



# Off Menu – Ep127 – Timothy Spall

**Ed Gamble**

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, taking the pitta bread of conversation, putting it in the toaster of humour and burning yourself on the steam of hot, hot content. Hello, James Acaster.

**James Acaster**

Yes, hello, Ed Gamble. I love it, the pitta bread.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you very much.

**James Acaster**

Don't often talk about pitta breads on the pod.

**Ed Gamble**

We don't, they don't come up that often. Mainly because they are very dangerous.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes. Should have got Rob Beckett on.

**Ed Gamble**

Does he talk about pitta breads?

**James Acaster**

Back in the day, one of the earliest Rob Beckett routines I saw was about pitta breads and how hot they are when you open them up.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, yes, we should get Rob on to talk about hot pitta breads. But that's it, I don't want to hear anything else that man has to say.

**James Acaster**

Yes, in and out.

**Ed Gamble**

Couscous as well, 'It's like fat sand', that was an old Rob Beckett line.

**James Acaster**

Great, 'fat sand.'

**Ed Gamble**

Great stuff.

**James Acaster**

That is good stuff.

**Ed Gamble**

But nothing else from Rob, thank you, just those two things.

**James Acaster**

Get him on to do his bits.



**Ed Gamble**

Get him on to do his humour.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Give that guy a little boost, career-wise. God knows he needs it. But we're not here to talk to Rob Beckett today and we're here to talk to someone else. And what are we here to talk to them about, sir?

**James Acaster**

This is the Off Menu podcast, we live in a dream restaurant and we bring in a guest and we ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order. And this week, our guest is, Timothy Spall.

**Ed Gamble**

Spall, what an amazing actor, Timothy Spall is. National treasure territory, are we in again James?

**James Acaster**

Absolutely national treasure, this is a real national treasure heavy series, actually.

**Ed Gamble**

It is, yes. It's a treasure chest, I'd call it, this series.

**James Acaster**

Yes, really. I mean, we all admire Timothy Spall, he's got a place in everyone's hearts. So many iconic roles and just such a delight to watch every single film. I love his performance, I love the warmth he brings to his characters no matter who they are, even if they're the baddies. He brings a certain relatability to them, a certain humour to them, Ed.

**Ed Gamble**

Couldn't have put it better myself, James. I was just slightly thrown by the fact earlier, you said that we live in the dream restaurant.

**James Acaster**

Yes. As soon as I said that, I knew you were going to pick me up on it.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, it's just something I didn't know, that we live in it.

**James Acaster**

Yes, we live there.

**Ed Gamble**

So we live there.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

People come and create their own dream restaurant.

**James Acaster**

Yes.



**Ed Gamble**

Within the blank canvas that we live in.

**James Acaster**

Right.

**Ed Gamble**

When they leave, does their stuff go with them? Are we just living in a big, white room until there's another guest?

**James Acaster**

Yes, it's not even a big, white room, it's like just a state of nothingness.

**Ed Gamble**

Sounds awful.

**James Acaster**

Yes, it's not nice. When people aren't in the dream restaurant, we're in a waking hell.

**Ed Gamble**

We like people to be in the dream restaurant which is why it's a shame that we've established a format point. If they pick a secret ingredient, then they will be kicked out of the restaurant, James.

**James Acaster**

We're asking for trouble, we're asking for trouble. But, them's the rules is an ingredient that we, or even the listeners, deem to be disgusting.

**Ed Gamble**

And this week, the secret ingredient for Timothy Spall's episode is pilchards.

**James Acaster**

Pilchards.

**Ed Gamble**

Pilchards. Horrible, horrible, horrible business.

**James Acaster**

Yes, I think that's a good way of putting it. Dropping the 'h' and saying 'orrible'.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Rolling the r's a bit like Uriah Heep. Is it like Uriah Heep?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, that's fair.

**James Acaster**

Also, I think you were more channelling David Thewlis in the third season of Fargo, there, that's who you reminded me of when you did that.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. I loved him in that. But also, was it Ben Whishaw who is Uriah Heep?



**James Acaster**

He was.

**Ed Gamble**

In the Copperfield film, the Armando Iannucci one? He was very good.

**James Acaster**

Yes. He's very good. Hello, Ben Whishaw, if you're listening.

**Ed Gamble**

We'd love you to come on.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

We 'Whishaw' you'd come on.

**James Acaster**

Oh, well, that's our chances gone. That's that, out the window.

**Ed Gamble**

Benito Whishaw.

**James Acaster**

We didn't choose pilchards, by the way. I'm kind of like 'I'll eat pilchard, I'm alright with it', but.

**Ed Gamble**

Even though they're a horrible, horrible, horrible business?

**James Acaster**

Yes. But it's the listeners who chose it, right?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, a couple of listeners.

**James Acaster**

I believe Zack Morris and AC Slater chose it. Sarah Phelps on Twitter and James Garrett on Twitter. Very nearly I got that right.

**Ed Gamble**

It was Lisa Turtle, that's what I've got here.

**James Acaster**

Great. And can you remember the other people's names?

**Ed Gamble**

Screech.

**James Acaster**

Samuel Powers, Samuel Screech Powers, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Dennis Belding.



**James Acaster**

Well, the actor was called Dennis Hopper. No, it wasn't.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh my god, yes. You thought you had me. His name was Dennis Haskins. Dennis Hopper, imagine. A very different career for old Hopper.

**James Acaster**

That would be great, if Dennis Hopper was Mr. Belding.

**Ed Gamble**

Timothy Spall being in so many wonderful things, including the film *Spencer*, which is out on Friday, James.

**James Acaster**

About Princess Diana.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm sure he will tell us more about the film in this conversation. But before we go to the wonderful Timothy Spall, James we've been nominated for a National Comedy Award.

**James Acaster**

Yes, finally.

**Ed Gamble**

We are on a long list for Best Comedy Podcast. We need people to vote to get us on to the shortlist and then we'll come back, begging again, like horrible little pigs and ask for another vote. But this first stage, we need to get to the shortlist. So, you've got to go and vote, please.

**James Acaster**

Essentially, we'll beg so much that if we do win it, we'll be so demeaned by the whole experience that it won't feel worth it.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. We'll feel dirty, we'll feel horrible. Horrible business.

**James Acaster**

Have we really won? Or did we just beg people to give it to us?

**Ed Gamble**

Exactly. But I don't mind that, I love to feel dirty. So, go to [thenationalcomedyawards.com](http://thenationalcomedyawards.com), and you can vote there. But now, this is the Off Menu menu of Timothy Spall. Welcome, Timothy, to the dream restaurant.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I'm delighted to be here. I'm already dreaming.

**James Acaster**

Welcome, Timothy Spall, to the dream restaurant. We've been expecting you for some time.

**Ed Gamble**

Here we are.



**Timothy Spall**

Well, I'm sorry I'm late.

**Ed Gamble**

You weren't late, you were bang on time, Timothy. We're recording this one over Zoom. We're supposed to be doing it in person, of course, but James isn't very well. The restaurant genie isn't feeling very well. James, are you alright, mate, are you going to be okay to do this?

**James Acaster**

I'll be honest with you, when I did the sound effect just then, it really tore my throat up in a way that it hasn't before.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh no.

**James Acaster**

But I really committed to it, Timothy, because I don't want to go lacklustre on your episode just because I'm a bit poorly.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, listen, I understand how brave you're being and what a brave soldier you're being. And, therefore, I will bear that in mind, and I'm humbled by your sacrifice.

**James Acaster**

Thank you so much. What are you drinking there out of your glass mug?

**Timothy Spall**

A cup of my favourite tea, which is Yorkshire and Earl Grey. So, a little bit of the old builder in me and also the layers of sophistication that have happened to me ever since I've become an actor of the parish many, many years ago.

**Ed Gamble**

It's a mix of teas?

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, two bags. Just stick them in, always that's what we do. We get, in the morning, two Yorkshire or whatever the equivalent builder's is and then a bag of Earl Grey. Let it become so strong that you can stand your spoon up in it, and then it's ready to go.

**James Acaster**

I've never met anyone who's double-bagged it. Let alone cross-bagged, crossed the bags.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, cross-fertilising your tea? Yes. Well, then it's what I see (ph 07.23), you're getting your old-fashioned transport caff tea, the basic tea that I was, sort of, brought up on, and then the poncey kind of tea that one is introduced through the life of sophistication of a strolling player.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you feel like if you ever let the Yorkshire tea go, then you've sort of lost something? You've abandoned your past?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I think I'd lose it because it's good, isn't it? I think I would find myself entering into this sort of health shoe phase and then only ignoring all that, the great stuff, the really-, you know, the fried bread and deep-fried shit of my youth, and all those wonderful carcinogenic meals that were dished



up and enjoyed, and still do on occasion. I still love them, you know, why not. There's a mixture. So, I still have a little bit of that and I go into the sophisticated as well, or the poncey, whatever you want to say, however you want to couch it.

**James Acaster**

Will you name and shame a national treasure who only has Earl Grey? Do you know of any?

**Timothy Spall**

I know people who have far worse teas. You know, fennel and raspberry and all them things that aren't supposed to be in tea. Those are all those teas that I don't know how they've quite come upon us. Where did they come in from? Did they come in from after the time an egg and bacon pie became a quiche Lorraine? I think that's when it all started, I think.

**James Acaster**

Of course we know here, at Off Menu, that a cup of tea is not your favourite drink, is it, Timothy?

