know, being a bit cautious about having a nut in a salad, because it is difficult to scoop but I do love nuts in salad.

**Josh Gondelman**

I love the texture of it and the taste

**James Acaster**

They're so nice

**Josh Gondelman**

A walnut in a salad

**Ed Gamble**

oh, a toasted walnut

**Josh Gondelman**

oh, so good, delicious

**Ed Gamble**

I put a toasted walnut on something the other day, I can't remember what I was cooking all I remember was the walnut, that's the key piece of information

**James Acaster**

That[s how good it was

**Ed Gamble**

I toasted too many walnuts and then just kept eating the walnuts

**Josh Gondelman**

just full on walnut blackout



**Ed Gamble**

yeah, exactly, I just came out the other side and was like, what happened?

**James Acaster**

I always wanna have a nut in every mouthful of salad that, if there's nuts in the salad then I don't want a mouthful without a nut

**Josh Gondelman**

Same with the little goat cheese, I try to evenly distribute the cheese throughout the bite

**James Acaster**

you want the perfect mouthful each time

**Ed Gamble**

so this is another vehicle. Basically this is another dairy vehicle isn't it?

**Josh Gondelman**

it is, the cheese is good but I do like the escarole, the lettuce, everything, it all works together

**James Acaster**

what's escarole?

**Josh Gondelman**

it's like a big floppy lettuce.. I think? Yeah, that's how I would describe it

**Ed Gamble**

yeah I thought lettuce,

**Josh Gondelman**

it's lettuce-esque

**Ed Gamble**

lettuce-esque

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, it's in the lettuce realm

**Ed Gamble**

that's why it's called escarole, because its full name is lettuce-escarole

**James Acaster**

love it. I like the sound of this very much

**Josh Gondelman**

it's delicious, yeah

**James Acaster**

because I don't think that we've had a salad with nuts in it yet. When you first had this salad, were you like, 'oh, this won't be that great'? Were you like this'll be a whatever?

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah, I thought, we should have a salad, we were looking to split a salad, I was out with my wife Maris so we were looking to split a salad and we crossed off the ones that were objectionable to us for various reasons, too much tomato and the like, and then we were down between this and one other and we were, oh we can take a chance on this, and it is like all-time favourite salad.



**James Acaster**

Yeah I mean, the having a salad, I usually just do it for conscience reasons to feel better

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, exactly

**Ed Gamble**

for guilt purposes.

**James Acaster**

when you, you stumble across a good one, that is exciting

**Josh Gondelman**

it's a gift

**James Acaster**

yeah, you've found a secret. Cos you've gone to a corner of the menu no-one with, you know, an actual appetite for good times would go

**Ed Gamble**

there's like dust all over the salad bit, you have to blow all the dust off

**Josh Gondelman**

It's an ancient scroll. Is this gonna teach me how to win the game of thrones?

**Ed Gamble**

and you read the salad outloud and you invoke a demon

**James Acaster**

I love it, though, that kind of stuff

**Ed Gamble**

you love the salad demon?

**James Acaster**

I'd love to open a menu and there's like a treasure map in there

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah

**James Acaster**

like, I would love to find a treasure map so much

**Josh Gondelman**

oh it'd be so great! I would even love, one of those, like you turn around and on the back there's like a priceless work of art. It's like embedded in the picture and then you scratch it and it's like, oh this was painted by Picasso himself. Any kind of fancy secret. A bookcase that you pull the book

**James Acaster**

yeah, I'd love that. just once

**Josh Gondelman**

Once!



**Ed Gamble**

Yep, I lived in a house when I was at university and we found out there was an extra room in the house that was bricked over, so there was like a window that we couldn't work out where the window went, and there was like a wall in front of it, a little extra room

**James Acaster**

And you went in the secret room?

**Ed Gamble**

yeah there was nothing in there

**James Acaster**

here's a question. and I wouldn't ask this if it wasn't during your university days.

**Ed Gamble**

Go on.

**James Acaster**

Did you have a wank in the room?

**Ed Gamble**

No. I didn't wank in the secret room

**James Acaster**

okay

**Josh Gondelman**

I wonder what kinds of secrets were in there

**James Acaster**

Yeah I think most students probably

**Ed Gamble**

do you think most students, the first think that they do when they find a secret room would be to have a wank

**James Acaster**

well, no one's gonna find you in there. It's a secret room

**Josh Gondelman**

it is a secret room

**Ed Gamble**

yeah but I'd have to break down a wall, cos there wasn't a door to it, so I'd have to like break down a wall which everyone would hear

**Josh Gondelman**

like a horny cool aid man

**Ed Gamble**

there's be no way of blocking that off then, so then they'd come in and I'd just be walking in some rubble, it'd be the saddest thing

**James Acaster**

they'd understand, they'd go, 'ah, we see what's happened here'



**Ed Gamble**

'Oh, we've already done that'

**James Acaster**

Yeah, we've tried

**Josh Gondelman**

they'd put it back. Very carefully learning how to do mortar work

**James Acaster**

reminiscing about the wank while they're building, rebuilding the wall, it was a good wank actually, pretty cool.

