

Bryan Schaaf:

Back here on the Meat Speak Podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand coming to you via Zoom, although I am in the inner sanctum of the basement of Certified Angus Beef here in northeast, Ohio. Our guest today is a noted television personality, author, sushi maker, recovering competitive eater whose works include America the Edible, The Traveler's Guide to Life, Adam Richman's Best Sandwich in America, and perhaps most recognized Man v. Food of course. Where he not only tackled- [crosstalk 00:00:38]-

Adam Richman:

Hey-oh!

Bryan Schaaf:

Hey. Some of the most gigantic and incredible foods, but you also beat me to my career aspirations. That is as a former spokesperson for Zantac. What's more, he's a huge fan of the beautiful game and is part owner of the mighty Mariners of Grimsby Town currently in the fourth year of English football. And of course the biggest Tottenham Hotspur supporter this side of the Atlantic [inaudible 00:01:10] Barmy Army. We'll to the podcast, Mr. Adam Richman. How you doing, sir?

Adam Richman:

Thank you, thank you, thank you. And Grimsby is actually in the third. They're in league two now, so we left the Blue Square Premier league. Huzzah, huzzah, huzzah, huzzah. Just a shareholder, but yes, I'm honored. I'm honored. I'm honored. I'm very impressed by the research, by the way.

Bryan Schaaf:

Thank you very much. I'm a little upset that I missed that little nugget because-

Adam Richman:

Oh, no. Look, look. Grimsby I became a fan of really randomly. This is the truth. First press junket going to England to promote Man v. Food on the flight back someone recognized me and I said, "Listen, I don't mean to be rude but I got to make a fantasy football trade." So he says, "American football, proper football?" And I said, "Well, they're both proper in my mind but what you're referring to as proper football."

Adam Richman:

"Who do you support?"

Adam Richman:

"I support Spurs. Who do you support?" He said, "Well, because of where I live it'd probably be this team. But I support a little team called Grimsby." He tells me this amazing story about how this department store in town and this cannery they've leveraged every penny they can towards this team. He tells me about their trials and tribulations and it just was so cool. To me it was like the spirit of the game. I never thought I'd be a shareholder of a football team let alone sponsor one team and be a shareholder in another like I am now, so it's pretty cool. So shout-out to Mariners and shout-out to the mighty Broadley FC of Lincolnshire.

Bryan Schaaf:

I would love to talk about the beautiful game all day long. I myself am a Newcastle United supporter. Long story on that but-

Adam Richman:

[inaudible 00:02:52] the tune. [inaudible 00:02:53] the tune.

Bryan Schaaf:

[inaudible 00:02:54] the lads. That said I want to talk to you about something else that we both have in common and that is eating food and cooking food. You've done an awful lot of things. Actually there were a couple things that popped up on your IMDB. I didn't realize you were on, what was it? Days of our Lives or no-

Adam Richman:

I was on Guiding Light and All My Children.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's it. I had no idea. Right?

Adam Richman:

With a face made for radio I managed to get on soap operas. But you know because I haven't had a cheekbone my whole life that naturally I was supporting characters. I wasn't Raul the pool boy who comes back, "Oh, Raul. We thought you were dead." And then he kisses some girl. B then Chloe as they fade to commercial. No, that wasn't me. I was one of those supporting regular people that they put in to make the other people look pretty. Like, hey, they're like, "Wow, Fred Savage looks terrible but Jay Leno looks great."

Bryan Schaaf:

Fred Savage. That's the first time there's been Fred Savage reference dropped in the history of this podcast.

Adam Richman:

Nice, nice. Usually it depends on the level of chubbiness that I am currently and because obviously carbohydrates and quarantine got me feeling some kind of way. I look a little like, I don't know, I guess [inaudible 00:04:15] Fred Flintstone, but I also have to acknowledge that when I shave I do bear a very close resemblance to human Shrek. In fact, this is a poster from the first event I did at New York Wine & Food called Brooklyn's Bounty. And I think you can see there's a little bit of human Shrek in there. Just, "I'm an ogre." Just a little bit. [crosstalk 00:04:36]

Bryan Schaaf:

You got to embrace it thought, right?

Adam Richman:

I absolutely do. I absolutely do. I just going to find my Fiona and I'm golden.

Bryan Schaaf:

All right. So let's talk about this. You are... Are your core you're a New York boy, you're a Brooklyn boy. Right?

Adam Richman:

Sir, yes, sir. New York all the way.

Bryan Schaaf:

OG Brooklyn boy. How did you go from Brooklyn, obviously you went to Emory down in Atlanta, you were on soap operas and then somehow you're on this show that just kind of blew up called Man v. Food. How did point A get to point Z in there?

Adam Richman:

So, I can sometimes get long winded with this one, so I'm going to try to see if I could do this quickly without boring your listeners to death. In a nutshell I was always told I was going to be a doctor because I'm a Jew from the northeast. I did Westinghouse projects and advanced placement sciences and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Went to Emory largely for that reason, realized that for the amount of work required, I just didn't have a passion for it anymore. I was much more creative. I was into languages and into international studies. Travel, culture, stuff like this. Switched my major to international studies. I speak French, I speak Hebrew, I speak a little bit of Japanese. And was really into history. I have a weird archival mind. I can remember stuff like this.

Adam Richman:

Anyway, I started a food journal randomly in 1995 in the wake of a really crap breakup and because I'm not a food critic by any stretch of the imagination, but I can only write my reactions. It started as this entry me pissing and moaning over my breakup and then all of the sudden I realized I was writing about the restaurant I was at, the food how it made me feel and the décor and the waitress and stuff and it came out naturally. I realized you know something? As long as I'm not trying to do this erudite like, "Service, I give it a 29. Food, I give it a 28." That's the Zagats and that's cool. That's that language. So yes, so then I loved it because one of the reasons... I had gotten into University of Chicago for example, another fine school, but I came from a big cold metropolitan city. I didn't want to exchange it for another one. And so for me Atlanta was so different in every way but also the great thing is there's some perimeter of Atlanta, the 285, and then there's the greater Atlanta area.

Adam Richman:

And so I was blessed. I was there '94 to '96. I got a World Series, a Superbowl and an Olympics. So you had lots of international information. Delta's there. Xerox's there. Coca-Cola's there. So they're all growing. Anyway, I'm not doing what I said. Let me accelerate. What does Inigo Montoya say? "Let me explain. Though it is too long, let me sum up." So, I do this food journal and I felt a tremendous amount of catharsis doing it. So then I used to just go on drives. I will always... As an only child and a bit of a weirdo I didn't always roll with a big pack of people so I would go to random church barbecues in Peach Tree City or Jonesboro. I would go to Marietta, go to Roswell, not New Mexico, Georgia. Go to different places in Little Five Points, in Clayton, in Decatur, down by the airport and literally just explore.

Adam Richman:

I never would have found Daddy D'z BBQ on MLK and Freedom Parkway. I never would have gone to the Whistle Stop Café for fried green tomatoes. I never would have really seen people cooking with an old oil drum and learning these things. And so I started this food journal, started acting in Atlanta as a non-union actor. And because of cost of living and before my buddy... I'm friends with Killer Mike and he's always talked about how it's really become this amazing mecca for young black entrepreneurship and for modern African American excellence, which I think is amazing. In fact, I attended Clark University on a program called the Host Broadcast Training program with the '96 Olympics. I got a chance to actually then explore the HBCU area and eating at soul food restaurants on Abernathy of the 20 and where the Morehouse students went and stuff. So that Atlanta was not expensive as the modern Atlanta, so I could live there and work there as an actor and supplement this food journal.

