



Off Menu – Ep 165 – Richard Ayoade:

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu Podcast. Taking the tortilla chips of the internet, pouring over the guacamole of humour, adding the nacho cheese of good times and sharing it with your friends like all good podcasts should be.

James Acaster

That is the voice of Ed Gamble. My name is James Acaster. We own a dream restaurant. We invite a guest in every single week 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 Richard Ayoade.

Ed Gamble

Of course it is.

James Acaster

This is exciting.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Good stuff. I mean, you know, I'm going to say before it even starts, I'm sure that all the listeners, you know, the fans of this podcast are fans of Richard already.

Ed Gamble

Yes, absolutely.

James Acaster

There's a lot of crossover.

Ed Gamble

Probably one of the most requested guests.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

We, sort of, have a list of guests who get shouted out the most that people want to come on. We've had a fair few of them now.

James Acaster

We have.

Ed Gamble

We're working our way through that list.

James Acaster

We are. We listen.

Ed Gamble

We listen. We do listen, but these are of course all people that we want on anyway.



James Acaster

Come on, of course.

Ed Gamble

But it's a wonderful crossover between the list and people we're very excited to have on today.

James Acaster

Yes, obviously, you know, accolades, too many to list really all the things that Richard's been involved in. He's also got a book coming out soon. The Book That No One Wanted to Read, it's called. October 6th it comes out.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's a kids' book. It's for children.

James Acaster

Let's face it, I bet a lot of adults would enjoy it.

Ed Gamble

I'm going to read it. That's my reading level anyway at the moment, so.

James Acaster

Sure.

Ed Gamble

So, you must go and buy The Book That No One Wanted to Read. It's out on the 6th October 2022.

James Acaster

2022 year of our lord. However, even though we all love Richard and we all love his new book, if he says the secret ingredient, an ingredient that we have dictated we don't like, then we are going to kick him out the dream restaurant. Now, this one this week isn't one we don't like. We like it but it's related to his career. The secret ingredient is broccoli.

Ed Gamble

Broccoli. Specifically because of an episode of Garth Marengi's Darkplace where everyone starts turning into broccoli.

James Acaster

Why is she green?

Ed Gamble

Why is she green?

James Acaster

Nish's favourite.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

One of Nish's favourite things ever in the commentary for Garth Marengi.

Ed Gamble

Yes, Nish will probably come up in this episode because, well look, Nish is an obsessive Garth Marengi fan. I was as well, but I'll not be bringing that up because it will be weird in the small room



with someone going, 'Hey, before your show came out on DVD I bought it on an illegal DVD from eBay.'

James Acaster

That's great, I didn't know you did that.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I did.

James Acaster

I also owned it on DVD. Nish has a theory that it's, like, summer, but basically, look, everyone who's a comedian now owns Garth Marengi on DVD.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Like, our generation of comics all watched it and all own it. That's Nish's whole theory about the whole-

Ed Gamble

I mean, bear in mind I also used to do a character who was a romantic novelist that was basically just sex Garth Marengi.

James Acaster

Yes, and it was good. I love stuff and will do until the day I die.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But, yes, we'll see if Richard chooses broccoli. He'll be out. Even though, you know-,

Ed Gamble

I kind of, you know what, I like broccoli, but big normal broccoli I'm less into. I think since tenderstems hit the scene, purple sprouting, there's less of a need for the big trees.

James Acaster

That is true. The big trees I like to roast, I like to roast them up after I've-,

Ed Gamble

You roast the stalk-,

James Acaster

Well, I chop up the stalk and use it in the cheese and broccoli pasta, and then I would keep the heads and then I roast them.

Ed Gamble

No waste.

James Acaster

No waste.

Ed Gamble

And you eat the plastic don't you?



James Acaster

And then I eat the plastic they come wrapped in. Yes, I chew that like chewing gum all day long. Well, let's get to it I say.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I think so. This is the Off Menu menu of Richard Ayoade. Welcome Richard to the dream restaurant.

Richard Ayoade

Thank you. Okay.

James Acaster

Welcome Richard Ayoade to the dream restaurant. I've been expecting you for some time.

Richard Ayoade

I think it's very brave of you to do this show without a pop shield, because I've listened to the-, oh, just an excellent podcast, first can I congratulate the two of you. But often I've actually felt that you're almost inside me James. Such as the propulsive force of your appearance, like, you're in my head. It's 3D the sound and it's-,

James Acaster

Yes, the spit on the desk. I'm looking at it now.

Richard Ayoade

Oh, yes, I'm absolutely drenched.

James Acaster

I definitely spat on my own portion of the desk. I don't know if it made it across to you.

Ed Gamble

It was a very spitty one that, I felt.

James Acaster

Yes, I had a coffee and then I had some water after the coffee, so, that my teeth wouldn't stain that much, you know, very conscious of that.

Ed Gamble

Does that work?

Richard Ayoade

So, hang on, how do you stop the staining? What's your scheme?

James Acaster

Just as soon as I've had the coffee I just drink a big water.

Richard Ayoade

A big water?

James Acaster

Yes, to really, like-,

Richard Ayoade

You rinse it down?



James Acaster

Yes, to really, like, wash the teeth.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, wow, and is that recommended by dentists?

James Acaster

Well, my dentist told me.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

Nine out of ten dentists recommend water.

Richard Ayoade

Big water, rinse it down.

James Acaster

Have a big water.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, big water, and it's got to be big.

James Acaster

It's got to be big.

Richard Ayoade

What's that, in a pint glass, or just from a bucket?

James Acaster

Well, this is actually just in a tumbler, but, like-,

Richard Ayoade

Okay, that's the actual water? Okay.

James Acaster

I'm going big on it, big gulps.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, big.

Ed Gamble

Big Gulps is my nickname.

James Acaster

Yes, it is -

Ed Gamble

Yes, I love a big gulp.

Richard Ayoade

Big gulps.



James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

What do you think about this though?

Richard Ayoade

Big Gulps Gamble, that's what they call you.

Ed Gamble

Here's a bit of advice from Big Gulps, well, via my dentist, Little Gulps. He said, 'Brush your teeth as soon as you get up, don't have a coffee and then brush your teeth because then what you're doing is pummelling the coffee into your teeth.'

Richard Ayoade

Pummelling, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, that's what I do. That's the first thing I do is brush actually from within the bed.

James Acaster

Like Wallace and Gromit?

Richard Ayoade

Yes. I won't even step out until-, it's that bad. It's the stench, it's so acrid.

James Acaster

What's the best advice your dentist's even given you?

Richard Ayoade

Grow up.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

He just went, 'Grow up mate, yes, you're too old for this.' It was actually Danny Glover my dentist.

James Acaster

Yes. First of many film references I hope.

Richard Ayoade

I hope so. I hope so. I mean, I could try and relate on the human level but it's probably best to do it via media.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Absolutely do that.

James Acaster

You got favourite food scenes from films?

Richard Ayoade



That's a good question. I always find it slightly unprepossessing when people are eating in films. You're aware that they're pacing themselves because it's small bites. So, I think maybe the things that you remember are when someone really tucks in. Three Colours Red, not the first time it will have been mentioned, has a very good scene where Irene Jacob drinks an entire-, I mean, it's a big water, maybe she just had a coffee, after a ballet session, and it's a full bottle and she drinks all of it, and you do go, 'That was decent, decent drinking.'

James Acaster

I know what you mean about you really start focusing on, because if they're just moving it around the plate, you're like, that's the actor avoiding eating the food-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, that's like the fifth take, yes.

James Acaster

When they go for it you're, like, 'How many takes did they do? Did they eat that much every time? Or, were they, like, 'Look, this is the take where I'm going to eat the food, so-,'

Richard Ayoade

Yes, switch on the camera.

James Acaster

'This is it.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and the look up after that take, there's going to be some pleading in that look to say, 'Please, I hope that was good enough.'

Ed Gamble

Well, we mentioned Chris Pratt briefly before we started recording. I read something recently about him that when he was a big boy filming Parks and Rec, there was a scene where he was eating ribs, and he would eat a whole rack of ribs for every scene just to make Nick Offerman laugh.

Richard Ayoade

Big Goals Pratt.

James Acaster

Yes, Big Goals Pratt.

Richard Ayoade

He was the OGBG.

James Acaster

Absolutely.

Richard Ayoade

That is extraordinary. I like people eating from ten plates in films to show how, kind of, blue collar they are. I like when they're pushing their-, and taking big, kind of, side of the mouth chunks from a plate. Swayze was very good at that. Road House I'm thinking of.

James Acaster

Yes, Road House, there was Swayze.



Richard Ayoade

Yes, very good eating in Road House. And also I like people eating chicken and just tearing a big chunk off. They don't care because, you know, they get paid in cash. So, I like that kind of eating.

Ed Gamble

Sort of like a medieval king-, like, a Game of Thrones style feast?

Richard Ayoade

I'm not familiar with Game of Thrones. I know it exists, but I'd definitely-, I'd hope that would be goose.

Ed Gamble

You can imagine ripping a big bit off a bird leg and then throwing it away, sort of thing.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. I understand, yes. You know, I can feel that can become a bit rout, medieval eating. I like a, kind of, eighties double denim from a lunch box kind of eating.

James Acaster

But chicken in a lunch box?

Richard Ayoade

Ideally chicken.

James Acaster

I can't imagine someone opening a lunch box and there's a chicken in there, or, like a chicken drumstick.

Richard Ayoade

So, when you say you can't imagine it-,

James Acaster

I'll imagine a whole chicken in a lunch box.

Richard Ayoade

So, when you say you couldn't imagine it, how hard had you tried?

James Acaster

Well, I'm still trying to imagine it and I can't really-,

Richard Ayoade

Okay. Just a chicken leg, no?

James Acaster

Just a chicken leg in a lunch box?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, did you never-, I often in a paper towel, in a kitchen roll, single chicken leg. And then you use the chicken leg round the bottom of the drumstick so that, you know, you can still-,

James Acaster

Yes, but are you-,



Ed Gamble

Yes, I don't think it's an unusual thing, and also I think James has seen a lunch box and a chicken leg, so, he can imagine those two things-

Richard Ayoade

I think you're underselling your powers of imagination.

James Acaster

Well what else is in a lunch box? What else would be-, when you were a little boy-,

Richard Ayoade

Hang on, this has taken a very aggressive tone immediately. What else-, it's as if the lunch box is just a write-off now because there's a chicken. For a start, you could put that in the tinfoil, the chicken, or the tinfoil, and again that's very nice to wrap the bone back up in afterwards to dispose of later. And then normal stuff in the lunch box, sandwich, could be a drink, carrot stick, chocolate.

Ed Gamble

Look I'm on board with this.

James Acaster

Yes, but I want to know all the details of Richard's lunch when he was a little boy in his lunch box.