**Timothy Spall**

No. What is my favourite drink? I used to go right across the board, you know, bottom shelf to top shelf. I don't do that anymore. From pump to optic via the vineyards of Spain, France and Rome, and Greece. I don't do that anymore. So, all of the wonderful beauties of such delights have now been replaced by the mixed bag and your Diet Coke and your fizzy water with a bit of lime juice in it. Or, to top off the day, like some boy scout rewarding himself for lot of the days on the toggle (ph 09.33) or whatever you do, I have a nice Robinson's Blackcurrant and Apple with some lemon in it. Pathetic, I sit there sipping, going 'Mmm, oh, I can relax with this now.' But there we are.

**Ed Gamble**

That's the big reward, is it?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, it is the thing it's become, you know. It's not a bottle of Brunello, anymore. Or, I've become a great aficionado of the Waitrose Cranberry big bottles, it's a huge bottle, that is. Which has gone up from 72p to 75p, and I was a bit shocked. And I said 'Come on, sport, pull yourself together, you used to spend £20 on a bottle of wine. Now you're moaning about cranberries. Cranberry? You know the bottle's 75p.' No I've, as I say, I've had my share and these are now my delights. A diet Coke being a sort of a staple.

**James Acaster**

Do you go for diet Coke or diet Pepsi?

**Timothy Spall**

Slightly, doesn't satisfy. There's a different taste, I'm not going to diss it because I would take it, but I've gone towards-, or zero, I like that. I find that's a bit highfalutin. I've done that thing now, 'Can I get a Diet Coke, or Zero, if you happen to have,' you know, all that thing, you over-explain, yes we've got it. All that bollocks, you know.

**Ed Gamble**

If you have a Coke Zero would you add in a bit of diet Coke just to remind you of your roots?

**James Acaster**

Double bag?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, you'd then have to get two, wouldn't you. But an example is I drink very fast, I mean, this is my sixth cup of tea. I mean, that's the problem, is that I have to have to have at least six. I usually have five, three straight off and I drink them fast, and my wife is usually just on a one. And then I go in for



a fourth and then the fifth comes in and then of course if you have to go out, you spend most of the day trying to find toilets. And going 'Excuse me', like in this country you can't just walk in you have to beg and throw yourself on the mercy of various institutions. I haven't got a card yet, you know, 'Help this poor old man who needs a wee' but that is one of the downsides of drinking so much tea. And then Coca Cola, you've always going to go for a wee.

**Ed Gamble**

Are you double bagging every single time, Timothy? Are you making separate cups of tea, double bagging, or are you making a big pot at the beginning of the day?

**Timothy Spall**

Oh no, I have a big pot. Got a nice pot. Isn't it funny how, every cup, it doesn't matter how much you try, how much you've perfected the art of tea-making, every pot of tea is slightly different? Why is that?

**James Acaster**

You've got to allow for the dance of the bag.

**Timothy Spall**

Dance of the bag and you can never do it exactly the amount of time without egg timers and, I mean, putting on a timer for, as the Americans call it 'steeping a bag', I think that's a little bit pedantic, slightly, probably anal. So I think allowing yourself the disappointment or the joy of what's going to come out of the pot is actually part of the morning's, you know, fandango, I find.

**Ed Gamble**

Sometimes the disappointment is worth it because you know you've got joy just coming around the corner.

**Timothy Spall**

Exactly, you've always got another go, if you've got plenty of bags.

**James Acaster**

Now, we have talked a lot about drink. However, when I asked you what your favourite drink was earlier, you did get the question wrong, Timothy.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, did I? Obviously, I don't know myself. Go on, what is it?

**James Acaster**

Your favourite drink is diet cloudy lemonade, that's your favourite drink. You drink it all the time.

Timothy Spall: Now, I know where you got that and I don't believe it lived with me (ph 13.11) quite a long time. That is true, that is true. I do like that very much, but I have graduated towards this big, I think it's pink grapefruit. Or Marks & Spencer Fizzy Cranberry Lemonade. So, I've veered off. I mean, I haven't abandoned the cloudy lemonade, I do love that and that would be on the desert island, I think. I'd have to have that in a well.

**Ed Gamble**

How often, if you had a cloudy lemonade well, would you be going back to the well?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, quite a lot. I do like to drink. I think I might have gills, I sometimes, ridiculously, check, but I haven't. Because I don't understand why I can drink so much. And I think, and I don't know whether I believe it or not, it's probably nonsense, it might be absolutely true, it might be ruled by the stars, but I am a Pisces, as are lots of actors. And I think that I could quite easily just float about in a sea





of cloudy lemonade, just constantly consuming it. Well it's, I presume far, far better than the constant consumption of Brunello and Barolo, that might have done me worse. You know, I don't know, there's probably all sorts of horrible carcinogenics and things inside cloudy lemonade. But probably not as bad for you as litres and litres of wine.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm a Pisces as well, Timothy, and I think I agree with you. I think that's a thing because as James will tell you, I'm a glugger. I glug things down. I'll get a pint of water, and straight down.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, absolutely, and same with food. I eat it very quickly. I don't know what it is. Maybe it's because of having three brothers and you're always worried that if you didn't eat it quickly they'd eat it before you even got it in your mouth, you know. But I eat so fast that it's gone, I'm done. I've eaten the starter and if there's the main course, before my wife has even got the bread.

**James Acaster**

And will you confirm that you drink cloudy lemonade so much that it comes out of your eyes?

**Timothy Spall**

It probably does. I'll have to try by drinking my tears. I don't know whether that's sad, it means you're ill, or whether that's poetry. I'm not sure.

**Ed Gamble**

Before we move on to your menu properly, Timothy, can you tell us a little bit about your new film, 'Spencer'?

**Timothy Spall**

It's a very unusual look at three days in the life of Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales, a woman that some people might have heard of. It's set in the early '90s at the time in her life when the marriage was not on great soil and she's there at Christmas at Sandringham. It's an investigation of how she deals with those three days, the rules and regulations, the stringency of what the traditions are, you know, of what she has to do, and it being, in a sense, an exacerbation of all the problems that she found, in a simplistic form, of what is indicative of the problems of her position in the royal family. It's a very in-your-face view of her psychological state, her relationship to the family and what she's going through. It's as different from 'The Crown' as 'The Bourne Identity' would be, and I play a character, a Major Alistair Gregory, who is sent to Sandringham to keep her in line, basically. We shot it all in Germany during lockdown, so it was hell. I was in Berlin for a long time and there was a lot of time off because snow came in and disrupted it. I was right in the middle of all these cultural delights and completely unable to go and see them. I ended up having to cook for myself because nothing was open and my wife and I, who are joined at the hip, she couldn't join me, which was hell as well. So, I had to have cooking lessons with her on FaceTime. I mean, it was really sad, but, because I had lots of time off, I'd plan, I'd forget things in the supermarket so I could go back so I had something to do. It was really sad, 'Oh, oh, I seem to have forgotten the bread,' so I could go back later on. I mean, it was really pathetic, but I realised something. I'm 64 now, I was 63 before I'd ever cooked my own pasta.

**Ed Gamble**

Wow.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, I mean, it was alright.

**James Acaster**

What was the pasta?



### **Timothy Spall**

Well, it was spaghetti, I thought I didn't want to go to rigatoni or anything, all that exotic stuff, like off of one of those charts with all them things on it. I thought I'd go in with a spaghetti, get the tomato sauce on, get that going. And it turned out, obviously I had to FaceTime my wife eight times, and I set the alarm off in the hotel apartment four times. 'Herr Spall? Herr Spall, is there any problem, Herr Spall?' 'No, I'm just cooking a pasta.'

### **James Acaster**

Well, I like that character very much. We always start with still or sparkling water in the dream restaurant.

### **Timothy Spall**

Definitely sparkling, a little bit of the exotic. I'm not that keen on water per se, to tell you the truth, being a fish, though, which is odd. I'm a cloudy lemonade-drinking fish. Not a water fish, I'm not a fresh water fish, I'm a stale cloudy lemonade fish. So it's got to have the sparkling water. I always ask, so does my wife, we always ask for a side jug of lime juice. Cordial, not juice, none of that rubbish from real stuff, lime cordial. Hopefully roses if they've got it, you know, and I always say, and I mime it, 'Can I have, in a little jug, a little jug on the side?' I always said, Rafe said when he was a kid, I used to say 'Can I have a double espresso with some hot milk on the side, a little jug?' And Rafe used to say 'Dad, you're going to ask for a little jug of hot milk every time?' Every time I ask for it, a little jug, I always remember him taking the piss out of me when he was a kid. It's hardly surprising because we brought them up on sarcasm as a device to stop them being bad rather than compliments.

### **James Acaster**

So, he would copy you and mime the jug?

### **Timothy Spall**

Yes, but mainly he would take the mick out of me saying 'A little jug, a little jug'. I don't know why I go up an octave, 'A little jug', and sort of do a little jug mime with my hand.

### **Ed Gamble**

Well, that shows it's a little jug. You've got to go up to show that it's little.

### **Timothy Spall**

You have to go 'A little jug'.

### **Ed Gamble**

Because if you say, 'A little jug,' they'll bring you a normal-sized jug if you say it.

### **Timothy Spall**

Yes. 'Could I have a ewer? A ewer of hot milk?' 'Could I have a firkin of hot milk?' No, 'A little jug of hot milk?'

### **James Acaster**

So, is your dream water the fizzy water with a little jug of lime cordial on the side, or because you love cloudy lemonade so much and me and Ed, going into this, that was the main thing we knew about you food-wise, is that you love cloudy lemonade. I would almost be willing to bend the rules and let you have cloudy lemonade as your water course.

### **Timothy Spall**

Oh, thank you. Are you sure? I don't want to bring the whole edifice of your structure of your show down by breaking that - , but if that's allowed. But I have to modify it, it's got to be diet cloudy lemonade.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes, of course.