**James Acaster**

Hope we haven't affected your appetite now, with our wank talks

**Josh Gondelman**

no, it's okay

**James Acaster**

We were gonna talk about your main course now, so that salad has really teed you up nice to essentially do whatever you like, you know, in terms of ... you feel guilty

**Josh Gondelman**

oh yeah, im setting myself up to just, you know, run wild during the meal. I'm still gonna keep it pretty simple cos again, im gonna wanna live afterwards. So, I think we go lobster roll

**Ed Gamble**

Ah yes

**Josh Gondelman**

which is also an effective vehicle for butter

**Ed Gamble**

Oh yeah

**Josh Gondelman**

and lobster

**James Acaster**

to be fair, the lobster's in the passenger seat

**Ed Gamble**

yeah, the lobster gets a look in there

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah, the lobster headlines the role, the butter isn't even mentioned, it's like a cameo just after the credits. But yeah I love, I love a lobster roll. I grew up in a Massachusetts which is lobster roll country I think and they, so there's two kinds, the kind with, the cold kind with mayonnaise, and the warm kind with butter which I think is the preferable kind

**Ed Gamble**

that's the king





**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, that's a good lobster roll. And you kind of, you get it at a place where, I feel like there's places you go on the beach and you're like 'god I'd like a lobster roll' and they're like \$23 and then you see how much it is and it's like an entire fleet of lobsters has perished for the one roll. And there are people say, you know people say they're like a cockroach, it's like eating a cockroach of the sea, to try to harsh your good time. But to me, that just makes it sound like maybe cockroaches are also delicious. Cos lobsters are so good

**James Acaster**

yeah, why are we not eating cockroaches

**Josh Gondelman**

and yeah, I've never had a lobster like crawl our from behind my refrigerator. It's just a different relationship with them

**Ed Gamble**

Cockroaches can survive anything right? So you'd try to steam them like a lobster and they'd just run off

**Josh Gondelman**

Just, little butter tracks behind them

**James Acaster**

Thanks for the free butter losers!

**Josh Gondelman**

Bend way over and suck my dick

**Ed Gamble**

Bend down as far as you possibly can, bend over and suck my tiny little cockroach dick

**Josh Gondelman**

So lobster roll I think is where, that's where, that's the main course. So it's not too heavy but it's certainly a little decadent

**Ed Gamble**

Is there a specific place, from Massachusetts?

**Josh Gondelman**

There's a few places, my family used to go to this place called Woodman's which is like up on the north shore of Massachusetts and they would have, you'd sit outside on these picnic benches and get all sorts of seafood, you'd get lobster and sea clams and muscles and all that and I have very fond memories of it and I don't go back that much in the summer so I always miss out. So I will routinely get my parents a gift certificate there because I know they'll go there anyway during the summer. So I'm like 'here, enjoy this meal that I know you were planning to have that's like a nice meal out'. Because otherwise I like, I really spin out buying a gift. We've gone, my family has gone onto a gift certificate based gift giving system, primarily. And I think that I've initiated that

**Ed Gamble**

That's such a good decision.

**Josh Gondelman**

It feels terrific. It's so good cos there are some places around where I live that, you know, it's a little fancy to just go and if you don't think about it in time for, oh it's my birthday ah they're already book,



oh I guess we'll go next year. And to go like oh I'm gonna get a gift certificate there so it's top of mind and lock down a reservation

**James Acaster**

That's fair, I do like that, I like that a lot. I think, as you get older, just it's more about time spent with each then it is about.. brilliant

**Josh Gondelman**

For sure! It's also like, I don't need that much stuff. And my parents don't like the same stuff that I do, so like I'll be like, hey this is pretty cool and they'll be like, we don't need these high top Jordans, like nobody, my mum is like, I'm not gonna wear those.

**Ed Gamble**

okay I'll take them back then

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, they are conveniently my size. Mens 10, I dunno why that was my guess for your shoe size

**James Acaster**

I also like the you've chosen the lobster roll and not a lobster because I am of the opinion that it is better and I don't really understand when people buy lobster and they spend ages like trying to be a surgeon and it's all a mess and I think just put it all in a roll and have a good time

**Josh Gondelman**

it is, it's an easier time. I do like kinda cracking it open and that feels, not in a restaurant. It feels like you know everybody else is just eating chicken with a fork and a knife and you're just ripping into it like it murdered your family. You're just like tearing it limb from limb and it just feels like really barbaric to do while other people, like if everyone's doing that then it's fine but if you're the only one that's performing that kind of like, amateur surgery, as you were saying, it's like, a little ugly

**Ed Gamble**

I quite like, I like cracking into the lobster. I like any food where they have to bring you a bib. I'm a big fan of that where they're like, 'we know you're gonna get messy cos all bets are off, put this child's bib on'.

**Josh Gondelman**

you get barbecue ribs and they bring you like, the wet naps before the meal starts. they're like, 'you're gonna get extra dirty'. Like you have napkins, you're gonna need more.

**James Acaster**

I don't like cracking them open because I always think that im gonna get a shard of like claw in my meat, like that's what I worry about, I worry that im gonna have a little like horrible little shard of

**Ed Gamble**

and what do you worry the shard will do

**James Acaster**

ohhh I just don't want it in my mouth, the thought of it is horrible

**Ed Gamble**

That's a confused bouche isn't it?

