



Off Menu – Ep 164 – Richard E Grant:

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, taking the rice of conversation, laying over the raw fish of humour, wrapping in the seaweed of the internet and dipping it in the soy sauce of good fun, sushi.

James Acaster

Ed Gamble there, my name is James Acaster, this is the Off Menu podcast. We own a dream restaurant and we invite a guest in every week and ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, AKA their dream meal, not in that order, and this week our guest is Richard E Grant.

Ed Gamble

Here we are, we're back in the treasure chest.

James Acaster

Oh, look at us, look at us, we've dug up some more national treasure.

Ed Gamble

Yes please.

James Acaster

Very exciting. Obviously Richard E Grant needs no introduction, he's in so many wonderful, iconic things, and he soon has a new book out, A Pocketful of Happiness, it's a memoir, it's out tomorrow, and we're going to be asking him about that in the podcast. Very excited that he's on. I mean, too many to list his films, his iconic film roles.

Ed Gamble

Basically this whole interview is going to be me trying to not do 'Withnail and I' quotes.

James Acaster

Yes, I might try not to ask about Spiceworld The Movie.

Ed Gamble

If you could, try.

James Acaster

Yes, I will try, but if spices come up.

Ed Gamble

Spice might come up.

James Acaster

We're talking about food.

Ed Gamble

But what's going to come up with-, you know, he might-, does he want wine? Does he want the finest wines available to humanity?

James Acaster

Oh yes, then we're in trouble.



Ed Gamble

Yes, then we're in trouble, yes.

James Acaster

You've got to bite your tongue there. We'll see, we'll see what happens. Of course, you know, hopefully we'll get that far, because obviously if Richard says a secret ingredient which we deem to be unacceptable we are going to kick him out of the dream restaurant, as is the rule for every guest, and this week the secret ingredient is lighter fluid.

Ed Gamble

Of course, another Withnail and I reference.

James Acaster

They drink it in Withnail and I, so it therefore counts as an ingredient.

Ed Gamble

Sometimes we pick these because they're relevant to people's work, sometimes we pick them because they're ingredients we don't like, sometimes it's because we don't want them to be kicked out.

James Acaster

Yes, and we're pretty sure-, look, if Richard E Grant says, 'To start I would like a shot of lighter fluid', then I think-,

Ed Gamble

He deserves to be kicked out.

James Acaster

Yes, people would be like, 'Oh, fair enough.'

Ed Gamble

Yes, get him out.

James Acaster

They had to do that, even tough he's a national treasure, because he shouldn't be drinking lighter fluid.

Ed Gamble

I'm so excited to meet Richard E Grant.

James Acaster

Very excited. Who was-, who thought that when this bunch of idiots sitting round this table here started a good podcast that we'd get to speak to so many national treasures and that Richard E Grant would sit down with us and tell us his favourite food.

Ed Gamble

This series we've had Lenny Henry and Richard E Grant.

James Acaster

Pinch me.

Ed Gamble

I will not.



James Acaster

Ed refuses to do anything that might hurt me, that's how much he cares about me.

Ed Gamble

I'll kiss you, I won't pinch you. Who would have thunk it, Richard E Grant on our little pod.

James Acaster

We should point out as well, Ed is drunk.

Ed Gamble

Well, you're just leaving massive pauses, so whenever I say anything it makes me sound like I'm drunk.

James Acaster

Yes, we've recorded quite a few today.

Ed Gamble

I'm drunk with pod.

James Acaster

And we've had so much pod and now we're going to interview a national treasure and I keep on powering down and then Ed has to fill the silences by saying, 'Who'd have thunk it.' I mean, at least they can edit out the silences and it can just seem like it's like that, it's just you shouting, 'Who'd have thunk it' over and over again.

Ed Gamble

Yes, maybe I will get drunk now.

James Acaster

Yes, well let's see.

Ed Gamble

After Richard E Grant.

James Acaster

Yes, after Richard E Grant.

Ed Gamble

I don't think there's many national treasures left after-,

James Acaster

Attenborough.

Ed Gamble

Attenborough. Let's get on with it, here we go. It is the Off Menu menu of Richard E Grant. Welcome Richard to the Dream Restaurant.

Richard E Grant

Thank you.

James Acaster

Welcome Richard E Grant to the Dream Restaurant, we've been expecting you for some time.

Ed Gamble

Here we are.



Richard E Grant

Thank you.

Ed Gamble

Lovely to have you in the Dream Restaurant. In your dream dining scenario is there anything that you would love to see around you? What's the setting like?

Richard E Grant

Oh, to be at the seaside.

Ed Gamble

Yes? Oh, lovely.

Richard E Grant

Yes, anywhere. Have I said a word that is a banned word already?

Ed Gamble

Not at all.

Richard E Grant

I'm not going to be ejector seated like (talking over each other 04.23). Okay, no, anywhere by the sea, yes, that's where I'd like to eat.

Ed Gamble

Is it a UK seaside spot?

Richard E Grant

I will go anywhere where there is water, yes.

James Acaster

And are you outside for the meal?

Richard E Grant

Depending on how cold it is, yes as close to the water as possible.

James Acaster

I'm not going to even to ask you, but I'm going to take the liberty of getting rid of all the seagulls in that case, because I don't want you having your dream meal under constant threat of seagull theft.

Richard E Grant

I'm very, very greedy, so I would take on a seagull.

James Acaster

You could take on a seagull?

Richard E Grant

Yes, I would. I'd have a machete, you know, down my back ready to pull out.

Ed Gamble

Could you reintroduce one seagull, because I'd love to see that.

James Acaster

Yes, there's one seagull and it's the seagull from The Little Mermaid, what's it called?



Ed Gamble

Oh I don't know.

James Acaster

So, it's a popular character, going to be voiced by Awkwafina in the new film.

Richard E Grant

Yes. Right, well of course it would have very good manners and befriend me and come and sit at the end of the table and I'd feed it, you know, my leftovers.

James Acaster

This is nice. You're by the sea. Would you dine alone for your dream meal, or do you like company?

Richard E Grant

I'm very greedy and the idea of a sharing plate to me was one of the great culinary disasters of the last two decades.

Ed Gamble

Very popular. So widespread now, the sharing plates.

Richard E Grant

Yes, I hate it. I don't like sitting on a bench, I don't like sharing a plate. I want everything that is in front of my on my plate and I've had to restrain myself for stabbing fellow diners who have reached over and said, 'Oh, could I just have a taste of that?' I've said, 'No, I'd rather order you an entire plate of it and I will pay for it, even if you take one bite, but do not mess with mine.'

Ed Gamble

Oh, I mean we're so on the same page Richard, absolutely.

Richard E Grant

Yes, they'll say, 'Can I just have one of your chips?' And they go, 'Oh, I'm on a diet.' No, no, fuck off, just let me eat what I've ordered, don't give me a sharing plate.

Ed Gamble

And you've got the machete now, so.

Richard E Grant

Yes, I have, yes.

James Acaster

But you hate sharing Ed, but also you hate it if someone orders the same thing as you.

Ed Gamble

I do.

James Acaster

So, Ed's impossible to please.

Ed Gamble

Correct.

Richard E Grant

So, how do you feel about people who envy what you've ordered and say, 'Oh, I should have ordered that', and their hand is reaching over, the paw is ready -



Ed Gamble

Machete, hand straight off.

Richard E Grant

Oh, we're on the same page.

Ed Gamble

I love it when people envy what I've ordered, because then I can feel like I know what I'm talking about.

Richard E Grant

Well, before you were born there was a French and Saunders comedy team of two female comics that had a sketch where two school girls, and one had a big chocolate something and the other one was edging towards her to try and get a little bit, and as she got within inches of her the Jennifer Saunders character just stuffed the whole thing into her mouth and I thought, 'That's me.' I identify with that completely.

James Acaster

Before you were born Ed, that's a compliment.

Ed Gamble

Yes, thank you.

Richard E Grant

Yes, you're both very young.

Ed Gamble

How old do you think we are Richard?

Richard E Grant

25.