**Timothy Spall**

That is the one, you know. It's got to have all of those things you're not supposed to enjoy. Aspartame and all them other things that come out probably of nuclear fissions and all that, I don't know where they come from. But if you're going to drink fourteen gallons of them, that's like having seven dinners, so you've got to lose the calories so you can have it in the food.

**Ed Gamble**

I feel like because it's the dream restaurant as well, you can have a well. I think you can have a well in the middle of the restaurant which has got diet cloudy lemonade in and every so often you can just send a bucket down, pull it back up.

**Timothy Spall**

Send a bucket, that is marvellous, isn't it. Yes, a bucket. A pail, one of them big wooden ones with the metal rims around. Or, could it be a firkin? Could I ask for a firkin, or something similar to that? A quart? A quart, yes, that would be a quart pail. 'Sir, would you like the quart pail, the firkin, the gallon pail, the half gallon?'

**James Acaster**

But you have to do the different voices for each one of those, you have to go up an octave or down an octave or whatever.

**Timothy Spall**

'Can I have the gallon?', or 'Do you want the American gallon, sir? Or the imperial gallon? That American gallon is less, but the imperial gallon, one imperial gallon of cloudy lemonade.'

**James Acaster**

That's perfect.

**Ed Gamble**

You've created so many characters already, Timothy. We're only on the water course and we've had so many different voices and characters. I mean I'm hoping later on we're going to hear more from the worried German hotel worker.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, yes. Maybe, yes. 'Ah, Mr Spall, just checking that you're okay.'

**Ed Gamble**

I really like the worried German hotel worker. They've got a good soul.

**James Acaster**

Herr Spall, that's very funny.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, Herr Spall.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, 'Herr Spall!'

**James Acaster**

Poppadoms or bread, poppadoms or bread, Timothy Spall, poppadoms or bread?



### **Timothy Spall**

I do like a poppadom. Very much like a poppadom. And I like a spicy and a plain. I could just have one or the other, because I like bread. I'm one of those people that eats all the bread as soon as it arrives. That is a problem. You have to be careful with how many poppadoms you eat. I once was in an Indian restaurant in Egham, that sounds like the beginning of a limerick doesn't it. And I saw a table of six order 38 poppadoms, I thought that was such a wonderful order, and they came, and the crunch, the sound.

### **Ed Gamble**

Were they all on top of each other, all 38 poppadoms?

### **Timothy Spall**

No, they couldn't balance, they were precariously brought in on four different plates. They got them down. So, may I have a spicy poppadom and a plain one and can I have some really big, Spanish, crusty, you know that bread you get in Spain will all the air holes in but it's soft and it's got a dark crust on it? I love that. And some oil and vinegar, Balsamic and that goes on there. And a little relish tray with the lime pickle and the mango chutney and the onion and tomato salad. And a little bit of yoghurt, not too much of that.

### **Ed Gamble**

It sounds amazing, Timothy. I'm laughing because this is genuinely just like talking to Rafe again.

### **James Acaster**

Yes, it's exactly like talking to Rafe again.

### **Timothy Spall**

We could almost be related.

### **Ed Gamble**

He also did what you're doing which is just use this as an opportunity to list as many things as possible.

### **James Acaster**

Have all of it, immediately.

### **Timothy Spall**

Well, there's so many delights, isn't there. I mean, I suppose if I as going to be ascetic about it I could bring them right down, but it is a dream place, isn't it, so dreams are about indulging. And I presume you're casting off any fear of feeling ill after you've eaten too much, so that goes away. I mean, I said to somebody, if there was device where you could swallow a carrier bag and just leave the corner out of your mouth and eat as much as you want and enjoy it. Pull it out, empty it, and stick it back in again. So, you actually got a pleasure, just pull it out and empty it so you'd never get full. I mean that is a pretty disgusting image, I know.

### **Ed Gamble**

Yes, I was going to say. Would you like that in your dream restaurant? Because it sounds like something of a nightmare, to have a carrier bag down your throat with the corner hanging out that you can pull out of your own stomach.

### **Timothy Spall**

It wouldn't be very nice for the other diners. The noise it would make when it was pulled out and emptied would probably put people off whatever they were having.

### **James Acaster**

You basically have poppadoms and bread.



**Timothy Spall**

Bread and if I may, we're going to hold back to the starter as well, I'll leave that as the bread and the poppadoms if I may. Also, my wife, during lockdown, became a master baker. And some of the bread, I might have to bring in a bit of that, some of her focaccia. She makes this focaccia, and we've been to Italy quite a lot and honestly it's up there with the best. And so, maybe I would bring a little bit of that in in a sort of heated pouch.

**Ed Gamble**

You did a little, it wasn't a little jug mime there, what was the heated pouch that the focaccia was coming in?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, the heated pouch almost came out as if I was wearing a bra.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Timothy Spall**

I'm wearing a bread bra. 'Why are you wearing a bread bra?' Well, I haven't got breasts anymore, I used to have, but I haven't got anymore, but I use my bra to keep my home-made focaccia warm so I can reduce it with little fuss and without drawing attention. You would draw attention to yourself if you were bringing bread out of a bra, particularly an old man.

**Ed Gamble**

So I think that's fine, I think that you can have the poppadoms and bread that you described and you can also have your wife's focaccia if you're bringing it out of your bra.

**Timothy Spall**

My bread bra.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

As long as you're wearing your bread bra and that's where you're bringing out the focaccia, then we'll allow it. Can we get your starter now, your dream starter? I'm quite excited to see how many dishes are in this.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, if I may, I'm going to go in for a mezze.

**James Acaster**

Here we go.

**Timothy Spall**

A mezze or a tapas. I think I'm going to go with, if I may, can I have a, you know like a little ramekin, there's a word I like. A small ramekin of plain crisps, with little cubes of cheese. I would love a little ramekin of peanuts. I would like some olives if I may and I've got a great liking for these Marmite crisp breads, I'd like a little pile of those as well. I love those. And I think that would do me as a little nibble thing to nibble my way through the ramekins. We were recently in Rome and we went to this place and I had something I never had before which was a deep fried small artichoke. Tiny little artichoke, not of them big things where you have to peel, like you're doing some kind of origami, or something, or reverse origami on an artichoke like that. But, the little deep-fried artichokes, and a



little of goujon of fish, I'd like that as well. I love a goujon. I don't know-, are you familiar with the delight of the goujon?

**James Acaster**

I am, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I've goujon.

**Timothy Spall**

Just isn't it a lovely thing, the goujon?

**James Acaster**

What makes a goujon a goujon?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, it's just a small deep fried fish, isn't it?

**Ed Gamble**

Is it a fish finger?

**Timothy Spall**

Well no, it's a misshaped fish finger and it's usually like that beer batter type thing, not a bread coated thing. You know when our fish manages to have a puffed up batter and have air between the fish itself and the batter, and then a nice little bit of squashy sort of fat juice thing comes out when you bite it? That kind, that's a goujon. They don't get the fat squidgel (ph 28.11) on a fish finger, do you?

**James Acaster**

No, you don't get the fat squidgel actually on a fish finger.

**Timothy Spall**

Sometimes it squirts out and can hit you in the eye or (inaudible 28.18) if you're not careful.

**James Acaster**

So, just to recap, you would like a ramekin of crisps and cheese.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

You would like a ramekin of peanuts, a ramekin of olives.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

A ramekin of those Marmite flatbread bites.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

A fish goujon and a deep fried artichoke.



**Timothy Spall**

And also what I'd like, maybe not a ramekin, a slightly larger bowl, of Padrón peppers.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Lovely. Have we even talked about Padrón peppers? Has anyone picked Padrón peppers before, James?

**James Acaster**

We've definitely talked about them before because we talked about how I say Padrón peppers, which I think Timothy does as well, and you always say Padrón peppers.

**Ed Gamble**

I don't think there's a right version, I think they're both right.

**James Acaster**

Well, both times yours has sounded wrong.

**Timothy Spall**

I'll leave you to bicker about that, but I don't-, as long as you get them, who cares? Or in Spain, they have to say Padrón, put an 'e' in front. Yes. 'Could I have some Padrón peppers?'

**James Acaster**

So, who's this character?

**Timothy Spall**

I don't know, someone serving your Padrón peppers. I don't know. I think it's based on a character I played, Don Adriano de Armado, it was a character I played in a mad production of Love's Labour's Lost which I did. Ken Branagh's production, where I had to sing, 'I get no kick from champagne,' and I had to do-, anyway, no, we'll leave it at that.

**James Acaster**

I saw that at the cinema.

**Timothy Spall**

You never did, you must have been 4? And you must have thought what on earth was going on.

**James Acaster**

The Kettering Odeon we went to see Love's Labour's Lost.

**Timothy Spall**

Goodness me.

**James Acaster**

I'd never seen a Shakespeare thing at the cinema before.

**Timothy Spall**

Tell me, what did you make of it?

**James Acaster**

I think I liked it. I can't really remember. I just remember the fact that, like, we were seeing a Shakespeare film and I hadn't seen a Shakespeare film before, so that was exciting. And I didn't learn it was Kenneth Branagh or who Kenneth Branagh was until years later.



### **Timothy Spall**

How old were you, if I may ask?

