

Bryan Schaaf: Back here on the Meat Speak podcast powered by this certified Angus beef brand. Coming to you from the inner sanctum of the world headquarters of premium beef, somewhere south of Cleveland and north of Amish Country, Bryan Schaaf. With me via zoom is meat scientist Diana Clark. How are ya?

Diana Clark: I'm doing pretty good today. Can't [crosstalk 00:00:27]

Bryan Schaaf: Very nice. You were on the slopes last week with chef Tony Biggs, I saw.

Diana Clark: Yes. He told me that he was never really afraid of heights until he got on this one ski lift in particular, and I didn't believe him when he said it. I'm like, okay, whatever, Tony, like I've been on ski lifts before. There was one ski lift that I went on and, oh my gosh, you were at the tippy tops of the trees and everything. So, yep, I believed him 100% after that point. Let's hold on tight.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm curious to see Tony on the slopes, I would imagine. I mean, does he give the dude sign a lot and say powder a whole lot?

Diana Clark: I feel like he's fairly agile. You just don't expect it out of him.

Bryan Schaaf: Tony Biggs is like a ninja. That's outstanding. Well, we appreciate y'all for listening to the Meat Speak podcast. I will say we just got an email from Apple saying we're one of the top 150 food podcasts. I don't know how many there are, right? Maybe there are only 155, but we're in the top 150, maybe. So that said, we appreciate it. If you could give us an subscribe, give us a like, right? It's not about our ego. It's about our visibility to continue the fine work of meat science and agriculture, and all that good stuff.

Speaking of, our guests today is all of those great things. Actually, one of my favorite people to follow on social media, because I always love the people that you can tell, right? At my core, I am a gen X-er who doesn't have time for sales pitches or anything like that. It makes me angry. So I appreciate the people who go the extra lengths to make sure that the content out there with their name behind it is tried and true. That is our guest today. That said, let's tear into it. Our guest today was born and raised in Melbourne, Australia. I can say that without throwing on my own little Ohio accent, and found true enlightenment in her adopted home of Austin, Texas, where a casual interest in meats led her down in ever deepening rabbit hole of knowledge. Today, she spends her time teaching live fire cooking, how to make the perfect steak. And even dons a lab coat from time to time in her graduate studies in meat science at Iowa State University. Can I get a, let's go, Cyclones? Diana [crosstalk 00:02:47].

Diana Clark: Sure. We'll have to talk about that another time because there's a Longhorn issue there too. Okay?

Bryan Schaaf: Oh, right on. Right? So please welcome to our podcast one of the very few people in the world who can confidently say what's better, brisket fat side up or

fat side down, and the original burger Mary. Welcome to the podcast, hardcore carnivore herself, Jessie Pryles. How are you?

Jess Pryles: Hi, thank you. I'm so excited to be here. I've been listening for ages and I was just waiting for a coach to call me up and today's my chance, so I'm excited.

Bryan Schaaf: Well, we are grateful that you have taken time. I mean, you are everywhere. So the fact that you have somehow managed to find time in your travels in your meat science work and your social work and all that to join us here, we're eternally grateful. If you could, we want to go back to the very beginning and I pride myself on, right? Diana is really the brains of the operation. I have the power of Google behind me, and you have roots with cupcakes, right?

Jess Pryles: Yes, I do. That is true.

Bryan Schaaf: How did you go from cupcakes to hardcore carnivore?

Jess Pryles: It was one of those things where I think we all dip our toe into different ... not all of us go straight from school to university to that job. We try different things out. And I was one of those people who I really didn't find what I wanted to do until I had moved to Texas, until I was well into my thirties. And one of the last jobs that I had before this was, I had started a cupcake company. Again, still just driven by a love of food. I'm not a trained chef. I'm not a trained baker. I'm not a trained meat cook, just made the stuff that I liked. And it resonated with other people, which is really the same story as me in the meat world too. So, that was basically my last job immediately before this. And if I could scrub it from the internet, I would.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm sorry. We've just added another layer of scrubbing that you have to do on this. I apologize.

Jess Pryles: It's all right.

Bryan Schaaf: It was not my intention.

Jess Pryles: I'm not ashamed of it at, by any means. They were delicious cupcakes. It's just a really random [inaudible 00:05:09]

Bryan Schaaf: Well, I [crosstalk 00:05:11].

Diana Clark: I think that you should be proud of that one. I mean, that's pretty awesome. Meat and cupcakes? I mean, that's great.

Jess Pryles: I know, but I draw the line at those meatloaf cupcakes with the mash potato frosting. I think we all need to have boundaries and that's one of mine.

Diana Clark: I agree.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah. I'm with you. That said, enough about cupcakes. Let's go ahead and talk about meat. That's relevant here, right? Barbecue though, right? You're an Australian, right? Where did this love of barbecue, interest in barbecue ... I know there's a history there with, of course, the Mueller family, Louie Mueller, John Mueller, obviously Leanne and the family as well, one of the most interesting iconic Texas barbecue families. But can you talk us through where does somebody from a country that, as far as I know, they don't really smoke a whole lot of briskets down that way? Or at least they didn't used to before you. How did this all come about?