Richard Ayoade

Well-,

Ed Gamble

Would you have a chicken leg every day?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, every day, twice a day. Big Gulps Richard, that's what they called me. It was all chicken.

James Acaster

You actually had two chicken legs a day?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, two chicken legs.

James Acaster

Were they from the same chicken?

Richard Ayoade

No. I liked it to be a variety of chickens and I'd kill them myself. That was part of the morning routine. Get up, brush the teeth, source the chicken, kill it, and then I'd have to probably brine it, boil it, fry it. So, I was getting up at 4:00 by the end.

Ed Gamble

It felt like an insult that you wrapped the chicken legs in foil before you killed the chicken.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, exactly. I like to sweat that chicken a little bit before it dies.

James Acaster

What was your favourite sandwich filling?



Richard Ayoade

Yes, I quite like corned beef in a sandwich when young. Peanut butter and jam. Peanut butter now is probably not making any appearance in school sandwiches because of the nut allergies. So, it's a whole generation we're losing.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Because you're a parent now.

Richard Ayoade

I'm a parent as of this podcast, yes. (talking over each other 10.55) Yes, I mean, you've got to take it into account, you cannot be lax about that. I mean, the hazelnuts that I was just flinging about the joint now, I've got to just keep in my pouch and in an airtight pouch as well. I can't be walking around with nuts on my person. It's-

James Acaster

Where do you keep the pouch then?

Richard Ayoade

Next to the chicken legs, in there. It's a very big lunch box. Is it other things touching the chicken that's distressing you so much James, in that lunch box?

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

What was in your lunch box?

James Acaster: In my lunch box?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, at school.

James Acaster

There would be sandwiches cling filmed.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. What's in the sandwich? What's the filling?

James Acaster

Oh, so actually-, you've done me there.

Richard Ayoade

Don't like it when the tables are turned do you?

James Acaster

No, I quite like it in a way, but what's happened is, when we were kids my brother would have peanut butter and honey in his sandwiches.

Richard Ayoade

That's never occurred to me, peanut butter and honey.



James Acaster

So, immediately my mind went to that even though I never got that.

Ed Gamble

He didn't have that.

Richard Ayoade

Well, I'm not surprised. You're not going to forget that. How did that come about? I mean, presumably an accident like the invention of, kind of, penicillin.

James Acaster

Yes, I don't know why it was. It was just this big thing in my house of, like, you know, the peanut butter and-,

Richard Ayoade

Peanut butter and honey?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, honey, I guess, is a big thing in your house anyway, right?

James Acaster

Yes, obviously, I mean, the Acaster family sweet teeth-, sweet tooth family.

Richard Ayoade

Oh, no, okay.

James Acaster: I tell you what, if the Acaster family were beekeepers we'd be dead by now. The amount of honey -

Richard Ayoade

Oh, you'd just be in the hive?

James Acaster

We'd have sucked all the honey out the bees themselves. We'd have grabbed the bees and put them in our mouths and sucked the honey out.

Richard Ayoade

Specifically honey, or anything sweet?

James Acaster

Anything sweet.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, right, so, same would happen if you were in a sugar factory?

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Richard Ayoade

You've just got to avoid sugar.



James Acaster: That would be it, but, like, you know, the Winnie the Pooh where he gets stuck in the hole because he's so obsessed with getting the honey, would be every single member of my family apart from my mum.

Richard Ayoade
That's your origin story.

James Acaster
Yes.

Richard Ayoade
Okay.

James Acaster
My mum would be clear of it.

Richard Ayoade
Not into sugar?

James Acaster
No, she would be, like-,

Ed Gamble
She's very much the Rabbit of their Winnie the Pooh.

Richard Ayoade
Okay, so, she's the feeder?

James Acaster
Yes.

Richard Ayoade
Okay.

James Acaster
And we're all stuck in the hole trying to the get the honey-,

Richard Ayoade
Yes, you can't get out.

James Acaster
And can't think about anything else, yes.

Richard Ayoade
That's interesting. And what were in your sandwiches Ed?

Ed Gamble
Pretty straight forward I'd say. Ham and cheese. Love ham and cheese. Sometimes that, sort of, pre-done weird cheese stuff from a pot, where it's, like-,

Richard Ayoade
Cheese spread?

Ed Gamble
Cheese spread but with, like, mayo-,



Richard Ayoade

Like, Philadelphia, those kind of-, cream cheese.

Ed Gamble

Yes, that sort of thing. Yes, like a cream cheese, but the sort of one where it was, like, grated cheese but then there's, like, spring onions and other flavours, that sort of thing.

Richard Ayoade

I see what you mean, yes.

Ed Gamble

But I'd eat that at morning break and then I'd sneak into school lunches.

Richard Ayoade

Interesting.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

What I did, and I'm ashamed to even admit it. I do feel bad about this. My mum gave me money for school lunch. I didn't buy a school lunch. I'd say to my mum, 'I'm so hungry because I'm doing so much stuff, maybe I could have a packed lunch as well.' I think she must have known. And I just saved that school money for-, I stole, that's what it is. I stole and I cheated and I lied, and I bought records on the Friday. Well, a record with my school money.

James Acaster

Well, I was going to say-, before you said it I was going to say I'm sure that whatever you spent money on was so wholesome and fine that it wasn't naughty. And when you said records, I was, like, yes, that would be one of my guesses.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and what was left over was for crack. Yes, so, straight-,

Ed Gamble

Initially when you said you saved the money, I immediately assumed you meant you actually saved it until-, that's your mortgage.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and eventually I'd loan it back to my mum at interest. So, in a way she was getting hit from both ends.

Ed Gamble

Bought her a house, lovely.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. But I do have pangs about that still.

Ed Gamble

Really?

James Acaster

Do you?



Richard Ayoade

I do, because it's a daily lie. Each day I was going, 'God, so hungry at school again.'

James Acaster

But then surely the records would show up and she would know, 'Well, he's got that from somewhere.'?

Richard Ayoade

No, it was all cash in hand, our school, it was run by the mafia the kitchen. No, it wasn't done directly, you paid cash. Or, maybe you didn't. Maybe I told my mum it was a cash till.

James Acaster

But, I mean, like, you would be listening to a vinyl at home or something, so, wouldn't she be, like, 'Well, you've got that from somewhere.'?

Richard Ayoade

I'd say they were very cheap and they were from car boot sales. I mean, it really spirals and spirals. And often I'd get them from second hand shops. So, conceivably they could have been relatively cheap.

James Acaster

I think she would have been quite relieved that that's what you were lying about as a teenager. It could be worse.

Richard Ayoade

But still, it's not good. It's not a good start to the day.

James Acaster

Slippery slope.

Richard Ayoade

I mean, I've brushed my teeth, but after that it's downhill.

James Acaster

Killed a chicken.

Richard Ayoade

I killed a chicken, wrapped it in tinfoil, stole the money from my mum.

Ed Gamble

Maybe you were so eager to brush your teeth because you knew you were about to dirty yourself with lies.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

That's true.

Ed Gamble

Clean myself as soon as possible.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, I did dirty myself with lies, yes.



James Acaster

These teeth are about to tell some lies.

Richard Ayoade

That's a lovely way of putting it. I did dirty myself.

James Acaster

The Book That No One Wanted to Read. Ring any bells?

Richard Ayoade

For me? Yes, I wrote it. Yes. And thank you for mentioning it, that's very kind of you. It's a book for children, although I suppose you could read it and not be a child. I mean, it's up to you. It's about a book that a child encounters in a library and the book is very high up on a shelf out of the way and refuses to be touched or read because the book is frightened that it has nothing inside itself.

James Acaster

Wow. Oh, okay. Well, I mean, the kids won't know what that's about, but I think every adult listening to this went, 'Well, the book is Richard.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes, well, there's nothing better than writing a book that the children will not know what it's about when it is for children.

James Acaster

The children will enjoy the story on the surface.

Richard Ayoade

That's a quote. Can we use that on the cover actually? All children will not know what this is about.

Ed Gamble

They will know, won't they, they'll know deep down something.

James Acaster

Yes, they'll enjoy the story a lot.

Richard Ayoade

I hope so.

James Acaster

But I doubt they will go, 'Oh, I know the subject to this. This is Richard talking about himself.'

Richard Ayoade

Well, look, I don't know that it's full subtext because if anything, I think that's the text of me. I don't know that that's even the subtext. I'm wearing that very much on my sleeve, were I to be wearing sleeves.

James Acaster

Also, like, a lot of the time you might read, you know, there's that about the author bit and you go, 'Oh, a publisher has written this, or someone else has.' And with yours it's very clear that you have.

Ed Gamble

I've just seen it.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay, right. What does it say? Okay.



James Acaster

Richard Ayoade is a highly tolerated British comedian.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, that was me, yes, that was me. But they immediately accepted that. They didn't go, 'Oh, no.' They went, 'No, that's fair enough, that's a fair description, you are tolerated.'

Ed Gamble

Whereas, you've absolutely stitched Tor Freeman, the illustrator, up like a kipper there.

Richard Ayoade

Oh, she wrote hers.

Ed Gamble

Oh really?

Richard Ayoade

What did she say?

Ed Gamble

Oh, she's just listed all her brilliant achievements.

Richard Ayoade

Oh, yes.

James Acaster

I graduated from Kingston University. It's looking pretty good there. That was tolerating Tor Freeman.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, done a lot of good work in the past. Illustrations are excellent.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Nothing to apologise for.

James Acaster

Was it a new challenge writing a kids book?

Richard Ayoade

Well, I didn't necessarily set out to write one. It wasn't part of any plan. I think just the idea occurred and then I just went through it again. It's not a great story I'd have to say. I need to work on this anecdote if it's truly to earn its place in the anecdote pantheon.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

We're a great opportunity for people to hone their, sort of, PR answers.



Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay. It was a great challenge writing the book and I love a challenge, and I grasped it, and I think if you're out there and you want to take on a challenge, then do it, because you know what, life's about meeting challenges and overcoming them.

James Acaster

That's good. That's really good.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay. It just sounds so bad from me. I can't-,

James Acaster

I think if you just started speaking like that all the time, I think people would love it.

Richard Ayoade

I know. Imagine. I was briefly captain of the cricket team in my school and I was fired for demoralising the cricket team, and I think that was the only time that had ever happened. I like cricket and I said-, I wasn't even aware of it, but I think occasionally I said, 'Look the other team's very strong, we could resist, or we could go home at lunch.' And they don't like talk like that in sport.

James Acaster

I cannot imagine you giving a team talk.

Ed Gamble

I would appreciate that so much as a cricket player I think.

James Acaster

Sure.

Richard Ayoade

Sometimes don't fight.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Just go home at lunch-,

Richard Ayoade

Just go home at lunch.

Ed Gamble

I've got two lunches in my bag, yes.