### **James Acaster**

I don't know. I would've been probably primary school definitely, but like-,

### **Timothy Spall**

Oh my God, I really am old. You saw it in a cinema, I thought I was the only person who'd done that but, I mean, it was horribly received. My wife absolutely loved it and I think it's been what's, you know, you have to put up with that, don't you, you end up in some things that people adore and then you end up on things that people loathe. And then sometimes they loathe it and then-, luckily these days, I mean, they stick around these days, they don't-, it's harder to kill a film. Some deserve to die but a lot don't, and if they can survive, there's streaming and all that stuff that, you know, young people know how to work to watch, and I think you might be able to get a-hold of it. I did look it up once and saw myself doing it in German, which was interesting. I'd never seen myself being dubbed in German.

### **James Acaster**

What is the film that people love the most that you've done? That they bring up to you the most?

### **Timothy Spall**

Well, it's going to have to be the Harry Potter series, which is the one that, funnily enough, is one of the smallest parts I've ever played that's made me the most well-known internationally. I remember getting in a lift in-, my wife and I got in a lift in New Mexico, a sophisticated, very sophisticated, middle-aged couple got in. I thought, 'My God, what are you, a politician or something?' And he turned to me and he said, 'Oh my God. Are you the rat dude from Harry Potter?' I said, 'Yes, I do answer that appellation on occasion, yes.'

### **Ed Gamble**

The rat dude.

### **Timothy Spall**

Better than the guy I met also in New Mexico. I was sitting outside having a beer outside a restaurant and a guy, oldest guy, a very, you know, kind of distinguished old guy, came up to me and said, 'I just wanted to say thank you.' I said, 'Sorry, so have we met?' 'No, no, no, we haven't met. I just want to say thank you. You are the reason my daughter is an opera singer.' I said, 'I'm very delighted she is-, but I don't think I can take claim for that,' and he said, 'Well, I am telling you, I know you're being humble, I'm telling you, Mr Andrew Lloyd Webber, that you are the reason-, ' I said, 'No, no. Thanks. I'm a big fan, not as good-looking as him, but I can't take that.' He wasn't disappointed, he wasn't having it. He thought I was fibbing.

### **Ed Gamble**

Padrón peppers to Andrew Lloyd Webber, as always happens on this podcast. It always seems to go down that road.

### **Timothy Spall**

Yes. And then the other one is, of course, it's either kids with that or old fellas now watching Auf Wiedersehen, Pet still. So, I cover the lot. I go from, you know, and all the kids of the kids who saw Harry Potter are now watching Harry Potter and sums of the people are now watching the original Auf Wiedersehen audience and now I'm even-, I used to get, 'Oh, I've been watching that with my dad,' now I'm getting, 'Oh, I saw that, I'm now watching Auf Wiedersehen with my granddad,' you know. So, I've covered all areas. With a little bit of art, a little bit of world cinema in between, you know. I'm lucky to be tolerated on a long-term basis, that's the way I look at it, by the professions. I really, I can't complain.





**James Acaster**

When Rafe was on, he said about how much cloudy lemonade you drank and we said about it spilling out of your eyes because you drank so much and covering you. And I made a joke, Timothy, I said, 'Auf Wiedersehen, Wet.' How do you like that?

**Timothy Spall**

I don't know how to contain myself. I've actually soiled myself with laughter. I'm going to have to call my wife to bring me some pants because that is so funny. My socks are full. You know. Interesting use of humour.

**James Acaster**

Yes, thank you.

**Timothy Spall**

The deeply unfunny kind.

**Ed Gamble**

That's the way I'd sum up James. If anyone said, 'Can you describe James Acaster's comedy?' I'd say, 'Well, it's an interesting use of humour.'

**James Acaster**

Yes, I'll take that. Your dream main course, Timothy.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I don't know why it's happened, I have become very prone to eating a lot of fish and a lot of-, my wife's a vegetarian, she has a bit of-, but I've moved, maybe because I am a fish, I'm leading towards being a fish, kind of, lemonade drinking fish and becoming a fish. But the one thing I said to my wife, 'What do I like the most?' We've been married 40 years, you know, she said, 'What you really like, and it's not something you have, is oxtail.' Has anybody chosen oxtail here?

**Ed Gamble**

I don't think so. I think you might be the first oxtail.

**Timothy Spall**

Now, luckily, I've never actually gone in a butcher's and bought one because they are, you know-, oxtail soup, it's that brown thing, isn't it, in a tin with little flakes of something and you go, 'What's that?' It's got a sort of slightly, you know, some appealing thing to it, and the sort of thing you have, maybe you're forced by your nan when you're ill or something when you're young to have it, and you just feel sicker when you've had it. I mean, I've always liked it, but oxtail is literally what it is, you know? It's a huge tail from an ox, cut in slices, into, like, rings so you can see the ring. So, it's all got meat in an odd, sort of, gelatine thing around it, and then you cook it for about eleven years in a pot, and then it is the most exquisite-, and my wife does all sorts of magical things to it. I don't know what she adds, I think she just lets it cook, I mean, but I don't know. I never ask, because she's a magician with food, but this amazing, sort of, vat, like a huge bowl of meaty, kind of dark, almost medieval-type thing comes out with this beautiful, soft meat that just falls off, and then you're left with a very strange sort of gelatine-y type bone thing. It's almost like-, well, I suppose the tail is an extension of the spine, isn't it? I remember you couldn't have them during mad cow disease because anything from the head to the spine to the tail was banned, do you remember? You couldn't eat it. But it's on rare occasions, because it is a little bit-, I suppose for want of a better word, disgusting, in some eyes, but it's quite anachronistic, quite old-fashioned, but I highly recommend it. Really. I really do, you know?



**Ed Gamble**

Timothy, I think you're the first person to bring oxtail to the dream restaurant and also you're the first person to use the phrase 'extension of the spine' during describing their main course.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I might be wrong technically and I hope to be disabused eventually of my ignorance on this about whether a tail is an extension of the spine. I mean, there is evidently the coccyx, which is the bottom of our spine, used to be where we had a tail. Now, is that an urban myth? Can't be an urban myth because there weren't any cities when we had tails, if we had tails, but is it? I don't know. I don't know.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, you should look. Yes. I'd take your advice on tails more because you were the rat dude, of course.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, exactly. Yes, yes. Because I was the rat dude and I've been it more than once, because I was a rat in Chicken Run as well, so I am of authority. But I also have played Winston Churchill more than once and I'm not an authority on him, but I think *Rattus norvegicus*, I can claim to have some inside knowledge of, yes. Or *Rattus rattus*, depending on whichever one you want to go for.

**James Acaster**

Wasn't Extension of the Spine a single by Bonnie Tyler? Do you know?

**Timothy Spall**

Extension of the Spine?

**James Acaster**

Bonnie Tyler sang about that.

**Timothy Spall**

How would it go? Sing it mate. Sing it, please, go on.

**James Acaster**

Nothing I can do, a total extension of the spine.

**Timothy Spall**

I like that. Yes. I think that, yes. Yes. Bye-bye. My wife's just going off to get some oxtails.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Just reminded her.

**Ed Gamble**

That was very sweet. I think James missed that, your wife came and ruffled your hair to say goodbye there.

**Timothy Spall**

Ruffled my hair, going off, yes, to buy oxtails. Yes, and because I live very near Smithfield, which is an interesting place to live and you're never far from our oxtail. They don't lead the cattle up here anymore. I read the statistic once, evidently when they did lead the cattle to the market where it was also slaughtered here, the guys that worked here, the bailiffs or the beadles, used to have to wear a leather, sort of a treated leather, waist-high waders because there were a million beasts here and there was so much shit that they had to wear waders up to the-, and do you know where the Fleet, which you can no longer see, was, down Fleet Street, which is where Farringdon Road-, they used to tip all the offal down in there. They used to use it like a big drain. So, there was a river there and



it slowly got covered in bridges and then they started chucking all the guts and all the things after they slaughtered the animal, and the stink was so horrible that it became a health hazard, so they eventually covered it up and piped it off. So, that's why the Fleet is under the Farringdon Road. It starts somewhere up in Hampstead and you can hear it some. I can hear it under the Holborn Viaduct sometimes.

**Ed Gamble**

You can hear all the offal?

**Timothy Spall**

You can't hear the offal bubbling, I think that's all decomposed because it was at the 14th century they did that. Who knows? There might be a spleen wobbling around, you know. Stuck in a Bazalgette sewer outlet, you never know.

**Ed Gamble**

Hopefully none of that makes it into the cloudy lemonade well, that would be an absolute disaster if you pulled the bucket up and there's a spleen in there.

**Timothy Spall**

No, if there was an infiltration, you dip in your firkin and pull out a lump of medieval spleen.

**James Acaster**

Talk about what the foot and mouth crisis was like for you.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, not being a farmer, it didn't really affect me, and not having any farmers-, being from South London and now living in the centre of the old Londinium, farming is a little bit of an exotic, sort of, other planet to me. I mean, the only thing I was deprived of was oxtail. I mean, that's how it hit me.

**Ed Gamble**

That was a great answer, Tim, to what I think, from James, is the weirdest question he's ever asked on this podcast. He's never ever asked anyone, 'Tell us what foot and mouth was like for you?'

**Timothy Spall**

Well no, because it's all about COVID and it's nice to have a blast from the past, isn't it? Asking about, 'How's your coronavirus?', is so boring, so de rigueur. To ask about something like that, I mean, I'd love to talk about The Blitz but I only know it from second hand while talking to my nan, you know. I mean, I could do you an impersonation of Lord Haw-Haw. 'Germany calling, Germany calling. Give up the war British Tommy, we are superior to you.'

**Ed Gamble**

How would Lord Haw-Haw ask for a little jug?

**Timothy Spall**

'Look here, you. Young foolish English person, supporting your army. Pass me a little jug. A little jug of lime juice and we will spare you when the Führer's taken over.'