Jess Pyles: Barbecue, even though Australia has that whole history of throw another shrimp on the barbie, which is not even what we call them. We call them prawns. But there's this idea that we have this rich barbecue heritage, but when you say barbecue in Australia, you mean grill. And usually it's often a flat top grill that's just rolled out at events with some really cheap sausages, with a lot of filler in them, between pieces of white bread. And that's the grand history of Australian barbecue. American style barbecue has gotten huge in Australia within the past five to seven years, but at the time, certainly growing up, we didn't have anything like it.

And the whole thing of coming to Texas was I was someone who always enjoyed eating meat, always loved a steak, loved chop night at home, but my parents didn't really educate me into how to buy it, what I was looking for at the grocery store. It's extremely intimidating. You know when you buy a tomato, to just buy a tomato, but when you're buying a steak, you're like, what? So I didn't really know much about it at all, but in trying my first taste of barbecue, I loved it so much and was so fascinated to eat more and learn more about it. There's obviously a black magic mystique to the idea of putting a giant piece meat into this locomotive looking steel pit, and then turning it into barksy, smokey rendered magic.

And what had happened was I tried to go back home and I thought I was going to cook a brisket in my oven. Ha-ha. That shows you exactly my starting point at the time. But I went to my butcher and I asked for a brisket and they gave me a rolled flat, which I know all three of us here, probably most of your listeners understand the difference. But I couldn't at all understand as a consumer, how I could ask for a thing with the same name and get such a different product. I didn't know what I was looking at. I didn't know why it was different. I just knew it was different. And it led me to this journey of trying to figure out what happened and why it was different.

I ended following a lot of folks on ... I mean, Twitter was big at the time, a lot of great women in agriculture as well, who were happy to share information about where to look further and why it might be different. And then when I would come back to Texas, because I enjoyed my trip so much that I actually just kept coming back, I eventually just for lack of a better term [inaudible 00:08:54] or just followed the pit masters around to watch what they were doing. And the

person who I first cooked with was John Mueller. And he had a really fascinating style of cooking and came from that Louie Mueller barbecue dynasty.

But there was such a steep learning curve to not just the barbecue itself, but to understand the raw ingredient. To this day, I still get asked, well, oh, I've got this tiny little brisket or this brisket flat. Can I do this amazing texture style situation on it? And you have to explain the quality and physical specs of the meat makes a tremendous difference to barbecue. So basically I just shared what I learned along the way. And I think a lot of people really appreciate it because we still see today, I'm sure y'all get it too, it's the same questions over and over as new people get into the craze.

Bryan Schaaf:

I think one of the reasons that I think you resonate so much with people who follow you is a lot of the times you're answering questions that you had out of just genuine curiosity, which I know. I mean, I always tell this story years ago. I had a neighbor, I hadn't even thought about it, he was a meathead. He's like, why isn't there a bacon from cattle? I was like, that's a good question. Diana, why isn't there bacon from cattle? Turns out there is, we just haven't been making it, right? But meat science, right? I first met you, met you when you were here a couple years ago, actually, I guess, pre COVID. You were just here, what, I guess last week or a week before. I know I was in Phoenix [crosstalk 00:10:36] while you were up here. But I guess, can you talk about some of the work? You and Diana, I mean, you guys have become the dynamic duo of meat science. And I guess, can you talk about some of the things that you guys are doing?

Jess Pyles:

We sometimes say Laverne and Shirley, but dynamic duo sounds much better. [crosstalk 00:10:53] One of the things, I guess, to segue into to this that's really important is right now, what I do on a lot of my social media is a lot of meat myth busting. And if you don't know me, it nearly looks like I'm a page shill for the industry, because I'm so fervent about it and I'm so passionate about it. But what it is, I mean, it's exactly what you said, Bryan, it's that journey. So it's things like ... now that I know what I'm looking at when I read a label, I get frustrated when people take advantage of other people's lack of understanding.

So one of the things, for example, that drives me crazy is people using the terms better, healthier, just these generic, oh, it's better for you, our cows are happier, things like that, that just prey on people's misunderstanding of what actually constitutes great quality beef. And also the lack of understanding about sustainability and animal welfare and all of that kind of thing. And I challenge them. I mean, I had a whole very heated argument with someone the other day, who was talking about regenerative farming. And I asked her two or more questions, and that's where it stopped, because she just knew the buzzwords. She didn't actually know why organic was important to her because she didn't understand it. She didn't understand what industry standards were.

Anyway, so all of that is what I really enjoy doing now because it's like once you're empowered with information, it's the most wonderful feeling that you get to make informed choices as a consumer. And that's why I'm so passionate about it. But I met Di a few years ago and I mean, I still think she's the bees knees, but I remember at the time just thinking, I didn't even know meat science existed and here is this woman who is so intelligent and so far along in her career at still such a young age. And I just thought she was incredible. And through friendships like with hers, I tried to soak up as much as I possibly could in terms of short courses, like a beef 706 at Texas A&M, or Di would print me off studies for me to read. And it's very difficult to read a scientific study when you don't really understand how to interpret it, but I would try my best.

And that's what eventually led me to seeking out the program at Iowa State because it's designed. You are supposed to have a science background or an ag background and augment your career that way. I had to apply for special exemption for life experience as a prerequisite, but I felt it was the first time in my life that I wanted to go back to school and wanted to study something. And I really felt that it helped do two things. One, continue to teach me so that I can then share with other people. But two, it gave me a little bit of legitimacy in terms of the things that I knew that most, I guess, creators wouldn't really be aware of and things that aren't important to them. So it was that expertise as well that was really nice. And yeah, I still absolutely don't feel comfortable calling myself a meat science compared to someone like Di, but theoretically, at the end of the summer, I will be.

Diana Clark: Well, you've been a meat scientist for a while. I think that's what amazes me, Jess, is that you've been able to continue to want to learn more. I think a lot of people get to that point of, okay, we're just going to Google it and see what happens. And you would do that and like, well, does that really make sense? So now let's check our sources here. And you just keep diving deeper and deeper and deeper into the knowledge. And then to me, the beauty of it is then your ability to share that fact to just the average consumer. You make it very digestible for them to understand and not be afraid. Like you said, I think most people would think that you are this advocate for the meat industry and we're AMI or someone is paying you to do all this. But no, it's just, it's your passion to get the right message out there so that people aren't confused by it and they can trust it more than what they do today. So I think that's phenomenal. I love it.

Jess Pyles: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: Diana, I mean, can you talk about that from your perspective, obviously doing what you do specifically? Obviously we both are employed by certified Angus beef, but when you see a lot of those misnomers that are out there, whether you call it drive by media, whether you call it social media run a foul, and you are able to latch onto something that Jess is putting out where it really is stating

the facts, I mean it, what does it mean to have somebody out there who's like, thank you for saying what I really want to say?

Diana Clark: Honestly, it's amazing because it's finally like a ha-ha, because I feel like most people within the meat industry, we don't want to offend you when we say this, so we're going to try to put it in this way, in these terms. And then we just go into too much detail. We just start to add on another level, another level, another level. And it gets so complex that it's like, okay, now our messaging is gone. They stopped listening to us 20 minutes ago and we're still talking. So it's how do we get that right message out there, what they want to hear and need to hear in order to trust us and move forward? And it's so hard because lot of us are employed by different companies within the meat industry and they want to make sure that we have a reputable ... like, we don't want to say this. We don't want to say this. Just being very politically correct in things, which I completely understand. But at the same time, I think sometimes it's easier just to rip the bandaid off and say, Hey, this is how it is and this is why it's that way versus let's try to skate around it very gently and hopefully they pick up on the message, but they might not. But hopefully they do.

Jess Pyles: Di, I think it's also that there's two aspects. One, there's a liability aspect to the industry. But two, especially if you're coming from the science background, it's unthinkable to put out a research paper or findings that isn't an entirely complete, thoroughly transparent piece of literature where absolutely everything that you think feel and experiment has been documented. And in today's social media world, we have one minute to do it.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Jess Pyles: And it's funny because I often get upset and used to try to preempt what people were going to say, knowing, well, if I say this, I have to talk about this because someone's going to leave a comment. And what I've learned is you will absolutely never please anyone. I filmed a video where I cut a steak in half in order to sear half of it and then grind the other half to show you the difference. And I got a comment just this morning that was, oh, she's a meat scientist, but she cut the steak before she seared it? And I sat there and my brain went ... but literally it was to experiment with the same piece, so the experiment was equal and the ... You know what? You will never get it right. And so you do need, I think like you said, to just try and tailor it to as many people as you can, always realizing that there will be some Smarty McSmarty Pants that will come and tell you what they think you left out in the comments.

Bryan Schaaaf: Yeah. I mean, I would imagine you have to be ready. I mean, because it almost does seem like, well, there are the haters out there. They're just looking to pounce on anything they can. And I say this, as you know, I have three screens up on my laptop here. I'm the lone male, so I'll go ahead and be the one to say it. The term mansplaining is something that I can imagine that you guys probably experience. I tend to every once in a while. Actually, I got a text from

one of our social media folks, because I have a little trouble keeping my mouth shut, calling out mansplainers. Our one female chef who ran our culinary center probably has cooked more steaks over the past five years than anybody in the world. And somebody told her she was doing it all wrong. And I was like, dude, do you know what she does? But yeah, but it's out there.

Jess Pyles: An interesting phenomenon, Bryan, that I've seen where it certainly felt like mansplaining in the beginning, but now it's just explaining because I see it happen to male colleagues. I see it happen to everyone. And it's this interesting phenomenon that's been brought on by that flashing cursor in the comments bar nearly goading people to give their opinion, where people will, no matter who it is, just reiterate what that person said in the comments to show that they acknowledge it or that they agree. And it's 100% person explaining no matter who you're doing it to. And I don't know why it's become such a fad. I think we need to call some sociology departments and anthropology departments and get them to look into that.

Bryan Schaaf: When you finish your meat science degree, if you could go research that, that would be fantastic.

Jess Pyles: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: Well, you know what, let's talk a bit more about you, about the hardcore carnivore. Obviously it has spawned an extremely successful book. You have rubs, you have spices, you have swagger logs. I've got a Hardcore Carnivore sticker up in my office. Talk about this beast. Where did the name come from? Where did the idea of ... Was there a time when you sat down and were like, this is what it's going to look like? Or has this all just been an organic process as you've progressed?

Jess Pyles: It's all been very organic because my journey wasn't a definitive, I'm going to ... I mean, creators and influencers didn't exist when I did my thing in the beginning. So I didn't sit down and say, I'm going to do this and I'm going to try and get all this free stuff, and this is the next move. It was as organic as it gets. And first it started with the interest in barbecue and then it was a dipped toe into recipes. And then I just put those on my website and then it went from there. And the next extension of that was fun merch, like steak and bourbon, a complete meal T-shirts, which is still one of our best sellers today. But that was just under my brand because Hardcore Carnivore didn't exist.

And I had started using that terminology just as a little catchphrase to describe myself, because I thought, oh, what am I? I'm not a pit master and I'm not at this, but I'm a hardcore carnivore, catchy name. Great. And the next natural extension to people enjoying my recipes was seasoning. I had an idea for a barbecue rub really before. Even seasonings and rubs now are such a huge, huge industry, and they weren't at the time. I just had an idea to put one out that had activated charcoal in it, so it nearly acted like meat cosmetics, because



it gives you ... but it all ties in, right? So it gave you the appearance of the sear. So if you're struggling with how to cook or you don't have an aggressive grill or a great cooking device at home, you could get that appearance. And so I thought, look, I'll get a quote on it. I'll put it out. If it all goes south, everyone gets a bottle with my name on it for Christmas, and that's how it started.

It was about eight months in and a friend turned to me and they're like, you know you have to bring another one out now, right? And I was like, oh. And then we brought the red product out just because people love the flavor profile of black so much. They were using it on other proteins that didn't look as great. It's best suited to red meat and so we brought the red out. And then it went from there and now all the stuff in the lineup, be it butcher's peach paper, barbecue slicing knife, trimming knife, even, which is our latest thing in the line, they're all tools that I use in my everyday life that I don't think have enough representation in the space. Everyone should have a trimming knife if you're serious about meat cook or your barbecue. And it's just not one of those chefs knives. The trimming knives that you can get out of those traditional cut brands are very expensive. They're very rigid and that's not ... and I will tell you it's not traditionally what you find in a boning room or a butcher's shop.

Diana Clark: Yeah. No, I completely ... that's what I think what's neat is that you give that at home cook everything that they would need to be successful just with seasoning and tools, but then also to take it to the X level, just to be that person of like, Ooh, when you have people over, oh, where'd you get that? Even the seasoning standpoint, we use that Tex Mex one a lot when we have people over for taco bars. I have to say I'll put it on chicken. And so every single time that we do, it's always, what seasoning is this?

Jess Pryles: Oh, it's because chicken needs all the help it can get [crosstalk 00:24:49]

Diana Clark: It does. It definitely does, but it brings out the best in it, which is all the seasoning itself. I mean, the chicken, you can't taste at all, but it's just a fantastic way to drive that. And then I think it's neat, then we'll have a Hardcore Carnival of carving tools and it's ... Yeah. It just makes you look way more legit in the kitchen than before.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm just processing the fact that you said you cooked chicken.

Diana Clark: I know. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Bryan Schaaf: Can we get a Hardcore Carnivore shake and bake?

Jess Pryles: Oh, man. Wouldn't that be great? Hamburger Helper?

Bryan Schaaf: Yes. Yes. I see it. I see the extension of Hardcore Carnivore going everywhere.



Diana Clark: My favorite is the Hardcore Carnivore six month onesie. I think that all little children need to have one of those, so shout out to that one.

Bryan Schaaf: I get [crosstalk 00:25:40]

Jess Pyles: We sent a few of those around, but never does it ever make sense as much as it does to the child of a meat scientist.

Bryan Schaaf: Oh. I have to say I'm a proud owner of the ... and my only regret is that I didn't think of it, the beef chief hat.

Jess Pyles: Ah, that's one of my favorites.

Bryan Schaaf: I can tell you [crosstalk 00:25:59].

Diana Clark: It's great hat.

Bryan Schaaf: It's fantastic.

Jess Pyles: We have a fun mech line and it gives us an offer opportunity, I think, to still have a bit of fun. The seasonings' a serious business and premium stuff, but who doesn't love a novelty T-shirt?

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: Amen. Amen. I know obviously you do a lot of meat science type things here, but one of the things that is near and dear to our heart here is obviously barbecue, right? I don't know. I've lost count of how many episodes that we have done on this podcast that have something to do with barbecue, whether it's barbecue people, whether it's talking about science of brisket and smoking and all these different things. Obviously, that was your foray into Texas. You are in Austin. You are in the epicenter of the barbecue universe. For our listeners, can you talk to us? Because I love the fact that you come out a lot of these things with genuine interest and curiosity. Talk to our audience that does not understand Texas barbecue. What in your eyes does that mean?

Jess Pyles: It's interesting because Texas barbecue has also evolved over the years and it's nearly become ... It's currently, I would say, the most famous it's ever been, even though it's held such an esteemed place in the hearts and minds of Texans, but it started out of necessity. Its history lies in the meat markets. So it's also closely tied to butcher shops, which is really interesting, I think too. And it was a lot of German immigrants using their traditional smoking techniques to cook leftover meats or meats that they would have to cook for transient workers when they would have a lot of workers come in during cotton season or what have you. And they'd have more people to feed.

And because they would serve these meats by the pound, because they were a butcher shop, that's where that tradition of just it being on a tray sold by weight continues today. And dotted around Texas with these historical barbecue joints. It was also one of the only places to historically have beef on the menu along with then Kansas City, which has a lot to do with the Loving-Goodnight Trail, which is literally the cattle trail that used to drive beef from Fort Worth all the way up to the Kansas stock yards to be shipped out. So also, if you're a meat beef nerd, there's some tremendous history there as to why brisket is on the menu.

And what we've seen in the last 10 years is ... so even though all these little towns would have these historical joints and you could go to Lockhart, go to Giddings, go to Luling and visit all these very, very old smoke houses, you wouldn't always necessarily get the best food. It was one of those ... and I think this is true of any cuisine, you can have a historically significant joint that's gets you in the fields, just because of how it looks, what the ambience is, how stained the walls are with smoke.

I always say to people, if you ask someone what their favorite meal is or their best food memory, you generally only get one of two answers, which is either that it's connected to family like, oh, it was my grandmother's chicken soup, or it was connected to travel. So I was traveling in New Mexico and we ran out of gas and stopped at this station. This little, old, abuela was selling these tamales and they were incredible. And I guarantee you, if I served you those tamales in a blind tasting, you wouldn't think they were so incredible, but it's the memory that came with it. And that's a big power of food as well. And so a lot of Texas barbecue was based in memory and based in that power and based in that experience because these joints ... it's stepping into living history and that is just an incredibly powerful thing.

But over the last 10 years, there's been this resurgence and a real focus from a food quality standpoint into barbecue. You are seeing it go from buying the cheapest brisket available because it's just about turning a cheap cut into something palatable, to a lot of barbecue joints being very discerning about what they're using, which is why there's so many using certified Angus beef now of course. And also applying more chef standards to their food. So if it's not right, I won't serve it. If the brisket hasn't rested properly or set up like I expected it to, perhaps I'll turn it into sausage or chili or something else, but I won't serve it as sliced brisket, because I need that standard, standards for holding, standards for cooking. And that's what truly has given rise to this explosion in popularity, and also an explosion in different state lines.

So brisket obviously is the king of Texas barbecue, also all beef sausages. And again, obviously, it is just very rooted in the fact that that was our primary livestock here in Texas. And now you can find Texas style brisket in Brooklyn, in Atlanta, in Australia, in Europe, because people are now cherry picking the best of the best. And I would say the standard of Texas style brisket with that heavy

pronounced smoke and pepper and bark is, I mean, it really is one of the few things that lets the meat speak for itself. And I think I know that Di is ... I haven't even asked it, but I can tell you that she feels this way. The biggest hallmark of Texas style brisket is you just cook it so that you taste the brisket. We don't inject it.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Jess Pyles: We don't add things to it. It's very, very simple to allow the true fat flavors and also the textural collagen elements or gelatin elements to really be the hallmark of the dish.

Diana Clark: Most definitely. I love that when you go to any big Texas barbecue house ... and so what did you put on this? Salt and pepper. Wait, no, no, what else? Nope. Yep. That's it. It's like, just keep it simple. Don't try to make it fancy. You're doing enough right now. Okay? Just salt and pepper. Just let the meat speak. Yeah. Hey.

Jess Pyles: Hey. I see what you did there.

Diana Clark: You see that?

Jess Pyles: I think that there's also an element though, where it's nearly swung back the other way. People are so interested in trying to recreate it at home that I always say to them, don't watch too many YouTubes before you attempt your first brisket, because it'll steer you on the wrong path.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Jess Pyles: The best way to learn to cook a brisket is just by trial and error. It's a natural product. It's dependent on your weather, your cooker, so many variables that only having experience is going to be the best thing for it. And there was this fad lately of injecting tallow or brushing tallow across the top of the brisket. And Diane and I sit there and it hurts our souls on a molecular level because we know that you do not need to add tallow to a very fatty piece of meat [crosstalk 00:33:45] to achieve a great result. But I think people are constantly looking for, well, what can my secret weapon be to distinguish my brisket from others?

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: You go to these competition barbecues and there are guys who will inject the A5 Wagyu briskets. Dude that's already 50% fat already so [crosstalk 00:34:06]

Jess Pyles: But they're buying the cheapest grocery store beef stock to inject.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Jess Pyles: That's the irony.

Bryan Schaaf: Now I will say the best application of injection that I've ever heard, our friends in Chicago at Chicago Culinary Kitchen, they sell Thanksgiving turkeys to people. They will inject the turkeys with brisket fat to the extent that if you squeeze the Turkey, fat shoots out the side of it and it smells fantastic. I'm like, all right, I can get on board with this. [crosstalk 00:34:38]

Diana Clark: When I judged the Jack a few years back, I think that was the most eyeopening thing I had ever seen was the taste of brisket. I mean, whatever they brought out, it just was not there. It was like you could tell that they're trying to fake it, which I did not understand, until with the Jack specifically, they do ... I don't even know what the category's called, but it's a creative whatever. Basically, make your own and try to make it shine. That was the best category. I mean, I still remember this gumbo that I had, and the part that sucks is it's double blinded, so we have no idea who actually served it. So I can never recreate that experience again, but it was just mazing seeing the creativity in it in a good way versus, oh, let's cook it early and try to hold it and inject it with this so the flavor ... I'm like, no, no, no, no, no, no, flavor. Go back to the flavor of it and that's what's going to make you shine. I was definitely taken aback when I did that, for sure. I did not expect that in the whole judging sector, but ...

Jess Pyles: I mean, all competition cooks will tell you that they don't cook like that at home. It's not [crosstalk 00:35:55] self perpetuating or self-fulfilling prophecy that we know that this is what the judges expect, so this is what we have to cook to. And I don't know how you un-ring the bell on that.

Diana Clark: I know, I know. It's just this vicious cycle that just keeps continuing.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Jess Pyles: And actually, I love MSG, even though it's not in our product. That's another great example of it's harder to reeducate the public than it is just to leave it out of something.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Jess Pyles: It's derived from glutamic acid. It's a tremendous flavor enhancer in that it wakes your taste buds up. It's a very valuable tool in a chef's arsenal. But after being involved in competition barbecue and doing judging for a few years, I had to take a few years off MSG because it wasn't used judiciously. And I nearly had this, I wouldn't say adverse reaction because, Di, as you know, there's no science to support any allergy to MSG, but I just was so sick of the flavor, because it was used so heavily that I was [crosstalk 00:36:58] just was like, no. And now I use it back in my cooking again.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah. I put it in all my sauces.

Jess Pryles: Right?

Bryan Schaaf: Oh, it's so good.

Diana Clark: It does. It's just delicious.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm so pro MSG. But before we turn the page, can we talk about since we're on the subject of brisket quite a bit, but, Jess, in my reading up on your history and all these things actually was this thing that has come up several times in this podcast. Our buddy, Arnez Robbins, who I know you know from [inaudible 00:37:28] right? Out in Lubbock, Texas.

Jess Pryles: I love Arnez.

Bryan Schaaf: Arnez will tell you his first barbecue memory was on a family trip. As a kid. They went to Louie Mueller Barbecue and got the beef short rib. And that was his moment, right, when his soul was awakened to barbecue. You have a bit of history with Wayne Mueller, with Louie Mueller, with that beef short rib. Right?

Jess Pryles: Well, yeah. I mean, I do and Wayne's cooked at events that I used to do called the Carnivores Ball. And as I said, his brother, John, taught me how to cook and also taught me how to cook those beef ribs hot and fast because it can handle it. But my actual first taste of barbecue was at a place that doesn't even exist anymore called Art's Rib House, and it was actually a beef back rib, which is really unusual. You can't find it anymore, but it also speaks to ... back ribs are significantly cheaper than plate ribs. There's not a lot of meat on them, but you can get ... especially if you love that sort of crunchy membrane, [crosstalk 00:38:30] the gnarly edges kind of thing, back ribs are great for that.

But they were probably cooking back ribs just because it was a more cost effective thing for the restaurant. And that was my first taste of Texas barbecue was a beef back rib and it was just peppery and intense. And as I said, it had all those golden rib nuggets of goodness and that's hard to beat, but I think probably either there's something texturally in smoked beef rib that's just phenomenal. And my perfect buy would be just a slice of white bread, a big hunk of cheddar, a big pull ... You have to pull it. You can't cut it. You have to rip that chunk out the cooked rib, and a little bit of white onion, just for that crunch. That's my barbecue bite. That's my historic Texas barbecue bite.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm such a fan. I'm such a fan. Oh. Also, since we're on that subject, if you go back to the podcast, actually the one before this one actually would've come out two weeks ago, it's all about the scientific makeup of the short plate, which of course includes the beef plate rib. That's the big long bone guy that ... when people say, ah, I only got one rib, like, yeah, but you don't understand how big one plate short rib is.

Jess Pryles: Every time you eat a Dino rib, a tomahawk cries somewhere. [inaudible 00:39:51]

Diana Clark: That's a really good point.

Bryan Schaaaf: Jess and Di, between the two of you, over the course of the history of this podcast, we get caught up on cut names, right? And different things are known in a different regions, even just domestically. A Kansas city strip, a New York strip, a Delmont ... all these different things. But can you guys talk a little bit about how difficult ... and, Jess, especially coming from Australia, how difficult was the learning curve to figure out? What are these cuts called, where I spent the first part of my life versus now to figure out exactly what's what?

Jess Pryles: It was very difficult. I mean, I mentioned before I was asking for brisket and how could it be the different thing, but it's even more confusing. I mean, so it is the same muscle. It's just cut in a different way, to be clear. They basically gave me the flat only, which they call a rolled brisket. Then you take something like a porterhouse, which in Australia is a strip steak, which in the U.S., is it a New York strip? Is it Kansas City strip? Are you talking a portion of a strip? Is it a Manhattan steak? And you have to be a linguistical wizard in some ways to translate it. And it was challenging to discern the cuts.

And another challenge as well is ... and Diane and I have run into this in the meat lab when I go up there and she teaches me the cut. She taught me so much about breaking down. Sometimes there are also cuts that are really interesting, but that the public won't get access to, or it doesn't have a name, like when we talked about that top round cap.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Jess Pryles: And it hasn't been given a fun name yet, but it could have, or people confusing a tri-tip and a picanha. And then are you calling it picanha? Are you calling it coulotte? Are you calling it top sirloin cap? And so it's very, very confusing. And I think that's part of the intimidation for consumers dipping their toe in because they don't understand why it's not standardized and why it has to be so complicated.

Diana Clark: Yeah. I agree with that. So when I was in college, we actually had a meat judging competition in Australia and I was the coach of the team. So I was trying to teach these kids all of these different terms, even though they're the same cuts and they're cut slightly differently. But no, but they don't call it that there. They call it this. I mean, talk about being extremely confusing, but then really eye opening thing. We had a group in from South Korea and I start going through some of the cuts that we have and they're sitting there, I mean, vigorously taking notes and I never thought about it, because they're not just getting meat from the United States. I mean, they're getting meat from Australia, they're

getting meat from Brazil. So if you think about the complex of global meat consumption, it's so hard to realize what you're actually getting.

They'd say, yeah. I mean, they would send me pictures. This is what we got in the box. What is that? If we were to order that from the United States, what would we order? Well, actually, you can't get that because we break our cattle just slightly differently. So just understanding those little things. I will have to say USMEF has put out a really neat book and they actually have country and cuts. And so you can go through that, which has been very beneficial just to understand what people are talking about. But the complexity behind it, like you said, originally, Brian, regionally just in United States is huge, but then you add in the world and that's ... I mean, the United States is definitely involved in global beef production, so is Australia. Those are [crosstalk 00:43:43] bug top contenders right there. So just understanding how that goes in is mind blowing.

Jess Pryles: And then on top of that, you have to explain that there's stuff that even if it appears in a guide like [inaudible 00:43:57] guide or an meat guide, that it's subjective, so if we look at something like a flank and cut rib. So if you have a quarter inch, half inch cut, you have south Texas style tub liters or flak and cut ribs that you can grill. But if you're going into the half to three quarter inch in Korean and Gallatin territory and then ... I mean, you can cut beef ribs as thick as you want. We're still talking about the same beef rib here or ribs two to five. And we're just how thick do you cut them? And it's hard to explain to people again that if I cut you the quarter inch or the half inch ones, you can grill them. But if you're getting an inch thick, you're probably not going to want to grill them then.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Jess Pryles: And it's hard to understand that. I mean, they sell bone in brisket steaks in south Texas here that are just sliced very, very thinly because you can grill them. I mean, and also now you're talking also about cultural groups. So Americans tend to want fall off the bone ribs, tender steaks, whereas a lot of Hispanic cultures, and obviously we have a lot of Mexican influence here in south Texas, are used to tougher cuts where there might be some chew to them. So they're not afraid to pick up that flanking cut beef rib and give it a good tear and chew because it's got this delicious grilled aspect to it. Someone else might consider that to be unacceptable to their palette, so it's hard.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm trying to process, and Diana, we got to cut some of these brisket steaks.

Diana Clark: I know. Now I'm like I'm [crosstalk 00:45:43]

Bryan Schaaf: Well, we need to play around with this.

Diana Clark: We get it. Let's just wait. I'm glad Tony's not here because we probably would need those by tomorrow if it was. Just give me a little time on that one, Bryan.



Bryan Schaaf: All right, you got it. You got it. Jess, if you could, tell us a little bit about, I guess, where you're at now versus ... I guess, what does the future hold? You mentioned you've got your meat science degree in hand by summertime, I guess. What does the future hold for you?

Jess Pryles: That's a great question and I wish I could tell you that in these last few years I've developed a game plan, but I'm still very much a move as it comes, roll with the punches. Obviously we'll be developing more hardcore carnival products. There's a lot more ideas that I have I want to bring to market. And I still develop all the seasonings myself. So we don't sit there and think, oh, what do I need to add to the line from a what's going to sell? What's going to walk out the door? It's like, what is missing in my pantry that I want to be able to pick up and just use? And what do I want it to taste like? And luckily, I guess what I like the flavor of, a lot of other people have resonated with.

I'm doing a lot of industry focused stuff this year, speaking at the reciprocal meat conference later this year, also hosting the World Butcher Championship in Sacramento later this year, which is basically meat Olympics. It's open to the public. It's going to be at the Golden 1 Center. If you have any interest in butchery, even if you think it's cool to watch, I think it's be a real fun event for people to attend. And different teams are coming over from all over the world to participate, so that's pretty neat.

Diana Clark: Bryan, I think we need to go.

Bryan Schaaf: I think we're in. All right.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: The problem is ... understand you're going to be doing most of the work and I'll just [crosstalk 00:47:40]

Diana Clark: It's okay. But still, I need you with me.

Bryan Schaaf: All right. I'll slow clap for you in the background. Count me in. That's amazing, the world cup of butchery.

Jess Pryles: Hell, yeah, the world butcher championships [crosstalk 00:47:52] So the last one was held in Ireland. It's gone around the world and literally, I mean, Mexico, Brazil, France, Britain, Australian, New Zealand, Canada, U.S. Huge attendance and it should be really interesting.

Bryan Schaaf: That's amazing. I actually remember when Ireland came up because our friend Craig Deal actually from [crosstalk 00:48:18] Now, he's in North Carolina, but he was on the United States butcher team. I mean, man, that's what I want on my business card.

Diana Clark: Right?

Bryan Schaaf: Right. Oh, that's incredible. Can you tell us where can people find you? Where can people follow you across all of your various platforms?

Jess Pryles: I'm on all the social medias under my name, which is Jess Pryles, P-R-Y-L-E-S. Hardcore Carnivore has its own accounts as well, hardcorecarnivore.com or at Hardcore Carnivore. And my website, Jesspryles.com, also has a bunch of recipes. So I would just bounce between the two to find what you need, because it's going to be on there one way or another.

Bryan Schaaf: Excellent. And I highly recommend ... give the Instagram follow because anytime I see a video and it's your face in front of an image in the background, I always have to click to turn the sound on because I'm like, this is a going to be really good. Right? Yeah. I caught one and I think it was a Tik Toker who was trying to expose mislabeling of expiration dates on meat. And it was like, they changed the date and lowered the price and you were like ...

Jess Pryles: Yeah, they did.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Jess Pryles: That's how it works.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Jess Pryles: Yeah. I will say this real quick, Bryan. What was interesting on that one, and this makes it all worthwhile, is that someone came on there and asked a question. And they said, well, I just want people to be careful about buying stuff that's close to expiring. And I said, well, actually, as long as you cook it to 165, it'll always be safe to eat. It may not taste the best, but it'll always be safety to eat. And Di, are you freaking out that I just said that

Diana Clark: No.

Jess Pryles: We're working on technicalities here.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Jess Pryles: We're working on just making people think at this point. And initially she said, well, I'm just worried of giving people bad information. And I'm like, well, that's why I went back to school. And then she turned around completely and said, oh, my God, I just read your bio. Thank you. This is helpful. And I'm like, yeah, [crosstalk 00:50:27] you buy spoiled meat, but I'm saying somewhere in between lies the truth.

Bryan Schaaf: I'm just saying, if I am at the grocery store and I see something that has a manager special on it, I am buying that.

Diana Clark: Right? That's my thought. I'm like, we got this now.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah. Buy it, throw it in the freezer.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: Right? It's going to be just fine.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: I am for it. I'm going to put it in a little clap here so I can make sure we edit. Di, anything that we haven't touched on that you want to make sure that we extract?

Diana Clark: I can't think of anything. I feel like it was ... Yeah, that was good. I like it.

Bryan Schaaf: Perfect. Perfect. On that note, Jess Pryles, Hardcore Carnivore. We appreciate you for joining us here on the Meat Speak podcast, powered by the certified Angus beef brand. If this is your first time tuning in, please know that you can find us on all of your major podcasting platforms, Google Play, Apple, Spotify. If you could, go to the app. If you have the iPhone, which I understand all the kids are playing on these days, go to the Apple podcast icon. That's the little purple button. Go there, leave us a star ranking, leave us a review. Again, this is not about ego. This is about making our little podcast more visible. So a lot of this content that we're able to deliver to you, including all of these fine nuggets of information from the Hardcore Carnivore today, can get a larger reach as we go. So we had 14 downloads in Kazakhstan last month. [crosstalk 00:51:51] How about that? Yeah.

Diana Clark: That's actually cool.

Bryan Schaaf: It's amazing. Look at that. We get around.

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: So Page, the social media gal, also says that we can leave reviews on Spotify as well. I still don't have the Spotify because I'm old and I can only take things one at a time here, guys. Hold on here. I'm still on Myspace.

Diana Clark: My gosh.

Bryan Schaaf: That said, Jess Pryles, Hardcore Carnivore, thank you so much for joining us here. Any parting shots?

This transcript was exported on Mar 10, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Jess Pryles: No. Stay tuned to Instagram for those parting shots, but [crosstalk 00:52:26] It's so, so fun getting to speak to fellow meat nerds.

Bryan Schaaf: Well, we certainly appreciate you and all the work that you do on behalf of the entire meat industry. So for Diana Clark, our meat scientist, chef Tony Biggs, who is probably still out skiing in Eastern California, up in the mountains. I'm Bryan Schaaf for Meat Speak podcast powered by the certified Angus beef brand. Thank y'all for listening.