James Acaster

What, both of us?

Richard E Grant

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I love it.

James Acaster

I love it.

Ed Gamble

I'm 36.

James Acaster

I'm 37.

Richard E Grant

Are you? Well, listeners they're using donkey sperm treatment to keep their skin as taut as I don't know what to mention.



Ed Gamble

Please don't give away our secrets. We told you, when you came into the studio, we said, 'Ignore the donkey in the corner.'

James Acaster

Ignore the donkey.

Richard E Grant

No, but you're looking marvellous, both of you. (talking over each other 07.39). Very good lighting, you've both got your own hair and teeth, so I'm envious.

James Acaster

Are you much of a foodie Richard, in general?

Richard E Grant

Yes, yes, have you ever had somebody who's come onto your show that doesn't like food? I mean, there are lots of things I don't like to eat, but yes I love cooking and I love eating.

James Acaster

Well, before we started recording there was a brief conversation you were having with the great Benito about 'Withnail and I', and one of the bits in 'Withnail and I' that I always think about, whenever I see anyone eat an egg sandwich, is the bit at the beginning when they bite into the egg sandwich and then the yolk just pours out of the back of it like that, and it's when he's really depressed in London, it's like, 'I just need to get out of here', and he sees that happen. I think about it every time, every time I'm eating an egg sandwich or anything like that, I think about that and how-

Richard E Grant

So, how often are you eating a soft fried egg sandwich?

James Acaster

Do you know what, not as much anymore, not as much as before I saw that film.

Richard E Grant

Because you're so rich now.

James Acaster

I'm rich as hell, but also because that film, which I saw before I was so rich, made me think, 'Egg sandwiches are gross.'

Richard E Grant

I agree with you.

James Acaster

It just suddenly represented despair for me.

Ed Gamble

It is very interesting, because I heard you mention that just then, the egg sandwich, and I thought, 'Oh, he's going to say it makes him love an egg sandwich', because I love a fried egg sandwich, the pop, when you bite into it and you feel the yolk pop and it dribbles out, I love that.

Richard E Grant

Yes, but can you eat an egg and cress cold sandwich which is like a fart between two slices of white?



Ed Gamble

I'm not a fan of egg and cress.

Richard E Grant

We're bonding enormously already. We have to catch up, you and I, blondie.

James Acaster

Listen, slow and steady wins the race, I'm going to be there by the end.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you'll get there.

James Acaster

It's just hare and tortoise stuff. We're also very excited to talk about your new book, 'A Pocketful of Happiness', a memoir. It's quite a personal book.

Richard E Grant

Thank you. Yes, it came about because on New Years Day, at the beginning of this year, I posted something on-, I posted a video on social media in which I had said that my late wife had said to me four days before she died at the end of September 2021, 'I know that you'll be sad, but try and find a pocketful of happiness in each day.' And that really has been a, sort of, what do you call, a Hallmark card, corny as it may sound, my daughter and I have found it really useful to try and get over the canyon of grief that you have to navigate your way through on a daily basis to find something that is going to make you happy. So, you guys are my pocketful today so far.

James Acaster

Ed is.

Ed Gamble

No pressure. Yes, I'm the pocketful of happiness.

Richard E Grant

Yes, so it's a memoir that begins with when she was diagnosed and ends when she died, and then see-saws back in time to how we first met and our combined careers over 40 years, so lots of showbiz stuff in amongst all the other.

James Acaster

Wow, and did you find that writing it, sometimes that was the-, the little bit of happiness you found each day was writing about that memory?

Richard E Grant

Well, when my literary agent called and said at the beginning of January that a publisher had asked if I would write a memoir I immediately said no, and then my daughter wisely said, 'I think that this will help you, because it will force you to get out of your own head and going down the rabbit hole of grief', and it proved absolutely right. So, i'm very grateful, but I did make a (inaudible 10.56) with her that I said, in order not to jeopardise my relationship with her, my daughter, I would write the whole thing out first, make an agreement with the publisher that I wouldn't take a penny of the advance until my daughter had read it and either vetoed a section or the whole thing. They willingly took that risk, for which I'm very grateful, and she read it, kept me waiting for three days, and I thought bloody hell, because I speak to her twice a day, I've absolutely blobbed, and then she said, 'There's one paragraph that I want changed, because the person who will read it could interpret it in a way that they could see as being critical', so she was protecting somebody, and she said, 'You've got the surname of one of my friends wrong, it's missing an 's'. And that was it, so I thought-



Ed Gamble

That's not bad for notes really, is it? Pretty good.

Richard E Grant

Yes, I was absolutely amazed. So, she said, 'No, you've absolutely captured what your wife (her mum) was like and what your relationship was and all of that stuff and your careers.' So, she said, you know, 'Warts and all, it's good.' So, I got the go ahead from her which is why I'm not sitting here all these months later.

Ed Gamble

Does food ever represent the pocketful of happiness in a day?

Richard E Grant

Oh God, yes, and the first time I mutually seduced my wife and I, when we first met in 1983, she invited me round for dinner because she was an actor, a speech teacher, and I'd done a series of regional accents with her at the Actor's Centre at the end of 1982 after I'd just emigrated from Swaziland and she then said, 'Oh, well, I'm coaching on a play at the Royal Shakespeare Company that requires a SiSwati speaker and you're the only person that I know that speaks SiSwati', which is a click language. So, I went round for dinner and she cooked Beef Bourguignon, which was absolutely delicious and I didn't go home that night, so it began like that. The last meal I cooked for her was chicken soup. So, yes, a life in food, and when I met her I couldn't boil an egg and she gave me-, you know, I'd grown up in the colonies, you didn't need to cook for yourself, you know, the la-di-dah life, so she gave me Delia Smith's How to Cook which tells you how to boil an egg, fry an egg, scramble one, and once you've mastered that I then learnt very quickly how to cook properly, and now love doing it.

James Acaster

Thank you Delia.

Richard E Grant

Thank you Delia.

James Acaster

I need to meet an accent coach.

Richard E Grant

Oh no. Well, you know I had to go to my wife to learn how to do your-, the 'r', the way you do your 'r's, because I played Michael Heseltine in the Iron Lady with Meryl Streep and I had to do the 'r' like you speak.

James Acaster

Like I do, the soft 'r'.

Ed Gamble

He really hams it up though, don't you?

Richard E Grant

Oh, does he?

James Acaster

Yes, well not deliberately. Apparently I do.

Ed Gamble

You do, you really put it on.



James Acaster

Yes, I put it on, I lay it on thick.

Richard E Grant

Do you? What, is it a seduction technique that you use?

James Acaster

Yes, yes, are you feeling seduced?

Richard E Grant

Oh yes, absolutely. Pants off, ready to go.

Ed Gamble

Why do you need to meet an accent coach James?

James Acaster

Because I'm always trying to do accents on the podcast. I'm really interested in, like, any time an actor comes on and can do an accent I'm jealous of them, I want to know how they do it. My brain just doesn't work that way, I can't do other accents, and sometimes I think I just need to sit down with an accent coach, face it head on and actually learn to do some voices besides my own. I really get a kick out of it, that people are going to accent coaches to learn how to speak like me, that's topsy-turvy.

Ed Gamble

I told you, I went to an accent coach once for an American accent and she had me crawling around on the floor?

Richard E Grant

Did she?

Ed Gamble

Yes, she said it's more helpful if you crawl around on the floor. I said, 'Well, that's not going to be very good at the audition.'

Richard E Grant

What was her name?

Ed Gamble

I can't remember, but she had me crawling around on the floor.

James Acaster

Do you think it sounds familiar?

Richard E Grant

No, my late wife was absolutely adamant that you didn't have to lie on the floor and think of Himalayan gusts coming up your sphincter and, you know, thinking of Auntie Muriel to try and reach an American accent. She gave you very specific practical things to do, which is why she was so successful. So, you've just pointed out exactly the kind of accent guru bollocks that goes on in the profession. I have the same wariness of people who say, 'I'm a very spiritual person, what's your star sign?' And the combination of those two things usually has me, A, lying and then running for the door.