**James Acaster**

Your dream side dish, Timothy?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, with this, do you know I don't know how it's done, my nan used to do it and my wife can do it if I ask her, she doesn't like doing it, is if you over-boil potatoes, they get a, kind of, fluffy quality to them. They go a bit dry and they've got, like, bits of fluffy and then that, with the-, because you stick that in the-, any dry, fluffiness becomes in the lovely mixture of the sauce and that goes in, with that



on the side and you lovingly putting it in there to change the colour of the potato. And I also maybe, if I may have another potato with it, which is like a crispy, roast potato. Maybe a Mediterranean one, you know, done in the pan, like that, or just a roast one covered in some kind of goose fat or some fat of something. And then I think some-, I want to say frozen peas, I do like frozen peas, but sometimes, if you're going medieval, if you're going back, the marrowfat pea. Tin of marrowfat peas. Which is another thing I don't quite-, do you think marrowfat peas actually have marrow in?

**James Acaster**

I've never heard of marrowfat peas until you just said them.

**Timothy Spall**

You've never heard of a marrowfat pea?

**Ed Gamble**

I've heard of a marrowfat pea but I couldn't draw you one.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, it's a pea. Picture a pea, picture a pea. Invariably in a tin. And I think they must have, unless it's the type of pea that grows, I don't know whether they put marrowfat in them to give them a specific-, or whether it's a type of pea. I'm tempted to look it up but I'm not going to because that would be distracting, but I always like to think because it always tastes like there is something else in it. I don't know whether it's the pea itself or whether it's gone, that tinny taste, because a tin pea does have a particular tang to it, doesn't it, and it's old and it's, kind of, marinated in its own pea-ness. You know. Oh, penis. That's an interesting word, isn't it, that pea-ness, that being of a pea type of pea, being pea-ness, sounds like penis.

**James Acaster**

Marinated in its own penis.

**Timothy Spall**

Marinated in its marrow-fatted pea-ness penis.

**Ed Gamble**

So, you would like the peas marinated in their own pea-ness?

**Timothy Spall**

In their own pea-ness, yes. You have to split it up, don't you.

**Ed Gamble**

Actually the worst thing for a penis to have is pea-ness. You don't want your penis to have a pea-ness.

**Timothy Spall**

No, you don't want it to be pea-like. No. It would be out of control, wouldn't it?

**James Acaster**

You don't want it to have that tang that you mentioned.

**Timothy Spall**

No, you don't want that tang. You know what, I wouldn't mind it just to hear a doctor try and say, 'A pea-ness penis,' because that's getting towards the Latin, isn't it, so it might even actually, you know-, anyway. I'm actually starting to feel a bit tired of this kind of-, I'm starting to loathe myself talking about it. Self-loathing's never far, you know, presuming you've got verbal diarrhoea like me, you go, 'Oh, shut-', You know, when you do a junket, which your job is to constantly talk. I once did 36 interviews in two hours, one after the other at a junket, and I kept saying, 'Who is that horrible



man going on and on and on? Shut him up for fucks sake.' 'You, it's you, Spall. It's you. You're constantly going on.'

**James Acaster**

What was that for? What was the film?

**Timothy Spall**

That was for Denial, which was about the Holocaust.

**James Acaster**

My dad loves that film.

**Timothy Spall**

Does he?

**James Acaster**

I have not seen the film Denial but I have heard my dad describe the plot of the film Denial to me upwards of ten times. At least ten times he has described the entire plot. So, we've got fluffy, overly boiled fluffy potatoes, really nice Spanish roast potatoes, some marrowfat peas.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, I'll tell you what, I mustn't forget this, but maybe, possibly nine chips. Fat chips. Nine chips. No more than that because you don't want to overdo it. You don't want to spoil the -, but nine chips.

**Ed Gamble**

Nine chips.

**James Acaster**

Triple cooked?

**Timothy Spall**

I'm never sure about that. I think that's overdoing it. I've always-, I like it, I've had it, but I had it, I think was it not Heston Blumenthal who, sort of, made that all the rage?

**Ed Gamble**

I think so, yes.

**Timothy Spall**

I did go there and have them, they were absolutely delicious at 'The Fat Duck'. Only the once, it was delightful, but I think they were slightly over-, you know, overcooked, overdone. You know, you just think, something just a deep-fried, bang, whack it in, in a chip pan, one of those things where the fire brigade was always, 'Chip pan fire'. You know, they would call the fire brigade. 'What's that?' 'Chip pan.' Chimney fire, you don't have them anymore, or chip pan fire. Little - . But I think, I don't know whether this is a side dish, but is an absolute-, and it goes way, way back to what I did as a kid, a slice of thick or medium-sliced, Home Pride, Mother's Pride or whatever the equivalent, Sunblest, all these trade names for white bread that taste like, sort of, a chalk pillow. That kind of thing, you know? Then you make sure you've got, not too much, because you don't want to drown the bread, what's left, you've eaten everything and the bones are pushed to the side, possibly maybe even put on the bone plate with some of the Padrón pepper ends still left. You can make a nice little bone, circular bone, Padrón pepper hair, on a circular bone face, several of them.

Then you get the bread and you've got, you know, possibly an eighth of an inch of gravy and then in dead centre you put the Mother's Pride or equivalent, whatever that would be, Sunblest or, you know, into the bread and you watch it slowly, the bread and the gravy, seep in, and turn slowly but surely, in slow motion, turn into another colour and another thing, and another piece of matter



entirely. Oxtail juice soaked Mother's Pride. There. And you eat it delicately and with precision, with a knife and fork. It finishes it off lovely. And if you're lucky, you leave a little bit to the side and that maybe hasn't got so much soakage in it, you then get that and you put that onto your fork and you wipe that last little bit so we've a completely clean plate. Which reminds me of when I was a kid, when I used to lick my plate after my nan, who lived with us, who cooked because my mum was hairdressing, and I'd go, 'Look nan, look, you haven't given me any dinner, nan, nan, nan. Where's my dinner? Look, look, there's nothing on there, you've given me an empty plate, nan.' That thing, you know, yes. And I still do that, like a stupid, foolish, self-regarding, comedic nine year old to my wife. 'Look, look, Shane, look, look, look, you haven't given me my dinner, where is it? Look, look, look. A complete clean plate, you've given me a clean plate.'

**James Acaster**

You'd lick it?

**Timothy Spall**

Pathetic, isn't it.

**James Acaster**

I love it. I love it and I love your-, you've already referenced the self-loathing and I love now being able to see it as you're saying it. As soon as you started saying, 'You've given me a clean plate,' I saw your eyes, you were going, 'Oh, this is pathetic, you're being absolutely pathetic.'

**Timothy Spall**

It is. I mean, it's joyfully pathetic, isn't it.

**James Acaster**

I love it.

**Timothy Spall**

I mean, I love that. I mean, I'm trying to perfect the, you know, the chronically irritating and the sympathetic. I mean, it's a bit of a forte really, in a sense, you know, you've got the bizarre, the deeply sad, and the very funny in unison, really. It's a thing in usually, like, the best kind of drama-comedy has that, doesn't it, you know. That great word bathos when something that is deeply moving and gets you to cry and then it just becomes pathetic because somebody's overdone it or they use the wrong word at the wrong time, do you know what I mean, or somebody comes in and spoils it. Bathos is such a wonderful thing, isn't it.

**James Acaster**

Do you think your entire acting career has come from you trying to convincingly sell to someone that they've not given you any dinner and that they've given you a clean plate? So like, when you were nine and you were trying to just convince your nan and now still you're doing it to your wife, and one day you'll be such a good actor that someone will go, 'Oh, sorry, Timothy. Yes, that's a clean plate, I haven't given you any food. There you go.' And give you a second meal.

**Timothy Spall**

What a brilliant, brilliant-, it would probably have to be them either with amnesia or with some kind of goldfish concentration of thoughts for them to have done that, that might help.

**Ed Gamble**

No, I think it needs to be-, the ultimate performance is someone who's completely sharp, you know, they've got all their faculties, and your acting is so good that they truly are convinced that you didn't have any dinner. That's better than the Oscar.



### **Timothy Spall**

Yes, I mean, that is good. No, that's a very good notion because there would have to be tears, wouldn't there. There would have to be silences, you'd have to say, 'Okay, I think I agree with you, you did cook it but I'm only doing that because I don't want to hurt your feelings because you actually, you know, you are suffering from possibly memory loss. I don't want to-, because it's unfair and, you know, I'm crying for you because I know you're not right and you forgot me. But I'm going to pretend-, but alright, you did give it to me, I've eaten it.' Then they'll go, 'Did I?' Then they'd start questioning, wouldn't they. You'd have to really lay it on. You might have to go out and come back and say, 'It's fine. Thank God, that was an episode, we got through that.' And then just (crying noises), 'I'm hungry,' you know.

### **Ed Gamble**

Yes. You'd have to make sure that you'd cleared away your plate that you'd made with the oxtail bone and the ends of the Padrón peppers into a little face because that'd give you away straight away, wouldn't it.

### **Timothy Spall**

Well, you'd have to eat them so there wouldn't be something-, you'd have to eat the marrowy middle, wouldn't you, that kind of gelatinous thing. But that is all, you know, that thing that everybody that became that-, do you remember when recently gaslighting, when everybody starting talking about being gaslighted. Nobody talked about that for a long, long time. Interesting that that term's come along from that old, you know, from that play Gaslight which was Victorian, wonderful Victorian play that all of a sudden these anachronistic words have come back to explain some kind of modern, inegalitarian abuse.

### **James Acaster**

Yes. But that's what you would do. You would gaslight someone into thinking they hadn't given you any dinner and then you would get the Oscar.