Adam Richman:

Flash forward, I move back to New York, try to pound the pavement as an actor there, decide I need an agent, realize graduate school's the best way to do it. I'd been doing survival jobs at myriad restaurants learning more food. Get into Yale, go to Yale drama from 2000 to 2003. The whole time each summer trying to find restaurant work. My stepmom had gotten my sushi training as a gift for me as a gift for getting into Yale. Shout-out to Miya's Sushi on House Street in New Haven. Bun Lai, really terrific guy who runs it. I interviewed with him and before I found out that financial services at Yale doesn't want you to have an outside job. He says, "I got to ask. You're a white Jewish kid. What made you become a sushi chef?" I go, "Well, my pop and I were always going to do it but he passed before I had a chance to." And I said, "And you know, get chicks. To meet girls." Be like, "Yeah, I can make you sushi." Literally he doesn't even blink. He's like, "It's better than being a rock star [inaudible 00:10:20]. It's good stuff" Because not everyone looks at me and they're like, "You're a jew making Japanese food? What's your restaurant called? So Sue Me?"

Adam Richman:

Anyways so I did this, came out of Yale in '03, started doing regional theater but kept up that food journal. Every regional theater gig I did I learned. I did a show... I'd spend the summer at the Jersey shore working at a theater there and I got a chance to explore [inaudible 00:10:50], Sandy Hook and West Yarmouth and whatever and learning those places. So then pound the pavement, so on and so forth, five years out of Yale I decide... I put myself on a five year plan like Stalin and I said I needed to transition. Was working in television and I read a very impactful book. I'm not getting any kickback from this but the book was called The Renaissance Soul by Margaret Lobenstine. Life designed for people with too many passions to pick just one. I appreciated the fact that this book was not full of esoteric hippy-dippy (beep). It was very much about brass tacks. It was almost like a workbook. There were exercises that you had to do.

Adam Richman:

So one of them was like a reverse flow chart where you took your skills and interests and then you kind of could ascertain how they could merge into and coalesce into a profession. Because that to me, if I could find a nexus where passion and profession collide, that's my sweet spot. It was this thing about performing and the medium of television and food, food creation. I was like, having a food show, a food exploration show using the languages, using that stuff et cetera, so on and so forth. So my commercial agent that I sign with, out of Yale, shout out to CESD, they had periodically sent out emails. Like agency-wide emails like, "Discovery Channel seeks blond Spanish speaking scuba diver." Or something. You know what I mean? So I used to always skip them, pass them. For some reason I opened this particular

one and it said, "Travel Channel looking for someone who knows regional food, has kitchen experience, has camera experience, likes to eat a lot, likes traveling and has travel experience and can describe flavors. Can accurately describe flavors." Or something like this.

Adam Richman:

There was a wonderful casting director in New York named Barbara Barnum and I remember my agent said, "They'll have some foods there. They'll have potato chips, pickles, whatever else because they want to see how you describe flavor. But you can bring your own food." I went to an amazing, I'll never forget because I was really... I was on the unemployment at the time and I went to this amazing burrito place, it no longer exists, because I got a mole burrito. So if you're good I can talk about mole, chilies, and chocolate. Oaxaca. I went in and as anyone who's ever auditioned for anything will tell you, you have to have... You're right on that razor thin line of cockiness and confidence. What did Muhammad Ali say? "Bold, cocky, confident, beautiful."

Adam Richman:

And I went in and said to... I said to Barbara Barnum, I did my spiel. And I memorize lines really quickly. They had a board of what basically was the type of read I would do at the beginning of a segment on Man v. Food. Like, "I'm here at The Salt Lick BBQ here in Driftwood, Texas and there's not a lot of open pits left in the United States but one of them is right here just 25 minutes outside of Austin where Scott Roberts and his friends are using Asian flavors and Texas flavors and a whole bunch of live oak." That kind of intro. So, I watched... I'm going to keep it 100. I don't know if I've ever said this on a podcast before but we're friends. I used to get pirated... I used to live... My current office was my old room. Someone else lived in this apartment. And I used to get illegal Food Network and I kid you not, Court TV. Those were the two channels I was able to get that weren't broadcast and so I was just watching Food Network like a zombie.

Adam Richman:

And so I knew how to intros were meant to be structured and tempo, so she shows me a sample read. It may have been a fictional place. I don't recall what it was but I memorized it rather quickly and I delivered it in the way I knew. And then she said, "That's pretty good." I said, "Thanks." She goes, "What food did you bring?" So then I talk about the burrito, talk about mole, how it's chilies and chocolate, how it biochemically it mimics when you feel love, talk about Oaxaca, I make a circumcision joke as took the tip of it off, whatever. And she's like, "So tell me, where do you like to eat around the US?" I hadn't told her about the food journal. So I go, "Pick a region." And she's like, "Okay, slick. You're from Brooklyn, right?" I said, "Yeah."

Adam Richman:

"Tell me about the Midwest." And I was like, clickity, clickity, clickity, click. I was naming places in Minneapolis, in Cleveland, in Wisconsin. And then it was a six round process from there and I did my final screen test with I think six other people at Cass's Deli. I had gone the day before, interviewed everyone and bought a T-shirt. I wanted to make it look like I had had it for a while, so I went home and I was so broke. Buying this T-shirt crushed me. And then I cut the neck of the T-shirt out and there's a laundromat on my corner. I spent, and I remember again, spent five bucks to launder it. But to launder it really, really make it look washed and worn. I wear a black hoodie and I do one of those intros.

Adam Richman:

Now at this point the show's called Pig Out and I was like I am not going to host a show called Pig Out. And so it's Valentine's Day. I remember this very clearly. Valentine's Day 2008. I walk in. There's a competitive eater, because I'm not a competitive eater, never have been, there's a real competitive eater name Coondog that I remember seeing at the Nathan's thing or whatever. Dude's got, and no disrespect to you Coondog if you ever listen to this. He shaves his head, he's got a Mohawk of hair. I'll never forget this. Walks up to me, his Mohawk, and goes, "Coondog. You have beautiful eyes." I'm like, "thank you."

Adam Richman:

They told us we needed to do an intro and I had... I'm an actor. I'm a Yale trained actor so I had rehearsed it within an inch of my life, had more facts than they had given us in the brief. I mean I was quoting Tom Lehrer songs. I knew that it had been across the street. I knew which presidents had eaten there. John Glenn had asked for the pastrami when he was on the launch pad during his Mercury mission. Like I knew random factoids about it. If you've ever been to Cass's deli you know that there's a neon sign that says, "Cass's. That's all." That's because Leon Cass when he ordered the neon they said, "What do you want it to say?" He said, "Cass's. That's all." And he's like, "I just meant Cass's. You didn't have to put, 'That's all.' It's unnecessary."