**James Acaster**

Yeah, that that is a confused bouche. Just the shards, imagine if someone brought that out before a meal?



**Josh Gondelman**

I would call it a refuse bouche cos I would want keep it out my mouth

**James Acaster**

We've invented so many bouches today.

**Ed Gamble**

so many different types of bouches

**Josh Gondelman**

We're in the bouche pioneers, we're bouchineers!

**James Acaster**

Have you ever chosen your lobster?

**Josh Gondelman**

I have

**James Acaster**

ah, what was it like?

**Ed Gamble**

What do you look for in a lobster? While it's still alive?

**Josh Gondelman**

Size is one, that's most of it because I don't know what else make's it delicious

**Ed Gamble**

Fight?

**Josh Gondelman**

like, right, if it's friskier, am I just gonna be like 'oh, I like the spirit of that one', it feels all very war lord like.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah it does, yeah. but the whole thing feels very war lord like anyway,

**Josh Gondelman**

oh yeah for sure it does you're just like tearing it open with your hands

**Ed Gamble**

It's like 'you shall die', jus pointing at it in a tank

**James Acaster**

what would you do if you looked in a tank of lobster and there's the biggest, plumpest one and you knew you wanted it and you're about to point at it and as you're about to point at it, it looks at you and waves. Just waves its claw like, really like sweetly waves at you?

**Josh Gondelman**

Like, 'good to meet you'. Are we gonna, are we vibing? is this something?

**Ed Gamble**

Okay, I'll come and meet you but you gotta promise. I thought you were gonna say, what would you do if you looked in and it had your face.



**Josh Gondelman**

Oh that would be very bad, I would try to, I think I would offer them a sum of money to give it to me to not eat, if it had my face

**Ed Gamble**

Cos you'd need that lobster as a pet.

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah, or just a body double, the way Saddam Hussain used to have

**James Acaster**

Just send it into work

**Ed Gamble**

I'm not sure you'd fool the government, by going oh Josh Gondelman's gonna be at this event today. Oh, he appears to have lobster's body

**Josh Gondelman**

No that's true. Well, we can't shoot him, might as well boil him. All we can just trick him into a pot.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, you definitely need, yeah if you saw a lobster with your face, that'd. if someone said, have you got any pets that'd

**Josh Gondelman**

I thought you were about to say if you were about to point at the lobster and it pointed at you like 'bring it on'. Then you would have to defeat it in single combat

**James Acaster**

Oh yeah, that would be scary actually

**Josh Gondelman**

it'd be very scary

**James Acaster**

All those options I think would put me off eating the lobster actually, all of them

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah, I would be like I'll just stick with the salad.

**Ed Gamble**

Just double the salad

**James Acaster**

More walnuts please

**Ed Gamble**

there's a little chain in London called Burger and Lobster which, when it opened with the, it was basically, on the menu was only a burger, lobster that you have to crack and a lobster roll. And it was like £20

**Josh Gondelman**

they have that here too!



**Ed Gamble**

Oh do they?!

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, but I think that they've expanded the menu a little bit. Which I miss the original menu, I thought that was so fun- just three choices.

**Ed Gamble**

I didn't know they had them here that's great

**James Acaster**

And their lobster roll, that was the first lobster roll I'd ever had and it still maybe my favourite lobster roll. I do go pretty nuts for it.

**Ed Gamble**

But yeah, they expanded the menu too much, they had a burger that they put lobster in it and I was like im having that, that's right up my street but it was too much.

**James Acaster**

I think that they basically just ended up being a normal restaurant but with the longest name in the world: Burger and Lobster and Lasagne and Quiche and Coleslaw and Corn on the Cob.

**Josh Gondelman**

And we definitely have dessert. Don't think that we don't have dessert just because we didn't say dessert yeah

**Ed Gamble**

And drinks!

**Josh Gondelman**

And beverages.. oh you're not gonna go thirsty in this restaurant! And that's all part of the name of the restaurant in parenthesis

**Ed Gamble**

And tables and chairs

**James Acaster**

And good service, a warm welcome, an amused bouche a refuse bouche.

**Ed Gamble**

A confused bouche

**James Acaster**

Your side dish, let's go with the side dish. So, are you picking a side dish based on your main?

**Josh Gondelman**

I am, I'm gonna go thin French fry. Well not one, like a side of French fries

**Ed Gamble**

A very long one

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah just one that I'm gonna like a long, like a Cruella Devil cigarette. I'm just gonna hold it in my mouth. But yeah, skinny French fries that you can dunk like three at a time into ketchup.



**James Acaster**

I like to, at Burger and Lobster, they bring along the lobster roll. And they have the fries there, in like a big cup and then they have the butter boat with the butter in it that you can pour in your lobster roll, I like to pour a bit of that butter over the fries.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah yeah. Very luxurious. that's like a Dream Restaurant meal that you can have in real life. I almost, for my main, I almost went with a fictional food. But I've never tried it so I didn't know if it would be worth using my dream on. I almost went with the chicken from the chicken restaurant in Breaking Bad. Because people loved it so much they didn't notice that they were making that they were making meth downstairs. This is the best chicken that anyone's ever imagined.