James Acaster

So, we always start on the dream menu with still or sparkling water?



Richard E Grant

Sparkling water please, ice cold with a glass full of ice and I don't care how much water there is in there, but it has to be ice cold every day of the year.

James Acaster

Yes?

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

If it's not ice cold is it repulsive to you?

Richard E Grant

Yes, repulsive. Everything has to be ice cold.

James Acaster

And you want it in ice cubes, crushed ice?

Richard E Grant

I don't care, as long as it's absolutely, brain freezingly ice cold.

James Acaster

Are you taking your time, or do you go really fast and actually give yourself brain freeze?

Richard E Grant

Oh, I'll do whichever.

James Acaster

If there's seagulls nearby.

Richard E Grant

Yes, I'm very greedy. Yes, I might clock the seagull with an ice cube.

Ed Gamble

Now, I don't know much about seagulls, I know they nick chips, I've never seen one go after someone's sparkling water.

Richard E Grant

No, even if it's blobbing about with ice. I don't think so, yes you're right.

James Acaster

That's funny, you don't ever see them clocking a bit of sparkling water.

Ed Gamble

Chasing someone with a Perrier down Brighton beach.

Richard E Grant

Have you two ever had a big fight?

James Acaster

Like an argument?

Richard E Grant

Yes.



Ed Gamble

No I don't think so.

James Acaster

No I don't think we have.

Richard E Grant

Wow.

James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

That means there's one coming, right?

Richard E Grant

No, no I think that's wonderful that you-

James Acaster

I think we're quite good at seeing when one is potentially going to happen and then the one-, I think we've been lucky that we haven't both been wound up about something at the same time and therefore an argument. I think it's been, like, one of us will be angry and not the other, and the other one goes, 'I'm going to walk away from this.'

Richard E Grant

And do you never-, do you socialise outside of podcast land?

Ed Gamble

Yes, all the time.

Richard E Grant

Oh, you do? I was always amazed by I.A.L Diamond and Billy Wilder, you know, who wrote Some Like it Hot and Sons of Boulevard, all those movies, they used to meet in an office I think at 8'o'clock in the morning for something like 40 or 50 years and then would leave at 5'o'clock in the evening and they never, ever socialised. They never even went into each other's houses, and they produced this great stuff. So, I wondered whether you-, but you obviously live in each other's houses.

Ed Gamble

Well, we don't spend enough time together working for that to be necessary I think, because you hear about people who spend, like, you know, like Penn and Teller who are on tour all the time, but they won't speak to each other outside of the show, they'll literally just walk on stage and that's the first time they will have seen each other all day.

Richard E Grant

Oh, I didn't know that.

Ed Gamble

Apparently yes, and I think Cannon and Ball were like that towards the end as well.

Richard E Grant

Can you blame them?



Ed Gamble

But that's a lot of time you're spending with someone professionally, whereas we every now and again get together and do a day where we do four podcasts, and then most of the time we spend together is social.

James Acaster

Yes, most of it.

Richard E Grant

And do you have partners?

James Acaster

We do, yes.

Ed Gamble

Both got partners, yes.

Richard E Grant

You do, and how do they cope with your friendship?

James Acaster

They love it.

Richard E Grant

They do?

James Acaster

Well, I don't know.

Ed Gamble

We're all big pals together.

James Acaster

I can speak on behalf of my partner, she's all for it.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and mine, yes she's-

James Acaster

I don't want to put words in your partner's mouth. Why do you think our friendship would be a problem to our partners?

Richard E Grant

I don't know. You know, some people can be threatened or feel left out, I've no idea.

James Acaster

Yes, I'm not very threatening I think.

Richard E Grant

I've just met you, so I'm just asking. I'm curious.

Ed Gamble

He's not a threat to anyone this guy.



Richard E Grant

And because of doing this, do you know exactly what the other person doesn't like? What's the thing that you hate eating most?

Ed Gamble

There's not a lot of things.

James Acaster

He hates Yorkshire puddings.

Richard E Grant

Yorkshire puddings, you don't like them?

Ed Gamble

Yes, but sometimes I really, sort of, amp that up, because it annoys people a lot Richard.

Richard E Grant

Right. Why-, what is it? Is it the puffiness of them?

Ed Gamble

Puffiness, I just find they're quite plain, I don't think they've got much flavour and, he's going to get angry, this annoys him, they take up a lot of real estate on the plate.

Richard E Grant

They do.

James Acaster

Bollocks, because you can put stuff in it -

Richard E Grant

Yours is Yorkshire puddings, what's your hate?

James Acaster

Fennel, I hate fennel. I hate pomegranate seeds.

Richard E Grant

Wow.

James Acaster

Yes, both of those are the most disgusting, they're the gruesome twosome.

Richard E Grant

That's what I feel about chocolate and cheese.

James Acaster

Oh yes, together?

Richard E Grant

Oh, in either-, any combination. The smell and the taste of them, absolutely abhorrent.

James Acaster

Now you're winding up both of us.

Ed Gamble

You're kidding?



Richard E Grant:

No, no, no, it's absolutely true.

James Acaster

Ed loves cheese, I love chocolate.

Richard E Grant

A tiny bit of parmesan cheese on a Caesar salad is about as close as I can get to that smell of arse that it has. Goat's cheese is the worst.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, I back you. I'm backing this.

Ed Gamble

These are the two finest things available, chocolate and cheese.

James Acaster

Chocolate is, not cheese.

Richard E Grant

No.

Ed Gamble

The taste of luxury.

Richard E Grant

No, I think anything that has come out of an udder should go back in there, seriously.

James Acaster

Do you think you could put a block of cheese back in an udder? Would you give it a go?

Richard E Grant

I'd like to yes, with a machete and a seagull to go with it.

James Acaster

That's a weird looking udder when you see that cow walking around the field, very lumpy.

Ed Gamble

Squawking. Why is that udder squawking?

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread, Richard E Grant? Poppadoms or bread?

Richard E Grant

Bread. Bread every-, I suffer from misophonia.

Ed Gamble

Oh, you don't like the sound of it.

Richard E Grant

Yes, which was identified 20 years ago officially.

James Acaster

Sorry to immediately make the sound then.



Richard E Grant

Yes, so the sound of a poppadom being crunched near you literally brings the red mist of rage over my-, I wish I didn't suffer from this, but I do, so the sound of a poppadom is unacceptable.

Ed Gamble

So, is all of your menu going to be quite soft foods?

Richard E Grant

You mean old aged foods that you don't need teeth for - No, but if I eat an apple I will go and eat it in a corner on my own, so that I don't have to infringe that noise on somebody else close by, because I know what that does to me if someone is doing it close to me.

Ed Gamble

Oh that's nice. I've never met a, sort of, empathetic misophone before.

Richard E Grant

Are you a misophone?

Ed Gamble

No, but it's always about-, when anyone talks about it, it's always about what it sounds like to them and how it makes them feel. I've never met anyone who's gone, 'And I also don't want anyone else to hear that.' So, you have to privately crunch your foods.

Richard E Grant

Yes, yes. No, I'll go and sit in the front row of the cinema on my own with a box of popcorn, because I know that the sound of that is-, it's only I will be hearing how awful that sound is, because if I'm in there and anybody else is doing it I'm (talking over each other 20.38).

Ed Gamble

So, does the sound of yourself eating make you feel weird?

Richard E Grant

I get used to it, because greed overtakes the misophonia part of it, but yes I find that even crunching toast I think, 'God, can't you just do it-, ' This is the one time I wish that I could be deaf, so that I couldn't hear the sound of it.

James Acaster

- one of your own film premiers and you're just sat at the front on your own and everyone else is at the back, and you're there eating popcorn on your own at your own film premiere.

Richard E Grant

No, you go at the beginning to do the press stuff, because you're required to do that in your contract and then you don't stay and watch it.

James Acaster

I've noticed that. Sometimes I've gone to watch a film at a film premiere and been excited and everyone's there at the front, all the stars are here, and then they all leave out of the fire escape and you're like, 'What the? Chalamet, where are you going?'