Adam Richman:

So I knew this stuff and Dan Adler, who would go on to become my showrunner, my friend, and he's now the genius behind 90 Day Fiancé. So Danny was behind the camera and I do the read and I'm selling it. I remember there was... Man v. Food was sort of an image that they had given like this is the vibe of the thing. I keyed in on that, so I went, "This is Valentine's Day, 2008. It's a new Valentine's Day massacre on the Lower East Side between man versus... And this one is man versus food." And I go, "Oh, and if you think that I'm reading this off a cue card or if I'm just a big fan of Cass's, this is my T-shirt. Big fan." And then I walk inside. I come around. I say to Dan, and I look and I see the cameraman doing this and I look up and Danny looks up from his monitor and he's looking at me like... You know what I mean? It's almost like Morpheus like, "He's starting to believe." Danny looks up from the monitor and he's like nodding. I go, "You want a second one?" And Dan's like, "No. No, man. I think we got it." I was like, "Oh, shoot. I appreciate you."

Adam Richman:

Then all of the sudden the cameraman grabs me, bless his heart, he goes, "That was really good. Usually we've been doing six or seven. We never gotten one in one. That was terrific." I said, "Thanks. I'm trying not to get too ahead of myself." So I know all these facts and because I had been there the day before I remembered people's names so it seemed like it was like, "Norm!" I went through like, "Hey what's going on, Julio? How you doing man? What's going on, Juan?" And I know Cass's because my grandfather grew up on the Lower East Side. So flash forward, this is much longer than I thought I was going to be and I'm terribly sorry Bryan.

Bryan Schaaf:

You are just fine.

Adam Richman:

So anyway that's what they all said, then they never called. The upshot was... So I do this and it led to a few more rounds of they needed to see reference material, my cooking resume, my acting resume. They

wanted a couple of the entries from my food journal and I said, "I'm only going to give you the ones I mentioned because this is my stuff. I may publish this. I don't know what I'm going to do." So I do that and I showed them. I have these crazy old school accordion files so I'll rip stuff out of magazines and put it under stuff. I'm like that to me is like oh, no. That's like the Tesseract. I got to guard that shit."

Adam Richman:

And so I go down the road with Matt Sharp and Dan Adler and they basically say essentially... And I'm at McDonald's on 7th Avenue using their free internet waiting for my shift at Madison Square Garden Television as a logger making \$70 a shift. Not an hour. I'm there just waiting for my shift and then I get a call. They're like, "Dude, so basically you have the job provided there is a job to have. So we're going to shoot something called a sizzle reel."

Adam Richman:

"All right." We shot it all in Brooklyn. I had a suitcase of clothes and we would fake other states. So basically I would have a gingham shirt walking... I mean so cold my nipples could cut glass and I'm walking in a gingham shirt in cold Brooklyn against the brick wall like, "I'm in North Carolina on the search for some of the best NC barbecue and da, da, da, da, da." And then we would go that a barbecue place and there would just be a shot of me just doing this. I'd run into a bathroom, I change, I put on a [inaudible 00:21:52] coat, walk against a cyclone fence or against an ambiguous urban cityscape and go, "I'm in Boston, Massachusetts looking for a da, da, da, da, da." Change again. Different Army jacket and stuff like, "Hey, I'm in Philadelphia. I want to find the best cheesesteak and whatever." That day was arguably more eating than almost the whole series. It was just like I had to taste this and then they had to fake challenges.

Adam Richman:

So then I had to... I tried this thing called the Suicide Six Wings Challenge, which I eventually put in the Brooklyn episode of Man v. Food. That was hell on earth. So I shot it. We shot the sizzle trailer. They loved it. Sharp, who made the show, Sharp Entertainment, and it was a great experience but I had no idea what was happening. So then Matt Sharp and Dan left me a very sweet message. They said, "Well listen, we're taking it to Travel Channel in DC on May 1st. We'll know something around then. We'll let you know. And if not, we love you. You've been a joy to work with and hopefully we'll work on something else if not this." I said, "Okay." But naturally you're like... May 1st comes and goes. I don't hear from them all day. I go to the bar across the street from my house and I get legless drunk. Literally the type of like Charles Bukowski kind of depressed where you're resting your head on the pint glass. I'm drinking doing shots of Jameson, drinking Guinness, I don't know. I should have gone to med school.

Adam Richman:

So I wake up in my basement apartment and I had an LG flip phone. I see the little light blinking. I wake in the afternoon and it's Matt Sharp, "Hey dude, what's up? I'm so sorry we had your cellphone number wrong by one digit. Give me a call back on this number." It was not the number I had been calling so it must have been Matt's direct line. And I call. Doesn't even ring. I guess he had caller ID. I pick up the phone and he's like, "You ready to be a star, dude?" I said, "What?" He's like, "They dimmed the lights, we showed them the trailer, we did our presentation, we showed them the trailer and then Pat Young the president of the network said, 'Well this is obviously a show. We'll taken 10 episodes.'" I was like, "What?" So like, "You're going to be hosting a TV show. 10 episodes of a new TV show on Travel Channel." And then I let loose with this war whoop like Johnny [inaudible 00:24:22] like, "Victory."

Adam Richman:

I do this thing and then all of the sudden the hangover just [crosstalk 00:24:26] in the head. I dropped to my damn knees. I'm like, "Thank you guys so much." At that moment it was kind of a few things fell into place. I booked, and feel free to YouTube this, I did a NASCAR Bank of America NASCAR VISA card commercial. Before Man v. Food had booked this show Virginia Stage called Indoor Outdoor, which I sadly had to drop out of, and then I was doing this show called Walls written by a friend of mine [inaudible 00:24:58] Cherry Lane Theatre in New York. Shot the pilot in Memphis. The pilot tested well and by episode three, which was the Don Juan Taco Challenge at Juan in a Million in Austin, Texas they were like, "Well, we love you. Are you having fun?" I said, "Yes."

Adam Richman:

"Well, we'd like to keep having fun with you. We'd like to buy eight more episodes." And then Dan Adler pulls me aside and says, "Dude, we've never gotten a pickup that quickly." And then towards the end of the season they said, "We want to keep doing this. You want to keep doing this?" Season two, "You want to keep doing this?" Season three. And there you have it.

Bryan Schaaf:

So what are the questions, and I apologize, I am positive this is probably one that you've answered a billion times.

Adam Richman:

Come on, Bryan. It's all good. You know we haven't got it like that. Come on.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, the things that you would consume. I mean how in the world? I get asked this a lot because I just eat a lot because I work for a beef company, you do it on television. How in the world do you manage that? Do you physically manage that? And at what point does it just get to be like, "I don't know if I can do this anymore."?

Adam Richman:

Well you know the thing was... The biggest misconception is God forbid I had some kind of physical ailment that prevented me from doing it when realistically I didn't want to fall into the trap where my only perceived value was as the happy fun eating machine. But before the big quantity challenges I would not eat for a while and then Joey Chestnut, who I filmed with in San Jose, gave me a really great tip. He would pound a gallon of water in about five minutes and it would stretch your stomach out. I would do that the night before or maybe the morning of. You feel like crap but through respiration, perspiration, peeing, whatever, you lose the water but your stomach's been stretched. And then I would do shoulder loaded squats with... I remember this vividly. I'd put in phone books, I'd put in shoes, I would use some of the basalts weights, like the sandbags we had for the cameras. I'd borrow them. I'd put in shoes, the Gideon bible from my hotel room, whatever it took, and I'd put my suitcase on my shoulders and I would do shoulder loaded squats.

