



Off Menu – Ep180 – Reece Shearsmith

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, slicing the squid of conversation, dunking it in the batter of good humour, and frying it in the oil of the internet. We're making podcast calamari, baby.

James Acaster

I absolutely love that. My name is James A Calamari, and that is Ed Squidbull.

Ed Gamble

Ed Squidbull, and of course, we are joined as ever by the wedge of lemon, this is the great Benito.

James Acaster

Squirty, squirty, wedge of lemon, spray them over all the food, and you might not see him, but the flavour is there.

Ed Gamble

It's not the same without him.

James Acaster

Yes, throughout the podcast the flavour is there, man. You've got to-, but, you've got to give him a squeeze.

Ed Gamble

Yes, he's sharp, he's abrasive, he's yellow.

James Acaster

This is the Off Menu podcast. We have a dream restaurant, Ed and I, and we invite a guest every single week. We ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order, and this week, our guest is Reece Shearsmith.

Ed Gamble

Reece Shearsmith. Oh, Reece Shearsmith, League of Gentlemen, Inside No. 9, Psychoville and many, many other brilliant things, James.

James Acaster

Ahoy, my hearties.

Ed Gamble

What's that?

James Acaster



National trash (ph 01.20).

Ed Gamble

We're in national trash territory, for sure.

James Acaster

Yes, not buried trash, actually.

Ed Gamble

Not buried trash.

James Acaster

That was the-, I just realised, pirates is more buried trash.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

As of when we're recording this, Reece Shearsmith is not buried.

Ed Gamble

We'll save the pirate impression for when we release an episode with a national treasure who, since recording the episode, has passed.

James Acaster

Yes, and that will be buried treasure.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And, well, I mean, this is a guest who will love it, when he's dead.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Reece Shearsmith, I imagine, is very much looking forward to being dead.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, he loves all that stuff, doesn't he?

James Acaster

He loves all that stuff. Hopefully, we'll get a dark menu, maybe. Some spooky stories.



Ed Gamble

Some spooky stuff. But, hopefully, he will not die before he does the whole run of The Unfriend, James, it's a new play that he's in, very much looking forward to seeing it. It's been written by Steven Moffat and it's being directed by Mark Gatiss.

James Acaster

I mean, come on, this is the dream team we're talking here, this is very exciting. I really like the sound-, I mean, hopefully, we'll get some more info from Reece about it.

Ed Gamble

I'm sure we will. It's on right now at the Criterion, it's a strictly limited season, so go the theunfriend.com to book tickets for that. I'm going, maybe you'll be there on the same night as I am.

James Acaster

Yes, I'm going. Maybe you'll be there on the same night as I am. So, listen, I love Reece Shearsmith. I mean, I try not to fanboy out, but if Reece Shearsmith says a secret ingredient, an ingredient which we deem to be unacceptable, we will kick him out of the dream restaurant.

Ed Gamble

We will.

James Acaster

And this week, our secret ingredient is special stuff.

Ed Gamble

Special stuff. Special stuff.

James Acaster

It's a reference.

Ed Gamble

It's a reference.

James Acaster

It's a reference for the guest.

Ed Gamble

We know the reference.

James Acaster

The reference.

Ed Gamble



We know the reference, that's a-

James Acaster

The reference.

Ed Gamble

Restaurant reference.

James Acaster

Welcome to the reference.

Ed Gamble

Going to level with you, this is the first thing we've recorded today, and I've not really slept very well, hence, I can't say the word 'reference'.

James Acaster

Yes, I feel fit as a fiddle though, so I'm very-, one of those rare occasions where I'm picking up the slack.

Ed Gamble

Yes, please, please pick up that slack.

James Acaster

This is what it sounds like when I'm picking up the slack, is that, you do notice that there is slack there still.

Ed Gamble

But don't worry, there will be no slack in this interview, very excited to chat to Reece Shearsmith.

James Acaster

Special stuff is from the League of Gentlemen, by the way.

Ed Gamble

Yes, they know that.

James Acaster

Well, some people might not know, we've got some young listeners.

Ed Gamble

If they're listening to this, if they're excited to listen to this and they're like, 'Reece Shearsmith', they're going to know special stuff.

James Acaster

It's people in the pies.



Ed Gamble

No, they never say, that's the point.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, but we know it's people.

Ed Gamble

No we don't, do we?

James Acaster

We do know it's people.

Ed Gamble

We don't know it's people, special stuff. Why does it give people nosebleeds?

James Acaster

Yes, that's a good point.

Ed Gamble

Yes. This is the Off Menu menu of Reece Shearsmith.

James Acaster

Reece Shearsmith.

Ed Gamble

Welcome, Reece, to the dream restaurant.

Reece Shearsmith

Thank you, thank you for having me.

James Acaster

Welcome, Reece Shearsmith to the dream restaurant, been expecting you for some time.

Reece Shearsmith

Thank you very much, now, I need some clarification about what the dream restaurant can do, because can it shrink me down to the size of a sparrow?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.



Ed Gamble

Of course, you've got a genie here, you know, the genie can do that.

James Acaster

Yes, I can do that.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Good, because my location, if you want to know it, is a nest, so, so if that's alright.

James Acaster

Yes, I (talking over each other 04.37).

Ed Gamble

Yes, of course it's alright, it's allowed.

Reece Shearsmith

Good, (talking over each other 04.37).

James Acaster

So, the dream restaurant for you is a nest, so you're the size of a sparrow?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

I can't say it's come up before, but it is allowed.

James Acaster

I guess, we'll ask why?

Ed Gamble

Really?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, I wondered if you were going to ask it, but it's, the reason is, when I was little, I read a very little known Roald Dahl book, it's very slim, called the Magic Finger, and in that, it's not really celebrated. Maybe you'll know why when I explain it, about a girl that turns the next door neighbours that she doesn't like into sparrows, birds. And then, these big birds end up in her house with arms, but they've got wings. I'm not bothered about the wing part, otherwise I can't eat the meal.

Ed Gamble



Yes.

James Acaster

Thought about that.

Reece Shearsmith

I thought about that. But, one of the nicest bits in it, it's not meant to be nice, I re-read it recently, you know when you have that strange memory when you're sure of things and you look back at them and they're completely different. And, me and Mark and Steven have a collective memory of an armchair thriller with Martin Jarvis, who gets sent a box of chocolates and he opens it up and it's dog shit rolled into chocolates. And, that's not true, that never happened, well, it happened, but it wasn't Martin Jarvis. What a weird collective memory.

Ed Gamble

I feel like you've remembered the main bit of that, though.

James Acaster

Also, (talking over each other 05.50)-,

Ed Gamble

If there was an armchair play with Martin Jarvis, and he just had some chocolates and you'd all remembered some dog shit being wrapped up in there, that would be weirder.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, I guess so.

James Acaster

Also, if I was to kind of think what part of that TV show you three had made up in your heads, it would not be the Martin Jarvis part, it would be people eating dog shit in a box of (talking over each other 06.10).

Reece Shearsmith

So anyway, yes, the story of the Magic Finger, by Roald Dahl, is this little girl transforms these mean neighbours into sparrows, and they have to make a nest to sleep because they can no longer live in a house. They build a nest and it's in a tree, and one of the nicest, cosiest bits of it in my memory, and this is sort of trajectory for my entire menu for my dream restaurant endeavours, because it's a nice, cosy feeling. And, increasingly as I get older, all my-, I cling onto the nice memories of childhood that make me feel happy. One of these memories was, when they build this nest and they're in it for the night, it pours down with rain and they're in the nest, and it's this very cosy memory of-, I remember thinking, 'I'd like to do that and be in a nest at night time while it's raining,' the pitter patter on the trees, and in fact, a raging storm. Maybe it's a little bit like being in a tent when it's pouring down with rain, there's something great about it, isn't it? So, that's where I want my meal to happen, first of all.

Ed Gamble



Wow.

James Acaster

Lovely, yes, absolutely.

Reece Shearsmith

So, you can get the stuff up the tree, no problem, that's all fine?

James Acaster

Yes. We can get it up the tree.

Ed Gamble

Yes, (talking over each other 07.15).

Reece Shearsmith

Good, well (talking over each other 07.15).

Ed Gamble

Are you a sparrow forever, then, after that? Or, are you going-

Reece Shearsmith

No, she is kind and the girl turns them back, and then there's a redemptive quality to the story.

Ed Gamble

But, you in the dream restaurant, you're down to the size of a sparrow to eat the meal, are you then going to be full-sized Reece again?

Reece Shearsmith

While I'm eating?

Ed Gamble

No, after you've eaten.

Reece Shearsmith

Oh, after I've eaten, yes, I'll go back to normal, yes. I'd come down from the tree when the meal's over and go about my life.

Ed Gamble

You wouldn't be full then.

James Acaster

You'd have to have fed yourself as full-sized Reece.

Reece Shearsmith



Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. And, it's not-, the meal is now going to be an extension of this whole situation like, worms or anything.

Ed Gamble

(talking over each other 07.45).

Reece Shearsmith

Then the meal is, it's the meal.

Ed Gamble

Human food.

Reece Shearsmith

Human food, yes.

James Acaster

Is it raining during the meal, so you can hear the pitter patter?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, yes, yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Definitely, yes, otherwise there's no point to the nest.

James Acaster

That's what you wanted.

Reece Shearsmith

Definitely, yes.

James Acaster

Are you a fan of food in general, are you a foodie?

Reece Shearsmith



I was thinking about, am I a foodie, I'm quite obsessed with my weight and not-, but only through vanity from filming, so I always try to not err on getting fat. But, I think I could easily be-, I could eat a lot of food unbidden and become-,

Ed Gamble

Do you ever not think about writing an episode for the next series of Inside No. 9, where you do like, a sort of method thing where you allow yourself to change body shape to play a character?

Reece Shearsmith

That would be so good, yes. I mean, the best characters, and we don't do it very often now, but-, is when you wear padding, because then it doesn't matter what's happened to you underneath, it's the best ever when you wear like, size 40 trousers, or whatever it might be. But, it's increasingly hard to not remain slim. I have a very strict-, and I've just recently broken my foot, so I can't do it, but I'm quite on the side of fitness, I have a morning regime with these very rich ladies, that we've got, it's like a sergeant major man that does a workout with us every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (talking over each other 08.53).

Ed Gamble

You and the rich ladies.

James Acaster

And the sergeant major man.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, and the sergeant major man, that's not his name, I'm not going to tell you his name, but yes. And, he's kind, he's like a sergeant major but he's nice with it, so we don't get-, you don't get told off, you're encouraged, yes. And, it's outside and it's nice now, and it's all weathers, and I used to really like doing it. I've not done it for too long now because I was filming and that stopped it, and then I broke my foot, so I've not been able to get back on it.

James Acaster

It's gutting isn't it, when you find a type of exercise you enjoy, you're actually doing it quite regularly, you're like, 'I'm getting back onto-, ' especially like, you know, since the pandemic and stuff.

Reece Shearsmith

Absolutely, yes.

James Acaster

We all fell behind that kind of stuff, you start getting back on it again, and then something like breaking your foot.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.



Ed Gamble

Yes, it's like, 'Goddammit'.

Reece Shearsmith

A silly, silly accident, yes, and it's like being through a door, isn't it? You're either completely, fully doing it and can't not do it, or you just-, 'Why did I ever think I was doing that? I don't do that, I seat.' So, I'm the other side of the door at the moment with the door firmly closed, and just looking through at all the fit people.

James Acaster

Yes, all the rich ladies.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Would you ever go down to hang out with the sergeant major and the rich ladies with the broken foot, just to sort of pick up the vibes?

Reece Shearsmith

I might walk by with the (TC 00:10:00) cane, 9am in the morning where I know they'll be, marching down the steps and rolling-, and doing, you know, prone (ph 10.09) work on the side of the hill, and look at them enviously, weirdly. But, yes, I don't know, it would make me feel too unfit to do that, I'd have to-, I have to-, I'm in it, or out of it. And, there's a WhatsApp group, and I sort of mute the WhatsApp group, because I can't bear the-, I still see everyone, 'Nine o'clock tomorrow' and, 'Thanks for a great morning, it was great, wasn't it?' Now, I wasn't part of it, you've all lost about 1,000 calories, I've done nothing, I've eaten some Jaffa cakes. So, that is a constant reminder of how much I'm not doing, so food wise, it's a slight adversarial quality to food because, I try to eat healthily but not-, I'm sometimes-, then I'll go on that weird crash course of having Slim Fast and dieting, and trying to be thin for a duration, and then not mind again, because I think, no one's going to take a picture of me now for ages, so it doesn't matter.

James Acaster

It's the pictures that-, that's the deterrent.

Reece Shearsmith

It's the only reason.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

And, the only reason I'm even now not-, I'm shaven today, and you know, why would I be if I wasn't coming to see you?



James Acaster

Oh, (talking over each other 11.13).

Reece Shearsmith

Special, yes, I put clothes on. I mean, I only maintain the existence of humanoid form, because I am in front of people at certain times in my existence.

James Acaster

Yes, so that's the only reason like, you do any of that sort of, any manners.

Reece Shearsmith

And washing.

James Acaster

Being polite.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, if I didn't have to encounter any people, which I don't like doing, I think I'd be some sort of troll creature, because, why not? No need for (talking over each other 11.37).

Ed Gamble

It's good for not being recognised as well, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, of course, yes.

James Acaster

Well, talking about middle class England's obsession with good manners, you could do with doing a play soon called The Unfriend.

Reece Shearsmith

That's right.

Ed Gamble

That's really good, James.

Reece Shearsmith

What a good link.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster



Not bad, eh?

Reece Shearsmith

No.

James Acaster

It's one of my better ones.

Reece Shearsmith

It's seamless, to me. I mean, I barely even know you've brought it up.

James Acaster

Yes, I'm quite pleased with that.

Ed Gamble

Well, I heard you dropped the manners thing in, and I was like, no, that's rung a little bell in my head.

Reece Shearsmith

Talking about, and I thought, we haven't really been talking about that (talking over each other 12.00).

Ed Gamble

(talking over each other 12.00).

James Acaster

Yes, hadn't really been, but-

Reece Shearsmith

So in fact, well, no, it's alright, it's fine actually, yes.

James Acaster

It's a good first draft.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. And yes, I am doing a play about manners, I guess you could say that, yes. Steven Moffat wrote this play called The Unfriend, which we did in Chichester at the festival theatre last year. It's a true story about this-, his neighbours, who went on a cruise. It's sort of an unbelievable story but it was all true, and he listened to them and he said, 'Can I have this as an idea?' And, he wrote a play about it. Debbie and Peter, his neighbours, went on holiday on a cruise, and they met and befriended this American lady on the deck of the ship, and they sort of got to know her over a few-, the couple of weeks they were on the cruise. They parted their ways at the end and she said, 'Oh, we must swap email addresses, we'll keep in contact.' And they thought 'Well, fine, we'll do that and we'll never see her again,' and within like, a month, she was emailing saying, 'Can I come stay with you, I'm coming to England?' And they were like, 'Oh, okay.' And so, they wrote back tentatively, yes, they'd friend and like-, is it 'friend'? I don't do Facebook, you do friends on Facebook, don't you?



James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

That's why it's called The Unfriend, because when they found out about Elsa, they unfriended her immediately. And the wife, Debbie, Googled her to find out a bit more about her, because they thought, 'Well, we don't even know who she is and now she's coming to our house and we've got children,' blah, blah, blah. Rang the husband when she found out, 'Come home. I need to tell you something that I've found out about Elsa.' Don't think the real name was Elsa. 'What's happened? Tell me.' 'I can't tell you over the phone, you've got to come home.' So, she comes home-, he comes home, 'What's the worst thing you could find out about someone that's coming to stay with you?' 'I don't know.' 'Guess.' 'Debbie, I don't know, what is it?' 'Guess.' 'I don't know, murderer?' 'Yes.' And, she was a murderer, and she'd killed, I think-, definitely her father, and a couple of old ladies, all for greed, and got off on a technicality. Definitely did it.

Ed Gamble

Geez.

James Acaster

Wow.

Reece Shearsmith

It was out. And so, in real life, they just emailed and said, 'Of course you can't come, we've got children, no, we don't want anything more to do with you.' And, they unfriended her, and that was the end of it, they never heard from her again. In the play, they're too polite and too British to say no, so she comes. And, it's this sort of, awful situation, it just gets worse and worse for this family that have got this murder poisoner in the house. Very funny play, and I'm very delighted it got a transfer, so we're doing it again in-,

Ed Gamble

And, directed by Mark as well.

Reece Shearsmith

Directed by Mark Gatiss, my old cohort, yes, which was great fun, Steven Moffat wrote it, Amanda Abington is playing my wife, it's a really funny play. It's sort of not-, there's no bigger meaning other than, hopefully you will come and just laugh, it's just funny, I think, as if that's a bad thing, but it's not. I think, in the days we're in, it's quite good just to have a laugh. So, yes, that's what I'll be doing at the moment.

James Acaster



Fantastic, and that's on until 16th April as well.

Reece Shearsmith

That's right, yes.

Ed Gamble

That's such a long time for you to have to, you know, shave and be presentable and stuff.

Reece Shearsmith

I know, you're right, Ed, actually, yes, there is that to having to do it at theatre, because you've got to be at a certain place. I mean, I'm sure you'd know what it's like, everyone does, when you've got a list of-, not even in the week but just day-to-day things, I just love it when things get ticked off and you've achieved them. I don't know what'll happen when one day, when I don't have anything in the diary, but I sort of love it and don't love it. I'm always busy, but I don't-, and I strive for the day where it's like, decks are cleared, but then, within a minute, now what? What am I doing? I'm failing, so it's an endless-, it's torture, is what it is.

James Acaster

It's not a happy life.

Reece Shearsmith

No, it's not a happy life.

Ed Gamble

Life's a torture, life's a torture.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, no, exactly. This is why I need to go in a nest.

James Acaster

Yes, while it's raining.

Reece Shearsmith

While it's raining, exactly, you understand, don't you?

James Acaster

Yes, I understand.

Reece Shearsmith

Good, good.

James Acaster

Well, we always start with still or sparkling water.



Reece Shearsmith

See, and again, you plunge me into a dilemma, because, and I was thinking about this whole idea of going to a restaurant, it's messy, it's massively stressful for me, in the same way as going to the cinema. They're going to come and sit next to me, they're going to talk all the way through it, they are talking all the way through it, do I say anything? The light, please don't be checking their texts all the way through, oh, they are doing a running commentary of-, what if, shall I say something? Oh no. Shall I move? Is it now, have I left it too late? Same thing applies with the minefield of going to a restaurant to me. They've put me near the toilet, I'm near a draft, I can't bear it, those people are too loud talking. So, there are constant things, and one of the first hurdles is the passive aggressive 'Still or sparkling?' Because, to me, it's just, oh they were trying to bump the price up and they want me to buy water. I just want to say tap. And, if it's raining, I can just put a little, maybe, half egg shell out and just, collect some water.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Forgot you were in a nest for a second.

Reece Shearsmith

(talking over each other 16.40).

James Acaster

Yes, weird you don't like being next to the toilets if you like the pitter patter of rain so much when you're having your meal.

Reece Shearsmith

I know, I know.

Ed Gamble

It's very different to the pitter patter of piss.

Reece Shearsmith

It's different.

James Acaster

Well, you know.

Reece Shearsmith

It's a different link. But, if you push me to answer, and if it's free in the dream restaurant-,

Ed Gamble

Sure.



Reece Shearsmith

Sparkling.

Ed Gamble

Now, if you're a bird, can you have sparkling? Because, I thought it exploded their stomachs.

Reece Shearsmith

That's interesting.

James Acaster

Precisely (ph 17.03) the size of the sparrow (ph 17.05).

Reece Shearsmith

I thought that was pigeons and paracetamol.

Ed Gamble

Ah, I thought it was-

Reece Shearsmith

Because I think I've done it.

James Acaster

You think you've done it?

Reece Shearsmith

I have a memory of doing at school, because my house used to back on to my school playing field, and I remember throwing them across the way to see if it happened. I don't remember anything happening.

Ed Gamble

Yes, did you do it, or is this a Martin Jarvis situation?

James Acaster

Jarvis.

Ed Gamble

Jarvis, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

I think it's Jarvis. There was an Armchair Thriller in 1977 about a man who took it upon himself to explode the stomachs of pigeons.

James Acaster

I mean, I quite like the thought of your dream water being half an eggshell full of rainwater that you've (talking over each other 17.42).



Reece Shearsmith

Well, there you are, it's like The Cursed Child.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Which, actually, inexplicably is the front of the Palace Theatre, and it's that Harry Potter, but there's nothing to do with that in the play. The little, the thing has a little child with-, in a-, it's got nothing to do with any of it, unless I've missed something.

James Acaster

It's nothing to do with it and I think it-, I really enjoyed The Cursed Child when I went to see it.

Reece Shearsmith

I mean, I only went because of that nest.

James Acaster

Finally, I can go and climb in the nest.

Reece Shearsmith

It's nothing to do with it, waiting sat in the second half, 'Well, obviously they're going to keep the nest thing to the second half to keep people interested.' It doesn't come.

Ed Gamble

You're ready, ready to get on there.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, ready, ready, nest thing explained.

Ed Gamble

It massively smacks of a play that was advertised before it was finished.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, 'let's have a nest, and a child in it, and we'll explain that later on'.

James Acaster

Later on.

Reece Shearsmith

And no illusion, no anything.

Ed Gamble



But that's a big swing, isn't it? To assume you're going to put a nest in it.

James Acaster

I think first draft must have had a nest in it.

Reece Shearsmith

Must have done, but they've just removed it and then not thought about the frontispiece of the theatre, which must have cost loads, I imagine.

James Acaster

Oh, absolutely. Would you ever be tempted, like-, have you ever been in the West End late at night, you've had a few?

Reece Shearsmith

Try and pull it down?

James Acaster

'I want to get in that nest.'

Reece Shearsmith

Oh, get in it, right, I see what you mean, I thought you meant tear it down in protest.

James Acaster

'I want to get in, have a climb up there, get in that nest.'

Reece Shearsmith

There's nothing in there, nothing to do with the play. I haven't thought about climbing up there, but now you've put that in my head.

Ed Gamble

Yes, could happen.

Reece Shearsmith

I'd quite like to curl up in a nest

Ed Gamble

But then, (talking over each other 18.59).

Reece Shearsmith

(talking over each other 18.59), is it?

Ed Gamble

Well, I don't know, but I think it would be-,



Reece Shearsmith

Is it to do with the nest?

Ed Gamble

I think you could write the next thing, and then make a nest-, there's a nest in the next thing, and then I think you're a shoe-in to get that theatre because they'd just leave the nest up.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, part two, yes, it's there ready.

James Acaster

Yes, can we keep the nest? Yes, it makes sense now, finally.

Reece Shearsmith

I wonder what it could be, a child in a nest.

Ed Gamble

Well, it could be like, they play of this podcast.

James Acaster

You could do a Magic Finger musical.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

Or a play.

Reece Shearsmith

Magic Finger the musical, that's a good idea, no one's done it.

James Acaster

I think people would be quite excited if you did a Roald Dahl.

Reece Shearsmith

Did a Roald Dahl. I think Netflix have got them all under their belts, but yes, I'll look into it.

James Acaster

Yes, God damn Netflix.

Reece Shearsmith

I'll look into it, yes.

James Acaster



Netflix, they won't be watching Magic Finger.

Reece Shearsmith

No, they're not going to want Magic Finger.

James Acaster

They've not got their eye on that.

Reece Shearsmith

It's not their demographic, they've done the algorithms, no one likes nests.

James Acaster

Yes, no one's watching nest stuff on Netflix.

Reece Shearsmith

No one's watching's nests, only Oddie.

James Acaster

All his recommendations are more nest stuff.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, yes, 'you may like'.

Ed Gamble

He stands outside that theatre every day.

Reece Shearsmith

Staring (TC 00:20:00) up with binoculars.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

He's very near it.

James Acaster

Still nothing. Bill, you've got a-, we've been over this, that's not a real nest.

Ed Gamble

Bill, you've really lost it, man.

Reece Shearsmith

'There's something pink in there, yes, it's a baby, and we don't know why.'



James Acaster

So, are you going for the eggshell or are you going for sparkling water?

Reece Shearsmith

It seems churlish to not enjoy the things that are on offer from the restaurant, so I'll say the sparkling water.

James Acaster

Sparkling water.

Reece Shearsmith

And, to answer your question, I don't know about whether birds can have sparkling, but I'm not a bird, I'm a person.

Ed Gamble

You're a person who's been shrunk down to the size of a bird, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

In the nest, so I'm having sparkling.

James Acaster

You've got to be very clear that you're not a bird, you're a person, yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, well, you've got to get the parameters right, define your terms. So, I say, yes, sparkling water, in a little tiny glass.

James Acaster

Little tiny glass, not an egg shell.

Reece Shearsmith

No.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

With sparkling water.

Reece Shearsmith

Not an egg shell. I mean, there might-, there shouldn't really be egg shells in the nest.

James Acaster

Yes, ideally.



Reece Shearsmith

Otherwise, that's not very nice, is it? It's a bit dirty. I imagine it quite clean, I want like, a little booth in the corner of the nest.

James Acaster

Of your (talking over each other 21.03) top area?

Reece Shearsmith

A roped-off red room.

James Acaster

(talking over each other 21.05) roped off in the VIP.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, definitely. (talking over each other 21.09).

Ed Gamble

It's a bit weird, because I'm imagining you as the only one in there, (talking over each other 21.11).

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, I think I am, as well, I think I'm the only one because, I don't-, there aren't very many people that would be-, probably want to come with me, so I say alone, then I don't have any-, you know, there might be the odd squirrel that's going to make a lot of noise, and that will annoy me. Because, it's like-, but then, they've got a right to be there, I guess, in the trees. It depends where it is, can it be anywhere? Can it be in a quiet tree? Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, anywhere you want, anywhere, quiet, really quiet tree.

Reece Shearsmith

I think really quiet, because the other option, if it wasn't going to be in the nest, was a sort of library-like situation, quiet.

James Acaster

Because well, you mentioned cinemas earlier, and I feel like the days are over now where people are quiet in cinemas, that's gone now.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, absolutely, of course, yes, it's gone. There are-, I mean, you get like-, it's like a restaurant around you, isn't it? Chairs, things slid in, they come to you and ask you, 'What are you-, do you want some nachos?'

Ed Gamble



Yes, I had that the other night, I like the idea of it but then, the trailers had started and there were still loads of waiters in there being like, 'Does anyone else want anything else in?' No, no, no.

Reece Shearsmith

What's it about? You know-, again, define your terms, are you coming to eat? Go to a restaurant, or are you watching a film quietly? Not being brought nachos, the most sloppy, not conducive in the dark-,

Ed Gamble

And they stink.

Reece Shearsmith

And they stink.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

It's one up from an old people's home, to me. Just trays being brought out.

Ed Gamble

Yes, so, like, five o'clock, TV time.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. It's five o'clock, get them all tucked up in bed. At 5:45, light's out. Get them up again at 4:00 in the morning.

James Acaster

How angry to you get at the people looking on their phones in the cinema?

Reece Shearsmith

Oh, yes. I mean, incensed, of course, yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

You know there was-, I don't know if it's true. I like to think it's true because it makes me angry, and I sort of enjoy being angry. There was talk of a theatre seat, in the theatre, where you could tweet from it, your thoughts during.

Ed Gamble



What? No.

Reece Shearsmith

Can you believe that?

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's awful.

Reece Shearsmith

Like, 'Well, if you're going to do it, let's have a special chair where you can do it from.'

Ed Gamble

Do you want a seat to tweet in when you're in the nest?

James Acaster

(Laughter) Oh, great. Double meaning there.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, I know.

James Acaster

He's done well.

Reece Shearsmith

It's really good, because it wasn't planned.

James Acaster

It wasn't planned?

Reece Shearsmith

No, no, just said it unscripted.

Ed Gamble

I mean, I might've only been planning it for about 25 minutes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Very good.

Reece Shearsmith

Seamlessly slotted in.

Ed Gamble

But you're not a bird, you're a person.



Reece Shearsmith

Yes, so I'm not going to be tweeting.

James Acaster

Yes, remember that. Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Reece Shearsmith? Poppadoms or bread?

Reece Shearsmith

Poppadoms or bread?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Oof. Are you saying it in a loud voice to make me answer very quickly, because I'm stalling?
Poppadoms!

James Acaster

Yes?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. It's unusual, isn't it?

James Acaster

Yes, I love poppadoms.

Reece Shearsmith

I think it's poppadoms though, yes. The bread comes along, and next thing I'm going to be asking for olive oil and balsamic. And that-, no. Not in a nest.

James Acaster

Seeping through the bottom.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, exactly.

Ed Gamble

Do the poppadoms not lead to dips? You're not asking for dips with the poppadoms?

Reece Shearsmith

Some mango chutney, yes. That would be all, though. I don't like any of the other kinds.

James Acaster

Interesting. So, just the mango chutney.



Reece Shearsmith

No, can't bear it. You know when you get that weird pot that's, like, something that's really hot in there? I just chuck it immediately. It's such a waste, I never want it.

James Acaster

The spicy one.

Reece Shearsmith

You know the one?

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

I don't want it. And then there's the other one that's just full of onions. Don't give me that. It's like a set of things that I just don't want, and I get given them all the time. Why don't they learn? Actually, I never tell them, so that's why they don't.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and there are loads of different places.

James Acaster

And the mint yoghurt one?

Reece Shearsmith

The mint yoghurt one? Yes, I'd have it. I'm not sure that the Dream Restaurant needs to be carting that up the tree to me, though.

James Acaster

Yes. You'd just have the mango chutney.

Ed Gamble

So, you know how they normally come on, like, a four-dip wheel?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes?

Ed Gamble

Do you want that, but all mango chutney in every pot?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes please.



James Acaster

Yes. Sounds nice.

Reece Shearsmith

Because there's never enough, is there? To me. Or Nutella. (Laughter).

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes. How many of the four are Nutella?

Reece Shearsmith

Only one Nutella, just as a-

Ed Gamble

Just to try.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, just to try because I've never done it. I don't know about mango and Nutella together. I remember one of the options that was dismissed from the list of things that we're about to talk about was something that I used to really love when I was little. It was a fried egg sandwich, peanut butter and jam.

James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Reece Shearsmith

Imagine that.

Ed Gamble

It's like an Elvis sandwich.

Reece Shearsmith

It is, literally. It's funny you should say that, because I read only yesterday that he-, I don't know, obviously they cut him up and had a look, but there was a stool in him that was there four years. (Laughter).

James Acaster

What?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, I know what.



Ed Gamble

How do they tell?

Reece Shearsmith

God knows, that's what I want to know.

Ed Gamble

Do they cut it open and count the rings?

Reece Shearsmith

How did they tell?

James Acaster

A four-year stool? Jesus.

Reece Shearsmith

Four years ago.

Ed Gamble

Was there, like, a receipt in there from-, (Laughter)

Reece Shearsmith

It must have just said to-, you know, done some sort of test on what was in the stool and gone, 'That's from four years ago, that.'

Ed Gamble

Wow.

James Acaster

It explains his dance style.

Ed Gamble

He's trying to shake it out.

James Acaster

He just did that one leg, just trying it, 'Oh God, come on. Got to get this out of me.'

Reece Shearsmith

I don't know how we've got onto all this. Anyway, yes-,

James Acaster

It was your sandwich, your fried egg sandwich-,

Reece Shearsmith



It was the fried egg sandwich, that's right, yes. I mean, I guess peanut butter and jello, it's an American thing, isn't it? But yes, jam, peanut butter on a fried egg in a sandwich. That was something I used to enjoy.

James Acaster

How did that start?

Reece Shearsmith

God, I don't remember. You know what, I think it was something to do with Top Cat.

James Acaster

Yes. He lived in a bin.

Ed Gamble

(Laughter) Yes. A stinky nest.

Reece Shearsmith

Maybe, but there's some connection with children's television and that sandwich being created.

Ed Gamble

So you saw it on an episode of Top Cat and then said, 'I've got to try that'?

Reece Shearsmith

I think I saw it on something-, yes, something like that.

James Acaster

I've done that. I've said it on the podcast before, I ate peanut butter and bacon sandwiches for a long time because I saw it on a show called Ed.

Reece Shearsmith

Really?

James Acaster

Not him, not this guy-,

Ed Gamble

The lawyer who lived in the bowling alley?

James Acaster

The lawyer who lived in a bowling alley. And he has one episode where he's recommending peanut butter and bacon sandwiches to everyone, and then for a year I ate peanut butter and bacon sandwiches because of that. So I can relate to that.

Ed Gamble



Wow.

Reece Shearsmith

You understand it, yes. Well, it's not featuring in the Dream Restaurant, you don't have to create it, but it was a plan B.

Ed Gamble

Well, as an amuse-bouche, I could present you with a peanut butter-

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, possibly. Thank you, I'd like it. I mean, as it is, I'm already saddled with poppadoms. I'm not that bothered by them, but you've forced me into it now.

James Acaster

So, if you want as your bread course-, we were talking poppadoms or bread. If you have anything bread related, you should have one of those sandwiches.

Reece Shearsmith

Maybe I'll do that, then. I mean I've slid it back in-, yes, go on then.

James Acaster

Yes, you can have that. You can have that sandwich as your poppadoms or bread.

Ed Gamble

Have you had one of those sandwiches since you used to have them has a kid?

Reece Shearsmith

No, I haven't. And it's interesting to me to think, 'Maybe I should try it'.

James Acaster

How runny is the yolk?

Reece Shearsmith

Oh, quite runny, but not Withnail biting it and the whole pissing it out the end, which is-, you know, that.

Ed Gamble

Yes. You see, I love that scene.

Reece Shearsmith

Do you? That scene?

Ed Gamble

Yes, because that makes me think I'd love that sandwich.



Reece Shearsmith

Right. To me, that's just too messy, but I know what you mean. Isn't it funny there are things in films and TV that do put you onto things and then you, sort of, assimilate them, don't you? Same with another one of my choices, which I haven't gone for. For the drink-, I know we're skipping around, but the drink was going to be a White Russian purely because of The Big Lebowski. Same thing where you think, 'Yes, that makes me want to try that. The Kahlua and the milk'.

James Acaster

Our friend Nish Kumar, comedian, he has White Russians every year for his birthday, so that's what we associate that with a lot as well. But I think it might have even come from-,

Ed Gamble

I think it probably comes from The Big Lebowski, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

It's got to be his drink, hasn't it? It's done it to people.

James Acaster

But that sounds great. And also, in terms of things like films and how they affect you, the egg running out of the sandwich-, I said it on the podcast when Richard E. Grant was on. The start of Withnail and I, when someone bites into the sandwich and it comes out of the end, disgusts him and makes him feel like, 'I've got to get out of his city'. I've always thought, 'Yes, that's gross. That's horrible,' but then Ed was like, 'This is the idea of Heaven'.

Ed Gamble

Yes, love it.

Reece Shearsmith

It's just, like, 'That's what I want. That sandwich. It's tasty.'

Ed Gamble

It's what I think about every time I have a fried egg sandwich.

Reece Shearsmith

And the same with Withnail, just to talk about Withnail, is, to me, the sherry in Withnail makes me want to have sherry. Uncle Monty 'Sherry? Sherry'.

Ed Gamble

Yes. That and lighter fluid as well, right?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, exactly, of course. (Laughter).

James Acaster



Your dream starter?

Reece Shearsmith

Dream starter? Heinz Oxtail Soup.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Reece Shearsmith

A bit specific, isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Very specific.

Reece Shearsmith

And that is because, again, in my quest for, sort of, triggering via food the remembrances of things. The feeling that Heinz Oxtail Soup, weirdly-, it was only when I was ill when I was a child and off school that I would be given it as a sort of restorative. So, it sort of reminds me of having a stomach bug, but also it's a happy thing because it's like, 'I'm off school and I'm watching Crown Court. I should be going back to school, but I've got the afternoon off.' So, I'm deliberately picking it to, sort of, trigger a happy memory from childhood. And that, weirdly, ticks that box.

James Acaster

So, my first question is what's Crown Court?

Reece Shearsmith

Right, of course it would be. Crown Court-, of course, because (TC 00:30:00) you're young, I forget. I'm (inaudible 30.01) old-,

James Acaster

For me, Sesame Street was 'Day off school'.

Reece Shearsmith

Okay. Crown Court used to be on TV and it was a depiction of famous trials-, it's really boring, in a court and there would be the defence and the prosecution. And you would have basically the whole-, it was like before there were real trials shown. This was just depictions of, 'This man has stolen these boots,' and then you watch the whole thing play out. And sometimes it would be those kinds of things-, I think they were made up, Gatiss would be able to tell me if this is true or not, but I don't think they were always real cases. But then one time I think, inexplicably, I'm sure, Crippen was on. Not the real one, but-, you know, I've looked through Crippen's real glasses, by the way.

Ed Gamble

Have you? How did you lay your hands on Crippen's glasses?



Reece Shearsmith

Because I was taken to the back room when they closed down The Chamber of Horrors, and I was able just to rifle through it all. I picked up this box that had Crippen's glasses in there, and I just picked them up and looked through them. I saw the world through his eyes. So, that was Crown Court and it was sort of dull, but equally great because it didn't matter what was on, because I wasn't going back to school in the afternoon.

James Acaster

What I really love about you and your creative cohorts, that group of people, is that there's just this overlap of, like, you all like the same things. So you going, 'Gatiss would know this. He knows what Crown Court looks like,' because you've all-

Reece Shearsmith

Well, of course. We all have had the same-, in a very strange way. I mean, I'm sure it's not strange for groups of friends, when you find your people, you often have these crossovers of, 'Yes, exactly! I remember that. I didn't think anyone else did'. But we seemed to have the same childhood across the four of us. All of us remember 1977 Bonfire Night where we all stayed in. Didn't watch the fireworks, but stayed in and watched 6:25, BBC One, 'Carry On Screaming' rather than go and watch the fireworks. It was like, 'I did that! I did that!' and it was amazing to find this sort of link across our collective remembrances, passions and weird ignition of a love of horror, comedy and black humour that we all seem to share. And even now, to this day, if I can't google something I'll ring Steve or Mark and they'll have the answer, of course.

James Acaster

To me, because we were talking about Inside No. 9 before this, I was thinking, 'If that was an Inside No. 9 episode, the twist at the end would be "It's all the same person"'. We all remember there was a Bonfire Night where we all stayed in and we watched this and then we all became friends, and then actually, it's the same guy at the end.

Ed Gamble

You love it when people pitch ideas for episodes, right?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes but we have done one like that.

James Acaster

We can be (inaudible 32.38) if you want.

Reece Shearsmith

We sort of did one like that, James. However, yes-

James Acaster

That's why I prepared it.



Reece Shearsmith

It's a good twist.

James Acaster

I wasn't pitching it as a new one.

Reece Shearsmith

No, no. Of course.

James Acaster

I was saying it reminds me of Inside No. 9.

Reece Shearsmith

He's got any new one. Any ideas (talking over each other 32.53).

James Acaster

I don't want to see any new ones.

Reece Shearsmith

'I just want the same again but slightly different'.

James Acaster

Well that sounds very nice that you've chosen that as that memory.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes it's slightly odd, isn't it, because it is connected with being poorly. I remember when I was little I tried to make myself get a cold. I used to do it repeatedly. Run up to the door and put my nose near the key hole to try and get a draft into my nostrils. When I was little, I used to do it.

Ed Gamble

To try and get off school?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes. And that was the best way you could think to do it, was nose to the keyhole?

James Acaster

(talking over each other 33.24) freezer's sitting completely unmolested in the corner. Not going near the freezer?

Reece Shearsmith

No, no. Just a gentle breeze through the key hole.



Ed Gamble

Sniff the key hole.

Reece Shearsmith

It didn't work but I talk like all my entire childhood was based on trying to not go to school but I remember one time really wanting to go to school and having a terrible stomach ache and having to come back because I had diarrhoea.

James Acaster

Oh, nice.

Reece Shearsmith

I was sent home having shat myself. I think maybe that's another Jarvis actually. Maybe it didn't happen but the threat of it might have (talking over each other 33.57) come back home again but yes, it's interesting.

James Acaster

Of course whenever you did get ill, your parents couldn't give you anything, as you'd thrown it all for the pigeons.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, of course. Yes. 'Oh we've got some painkillers. Oh, they've all gone! What are all them pigeons doing on that field?'

Ed Gamble

I'm doing an experiment.

Reece Shearsmith

An experiment. The other thing I used to do as a kid in the same back garden that I was throwing paracetamols over the fence was trying to catch a bat. Every night-, nearly every night, from when I was about eleven to about fifteen, at the end of the garden with my dad's fishing net trying to catch bats. I realise now it was a futile endeavour because you can't catch them, can you? Because they've got-, you know. Solar. However, I just wanted one. I wanted a little bat and then I was told they were full of lice and it would have bit me and I might have got something horrible so I stopped trying to catch them but I never did catch them.

James Acaster

You'd have loved growing up in my house. My mum used to look after bats.

Reece Shearsmith

No?

James Acaster



Yes. So, like, if there were injured bats, my mum would look after them.

Reece Shearsmith

Probably one of the ones like if I had caught it, it'd have got hurt.

James Acaster

Yes. 'Some fucker hit me with a net.' Yes so there are a number of bats that, like, yes, I had hanging off my finger.

Reece Shearsmith

No you didn't?

James Acaster

When they were learning to fly again.

Reece Shearsmith

Pipistrelles?

James Acaster

Yes, yes. So you'd be there with your finger out, hanging out of nowhere, flying around the living room, go back on your finger again.

Reece Shearsmith

No way.

James Acaster

And then yes, my mum would release them back in to the wild.

Ed Gamble

Pipistrelle de Halloween.

James Acaster

Pipistrelle de Halloween. But yes and once Pet Rescue came to interview my mum and do an Pet Rescue episode about my mum.

Ed Gamble

Why the hell haven't you told me this?

James Acaster

Well it hasn't come up before.

Ed Gamble

I'll find it.



Reece Shearsmith

That's amazing.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. I was trying to get in the background of it and they cut me out the shot.

Ed Gamble

As per.

James Acaster

Yes. I'm used to it now.

Reece Shearsmith

It's like The Addams Family. Really good, you know.

James Acaster

Good Addams Family.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, good Addams Family. Brilliant.

James Acaster

Yes, big stuff.

Ed Gamble

What would you have done with the bat if you caught it?

Reece Shearsmith

I would have looked at it for a bit and then tried and uncurl it from the net because I presume it would have gone in to a tight ball.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it would have gone bad.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes it would have been bad and then just let it go, I guess.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You could have started COVID much earlier. Got it out the way.

Reece Shearsmith



Can't blame me for that. This is 1976 but yes, I would have just been fulfilled, I caught one finally after many years of attempting it and then I would let it go again. Yes. I think I did try to have a bat box at the end of the garden. Nothing ever went in it, annoyingly. But you had them in your house?

James Acaster

We had them in the house. About four of them at different times.

Reece Shearsmith

Pet ones? Did you give them names?

James Acaster

They get names but just because-, my mum wouldn't have named them. Just because we were kids and we wanted to-,

Reece Shearsmith

But real names or, like, B21 or something?

James Acaster

No, no. We all wanted to give them names. I can't remember what they were called now. I remember, like, the one-, the Pet Rescue one was called something stupid because we would give it silly, comedy names like that made us laugh as kids but then the Pet Rescue people were like, 'We want you to call this one Radar,' because it's for the show and my mum was like, 'That's very basic. I don't want people to think I catch bats and call them stuff like Radar.' That's the kind of person I am but they were insistent that, 'On camera, make sure you refer to it as Radar.' So through gritted teeth she would say it.

Reece Shearsmith

And as if it were her idea?

James Acaster

Yes so she really didn't love it.

Reece Shearsmith

I can't stand it. It reminds me of, like, when you get stunt people to do things for you when filming and you look terrible because they're doing it and their acting is bad. 'You've made me look shit now.' I don't know why I leaped from a bat to that but that's what it reminded me of. Same injustice.

James Acaster

I love the thought of a stunt person on one of your shows, like, doing a massive stunt like smashing through a window, rolling through a fire, lying on the floor and then you going, 'You've made me look shit now.'

Reece Shearsmith

It's exactly what-,



James Acaster

Your dream main course.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Well, again, in the spirit of picking things that will just trigger-, it's like Heston, isn't it? This. He does that. I have meals with him and he tries to trigger memories. Christmas dinner.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Full on. That's my choice. I know it might be a bit boring but has other people ever picked that?

Ed Gamble

Richard Osman.

James Acaster

Richard Osman. That was back in third episode. (talking over each other 38.11) but it's not been-, people have chosen roasts. Sunday roasts.

Reece Shearsmith

But the specific thing is the Christmas roast. (talking over each other 38.18).

James Acaster

We've had Christmas pudding chosen as a dessert.

Reece Shearsmith

Right, interesting.

Ed Gamble

It's rare to get the full Christmas dinner as the main course.

Reece Shearsmith

I think full-on pigs in blankets. The whole works. Turkey. I mean, turkey. And yes, sprouts. People don't like sprouts. A lot of people don't like them.

James Acaster

It depends how they're (talking over each other 38.35)

Ed Gamble

How would you have the sprouts?

Reece Shearsmith



Well probably steamed but then the nice addition of chestnuts on.

Ed Gamble

Oh nice. Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Some roast chestnuts sprinkled on top. Just a few little bits. That's what I'd have, yes. And very nice gravy. You can't ever go wrong with a-, I think people sometimes let themselves down with the gravy. Well I do cook actually. We talked about this but I was on Bake Off and I tried to spend the time making a nice gravy because I think it really does add to the meal when you get a good one. You can tell when it's a bad one with the food. This is now not (talking over each other 39.14) over the line. Yes.

Ed Gamble

Ruins it. You may as well pour a pint of water all over your dinner if you've done it-,

Reece Shearsmith

That often at times is what gravy is.

Ed Gamble

Yes, just wet dinner.

James Acaster

Yes, so would you like this gravy to be made by yourself?

Reece Shearsmith

It may be actually-, I don't know who I would call on in the restaurant to make me a nice gravy but if you could find someone.

James Acaster

It can be anyone you want in the world really. Anyone.

Reece Shearsmith

Who's good at gravy though? I don't know.

Ed Gamble

Who is the best at gravy? That's not information you've got access to.

Reece Shearsmith

I don't have access to it but if the restaurant could find that out for me.

Ed Gamble

Would Mark know? We can call Mark and ask him.

James Acaster



Yes Mark would know, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes maybe. He might do. If it was in a horror film-,

Ed Gamble

Christopher Lee did a lovely gravy.

James Acaster

So what else have we got? We've got stuffing?

Reece Shearsmith

Oh yes, definitely stuffing and I don't mind, sort of, just, you know, packeted stuffing but I sometimes (TC 00:40:00) find it too much when it's stuffing and it's meat. You know when you get those full-on slabs of meat that also become stuffing?

Ed Gamble

Like sausage meat?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. I don't quite regard that in the same way as stuffing as I know it.

Ed Gamble

Sure.

Reece Shearsmith

I could quite easily eat stuffing. Just pour some water on it and eat it on the bowl. In fact, I have done. (talking over each other 40.24) I have done.

James Acaster

In the very short amount of time there between you pretending something was hypothetical to fully confessing that you have done that.

Reece Shearsmith

I know, I know.

Ed Gamble

I'm getting a bit too obsessed with the nest thing but are you shrinking the food down as well or are you having a full-size Christmas dinner in a nest?

Reece Shearsmith

I couldn't get through a full-size Christmas dinner if I was-, it has to be small.

Ed Gamble



Do you want small portions or small versions?

Reece Shearsmith

No. It's the same amount that I would have if I was full-sized but bird size. So it's like-, so there's no difference in fact because it's all to scale.

Ed Gamble

So it's all to scale so we're magic fingering the turkey as well.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, we have to.

James Acaster

Let's not start using that as a phrase. We're 'magic fingering' all the food.

Reece Shearsmith

(talking over each other 41.09) But that is what it is.

James Acaster

You're magic fingering a turkey.

Reece Shearsmith

You're in charge of it. I just want it bought to me. And the other thing-, anyway, there are never going to be any complaints with the dream restaurant are there? I'm always surprised by how unbidden people are about complaining in restaurants. I've been sat next to people and I gasped. I was at one-, I was at the Ivy in Marylebone three weeks ago and someone ordered food. I think it was some sort of-, they wanted a fried egg on top and they didn't do one but they wanted this fried egg on top. I think-, what was it? I can't remember. Anyway, they asked for it and they got it. They weren't happy with it. It was too cold. They were very apologetic, sent it back immediately. The people with them, the father had got the same and he let his go back to the kitchen whilst the other one was warmed. So he wasn't going to eat ahead of the son.

James Acaster

Right.

Reece Shearsmith

It came back. Again, 'I found a hair in it,' he says. Again. And it went back again. And then a third time.

Ed Gamble

Yes, what the fuck have they done to that egg the third time it comes back?

Reece Shearsmith



Exactly. Exactly. But what I couldn't believe was, you're not going to do it again? Because it's enough of a huge amount that you're going to go, 'Excuse me, there's something wrong.' I would never in a million years complain.

Ed Gamble

Especially if you've already made them go out of their way to put an egg on top.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. It wasn't on the menu. They created a thing. I mean yes, it's an egg. Alright, it's not that big a reach to find one and crack it on top however three times over, something wrong with it? And then I realised, when I looked at the person, I thought, 'You just don't want to eat.'

Ed Gamble

Oh really?

Reece Shearsmith

That's what I thought. I thought, 'You're finding any reason to not eat.' There was a bigger psychological problem.

James Acaster

So this is an interesting, like-, there are two different parts of your personality here because you say that when you're in a restaurant, loads of things that you don't like, all this stuff, but you'll never complain.

Ed Gamble

But all of your problems were about other people eating in the restaurant, not the restaurant itself.

James Acaster

Well the draft, you're too near the toilets. If they put you too near the toilets in a draft, are you just sitting there for the whole meal and dealing with it? You're not saying, 'Can you move me?'

Reece Shearsmith

I wouldn't say it. There's a tiny window of opportunity to dare to say but it's gone and I'd never then say it.

Ed Gamble

Also you've already admitted you quite like being angry so why would you ruin that for yourself?

Reece Shearsmith

On the one hand, yes. I'm furious all the time but I never say anything. I'm just furious and sat in impotent rage. Don't do anything about it. I've eaten raw chicken rather than complained. Say, 'Sorry this is pink and there's blood in it.' Literally I remember there was plastic in it. I thought, 'There's plastic on this chicken, I'm not going to say anything.' 'Is everything alright, Sir?' 'Yes, thank you.' Yes and then my family sit with me raging going, 'Don't eat that, it's pink. You're going to get stomach ache.'



Ed Gamble

But at least you know the next day you can have Oxtail soup.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

(talking over each other 43.59) get ill.

Reece Shearsmith

There's a whole-, all roads lead back to the Oxtail.

James Acaster

Crown Court box set. I'm well up for anyone complaining at the Ivy. I've only been to the Ivy a couple of times and I'll say it, I think it is one of the most overrated places. I do not get at all why people-,

Ed Gamble

What's good about this podcast is it's not showbiz or-, it's for everyone.

Reece Shearsmith

I didn't mean to throw that in as if that's a thing because I don't ever really go but yes, I say it because it was-, to me, it was alright but it was the thing of the person continually complaining. You get that flocked wallpaper. You know that wallpaper that looks like a jungle?

James Acaster

Yes, I know which one you mean. Yes, yes, yes. I just think that, you know, I don't want anyone-, anyone who has not been to the Ivy going, 'Oh yes, one day I'd love to go.' Don't bother.

Ed Gamble

I think the original was a thing, right? It was like a showbiz thing and it was like an exclusive restaurant and then they've franchised it out and there's loads of-, and that's what happens when it gets franchised. It sort of gets watered down.

James Acaster

But what I don't like it is you still get treated like shit by the wait staff. So you go there and they look down their nose at you and they treat you like you're in this fancy pants place and then they bring you out something that may as well be on the menu of a Bills.

Ed Gamble

You sent your egg back three times, didn't you?



Reece Shearsmith

It was you!

James Acaster

I was furious. Whoever sent that back is a hero to me.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, daring to do it. I know what you mean, yes but the idea of complaining-, I sort of admire people but then I wince when I see it happening because I just think, 'The poor people. They are run off their feet, don't be mean.' So I'm torn with seeing both sides.

Ed Gamble

I'd really struggle to complain. But then also, I was out for lunch with my dad yesterday, and I've actually never really seen him complain in a restaurant, but when I do, I find it really awkward and I just sit there, like, really still. But yesterday, he was paying too many compliments. So, he was, like, calling the staff over to be like, 'This is fantastic.'

Reece Shearsmith

No.

Ed Gamble

Come on, it's too much, Dad.

Reece Shearsmith

It's too much.

Ed Gamble

Yes, or chatting to the wine guy about wine for ages. Yes, he just loves it.

James Acaster

That's when you know he's dropping hints to you, Ed. You don't talk to him enough. You don't talk to the wine guy.

Reece Shearsmith

I don't like it if you start to get-, it becomes, like, 'Don't think you've got a rapport with me now.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

'You're talking to me too much now.'

James Acaster



I feel like this is you-,

Reece Shearsmith

'And I don't like you, and I'm not going to be your friend.'

Ed Gamble

Is this you about the wine guy?

Reece Shearsmith

This is me about the wine guy.

Ed Gamble

Or about us?

James Acaster

You can't hurt our feelings, Reece, it's okay.

Reece Shearsmith

Well, those just encounters.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

There's a level where you just have to do the job, we have a transaction, I'm not your friend.

James Acaster

Do you think it'll be like the film, Cable Guy, and the wine guy never leaves you alone and thinks you're friends because you said, 'Thanks, buddy'?

Reece Shearsmith

Never leaves, yes. And with a Burger King hat on.

James Acaster

Yes, I'd watch that film.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster



I'd watch a British remake of Cable Guy, and it's called Wine Guy, and it's Reece and someone as a wine guy-

Reece Shearsmith

I would love to play that sort of part, yes. I would be the Matthew Broderick.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, of course. Yes, I wouldn't be the irritant, I'd be the one that's getting more and more furious but keeping a lid on it, or not. I'd eventually-

James Acaster

Yes, I'm trying to think who would be the wine guy.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, who would be the wine guy?

James Acaster

Who would be a good wine guy to play alongside Reece?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, someone that can play unhinged. I mean, I do that as well though sometimes.

Ed Gamble

You could play both. (talking over each other 47.22).

James Acaster

You've got range, mate. We're not (inaudible 47.23) do you down.

Reece Shearsmith

I do a bit both. Maybe I could do both, do a Tom Hardy, play all the parts. He always plays doubles of himself, doesn't he?

Ed Gamble

Yes, he does. That Kray brothers film.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, Venom.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Reece Shearsmith

Same thing twice over.

James Acaster

When people play multiple roles, I actually feel like the best part of that is the trailer where the guy, 'Reece Shearsmith, and Reece Shearsmith.'

Reece Shearsmith

And then you get that gag again, yes.

James Acaster

And all this, then that's exciting. And then you watch the film and you go, 'That's just the same guy over and over again.'

Reece Shearsmith

'I get it now.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Do you have a dream side dish, then? When people choose roasts or Christmas dinners, I'm never sure if they're going to have a side because they've got all the trimmings. But do you have a dream-

Reece Shearsmith

Well, I am, but it's nothing to do with Christmas.

James Acaster

Right.

Reece Shearsmith

Haggis.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

So, reason is, again, in a, sort of, pulling into this dream scenario of all my favourite things, I don't know why, I have nothing to do with Scotland, but Burns Night and haggis and neeps and tatties to me is a lovely, again, it's not autumnal of course, it's January, but it's just I make it into a thing in our house and I insist that we do it, Burns Night. And then weirdly I was filming Good Omens in Scotland last Burns Night, it was dead. I was there, I went to walk around the streets, I went into the Deacon Brodie expecting everyone to be kicking, and it was quiet as the grave. So, I am the only one keeping it alive, it would seem.



James Acaster

Yes-

Ed Gamble

It's you.

Reece Shearsmith

So, I pick haggis as a side dish. Sort of extraordinary, and weirdly I've just thought it goes against what I just said about the stuffing being meaty, but I do like haggis. I don't know, it's probably not very good for you. And I'm also picking things that I don't have a lot of often.

Ed Gamble

Yes, no one's having haggis on the reg though, are they?

Reece Shearsmith

Because it's a treat, you shouldn't, you shouldn't.

Ed Gamble

No.

Reece Shearsmith

I would if, again, I didn't have to encounter people.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Like some sort of Stephen King creature, isn't it, in a house by yourself eating haggis all the time.

Ed Gamble

A haggis troll.

Reece Shearsmith

I think you wouldn't get very far, would you? It's another Elvis.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

That's four years less.

Reece Shearsmith

Another four years less.



Ed Gamble

Yes, God knows what they're pulling out of you there.

Reece Shearsmith

DNA, yes, pull back.

James Acaster

I think haggis is one of the foods that has the most undeserved bad reputation really.

Ed Gamble

Yes, because-

Reece Shearsmith

Good, I'm glad you said that.

James Acaster

It's delicious.

Reece Shearsmith

Isn't it?

James Acaster

But all the way through my childhood, on TV it was the punchline of a lot of jokes, them describing, you know, what's in it, what it is, and everyone going, 'It's so gross.' But actually if you stop and describe a lot of foods-

Reece Shearsmith

It's cooked inside a cow's stomach, all the rest of it, all the-

Ed Gamble

But I think they damage the PR by cooking it inside a cow's stomach, you know.

Reece Shearsmith

Probably didn't have to do that. They probably got-

Ed Gamble

Like, now when you see it in just, (TC 00:50:00) like, the plastic, and you can cook it and then just boil it and stuff, lovely. And you puncture it and it all bursts out, it's great.

Reece Shearsmith

It's great. They can explode in fact, can't they? Last time I did one in Edinburgh on my own, I cut into it having had the three hours or whatever it was cooking away, and it burst like some sort of monstrous-, it was like John Carpenter's The Thing.



Ed Gamble

Like a pigeon's stomach.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, if I was able to put a camera in. But yes, so haggis-, I mean, am I allowed the neeps and tatties, or is it purely only haggis as an addition?

James Acaster

I think if you want neeps and tatties, you want to have a-, because I like the idea of you've got Christmas main course and the side dish of Burns Night.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, that was the idea.

James Acaster

Yes, so I think neeps and tatties there, it's great.

Reece Shearsmith

Great.

Ed Gamble

Also, you've got a gravy kicking around that could happily slosh over both.

Reece Shearsmith

Absolutely, yes, I think so. And the other thing I've never done actually with haggis is you're meant to pour a bit of whiskey on it, aren't you?

Ed Gamble

Yes, you can do whiskey sauce as well, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

I've seen people to it later, yes. In my experiences of Burns Night I've thought, 'I'll just try that, yes.'

James Acaster

Do you want to read a poem, a Burns Night poem?

Reece Shearsmith

I would read a Burns Night poem, yes. I mean, not now, but yes, I'd do it in the nest.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith



To the wine waiter.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

He might not want to hear it, but I'm going to do it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

When he brings that particular bit, just while we're in Burns Night mode.

James Acaster

Well, that sounds great.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, good, I'm glad.

Ed Gamble

I love that, and it's a big side dish as well.

Reece Shearsmith

It's a lot, yes. I mean-,

James Acaster

You know, I'm quite excited for-, it's your menu and we're getting all these, like, big calendar days of the year there. Because a lot of listeners are going to be getting 12 Days of Christine, kind of, vibes from this now. He hates it, he hates it, 12 Days of Christine. Because it's very on brand for you to hate probably a lot of the fans' favourite episodes and absolutely be like, 'Fuck, 12 Days of Christine.'

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, we're not even in it.

James Acaster

You're in it.

Reece Shearsmith

Well, I mean, a tiny bit.

Ed Gamble

Yes, a tiny bit.



James Acaster

You're in it. You're trying to help, you've been hit by the car or something, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

I know, well, yes, I sort of cause it, yes. Yes, it's a good one.

James Acaster

Yes, I've never been happier to bring up something.

Reece Shearsmith

Wrote in five days, and next thing it's an amazing one that everyone recounts as being the best ever episodes.

James Acaster

It's not your favourite?

Reece Shearsmith

Not for me.

James Acaster

Not your favourite? If you were in charge-

Reece Shearsmith

What's interesting is, you know, we try our best, and the hardest thing in the world is to make them funny. Admittedly, that one is not funny. It's got some funny things in it, like, people are in the world funny along the way. But it's because it's got heart, it's because it makes people cry, they are the ones that seemingly stick with people. Like the other one we did with a double act, with Stephen, that was very moving as well. You know, it's not something we try-, think it's a gimmick, we don't think, 'We should do a sad one now, that's what works.' But that one I think was the first one that we did with Christine that was, sort of, unexpectedly emotional. And of course it's great, and Sheridan Smith is great in it, I just get annoyed because it's everyone's first ranked number one. And I hate ranking, I hate them putting them in order anyway. Only today I read, 'There's some real stinkage you can't get through.'

Ed Gamble

Where are you reading this though, Reece?

Reece Shearsmith

On Twitter.

Ed Gamble

Stop looking.

Reece Shearsmith



I've got to look at these, and I want to get them out, I want to send-, know which ones.

James Acaster

You like being angry, of course you're reading it, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

They're the hardest ones to write, cunt.

James Acaster

It's a proper moment. I remember being in Melbourne when 12 Days of Christine aired, because I remember-

Ed Gamble

Still talking about it?

James Acaster

Yes, it was fun.

Reece Shearsmith

You remember-

James Acaster

I was in a hotel full of comedians. I remember walking out of my hotel-

Reece Shearsmith

Crying your eyes out?

James Acaster

I had not seen it, so I got up in the morning, opened my door, John Kearns in the room next to me. He comes out, he goes, 'Have you seen it?'

Reece Shearsmith

Shattered.

James Acaster

'Have you seen this Inside No. 9?'

Reece Shearsmith

Hushed tones.

James Acaster



'You've got to watch it.' Later on that day he sees me again, 'Have you seen it yet?' 'No, I haven't watched it, Kearns. I've been out doing-,'

Reece Shearsmith

Have you seen it yet?

James Acaster

'Let me know when you watch it.' Kept on checking on me, had to watch it while I was there until-,

Reece Shearsmith

No, he was standing over you looking at you.

James Acaster

Yes. 'Yes, I'm feeling the emotions going, don't worry.'

Reece Shearsmith

'You wait, you wait, it's coming up to it, it's-,'

James Acaster

Yes. It's a twist-, I won't say what it is.

Reece Shearsmith

'Watch, it's amazing, it's amazing. I'm going to watch it when you watch it.'

James Acaster

Yes, 'You've got to watch this.' Is your dream drink related to a night of the year, a special-,

Reece Shearsmith

No, the dream drink, again, goes back to a childhood incident. When I was small, we used to have, sent to the house, was the pop van, and it was Alpine Pop. And I used to have, in an inexplicable situation I can't believe my dad used to do to me, I used to be allowed a lid full of Alpine Dandelion and Burdock. He'd pour out this big, massive bottle of Alpine Dandelion and Burdock, presumably for him, and he'd pour a little-, the lid, and I had to drink it like-,

Ed Gamble

Like it was medicine?

Reece Shearsmith

Like it was medicine. That was it until next Saturday. And then he presumably would drink the lot. No, we didn't get full glasses of it. So, I want a full glass of Alpine Dandelion and Burdock.

Ed Gamble

I mean, the irony is the size you are in the nest, you're only going to be able to manage a little-,



Reece Shearsmith

It's the same amount.

James Acaster

It's the same amount but you've shrunk yourself down.

Reece Shearsmith

Even smaller.

James Acaster

It would be even smaller.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

It's not even a lid-,

Reece Shearsmith

Acorn, acorn cup like-,

James Acaster

If you're lucky.

Reece Shearsmith

Like Willy Wonka.

James Acaster

Your dad's still standing over the nest chugging the rest of the bottle.

Ed Gamble

Chugging it.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

'There you go, you loser.'

Reece Shearsmith

Maybe I've made a mistake there. But yes, again, I mean, I just covet it because I was never allowed it, in a weird way. I mean, it was good in a way I guess, because you shouldn't give children poppy, sugar drinks.



Ed Gamble

But it's even worse than being allowed it, because you were allowed a tiny taste of it to see how good you could have had it.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, the taste, absolutely, yes. And it's like, 'That's great that drink, please let me have more of it.' 'No, that's your lot.'

James Acaster

Yes, so you're craving it.

Reece Shearsmith

'Next Saturday, see you again.' Never ever saw it for weeks and weeks.

Ed Gamble

'Now, eat another peanut butter, jam and egg sandwich.'

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, can have as many as you like of them. So, that was my drink.

James Acaster

From the pop man, you said?

Reece Shearsmith

From the pop man. Yes, there used to be a van that used to ride with all the bottles, like the ice cream man you could hear coming. I hear them bottles, I know it's the Alpine man. And he'd come and then-

James Acaster

You're about to get your lid?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, and I got my little thimble full of-

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Maybe again, it could be Jarvis, it might be that he did it once when I was-, no, it wasn't that, I'm sure this is right. I will ask him, actually. But yes, I've a full glass of that please, why not. I don't even know if they do Alpine anymore, but nevertheless. Do you like dandelion and burdock?

James Acaster

Not massively, but if I was-, I don't dislike it. But if I was in your situation, whatever that drink was-



Reece Shearsmith

You'd want it?

James Acaster

I'd want it as my drink.

Reece Shearsmith

Because I don't remember ever really having a full swig of it at all.

Ed Gamble

The pop van, that's an exciting idea.

Reece Shearsmith

It's good, wasn't it, yes.

James Acaster

I don't think we've ever interviewed someone before where all of the details you've given about your life and your childhood I've gone, 'Of course he likes the stuff he likes.' Catching bats and, like, all the bottles clinking around the corner, and I just get the little-

Ed Gamble

I can definitely imagine a pop van driver character. (talking over each other 57.03).

James Acaster

Yes, you'd have a pop van driver.

Ed Gamble

'Yes, what're you after? We've got orange, we've got lemonade, we've got-'

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, so the dandelion and burdock was a particularly exotic flavour even then at that point, and I was like, 'What's that?' But it was, sort of, not quite Coca Cola, it was very sweet, like Panda cola, remember that?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Panda Pops.

Reece Shearsmith



Panda Pops, yes. But anyway, yes, that would be my choice because I wasn't allowed it at the time. I mean, or a cup of tea, it's the classic.

James Acaster

Yes, classic cup of tea, (inaudible 57.32) cup of tea.

Reece Shearsmith

But I'm not going to change it, I'm going to say Alpine Dandelion and Burdock.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I think that's a good choice.

James Acaster

Jay Rayner's dessert of choice was an éclair because his dad would come back from the shops with loads of pastries, but he would have the éclair and no one else was allowed the éclair, and Jay Rayner wanted it. So that's why he chose that.

Reece Shearsmith

Isn't it funny, you set people on a certain road. That's why you should allow the children to do what they want. As soon as you say no it's like, 'I'm doing it. I'm doing it harder now, whatever it is.'

Ed Gamble

Yes, eventually, yes.

James Acaster

You're still trying to catch bats now.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

If you had actually caught one when you were a kid-,

Reece Shearsmith

I wonder if that would have been the end of it. There's this unscratched itch to catch a bat. I mean, I need to find out about how to do it properly, there must be a way of capturing-,

Ed Gamble

Catching a bat.

James Acaster

There must be.

Reece Shearsmith



Yes.

James Acaster

Maybe using its own sonar against it or something.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Ed Gamble

How would you do that? Well, I guess if you play sonar you might-,

Reece Shearsmith

With a mirror.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

No, not a mirror.

Ed Gamble

If you show a bat itself, it stuns it.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, it's like Medusa, and then it just flops to the ground.

Ed Gamble

They don't know how ugly they are.

James Acaster

I have to text my mum how do you catch a bat.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, well, she'd undoubtedly know-,

James Acaster

I'll text her now, and we'll see if she gets back to me. But, yes-,

Reece Shearsmith

See if she gets back to you, how do you catch a bat.



Ed Gamble

She wasn't capturing them though, right?

James Acaster

Yes, she would never have caught them.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Right, okay.

James Acaster

She would look after the ones-

Reece Shearsmith

Maybe there's a trap they go in. Do they go into a little box and then the lid comes down? Got.

James Acaster

Yes, maybe.

Reece Shearsmith

And then one half of the-

Ed Gamble

That's what your mum would shout, isn't it?

Reece Shearsmith

Got.

James Acaster

Got.

Reece Shearsmith

And then maybe one section of it is glass so you can just look at them and see if they are crawling with lice. That's another question, part B, are they crawling with lice?

James Acaster

Yes, 'P.S, are they crawling with lice?'

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Because that stayed with me, someone told me, 'You don't want to touch one.'

James Acaster



I'll put that in there.

Ed Gamble

Make sure the first one's sent, before you send the second one.

James Acaster

Okay. So I've asked both of those.

Reece Shearsmith

Good.

James Acaster

We'll see.

Reece Shearsmith

And we'll see.

James Acaster

See if she gets back to me within the time.

Reece Shearsmith

What's this about?

James Acaster

The secret ingredients on the podcast and they're normally ingredients we deem to be unacceptable.

Reece Shearsmith

Interesting.

James Acaster

Or the listeners deem to be unacceptable.

Reece Shearsmith

Right.

James Acaster

And if people choose them they get kicked out of the restaurant.

Ed Gamble

But it's only one per episode.

James Acaster

(talking over each other 59.31). Not anymore but it's in the past Dandelion and Burdock was-, and that wouldn't have been us, I don't think, I think that was the listeners (talking over each other 59.37).



Ed Gamble

No, because I've not really had it that much.

James Acaster

I've not had it enough to have an opinion but a listener in the past would kick you out for that shit.

Reece Shearsmith

Oh my goodness, out the nest?

James Acaster

I mean-,

Reece Shearsmith

On the floor like one of those half-gestated birds that you see.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Pink, no feathers, dead.

James Acaster

You noticed.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

Hold on, are you naked in the nest?

Reece Shearsmith

No, I'm just-, I'm leaping to the idea of seeing a dead bird on the floor. (TC 01:00:00)

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, yes, yes.

James Acaster

You don't want to be naked in the nest?

Reece Shearsmith



No, no, I don't want.

Ed Gamble

You're not all pink on the floor.

Reece Shearsmith

I need clothes on, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

Now I imagine in my mind that-,

Reece Shearsmith

Are you naked in the nest?

Reece Shearsmith

Because we're going to have to rerecord the whole thing if you're naked in the nest.

James Acaster

Yes, too many-, examine all this, what we've talked about so far.

Reece Shearsmith

It doesn't fit.

James Acaster

I imagine that you don't care that a listener has said that's not acceptable because I mean as far as you're concerned the audience are scum, right?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Absolutely, yes, of course they are. I mean we may have been chuckling away at these things but I do hate them.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Don't think you've got any affinity if you agree with any of my choices or somehow you feel closer to me.

Reece Shearsmith

We're not friends.



Reece Shearsmith

Not friends.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

Not friends.

Reece Shearsmith

No, I don't agree with anything you might say. If you like me I hate you even more.

James Acaster

Unless of course your actual friends are listening.

Reece Shearsmith

Well, yes, but they know who they are.

James Acaster

Yes. How many?

Reece Shearsmith

One?

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Actually, none.

James Acaster

No friends?

Reece Shearsmith

No friends?

Reece Shearsmith

Not really, not friends.

James Acaster

No, colleagues who you know?

Reece Shearsmith

Colleagues family.



Reece Shearsmith

Have to experience. That's the level of my interest.

James Acaster

Great.

Reece Shearsmith

I could've guessed that. Your dream restaurant you've obviously shrunk down to the size of a sparrow and put in a nest by yourself.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

This is not a man with many friends.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, but is anyone? Richard Osman? No?

James Acaster

No, no, no, Richard Osman did say that-

Reece Shearsmith

No, you'd need some magic finger to shrink him down to the size of a sparrow.

Reece Shearsmith

You would. He would go down and just be normal size, wouldn't he?

James Acaster

Yes,

Reece Shearsmith

That is him.

James Acaster

He fits in a restaurant, fits in a normal restaurant.

Reece Shearsmith

Congratulations.

Reece Shearsmith

It's his treat.



Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Can I be normal-sized in the world?

James Acaster

Dream dessert?

Reece Shearsmith

Dream dessert. Again evoking a time of year, my own pumpkin pie. A slice of, yes.

James Acaster

Lovely. One slice?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Actually give me the whole thing because it feels very light, doesn't it, pumpkin pie? So I would have this maybe with some single cream./

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, it would be my own recipe which is not fancy but it's just home-made pastry and then this pumpkin pie and again it's because it reminds me of one of my happy times, times of the year, Halloween. My probably biggest of all the holidays for me, beating Christmas and I love Christmas but Halloween is huge. Weirdly curtailed this year because I was filming so it passed me by annoyingly so I've got one under my belt, I have to experience it twice as hard next year but, yes, I would say pumpkin pie as a treat. Do you like Halloween?

James Acaster

Do you know what? So I grew up in a Christian household.

Reece Shearsmith

Right, okay.

James Acaster

So it wasn't really-,

Reece Shearsmith

Did they think it was devil-ish?

James Acaster

They didn't think it was devil-ish-, I mean maybe they did, I'll have to let them speak for themselves the old parents but they didn't want us going out trick or treating because they thought we'd scare old ladies.



Reece Shearsmith

Right.

Reece Shearsmith

Right.

James Acaster

And I thought it was not nice.

Reece Shearsmith

But on the other hand your mum caught bats.

James Acaster

But she caught bats all the time and we ate them. So, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Pretty Halloween-y to have bats in the house.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

It was Halloween all the year around.

James Acaster

But, yes, I remember having a fancy dress party that I think was a Halloween party at my house and so I do remember that at one point. But, yes, in general didn't go in for it, didn't happen much. And now as an adult and I see families that have kids and they go in for it I think, 'Oh, that would've been so fun'. Objectively fun and when I've had pumpkin pie, which I've had mainly at my friend's when they've done Thanksgiving because they celebrate it.

Reece Shearsmith

Right, of course, yes.

James Acaster

Delicious. And obviously as a kid I would've gone crazy for that.

Reece Shearsmith



Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

I love Halloween and my wife loves Halloween as well and decorates her house all but she likes spooky stuff not scary stuff.

Reece Shearsmith

Right.

Reece Shearsmith

So there's a lot of quite cute pumpkins and stuff whereas I prefer to have all guts hung up and stuff.

Reece Shearsmith

You would have full on Saw?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Yes, exactly, yes, that's what I'd want.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Well I've increasingly got, for someone who purports to like horror I am more and more squeamish in my old age I think and I go more for the spookier, more ghost-y, psychological than Saw and guts and gore.

Reece Shearsmith

Fright Fest is a big horror festival and it seems to be all about cheering the heads coming off and arms and it's like, it's a first route for me now.

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

First time in my life the other day I turned off a film because it was too much.

Reece Shearsmith

Really? Did you? What was it? Can you name -,?

Reece Shearsmith

Terrifier.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

The first Terrifier.



Reece Shearsmith

Have you seen the second one?

Reece Shearsmith

No.

Reece Shearsmith

Oh my God.

Reece Shearsmith

I couldn't get through the first.

Reece Shearsmith

Did you get to that bit?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, yes. And I was like, 'No, I can't'.

James Acaster

There was a little mime there that made-, Benito went-, But I saw the mime and absolutely just started crying.

Reece Shearsmith

Because I was loving it because it was really making me laugh as well because the scene in the diner is really funny and they cut back to him every time he's doing a different face, I loved all that.

Reece Shearsmith

But quite creepy as well.

Reece Shearsmith

Quite creepy. But then when it just gets to horrible, quite disgusting violence towards women just in a deliberately provocative way I was like, 'Oh, that's making me feel ill'.

Reece Shearsmith

He's out.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

He was out.

James Acaster



That's an evening in on his own for a gamble.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, it was, yes. It is horrible.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

The second one is even worse, yes. It's sort of like they've gone, 'Right, then', wrung their hands together and thought, 'We've got to top it'. And they sort of do in a really grisly way.

Reece Shearsmith

It's done very well though, hasn't it? The film?

Reece Shearsmith

It's done very well because it's like 80s, they've filmed it as if it's a video nasty type of feel to it and that is very authentic.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Reece Shearsmith

So it's not just that they're just making a film, it's a film and it's an era of that type of film-making so there's more thought. If it was just that film from that time it'd be even worse but because it knows what it's doing. Maybe that's worse?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

I like horror films.

Reece Shearsmith

Do you?

James Acaster

But, yes, maybe.

Reece Shearsmith

It's interesting, isn't it? We talk about horror but what has been the horror film that's actually scared you or made you feel unsettled in the middle of that night that same night thinking about it again because to me nothing ever really does. Even that is horrible but it's not like, 'Oh my God, I actually feel a bit scared in my bed'. Nothing ever really achieves that to me.



James Acaster

Not now as an adult. When I was a teenager any horror film would stick with me for too long. The first time I saw Scream 2, two weeks I was shitting myself because-

Reece Shearsmith

Right. Well, Scream I think is a very scary movie actually, ironically enough, because the pastiches were called Scary Movie but it's horrible the first one, very violent.

James Acaster

Well it's the thought of a killer not really needing any motive really and just going around and knifing up everybody, and I was like, 'Oh my God, that could be me at any point.' Have you had anything like that when writing, anything that you've done in the past and gone-

Reece Shearsmith

'That's too horrible or too weird'?

James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

No, not really. I mean, I think our things are dark but I feel like there's always a level of responsibility about it. I think they're sometimes powerful because we are judicious with swearing so it's very impactful when we use it and we've always had that ethos to try to not just go from nought to 100 and earn it, and maybe it's a more insidious way of affecting people because we're careful with how we use it. If it's going to be a gross out bit or something. But, yes, sometimes you can just tell that people are going for the full effect and they haven't earned it. So I don't think we've ever written anything where we thought, 'That's too horrible, we can't do that'.

Ed Gamble

Well with judicious swearing it's just you do build them so well. 'I just think it's a fucking pleasure', the Roy Chubby Brown bit it's just perfect.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, especially coming from him of course, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you could see he's holding it in throughout the whole thing anyway.

Reece Shearsmith

It was the one time we wanted him to do it and it was like, 'Oh, you want me to swear?'. Yes, so, yes, it's all in the writing and keeping things back. Like horror, good horror, I guess you're not seeing everything like Terrifier, it's so horrible. Probably would have been just as horrible if not more to have seen him doing what he was doing but not see it.



Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

And you might have got through it then?

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, maybe. (talking over each other 01.08.14) It was the noise.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

Funny Games, that film?

Reece Shearsmith

Funny Games is horrible.

James Acaster

That doesn't show pretty much anything.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

James Acaster

So for all of it, all of the horrible stuff is happening off camera and that stuck with me for a long time because you just imagine, you just go away imagining it all.

Reece Shearsmith

Home Invasion stuff keeps me awake at night.

Reece Shearsmith

That's really horrible because that's near to what could happen and in it often the acting and the situation is like what it would be like.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

The Purge is a horrible film as well.

Reece Shearsmith

I was just going to say that.



Reece Shearsmith

Isn't it?

Reece Shearsmith

Because think, 'Oh, God, that would be awful'.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, imagine that and it's very close, it's not gothic, it's not like a castle where it's not scary because once removed, this is like in your house and it's very believable. That's why I think often the scariest thing are like a robber coming in, that's what used to keep me awake at night, thinking, 'Oh, there was a creak on the stairwell, someone's in'. Terrified, trying to creep round to my mum and dad to wake them up in the night. That was always the most scary thing. I used to have a recurring nightmare, I've just remembered it now, my mum and dad were replaced, literally, I used to dream about it a lot. And when it started I was the most frightened I'd ever been because it was, like, 'Oh it's going to be that one again.' And I would go to bed and then my mum and dad would take their mum and dad faces off, and they'd be witches, and they were dancing round downstairs. They weren't my mum and dad. They'd been replaced. And that used to happen a lot and I would wake up and be slightly frightened of my mum, thinking, 'It's not you.'

Ed Gamble

Yes. Take your mask off.

Reece Shearsmith

What's that about? I feel now, like what you were saying about you shouldn't have said it out loud.

James Acaster

I loved Roald Dahl books as a kid.

Reece Shearsmith

Right, The Witches.

James Acaster

And my mum started reading The Witches to me.

Reece Shearsmith

Whilst holding a bat over you?

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes. Bats flying all over me (talking over each other 01.09.59).

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, this bat landing on (TC 01:10:00) you.



James Acaster

I think *The Witches* opens with, 'How to spot a witch.'

Reece Shearsmith

Right, yes.

James Acaster

That's, like, the opening of the book.

Reece Shearsmith

Or the thing about they've only got one toe.

James Acaster

Yes, all this. They wear gloves because (talking over each other 01.10.11).

Ed Gamble

- it's square on the rest of-, yes.

James Acaster

All this stuff. And she was reading it all, all the checklist, and not all of them added up. But some of them, I was, like, 'This is you.'

Reece Shearsmith

Hiding in plain sight.

James Acaster

She got to the end of it and I, just in a quivering voice, went, 'Mummy, are you a witch?' She went, 'Right, we're not reading this book because you're shit scared.'

Ed Gamble

Well that's the worst thing to say. Just say, 'No,' straight away rather than, 'We're not reading this, he's on to me.' That's what that sounds like.

James Acaster

'(mw 01.10.40) we have to eat him.'

Reece Shearsmith

And then she put you into the cage because you were a mouse at that point.

James Acaster

Turned me into a mouse. Put me in a nest with you.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes. Come and have a meal with me.



James Acaster

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, well, it's funny, isn't it, the childhood things and the more mundane things are the things that get you more than all, full-on horror. Definitely.

Ed Gamble

But this pumpkin pie-,

James Acaster

Is delicious.

Ed Gamble

Is delicious, because you are a fantastic baker as well.

Reece Shearsmith

Well, yes, and I guess, as I said earlier, having done the Bake Off, where one of my choices was a pumpkin tray bake, so it's in that world. But I don't know whether I'm a fantastic baker, I just knew I would get by some way, by being quite artistic, because I'm quite good at art, I don't really do it as much as I used to, but I thought, 'If it's biscuits, I'll probably be able to do something that looks quite good with the icing.' So I thought it wouldn't be completely useless, I wouldn't be going that route. And, as it turned out, they said it tasted nice as well, I was surprised. I got the handshake.

James Acaster

You got the handshake.

Ed Gamble

You got the handshake, won the episode.

Reece Shearsmith

For my tray bake. Amazing.

James Acaster

Well, you know.

Ed Gamble

We can't all do well, James, it's alright.

Reece Shearsmith

However, it was absolutely the most stressful thing I've ever done.

James Acaster



Yes, (talking over each other 01.11.48) Reece.

Reece Shearsmith

I think it's exhausting and I was fucked by the end of it.

Ed Gamble

We've got the full spectrum here. One, did fine, absolute disaster.

Reece Shearsmith

Well there you go. I never really appear as me in things, and that, it was only two days of it, but it was exhausting to be on the entire time. Five camera on you, waiting for you to fail, trying to think of funny things all the time. And do it, do the cooking. (inaudible 01.12.14) want to fucking crack an egg normally whilst being watched and asked what you're doing. So, yes, it looks like I was just doing it but you're on Bake Off and it's really stressful.

James Acaster

I learnt that everyone else is just a lot better at going on Bake Off and acting on the outside like they're alright. But I don't have that. I was just, like, 'No, this is how I'm really feeling and it's all going to be on the outside and you don't have to wait around for me to fuck up because it's happening constantly. So just point the cameras at me, and here we go.'

Ed Gamble

I had a lovely time.

Reece Shearsmith

Good.

Ed Gamble

I was very excited to do it, I thought, 'I'm going to have a great time.'

Reece Shearsmith

Just found it fun to do?

Ed Gamble

Yes. 'I'm going to cook really well, it's going to be great.' First thing I did, put icing sugar in instead of flour. First thing I did.

Reece Shearsmith

No.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith



I know, I mean, you suddenly realise you're doing things, like the things you watch people do on Bake Off. 'Oh my God, it's not all sticking together, what am I going to do? Put it in the fridge. Oh, I've dropped it all.' Things like that. You're just fingers and thumbs, completely, but that's what they're relying on, isn't it, obviously. They want people to do horrible things.

James Acaster

I want you to do bad things.

Reece Shearsmith

Yes, full spectrum. Fail, win. I'm nodding toward James at fail and (talking over each other 01.13.27)

James Acaster

People know. People know who you're nodding towards.

Reece Shearsmith

I know they know.

James Acaster

Oh, they know. They know what direction that nod's going in. When anyone says, 'Fail,' on this podcast-

Reece Shearsmith

There's a nod. Very definitely.

James Acaster

There's a nod and it's going this way.

Reece Shearsmith

This direction.

James Acaster

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

Reece Shearsmith

Okay, let's see, yes. Because I feel like I've been a bit vague. But I haven't, have I?

Ed Gamble

No, I think you've been pretty specific.

James Acaster

I don't think you've been vague at all.

Reece Shearsmith

Okay good.



Ed Gamble

The first thing you asked was to do be shrunk down and put in a nest.

Reece Shearsmith

Correct, yes.

James Acaster

So, couldn't be more specific. Sparkling water. For poppadoms or bread, you had chosen a fried egg, peanut butter and jam sandwich.

Reece Shearsmith

I did, didn't I.

James Acaster

Starter, Heinz Oxtail Soup. Main course, Christmas dinner. Side dish, haggis, neeps and tatties, Burns Night. Drink, a full glass of Alpine Dandelion and Burdock from the pop van. Dessert, your own, home-made pumpkin pie with single cream.

Reece Shearsmith

Narcissistic, but yes.

James Acaster

I mean, it's pretty great, Reece.

Reece Shearsmith

Is it?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'd be very happy with that.

James Acaster

I think that they've all got nice memories attached to them, they've all got reasons why they're there. There's different times of year associated with different courses.

Ed Gamble

But it all feels wintry and nesty.

Reece Shearsmith



Yes, it does, doesn't it? Yes, it's all very autumnal and that is my favourite time of the year, when the nights draw in and we're getting to the run from Halloween to Bonfire Night and Christmas, it's all my favourite bit. So, yes, it's keeping with that I think, and the wintry skies.

Ed Gamble

How quickly do you want to be magic fingered back into normal-size Reece?

Reece Shearsmith

Ah, yes, good question. I mean, I guess it's if that wine waiter's around, talking to me all the time.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Reece Shearsmith

If he's left me alone, I'd be happy just to be up there for a little bit, listen to the pitter patter. I wouldn't want to waste it, I mean, it's not going to happen very often, is it, this shrinking down? So I guess I'll let it all settle and feel contented, and then have to go back to my normal life. So give me, like, half an hour, 45 minutes.

Ed Gamble

Alright, perfect. Thank you very much for coming to the dream nest, Reece.

Reece Shearsmith

Thank you very much for having me, shrinking me down.

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much to Reece for coming in, we've made him big sized, again, and sent him on his way.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, we magic fingered him back to normal size.

Ed Gamble

We magic fingered him back to normal size. Very lucky, as well, that he didn't say special stuff.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean, who knows. He could've done. There was a lot of imagination going on there.

Ed Gamble

There was but I would've hated to have had to have kicked him out of the restaurant when he was still small.

James Acaster

Yes, that would've been bad he would've fallen down the drain.



Ed Gamble

Because there wouldn't have been time to magic finger him.

James Acaster

No. We would've had to just kick him out, he would've tumbled down the drain, maybe, and been washed away.

Ed Gamble

And then, you know, he couldn't have performed in *The Unfriend* because he would've been too tiny. There would've been people sat in the front row having to use those little opera glasses from the back of the seat. And who's got a 20p these days?

James Acaster

I went to see a play with my parents and I kept on offering 20 p to my mum to use the binoculars. Because I was, like, 'You need those now, you're old.' She didn't like that. Kept going, '20p, I'll pay for it. My treat. You can use them.' Pretty fun joke.

Ed Gamble

You're a lovely son. Go and see *The Unfriend*. Theunfriend.com is where you need to go to get tickets. It's on at The Criterion and it is on now. Strictly limited season, get your ticket. It's a hot ticket.

James Acaster

It's a hot ticket so wear oven gloves when you go to the ticket booth.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you need oven gloves but then if you do need the opera glasses, they're going to be even trickier to get out.

James Acaster

Yes, it's really hard, actually, but that's why. They only want the best coming to see it.

Ed Gamble

Yes, so go see it. Thank you very much for listening, we will see you again some time soon. Goodbye.

James Acaster

Goodbye.