### **Timothy Spall**

Well, yes. Or the equivalent, yes, of the gas-, I don't know what it would be. But yes, but I mean, that would be-, would that be acting? I suppose in a sense, all acting is a form of gaslighting, isn't it? You know, it's a con. I mean, you're trying to convince somebody that you're somebody else and they've got to forget that. You know, particularly if you've been around a long time, they go, 'Oh, it's Timothy,' you know, 'For goodness sake, oh God, he's doing a character.' You know, you hope they're not thinking that. 'Oh God, not another. Oh, different accent, funny one, oh dear.' You hope they're not thinking that, you hope they're convinced by it, but in a sense, that's what you're doing. You're saying, this is a bloke, I turn up with him, and believe me for a while and you might laugh, you might cry, I don't know, I mean, but in one form or another it's a con, isn't it. It's a very sophisticated, deeply elaborate, very largely thought through con. With others, all conning people. Who are willingly paying money to go and be conned. For entertainment. Entertainment.

### **James Acaster**

We come to your dream drink Timothy. Now, are we sticking to diet cloudy lemonade?

### **Timothy Spall**

Or should I go in or is it very much a should I go in for the evening drink? I don't know. I don't often have that before 6, but I might make exceptions. You know, I mean, there's a whole list of all the wonderful wines I used to drink and so on and so forth, and all those wonderful things that all go that I've enjoyed. I was thinking about that this morning because people say, 'Oh, do you miss that?' I say, 'Well, I have a nostalgia for that one, all those wonderful big Tuscan wines, your Brunellos, your Tignanellos, your Chablis, and your (mw 53.47) Rhône, and your Finlandia Vodkas, and the châteaux, fairly dry Montrachets, and all these amazing things that you could-, and German beers, Czech beer's always worth-.' I think, well, actually, it's a bit like being a, sort of, cage fighter for a while, you know. Drink is cage fighting, isn't it, if you like it and love it and explore it to such a



degree that I did, there's a certain shelf-life where you can't carry on. It's a bit like seeing a 60 year old cage fighter, unless you're a superhero, would be wrong. Or a downhill racer. Something you have to just say, 'That was what I did. And I'll leave that' So, all of those things I listed with a certain-, not regret, not missing, with a certain tinge of nostalgia, I will say, they're there. I've had them. It was a lovely time. It was a beautiful time, but it is in the past.

On that note, I'd probably be able to get another, maybe a Marks & Spencers fizzy cranberry lemonade down. I really like them, or I might go in with the Robinsons and the lemon juice. Boiling hot though. It has to be-, I sometimes forget and I drink it and I'll scald my throat and then I'll feel like I've got throat cancer. I'll start talking in a funny, like, 'Oh no, I'm going to have to go and get tested. I've got to get-, you know. So, the scalding. Sometimes, you know, you just have to have it so hot. Like coffee. You can't have-, what is it about posh coffee shops? Really posh coffee shops, called things like Nincompoop and Cough Bone and all that stuff. Why is the coffee cold? Why do you have to say, 'Can I have it hot?' You know. I don't know why. It's always nice but it's cold. You go in Costa or somewhere, it's boiling hot, scalding, you know. And then I ask if it's hot, you know. It's got to be hot. But then again, I found out the Italians don't have their coffee hot, they like it a bit tepid so they can taste it. So, I suppose maybe I'm the peasant. I don't know. Who knows.

### **Ed Gamble**

How often when you're having your hot Robinsons do you think, 'I've got throat cancer and I need to go for a test'? Is it every time?

### **Timothy Spall**

No, it's usually after, when I've thought, '(coughing noises)'. Or sometimes I start talking in this old man voice, like that (inaudible 55.59), 'I've got throat cancer.' No, no, actually I drank water, boiling blackcurrant juice straight out the kettle. You haven't hopefully got throat cancer, you've got boiling blackcurrant and lemon throat. Not oesophagus cancer. You never know, I mean, you know. I noticed when I was ill 25 years ago, it wasn't being a hypochondriac, it wasn't the one I thought I had that got me. You know, I got over it, thank god, but being a hypochondriac is no excuse for not getting cancer. I mean, you don't want to hear that, do you, you know.

### **James Acaster**

No, last thing you want to tell a hypochondriac.

### **Timothy Spall**

Hypochondriacs can get cancer. Because hypochondria's a way of heading off illness at the pass, isn't it, you think you've got it, if you've got it before you've got it, then you haven't got it, you know.

### **James Acaster**

Has it ever got to the point where you've been at the doctor and said, 'I think I've got throat cancer, can you do some tests?' And then they've gone, 'We think you've just been drinking hot Robinsons.'

### **Timothy Spall**

I have to pull myself together. One of the other things about being an actor is that you tend to have an inflamed-, possibly a comedian as well, an inflamed imagination. You know, years ago I said, 'The imagination is a beast that needs to be caged.' You know, I mean, that's slightly poncey, isn't it? But it can get out of control, and you can get all sorts of terrible things if you allow yourself. I mean, having been seriously ill now, I do give myself a break, but there is the lingering ghost of that childhood. I had to go, I was taken to hospital to see a psychiatrist because my hypochondria was so bad as a child. There was a bloke who used to walk down our street who had a huge nose. Big, red nose, and somebody said to me, 'You know why he's got a red nose like that?' I said, 'No.' They said, 'Because he had cancer of the nose and they had to use a piece of his bum to stick it on his nose.' Three weeks later my mum caught me crying in the scullery. Not the kitchen here (ph 58.07), I'm not in a Dickens novel, in the scullery, saying, 'What on earth's the matter?' I said, 'I think I've got cancer of the nose and they're going to cut it off and put a bit of my bum on there.' She said, 'Well,





this is it.' They referred me to a psychiatrist at St. Thomas' Hospital. My mum's a very smart woman, we went there, and I didn't really know what to expect. You know, what you've got to realise is that I also was, at that time-, I was twelve, but I was a skinhead. So, I had Sta-Prest trousers height-high, Ben Sherman shirts, skinhead, cut-in parting, braces, and Doc Martens.

**James Acaster**

Okay. You're the kid from 'This is England'.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, but, you know, when skinheads were skinheads then, this was, you know, so 1971, the original skinhead. You know, I wasn't really a skinhead, I mean, it was like a kid version of, you know. And I didn't realise, I was shown into this room and it was a lecture theatre, full of medical students, and I was on a stage. My mum was sitting next to me and there was a psychiatrist on a stage and when I walked in, all the medical students started to laugh. And then when she said, 'This is Timothy, he's twelve years old and he is showing signs of hypochondria,' they all started tittering again. Even then at the time, I thought, 'This is a little bit outrageous.' I remember thinking, 'Don't think you're supposed to do that when you're a medical student.' Apart from being really humiliating, then every time I asked a question, there were titters, there were stifled titters from the audience. And then I was taken in, I was examined, and about ten of these titterers came in, I was lying on a table. Maybe this is where the acting started, I don't know.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, maybe. Maybe Timothy.

**James Acaster**

First onto a stage.

**Ed Gamble**

I'd say there's a 100% chance of that.

**James Acaster**

Yes. It all comes from trauma, clearly.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes. I mean, this is not the worst. I mean, I didn't obviously. I am growing, sort of, a slightly bulbous nose, I think that's just age, but I know it's not my bum being put on there. But no, I got through that. But I did have a worse piece of hypochondria. We had a very small cactus in our bedroom, my brother and I shared it when we moved to a council flat, and it fell on me and it pricked a little, and I spent an hour just thinking I was going to turn into a cactus. I thought in the morning-, I started to cry, my brother said, 'What the fuck? What's the matter with you?' I said, 'A cactus has fallen on me, I'm going to be a cactus in the morning, I've got to wait, I'm going to just be a big cactus boy.'

**James Acaster**

A big cactus boy.

**Timothy Spall**

'I'm going to be a cactus boy in my bed.' Imagine going and I'd have to go put my Sta-Prest, my Ben Sherman, go back to the same-, and then they would stop laughing, they would be frightened, wouldn't they, the medical students.

**Ed Gamble**

If you were a skinhead cactus.

**Timothy Spall**

Cactus boy had turned up in his skinhead, you know.



**Ed Gamble**

The last thing you want from a skinhead is to be a cactus boy, right? For a start, you couldn't be a skinhead because you'd have a big spike sticking out the top of your head.

**James Acaster**

Too spiky.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I suppose you could cut a parting in between the pricks.

**James Acaster**

You've thought of that.

**Timothy Spall**

I tell you what, people would-, they'd be a bit scared of you though, wouldn't they. I mean, I suppose you would probably be quite an intimidating skinhead, if you were a cactus skinhead.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. The last thing you want is to be nudded by a cactus, right?

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, yes, exactly. Because then you'd become a cactus. If you were a hypochondriac, you'd become a cactus too.

**James Acaster**

Do you think it was likely that all of the medical students had been told before you walked onto the stage, 'Next we've got a little boy who thinks that he's got nose cancer and they're going to put his bum on his nose.'? And do you think they knew that before you walked out onto the stage and that's why they were tittering the whole time?

**Timothy Spall**

No, I think they laughed because there was a boy coming in with an acute neurosis, who happened to be a chubby little skinhead, so the incongruity of a chubby little skinhead showing signs of hypochondriac neurosis was too much for them to bear.

**James Acaster**

Let's get onto your dream dessert, because I love dessert, it's my favourite course, although you haven't really mentioned sweets much during this. Although, you know, your drinks are quite sweet.