Adam Richman:

Or I would do upright rows with my suitcases, because your back and your legs are your biggest muscle groups. The more muscle mass you have the higher your metabolism. Then I would do... I had seen a

friend of mine who's a professional driver do... He does invisible jump rope. You jump rope as though you're jumping rope but you don't have one. I did fake skipping. And then I would be... Before the Amarillo Texas one I did suicide sprints in the parking lot. Touch a line, touch a line. People were, like telling the front desk, "I think there's a crack head in the parking lot touching the... He's running in the parking lot." Because remember the show hadn't aired yet. I remember we were on Amarillo television and they called the show Man v. Steak. And I'm like, "No." I remember the male newscaster was like, "That's gross." I was like, "We're off to a shining start, boys."

Bryan Schaaf:

You know of all the places that you would expect people would at least appreciate that, Amarillo, Texas.

Adam Richman:

Right? Well, that's the funny thing because that's one of the biggest most iconic challenges. Is the Big Texan. You know?

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah.

Adam Richman:

They'll even pick you up at the airport in a limo and drive you there for the 72 ounce steak. The old 96er, The Great Outdoors, that John Candy eats is based on that steak. Again I apologize and it's TMI but that was the one and only time in my life I've ever been asked for a curtesy flush. Not happy about that but you know you got to live life like the truth is true.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's right. It's real life, brother. I remember we were in Amarillo, Texas and I've been there many times, I've seen the big statue and we were with a good friend of ours. He used to be the corporate chef of Saltgrass Steak House and another guy was with us who maybe weighed 95 pounds. He was a chef from Barbados who was in with us. And on their last day Rick, who was with Saltgrass, decided to take Will War from Barbados down to do the Big Texan. Apparently he held his own. Physical stature isn't everything.

Adam Richman:

At all. That was the thing. They kept telling me, because they were lovely, lovely people, but I'll never forget they were like, "A little old lady did it and she had a piece of pie afterwards and put on her lipstick and walked off the stage." And I remember when they brought this thing over and it looked like the Gutenberg Bible made of beef and I was just like, "Oh, man." Because it's literally called the Coulotte. Before they butterfly it, it looks like the entire cone of meat at gyro place like when they're doing the... It's that gigantic thing. The Coulotte is [inaudible 00:30:25] and all of the sudden. So luckily I kind of knew the muscle groups, the primal cuts somewhat well. Because I knew... They required you to eat the gristle. I knew that dead smack in the middle was going to be the gristle line. I cut but I was trying to be a little shiesty and I cut out some [crosstalk 00:30:40] and I'm like, "No, no. That's gristle." I remember they came back and I said, "This is not gristle. No, this is not."

Adam Richman:

And they had me something about the size of like a Costanza wallet and they're like, "No. You're eating." But they gave me.. He did say, "Here's what's worked for some other people." They gave me a bunch of different sauces to fight flavor fatigue, which was something that I would come to rely upon, and then he actually... And I was eating and so my color, I was really wan and pale. I remember they said, "Adam, would you eat a french fry or something?" I'm like, "I'm not eating anything until the challenge." And then he said, "Listen, I'm going to give you a glass of really good burgundy." He said, "Not only will it settle your nerves it'll make your mouth crave the beef." And it absolutely did. It absolutely did.

Adam Richman:

I've always been enamored with pairing and the magical ratatouille-ness of whatever that third compound this created in your mouth. And it has subsequently been a linchpin of my brand, is creating branding menus. I've done it for everything from Jim Beam to Mike's Hard to a wine company in Argentina. It's what I'm very [inaudible 00:32:06] at. I flatter myself to think I'm pretty damn good at it. So for me that burgundy and the richness of this beef and the way it's offset with starchy potato and then it's a different kind of sugar and you can take that and then roquefort dressing. How does roquefort, that blue cheese, work with beef? That kind of funk mimics a little bit of that dry age funk and they work together.

Adam Richman:

The cool thing, I'm going to take a little bit of a detour, and this is the truth because for you lovely listeners, Bryan was kind enough to send me a package of meat before a demo I did during the pandemic at home, New York Food & Wine Festival. It turns out we share a love of one of the same cuts, which is the spinalis.

Bryan Schaaf:

Amen.

Adam Richman:

And for those of you who don't know, the way I describe the spinalis is tenderness of a filet with the character of ribeye. Fair?

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah. It's so packed with, for lack of a better term, fat. I mean it's the best part. I think everybody knows it. They don't know they know what it is. It's that part of the ribeye that you always save for last because it's that good. Right?

Adam Richman:

That's magic. That's magic. Yeah. So that was... It was interesting because there were a few subsequent steak challenges in Man v. Food. We went to a place called Steak & Main in Maryland. The problem was they had to keep reheating it. With each subsequent reheating it was more like shoe leather as you went on. But you know that's the hard part. Some of those things, it wasn't a matter of taking a toll. Like I had... The hardest ones were those first 10 episodes because I didn't get a break. Eventually when I got to be a little bit more valuable to the network and they were a little bit more understanding of me I could say, "Listen, I need... Can we shoot a half day of city B roll the day before the challenge so I have the second half of the day to prepare? And then the day after the challenge I just need a little recovery

time." Because otherwise they had me on the pilot attempting a burger literally the size of a bar stool cushion and the thickness of it. And then I had to go to Dustin's Fried Chicken the next day. It was just like, "Come on, you all. This is just insane."

Adam Richman:

I remember vividly filming in Little Rock at an amazing barbecue spot called Mean Pig BBQ owned by a guy named Buddy Merritt and then get in there getting habanero poisoning. I had to be treated with oxygen. I'm sucking on oxygen in the walk in freezer. Then I had to go home and pack my luggage and get on an airplane the next day. You're like, "Yeah, that's right. Being crammed into a plane in turbulence. That's exactly what I want right now."

Bryan Schaaf:

While you're recovering.

Adam Richman:

Well, it's just that was the thing. So it wasn't so much that it was lingering effects in terms of my decision to move on from it, I just think that I have a little bit more to bring to the table other than my capacity to crush a bunch of food.

Bryan Schaaf:

Amen. You know one of the things that I've always thought identifies you as our kind of people, and I say our kind of people, Certified Angus Beef my cohort, but also all our listeners, is there was a rumor floating around that you had gone vegan. You went out of your way to say, "I am not a vegan."

Adam Richman:

Well, here's the thing. As we talked about in the very beginning it's like we come full circle. I had an opportunity to play in maybe the biggest pro-am soccer game in the world called Soccer Aid that raises money for UNICEF in England. It happens every couple of years and so it was 2012, I was really unhappy with the way I looked and people think that I gained all the weight on Man v. Food. It wasn't. Because the challenges kept me honest. It's when I started doing Man v. Food Nation and I didn't have challenges to train for that I was just eating. The thing was I would eat on camera and then I'd eat lunch with the crew. It was almost like, "Oh, those calories don't count. Those are work calories." You know what I mean? And I just ballooned and ballooned and ballooned. And so I embarked on this weight loss mission 2012 and then I ultimately was like, "No, this is a good goal. 2014 I'm going to drop the weight for." And the last few months of that training I did adopt a vegan diet but it was for that event.