Richard Ayoade

There's something brutal about just being pummelled by a superior sportsman.

James Acaster

Yes, there's more to life than this guys.

Richard Ayoade

There's more to life-, well, there's the afternoon for a start.

James Acaster

Yes. Still or sparkling water?

Richard Ayoade

I'll have still please. I have as much wind as I can deal with already.



James Acaster

Constantly?

Richard Ayoade

It's a battle. I'm like a kite but on the inside and-

James Acaster

Is that how you feel?

Richard Ayoade

I do feel like that, but a kite that gives no one any joy. I'm a kite crashing to the ground. Enough wind to get airborne but not enough to please anyone. And, so, I don't-

James Acaster

I'm imagining the end of Mary Poppins and one of them's got you.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it's just skimming the grass, it's never quite taking off, and also very good kite flying for their first attempt at the end of that film. He does a lot of double takes, have you noticed that guy, David Tomlinson?

James Acaster

The dad?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, he was famed for his double takes, he tried to do one in every-, if you want that film again, in every scene he does at least a double take, and often a triple or (TC 00:20:00) quadruple. He is a master. It's really worth watching.

James Acaster

And are his double takes, triple takes and quadruple takes so good that you don't really notice it, because it's just part of the character, it's, like-

Richard Ayoade

Yes. They're excellent, but he does it in almost anything. I would appreciate if someone could do a super cut of his double takes. It would look like he just couldn't believe that someone had walked into the room.

Ed Gamble

The double take's really fallen out of favour hasn't it?

Richard Ayoade

It has, and I blame naturalism for that and for many things. But a good double take-, I tell you who was the last master of the double take I believe, Matthew Perry.

James Acaster

Okay. Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Excellent double taker.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Richard Ayoade

And is not to be sneezed at. Very hard. You need the neck, you need the eyes, you need the eyebrows, you need fixed point. It's a dance really. It's a dance of the face and reactions.

Ed Gamble

I mean, favourite Friends character got to be? Got to be Chandler I guess?

Richard Ayoade

It is a very good character. Now, do you think that was the first character who knew they were funny in a sitcom?

Ed Gamble

Well, I guess the older American sitcoms are all-, there's a lot of wisecracking characters, right?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, but no-one else laughs at them.

Ed Gamble

No.

Richard Ayoade

It's, like, give this guy a break. He's, like, done eight zingers in a row and everyone's giving him a stone face. Whereas, in Friends I think it was good that they were allowed to laugh at Chandler. That was a good development.

James Acaster

I guess you don't count Seinfeld in, Seinfeld, because he's a professional comedian in it.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

So, he knows he's funny, but it's not like-,

Richard Ayoade

He knows he's funny, and no-one else found him funny.

James Acaster

No.

Richard Ayoade

And that was quite funny that everyone-, you do a lot of, does everyone notice stuff, don't you?

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

I like how everyone hated his stand up, all of his friends.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Didn't he go out with someone once who just went, 'I can't respect what you do. I just can't respect that kind of material.'



James Acaster

Why still?

Richard Ayoade

I used to have sparkling in the good old days before the decline, but it's quite aggressive. Again, the dentist, Danny Glover, said, 'This is really attacking your gums, it's attacking your teeth, you've barely got anything to start with, it's now about defence. Forget it.' And also can be quite windy popsie. In the restaurant are other people at large? I think sometimes I feel that it's a bit like a dessert island meal. That it's like your last meal and no-one's around. But that's not part of the premise is it?

Ed Gamble

Well, it's up to you. It's your dream restaurant.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, it can be.

Ed Gamble

So, if you want to be amongst other people that's fine, but if you do want to drink it by yourself and fart, that's fine.

Richard Ayoade

My wife Lydia, she'll be there in the restaurant.

James Acaster

Same table?

Richard Ayoade

Sorry.

James Acaster

Same table?

Richard Ayoade

Same table, it would be a table big enough for two. One of those.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

You were possibly thinking of a jetty or a diving board.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Has anyone had a meal on a diving board, just on the end?

James Acaster

Not yet no, and we're not going to stop you if you want that.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, we're on a double diving board, so, at the end we can swim it off.



James Acaster

Is the diving board set up like a diving board, or is it like-

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

So, have you ever-

Richard Ayoade

Yes. I'm going to stop you there. Yes.

Ed Gamble

So, are you, sort of, straddling the diving board at the end, and you've got-

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and the safety harness is tethered to the wall.

Ed Gamble

Right, okay.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, because I can't swim.

James Acaster

So, one of you is on a sturdier end than the other of course.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

One of you has a plate that's on the end that, you know, is attached to-

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it's bad if I fall in. I'd have to be saved.

James Acaster

You can't swim?

Richard Ayoade

Look at me. Of course I can't swim. I'm from a long line of non swimmers.

James Acaster

I can't imagine you sinking.

Richard Ayoade

Oh really?

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Oh, I think in the case of the Titanic, I'm the first at the bottom of the drink.



James Acaster

Really?

Richard Ayoade

I wouldn't even try. I'd be sucked underneath. I wouldn't even be on a raft, I'd just be-, I'm gone.

James Acaster

Would you be the guy who hits the propeller on the way down when he jumps off the Titanic?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and it would be, 'Doow,' and then, yes, it would just go completely silent and it would be quite moving and there would be a flute that would come in. There'd be a flute motif. There'd be the propeller motif on the soundtrack album.

Ed Gamble

So, if you're dining on the end of a diving board-,

Richard Ayoade

Yes, can I change this idea?

Ed Gamble

You can, but I was going to say-,

Richard Ayoade

Okay, no let's go with it.

Ed Gamble

We would need a lifeguard.

Richard Ayoade

We're both hit-, oh, a lifeguard.

Ed Gamble

And obviously you get to pick your dream lifeguard.

Richard Ayoade

Hasselhoff. It would have to be Hasselhoff.

Ed Gamble

The Hoff.

Richard Ayoade

The Hoff, yes. So, in a way the whole meal could be a montage, like, in the middle of Baywatch. So, it would be, like, a highlights reel of eating, or maybe you eat for a bit and then there's a montage of a bit of the meal that you regret. You could just montage it through and then get to pud.

James Acaster

What music's playing over the Baywatch montage. What are you-,

Richard Ayoade

I think it's something on key-tar. It's very hard to place the Baywatch montage music. Was it always the same for each montage?

Ed Gamble

I remember the theme which was the de de de de de. Right.



James Acaster

Yes, that was very good.

Ed Gamble

That's how it started.

James Acaster

I mean, not a million miles away from the Garth Marengi music I'd say.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

I'd say you could probably put one track lover on there.

Richard Ayoade

You could, I mean, it's the keyboard with the guitar setting, there's only so expressive that can be in rock.

James Acaster

Would you do your Dean Learner rap?

Richard Ayoade

Well, you're very kind. I-, gosh-,

James Acaster

I'm not saying would you do it now, I'm saying, would you do it at the meal?

Richard Ayoade

Oh.

James Acaster

I know that if we ask you to do the rap now you won't do it.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay.

James Acaster

But I'm saying, like, would you have in the meal and that's the montage.

Richard Ayoade

No, my wife's suffered enough. I don't think so.

James Acaster

Would you tell your wife that she's cold like ice? Cold to the touch and it isn't very nice?

Richard Ayoade

I don't think-, I mean quoting (talking over each other 25.18). Yes, it's a lot of quoting a meal with me. I just go, 'Remember that thing I did twenty years ago?'

Ed Gamble

By the way, being friends with Nish Kumar at university was basically having to listen to him do that rap over and over again.



Richard Ayoade

I can only apologise. If anyone's got a more nasal voice than me, it's got to be NK.

Ed Gamble

It's NK47

Richard Ayoade

Yes. If anything he could do with putting it a little bit down into the chest, and that's coming from me.

James Acaster

Yes. I mean, you know about his Garth Marengi obsession don't you?

Richard Ayoade

Well, he said he liked it, but he was being very decorous in conversations that I've had.

James Acaster

Yes. I believe he quoted to you?

Richard Ayoade

Okay.

James Acaster

And he's told me that.

Richard Ayoade

Right, yes.

James Acaster

He was very proud of himself. 'I said to Richard. I said it to him.'

Richard Ayoade

Okay. Okay, right, yes, okay.

James Acaster

He came back from doing Travel Man with you. It was the first thing he said. 'I said it to him. I said to him.'

Richard Ayoade

Now, I feel that I have a sense that I may have stolen that from my friend Ben Rampster, who I think said that at school. I think he said.

James Acaster

So, Nish is actually a big Rampster fan?

Richard Ayoade

Aren't we all, yes, I mean, he is the OG, Rampster. He may have said. I do like as -

James Acaster

Poppadums or bread?

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread Richard Ayoade. Poppadoms or bread.



Richard Ayoade

Again, that pop shield, I've got to say it's such a worthwhile investment. Poppadoms. I've listened to-, what do you call it? A show, podcast? What's the term? I didn't mean that-, often things I say sound condemnatory. I think that's because I struggle to love, but very few people seem to choose Poppadoms. The ratio seems to be high on bread.

Ed Gamble

Well, but it does feel bread heavy now. And is that a love of Poppadoms or a hatred of bread?

Richard Ayoade

I don't hate bread. I like butter and-, you know, butter and Poppadoms, it's not a sufficient delivery system for butter, Poppadom.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Have you tried it?

Richard Ayoade

I've not. Have you?

Ed Gamble

No, but I want to now.

Richard Ayoade

I do like bread but I think because-, I mean, I don't want to spoil the whole surprise of the show, the pod, but I will have a curried meal. So, I think a Poppadom makes sense. And, I'll always have to have all of the dips on, each section of the Poppadom.

James Acaster

Oh what?

Ed Gamble

So, you'll get the whole Poppadom and you'll apply-,

Richard Ayoade

I will break the Poppadom into bits.

Ed Gamble

How do you break-, what's your style?

Richard Ayoade

I think it varies depending on frustration levels. Probably I'll start with breaking it in half, and then I'll crescent slices off. And then I will spoon toppings onto each slice of the Poppadom-, is it a slice of a Poppadom? Segment.

James Acaster

Depends how you're breaking them. A shard.

Richard Ayoade

A shard.

James Acaster

Yes.



Richard Ayoade

I wonder what the group name for Poppadoms is. (talking over each other 28.16) A phalanx of Poppadoms.

James Acaster

Yes, that's it.

Richard Ayoade

And then I will-, onions, the small onions with a small bit of-, I could do without the tomatoes in that section there.

James Acaster

Okay. We'll sort that out.

Richard Ayoade

That would be good, because they often seem quite warm.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Don't like a warm tomato?

Richard Ayoade

Not in shredded onion on a Poppadom. The warmth is unwelcome. I don't know why.

James Acaster

Do you worry about where the warmth has come from?