**Timothy Spall**

I've trained myself off them, really. Being somebody who's always had a diet thing, you know, and going up and down and spending a lot of time as a big guy, a chubby, fat fella, I became thin because I wanted to get rid of it. So, I kind of trained myself off puddings and got away from all that, you know, treacle tart, all that stuff and cakes, so I kind of went away from that. But just before-, can I have, I did forget because you reminded me Rafe chose so many things, just to finish off the oxtail, can I just a tiny, a little bit of tandoori chicken just to finish off that? Just three little bits. Maybe a tiny little skewer chicken shashlik, just to finish off because I don't want to think, 'Oh shit, I should have had the shashlik not the oxtail.' So, that is a palate clogger, not a palate cleanser, to clog the palate. And then I'm doing a little mime with my hands of a skewer.

**Ed Gamble**

You know the rules, if you mime it we have to bring it.



**Timothy Spall**

Chicken shashlik chaser.

**James Acaster**

Although I'm getting a bit nervous now because it sounds like you're not going to order a sweet thing for dessert.

**Timothy Spall**

Oh, I am. I am because we have carte blanche here immunity I believe, punishment immunity. I have discovered, since the remarkable breakthrough of the low calorie ice cream, I do treat myself to ice cream. Which reminds me, there was always down our street, Wycliffe Road, which ran off of Lavender Hill when I was a kid, the ice cream van. And there were two. There was Notarianni's, which was the Italian, old-fashioned ice cream, made down the bottom of Battersea Park Road, bought up in tubs and brought out on big spoons. And there was Tonibell, which was the soft one that came out like a big Mr. Whippy, the original Mr. Whippy. And at one point, there was an ice cream debate as to whether which was the best, the Mr. Whippy or the old-fashioned, and it culminated in the kids in the street shaking poor Tonibell's van so hard until he went away to allow Notarianni to come up, Mr. Notarianni, with the old-fashioned tub of ice cream.

**Ed Gamble**

There was a turf war, there was an ice cream turf war.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, a little bit. We had to take sides. So yes, well, I found myself part of a group of young, seven year old ruffians shaking the Tonibell van to make sure it didn't come down.

**Ed Gamble**

Were you worried that the Tonibell van would fall on you and then you would turn into a Mr. Whippy?

**Timothy Spall**

No, they do look like, you remember the-, well, you don't, you're young. But those ice cream vans were slightly top-heavy, particularly if they had a big ice cream on the top and a bell in it making a noise, which they did, you know.

**Ed Gamble**

We're more from the era where the ice cream van would maybe have a terrible picture of the Little Mermaid spray-painted onto it.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes. I mean, I do love it when I hear an ice cream van. I mean, I don't hear them around here where I live in the city, but there is something incredibly evocative about that, isn't there, particularly when you hear it on a sunny day in December? You think, 'That's brave. Someone is going to-, they've had a bad summer.' But the other thing about that was Sunday lunch, they must have timed it beautifully. We'd have our big roast as a family and then you'd hear the ice cream, 'Come on, mum, dad, dad, can we get it?' We'd get a big dessert bowl and run out and queue up and get them to put the ice cream, dollop, make a huge bowl of ice cream in your dessert bowl and take it back and have a tinned fruit salad or something, or tinned peaches, do you know what I mean?

**Ed Gamble**

So, you used to take your bowl out to the van?



**Timothy Spall**

The biggest dessert bowl you could get, yes. We'd all run out, queue, and get-, then they'd just put loads. 'Can we fill it up Mr. Notarianni, please fill it up,' and then go on, and you'd go back with this big bowl of old-fashioned Italian ice cream.

**James Acaster**

A really different relationship you had with these two ice cream men, like, 'Please Mr. Notarianni, oh, this is so nice,' 'Fuck off Tonibell, get the fuck out of here.'

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, there was a little bit. I mean, Tonibell did give it a few weeks and then came back and all was forgiven. It was just a phase.

**Ed Gamble**

Notarianni going, 'Yes, I will fill up your bowl as long as you go and kick the shit out of Tonibell.'

**James Acaster**

I've just got the image of you with all the little kids shaking the Tonibell ice cream van.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I'd like to draw a veil over that piece of seven-year-old delinquency and I actually now, all of a sudden, feel very sorry for the person inside that being shaken. They were frightened, I should imagine, and feared for their lives, you know? I mean, it was 'Lord of the Flies' all of a sudden down there off Lavender Hill.

**Ed Gamble**

Is your dream dessert the Notarianni's ice cream?

**Timothy Spall**

Well, I think it is. A real beautiful, I think a very sizeable slab or mound of vanilla old-fashioned ice cream, and then of equivalent mound, a barrow, you know, like a long hill, like an earth work, of chocolate ice cream, and then a barrow of vanilla. And then I think to go exotic, because it reminds me of going to the seaside, down to Margate as a kid, I think I'll have a banana split. You get this thing, you cut up a slice of banana, a long one and put it in either side of the ice cream, I can't remember, and then with some chocolate thing, it's ordered in kind of a zig-zag pattern across that, and that would be-, particularly with the taste sensation of you as a child of that ice cream, the wonder of the ice cream after your Sunday lunch, you know, that would bring that memory back. But the ice cream, I mean, what is it about ice cream? There are certain things you put in your mouth and as they go down your throat, you go, 'This is magnificent. This is almost spiritual and biblical in its sensual pleasure.'

**Ed Gamble**

Well, also it's good for you because you've just burnt your throat on some Robinsons.

**Timothy Spall**

It would help, yes. And it would probably be a good idea to have a little jug of ice cream next to you every time you're going-, or get in there quick. The trouble is, when you keep your ice cream in the freezer, there's a horrible, 'How long do I get it out for before I start eating it?' You know, many a time I've actually injured myself by trying to eat frozen ice cream in a tub of the slimming ice cream and missed, gone through the punnet and into my finger, you know, and think, 'No,' and made a hole. You think, 'Oh no, you can't let it melt, you've got to put it back in.'

**James Acaster**

I'm very, very happy that you've chosen a banana split. It has a very special place in my heart. I remember when I was a kid, going for a big meal with my cousins and everyone, and everyone



ordered banana splits and these humongous banana splits came out and I was the only one who finished mine and then I even helped other people polish off theirs and I was very proud of myself. I love banana splits. I love that you've chosen it. Are you having cream on the banana split? You said about the chocolate sauce, but you didn't say that there was going to be cream in there or?

**Timothy Spall**

Yes. The cream-, what, the, sort of, squirty cream? The aerosol cream?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Timothy Spall**

Squirty cream. I don't know why that always-,

**James Acaster**

Why that accent for the squirty cream?

**Timothy Spall**

I don't know, it just-, squirty cream. I don't know, it just seems to go with it, doesn't it? The word cream and squirty do lend themselves to the Wirral. I don't know why.

**James Acaster**

Can you please do the Wirral character asking for a little jug of squirty cream?

**Timothy Spall**

I don't know whether I can do it. I don't know, can I do it? Liverpool's difficult. I learnt it. I tell you what mate, I don't want the ice cream, I'll just have the squirty cream. The squirty cream. You can then go up an octave, squirty cream. Up an octave and nasal, squirty cream.

**James Acaster**

I love it.

**Timothy Spall**

Better watch out, you're going to give yourself a bloody coronary if you go up too high with saying 'squirty cream'. Oh, I've done my throat in now, throat cancer, throat cancer.

**Ed Gamble**

You'll be out in front of the medical students again, strained your vocal chords because you tried to say 'squirty cream' too high in a Liverpool accent. They'd be absolutely pissing themselves.

**Timothy Spall**

I know. Imagine going to the doctor. 'How did you get this throat?' 'Well, I had hot Robinsons, then I said squirty cream.' No, I don't want squirty cream because I think the actual cream itself interferes with the mutation of the cream in the ice cream. Because ice cream is a mutation, isn't it, it's a scientific eventuality of a form of cream and milk and so on and so forth, so in itself, I think bringing in the cream itself exposes its mutation and its bastardised version of the cream or another form. So, I think this juxtaposition against cancels out one on the other. My wife-, you know when you go to Italy, a nice ice cream and you get something like that big, they have got the cream machine so you can, you know, an ice cream is half a metre high, which is-, I know there's a delight in that. To me, I think the chocolate sauce and maybe, I don't know about the red sauce. No, I think just chocolate, don't want the red. No, too sweet. And that's that part of the dessert.

**James Acaster**

Lovely.



**Timothy Spall**

There's another phase, which if we're on impunity here.

**James Acaster**

What's the other phase?

**Timothy Spall**

Cheeseboard.

**Ed Gamble**

You've done something very clever here Timothy, because if you'd just picked the cheeseboard James would have gone mad, but because you've paired it with a banana split, I think you're going to get away with it.

**James Acaster**

I am delighted. This is what I've always wanted people to do.

**Timothy Spall**

Are you not allowed a cheeseboard, normally?

**James Acaster**

People are allowed it, but I personally think just having a cheeseboard as your entire dessert is sacrilegious. However, I always say to them, why not just have it after your dessert? And they're like, 'No, no, no, I want it as my whole dessert,' and it really winds me up. And the fact that you've chosen a banana split, which is very close to my heart, and you've followed it with a cheeseboard show that you respect the rules and I'm very happy right now.

**Timothy Spall**

And then that was something, you know, to discover as I got older and then became more aware of other food. You know, to discover things like Brie de Meaux or Brie de Turd, as I like to call it because that's what it smells like when, you know. And Brie de Meaux or Brie de Merde, which is also French for shit, which sounds very-, Brie de Meaux, which is an exquisite runny-, and camembert and emmental and Sage Derby and Colston Bassett stilton.

**Ed Gamble**

You're speaking my language.