**Ed Gamble**

That restaurant near you really needs to take a leaf out of that book.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, for sure!

**James Acaster**

If we're gonna cover this up we really need to make the food good!

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, we need to make the food better! Or people are gonna catch on to our four chair restaurant!

**James Acaster**

Yeah, that's one of those things where like, when Breaking Bad first came out, people would like, all the merch came out but none of it said Breaking Bad on it, so you had to have seen Breaking Bad to know the merch. So like the Heisenburg drawing or that chicken and then you'd see it and be like, 'ah cool, that person, that person's really cool'. And now, I see people with that t shirt and I'm like, 'oh, you try hard little loser. What're you wearing that chicken t shirt for?'

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh yeah, for sure

**Ed Gamble**

What's the name of that chicken restaurant in it?

**James Acaster**

Pollos Hermanos

**Josh Gondelman**

Pollos Hermanos, right right right. A Polla Loca I said, but that's a real place. We could just have that. Yeah, right. It's, we were in, a couple of years ago we went to a wedding in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and they are still riding that Breaking Bad train hard, they have like rock candy meth like meth rock candy in gift shops and like pads and t shirts, it's all over the place.

**Ed Gamble**

I feel like they've not taken, like the morals from Breaking Bad necessarily. they've come away with completely the wrong thing.

**Josh Gondelman**

Right. Just the aesthetic.

**Ed Gamble**



Yeah, they've been like, 'the meth, we sell the meth to kids'.

**James Acaster**

It's cool, make it blue!

**Josh Gondelman**

It tastes delicious

**Ed Gamble**

You can't put it down, it's really good stuff.

**James Acaster**

You guys all like meth, oh hey hey kids remember, if you see a lady in her sleep vomiting and choking on her vomit, just leave it! Don't get involved, that's the motto.

**Ed Gamble**

We sell edible cans of that vomit, you can recreate the scene

**James Acaster**

It's her vomit but she's dead now. Jessie doesn't know, don't tell him!

**Josh Gondelman**

It's like a, they have a Breaking Bad amusement park and one of the rides is you just let a lady die, it's very bleak. Not a lot of fun.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, you drink her vomit from a can and the can just says, 'don't tell jessie' on it.

**Josh Gondelman**

Don't tell Jessie brand lady vomit

**James Acaster**

Warm cans of Don't tell Jessie

**Josh Gondelman**

Can you throw me a hot can of DTJ?

**Ed Gamble**

It wouldn't fizz it would just go like

**Josh Gondelman**

Ohhh.. very bad.

**James Acaster**

So you nearly chose the chicken?

**Josh Gondelman**

Yep I nearly chose the chicken that doesn't even exist!

**James Acaster**

Fictional food is is great, there's some stuff that you just think I would like to know what that would be like

**Josh Gondelman**



That's like the number one fictional food for me. I used to think, I think that this is well tried territory but in *The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe* books there are all into Turkish delight which I thought was fictional but is real and not good!

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, it doesn't taste good!

**Josh Gondelman**

And I wished it was fictional

**James Acaster**

Absolutely, big disappointment. I think we've spoken about it on an episode before, that's how much everyone feels the same about this

**Ed Gamble**

yeah yeah, especially cos they like make it sound so amazing. And cos Edmund's all wrapped up all warm in the witch's slay and then has some Turkish delight and oh, it looks amazing

**Josh Gondelman**

That's what that is?

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah it's just like oh

**James Acaster**

I think I must've imagined it as like, you know, this sweet that kind of makes you feel the way that hot chocolate makes you feel. So like, that has that kind of effect on you, so like proper Willy Wonka stuff.

**Josh Gondelman**

It's like if popcorn were called *The Pharaoh's Gift*

**Ed Gamble**

Hmmm I can think of a better name for this.

**James Acaster**

I think we should call this *Don't Tell Jessie*. That's how I feel.

**Ed Gamble**

I actually think, soup, real soup dumplings were ruined for me because I saw *Spirited Away* before I'd had soup dumplings and the soup dumplings in that film are like bags, they're like huge bags of soup and they're like slurping them in and then you actually have a soup dumpling and there's like a tea spoon of soup in them.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, they're still good but they're ruined by the movie for sure, or at least yeah.

**Ed Gamble**

The food in that movie is crazy, that's my dream fictional food

**James Acaster**

That's how someone described, I might have said this on the podcast before but I was going for a meal with some friends and it was the Chinese restaurant near their house and they said it's really good and I was like, well like what kind of stuff is it? And they said, here's how good it is', The food tastes like the food in *Spirited Away* looks





**Josh Gondelman**

Whoa, that's an incredible restaurant.

**James Acaster**

And we hadn't had that chat before, they didn't know that I think that that food looks amazing, but I think that again that's just taken as a given that everyone just sees that film and goes, oh I wish that food was like that

**Ed Gamble**

Also, we're ignoring the fact that they eat that food and they all turned into pigs. We're too busy looking at the food going 'I would happily turn into a pig for that food'

**James Acaster**

Yep, I would turn into a pig with my face and then walk around and turn up to meetings. I would still turn up to meetings, I would keep my appointments.

