

Bryan Schaaf: And welcome back to another edition of Meat Speak powered by the Certified Angus Beef Brand. My name is Bryan Schaaf with me, as always, Chef Tony Biggs.

Speaker 2: I'd gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.

Bryan Schaaf: I have a feeling we're not going to be discussing old cartoons.

Tony Biggs: Nope, we are not, but we are going to discuss the first cartoon that probably presented hamburgers ...

Bryan Schaaf: Oh, my gosh.

Tony Biggs: ... when I was five or six years old.

Bryan Schaaf: You know, burgers are one of those things ... I think it ... And it doesn't matter what generation you came from, at least in America ... My earliest food memories growing up on the farm and I'm not going to tell you where it came from, but I will tell you there was a Happy Meal involved and it was centered around burgers, burgers.

Tony Biggs: I can recall watching Saturday morning cartoons and Wimpy, Popeye's best buddy with ... Just filling his mouth with burgers. I remember I wanted to do this, I just wanted to fill my mouth with cheeseburgers, hamburgers all the time. And now around the world, burgers have escalated, populated the earth. Everybody has one and everybody's trying to outdo each other.

Bryan Schaaf: That's right. You know, it's funny, I thought you were setting that up, that you wanted to spend the rest of your life stuffing yourself with burgers and you were going to point out that as basically what I do on ... I am basically your adult real-life Wimpy. Chef, you hail from Boston ...

Tony Biggs: Boston.

Bryan Schaaf: ... or the Boston area. Boston, Massachusetts, which not far from there is the place that is credited as being the home of the original hamburger. Now, have you been? Because it's ... Have you been?

Tony Biggs: I have not been.

Bryan Schaaf: I know it's a ... What is it? Louis Lunch.

Tony Biggs: Louis Lunch.

Bryan Schaaf: New Haven, Connecticut.

Tony Biggs: New Haven, Connecticut.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah, and-

Tony Biggs: They don't get enough credit.

Bryan Schaaf: Right?

Tony Biggs: I mean, really. I'm definitely going there and after I go there, I'm going to Frank Pepe's Clam Pizza right down the street.

Bryan Schaaf: When in New Haven, that's how you do it. Chef, across the board you see burgers for \$1.00 apiece, you see burgers for \$20.00 apiece depending on their ingredients. And it seems like there is this push where I believe the pendulum has started to swing back the other way. But for a long time it seems like people have been trying to push the envelope of making burgers bigger, better, more outlandish, more exotic ingredients, funky grinds, you name it. What are some of the craziest burgers that you've ever seen?

Tony Biggs: You know what I've seen? I have seen a \$250.00 hamburger. Why? They put gold leaf, some Iranian or beluga caviar on there, all right?

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: To jack that price up because we want you to have the best and then maybe a dry-aged burger, a blend of three different cuts, dry-age that would get you over the 250 mark real easy.

Bryan Schaaf: Oh, yeah.

Tony Biggs: But you're right about having a scale of one to 10, you can get a buck 50 burger. You know our friend Greg Garbo in Chicago, I love his ... I love that steak burger he's doing at the stadium where it's really thin, really thin burger. Smashburger has the onions on top of it, turns that baby over in some nice bacon fat and then those onions caramelize and he's got a nice soft bun. The bun has a lot to do with a good burger too.

Bryan Schaaf: Oh, yeah.

Tony Biggs: Would you agree?

Bryan Schaaf: I completely agree. If you go up to ... If you happen to be in Cleveland, Ohio, there's a fairly new restaurant on the Detroit Shoreway on the West side called Good Company. And some good friends of ours, Brett Sawyer and Vince [Tamasic 00:04:07] are the chefs there and they actually have a burger, it's called the Good Boy. It's modeled after the classic big boy of course, and there's a few different ingredients in it. Mind you, among them company sauce, but among everything ... Everything just works in such harmony, including the bun

that they have gone to the lengths to make in-house by their pastry chef, Chef Nolan. And it's incredible. It's a buttermilk brioche and it's just magical.

If you go down to the Cincinnati, the idea of the dry-aged burgers ... I think it's probably an offshoot as more and more restaurants have their own dry-aging coolers. They're dry-aging on-premise, they've inoculated with ... If you listen to ... Here's a shameless self-plug. If you listen to our podcast on dry-aging in the beef world, if you inoculate your cooler with your Bactoferm 600, right?

Tony Biggs: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: Delightful. You dry-age your sub-primals. Now that said, the dry-age burger to top all dry-age burgers, at least in my experience, if you go to Prime Cincinnati it's Chef Shawn Heinz restaurant. He brings an entire chuck clods.

Tony Biggs: Wow.

Bryan Schaaf: Puts them in his dry-aging cabinet just to put them into the grinder to make, I mean, the ...

Tony Biggs: Killer burger?

Bryan Schaaf: ... the funkiest, earthiest, richest burger I've ever had in my life. Then he tops it with some Larkspur blue cheese.

Tony Biggs: You don't even have to order ... Add the blue cheese because it kind of has that umami flavor already, right, Bryan?

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: Yeah, wow.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah, it's intense in the best, best, best way possible.

Tony Biggs: Wow. Sounds delicious.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah. Chef, in your travels in this culinary profession, you have been all over the world, you've been all around the world. I believe you've lived or you've been to ... You've been on four different continents cooking. And by that, I don't mean that ... We did the Amazing Race and you flew into Asia, cooked a meal, and got on a plane and got out. I mean, you've lived, you've immersed yourselves in the cultures in four different continents. A burger, is a burger ... As we commonly know in America, is a burger a burger, is a burger a burger everywhere?

Tony Biggs: Well, thanks to great burger chains and restaurant chains in America, I am seeing more and more chains in different parts of the world. Whether it be Dubai, Tokyo, the Philippines, Mexico. And what I have to say is one of the

burgers that we're not going to mention on our show, but it's about consistency. If I want that consistent burger that I can get here, I should expect that burger to be in the Philippines, or Japan or the Middle East. So, these chains are really coming up to speed on what an American burger is. But to your point, maybe 10 or 15 years ago when I lived there, folks were trying to put a burger together. It's all about the texture of the grind, you know what I mean, Bryan?

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: It's the texture of the grind. Is it too fine? Is it too coarse? Is it like meatloaf? I've had burgers where I'm think I'm eating a meatloaf sandwich, but you know what? This restaurant is calling it a hamburger, an American burger. So, folks are trying to grind their own burgers, but maybe they don't have the right dye. And that is the ... It's the piece that goes into a grinder, which is a medium dye medium, the small dye where you getting that nice blend and the right coarse. And you're blending it with the right consistency of fat.

Bryan Schaaf: Chef, we're going to get into it here in a few moments with our resident meat scientists, Diana Clark, who if you are an avid listener to this podcast, you are well versed with. But it's the idea of ... There are all of these different grinds and, of course, you go to a retail store there's ground chuck, there's ground sirloin, there's ground rounds and then there's ground beef. As you look at these different ones, do you have a specific go-to? I mean, 80-20 ground Chuck is kind of the universal standard, right?

Tony Biggs: Right, yes, yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: I mean, do you veer off that path?

Tony Biggs: Yeah, I mean, I like cuts from the brisket, the chuck and the round or ... When you get into the middle of meats, now you're really ... You're stepping on sacred ground in the middle greats ... Again, when I do that it means don't do the middle meats, unless you've got ... You really got a special person you want to show off to. Okay, but one of the ... I'll tell you, yeah, I love the three combinations. A lot of chefs are doing that now where they're taking cuts from the different sub-primals and they're blending them and it's just special. But I got to tell you before I forget, one of the best burgers I've ever seen was the burgushi, okay?

Bryan Schaaf: Yes.

Tony Biggs: The burgushi. Now, this was mind-blowing because this restaurant took ground beef, cooked it just coarse and they laid out your rice with your ... Your sushi rice on soy paper. And then they put ... The filling was the ground beef and cheddar cheese melted.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: They rolled that up and then you thought that was over? No way. They took potato, very, very thin sliced potato, and wrapped it completely around the sushi roll so it would stick to each other and then they deep fried it. Then when it came out of the deep fryer the potato was golden Brown, you could slice this perfect and then julienne dill pickle, a little bit of chopped onion and three sauces of mayo, ketchup and mustard. Oh my goodness, burgushi roll. I was hooked.

Bryan Schaaf: The burgushi roll. That is a ... I believe that's actually found in a North Carolina at a restaurant called Cowfish, right?

Tony Biggs: It's a Cowfish restaurant, yeah. And they have one at Universal Studios in Orlando.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah, and have you ever seen a cowfish?

Tony Biggs: A cowfish?

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: I've seen a poster of it.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah, they're adorable right?

Tony Biggs: They're ... My guy, head of a cow and a body of a fish, I love it. They're like Mr. Olympic.

Bryan Schaaf: They swim around, they're far more easy to manage than-

Tony Biggs: It's right up my alley, you know? Fish and cow.

Bryan Schaaf: That's right.

Tony Biggs: I love it. The menu is brilliant, by the way.

Bryan Schaaf: That's cross-breeding at its finest, huh?

Tony Biggs: We're not too far from that, Bryan. Let's not talk about that.

Bryan Schaaf: We are going to take a break and we are going to come back with our ... I'll go ahead and say it, our favorite meat scientist, Diana Clark, coming up next to talk about burgers.

Back here on the pod with our favorite meat scientist, which I hope you take ... Because we know a lot of meat scientists.

Diana Clark: I actually do take that as a big compliment.

Bryan Schaaf: People may think, "Oh, no, no, no." We live in the meat world. With us here, meat scientist Diana Clark. Welcome, Diana. Thanks for joining us.

Diana Clark: Yeah, no problem.

Bryan Schaaf: Diana, Chef Tony and I have been having a lot of discussions about one of the topics that is most near and dear to my heart. It's up there with brisket, it's up there with The Beatles, it's up there with my children. It's, of course, burgers. I love burgers.

Diana Clark: Oh, yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: Oh, my lord.

Diana Clark: Can't go wrong.

Bryan Schaaf: There is a thought, and I know there are a lot of chefs and industry professionals listening, so I know I'm preaching to the choir. But there is this general thought out there that a burger is a burger. It's meat that's been ground and then formed into a patty and then cooked to ... If you want to follow the food safety standard, 160 right?

Diana Clark: Yeah, thank you.

Bryan Schaaf: And there you go, on a bun. I've got to get my meat science in there. But there's more to it than that, yeah?

Diana Clark: Oh yeah. I will have to say, be the first to admit that I was one of those people that thought a burger is a burger. 80-20 is 80-20. There's no difference, it doesn't matter. Until then, I came here to Certified Angus Beef and it's not that I was like, "Oh, yeah." I drank the juice. I mean, I definitely do drink the juice at Certified Angus Beef. But-

Bryan Schaaf: It's coffee is what it is.

Diana Clark: No, it just gets right to ya. All right, but that ground beef, there's a huge difference when you really start looking at the ground beef category. I think that's what really took me by surprise is I didn't realize what all could be in ground beef. So, there's that surprise. But then you start thinking about just regular commodity 80-20, let's say it is just skeletal muscle. But that skeletal muscle, did it come from a maturity animal? Or did it come from your older animals that are eight years or older?

Yeah, that's going to make a huge difference there just even in the texture of the burger, which I really never thought about that before. And then you start thinking about even more of our specifications about colors. We don't allow any dark cutters, that really plays into the consistency of your grinds. If any chef out

there has ever dealt with persistent pinking, a lot of times it can be due to your pH. And the pH increase is actually caused from a dark cutting beef, which can be found in your older animals. So, that's when you get that inconsistency. Yeah, it might happen every now and again, but why are you paying a little bit more money for that 80-20 commodity grind? It's not worth it.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah. Can you talk about ... It's probably the thing that as somebody who's been eating burgers my whole life in case can't tell by my physique, is the fat component of a burger, right?

Diana Clark: Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf: It's the idea of fat is not necessarily fat, right?

Diana Clark: Mm-hmm (negative).

Bryan Schaaf: It's not always the same types of fat. I mean, the fat component throwing any fat into a burger grind isn't it though. I mean, it has a lot to do with where does that fat come from, right?

Diana Clark: Exactly. I mean, there's fat on the exterior surface of the animal, subcutaneous fat, there's fat on the inside of the animal, so internal fat that's kind of your kidney, heart and lung fat. That's going to be the most saturated and we actually aren't allowed to use that in beef patties just because it's so saturated. But then as you move into the muscles, so intramuscular fat that's going to be more unsaturated. Actually the most unsaturated in the animal, it's going to be comprised more of your oleic fatty acid, which means it melts at lower temperatures and it's more satiating to the human palette. You start thinking about that and there's actually some primals that actually have more oleic fatty acid in them. One of them being brisket, so not just ...

Bryan Schaaf: You can hear the angels.

Diana Clark: Just hear them ringing right now, those bells.

Bryan Schaaf: Okay, I'm going to cut you off there and I'm going to ask the question, because I've made this case. So, is it because that fat is similar to an avocado fat, a fat from a nut, right?

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: The better fat, right?

Diana Clark: It's considered your healthier fat.

Bryan Schaaf: Because it's considered a healthier fat, am I overstating this by saying that eating brisket, therefore, is healthy food?

Diana Clark: I'm going to say, yeah, sure. You could go with that, okay?

Bryan Schaaf: I'm a health nut, I am a health nut.

Diana Clark: You can totally go with that one.

Bryan Schaaf: Thank you.

Diana Clark: If it makes you feel better, yes. Yes, it does.

Bryan Schaaf: Thank you.

Diana Clark: All right? But it really is that more unsaturated fat, which is ... It's great. I mean, it ... From just an eating quality standpoint alone, it's phenomenal.

Bryan Schaaf: It's a tasty fat.

Diana Clark: Because now we are using brisket in these blends and we're getting more of that oleic fatty acid into these burger blends and it's driving that satiating flavor. Now, driving back to that fat component found in a typical 80-20, when you look at Certified Angus Beef we require a modest amount of marbling or higher. So, that's upper two-thirds of choice or higher. So, if you're grinding our meat, we're going to have more marbling in that meat. So, more of that fat is going to be comprised of the marbling, which makes it a better burger.

Bryan Schaaf: Also, a tastier fat.

Diana Clark: Exactly.

Bryan Schaaf: There you go.

Diana Clark: And healthier.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah. I mean, I'm going to go have a burger and then ride a treadmill for a while and I'm just going to waste away to nothing in front of everybody.

Diana Clark: That's just what happens. I'm sure everyone at the gym will be so jealous as you chomp down into that burger.

Bryan Schaaf: I love burgers. You've mentioned brisket a couple times and it's sort of the en Vogue patty. I remember probably five years ago when I was like, "Brisket chuck? Sure. What?" I mean ... But you see that blend pop up everywhere now where it seems like this idea of this specialty custom blended burger made up of brisket, chuck and short rib, it's just everywhere now. And I mean, and there's a reason for it. Would you recommend shying away from it just because it's so en Vogue now or is it just because we got it right?

Diana Clark: It's a phenomenal blend that we've got right. That's my opinion. I would not shy away from that sucker. I really do think it's a combination too of briskets, fantastic, it's delicious. I mean, short ribs, you look at those suckers, the amount of marbling that's found in the serratus ventralis is phenomenal. Always, always that abundant. Then chuck roll, I mean, chuck roll is just a great ma and pa roast. That's kind of what you think of behind there. At the same time, it's economical. So, we can add in some Chuck roll too. Sometimes brisket prices can go a little bit high, short rib prices can go a little bit high, but we alleviate that flavor with the chuck roll pricing and flavor. You combine them together and you have a winner. I mean, you have a great priced burger that's just delicious that people drive back to.

Bryan Schaaf: Build for me, if you will ... Now, you hail from Chicago.

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: Originally, right? Midwestern.

Diana Clark: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bryan Schaaf: Right? Good old fashioned Midwesterners. Chicago for me ... I was actually just in Chicago in the last 10 days and in one day I had three different burgers.

Diana Clark: That's awesome.

Bryan Schaaf: Right? And one was a thicker patty and I remember it had a brie and blueberry sauce on it and bacon, of course.

Diana Clark: That's pretty fancy.

Bryan Schaaf: Right? That was out at a Fox Fire with our friend Casey [Goldbro 00:19:04]. And then I had Lamar Moore at the Swill Inn.

Diana Clark: Oh, gosh, that's delicious.

Bryan Schaaf: The Swill burger, which is made with a housemaid pimento cheese ...

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: ... and angel dust.

Diana Clark: I still can taste that.

Bryan Schaaf: Fairy dust. And then I finished it off later in the evening by going to the great American standard, Au Cheval, which has been named best burger in America multiple times, right?

Diana Clark: I have yet to go.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah, so I find that I gravitate towards thin patties, towards burgers that aren't over fancified, right?

Diana Clark: Yes.

Bryan Schaaf: Give me meat, a good bun, fat in the form of mayonnaise, and something acidic and cheese. I mean, that is what I find is what sings to me.

Diana Clark: Classic.

Bryan Schaaf: What is your favorite burger? Either place or if you were building it.

Diana Clark: If I were to build my own burger ... Because I'd have to say hands down, probably some of the best burgers I've had have been at the culinary center here. I just have to give credit to them. Part of it's the material that we're using that's coming in, but then also our chefs. They cook a lot of burgers, they know what they're doing.

Bryan Schaaf: They've done this a time or two.

Diana Clark: Yeah. But I am ... Honestly, I am a low carb eater, so if I were to be completely transparent on that, I would like to take a patty and actually use lettuce as the bun. Yeah, I am that kind of person.

Bryan Schaaf: Blasphemy.

Diana Clark: But at the same time I will have to say as a meat scientist, I can taste the meat a lot better with that lettuce wrap versus the bun. The bun just absorbs that flavor.

Bryan Schaaf: So, what you've done in a roundabout way as you've played the I'm a purest card.

Diana Clark: Exactly, all right?

Bryan Schaaf: All right, fine.

Diana Clark: And then Greg Garbo hooked me up with this of taking some onions and putting them down on the flat top and then taking the burger and just smashing it into those onions.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Diana Clark: Now, that wrapped with some lettuce, maybe some just great cheddar cheese, that would be a perfect burger right there.

Bryan Schaaf: That's all you need, right?

Diana Clark: That's my opinion. I'm with you on the thinner burger. I'm a bigger fan of that.

Bryan Schaaf: I let ... And again, you don't have to worry about it being smashed or you don't have to worry about it being cooked to a certain temp. Smash it and run, yeah.

Diana Clark: Exactly. You that it's going to be ready and ... Yeah, totally-

Bryan Schaaf: I can get on board with that except the lettuce component. And I'm not a lettuce hater, but I have a reputation of pulling ... If somebody saw me eating something wrapped in lettuce, I feel like people would be like, "It's a cry for help."

Diana Clark: They might, they might. I mean that's usually why I eat in the back because I just don't want anyone to judge me.

Bryan Schaaf: Well, Diana Clark, meat scientists, we appreciate you taking time to talk burgers with us. Again, we're here every two weeks, myself and Chef Tony Biggs, and I'm quite certain that you'll be back many, many times. So, thank you so much for joining us.

Diana Clark: Yeah, no problem. Looking forward to more episodes.

Bryan Schaaf: Back here on the Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef Brand. Bryan Schaaf, Chef Tony Biggs back here. Chef, we've spent a long time talking about burgers, the power of burgers, the taste of burgers.