Richard E Grant

I know very few actors that like watching themselves in stuff. The only analogy I have is that unless you are a voyeur would you want to watch a replay of yourself having sex, because it's the actor doing it that is pleasurable, you know, it's the making of the movie or whatever you're doing, but having to rewatch it afterwards you'd go, 'Oh my God, is that what it looks like? Is that what it-, oh no', so it's gruesome.



James Acaster

Looks like he's just had a Beef Bourguignon.

Richard E Grant

Yes, exactly, exactly.

James Acaster

I can't watch this.

Richard E Grant

Exactly, exactly right.

Ed Gamble

So, is an actor who enjoys watching their own stuff a red flag?

Richard E Grant

No, because that's passing judgement on somebody. I don't know, because some people, I'm sure there will be critics out there who'll say, 'Well, that's your problem, you should have been watching yourself to improve.' I don't know, no it's the actor doing it that's-

Ed Gamble

I think comics have a similar thing, right?

James Acaster

Yes, I can't-, if I'm literally putting out a comedy special I can watch it during the edit, watch the final version once and then I'm never watching it again, and that's the most I'll ever watch myself, is when I'm literally putting the thing out and releasing it and having to make sure it's good.

Richard E Grant

And what does it make you feel when you watch it for that final time?

James Acaster

That's relief, because that's like, 'Okay, I've got it. I've got it edited the way I want it, it's fine.' But if I watched it one more time after that when it's finished I would just be like, 'Shut up you boring wanker.'

Richard E Grant

Yes, get the machete out.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, get the machete through the TV, that's it.

Richard E Grant

Whereas you love watching yourself over and over, do you?

Ed Gamble

I love watching myself. When I watch James I think, 'Shut up, you boring wanker.'

James Acaster

Often that's the bit we have to edit out in the special, that's why I'm editing it.

Richard E Grant

So, it's the yin-yang of your relationship.



Ed Gamble

No, I can't bear it either.

Richard E Grant

Oh, you can't?

Ed Gamble

It's easier when you're watching it for an edit or something, because you're in another brain, it's almost like you're not watching yourself, you're just watching it for the edit. I would never, certainly for pleasure, never watch anything I'm involved in and a lot of people would agree.

James Acaster

Poor Benito here has to edit this and at some point in the future he's going to be sitting there editing a conversation about editing and that is going to be quite the day for him.

Richard E Grant

So, you're just sitting here waiting, getting the scissors in between the bits where there's big gappy pauses and thinking, 'Get the fuck a move on.'

Ed Gamble

A good plate of bread at the beginning of a meal and you know the rest of the meal is going to be good.

Richard E Grant

Oh yes.

Ed Gamble

Warm, got to be warm.

Richard E Grant

Warm, olive oil.

Ed Gamble

Olive oil, is that what you'd go for?

Richard E Grant

Yes, I don't eat butter, so olive oil yes.

James Acaster

Are you dipping it?

Richard E Grant

Oh, dipping it in so that it all absorbs. Nothing like good bread.

James Acaster

Balsamic there as well, or are you just keeping it at olive oil?

Richard E Grant

Yes, I can have some of that too, but I like it just olive oil straight up.

James Acaster

It's not essential.

Richard E Grant

No, it's not essential. Not even the olive oil is essential.



James Acaster
Just the lovely bread.

Richard E Grant
Yes, lovely bread.

James Acaster
Your dream starter?

Richard E Grant
A bowl of linguine with fresh white crab meat, medium chilli, coriander, lemon and olive oil.

Ed Gamble
No enough people use the pasta as a starter hack. I love it when it comes out to play.

Richard E Grant
Well, you know when you go to Italy they give you a starter sized bowl, you never get this mountain of food that you get in an English restaurant where there's so much pasta that you then have to go and get into a bed for half an hour. Yes, it just gives you enough to-, you know, five or six mouthfuls to get you ready for the main course.

James Acaster
Well of course, here you're really lining up the seagull with the crab meat, you better get that machete, you better be fast with that machete.

Richard E Grant
Yes, absolutely. But if you have one of those-, because it was in England and you had one of those heater things nearby, you could always just thwack it towards the heater. I'm going to have animal rights people coming after me. I love seagulls, I love birds.

Ed Gamble
We're talking about a specific seagull who is not a good egg, this guy.

James Acaster
This is a fictional seagull who very aggressively wants all of your food.

Richard E Grant
Yes, the Don Colleoni of seagulls.

James Acaster
Yes, so I think it's fine to whack it up into a heater.

Ed Gamble
I think it would be interesting if the seagull got into your crab spaghetti, because I don't think-, could you suck spaghetti through a beak?

James Acaster
Oh yes, it would be interesting to see.

Richard E Grant
Oh yes, yes they could.

James Acaster
You reckon?



Richard E Grant

Yes, I think it's possible.

James Acaster

Do you think if Lady and the Tramp was about seagulls, do you think that that scene would work?

Richard E Grant

I don't think so, no.

Ed Gamble

They can't kiss, can they?

James Acaster

They can't kiss, because it would just click. They'd just clack beaks back and forth. So, yes the spaghetti itself it would be quite difficult, they'd have to do a lot of takes to get that, I think, with the spaghetti slurping.

Ed Gamble

Is this something that you cook yourself at home?

Richard E Grant

Yes, regularly.

Ed Gamble: And is the dream meal the one that you've cooked?

Richard E Grant

No, I'd have somebody else cook it for me.

Ed Gamble

Do you make the pasta from fresh?

Richard E Grant

No.

James Acaster

The crab meat, are you using-, is there a place you go to for your crab meat?

Richard E Grant

Yes, there's a great fishmonger called Sandy's run by a guy called Stewart in Twickenham which is about three or four miles away from where I live in Richmond, and he has absolutely amazing white crab meat.

James Acaster

So, you make the trek for it, get it back. Richmond's a lovely part of town.

Ed Gamble

So beautiful.

James Acaster

Ever see Ted Lasso being filmed?

Richard E Grant

No, I haven't. No, but I know that it's filmed on Richmond Green at the cricketer's pub.



James Acaster

I bet if you just walked over there one day while they were filming and went, 'Hello, I'm Richard E Grant, Oscar nominated actor, do you mind if I get in this scene?'

Richard E Grant

Oh, flatterer.

James Acaster

I bet they'd go, 'Yes, alright.'

Richard E Grant

It's a weird thing, I don't know whether you feel this, but when you see other people filming stuff there's always a feeling of, 'Why am I not in that? Have I been excluded?' So, you don't feel like you're worthy enough to go and show your face.

Ed Gamble

If you see it happening you're clearly not busy that day and they didn't do an availability check.

Richard E Grant

Yes, when you see that somebody has sold out Wembley Stadium or the O2 and their name is taller than this building, does that make you want to run in and go, 'Yes, I must see this stand-up?'

James Acaster

No, luckily it's a very bad venue.

Richard E Grant

Is the right answer.

James Acaster

So, I think, 'What a sucker, what an absolute sucker.'

Richard E Grant

I can't get over the courage that you must have to be able to stand up and make people laugh, because there's no in between. You know, as an actor you think if you're doing a drama and it's really quite you're hoping that they're blubbing their eyes out or are so moved, but if it's a comedy and there's no response you know that you've died, don't you.

James Acaster

Yes, but then we've got the opposite, where we desperately need that response from them to let us know it's going well and if I was ever doing serious acting on stage I would be terrified every time they're not, if I was doing a serious bit, I would have no gauge to know if that-, I wouldn't have the thing of, like, oh I trust that they're feeling emotional during this, I would just be like, 'I'm taking, this is going bad', because I need that reassurance from them.

Richard E Grant

Yes, but have you ever been and done your-, and then there's been no response?

James Acaster

Every time I've done anything, like a wedding speech, and I'm doing a serious bit within the speech where it's a heartfelt bit about how much I love my friend, and obviously that's not engineered to get laughs at all, so I say the bit and I just feel like now I just want to jump out of a window.