Adam Richman:

My trainer, Nicky Hollander, mandated it because he knew that it would really result in rapid, rapid weight loss. He is from Archway London and he was like, "Mate, lighter bodies will travel faster and jump higher." So he's like, "Get lighter, mate." So I did what I could to get lighter and so adopting a vegan diet was then. So what had happened was this awful reporter from, I want to say she was with the Daily Mail, she said, "Would you ever be a vegan?" And I said, "I actually went vegan for about five months in training for Soccer Aid." And then actually she titled the article, "Adam Richman from Man v. Food is, you'll never guess, a vegan now." Because that's more click bait-y than, "Adam ate vegetables for five months." And so yes, and I'll never forget the sheer stupidity that ensued.

Adam Richman:

If I defended myself people wrote... I took a picture with a Double-Double Animal Style from In-N-Out in Westwood, California and I had quoted Mark Twain. I said, "The reports of my veganism have been greatly exaggerated." I said, "Come on, guys. Newspapers just want clicks." I said, "They just want to sell papers." I said, "I am an omnivore." So I remember one girl was like, "That's so obnoxious. [inaudible 00:38:14] say that. No one cares." And it's like obviously they care. My network cares. I'll never forget one woman was like, "What's an omnivore? Also, is it true you're a vegan?" I'm like, "Lady, they allow you to have children?" I remember when I lost weight people were saying, "You were my food hero. Now you've turned your back on food." It's like turned my back on food? That's like saying I turned my back on oxygen. I still eat.

Adam Richman:

So that was a thing so you're right, I had to go out of my way, especially because I was about to host a barbecue show in England, and ITV was like, "Yeah, we're having an issue here because he's about to host a primetime barbecue show but people think he's a vegan." I remember I went to Veggie Grill in Westwood Village and I was getting something not healthy like buffalo cauliflower or something like that. I remember this girl's like, "Oh, that's right. You're a vegan now." I was like, "I am not." She's like, "But you're in a vegan restaurant." Because I want fried cauliflower. I'm not in here asking you for quinoa and amaranth. Just something semi healthy to just get me from here back to West Hollywood. Come on, man.

Bryan Schaaf:

Do we have to have labels people? Come on.

Adam Richman:

I just think that it's about balance. And the truth of the matter is a good steak dinner, I don't know, maybe it's a guy thing, maybe it's the way I was raised but part of a good steak dinner there always... Whether it's as decadent as creamed spinach or it's as simple as sauteed spinach or broccoli I think that there's always that wonderful potato element. So whether you're going to Peter Luger's and having the Dutch style potatoes or having really great french fries and then some kind of a green and then whatever. To me, I need an ice cold glass of water and I need some kind of red wine and then I got to finish it with some kind of bourbon. You know what I mean? There is something about bourbon and beef, red wine and beef.

Adam Richman:

To be fair one of my big beef marinades I make is if I'm using something like top round that isn't very marbled, for those of you listening, especially when I didn't have a ton of cash to play with, it's usually it's a cheaper cut. You get quite a bit for your buck and a very lean healthy cut of meat. It lasts quite a while. I know some people call it London Broil, whatever, but I would put it in the gallon Ziploc with just about equal part of coffee, red wine, balsamic and soy, fresh cracked pepper and three mashed cloves of garlic and I would just leave it in there and let it imbue with the flavor. Then I'd actually sometimes if I did it on the grill I'd pour that over it. Kind of do like a... What do they call it? A Pittsburgh where they put the butter on coals to steam up?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yup.

Adam Richman:

I would drizzle it over but I think that's the beautiful thing with beef is that I think a lot of people feel it's heavy or it's only good ground up in a burger form. Like you can do salt and pepper and to be fair with the Certified Angus, and I am not a paid spokesperson for... I mean we're friends but I mean it in earnest. I cooked for someone on New Year's and made your gorgeous filets and it would be a travesty to put anything other than salt and pepper on those. But I think you should play with flavor. You should play with temperature. Cold steak on a salad is delightful. In a wrap, it's delightful. But also you look at pho where you have raw meat that you then dunk or shabu-shabu where you cook it a la minute. I think that that's the beautiful thing with beef.

Adam Richman:

It doesn't have to be linear. It doesn't have to be baked potato, creamed spinach, glass of wine. It can be chimichurri and roasted vegetables. It can be... My dad made recipes. He used to say, "I fell in love with your mother for her beauty, her wit, her intelligence and her charm. But I married her for her steak au poivre."

Bryan Schaaf:

Priorities.

Adam Richman:

Yeah, man. Look, Mom's steak au poivre is the gospel truth.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, I tell you two things I want to touch on before we put a wrap on this is... And you actually mentioned two of them. The first one I want to talk about because you'd mentioned In-N-Out.

Adam Richman:

Yes, sir.

Bryan Schaaf:

Anytime In-N-Out comes out I got to ask, did you get it with the green chilies a la Alvin Cailan?

Adam Richman:

No. No, and I love Alvin. He broke my brain. I just did it once. I hadn't seen it before. I didn't even know that chilies was the thing you could get. And he said, "And make sure you say leave the onion whole. Tell them don't. Unsliced onion. Say one slice of onion whole and chilies." And then I saw someone on the grand do... They had gone to a farmer's market prior to hitting In-N-Out and they put fresh California avocado on it. I was like, you know what? That sounds delicious. I know that a fecal Jackson Pollack would lay in my future but by the same... Who's hungry? No, but that's the beautiful thing. To be fair it's almost like a one-to-one comparison. The Double-Double Animal Style and let's say for example the Certified Angus filet, they are almost the platonic ideal of what they are. Super tender, beautiful marbled filet. Good double cheeseburger with right ratio of toppings to bun. And then what you do with it from there could either make it or break it.

Adam Richman:

So I feel that I'm sure that there people who will put Gorgonzola on one of the Certified Angus filets or they'll put it on barbecue sauce. And look, who am I to say right or wrong? But I think that at some point why would you get that? Why would you get the Double-Double if you're going to then put on bacon and avocado and whatever else? But the chilies I think were a brilliant move. Well first of all I love Alvin. You know this because I've been on the Burger Show a couple hundred times or whatever. But it's that balance. You have rich. You have tangy. You have crunchy. You have to magnificent umami oomph from beef and cheese. And then all of the sudden you have that capsicum cutting through everything. That's what makes it work.

Adam Richman:

Why do you put red pepper flakes on pizza? Why of all Italian meats peperoni exists on pizza? Because it's salami picante. It's the oil and everything comes through. Plus the fat boy in me always thinks about Prince Street Pizza or artichoke where you get those little peperoni cups that are little Aztec offering bowels of just saturated delicious fat. You get the thing and it's little tiny... Like a little [inaudible 00:45:52] of just oil.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's a mood enhancer, man.

Adam Richman:

Hell yes. Hell yes. Better the Prozac.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's, right. That's right. The first time I met you, and I know you do a lot of Food & Wines and stuff like that all the time, I usually go as a guest. But somehow, and I'm sure at the event people ere we like, how did that guy...

Adam Richman:

Oh, come on.