**Josh Gondelman**

Right, just cos you're a pig doesn't give you an excuse to blow off obligations

**Ed Gamble**

Also, you know you'd turn up to a meeting and the guy that you're having meetings with is also a pig he'd be like 'you have those soup dumplings?'

**Josh Gondelman**

Yep, 'I have five hoofs'

**James Acaster**

This is my accountant, he's a lobster with my face also, I met him in a restaurant. So that's good, the fries with the lobster

**Josh Gondelman**

Just a pair, a natural pairing.

**Ed Gamble**

I feel like, in the states as well, I don't feel like we have that as much in places in the UK, a real nest of fries, you're very good at doing like a big nest

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, a lie that I tell myself frequently is that I won't finish all those French fries, and then I finish all those French fries, if I leave three behind I'm like a model of restraint, I'm Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, I just think every French fry I don't eat is one ab that I'm growing.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah yeah yeah, that's how it works, that's the maths.

**James Acaster**

He, I mean I would like him as a guest on the podcast, I don't know if he would do it, but like I would like to know what he would choose and what he eats, cos I can only imagine.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, he eats a lot of fish, I know, cos it's like lean protein, a lot of fish.

**James Acaster**

Oh, I have a pizza he might like, in that case. Do you think you'd get on with him?



**Josh Gondelman**

I bet, he seems very genial. He seems like one of those famous people that's like nice as mind of a general run and not like when the cameras are off it's like, oh you know The Rock is cooking let's get the fuck out of here.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, it's no, we've now found out what The Rock is cooking is fish. So when he says, can you smell what The Rock is cooking, it's like, yeah and you shouldn't be cooking it in communal areas because fish stinks and it's really antisocial.

**James Acaster**

You've made the rest of the room stink of fish!

**Josh Gondelman**

This is an office microwave, Dwayne Johnson!

**James Acaster**

We all smell your cooking

**Ed Gamble**

Get your haddock out of that office microwave.

**James Acaster**

And he says, know your roles, know your lobster rolls.

**Ed Gamble**

Know your lobster rolls, yeah

**James Acaster**

Maybe he was talking to you Josh

**Josh Gondelman**

Dwayne 'The Rock Lobster' Johnson, that's what it's short for.

**James Acaster**

It's short for rock lobster.

**Josh Gondelman**

it's an interesting abbreviation.

**James Acaster**

I'd love it if The Rock was short for something. It's short for rock lobster

**Josh Gondelman**

It's short for Baroque, Dwayne 'The Baroque' Johnson

**James Acaster**

It was too much for the wrestling crowd

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah he didn't know how that was gonna play with the WWE fans

**James Acaster**

It was too fancy, you can't call yourself that



**Josh Gondelman**

And in like the little costume sketches he's dressed as a conductor

**James Acaster**

'They're not gonna get it Dwayne!'

**Ed Gamble**

'Okay we're gonna have to do something about the name'.

**James Acaster**

'So what about fucking pilchards, you've had pilchards today, are you shitting me Dwayne?'

**James Acaster**

So, we come to your drink now. Now since everything so far has kind of complemented each other I kind of feel like you're gonna go in that kind of, continue down that road.

**Josh Gondelman**

I think so, this is, this I think goes, it's not the most natural pairing, is, I love a dirty vodka martini with, I had one of these the other night and every time it's offered to me, I react as if I've never heard of such a wonderful thing, because I feel that way. There's a dirty vodka martini with blue cheese stuff olives.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh my God.

**James Acaster**

What!?

**Josh Gondelman**

yeah, oh yeah

**Ed Gamble**

I have never heard of that.

**James Acaster**

What!?

**Josh Gondelman**

It's so good

**Ed Gamble**

I am fully on board

**Josh Gondelman**

oh it's so good

**James Acaster**

What!?!? This sound crazy! you're putting cheese in your drink!

**Josh Gondelman**

Yep yeah. Again, another vehicle for dairy. It is thematic

**James Acaster**

that's the last place I thought it was gonna crop up, as well



**Ed Gamble**

Where did you have that?

**Josh Gondelman**

There's a few places, I was at a bar in Chicago this week, occasionally a steak house will have it, that's the previous time I had it to, I was out with my, I took my, my wife and I took my parents out for dinner in Boston. I think Beauty Bar on 14th street might have them. Cos you know, for an extra dollar you stuff some blue cheese in those olives and that was like a bargain at twice the price, or however much the difference, even if it was three dollars. It's such a nice treat because it complements like the salty, savoury olive-y taste, and it doesn't leak out, they pack it in.

**James Acaster**

Right, I was gonna say.

**Josh Gondelman**

No, you don't want cheese floating in your drink.

**Ed Gamble**

I wouldn't mind that either, to be honest.

**James Acaster**

Oh he'd like it

**Josh Gondelman**

You know, I wouldn't throw it out. I wouldn't choose, I wouldn't choose a floating cheese.

**Ed Gamble**

No no no, but if it popped out of the olive I'm not gonna complain.