Richard E Grant

No, what I'm asking is, have you-, where something is obviously engineered to get a laugh and you get no laugh, there's tumble-weed, how does that-, has that ever happened to you?



James Acaster

Yes, constantly, on a weekly basis and it feels horrible every time.

Richard E Grant

Horrible.

Ed Gamble

Really mortifying, you feel so embarrassed, you can't believe you're up there doing it, 'Why am I doing this, I clearly can't.'

Richard E Grant

So, what keeps you doing it?

James Acaster

I've got no place else to go.

Richard E Grant

There's nowhere else to go.

James Acaster

Yes, we've made our own beds now haven't we.

Ed Gamble

Yes, also we've been doing it long enough and have had enough good nights to realise that they all weren't flukes.

James Acaster

And you want to improve as well. I don't know, I think the thing that means you keep doing it is that I would like to get better and so I keep on going back to try and improve.

Richard E Grant

And what do you think about the sell-by date of a comedian?

James Acaster

It's short.

Richard E Grant

I've been friends with Steve Martin for over 30 years since working on LA Story and he said, in his opinion, very often people's careers, and especially in comedy, are over five years before the person realises that it's over, and that gave me a, sort of, pube straightening moment of thinking, 'Has my time come and gone?' Do you know what I mean? I just wonder, with comedians, because you will know them and I know you can name them, and of course I'm not going to name them, people who used to be funny who still are doing the same schtick and it's just not so funny any more, or the time has changed -

Ed Gamble

It's interesting, Steve Martin deliberately ended his stand-up career way before that point.

Richard E Grant

Well he said, he told me that, and he's written about it as well, that by the time he got to the stadium shows he was the first comedian that had done stadiums, that the audience knew all his material and were saying it back to him. He said, 'Where do you go from there?' Because it had taken him so many years to get to that point that to then come up with fresh material was just impossible, so he thought it was just better to stop.



James Acaster

Yes. Also, I think that, it's weird, like you say, that it's Steve Martin actually, because I think that shelf-life wise, I remember seeing, is it Paul Kaye, Dennis Pennis?

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

In character.

Richard E Grant

Saying to Steve, 'Didn't you used to be funny?'

James Acaster

Saying to Steve Martin, 'Why aren't you funny anymore?' Yes, or whatever it was.

Richard E Grant

It was in 1991 at the premiere of LA Story.

James Acaster

Right, whereas now, yesterday, I was speaking to someone and they were going, 'You've got to watch Only Murders in the Building, it's so good, it's so funny.' So, like, you know, I guess it doesn't mean that you're done done. You can go through phases of going, 'I need to pick this back up, I need to get back in touch with this', and him and Martin Short now are just incredible. They were before, it ebbs and flows. You know, hopefully Ed that's our careers.

Ed Gamble

Well, it's just like food, the sell-by date of comedians, you just ignore it and then hope it's fine in a couple of weeks.

Richard E Grant

Take it out of the fridge, take the sticker off and go, 'This is delicious. It's a strange colour.'

Ed Gamble

My career in a few years, I'm just going to scrap the mould off and keep going.

Richard E Grant

You heard it here, keep that in.

James Acaster

Your dream main course, Richard E Grant? Your dream main course? You've had this lovely linguine starter.

Richard E Grant

A barbecue seafood platter of lobster, giant prawns from Mozambique or Madagascar, and squid. Just those three ingredients covered in garlic butter. Is that alright?

James Acaster

Yes, but I'm just picturing this seagull. It's going insane.

Richard E Grant

Well, you take the lobsters out and you put the shell on the edge of the platter and then, you know, it can come and take that, because he'd be attracted by the bright pink colour.



James Acaster

Keep it busy with the lobster shell.

Richard E Grant

Exactly.

Ed Gamble

That's not going to work for long though is it, with the prawns sat there and the squid, he's going to be straight back over.

James Acaster

Yes, like, 'Thought you could trick me? I'm the seagull man.'

Ed Gamble

That does sound absolutely amazing.

Richard E Grant

Good.

James Acaster

Yes, nice, simple, not doing too much with it, garlic butter, you've barbecued them, but it's not too much, it's just quality.

Richard E Grant

A bowl of lemon to squeeze, you know, oh and some lemon mayonnaise, home-made.

James Acaster

Oh, home-made by yourself, by your own hands?

Richard E Grant

Yes, nothing like it. It beats Hellmann's and all those other ones into a corked jar.

James Acaster

Have you got a secret to making the best lemon mayonnaise?

Richard E Grant

Just put lots of lemon in it.

James Acaster

Oh yes, secret ingredient is lemon. That's a real hack.

Richard E Grant

Yes, lemon, egg yolk, Dijon mustard and just go for it.

Ed Gamble

How are you eating all of this stuff?

Richard E Grant

With your hands?

Ed Gamble

Is it with hands? Is it a bib, are you wearing a bib?

Richard E Grant

Oh yes.



James Acaster

What does the bib say on it, 'hungry boy'?

Richard E Grant

Hungry boy, yes, Swazi boy eats here.

James Acaster

Getting in with your hands, and are you going back and forth between the different meats, or are you one at a time, are you that kind of person?

Richard E Grant

Oh, I'm not fussy in that way. I'm just very, very greedy, I just have my hands on the whole lot.

James Acaster

A tornado.

Richard E Grant

Yes, a tornado.

James Acaster

All of it one by one. Are there any actors that you've been doing films with and then you've gone to eat together and that you would share a meal like with this ever? Have you ever taken-,

Richard E Grant

I wouldn't share with them.

Ed Gamble

Come on, let's not bring that word up.

Richard E Grant

Melissa McCarthy is a fantastic person to eat with.

James Acaster

Do you know what, I was thinking in my head, because I love that film that you did together, 'Can You Ever Forgive Me?'

Richard E Grant

Oh thank you. Yes, she was so generous and funny and all the things that you'd hope that she might be from her screen persona and she loves eating and she loves food, so it's a real delight to eat with her.

James Acaster

Did you have any good meals during the filming of that? Did you get to spend much social time together?

Richard E Grant

Yes, all the time, because we were the only two people, you know, almost all the scenes were between the two of us, but on the morning of the Oscars I'd gone to LA with my daughter and I said-, I called her up the night before and I said, 'This is such an out of body experience being in LA,' and you and Ben Falcone, her husband, and their two daughters, live not in the centre of Los Angeles, they live on the valley side, in Studio City, and I said, 'If I bring all the ingredients can we make scrambled eggs and toast and everything at your house and just have a normal, family day before we have to get dressed and get into a limousine at 2'o'clock in the afternoon?' And she said, 'That's a great idea.' So, that's what we did, we trampolined, I cooked everything, and they had never had



scrambled eggs cooked with olive oil instead of butter and they thought this was a great improvement, so this was a very memorable meal that we had together.

James Acaster

Oh, that's lovely.

Ed Gamble

That's really nice.

Richard E Grant

It normalised everything, because we all-, I mean, the other thing was that we knew that by the time you get-, because you have to leave at 2'o'clock in the afternoon, by the time you get food at 9'o'clock at night you're ravenous. You can't take food into the Kodak Theatre. Both of us knew that we weren't going to win, so we stuffed ourselves to the gunnels on that morning.

James Acaster

You had a wonderful time with the nomination. It was nice to see someone really enjoy just being nominated.

Richard E Grant

How could you not?

James Acaster

Well too many people don't, I'd say -

Richard E Grant

I can't understand that.

James Acaster

People don't seem like they're enjoying it and really going, 'Oh this is great, I've been nominated. This is enough' and, you know, you really-, it was a joy for everyone to see, I think, you enjoy that moment in your career.

Richard E Grant

Well, it was-, you know, I knew that it would never, ever happen again and it was a once in a lifetime chance, so I grabbed every ounce of it that I could and I met everybody that I'd wanted to meet in my whole life, it was brilliant. It was like Madame Tussauds's come to life. I've written about it in my book too, no holds barred about what it's actually like to go there and meet all those people.

Ed Gamble

Who was the person you were most excited to see?