Bryan Schaaf:

There were four of us who were judges at the LA Wine & Food Burger Showdown and it was you, myself, Tiffani-Amber Thiessen, or Tiffani Thiessen, Kelly Kapowski, right?

Adam Richman:

And... Set Rogen.

Bryan Schaaf:

Seth Rogen. Yeah. So the four of us are up there, and again this is one of those things I'm like, all right, I clearly know somebody. And that somebody is Alvin, but if I remember at the end of it, because we ate a lot of burgers that night, but Seth quickly had to go.

Adam Richman:

We did.

Bryan Schaaf:

I had heard from the... Down the rumor mill that he got gout or had to go the hospital for gout after that. Have you ever had this confirmed?

Adam Richman:

No. He was just getting mobbed for pictures and stuff. I mean, look, let's call a spade, a spade. He's arguably the most famous person in the room and he was on stage. I remember he was sharing his burgers with his wife, Lauren I believe her name was, and she was just behind those panels that were behind us. So he'd have some and he'd turn around and give her some. I assumed he was leaving because he wanted just to get out of there. I was unaware of any medical thing. And I don't want to hazard a guess.

Bryan Schaaf:

The other thing I wanted to ask you, and it's one of those things we always... Any time we're talking to people who are from a specific region of the country we always like to ask to give us the eating tour of where you're at.

Adam Richman:

Yes, sir.

Bryan Schaaf:

Obviously with all things COVID the New York City dining, Brooklyn dining landscape looks a lot different than it did a year ago.

Adam Richman:

Absolutely.

Bryan Schaaf:

But if you remove all that and you look at for people who lord willing this all comes to an end fairly soon and people get to travel back to the city, where are some of your favorite places to eat in Brooklyn and New York and Queens and that whole region.

Adam Richman:

Absolutely. And I really hope that people, if they see whether it's the Food & Wine virtual events that are happening, Guy Fieri I know put together a restaurant fund for restaurant workers, I know that David Chang just did Who Wants to Be a Millionaire and won a bunch of money for restaurant workers and I know that a lot of them are doing to-go. Because it's tough because a lot of these shelters that they're building now in the cold weather... Look, I understand why but you're still kind of eating indoors if they have four walls and a ceiling. But it's still whether using DoorDash, Seamless, Uber Eats, Grubhub, still patronize these restaurants if you can.

Adam Richman:

So that said, some of the Brooklyn classics are classics for a reason. Randazzo's in Sheepshead Bay for calamari. But you say, ["Galoma 00:49:24]." You want galoma, hot roll on top. It's a hard roll, it's a biscuit they call it but it's like a hard roll. Really hot like fry diablo sauce with unbelievable calamari right across the water in Sheepshead Bay. Peter Luger's obviously is an institution and I didn't even know until Alvin took me there that they offer a burger for lunchtime only. But it happens to be exquisite. So I would say Peter Luger and it's... You got to get the creamed spinach, you got to get the bacon, you got to get the tomato and onion salad. It's worth it. There's not a lot of very expensive meals that I would say you can take or leave but it's a pricier meal. It's less pricey at lunch. But worth it, worth it, worth it, and double worth it. I would say Junior's Cheesecake is... I mean they're even big in Japan. They're incredible.

Adam Richman:

In terms of other Burroughs, and also it doesn't always have to be super fancy. There's a great place on 39th Street called Szechuan Gourmet. Formica tables, vinyl booths, but their food gets a 29 out of 30, or 30 sometimes on Zagat. Incredible szechuan. I would say Cass's is still phenomenal. Russ & Daughters both the café and the appetizing for smoked fish. They have one now at the Brooklyn Navy Yard as well. But they have smoked fish, they have horseradish cream cheese wasabi caviar. They have a bagel called the Meshugah, which has horseradish cream cheese, their amazing sable wonderful fish. Barney Greengrass on the Upper West Side. Sturgeon king is their known. But I also hope you go to there's wonderful chino latino restaurant in Queens like in Forest Hills. Jackson Heights has amazing Indian food. Amazing. Off of Lexington there's an area they call Curry Hill, which almost echos Murray Hill. But it's all cabs. All the cab drivers go eat there. So it's in the high teens low 20s on Lex and you'll see they're all brightly lit.

Adam Richman:

I would also say... I mean some the new guys, some of these little trucks are really great that are popping up and little tiny outposts. I'm trying to think what else I would recommend. I love Ippudo ramen in New York. Oh! Taisho on St. Mark's Place and [Kinkov 00:52:03] for yakitori scr ewers I think is really great place. Veselka for pierogies in the Village. Legendary, legendary restaurant open 24 hours for pierogi. I'm trying to think of little tiny niche places. I know that, oh wait. It's the place that... Denino's in Staten Island that Pete Davidson supposedly is working at in King of Staten Island. Denino's in Staten Island. Spumoni Gardens in Brooklyn on Avenue U. You cannot beat Spumoni Gardens. And ironically enough though their spumoni is great and people talk about their pizza, they do Sicilian slices, their grape tomato salad is proof God loves us and wants us to be happy. That's phenomenal. Phenomenal place. There's a few.

Adam Richman:

But I love going. There's a place on 96th Street. This is the type of place I wanted to think of. My mind just wasn't working fast enough because, you know, quarantine. 96th Street I believe there's a place called Flor de Mayo. Voted some of the best rice and beans in the city. Not overpriced at all. Great, great, great black beans. And there's a place, and I don't think it's closed, called [Herra's 00:53:17] Caridad on 72nd and Broadway. It's [inaudible 00:53:22] Latinos so you can get as John Leguizamo says, "Shrimp fried rice and black [Spanish 00:53:29]." Great place. And I recommend trying chino latino where Fat Joe is from in the Bronx and Castle Hill they have them. And if you want real great Italian in New York, Arthur Avenue in the Bronx is what Little Italy was. So those are just a few that come to mind.

There's great pizza at... It's Co., or company. This guy from Sullivan Street Bakery. Co. It's sort of in that Stuy Town area. Wonderful, wonderful pizza.

Adam Richman:

Lucali, great pizza. East Village Pizza. They're the ones doing that double-decker a pizza on a pizza thing. It's like buffalo chicken and then peperoni. So there's a few that are really, really flourishing. Even in my neighborhood Alchemy is wonderful for all kinds of stuff. I would recommend Calexico, Blue Ribbon. Great fried chicken. Sidecar. 15th Street. Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn. It's Chef John DeCoursey. His brother was my old local bartender, my old local back in the day. They pooled their money and they bought this place on 15th Street and it's called Sidecar. Phenomenal. Johnson & Wales trained chef. Great, great fried chicken. And they make a dish called Brandade. B-R-A-N-D-A-D-E. It's like a whipped fish baked thing that you dip crusty bread in it and just thank God you're alive. Any time the great George Motz, the burger [crosstalk 00:55:07]

Bryan Schaaf:

The burger slide.

Adam Richman:

Yes, he did the burger slide. Oh, God, I love you Bryan that you know that. He's been doing popups at the... I think it's called The Arrogant Swine or something like that. The Bushwick-Ridgewood hinterlands. That happens to be his... He does a smash burger, a vocative of white manna and it's... If you're a smash burger fan, George Motz, he's a lovely man first of all, but I love the Bill Nye science he imparts when he speaks about burgers. It's really... It's very seldom you find someone who has that much knowledge willing to share it and doesn't carry a bunch of pretense along with it. Mike Puma from Gotham Burger Social Club.