**Josh Gondelman**

No, I'm not tryna skim it, like a dirty swimming pool. But it is so good and it's like so salty and savoury in like a real olive-y vodka martini.

**Ed Gamble**

I feel like that just sounds like gout in a drink. You know it just really, it really feels like just such an old school thing to do.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, totally

**James Acaster**

A king would drink it.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, a king would drink it, definitely. Or in Mad Men.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yes. Right before, like right before you lost the use of your legs from the waist down, you just drink it and it stops working cos they just cease up with gout pain. And you're like, I deserve this. I feel the wealth coursing through my veins.

**Ed Gamble**

I've had a dirty oyster martini before



**Josh Gondelman**

I heard, that, that sounds incredible, for sure

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, that was incredible as well

**Josh Gondelman**

This is, this is my wife's story but I hope that she doesn't mind me telling it. She went to a, went to a bar opening that was, the bar was owned by Bill Murray's son and Bill Murray was bar tending. And she said, he said, 'what do you want', and she said, 'well do you recommend', and he said 'I like to pour rosé into an oyster'. And so she said alright and so she tried it, and it was, bad.

**Ed Gamble**

At this point, I think Bill Murray's just really struggling with new and exciting ways to have an impact on people's lives.

**Josh Gondelman**

We also, separately, about two weeks ago were in a restaurant, a friend was visiting from out of town and she likes to go to this fancy place on the Upper East Side and so we went to go have dinner with her there and we saw Bill Murray across the restaurant just acting normal and we were like, 'that's the story! We got the real goods'.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh but if he'd spotted you looking at him he would be like, 'oh God, I'm gonna have to do something crazy right now. I've done the rosé in an oyster shell'.

**Josh Gondelman**

right, he puts a sock on his hand starts eating his food with the sock like a puppet. Oh Bill Murray, your life is a prison of your own creation.

**Ed Gamble**

'I'm gonna have to do Guinness in a clam shell, I've run out of stuff.'

**Josh Gondelman**

'Oh, just waterboard a lobster head with a tequila, is that anything? Oh, I'm out of ideas'.

**Ed Gamble**

'Oh, I'm gonna have to check Reddit tomorrow and see if anyone saw me do this'.

**James Acaster**

Just crying as he's doing it, 'do you all notice me now, please tell everyone you saw me'.

**Ed Gamble**

'I'm crazyyyy!'

**Josh Gondelman**

'I was an original ghost buster'

**James Acaster**

'My name's Bill!'

**Ed Gamble**

Aw, that's the saddest thing that he's shouting, in this little riff; my name's Bill.

**Josh Gondelman**



Not being recognised, imagine Bill Murray doing that and not being recognised, he just like takes a roll off your plate and takes a bite out of it and winks at you; 'Hey, what the fuck was that man?'

**Ed Gamble**

'My name is Bill!!!'

**James Acaster**

'My name is ahhhh'

**Josh Gondelman**

'I don't care if your name is Mom, get out of here!'

**James Acaster**

'Bend down, at the waist...'. Oh, Bill Murray.

**James Acaster**

Before we move on from the drink, how many olives are in there and when are you eating them?

**Josh Gondelman**

Three and I pace them throughout, in the walnut style. Try to even it out so I drink, I don't start with an olive you know I'll drink about a third, and then either I'll eat the last one either right before I've finished or right after I've finished the drink.

**James Acaster**

Are you able, when you have ordered this drink, to drink it in peace without people going, 'what, is there fucking blue cheese in that?', and questioning you about it.

**Josh Gondelman**

I've never been accosted about it before, but I think if someone did I'd be like, yeah you've gotta get on this train.

**Ed Gamble**

That's immediately gone to the top of the list of things I have to find when I'm in New York.

**James Acaster**

I can see it in his eyes that he really wants it.

**Josh Gondelman**

I think Beauty Bar has it, which is like, not, it's not hard, you know it's not like a place that you have to make reservations or anything you just go in, and they do manicures and stuff and it's like a cute place.

**Ed Gamble**

Amazing, we should go get a manicure and a martini.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, I mean I don't want either of those things but I'm gonna do 'em. I'll happily do it in my New York experience. I'll do it, I'll drink that and have my nails done.

**Josh Gondelman**

A classic New York experience. imagine just like, that's what New York City's all about, getting your nails and drinking a martini that has just cheese in it. It's just a weird impression.

**Ed Gamble**



Oh yeah, I did all the standard touristy things, I had my cheese martini and got my nails done at the same time.

**Josh Gondelman**

Sat on the couch with Josh's dog, just the Josh Gondelman tour of New York City.

**James Acaster**

People walking past the nail bar and going, 'I remember when that used to be a creche'.

**James Acaster**

Your dessert now, so very exciting for me but also I'm a bit scared cos I get very, sometimes people order silly things that aren't sweet for dessert, I'm very passionate about dessert but you've had quite a lot of, you've snuck cheese already where I thought there wasn't gonna be cheese.

**Josh Gondelman**

It's been very savoury. I'm not, not even a cheesecake. There's no cheese in my dessert. I'm not one of those people that's like, we'll get a cheese plate with some apple slices and that's dessert.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh yeah, that drives James crazy.