Richard E Grant

Oh, Barbara Streisand of course, because I've been following her career for 53 years and I got to meet her. That felt to me like winning the gold rather than the actual thing that night.

James Acaster

Did she perform at that one, because she's performed at quite a few of the ceremonies?

Richard E Grant

She didn't, no.

James Acaster

So, you got her on a night off, that's good, even better I imagine.



Richard E Grant

I got her on a night off, exactly -

James Acaster

More chatty.

Ed Gamble

You didn't trampoline after the scrambled eggs did you?

Richard E Grant

Yes, we did.

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

Asking for trouble.

Richard E Grant

Yes, surrounded everything, yes.

James Acaster

Eat loads of scrambled eggs, go on a trampoline and then go to the Oscars.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Was it trampolining in the black tie or did you get changed after the trampolining?

Richard E Grant

Oh no, got changed at 12:30 or whatever, because they send round people to dress you and paint your face and do your hair and all of that, so you feel like one of these shop mannequins, they just come and paint you up and you just have to stand still, it's the most bonkers experience I've ever had going to that whole event.

James Acaster

Did you get to some of the after parties afterwards, there must be food there?

Richard E Grant

All of them, yes. It ended up with there was Olivia Coleman and Amy Adams were having a lock-in at Betty Davis' old house and Olivia Coleman came up to me, I've never worked with her, but I've met her a few times, and she came up at the Vanity Fair party and she said-, slipped a note in my hand and she said, 'We're having a lock-in, this is the address, get the driver who's brought you here to go there.' So, we went there at about, I don't know, midnight and crawled out of there at dawn. We all to to hold Olivia's Oscar and she had karaoke and I can remember singing David Bowie's Life on Mars with enormous passion and gusto and my daughter, I just looked around, my daughter just had her head in her hands in deepest shame and she said, 'Oh my God, thank God this is a lock-in, that nobody-, if this iPhone footage of this ever appears anywhere I will disown you as my father.' It has yet to appear. Yes, so that's how the night ended, it began with scrambled eggs at Melissa's house in the morning, and lock-ins doing karaoke with Olivia Coleman and Amy Adams.

James Acaster

That is a good day.



Richard E Grant

Yes, it was a really good day.

Ed Gamble

No matter what happens in the middle that is a good day.

Richard E Grant

And I had a fourteen minute conversation with Barbara Streisand in the middle of it at the governor's ball, so win, win, win, win, win. So, who's the-, you've asked me who was the person that you were most excited to meet, who out of both of you is the person that you either want to meet, or have met that you've thought, 'Wow, I can go to my grave now.'

James Acaster

I don't know, for ages on the pod it was Ainsley, right, we wanted to get Ainsley on the pod.

Ed Gamble

Ainsley Harriot was our dream guest for a long time.

James Acaster

Yes, Ainsley was, tick.

Richard E Grant

Both of you?

James Acaster

Yes, we wanted Ainsley on the pod. I think in terms of, like, outside of the-,

Richard E Grant

Did Ainsley deliver?

James Acaster

Oh yes, did he ever.

Ed Gamble

He knows what he's there for. He brings it, he brings Ainsley.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, it was recorded delivery.

Richard E Grant

So, there's nobody left now, there's nobody that you have your sights on?

James Acaster

We haven't replaced the wishlist.

Ed Gamble

Kathy Burke and The Rock.

James Acaster

Oh yes, we've been trying to get Kathy Burke since day one.

Richard E Grant

And why won't she do it? She's a brilliant guest.



James Acaster

I mean, she's amazing isn't she?

Richard E Grant

Amazing.

James Acaster

Some people just don't have the time, they can't make it work date wise, who knows? But we've never-, yes, I mean The Rock. Kathy Burke and The Rock. If ever a film came out and the two leads were Kathy Burke and The Rock I think I would pre-order it on Blu-ray without even seeing it.

Richard E Grant

So, you would like Kathy Burke and The Rock in here.

James Acaster

At the same time, and then -

Ed Gamble

I'd be happy to take them separately.

James Acaster

Yes, but maybe on a day like today where we're doing a bunch in a row, having them back to back so they can meet each other, because sometimes you have guests who are back to back and they do meet each other, one on the way in, one on the way out, and it's quite nice to see Jack McBrayer meet Rose McGowan for the first time, and it's quite nice to be present at that. So, you know, I'd like them back to back, The Rock meets Kathy Burke, see them have that conversation, then my life would be complete.

Richard E Grant

So, if I can persuade Kathy Burke to come on here, I don't know The Rock, what would I get in return?

Ed Gamble

Probably some sort of plaque -

Richard E Grant

Yes, Ben the producer is nodding with his headphones on.

James Acaster

I was going to say we'd make sure that Richard gets his dream meal for real.

Ed Gamble

Oh yes.

Richard E Grant

Okay, that's a deal, without the seagull.

James Acaster: Yes, without the seagull, but we could make sure you get -

Richard E Grant

This is where we're invisibly shaking hands on that.

James Acaster

Yes, Ainsley will cook it for you, it's done.



Ed Gamble

And you can have a plaque as well.

Richard E Grant

Okay.

James Acaster

Yes, a bit of everything. Let's get onto your dream side dish. You've got all this lovely seafood, a barbecue seafood platter, what are you having on the side?

Richard E Grant

A big tub of home-made mayonnaise which I've already mentioned, that's a side dish.

James Acaster

So, the side is the big tub of mayonnaise?

Richard E Grant

Yes, you don't need anything else.

James Acaster

Absolutely fair enough.

Ed Gamble

A big tub of mayonnaise.

James Acaster

A big tub of mayonnaise, just stinking in the sun.

Ed Gamble

There's just something so luxurious and then quite carnal as well of getting a big bit of lobster and-

Richard E Grant

Taking a whole lobster out of the shell and then dunking it into that big bowl of lemon mayonnaise, just dumping it in, Maldon salt sprinkled on top of it and then stuffing it. I've got a bag of it in my pocket which I keep with me at all times.

James Acaster

Sorry?

Richard E Grant

Maldon salt.

James Acaster

Oh, I thought it was the mayonnaise. I thought it was the lemon mayonnaise you had a yellow bag of. Just for the listener, that is a-, that bag, what is that made of, the bag, what material?

Richard E Grant

Oh, it's a calico bag with the Union Jack.

James Acaster

It has the Union Jack on it and it's full of salt that you always carry around in your pocket.

Richard E Grant

Everywhere, because any restaurant, anybody's house that I've ever been into, they all say, 'Oh no, it's all salted in advance.' Believe me, it never has enough for me, so I always put more on.



James Acaster

When you were chatting to Barbara Streisand was the bag of salt in your pocket?

Richard E Grant

It was, yes.

James Acaster

That's great.

Richard E Grant

It was, because we'd just been at the governor's ball dinner and so yes, it was there, indeed.

James Acaster

So, it was always there, all night long.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

Oh man, I love that.

Ed Gamble

There's some places if you walk in and say you've got a bag of salt in your pocket they're going to really misinterpret what you mean by that Richard.

James Acaster

Especially in some showbiz circles.

Richard E Grant

Yes, well I'd been through the airport, you know, the hand luggage, and you have to explain what these white crystals are in there. I should have shares in Maldon salt, honestly.

Ed Gamble

Maldon's gold standard stuff.

Richard E Grant

Gold standard.

Ed Gamble

We've both really got into Halen Mon as well, which is a fantastic Welsh salt.

Richard E Grant

Oh, I don't know about that one.

James Acaster

Yes, I think you would enjoy that Richard, it's very, very good.

Ed Gamble

I don't know how dedicated you are to the Maldon brand.

Richard E Grant

Oh, completely. I should have shares in it, the amount of money I've spent on it. The Welsh one is called what?



Ed Gamble
Halen Mon.

Richard E Grant
Halen Mon, can you say that with a Welsh accent?

Ed Gamble
No, I'd need a coach.

Richard E Grant
Okay, Halen Mon -

Ed Gamble
Let me get on the floor and I can do it for you.

Richard E Grant
Okay.

James Acaster
Well let's go onto your dream drink, then. Your dream drink to go with this meal.

Ed Gamble
Just resisting doing any Withnail -

Richard E Grant
Freshly squeezed orange juice and a glass of ice.

James Acaster
There's so many Withnail quotes for this.

Ed Gamble
Yes.

James Acaster
Yes, yes, obviously. Sorry, we were too busy thinking about Withnail, we didn't listen to you.

Richard E Grant
A glass of fresh orange juice, fresh squeezed orange juice, and a glass of ice.

James Acaster
Oh lovely.

Richard E Grant
Yes, so very cheap.

James Acaster
Why are they separate, in this case?

Richard E Grant
Because if you order-, I always ask for the glass of ice separately in a restaurant because otherwise, they'll give you the glass with the ice already in it with about a thimbleful of orange juice, or whatever the drink is. Whereas if it's separate, you get the full glass, and then you can make it as cold as you want.



James Acaster

As you go.

Richard E Grant

Yes, and it's not diluted by the time it's come from the bar to you by ice and water and all of that. So, that's why.

James Acaster

Lovely, and it's freshly squeezed.

Richard E Grant

Yes, always.

James Acaster

So, where's the-, because, like, there was a place. You know the orange-, right. Oh, here's something I don't think we've spoken about on the podcast.

Richard E Grant

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

That I'm quite excited to speak about, but maybe we have spoken about it. There are some places that have an orange juicing machine-,

Richard E Grant:

Yes.

James Acaster

That looks like a Willy Wonka contraption.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

Where it's, like, being flipped, it's like a Wallace & Gromit thing.

Richard E Grant

Absolutely, it's - . They cost a fortune.

James Acaster

All round, and that is the best orange juice.

Richard E Grant

It is the best orange juice.

James Acaster

I love it.

Richard E Grant

And I know because I did a documentary series called Hotel Secrets for Sky Atlantic about ten years ago, and I stayed at The Gritti Palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, and they took me into the kitchen, because I said, this is the best fresh orange juice I'd ever drunk.

James Acaster

Wow.



Richard E Grant

And they said, 'This is the machine,' and it was exactly what you've just described.

James Acaster

I love those things.

Richard E Grant

With all the gestures too, which, you know, listeners can't actually see.

James Acaster

Yes, I remember the first time seeing that, it's a place near Finsbury Park. Josh Widdicombe, he's a fantastic comic, you've probably heard of him.

Richard E Grant

Yes, I know who he is.

James Acaster

We both lived round there as open spots, and we'd go to this café to write together every time and try and figure out how to be funny, and they had one of those machines there. I remember seeing that machine for the first time and we were going, 'I bet the orange juice is shit from there. It's all bells and whistles, it's all just a big-,'

Ed Gamble

That's what I thought, I'll be honest.

James Acaster

All theatrics, it's going to bad.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

Had a glass there once, absolutely blew my mind. So happy.

Richard E Grant

Yes, Rolls Royce.

James Acaster

Didn't write any material that day. Should've.

Richard E Grant

Exactly.

James Acaster

Should have, I could have used it now.

Richard E Grant

But you're so full of vitamin C.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard E Grant

That's the secret of your beautiful skin.



James Acaster

Yes, exactly.

Richard E Grant

Orange juice.

Ed Gamble

You could have done a bit about those machines. That's a very you bit to do.

James Acaster

Yes, I think I was worried that not enough people would know the Wallace & Gromit orange juice machines, but, you know, maybe. Maybe now is the time.

Ed Gamble

Are you squeezing at home?

Richard E Grant

Yes, I have.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard E Grant

I am squeezing one out at home.

Ed Gamble

What are you using to squeeze? Because you don't have one of the contraptions, do you Richard?

Richard E Grant

No. I've got one of those that cost about £5.99 from Robert Dyas. The little white thing and you just, you know, you press the orange on the top of it and it goes, 'Brr' and it squeezes everything out of it.

Ed Gamble

It's good, that -

James Acaster

- sound itself.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

That's good.

Richard E Grant

Yes, because then you get everything out.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

My dad bought me a juicer but it's one of those ones that's just more like an ornament. I don't think we've ever used it. It's like-,



Richard E Grant

Oh, yes.

Ed Gamble

Stainless steel, like, Yes, yes exactly, on the-,

Richard E Grant

Looks like a sculpture.

Ed Gamble

Looks like a sculpture of a rocket.

Richard E Grant: Yes, and the juice runs down the legs.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard E Grant

Yes it's a whole lot of bollocks, it's pointless

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard E Grant

Looks nice.

Ed Gamble

It looks lovely, yes.

James Acaster

I love the press, like, when you squeeze something like that citrusy fruit, the smell, the immediate smell.

Ed Gamble

Oh.

Richard E Grant

Oh, nothing like it.

James Acaster

It's so good.

Richard E Grant

So I assume you would choose alcohol for your dream drink?

James Acaster

I guess I would. But listen, this is the first time we've had orange juice on the podcast as the dream drink.

Richard E Grant

Oh yes?

James Acaster

Which is exciting. I mean, you're right in assuming, a lot of people choose booze. Some people don't, but, like, we haven't had a lovely freshly squeezed orange juice before, and I think a lot of



people listening to this are going to feel seen, because I think it's-, it is a hugely popular drink, but it's never been represented on this pod. Anything you want to say to all the orange juice heads out there?

Richard E Grant

Squeeze on baby. Squeeze me until my pips squeak.

James Acaster

So, we arrive at your dream dessert.

Richard E Grant

Christmas pudding.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Straight in.

Richard E Grant

Straight in.

Ed Gamble

No messing around.

Richard E Grant

Christmas pudding, yes.

James Acaster

This is my dad's dream dessert.

Richard E Grant

Yes, I eat once a month, because in January, they are literally throwing them outside stores on sales. They're giving them away, because nobody wants them.

James Acaster

Yes, -

Richard E Grant

So, I have-, yes, I've got an enormous supply of them. I've got a pantry, and I eat them once a month. I have to ration myself, because otherwise, I would be the size of-,

James Acaster

Father Christmas.

Richard E Grant

Yes, exactly, Father Christmas. I think there's nothing like a Christmas pudding. It divides people, there are many people who loathe it.

James Acaster

I love Christmas pudding.

Ed Gamble

I've come to like it. I don't think I liked it when I was younger, and now I absolutely love it.



James Acaster

I'm glad I didn't like it when I was younger -

Richard E Grant

It's food of the gods, yes.

James Acaster

I'm glad I've been able to appreciate it more now.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

I hope that continues for the rest of my life. I - food that I think is garbage now that I like in ten years' time. I don't want to-, otherwise I would have been so bored, man.

Richard E Grant

Yes, twenty years ago, I belonged to The Pudding Club of England.

James Acaster

God bless you Richard

Richard E Grant

Where you would meet once a month and then they would just bring out, you know, a tiny amount of food at the beginning as a starter, and then platters of bread and butter pudding, Queen's pudding, toad in the hole, all of those. Sticky toffee pudding, and you would just eat that. Gorge on it.

James Acaster

Well, where do I join that club?

Richard E Grant

It's the best.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard E Grant

I'm sure you can go online and find it.

James Acaster

How have they not reached out to me?

Richard E Grant

I don't know.

James Acaster

I should be the president.

Richard E Grant

You should be.

James Acaster

I love it. Are you having custard or brandy butter or double cream? What are you having with this?



Richard E Grant

No dairy, no custard, no double cream.

Ed Gamble

Of course.

Richard E Grant

Absolutely revolting.

Ed Gamble

Brandy olive oil?

Richard E Grant

No brandy, allergic to alcohol, but lychee sorbet.

Ed Gamble

Oh my-,

Richard E Grant

To just make it-,

James Acaster

Wow.

Richard E Grant

Just bring in a little bit of cold and something slightly acidic against that incredible, rich, dark, delicious fruit of the gods, yes.

James Acaster

Ed's dad-, so I believe-,

Ed Gamble

And now me, this is something I do now.

James Acaster

And now Ed, and now me because Ed's told us on-, I believe, though I might be wrong here, that Sue Perkins chose Christmas pudding as her dream dessert.

Richard E Grant

Did she?

Ed Gamble

Your memory is mad, that you can remember that.

James Acaster

If I've remembered that right.

Richard E Grant

Sue Perkins, wow.

James Acaster

I might have mis-, did she?

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

Yes, she did.

Richard E Grant

She's a goddess.

James Acaster

So, Sue Perkins chose Christmas pudding. During that episode, Ed said that his dad-, and he's passed this down to Ed, will, on Boxing Day, probably a few days afterwards as well, just cut up rectangles of Christmas pudding and fry them in butter and eat them.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

At the time, my girlfriend had made a massive Christmas pudding at Christmas and bought a Marks and Spencer's massive Christmas pudding as a backup in case that one didn't work, and then we went somewhere else for Christmas to a different relative's, and had two massive Christmas puddings. So, by March, or whenever we were doing the Sue Perkins interview, I still had loads of Christmas pudding. Ed said that, made me go, 'I've got to try that now,' and then I think every day for too long, I was frying Christmas pudding in butter and eating it.

Ed Gamble

Fried Christmas pudding. It's just glorious.

Richard E Grant

It is one of the greatest, but my problem is that I've never managed-, I have at other people's houses, but if I've had Christmas pudding at home, I've eaten the whole thing, so there's never been leftovers to then fry up. But I know exactly what you're talking about, because I've had it at other people's houses.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It's so good.

Richard E Grant

Oh, food of the gods.

James Acaster

Have you had one this month yet?

Richard E Grant

No, I haven't, I'm having it at the end of the month.

James Acaster

So, it's always the end of the month?

Richard E Grant

Yes.

Ed Gamble

How does it feel eating Christmas pudding, say, in July or August?



Richard E Grant

Glorious. Absolutely perfect.

Ed Gamble

In a heatwave?

Richard E Grant

No, no problem whatsoever. It's like drinking something ice cold, you know, in the middle of deepest, coldest January. It's no problem for me.

James Acaster

Yes, I've found that. I found eating that Christmas pudding in the middle of the year actually made me feel even better.

Ed Gamble

Yes, -

Richard E Grant

It's a mugful of happiness. You just feel so good.

James Acaster

And you're like, 'No one tells me what I can and can't do.'

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

These are my rules.

Richard E Grant

Yes, and there's something, sort of, almost indecently pleasurable about the fact that you're doing it at the time of the year when you're not supposed to be doing it. You know, even though I've been doing it once a month, for years and years and years, I still get that tingle of thinking, 'Well, it's like Christmas Day all in one, in the middle of July.'

Ed Gamble

How many chapters of A Pocketful of Happiness are about you eating Christmas pudding?

Richard E Grant

75.

James Acaster

Right, I'm going to read your menu back to you now Richard, see how you feel about it.

Richard E Grant

Yes, alright.

James Acaster

You would like ice cold sparkling water in a glass full of ice.

Richard E Grant

Yes please.

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread, you would like a lovely bread with some olive oil.



Richard E Grant

Yes please.

James Acaster

Starter, linguine with fresh, white crab meat, medium chilli, and lemon and olive oil. Main course, barbecue seafood platter, lobster, giant prawns and squid.

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

With garlic butter all over it.

Richard E Grant

Oh yes.

James Acaster

Side dish, a big tub of your home-made lemon mayonnaise. Drink, freshly squeezed orange juice plus a glass of ice, and dessert, Christmas pudding with lychee sorbet.

Richard E Grant

The dream.

Ed Gamble

The absolute dream.

Richard E Grant

I'm living the dream, yes.

James Acaster

It sounds great.

Ed Gamble

That is so nice. The garlic butter?

Richard E Grant

Yes.

James Acaster

Oh, he's got another question.

Richard E Grant

Yes?

Ed Gamble

Are we okay with the butter? Doesn't that need to go back in the udder?

Richard E Grant

Yes, because if it's cooked-, you know, I cook with butter, but I would never put butter on bread.

Ed Gamble

I see, so it's the-, yes.



Richard E Grant

Yes, so it's cooked in. So, you know, I cook steak, cook it in butter, there's nothing in doing that.

Ed Gamble

So, you could do Christmas pudding cooked in butter?

Richard E Grant

Oh, yes, but I certainly couldn't put a slab of cold butter on top of a piece of Christmas pudding or on a piece of bread. I would find that gagging.

Ed Gamble

Oh. My dad does -

James Acaster

Yes, yes, Ed's dad could.

Richard E Grant

Your dad could?

Ed Gamble

I could do that-

James Acaster

I guess if you're cooking steak in butter that is like putting it back in the udder, right?

Richard E Grant

Yes, it is indeed.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard E Grant

Yes. Great segue back to that.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Every time I cook a steak, I shout, 'Reunited!' At the top of my voice.

James Acaster

Long time no see.

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much for coming to the dream restaurant, Richard.

James Acaster

Thank you, Richard.

Richard E Grant

Thank you very much for having me, it's been delicious.

Ed Gamble

Richard E Grant there, James.



James Acaster
Wonderful.

Ed Gamble
What a delight.

James Acaster
Delicious menu, lovely to hear his stories as well. Wonderful, friendly guy, everything you'd hope for.

Ed Gamble
Truly charming.

James Acaster
Didn't say lighter fluid, so we didn't have to kick him out of the dream restaurant, of course.

Ed Gamble
No, thank god for that. But he was never going to say lighter fluid.

James Acaster
No.

Ed Gamble
Although how did you like the barbecue?

James Acaster
Uh-oh, we didn't ask that. Kick him out.

Ed Gamble
You must go and buy Richard E Grant's new book, 'A Pocketful of Happiness,' it's published on 29th September, that's tomorrow, 2022, in hardback, and it's published by Simon & Schuster. It's also available in e-book and audio formats, James.

James Acaster
Oh, lovely. Keep squeezing, motherfuckers.

Ed Gamble
No, that's not what he said.

James Acaster
Yes? No?

Ed Gamble
Squeeze me baby.

James Acaster
Squeeze me baby, well somewhere in between that.

Ed Gamble
Keep squeezing baby.

James Acaster
Keep squeezing baby.

Ed Gamble
Squeeze me until my pips squeak.



James Acaster

Oh yes, squeeze me until my pips squeak, I like that.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I like squeeze me until my pips squeak.

Ed Gamble

I'm on tour. Ed Gamble, Electric. Do go and check that out, edgamble.co.uk for tickets.

James Acaster

I'm always knocking about.

Ed Gamble

So, go and just have a chat with James.

James Acaster

Yes, just have a chat. Well, no, leave me alone actually.

Ed Gamble

Yes, leave you alone, go buy your book.

James Acaster

Yes, if they like, 'Guide to Quitting Social Media.'

Ed Gamble

Right, it's not me is it? It is him doing this now?

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes. Oh, I'm completely-, my brain's not working.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

My brain is absolutely not working. I turned it on for the actual interview, gave it all I had, loved it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Then as soon as we stopped speaking to Richard, I turned it off again.

Ed Gamble

Yes, gone.

James Acaster

And my brain's just not working, and I apologise to the listeners. You know, it must be frustrating, but listen, this room that we're sitting in is boiling, we've been here all day. I've got sweat patches the size of dinner plates under my arms. It's tough stuff.



Ed Gamble

Yes, tough stuff.

James Acaster

You know, I'm woozy, I'm tired. I'm thinking, 'Do I go to the gym tonight? Do I not go to the gym tonight?'

Ed Gamble

You're not going to the gym tonight, man.

James Acaster

Probably not. You know, I'm going to carry on watching The Sopranos.

Ed Gamble

In case you're wondering, it's 2022.

James Acaster

In 2022, just so you know, I'm halfway through season one.

Ed Gamble

Thanks very much for listening to the Off Menu podcast.

James Acaster

'I made him an offer he couldn't refuse.'

Ed Gamble

No, that's The Godfather. We'll see you next week.