**Timothy Spall**

And gorgonzola. I mean, when I was a kid, the only experience I had with gorgonzola was my nan, who lived up in the top of our house when I was in-, she lived with us all our lives until we moved and then she got her own little flat. But she'd have a cheese dish, you know like a funny-, and my brother and I used to run up there and lift it, look at the little piece of gorgonzola, and scream and run downstairs again. So, I thought gorgonzola was a hideous, kind of, piece of Quatermass that was under a dish, you know, so when I discovered gorgonzola and cambozola and then mascarpone and gorgonzola together, I mean, it's like all the aorta clogging substances, one for each aorta. And then cream crackers. Cream crackers to go with these things. And since I've got older, the wonderful array of, you know, knäcke bread you can go with it. You know, I had the privilege of travelling the world for my work and through boating, all the things you discover, all these, you didn't realise that Ryvita was just the tip of the iceberg. There are Ryvitas in Sweden that are the size and the thickness of duvets, stiff duvets. I mean, they are like eating tile but, you know, they are amazing.

**Ed Gamble**

You'd like one of these big thick duvets to go with your cheeseboard?



**Timothy Spall**

A knäcke bread. Like a knäcke bread you need a wheelbarrow to eat, you know, or you need a-, yes. Or I don't think you can beat your simple Jacob's cream cracker. There's something so pure, so simple about that. It's like the king and the simple biscuit. It's either the digestive or the rich tea. Simple, unsophisticated in their simplicity, but all the more glorious because of their simplicity. And I think the cream cracker has that mixture of crispness, fat, clogginess to the palate, which helps clog the cheese in the mouth.

**James Acaster**

So, I'm going to read your menu back to you now.

**Timothy Spall**

Go on then.

**James Acaster**

See how you feel about it. Water, you would like an imperial gallon of diet cloudy lemonade.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Poppadoms or bread, spicy poppadom and a plain poppadom with all the relishes, and Spanish bread with olive oil and balsamic, plus a bread bra of your wife's focaccia.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes. Breast heated bread, focaccia, from my own bread bra.

**James Acaster**

Starter. A mezze, ramekins of plain crisps with cubes of cheese, ramekin of peanuts, ramekin of olives, ramekin of Marmite crisp breads, a deep-fried artichoke, fish goujons, and a big bowl of Padrón peppers.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Main course. Oxtail stew with a little bit of chicken shashlik at the end. Side. Fluffy boiled potatoes, crispy roast potatoes, a tin of marrowfat peas, nine fatty chips, and some Mother's Pride white bread.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, to mop up the juice, the sauce. Yes, the gravy.

**James Acaster**

Drink, Marks & Spencer's fizzy cranberry lemonade and a boiling hot Robinsons apple and blackcurrant squash with lemon juice.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Dessert, Notarianni's ice cream, vanilla and chocolate, banana split, followed by a cheeseboard.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, yes.



**Ed Gamble**

Beautiful, beautiful stuff Timothy.

**James Acaster**

Feel good?

**Timothy Spall**

I do, yes. I'm a bit peckish now, little bit peckish.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you so much for coming to this dream restaurant, Timothy Spall.

**Timothy Spall**

Well, it's been a delight to talk to you fellas, it was really very nice, and I hope your cold gets better. I'm getting one, I didn't want to go on about it.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, I'm not sure you are getting a cold Timothy, after everything we've heard about you.

**James Acaster**

I think you've talked to someone who's got a cold over Zoom, and now you think you're getting a cold.

**Timothy Spall**

Yes, exactly.

**James Acaster**

Thank you Timothy Spall.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, there we are James, what a wonderful time we had meeting the rat dude.

**James Acaster**

What a great rat dude he was. A delicious meal, just like his son, loads and loads of extra little bits and bobs going on in there, loads of little loopholes he found. Not even loopholes, just saying, 'If I may,' a lot and that tricked us.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Turns out we fell for that. Just say, 'If I may,' we'll let people have whatever they want.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

But no, great episode, some lovely revelations in there and some things, James, that Timothy told me he's never told anyone before.

**James Acaster**

I really appreciate that. I love an Off Menu exclusive.

**Ed Gamble**

Can't wait to read that absolutely butchered to fuck in the tabloids without a mention to where they got it from.





**James Acaster**

Yes. Completely changing the story so that it sounds like he's a maniac or something's wrong with him. How do they sleep?

**Ed Gamble**

How do they sleep at night? But Timothy can sleep soundly, because he didn't say pilchards.

**James Acaster**

He didn't say pilchards, he's allowed to stay in the restaurant, we're not kicking him out. We can all breathe a sigh of relief there actually.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. In which case, we can also plug his film because he didn't say pilchards. He's in Spencer, which comes out on Friday. Go see that, it sounds absolutely fascinating.

**James Acaster**

Yes. I'm very much looking forward to seeing that. Also Ed, everyone's got to vote for us tomorrow in the Comedy Awards.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. You've got until tomorrow to vote, that's what I would say. Do it now, don't wait until tomorrow, otherwise you're cutting it fine. Go to [thenationalcomedyawards.com](http://thenationalcomedyawards.com), and you can vote for Off Menu in Best Comedy Podcast. How you vote in the other categories, completely up to you. I'm not involved in any of the categories, I think James is involved in all of them, but it's the podcast which is the important bit.

**James Acaster**

I think we pop up in one other one.

**Ed Gamble**

Hypothetical. Hi pathetic, I call it. Hi, pathetic.

**James Acaster**

What?

**Ed Gamble**

Hi, pathetic.

**James Acaster**

What do you call it?

**Ed Gamble**

Hi, pathetic I call it.

**James Acaster**

What, hi as in H-I, comma, pathetic?

**Ed Gamble**

Hi, pathetic. Yes.

**James Acaster**

What the hell?



**Ed Gamble**

Hi, pathetic AI, that's what I call it. I imagine a guy called AI. Is there anyone called AI who works on the show?

**James Acaster**

I don't know anyone's names who works on the show.

**Ed Gamble**

Actually quite like it, I've done it three times, haven't I?

**James Acaster**

You have done it three times. I thought you liked it, I didn't know you thought it was pathetic.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, and I do like it. You know why I like it? Because I get to come on there and any situation I create, I get to make you do something horrible.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes. Once you made me hold a tube to your anus.

**Ed Gamble**

Hold a tube to my anus. Did I make you suck off a mannequin in the last one?

**James Acaster**

Oh, probably. Yes, yes, you made me put-

**Ed Gamble**

Something like that.

**James Acaster**

Yes. I don't think that stuff makes the edit, it's too hardcore for Dave.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, well, that's me. Too hardcore for Dave. Apart from every night when I'm on Dave. Few shout-outs James, to some people who've sent us some things. The Scotch Whiskey Society sent us all a lovely little, sort of, flight of mini bottles of whiskey.

**James Acaster**

Really appreciated that. I mean, I say appreciated, I'm halfway through them.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, yes? You have little spirits at home, don't you? You like your little spirits.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

We've got a bottle of vodka in the fridge. I won't say what vodka it is but it doesn't have any additives and it's very clean tasting, James.

**James Acaster**

Oh, lovely.

**Ed Gamble**

So, we have our little whiskeys, but clear, at home. Vodka, as it's known.



**James Acaster**

Delicious.

**Ed Gamble**

So, thank you to the Scotch Whiskey Society. Thank you also to Saxx pants, James.

**James Acaster**

Jamie Oliver put us onto them and when I say put us onto them, literally had some sent to us from the people at Saxx. And we were like, 'Well, we'll see about this, Oliver,' and I know we've talked about it briefly over WhatsApp, we've all said different things at different times. Right now, I'm literally in a stage where I look forward to putting them on.

**Ed Gamble**

Me too. And for me, I don't mind saying love the Saxx pants as well because that technology means everything's scooped forward and popped at the front and, well, it tricks the eye.

**James Acaster**

Before he'd got his Saxx pants, he used to walk around the room and his crotch area was like, you'd think he had a jacuzzi going on underneath there, because it was all bubbling around and everything was just going on all over the place. It was like a fight in a cartoon, where it's a cloud of dust.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, occasionally you'd see a chicken's head poking out of there to see what was going on, wouldn't you?

**James Acaster**

Yes. I'd be like, oh man, it all needs to be scooped into one place.

**Ed Gamble**

And finally, it's collected up all my nethers and thethers and scooped it all into one place, so thank you Saxx, for controlling my cartoon fight penis and testicles.

**James Acaster**

Yes, also when we first started this podcast way back in 20-, I want to say 18?

**Ed Gamble**

Correct.

**James Acaster**

The first, like, logo that we put out there for our podcast was the words Off Menu on a jar of Marmite.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

And I believe we've stuck with that, we've kept it over the years? I actually don't know.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, you believe that though. That's fine.



**James Acaster**

And now the people at Marmite have sent us a jar of Marmite that says Off Menu instead of Marmite on it.

**Ed Gamble**

Took a while, but we're very happy.

**James Acaster**

Means a lot to us.

**Ed Gamble**

And it sits in the office at Plosive Productions, where Benito runs his evil empire. And now and again, if he has guests over, he makes them lick Marmite off his finger and say, 'You're the boss.' Okay. Well, we should probably wrap this up, James.

**James Acaster**

Oh, well. Fair enough. Parting is such sweet sorrow.

**Ed Gamble**

Lovely. Poetic.

**James Acaster**

Oh, I should've said that to Timothy Spall. I bet he would've respected that.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, he would've loved that.

**James Acaster**

Too late, too late.

**Ed Gamble**

Doesn't respect you at all, mate. Thank you very much for listening, we will see you again next week. Goodbye.

**James Acaster**

Bye.