**James Acaster**

I go crazy.

**Josh Gondelman**

I fully understand that.

**James Acaster**

Thank you, thank you very much.

**Josh Gondelman**

Are you a cheese dessert person?

**Ed Gamble**

I like it but also, you're gonna be able to associate with this because your wife is type one diabetic, sometimes if you want something and your just hungry, it's just easier, you know, admin wise, to get a bit of cheese. you don't have to do any insulin for it really and it's just yeah, but then

**Josh Gondelman**

Right, high fat, low sugar

**Ed Gamble**

But then I also enjoy a dessert as well but sometimes I order cheese just to annoy James.

**James Acaster**

Yep, it works, every time.

**Josh Gondelman**

Very effective

**James Acaster**

Yep, and I know he's doing it to annoy me and I shouldn't give him the satisfaction but, straight away, I go through the roof Josh, I go through the roof.

**Josh Gondelman**



So, I'm torn. My one thing is my we have a great family recipe for apple pie which is Great warm with vanilla ice cream and I have a real nostalgia for it. When I was a child I didn't like the soft apples so my uncle who had celiac couldn't eat the crust so he would eat the apples and I would eat the crust, which is a very warm childhood memory. And so that's one thing, the other one, and I don't generally like other apple pies, it's just the family recipe is my favourite. And the other one is, if my wife is here, if I'm eating solo that's what I'll I'll indulge your, I'll ask your genie powers to indulge me this family recipe for apple pie. If my wife is with me, we didn't talk about the rest of her meal, but I know that her ideal would be for dessert, one of her two ideals, this is what we would get it's the, one of those molten chocolate lava cakes that's like a cake with the warm chocolate on the inside. And like two times a year she will have that, like on our anniversary and her birthday she'll take extra insulin and have that and the look on her face when she eats like her twice yearly molten chocolate lava cake is one of my favourite times of the whole year so that is, so that's where I'll go for dessert.

**James Acaster**

That's a very sweet choice, in more ways than one

**Ed Gamble**

That's so nice that you've picked you, you've picked your dessert for the look on your wife's face.

**Josh Gondelman**

It's my favourite. I think about it often and I make sure that when we order it that I get to watch her eat. I try not to be a creep that's just like, 'hmmm yeah eat the cake'. But I do kinda out of the corner of my eye, I'll be eating but really like just looking at what she's doing.

**Ed Gamble**

That's so nice.

**James Acaster**

You're thinking to yourself, this cake tastes disgusting but look how happy she is

**Josh Gondelman**

She doesn't know, she only eats cake twice a year, it's like, this cake is dog shit.

**Ed Gamble**

I can't believe I've let her eat that cake, all I wanted was my apple pie crust. That was my dream.

**Josh Gondelman**

I just wanted an empty pie crust.

**Ed Gamble**

She never looks at my face when I'm eating my empty pie crust.

**Josh Gondelman**

She can't even make eye contact she's so ashamed of me. It's like this isn't The Great Depression you can eat the whole slice, you don't have to save the apples in a bag for later to feed to a starving horse.

**James Acaster**

Thank God I've found that secret room in my house so that I can eat the pie crust in peace.

**Ed Gamble**

And then.. who knows?

**Josh Gondelman**





They've made a whole film about it then.

**James Acaster**

That's very nice.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, that's lovely

**James Acaster**

You know, that's very nice that you get to see your wife eating the molten chocolate lava cake. Also, this morning on our way here we were talking about how we think that's probably the most chosen dessert on the podcast. Although, everyone hasn't said the same reason.

**Josh Gondelman**

Yeah, they like to watch my wife eating, these mother fuckers, nobody watches my wife eating cake.

**James Acaster**

Everyone's just been like, well, first of all, a molten chocolate lava cake, and I know this goes without saying but bring Gondelman's wife, get his wife in.

**Ed Gamble**

He's so nice, he won't mind.

**James Acaster**

Yeah it's her birthday!

**Josh Gondelman**

All these meals take place on my wife's birthday.

**James Acaster**

Everyone must always assume that it's your wife's birthday

**Josh Gondelman**

So, you're in the Dream Restaurant, it's September 5th.

**James Acaster**

The insulin is flowing.

**Ed Gamble**

The insulin comes down a sort of frozen vodka luge.

**James Acaster**

Oh that'd be great!

**Ed Gamble**

Is there a place in New York that does the best molten lava cake?

**Josh Gondelman**

You know, I don't, I don't remember off hand. I should look it up and let you guys know if you wanted to have it.

**James Acaster**

This is gonna become an obsession now because I don't know what order these episodes are gonna go out in, who knows, I hope that the listeners appreciate that we don't know but, but all we can talk about is what's happened in our lives so far. And this is the second episode that we've done



in New York and the first one we've done is with Catherine Cohen, she also chose chocolate molten lava cake as dessert.

**Josh Gondelman**

Oh fascinating

**James Acaster**

We asked her where the best one is in New York, she didn't know.

**Josh Gondelman**

Wow

**James Acaster**

So this is now, so now it's two for two I'm becoming quite obsessed with finding the best chocolate molten lava cake in New York. I really want to know what it is now.