Tony Biggs: Power.

Bryan Schaaf: You have a story that if you ever wanted to know just how powerful are burgers, you've gone through this and yet burgers to you still sound appetizing to this day? What did you do?

Tony Biggs: Bryan, everybody loves burgers. Did you know I was the executive chef at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah for 10 years?

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: Okay. Hyatt Regency, Savannah. And did you know Savannah homes or houses the second or third largest St. Patrick's Day festival in the country behind Chicago and New York? Did you know that?

Bryan Schaaf: I did not know that.

Tony Biggs: Because people can come to Savannah and drink open beer, open alcohol law, and they can take and drink on the street. It's epic, they ... Savannah turns the river green.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah.

Tony Biggs: And the headquarters of the St. Patrick's Day festival was underneath the Hyatt on River Street. I got to tell you one day, one time, my first St. Patrick's Day, they told me to be ready for the masses. But I kind of ... I'm one of these guys ... Ah, I can handle anything, right? I'm ... Hey, I'm a chef. I can cook for the masses. Bryan, I think I cooked 1,000 burgers in four hours, my eyes were blinded because of the smoke and people were going bazonkers over my burgers. I don't know if it was the green cream cheese that was whipped up, get it?

Bryan Schaaf: All right.

Tony Biggs: Green? Green? Right?

Bryan Schaaf: Every so often I find green on my cream cheese in my fridge.

Tony Biggs: So, we made a little green cream cheese to go on that burger, it was beautiful. But they were going, "What is in your sauce?" Oh, it's a secret, but guess what? Since you're listening to the podcast today, I'm going to give it to you.

Bryan Schaaf: Do you need a drum roll for that?

Tony Biggs: You want a drum roll? I'll give you ...

Bryan Schaaf: All right, let-

Tony Biggs: All right, secret sauce is mayonnaise, I like Hellman's, but there's a mayo in New Orleans, it escapes me right now, but that's a good one too.

Bryan Schaaf: Wait, you're using Hellman's in Savannah, Georgia? See, in the South I was always taught that you use Dukes.

Tony Biggs: Well, Dukes is really kind of in New Orleans area, Louisiana area. That's the ... That was the name I was looking for. Dukes Mayonnaise in Louisiana. Beautiful mayonnaise or Hellman's. I like Hellman's too. Okay, A1 sauce. Here's the clincher, pickle juice.

Bryan Schaaf: Dill or-

Tony Biggs: Not Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, but pickle juice, pickle juice, pickle juice. A little bit of pickle juice, not Beetlejuice, and black pepper. Wow, put that into a bowl, whip it up very, very nicely. And I'm sure everybody else has got

their own concoction, their own special sauce. I know chefs going ... Telling me what this is and that is, you could use a little gochujang, you could use a little Sriracha. But I like that, it's very simple and it's not too spicy.

Bryan Schaaf: Yeah, and those are ingredients that most people have access to.

Tony Biggs: In their refrigerator.

Bryan Schaaf: And to go ahead and make sure we clear the air before we get hate mail. You were advocating for the steak sauce in a burger application. Not on a stake.

Tony Biggs: In a burger application.

Bryan Schaaf: There you go. I like it. Just so everybody's listening, we're talking about that on a burger. So, don't worry, we're not desecrating any stakes up here.

Tony Biggs: We're not, okay? Let me ... Yeah, I'm ... Please, I don't want any hate mail. All right?

Bryan Schaaf: Chef, that is about all the time that we have for this week's edition of Meat Speak. If this is your first time tuning in, please know that we are available across most major podcasting platforms, including iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, you name it. It's popping up in places, I have no idea. All right, until next week, we appreciate you tuning in here. If you do have any questions, concerns, if you want to make sure you clear the air with Chef Tony about the steak sauce reference, you can email us at podcast@certifiedangusbeef.com.

Big thanks to meat scientists, Diana Clark for taking time out of her busy schedule to join us today. Until next time, Chef, thank you.

Tony Biggs: Thank you.