Richard Ayoade

It's not a pressing concern. I just-, there's something about what it does to the texture of the tomato. It feels overly soft. And I'm in a crisp zone Poppadom, and then I'm getting something soft and I just feel something's gone wrong. I just feel it in my body.

Ed Gamble

Is the crisp zone a new thing for the Crystal Maze?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, the crisp zone is where I live. It's actually an extension to the new line actually that's just been opened, the tube line.

Ed Gamble

Did you ever do the Crystal Maze challenges? Did you ever go, 'I'll have a go at that one.'?

Richard Ayoade

I sometime would be asked to do them just so that I knew what was happening, just to try and get me to engage. It was losing metal and it has been in life, but I sometimes would play them. Very often though I would read, and that's something I like to do.

James Acaster

Yes, you'd switch yourself off and read.

Richard Ayoade

I do like to read to quell anxiety and also it's a good opportunity.



Ed Gamble

The Crystal Maze is a rare game show where it's actually better if the host is less engaged in what's going on.

Richard Ayoade

Well, thank you, and I try to bring my lack of engagement. I try and bring that to everything I do, because I think there's a lot of accent on commitment, on getting stuck in, and what of those of us who struggle to connect, where's our place in the world?

James Acaster

Who was the worst ever Crystal Maze contestant, who you were like, 'This person is absolutely useless.'?

Richard Ayoade

Now, here's the thing that I took away was that alpha men really struggle on that show because they will not cooperate with others, but you have to cooperate, and they're over confident, really poor at communicating and tend to undermine everyone else. So, they would go into some place, claim they could do it, tune everyone else out and then turn on everyone. So, you could probably look-, I mean, you're probably already online you'll be now if you're listening to this, scrolling through past contestants, and, so, I'd say the alpha men.

James Acaster

When an alpha man got locked in as none alpha man, did you feel great?

Richard Ayoade

I didn't, you know, it's like seeing a lion outside of it's natural habitat. There's something sad about it and sometimes quite moving to see it so far away it should be on a race track or, you know, touching down.

James Acaster

Race lions?

Richard Ayoade

People do race them.

James Acaster

Do they?

Richard Ayoade

They race them hard and they race them long. Or, you know, you see these people, they're outside of their usual environments, and, so, there's something slightly spooky and spectral about the sight of an alpha man on a polystyrene set, having to take something that's ultimately ridiculous, extremely seriously and unable to back down. Just unable to reverse.

Ed Gamble

We went and did the Crystal Maze in London.

Richard Ayoade

And how was that?

Ed Gamble

Well, I had a tantrum.

Richard Ayoade

Okay.



James Acaster

I'm glad Ed brought this up because I wasn't going to-, I thought it was unfair if I brought it up.

Ed Gamble

I had to sit on a rocket and throw balls into holes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay.

Ed Gamble

And-,

James Acaster

The rocket was like a bucking bronco.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, I understand that.

Ed Gamble

I had to put a jacket on with all the balls stuck on, but it had not been looked after, the jacket, so, the Velcro didn't work properly so all the balls fell off. So, obviously I complained-,

Richard Ayoade

And you went, 'What is this?'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

'No-one's taking this seriously.'

Ed Gamble

No.

Richard Ayoade

How alpha would you say you are? Are you closer to alpha? You seem like you may have some alpha-,

Ed Gamble

Maybe some alpha tendencies in that I definitely, everything you said about alpha males in the Crystal Maze there, I thought that's what happened when I did a Crystal Maze.

James Acaster

In context Ed is an alpha, when it-,

Richard Ayoade

You're a site specific alpha?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay.



James Acaster

The group was Ed, myself and Nish and our partners.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay.

James Acaster

In the context Ed was Mufasa.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay. You were the father.

Ed Gamble

Yes. But amongst true alphas, absolutely not.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, great, so, yes.

James Acaster

But, also our guide, our companion-,

Richard Ayoade

Tour guide, yes. The master-, maze, the maze master. I ought to know.

James Acaster

The maze master coincidentally was someone that we knew, a comedian. And, so, Ed throwing the tantrum was doubly bad because-,

Richard Ayoade

Okay, and did you level charges?

Ed Gamble

I didn't level charges, but I-,

Richard Ayoade

Did you say, 'What kind of free tent circus are you running here?'

Ed Gamble

A bit, yes.

Richard Ayoade

Okay.

James Acaster

He hit the bronco.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, you hit it?

James Acaster

He hit it with his fist.

Richard Ayoade

Okay.



Ed Gamble

I was trying to stop it.

Richard Ayoade

Okay.

James Acaster

Also, the friend that was doing the guide we hadn't seen in a long time, in years, and he was trying to stay in character, because obviously, like, he didn't see it was us until he walked into the room to brief us.

Richard Ayoade

Of course. Of course.

James Acaster

So, he walked in. Saw it was us. Had to make a split second decision of do I go, 'Oh, alright guys.' Or do I go, 'Welcome? '

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay.

Ed Gamble

Which I respect a huge amount.

James Acaster

So, then he takes us to the-, I think he thought, 'I know these guys, I want to give them the fun ones.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Or, 'I know these guys, I'll give them the ones where the maintenance has not been in for a few months.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes. And was there the feeling of, 'What has Ed become?'

James Acaster

Well, yes, there was a moment-,

Richard Ayoade

In the last three years, the podcast has absolutely taken off, it's rocketed to the top. He's punching bucking broncos. He's out of control.

Ed Gamble

It was more a slap.

James Acaster

I would say it was an open palmed smack.

Richard Ayoade

You see, I imagine a spring coming out and there's smoke coming out of this bronco. I imagine this bronco's pummelled.



James Acaster

Yes, but the poor-,

Richard Ayoade

I think you've punched from the shoulder like one of those ones where you twist it, and that bronco-, that's-,

Ed Gamble

Big hole in the bronco.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, they've got to change that game.

Ed Gamble

They won't. I tell you, given their maintenance record.

James Acaster

Ed was on the bronco hitting it and going and he went, 'The balls aren't sticking to the jacket.' Like that. And then the guy who we knew was trying to stay in character. He went, 'Oh, you have to persist.' Or whatever. And Ed was, like, 'Shut up Richard.'

Ed Gamble

No, I didn't say that. I didn't say, 'Shut up Richard.'

Richard Ayoade

Okay.

James Acaster

No he didn't.

Richard Ayoade

Was it me? I was there.

James Acaster

He would definitely have made it more difficult for Ed.

Richard Ayoade

That's a rare moment.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But it was, like, 'I can't-,'

Ed Gamble

But anyway, didn't get the crystal. Oh, no, I did get-, did I?

James Acaster

Yes, you got it. You got the crystal and then we all had to go, 'Well done, you got it.'

Ed Gamble

Because it's happened to me a couple of times in my life where I've thrown a big tantrum about something and then still get the thing that I was throwing a tantrum about, which is the worst feeling.



Richard Ayoade

Yes. How good are you at reversing out of a tantrum and repairing the damage after it happens?

Ed Gamble

Quite bad I'd say.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

I think the joy of the tantrum is never apologising.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Because in a way, they caused it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. In a way they should apologise to you for making you have a tantrum, that's the whole point.

Ed Gamble

What would you have done if I'd have done that on the TV show?

Richard Ayoade

I think I just would have opened the book and started reading through that. I think it would be fine because everyone else is, sort of, dealing with you on your team. You wouldn't really be allowed to have a tantrum. Well-,

Ed Gamble

Because the team would bring me back down?

Richard Ayoade

It's very different being witnessed isn't it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

As soon as you're recorded it's so rare to have a complete proper meltdown recorded. It's always somewhat Brechtian.

Ed Gamble

Well, the other times I was mentioning were all on Task Master, so.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, but you must have been aware. You didn't stop thinking you were being filmed?



James Acaster

You played - It worked.

Ed Gamble

Well, I think it was the last episode of the series. I thought someone else was going to get points even though they didn't do the task properly and I did the task properly, and then I got really angry, and then there was a fly in the studio and I killed the fly.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, you just care about justice really.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and my wife said, 'That's the only time you've been yourself on television.'

Richard Ayoade

Okay. That's good.

James Acaster

Wow. I bet she stored that up for an argument.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, that's good.

James Acaster

I'm going to leash that on him.

Richard Ayoade

That's brilliant. Why don't you just be like you were on Task Master? The real you.

James Acaster

The real you.

Richard Ayoade

My wife said a good one which, I was in a film with Vince Vaughn and Ben Stiller and Jonah Hill-

James Acaster

The Watch.

Richard Ayoade

The Watch. And she said, 'It looked like I'd won a competition to be in a film with movie stars.'

James Acaster

Let's start your proper meal with your dream starter.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. I struggle with starters. I will often avoid one.

James Acaster

Now this is controversial. I love it when this happens.

Richard Ayoade

Now, yes, this sounds very showbiz, but we once had a meal together with Nish, with NK.

James Acaster

We did, with NK.



Richard Ayoade

And I think you ordered all starters.

James Acaster

I did order all starters, - yes.

Ed Gamble

I'm so proud of you man.

James Acaster

Yes, thank you Ed. I mean, obviously I didn't tell Ed because it would give him the satisfaction. He's a starter boy, he loves it. But we were at Artusi, which is a very nice Italian place, and all of the small plates just sounded delicious. I was, like, I'm going to do it. I'm going to have three or four of them.

Ed Gamble

That's a big move. That's very grown up.

James Acaster

Thank you.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it is.

James Acaster

Thank you Ed.

Richard Ayoade

It was terribly sophisticated. Whereas, I struggle with starters. Originally just through tightness, I'd just go, 'Well, why are we-,' You know, when I say we, I always refer to me as we. 'Why are we having a starter when we can just fill up on a stodgy main? There's no point.'

James Acaster

Sure.

Richard Ayoade

So, I wonder whether I might have popcorn for my starter.

James Acaster

Great.

Richard Ayoade

It's light. It's very hard to be unhappy eating popcorn. I've tried. But it's just too silly an action to be truly sad. So, you don't want to be full and I think popcorn, on the edge of the diving board, Hasselhoff's across the way, I'm feeling safe, and I think a little sweet and salt, I have a mixture, sweet and salty.

Ed Gamble

How do you ask for them to be put into the bucket? One, then one, then one, then one.

Richard Ayoade

Thank you. A bit like sedimentary rock. I want layers, but I think I want the final, top layer to be salt.



Ed Gamble

Okay.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and the bottom layer to be sweet, because that's pudding.

Ed Gamble

Well, it's almost like a whole meal, yes, in itself, yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it is.

James Acaster

It is like a proper meal.

Ed Gamble

Do you have that, sort of, chemical memory where if you eat popcorn outside of the cinema it still puts you in the mode of being in the cinema?