Adam Richman:

Oh and there's a place called Hard Times Sundaes near where my dad grew up in Ditmas Park on Cortelyou Road. It's a bunch of... I mean I think he's publicized this. I don't think I'm putting anything on front street. He himself had been in prison and he hires a lot of men that have gotten out that are working to reform their lives. He gives them a chance because he knew he wasn't given a chance. And he makes a hell of a smash burger as well. You can follow him on Instagram at hard_times_sundaes. But I always try to give everyone a little bit of a leg up if I can. So, those are some of the places I love.

Adam Richman:

I love Tofu on fifth [inaudible 00:56:45]. That is a great, a wonderful sushi place. I cannot recommend enough. I believe they're now on 7th Avenue in Brooklyn called Inaka, I-N-A-K-A. We used to buy our fish from the same guy. It's how I found out about them. Superb, superb, superb fish. Great sushi. Not overpriced. Really, really f'n good. And of course as a steak guy I know you know this place, Bohemian. Bohemian the Japanese steak easy.

Bryan Schaaf:

I am familiar but I have never been there.

Adam Richman:

It's an eating in someone's living room that's way cooler and more Japanese than you. But it was super, super, super dope. I don't know. Let me ask you one question.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Adam Richman:

I personally, and maybe I am a peasant, and I'm not saying this because you're a beef guy, because you've been generous because we're friends, I find Wagyu to be overly rich. I find it to be... Okay, so when I'm doing a ribeye or if I'm doing a strip that has a little bit of a fat cap and I allow myself to eat that little bit of charred fat, it's one bite out of the whole. Wagyu I find it's almost overwhelmingly rich. A4, A5.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. I recognize Waygu's place, but it's in a one ounce, half ounce portion because it's so rich. I'm never going to get a Wagyu steak. It is way too much. If I'm going to get a steak obviously I'm biased to Certified Angus Beef, but I'm going to get something in that either USDA prime upper echelons of choice grade. Something there where it's that balance. I love a good bite of A5 but never in a steak form.

Adam Richman:

You know there is a point of pride I feel, especially because my shows are in over 30 countries now, about things like Angus beef. That I feel that things like Malpeque Oysters or Wellfleet oysters or stone crab or Maine lobster or Puget Island Sound seafood, these are American contributions to the global grocery that can stand toe to toe with the [inaudible 00:59:12] in Switzerland, can stand with the Waygus and the Hiroshima oysters and I don't know Ligurian olives and Calabrian chilies. And that there is something for me, and this is a kid whose dad served in the Army and whose grandfather served in the Army and uncle served in the Navy, and one of the first things I learned from my dad was how to properly fold an American flag into the triangles and how to put it up on our... How we had a flag on our house constantly.

Adam Richman:

That, you know, I'm blessed I have the following I do, especially in the UK and Australia and in Latin America, but I do feel a tremendous sense of pride and a kinship and a need to champion things like Certified Angus Beef because it's ours. It's American. You hear about Wagyu and I remember being in Texas and trying something from a place called Beeman Ranch where they actually bred the Kobe with certified, with Angus and make it whatever.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh yeah. Yeah. Yup.

Adam Richman:

I think there is... As someone who is representative of the American table first of all I respect so much what you guys do, but the product could stand toe to toe with... Like in Vietnam for example the gold standard there is Australian beef because that's where they can get it. The standard for beef, the way it's prepared, I mean first of all people don't realize that fajita meant skirt steak. It means skirt steak.

And that the pirate Jean Lafitte is the guy who termed the term barbecue. It was [foreign language 01:01:08]. It meant cooked over spits. So when you go to a [foreign language 01:01:13] in Argentina, it's skirt and it's skirt is a striated heavily worked piece of muscle. I filmed in this [inaudible 01:01:23] area of Buenos Aires and they do a steak called the matambre a la pizza. Some people say matambre because it's shoe leather or from [foreign language 01:01:34] to kill. Like, "Oh, I'm going to die." But it's always wonderful.

Adam Richman:

And that's the thing that I love. That in America we can do salt, pepper and leave it alone. One of my favorite steakhouses on planet earth is this called Bern's B-E-R-N'S in Tampa.

Bryan Schaaf:

Down in Tampa. Oh, yeah.

Adam Richman:

The best. I recommend anyone listening to this, it's like Disneyland for food. One of the sommeliers there was really sweet. He said, "Listen, you want to know what's really great on our steak," because he saw that I was trying to be a purest, because they've got a compendium of sauces you can choose from. They have this aged balsamic that is so thick you could paint a house with it. It's this reduced, reduced aged balsamic. That on their chateaubriand?

Bryan Schaaf:

The real deal, huh?

Adam Richman:

Oh, boy. If I'm going to the electric chair I know where I'm going.

Bryan Schaaf:

Just make a detour to Tampa.

Adam Richman:

Yes, exactly.

Bryan Schaaf:

So in New York I think they're still doing takeout right now, but have you done COTE?

Adam Richman:

No. I've always wanted. That's the Korean one.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. [crosstalk 01:02:40]

Adam Richman:

Something [crosstalk 01:02:41] what's his name?

Bryan Schaaf:

David Shim and Simon Kim.

Adam Richman:

Kim.

Bryan Schaaf:

I believe [crosstalk 01:02:45]

Adam Richman:

Everyone listening to this podcast, I'm going to be calling Bryan when this is done. I'm not even playing. I'm not even playing. We're going to definitely have to do this. And by the way is spinalis your favorite one to cook?

Bryan Schaaf:

For me to cook at home it's actually the Coulotte.

Adam Richman:

The Coulotte? So you get the big full Coulotte?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah, I'll get the whole... The gigantic pice would be your whole top butt, but there's a muscle that would be the Coulotte muscle. It's just like the top cap. It's about four pounds and I ask the butcher here, I get it for the grocery store here or our meat scientists over in the lab, they leave me a quarter inch fat trim on top and I'll score it like barbecue, rub it down with just like salt, pepper, maybe a little granulated honey so it's a little bit almost like a Santa Maria style, roast it, hit it hard and-

Adam Richman:

Granulated honey. Wait a minute. I'm putting that in my phone.

Bryan Schaaf:

Or sugar. I guess they're interchangeable.

Adam Richman:

No, no, granulated honey. Okay, I'm down. Okay, what else?

Bryan Schaaf:

I throw it in the oven, crank it to 500, get that nice crust on the outside of it because I've got the fat cap.

Adam Richman:

You don't cover it.

Bryan Schaaf:

No, no.

Adam Richman:

[crosstalk 01:03:52] cover it.

Bryan Schaaf:

I want to thrash the outside of that to get that crust. Then I back the oven off to like 300 and let it cruise up to 120, 125. Pull it-

Adam Richman:

And you're starting it at what? 400? 420?

Bryan Schaaf:

Usually like 500. As hot as I can get it. To get that... Because I want to get... It's basically like you're searing in the oven. You know? So it's just...

Adam Richman:

You do any liquid in the pan?

Bryan Schaaf:

No liquid in the pan. I do it on a roasting rack and I rub it down with usually like peanut oil or olive oil first.