**Ed Gamble**

I have another quick question before we read the order back. Where would you recommend, one place to go and eat in New York that we could go and we'll follow up on it.

**James Acaster**

That's a good question Ed.

**Josh Gondelman**

Ooh, let me think. What, are there things where you've been like, 'oh I really need to get this while I'm in town?'

**Ed Gamble**

Not, I kind of want to try some new places for a bit

**James Acaster**

As I've said, this is a staying alive meal, you get to continue stay being alive afterwards, but imagine people are like, this is it, you can go, it's your last meal but you have to go to a particular place.

**Josh Gondelman**

Right, Mission Chinese is a great choice so far, I would say there's a really, I don't know if it's the best place but I've always been really happy with the, they have pho and bahn mi at this place called Saigon Shack on McDougall Street and that's a that's a fun spot.

**James Acaster**

That's cool cos we haven't got anything like that planned

**Ed Gamble**

Yep, let's do it.

**James Acaster**

So thank you very much

**Josh Gondelman**

You're welcome

**James Acaster**

Now, we're gonna read you, gonna read you back your order, see how you feel about it, see how you feel. So, a water, tap water, absolutely, loads of ice.



**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you.

**James Acaster**

Poppadoms or bread, you chose a wholegrain roll with a honey salted butter. Starter, escarole salad from Rucola. Main, lobster roll, loads of butter. Side, thin French fries with ketchup. Your drink, a dirty vodka martini with blue cheese stuffed olives times three. Dessert chocolate molten lava cake, on your wife's birthday with a good view of her face.

**Josh Gondelman**

I hate when she obscures her face

**James Acaster**

It's no fun for me if you don't look at me!

**Josh Gondelman**

Behind kind of a fan or something.

**Ed Gamble**

It's like when you call and book you have to say 'I'd like the table with the best view of my wife's face please'.

**James Acaster**

Also, I think because

**Josh Gondelman**

She eats across the room also, she eats at a separate table.

**James Acaster**

You get out your binoculars

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah, her birthday is the only time she turns her chair around.

**James Acaster**

Yeah 'okay, get a good look, you happiness perve'

**Josh Gondelman**

'Oh I bet you wish you were in the secret room right now'. I'm sorry, I interrupted what you were saying.

**James Acaster**

No, well I think because you've chosen such a nice reason for your dessert, I think it would be nice of the restaurant if we throw in the pie crust and even the Breaking Bad chicken.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. There we go you can have that as a little

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you, this is a dream

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's a lesson for everybody, that maybe if we all thought about others a little more we'd get what we want



**Ed Gamble**

We'd get a pie crust

**James Acaster**

Yes, we'd all get a pie crust and some fictional chicken

**Josh Gondelman**

An empty pie crust

**Ed Gamble**

Yep. Thanks so much for coming to The Dream Restaurant Josh

**Josh Gondelman**

Thank you for having me, this was so much fun!

**Ed Gamble**

There we are then, the Off Menu menu of Josh Gondelman

**James Acaster**

Mmmm mmm, yumma yumma

**Ed Gamble**

Yumma yumma indeed, what a lovely guy, what a funny man and what a great episode.

**James Acaster**

Oh, it had it all

**Ed Gamble**

Well, what it didn't have was chicken feet

**James Acaster**

Thank you Josh, otherwise we would have had to send him out on his little chicken feet

**Ed Gamble**

That would've broken my heart.

**James Acaster**

Ah, it would, I would have felt really bad if he was like 'oh I just want to have a chocolate pudding and see my wife's face, also a side of chicken feet'. 'Get the fuck out of our restaurant Josh'.

**Ed Gamble**

'What's your wife's face gonna do when she finds out you were kicked out of the Dream Restaurant, scuttle away on your little claws Josh'.

**James Acaster**

Yeah, I would have felt so awful cos I would have had to have said all that stuff as well.

**Ed Gamble**

Yeah yeah, James gets nasty when he kicks people out of the restaurant.

**James Acaster**

But, not Josh Gondelman, we kept him in and I m so happy. He's a great guy.

**Ed Gamble**



Yep, if you like the sound of Josh, and who wouldn't, go and check him out on twitter he's @JoshGondelman, and he also runs the very funny Seinfeld today twitter account which is @SeinfeldToday

**James Acaster**

Yes, one of the few things I miss about twitter

**Ed Gamble**

And if you go onto twitter there's lots of clips that he's done on sort of late night talk shows, he's very funny, he also has a stand up comedy album called Dancing on a Week Night which is very very funny indeed. And he writes and produces on a show called Desus & Meiro and used to work on Last Week Tonight. His CV is huge!

**James Acaster**

Oh, that is impressive! And now, he's been on the Off Menu podcast, add that to the CV Josh.

**Ed Gamble**

Exactly, we should try and convince him to come and do a run in London, I think he'd go down very well.

**James Acaster**

Yes, people would love him.

**Ed Gamble**

They would indeed. Well, keep bothering him, bothering him on twitter to come to London, if that's where you're listening. But otherwise, thank you very much for listening, I love you so much, good bye.

**James Acaster**

Good bye.