Richard Ayoade

I eat so much popcorn that I more associate other things with eating popcorn.

James Acaster

Do you really?

Richard Ayoade

I eat a lot of popcorn, there's very good popcorn outlets near where we live. It's, you know, in the drum outside big bag, I'm down to a bag a week, a big bag. Like, there were times when it was a couple of bags a week.

James Acaster

Wow.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and that's £10 a week on popcorn and that's too much.

Ed Gamble

That mark-up on that's insane though.

Richard Ayoade

Please, they deserve every penny they make. Their popcorn is first class. It's first class popcorn.

James Acaster

Yes, this is exciting.

Richard Ayoade

They're underselling that popcorn if anything. I would. I'd do it by Direct Debit, if they offered it.

James Acaster

Have you always loved popcorn. This is great, because everyone knows that you love film, it's a passion.

Richard Ayoade

I do. I do love popcorn.



James Acaster

Well, tell us about the popcorn.

Richard Ayoade

Actually, apart from in the cinema.

James Acaster

Oh, really?

Richard Ayoade

Yes. You can't, because my favourite cinema's the BFI, well, I still think of it as the NFT, despite the fungible tokens or whatever, and I have heard someone be reproached for opening a sparkling water in there.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Richard Ayoade

There was a shhh, and there was such ferocity in the shush.

Ed Gamble

Which is too similar a noise to what's just happened.

Richard Ayoade

Exactly, it just sounded like, 'I'm going to open my water now.'

James Acaster

Just someone doing an impression of the water.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, exactly. So, in a way, I find someone eating popcorn in the cinema quite stressful, and so, if I see that people are eating popcorn in the cinema I, sometimes, will have to get popcorn, so that I can be in charge of the sounds. I'm a lot of fun.

James Acaster

Maybe I've got to start going to the BFI to watch films, because (TC 00:40:00) I absolutely fucking hate the cinema now. Everyone's doing what they want, it's noisy, people on their fucking phones.

Richard Ayoade

They're doing Zoom calls.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

When are you going and where are you going?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, where are you going?

James Acaster

I just go anywhere. Like, wherever the nearest one is, I'll pop along, and they're all there, on their phones.



Richard Ayoade

Okay, this is where-

James Acaster

Light in their faces.

Ed Gamble

Mid-week, afternoon, that's when you need to go.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

I went once to a screening of Parasite before it had come out proper.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, yes.

James Acaster

There's a Q&A afterwards with the director.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

Next to me was a lady who was on her phone for most of it.

Richard Ayoade

Stop it.

James Acaster

Then, when there was the Q&A, talking about class and stuff like that.

Richard Ayoade

Flash-frying a steak, yes.

James Acaster

She was, like, agreeing really vocally with him, as if, like-,

Ed Gamble

She'd watched it.

James Acaster

As if she'd watched the film. She'd been there in a big fur coat, very posh lady, in a big fur coat.

Richard Ayoade

Was she reviewing it, potentially?

James Acaster

No way, because I looked over, at one point. She was WhatsApping her mate and chatting.

Richard Ayoade

Ugh, that is outrageous behaviour.



Ed Gamble

What do you think of the new trendy popcorns? Your Josephs?

Richard Ayoade

No.

Ed Gamble

No?

Richard Ayoade

No. I don't want toffee on a popcorn. It makes it wet and I don't like the-, no, I can't even.

Ed Gamble

No cheese popcorn?

Richard Ayoade

No. No, no, no, no. No, no, no.

James Acaster

What about when it's just like a fun colour? When they make it, like, fluorescent pink, fluorescent blue, but it tastes normal?

Richard Ayoade

No, I can't cope with anything other than straight up popcorn. I don't like any fun colours. Yes, I just don't. I'm not that keen on decorative food. I find it quite stressful. I just feel the effort, and I feel, you know, it's enforced fun is not good, as you found in the Crystal Maze.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Do you pop your own corn?

Richard Ayoade

I hope that's not a euphemism. I have. In microwave popcorn, in the early, well, probably I'm creeping to senescence, but I remember microwave popcorn coming out and that being a terrifically exciting prospect. A lot of fires, often blackened popcorn would result from overcooking it, and in a way, it was more exciting just to set the popcorn on fire, and then, dispose of it. That was almost the best interaction you could have, but it was never quite good. The heat was pleasant, but there would be some ones that would be molten hot and kernels.

Ed Gamble

The kernels, yes.

Richard Ayoade

I'd always find it depressing that some of the kernels didn't pop. You felt like you'd failed.

Ed Gamble

Then you'd crunch on one too hard and it's off to Danny Glover in the morning.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and then, you spiral down. Before you know it, yes, the Crystal Maze, and you're having a panic attack.

James Acaster

Also, the pops. So, when it's, like, done in the microwave, and the instructions are, 'When it gets down to this many seconds between pops, then let it out.' So, I'm there counting the seconds between the pops, and I think, 'I don't know if any food's worth this.'



Ed Gamble

It's not a life, is it?

Richard Ayoade

Yes. It's a lot like giving birth, isn't it? You've got to just count those contractions, and I think mothers listening to this will appreciate the comparison.

James Acaster

Yes, sometimes, it's just like that.

Richard Ayoade

It's almost as stressful waiting for those final seconds. You don't want to leave it. Yes, you don't want to char them, but you don't want a bag full of unpopped corn.

James Acaster

Before we move on top the main, and I know you're going to say you don't like this, but chocolate-covered popcorn?

Richard Ayoade

Oh, no.

James Acaster

No?

Richard Ayoade

I just, no. You'd have a bar. My mum had a chocolate shop.

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

What the hell?

Richard Ayoade

Yes, that's right. Yes.

James Acaster

Lucky she wasn't my mum, because-

Richard Ayoade

Yes, had a chocolate shop in Woodbridge, Les Chocolat s Belges. That's what it was called.

James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

I love that.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, went to Belgium to get chocolates. It was quite a fancy chocolate shop.

Ed Gamble

It sounds it.



Richard Ayoade

I spent every day after school in the chocolate shop, hence my love of air conditioning, because it had to be kept cool, because the chocolates didn't have preservatives, and I packed up boxes of chocolates to the extent that I would rebel by buying Cadbury's, which my mum would find unbelievable. Why would you buy Cadbury's mini eggs, when, you know, you've got high-quality Belgian chocolate?

Ed Gamble

When you've got Les Chocolats Belges.

Richard Ayoade

Often it was too rich.

James Acaster

Sure, but that's a great-

Ed Gamble

Yes. Yes, so you can't knock them back, can you?

Richard Ayoade

No, you can't slam a load of Violet Cremes without having to pay the consequences.

James Acaster

What a way to rebel.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

'Bought some mini eggs, Mum. Bad luck.'

Richard Ayoade

Just, yes, just had a Curly Wurly, what do you think about that?

James Acaster

I don't need your quality Belgian chocolate. That's exciting.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it is really exciting.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

I mean, was there, like, a star of the show at the Belgian chocolate shop?

Richard Ayoade

Pralines were the workhorse I'd say, of the entire shop, chocolate praline.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Easter, that's a big time in the chocolate trade. That's really Christmas. Easter's Christmas.



Ed Gamble

Christmas is Easter?

Richard Ayoade

Christmas is, kind of, like, Easter. Christmas is still Christmas, but Easter's like Christmas plus. So, yes, Easter was a very tense time, and every year, my mum would always say, 'I think I've bought too many chocolates.' She always had a panic. 'I've bought far too many chocolates,' and at the end she'd go, 'I should have bought more chocolates.' I always found it quite a disturbing pattern.

Ed Gamble

Would she go over and get them herself and bring them back?

Richard Ayoade

It was more, sort of, sourcing, tasting, seeing the developments, what was new on the chocolate scene. Well, she said.

Ed Gamble

Did you ever go with her? Did you ever go to Belgium with her?

Richard Ayoade

I didn't, no, I was too young. I'm still too young to go to Belgium.

Ed Gamble

Sure.

Richard Ayoade

I think you really need to be mature to go to Belgium.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you do. One day.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

Did your friends get excited that you had a chocolate shop?

Richard Ayoade

It's just, you know, not children's chocolate, Belgian chocolate. It feels, sort of, fussy, it was quite old-fashioned. I'd say the mean age of a customer was 60. It was a lot of, sort of, treats at the end of the week, that kind of thing.

Ed Gamble

Expensive, right, as well? When you're a kid-,

Richard Ayoade

Quite expensive. They were sold by weight, yes.

Ed Gamble

When you're a kid you don't want to, like, I wasn't even going into Thornton's.

Richard Ayoade

No.



Ed Gamble

You just want a bar of something.

Richard Ayoade

Exactly, you don't want to go into Thornton's. It looks like a gift shop. It looks like adult business in there.

James Acaster

Yes, this is pre-, I've got so many-,

Richard Ayoade

It's pre-Brexit.

James Acaster

Obviously, I've got so many questions about the chocolate shop.

Richard Ayoade

It's almost like a charcuterie of chocolates. Yes, of course.

James Acaster

I've got so many questions.

Richard Ayoade

It's pre-Britpop, yes.

James Acaster

I'm so excited, because if one of my friends at school had a chocolate shop, man, I'd have been there all the time.

Ed Gamble

Well, so would your dad.

James Acaster

So, would my dad. My dad would be, like, 'Do you want me to drop you off at the chocolate shop? I don't mind.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes. Of course, he would.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

No, it wasn't. I never really saw children come in.

James Acaster

Was this, like, pre-salt in chocolate and stuff?

Richard Ayoade

Oh, yes, this wasn't all of that, kind of, business, and I have to say that the chocolates, well, I don't have to say, I'm choosing to say, let's have some autonomy. I'm choosing to say that the chocolates were excellent, so much so that I can't really eat any chocolate now without having a slight snobby reaction of just going, 'It's fine.' It's the closest I'll get to be a sommelier. I do have quite a refined chocolate pallet.



James Acaster
I'm jealous, man.

Ed Gamble
Yes.

Richard Ayoade
Yes.

James Acaster
This is great.

Richard Ayoade
Excellent milk chocolate. Very hard to do milk chocolate without it having a, sort of, chemically after-taste.

Ed Gamble
Yes.

Richard Ayoade
It's got to be fresh. You can't have preservatives. Unless you're buying chocolate from a refrigerated outlet, forget it. Forget it. Okay, it's like UHT milk.

James Acaster
Yes.

Richard Ayoade
That's basically what you're dealing with. So, let me say that. If people take anything away from today, I hope it's that.

James Acaster
Your dream main course?

Richard Ayoade
Lamb Madras from-

Ed Gamble
Very good.

James Acaster
We knew we were going to curry town.

Richard Ayoade
From Gandhi's in Kennington. Gandhi's restaurant in Kennington.

Ed Gamble
There it is.

Richard Ayoade
Excellent restaurant.

James Acaster
Yes?



Ed Gamble

How often do you have at a Gandhi's?

Richard Ayoade

As often as I can. There were times when it would be twice a week, sometimes.

Ed Gamble

Oh, wow.

Richard Ayoade

Everything's excellent. I always had the exact same meal.

James Acaster

Lamb madras?

Richard Ayoade

Lamb madras, pilau rice, half an onion bhaji, brinjal, bhindi bhaji, Peshawari naan, three poppadoms with all the dips.

James Acaster

Is bhindi bhaji okra?

Richard Ayoade

Okra.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

That's my side dish, sorry to skip ahead.

Ed Gamble

No, please, it all goes so well together.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it is.

James Acaster

We may as well talk about -

Richard Ayoade

Every time, I've had that for twenty years.

James Acaster: - come and have a curry that's.

Ed Gamble

For twenty years?

Richard Ayoade

Twenty years, that's the same order.

Ed Gamble

Did you say half an onion bhaji?



Richard Ayoade

Half an onion bhaji because it's two onion bhajis.

James Acaster

I thought we were coming to that.

Richard Ayoade

My wife, Lydia, does not like onion bhajis, so I have a half, I can't have two onion bhajis, that's a madness.

Ed Gamble

You're ordering two onion bhajis?

James Acaster

Or are you ordering a half?

Richard Ayoade

No, it's a portion of onion bhajis, there's normally two disks.

James Acaster

So you're having one onion bhaji?

Richard Ayoade

I'm having one. But if you an order bhaji potion from Gandhi's it's two disks of onion bhaji, I only want one.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So you're really having one onion bhaji.

Richard Ayoade

I'm having one onion bhaji, but within the portion system of Gandhi's an onion bhaji is two onion bhajis, okay? That's how they do it, that's how they deal.

Ed Gamble

Is that the same with the bhindi bhaji?

Richard Ayoade

No, I'll have the full bhindi because I'll share that.

James Acaster

A nice bowl, I love okra.

Richard Ayoade

Of okra.

James Acaster

With a side, with a-, sorry.

Richard Ayoade

Here's the thing. Okra, have you ever had okra soup?



James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

No.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, so the one meal my dad would ever make was-, oh, sorry, I just broke a glass, I just-, this buck and bronco stopped working. My Dad, whenever he had a tantrum, actually.

James Acaster

Yes?

Richard Ayoade

He would make this one which he called pepper soup, because he'd just go, 'I'm feeding myself now,' that was part of his tantrum, and this would last a week. So pepper soup is-, I can't believe I'm basically giving away the keys to the kingdom, this is one of the best meals that you'll ever have. Okay, tin tomatoes, an onion, chilli peppers, olive oil, salt, in a blender, you put that in a pot, you brown some meat, doesn't matter what meat, you could do it with a chicken, you could do it with ox tail, which I like, or you could do it with beef. Then you pour the pepper soup, as it's termed, over that meat, you can put a tomato puree as well if you like it more tomato-y-y, you cook that for a long time, that's pepper soup. With that, you have okra. So, you take the okra, you chop it very finely in disks, you boil that in water-, I don't know why it's funny. You boil that in water, and that's it, with some salt, it's excellent, and it becomes slightly slimey.

James Acaster

See, I like that. People that get so creeped out by okra going, 'Oh, it's slimey,' it's like, 'Fine, nice.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes, the slime's good.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

It really is a good way of sorting the chaff from the wheat.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Like people who are upset if you bump into them, I find that's the best way to determine whether someone's a person or not. People who bump into you and are angry, that's a level of optimism I can't cope with, They just hope that they never bump into anyone in their lives.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Richard Ayoade

And now it's happened, they just can't believe it.

Ed Gamble

They're livid.

James Acaster

Also, whenever people bump into each other, it's both persons' fault.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Unless someone's deliberately going around bumping people.

James Acaster

Sure.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and let's do Richard Ashcroft, in which case you should go, 'Oi.'

Ed Gamble

Or is he trying to sort the wheat from the chaff?

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

He literally is a sighter - Yes, he's a combine harvester. I would like to see Richard Ashcroft cover, 'I've got a brand new combine harvester,' but do the same thing but on a combine harvester.

Ed Gamble

Exactly the same video, yes.

Richard Ayoade

Where people are just being mowed down in the threshing wheels.

James Acaster

I love the side of pepper soup, I love that that was your Dad's way of throwing a tantrum, cooking a soup.

Ed Gamble

So good.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, and some OXO. This is why I've not got a cooking show, I have to get several of the ingredients, 'Oh, I forgot the main starter.'

James Acaster

Forgot ingredients.



Ed Gamble

You start the next episode with the ingredients that you should have took the week before.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, okay, I'm sorry.

James Acaster

I think if you had a cooking show, it would be the only one where people go, 'You've got to stick around for the post credits scene.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes. Oh, and salmon!

James Acaster

We'll wait with Richard.

Richard Ayoade

And salmon, sorry. We've just done the sauce.

James Acaster

Like a Marvel film.

James Acaster

I love the sound of Gandhi's.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Ever see Ben Kingsley in there?

Richard Ayoade

I recently did a film with Sir Ben.

James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Richard Ayoade

He was extraordinary. Amazing eyes. Incredible. Some people just have this incredible presence, but I wish you were a fixture of Gandhi's, but yes, he's incredible.

Ed Gamble

You should take him one day.

Richard Ayoade

I should.

Ed Gamble

How do you reckon that would go down in Gandhi's?



Richard Ayoade

We fell out. No. Well, I mean, imagine. Imagine if you have a restaurant, say you have Ed's burgers, and you came in. They'd go, 'Ah, titular-,'

Ed Gamble

Yes, they wouldn't believe it, would they?

Richard Ayoade

'This is wheels within wheels.' What's going on here? Yes, it must be whenever Art Garfunkel goes into Garfunkel's.

James Acaster

I guess, like, you can't get a suit from Moss Bros.

Richard Ayoade

I can't, and I'd love to. I have to swallow that hurt every day.

James Acaster

Yes, can't go in Moss Bros. They'd lose their minds. Moss is here.

Richard Ayoade

No, you can't. Exactly. Luckily, I think it's not well-known enough that I could still go into Moss Bros.

James Acaster

Yes. Are you sure? You won a BAFTA for that.

Richard Ayoade

I think so. Oh, please. I think-,

James Acaster

Come on.

Richard Ayoade

I think if there was a shop called The Guy From the IT Crowd, I think that would be harder, because I think that's generally the moniker applied.

James Acaster

Yes, so PC World is maybe harder for you.

Ed Gamble

It would be awful if-,

Richard Ayoade

PC World, of course, yes.

James Acaster

Harder for you to go into.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, PC World.

Ed Gamble

It would be dreadful if you went into a shop called The Guy From the IT Crowd, and they all went, 'Oh, we didn't mean you, we meant-'



Richard Ayoade

Yes, 'We meant the one who could act. Yes we meant that one.'

James Acaster

Did that character know he was funny?

Ed Gamble

No, none of us did.

Richard Ayoade

No, I don't think that character massively enjoyed humour at times, or found very specific things funny. There was one person who I knew who I vaguely had in mind before that show, and that person would say, 'That's funny,' instead of laughing, and just go, 'That's funny,' and that go, and then move on, which I quite liked. There was something quite-, it was a good level of approbation to it, yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Gandhi best picture winner.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it was.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And best actor.

Richard Ayoade

Best actor for Sir Ben.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and best curry house. Another award.

James Acaster

Best curry house as well. That's a category that year.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

James Acaster

Very good.

Ed Gamble

Raking in the awards.

Richard Ayoade

I wonder whether, when was Gandhi's restaurant open? I think maybe just before the film, maybe in 1982 I'm thinking.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I went there before, so it probably did get the honorary Oscar.



Richard Ayoade

When was Gandhi's 84? Or maybe it was earlier.

James Acaster

Wow. You literally know when the restaurant opened. That's how much you love it.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Just in case we need to - himself out there.

James Acaster

I mean, we're definitely talking post 1970 with Gandhi in the film, because I-,

Richard Ayoade

Oh yes. Wow, which came first? Okay.

Ed Gamble

Wow, here's what's happened. Firstly, I just want to say, incredible that you knew what year Gandhi's restaurant was open.

Richard Ayoade

Of course. I mean, why wouldn't I. I mean, it would just be such an insult for me not to know the origin story of Gandhi's.

Ed Gamble

Gandhi won the Oscar the same year Gandhi's was opened.

James Acaster

That's -

Richard Ayoade

Yes, exactly. My other favourite restaurant is of course Chariots of Fire.

James Acaster

Another curry house?

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's too spicy for me.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it's all flash-fried stuff. They do it at your table, from a chariot.

James Acaster

Yes. Also Best Picture winner.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, but I'm allergic to horses.

James Acaster

It's not as old as people think it is, Chariots of Fire actually, but also post 1970s. I know it's post 1970s.



Richard Ayoade

Yes. I think Chariots of Fire must be '84. I think that's why they did the whole British are coming thing, because there'd been a couple of British winners.

James Acaster

I keep saying post 1970s because it's going to get under Benito's skin, me knowing that. Do you want to know how, Benito? It's because I can name all the Oscar Best Picture winners from 1970 onwards.

Richard Ayoade

Can you?

James Acaster

No, he says it's boring. He says it's boring, Benito says. Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Do you know all of them in order?

James Acaster

No, I just know all of them randomly.

Richard Ayoade

Okay.

Ed Gamble

Go on?

James Acaster

I can name them all.

Richard Ayoade

Can you?

Ed Gamble

Why would you not learn them in order?

James Acaster

That's too hard.

Richard Ayoade

What won in 1970?

James Acaster

Pattern or Platoon. I can't remember which.

Richard Ayoade

It definitely wasn't Platoon, because that was '86.

James Acaster

Pattern.

Richard Ayoade

It must have been Pattern.



Ed Gamble

Wow, you really did not learn the order.

James Acaster

Pattern, then French Connection, then I'm done.

Ed Gamble

Godfather.

James Acaster

Godfather. Something in between, then Godfather Part II.

Richard Ayoade

Ah yes.

Ed Gamble

Godfather, my favourite Italian restaurant.

Richard Ayoade

Very good.

James Acaster

Thank you. Getting it back on track for you.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, that was good.

Ed Gamble

I'm going to go to Gandhi's.

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

I'm worried you might have blown on your spot though.

Richard Ayoade

You would. I was worried. I did weight it before I mentioned them, but-,

Ed Gamble

Because Tim Key came on and refused to name his favourite curry house.

James Acaster

He wouldn't do it.

Richard Ayoade

Key's very canny, isn't he?

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

Yes, he's smart.

James Acaster

He would not do it. Here's my question for you, Ed. When you go to Gandhi's, your portion of onion bhaji, are you going to do the whole thing, full portion?

Richard Ayoade

Are you going to get double, two discs?

Ed Gamble

No, I'm going to have the one disk. I'm doing the full Ayoade, and that's what I'm saying when I go in as well.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. I mean, perhaps they could name a half onion bhaji after me, like they do in Hollywood restaurants where a sandwich is named after you. That would be nice.

James Acaster

Yes, that's fun.

Richard Ayoade

If it's a disc of onion.

Ed Gamble

If you have a dish named after you and it's just less of a normal dish-,

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it's like the same thing but a really mean portion. The Rooney.

James Acaster

Half a portion.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. Maybe just any half portion can be that.

Ed Gamble

Yes. 'Can I get that Richard Ayoade?' Yes, 'Can you half the price for that because of structural problems physiologically?'

Richard Ayoade

They should offer that in restaurants, 'Can I half-size that?' Because it's too much.

Ed Gamble

Yes, half a burger.

James Acaster

But they've got to say-,

Richard Ayoade

Yes, they'd have to use my-, would I get a cut?

James Acaster

Half.



Ed Gamble

You'd get half.

Richard Ayoade

I'd get the other half?

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

They'd just post the other half of the food to me?

Ed Gamble

That's what it is, yes. The save the rest of it for you.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, so I'd know what everyone else is eating by the food trucks that came up.

James Acaster

We're onto dream drink.

Richard Ayoade

Now, I would say alcohol-free beer.

James Acaster

Wow.

Richard Ayoade

Call me Billy Connolly.

James Acaster

This has never happened before, obviously.

Richard Ayoade

I now prefer it.

James Acaster

Really? Wow.

Richard Ayoade

The technology, it's like CGI. It's unbelievable what they're doing.

Ed Gamble

It is amazing. Some of those alcohol-free beers are fantastic.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

I mean, yes, and at the risk of blowing up another spot, I'd get it from Hop Burns & Black, from Glen and Jen. Two people from New Zealand, Glen and Jen. Imagine that in a New Zealand accent. 'Glen and Jen.'



Ed Gamble

Oh, it's a nightmare in New Zealand, yes.

Richard Ayoade

It's excellent, yes. Excellent purveyors. I'd have them deal with it.

Ed Gamble

What are some of your favourites?

Richard Ayoade

I think it's called Lurvig, they do, and they do a mango one and a grapefruit one that's excellent.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Richard Ayoade

Possibly if I were allowed an additional drink, I would have a mango lassi.

Ed Gamble

I think we can give you an additional drink.

James Acaster

You like mango? I'm getting - You've got the mango alcohol-free beer you like.

Richard Ayoade

I definitely like mango, yes. The alcohol-free beer, I'd probably have a grapefruit alcohol-free beer, might be the best one I've had, although, I mean, recently, the alcohol-free beers I've had, it's a new frontier.

Ed Gamble

Yes, like you say, I could chug them.

Richard Ayoade

That entry-level to what they're doing, and no disrespect to Lucky Saint, who are doing a bang-up job, but there are people out there who I'd call poets, I'd call poets of the alcohol-free beer, professionals. I don't know how they're doing it. I don't know what they were doing twenty years ago. Where were they? I mean, in terms of the steepness of the curve of expertise, I can't really see a parallel to this, apart from maybe in the munitions race. I think the last time there was a development this quick was probably when they developed nuclear power.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Has it been so long since you've had alcoholic beer that now alcohol-free beer just tastes like alcoholic beer?

Richard Ayoade: Yes. I would select an alcohol-free beer over an alcohol-free-, I tire easily, and I've very little energy. I can barely, you know, wake up of a day, so anything that's compromising that, I've got to take a long, hard look at it. Now, I mean, if in the dream restaurant I for some reason had energy, I could consider it.

Ed Gamble

I think stick with what you like.



Richard Ayoade

I think I'd go with that.

James Acaster

I don't know how much energy you're going to have.

Richard Ayoade

I've got no energy.

James Acaster

You're focusing on eating on a diving board. I think that's going to drain your core strength.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, I'm terrified of falling down.

Ed Gamble

Yes, your core strength at this point. You are rock-solid.

Richard Ayoade

I am testing every sinew. I'm probably quivering by now.

James Acaster

And you like a mango lassi.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, please, thank you very much. Yes, I will have that.

Ed Gamble

Lassi.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, a lassi. That's Scottish for a girl, yes.

James Acaster

Your dream desert now. Very exciting. Your mother owned a chocolate shop. You like sweet and salty popcorn.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. Okay.

James Acaster

I'm feeling good about this.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I think it's going to be something sweet.

Richard Ayoade

Okay. I think after a meal of this type, which is a heavy meal lamb madras, it's a heavy meal, I think you'd probably want a sorbet.

Ed Gamble

Very nice.



Richard Ayoade

And again, this sounds like I'm just doing a work for the local area, but Fabulous Ice Fires, I'd have the man. His name is Tazir. He, as proprietor of Fabulous Ice Fires, this is the finest ice cream you'll ever have. This is-

Ed Gamble

It's a great name for an ice cream shop.

Richard Ayoade

It's extraordinary, this ice cream. He travels the world, winning ice cream competitions, like a kind of Paul Newman of the ice cream world.

Ed Gamble

Wow, what the hell?

Richard Ayoade

Just showing up, whipping up a batch, bringing home some tin. I mean, it's incredible. Strawberry Fields Forever, I think is a prize-winner, international prize-winner, which is a strawberry ice cream the like of which you will-, I mean, you need to really get this.

James Acaster

This is so exciting.

Ed Gamble

I mean, James is so excited. Look at your face.

James Acaster

Yes.

Richard Ayoade

Their rum and raisin, they put aside for me. When it comes in, a tub goes into the freezer. I will collect that.

Ed Gamble

Secret stash. Half a portion.

Richard Ayoade

No, a full tub.

Ed Gamble

Oh wow, you're going full tub.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, I'm going full tub. No, I'm not-,

James Acaster

What makes that rum and raisin better than any rum and raisin than you've ever had?

Richard Ayoade

I can't-, I mean, if we knew this, we would be him.

James Acaster

Sure.



Richard Ayoade

I mean, I don't know.

Ed Gamble

How often are you going into Fabulous Ice Fires?

Richard Ayoade

Most mornings.

Ed Gamble

Most mornings?

Richard Ayoade

No. Well, he had a bit of a sabbatical recently, and that was tough, so it's been a while, although, I mean, I have to say, the last time I had this ice cream was yesterday, it was yesterday.

James Acaster

And it was the rum and raisin?

Richard Ayoade

It was the rum and raisin, yes, but I don't think I could have rum and raisin after a curry.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Well, it depends. I mean, a lot of people take the dream restaurant to mean they can fit in as much food as possible.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, there's a palette cleanser.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but you're thinking more practically, I think.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. That's a funny dream, isn't it? I mean, because do you want something where after each course you'll just return to-, this is what I-, is the restaurant the dream, or are you in the dream? As in, are you a dream?

James Acaster

Are you a dream? Are you there?

Richard Ayoade

This is getting quite Inception, but do you have dream properties, like infinite appetite?

James Acaster

You can do, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you can do, but it would be the dream restaurant that imbues you with those properties, as opposed to you being a dream yourself.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, I worry that there are too many premises there.



Ed Gamble

Yes. Oh, it's quite complicated, yes.

Richard Ayoade

I feel I have to be the same, but the restaurant is magical.

Ed Gamble

Okay.

Richard Ayoade

If I'm magical, well, I can't imagine that, and then there are no parameters. Where am I getting my bearings? Everything's magic now.

Ed Gamble

Sure, yes. You keep it within the realms of things you can imagine.

Richard Ayoade

I'll keep it so it's just the stuff in the restaurant.

Ed Gamble

Yes. It's like a chicken in a lunch box. You've got to-,

Richard Ayoade

Yes, exactly.

James Acaster

I get that as well, because I think that if you're imaginings your dream meal, you want it to be something you could have, like it could happen for you in real life. That's what's exciting about it.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, because I don't want to, sort of, somehow be, like, a hammerhead shark or something and just go, 'I'll just have plankton.'

Ed Gamble

Yes. I mean, we're not saying that you're imagining you're a hammerhead shark or anything, the only thing we're asking you to imagine is having rum and raisin ice cream after a curry.

Richard Ayoade

But I could in the dream restaurant. Yes, but has anyone within the dream restaurant said, 'Well, I'd like to be,' for example, 'A lion. I've just finished a race, and just give me some antelope. I'd be delighted. Starter, main course. Drink is blood. This is my dream. I want to know what it feels like to be a lion'?

Ed Gamble

No. The only people to fully utilise the dream in that way are, I guess, Bob Mortimer I think wanted to travel through time and see the life of a couple across the other side of a restaurant.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And Richard Herring who wanted blackbirds in a pie.

Richard Ayoade

Okay.



James Acaster

Yes, Richard Herring very much utilised the dream nature of it for every course, and I think people were unfairly angry with him. People were very angry with him for doing that.

Richard Ayoade

He got some hostility?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But if someone came on and said, 'I want to be a lion and eat like a lion,' I think we would allow that.

Ed Gamble

Oh yes, for sure.

Richard Ayoade

Okay. Ah, it's a bit late now, isn't it? On the Bob one, I very much went along with him on the hot-dog as, if it wasn't okra, I would have-, I wouldn't have an Odeon hot-dog, I'd have the hot-dogs that you get in the airport in Norway. My mum was Norwegian. I'd always have a hot-dog there, pølse, white bun. Again, the toppings. It would have crunchy onion, dried onion, ketchup, mustard, Norwegian mustard, which is slightly sweeter, and potato salad.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Ooh, lovely.

Ed Gamble

Oh wow.

James Acaster

In the bun?

Richard Ayoade

On top of the bun, but it could be within the bun, and I very often would get two. I'd eat one at the stand and the other in the car.

Ed Gamble

Yes, fantastic.

James Acaster

Would you let your dog put his finger through the sauce and mix it together, and then say, 'It's good to be alive'?

Richard Ayoade

I mean, I very much liked hearing about that, but it's a level of intimacy that, as you can probably tell, was not afforded to me.

Ed Gamble

Also, someone can't swirl a potato salad, can they?



James Acaster

No, you can't.

Richard Ayoade

You can't. I mean, it's too chunky to swirl, isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's too chunky to swirl.

Richard Ayoade

I think you've got to put the potato salad on top. There's something about putting ketchup and mustard on top of potato salad. It aesthetically doesn't work.

Ed Gamble

Yes it just doesn't work, and also then your dad would get it on his finger and he'd go, 'Ah, I feed myself now.'

Richard Ayoade

Yes, exactly, and then he's pummelling the bucking bronco and we're ejected from the airport.

James Acaster

So, you want a sorbet?

Richard Ayoade

I think I would be tempted to-, this is the other thing about having a meal. Sometimes it's quite nice to be surprised, and I would like the agency to be removed from me, and I'd like a selection of fresh ice creams and possibly fruit.

Ed Gamble

Okay.

Richard Ayoade

You know sometimes where you're at a restaurant and someone says, 'Here's some fruits' at the end? Or often they've ordered in too many watermelons and they need to get rid of them. Something like that is always incredibly pleasing, because you didn't want it, but now someone's put a plate of watermelon you go, 'Ah,' and it feels very good.

Ed Gamble

So, would you like a sort of trolley? Would you like someone to bring out a trolley of-,

Richard Ayoade

I don't want the choice, because then now, I've got the tyranny of choice with the whole trolley. If there's a Black Forest gateau, I'll go, 'Well, I would like some of that but there's ice cream as well. There are various puddings, meringues,' so in a way, a pudding buffet for me is a kind of hell, because I can't have all of it. I know that, through bitter experience, I can't have all of it, but I am sad if I don't have all of it.

James Acaster

So, a selection of ice creams and fruit.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, I think so. I think someone needs to exercise portion control.

James Acaster

There are no fruits that you would say, 'Do not bring that fruit out, that would ruin it'?



Richard Ayoade

I'd be disappointed if it was just bananas.

Ed Gamble

Yes, that's not-,

James Acaster

My favourite fruit.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but you wouldn't want it at the end of a meal as, like, 'Oh, would sir care for a banana'.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, but for a desert, just no.

James Acaster

Probably not. I probably wouldn't just have a banana, yes.

Richard Ayoade

If someone just put a bunch of bananas on the table and just went, 'And here's your bill.'

Ed Gamble

With the bill like it was a mint.

Richard Ayoade

'Here's your bunch of bananas. Now get out.'

James Acaster

Benito has found-,

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, it's strong. In a way, it's a mixture between-,

James Acaster

That's the Ice Fires man.

Richard Ayoade

Yes. He looks a bit like the dude-, no, he looks a bit-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, looks like Sam Elliott, right?

Richard Ayoade

Exactly, he looks a bit like Sam Elliott in The Big Lebowski, but also has an element of a kind of a Tour de France winner.

Ed Gamble

Yes. That picture also looks like it's on a fancy dress shop website for a chef costume.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, very much so. I mean, it's a look that has not arrived without effort.



Ed Gamble

Yes. I love it. I can't wait to go to Fabulous Ice Fires.

James Acaster

I love that you interact with him as well, the two of you. I'd love to be in there and see that exchange.

Richard Ayoade

It's good, yes.

Ed Gamble

Quick question before we read your menu back.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Do you remember finding Ivo Graham eating a katsu curry with a Stan Lee of himself on a train?

James Acaster

Oh yes, this is what-, oh do you know what we can put everything else aside.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, so what-, is this a story in which I have been rude to someone.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

No, not at all. It's a story that Ivo told on the podcast.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, I always fear about that because in most interactions I have at some stage I'll find out that I've done something that I won't have noticed. People always go, 'I saw you on the Old Kent Road on a bicycle and I waved, but you didn't wave back.' And I go, 'I think I was probably cycling really fast on the Old Kent Road and that's-'

James Acaster

With all due respect to these people who do they think they're talking to because I would not think-, you know, I think you're a very nice person I've nothing negative to say.

Richard Ayoade

You're kind to lie.

James Acaster

But I would not think, 'Yes, there's Richard always waving at everyone.'

Richard Ayoade

I would certainly wave if I saw someone, I like to wave, it's just I am very much in the zone cycling.

Ed Gamble

This is not a story where you -



Richard Ayoade

What have I done, Ivo Graham he was eating katsu curry?

James Acaster

Yes, so 8 Out of 10 Cats does Countdown.

Richard Ayoade

Okay, yes.

James Acaster

Ivo has brought with him on the show-

Richard Ayoade

We had maybe the same shirt or a similar shirt I remember being on the show.

Ed Gamble

He did, he went to the same place you buy your shirts.

Richard Ayoade

Right yes.

Ed Gamble

And bought a shirt. That was a supplementary part of the story where he told you that you had the same shirt and rightly you were like, 'Okay.'

Richard Ayoade

That's a conversational tactic that I-, that's a lack of imagination and someone once told me okay, that someone went up to Harold Pinter, I'm not equating myself with Harold Pinter. Someone went up to Harold Pinter and said, 'Oh, I was at school with you. We were at school together from seven to eleven, you're Harold, we were at the same school.' And apparently, he went, 'So.' Which is amazing. Yes, okay so he's eating katsu curry, where is he?

James Acaster

Ivo bought a representation of himself onto 8 Out of 10 Cats, a little-

Ed Gamble

A little standee of himself wearing his Eton uniform.

James Acaster

Eton robes or whatever. And then on the train on the way home because you go from Manchester back to London he got a katsu curry, he realised he didn't have any cutlery to eat it with so ate it with the little standee of himself and apparently you saw him doing this at one point and it has stayed with him forever.

Richard Ayoade

Now I think Malcolm Gladwell would say, 'I'd default to truth there.' So I probably would have imagined he was just eating it with there normal implements and probably-, I don't know I have no memory of going, 'I remember when Ivo Graham was eating something with an effigy of himself.' Even if he had been eating it I think I would have gone, 'Oh okay, you've run out of cutlery.' I don't think I would have even questioned it. Also that show ends relatively late, I would have just been-, as I've said I've very low energy, I would have been up from eight, brushing my teeth, getting my ice cream down me and would have been in a, sort of, thug.

Ed Gamble

I think he'll be relieved to hear that.



Richard Ayoade

Okay, did he feel judged?

Ed Gamble

No, not at all I think he was just embarrassed.

James Acaster

He felt pathetic.

Richard Ayoade

No, I think if anything I would have admired him more for doing that and would have hoped in a way that that was his eating instruments. You know-

James Acaster

That if you go through his cutlery draw it's just loads of little figurines.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, or just one which I think would-, You know when you have a Thermos and it has the little spork on the side, the idea would just be to have one eating implement.

Ed Gamble

So and then you can imagine him washing it up it, just like washing his own little face.

Richard Ayoade

Exactly, yes. It's not dishwasher safe I wouldn't have thought, no it's a hand wash.

James Acaster

Okay, so just one last question because this your dream meal, do you want to eat the whole dream meal with a little Stan Lee or Ivo Graham?

Richard Ayoade

I think I'd have a spork.

James Acaster

Like a Spivo?

Richard Ayoade

Don't get me wrong I really like Ivo Graham, but his face being that close to my mouth throughout a meal I'm not sure.

Ed Gamble

You could eat it with his feet?

Richard Ayoade

It's a kind of dream, but I'm not sure it's the dream that I would initiate. If it happened in the dram I'd possibly accept it, but I wouldn't try and elicit that dream.

James Acaster

Still water. You want popadums with all the dips on all the sections, no tomatoes, no warm tomatoes.

Richard Ayoade

Thank you.



James Acaster

Starter, sweet and salty popcorn from?

Richard Ayoade

From North Cross Road.

James Acaster

Main course, lamb madras from Gandhi's with all the trimmings.

Richard Ayoade

Everything, yes.

James Acaster

Side dish, the Bindi Bhaji. Drink, grapefruit, alcohol free beer and a mango lassi. Dessert, Fabulous Ice Fire selection of ice creams and a selection of fruit

Richard Ayoade

Yes. Brought by Ivo Graham.

James Acaster

Brought to you by Ivo Graham of course.

Richard Ayoade

Yes, so he can feature and we can repair the hurts of the past and we can move on and we can all heal.

James Acaster

Will Ivo be allowed to eat with you as well at point?

Richard Ayoade

Ivo can join, he can join both of us on the dining, on the dining board.

Ed Gamble

The dining board.

Richard Ayoade

Come on now, come on now, hey now (talking over each other 01.12.45).

James Acaster

I'm going to insist that Ivo has to eat with the Stan Lee.

Richard Ayoade

Yes.

Ed Gamble

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

Richard Ayoade

You're very kind to tolerate me.

Ed Gamble

There we are, wonderful episode.

James Acaster

Wonderful episode wonderful menu as well I feel like that all sounds really tasty.



Ed Gamble

Really tasty menu although I've got to say my personal highlight description food wise pepper soup.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'm surprised pepper soup didn't sneak on to the menu somehow because that sounded amazing. I'm attached to such a fun memory of his dad having a tantrum.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

If it's good tantrum food you know I'm into it.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean I like it when someone breaks down a recipe, breaks down all the steps because in my hear time like, 'Someone, at least one listener is going to do that.'

Ed Gamble

Well you, it's normally. You normally go home and you do that thing.

James Acaster

I normally do, yes it's just nice for me to get a recipe.

Ed Gamble

James doesn't have any cookbooks he just listens back to the podcast.

James Acaster

It's the only bits of the podcasts I ever listen back to.

Ed Gamble

'But he did, and he sent me the time code for when Richard did the recipe for pepper soup?'

James Acaster

I say to my girlfriend, 'We're having pepper soup tonight.' 'What?' Yes, I like that a lot, I'm obviously going to go to the ice cream place.

Ed Gamble

You were gripping the table you were so excited to hear about Fabulous Ice Fires.

James Acaster

Can I just go now?

Ed Gamble

And now we've seen a picture of the guy I mean we've got to go.

James Acaster

I mean if people have got this far in the podcast and you haven't Googled the guy then you have to do that now. And I will be surprised if anyone who likes ice cream doesn't go to Fabulous Ice Fires because my God, obviously the ice cream sounds amazing, the guy looks like a legend, we all want to go. Richard's book, The Book That No One Wanted To Read, is out 6th of October 2022.



Ed Gamble

And he didn't say, 'Broccoli.'

James Acaster

He didn't say, 'Broccoli.' I don't think so.

Ed Gamble

I think he didn't

James Acaster

Sometimes I think, 'Aww we should have dug down into what the ingredients in the madras were maybe there was some broccoli in there.'

Ed Gamble

As far as I know, there is never broccoli in madras.

James Acaster

No, Gandhi's might be though.

Ed Gamble

Gandhi's might throw in a bit of broc. Anything you want to plug James, you've got a book haven't you?

James Acaster

Yes, yes, James Acaster, Guide to Quitting Social Media - Being the Best You You Can Be and Curing Yourself of Loneliness, Volume One, is out wherever you get your books, very excited.

Ed Gamble

I am back on tour doing my show, Electric, all over the place, go onto edgamble.co.uk for details. I'm doing some big old rooms around the country, come and fill up some of those seats.

James Acaster

Yes, very much, I'm looking forward to seeing it Ed.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Thank you very much to Richard for coming on, a wonderful episode and we will see you next week.

James Acaster

Yes.