Adam Richman:

Sometimes if I'm doing a roast, and this is something that I learned... Oh, another great place. In [inaudible 01:04:31], which is the eastern area of Spanish Harlem. I think it's 136th and Lex. If you watch the Harlem episode of Man v. Food I film there. It's called La Fonda Boricua. The chef there, his name is Jorge Ayala and he does the technical term is a bain-marie where you put a pan of water in the oven below that which you're cooking to create ambient steam. He called it [Spanish 01:04:57]. But he would seed through an orange and cinnamon sticks and clove into it and he did a pork butt that way. So sometimes I'll do that, but I'm always interested.

Adam Richman:

The guy who used to live on the fourth floor of the same brownstone I live in was a chef in Versailles. I remember he did short rib with oyster sauce, Guinness, and a little bit of olive oil and that would be the braising liquid. And then I did this similar thing and I added root beer to mine. I'll just periodically baste because you know if you do low and show with short rib you can look at them and they fall off the bone.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. They're perfection. And there's so much intermuscular fat in that short rib muscle, oh, it's...

Adam Richman:

That's where you get that nice sticky almost gelatin kind of fat that you really render out. The cool thing is I love that every single culture has some variant of potted meat, potted beef that whether it's the British meat pie or the Australian meat pie which is a derivative, and you can go and get sancocho, you can get different cassoulet. And the funny thing for me was being in Vietnam and filming, and thanks God Tony Bourdain was still alive and I could call him to find out that pho comes from the French [French 01:06:16]. That's even where the name comes from. And so there's this beautiful derivatives that you can find. So I love that you can buy... People listening to this don't have to spend a ton of money on whatever cut they get and that you can actually stretch it out.

Adam Richman:

The place that George Motz and I both love is Sid's in El Reno, Oklahoma. Home of the onion fry burger. El Reno used to be a big railroad manufacturing town. Railroad car manufacturing. And then the day and age of the automobile came. They moved Route 66 further south so then it became Route 40, so the depression hit El Reno really, really hard. They had less meat and more onions, plus you can plant an onion and grow more onions. So what they did was it was kind of brilliant. He put the onion on a power drill and then he got a brick trowel and he cut a notch in it, like a cheese knife, and then you hold the spinning onion against this trowel and it spins and it cuts off these thin, thin ribbons of onion. You pack in with the meat and the patty is actually close to 50% onion. The inner most ones sear, the outermost ones caramelize and it was a way to stretch out your depression era meat rations and still create a burger. And it's a burger worth trying because it celebrates the onion as much as beef as much as it celebrates human ingenuity. You know?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Oh, that's amazing. It's almost like using the onion as a thickener like with rice.

Adam Richman:

Exactly [crosstalk 01:07:53].

Bryan Schaaf:

On that note, Adam Richman, the... Man, there's so many different things that we could term you. Right? We can't put you in a box. Right?

Adam Richman:

I like to say gastronaut because I'm a food explorer, but let's just say rock on tour and [foreign language 01:08:13].

Bryan Schaaf:

It's on his business card. You can look him up.

Adam Richman:

I promise I'll write some American terms on there once in a while. My friends will be like, he's a (beep)

Bryan Schaaf:

Those who know him best.

Adam Richman:

You wanted to listen, one last thing. This will be my leaving, my final thoughts. One of the reasons I'm still friends with my boys from back in Brooklyn, right when Man v. Food was taking off and I had to do my very first promo shoot I told my friend Peter, who I've known since I was 12. Peter's a very successful finance guy, whatever else. I love him to the moon and back. Shout out Peter Shyer. I said to him, "Pete, I got to film this. I got to do this photo shoot." He goes, "What kind of photo shoot are you doing?" I'm like, "Well, it's a promo thing for the network. I guess maybe they'll put it on a bus, on a subway." He goes, "Let me tell you something. If I ever see your face on the side of a bus or in the subway station, I'm drawing a large (beep) right on your forehead."

Adam Richman:

I said, "God, I love you." Because I realized two things. One, I'm always going to have my friends to keep me humble. And two, if I ever see a giant (beep) drawn on my forehead I'll be like, "Oh, it's Pete [crosstalk 01:09:20]"

Bryan Schaaf:

He already called his shot.

Adam Richman:

What a way to end the interview.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh, it's fantastic. Adam Richman, you can find... You know what? Oh, real quick. My gosh I'm a terrible interviewer. What are you doing now, man? Give us a quick rundown.

Adam Richman:

Gotcha. Okay. So, I am in the second season of The Food That Built America on the History Channel. Great show. We could learn so much about the brands that we take for granted. The history, the ingenuity, the setbacks. I find it personally, not because I'm in it, wildly inspirational. I was in season one, which you can get on demand. Season two is coming out. I have two new digital series coming up. The second season of Biscuit Reviews From an American That You Didn't Even Ask For, where I review cookies from all over the world on my YouTube channel. I currently have started a new little itty bitty digital series on my TikTok called Chicken Sandwich Chronicles. I have a series site, a bit of a gardener and I teach you how to cook and grown stuff. Easy to grow stuff that I grew called Adam's Garden of Eatin. It's a new series that's starting this February on IGTV.

Adam Richman:

And I have a new series on the History Channel that I found that I'm officially not allowed to say something until they do. But it's a reboot of a very, very famous franchise on History Channel that I am now hosting. That's what I'm currently filming at the moment. It celebrates the greatest stuff within American food as relates... It kind of ties back to the Built America series on History Channel. So I've got those and I have a series that I was filming but COVID shutdown unfortunately in the UK called Supper Man on the Dave Channel.

Bryan Schaaf:

Glorious. And [crosstalk 01:11:03]-

Adam Richman:

I'm on my books. Buy my book, buy my books, buy my books. They're so much fun and cool.

Bryan Schaaf:

Amazon?

Adam Richman:

Yeah, yeah. The first one's called America the Edible: A Hungry History from Sea to Dining Sea. So you get some of my history, some of the food history. You get recipes with every chapter. There's maps, there's phone numbers, addresses of all the restaurants to go to. And then I named my first cookbook called Straight UP Tasty. Again I got recipes that are just about flavor. They're not pretentious. They're douchey. There's one called Spanish Fly. It's a good cookbook. It's fun. You can do it with friends and kids. There's everything from the entire history of chocolate as a rhyming poem and hiku. Explanations of cooking to again restaurant recommendations along with phone numbers and addresses of the restaurants to go to.

Adam Richman:

So look, whether or not you buy them it's not about my money. I just want you guys to enjoy your lives and have the type of fun that I get to.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's amazing. I'll tell you what, hearing all that stuff going on, the fact that you were able to take time out of your busy schedule to sit down and chat with us, man, dude, we are grateful. If there's anything that we can ever do for you, even if it's a simple restaurant recommendation from some of our listeners, please don't ever-

Adam Richman:

Dude, hit up COTE for me. But really and the truth is and I'm glad I get to say this on a public forum, you've been a true friend. You have been a real tremendous advocate of mine. You've been incredibly generous through the years as has everyone at Certified Angus Beef. So, thank you. Thank everyone at Certified Angus Beef. And for me, I'd always make time for a friend.

Bryan Schaaf:

Dude, thank you so much. Adam Richman, we appreciate you joining us here on the Meat Speak Podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand.