



Off Menu – Ep 280 – Robert De Niro

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, taking the garlic of conversation, the razorblade of friendship and slicing it into thin slices of humour, James.

James Acaster

What a reference. That is a gamble. My name is James Acaster and together we own a dream restaurant. Every single week we invite in a guest and we ask them their favourite starter, main course, desserts.

Ed Gamble

Just laughing already at the-, yes, just laughing already.

James Acaster

It's funny. Yes, it is funny, and that's because our guest is.

Ed Gamble

Robert De Niro.

James Acaster

Robert De Niro.

Ed Gamble

We're being slightly quieter because we're in a room at The Langham hotel in London, where Robert De Niro is doing press for his new show, Zero Day.

James Acaster

Out now on Netflix, a limited series.

Ed Gamble

Out now on Netflix. And, yes, it's not a joke actually, that we have Robert De Niro on the podcast.

James Acaster

No, we're not joking, but just because things aren't a joke doesn't mean they're not funny.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So, that's important. It's very funny that this podcast has Robert De Niro on it.



Ed Gamble

Yes. It's mind-blowing.

James Acaster

And that's no shade to all the guests we've had in the past, who have all been phenomenal.

Ed Gamble

It is. It is.

James Acaster

Yes, full shade.

Ed Gamble

I hate all the guests we've had in the past. We've got Robert De Niro today. So, from now on, I only want Robert-De-Niro-level people, which means this is the last episode.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Because there's absolutely no one on the level of Robert De Niro.

James Acaster

Al Pacino, maybe?

Ed Gamble

Pacino. Yes, and then we're done, aren't we?

James Acaster

Yes. And then we want to get them both on, like Heat.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And to speak to each other across a table that's in a diner.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It's food related.



Ed Gamble

Yes. Maybe we'll ask him about that?

James Acaster

Maybe. But, I mean, we'll definitely ask him about Zero Day.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Which is out now on Netflix.

Ed Gamble

Zero Day is a new limited series starring Robert De Niro, of course, who is on the podcast this week playing ex-US President, George Mullen. It's the first time I've done any research in advance of an interview. Often, people will send links and stuff and you're, like, 'Well, I know the vibe. We'll just have a chat.' I was, like, 'I'm going to watch this.'

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And it's six episodes, and I watched the whole thing in two days. It's fantastic.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It's proper gripping, interesting, like, asks a lot of questions about unchecked power. But there's some crazy stuff going on in the show, man. It's such a good cast. Plemons is in it as well.

James Acaster

Jesse Plemons?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Lizzy Caplan?

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

Angela Bassett?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I can't believe these names.

Ed Gamble

Yes. It's a big show.

James Acaster

Dan Stevens is in it as well. I really enjoy watching Dan Stevens in stuff.

Ed Gamble

Dan Stevens is so good in this show. So, go and watch that on Netflix now. I promise you, you will like it. It reminded me of the excitement I used to get when I was watching 24 in that first time of, like, the golden age of TV.

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Ed Gamble

Where you're, like, completely gripped.

James Acaster

Yes please.

Ed Gamble

So, yes.

James Acaster

But now we're in the golden age of podcasts.

Ed Gamble

We're in the golden age of podcasts, because-, I mean, I'm going to say this, bumped into Rob Brydon on the way here.

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

He was, like, 'What are you up to?' I went, 'I'm going to interview Robert De Niro.' That guy was jealous, man.

James Acaster

Great. I hope he was jealous. I hope you're listening to this, Brydon, and you know how much we love that you are jealous.

Ed Gamble

He said, 'You've won the podcast wars.'

James Acaster

The podcast wars? I didn't know there was podcast wars, but it feels great to win.

Ed Gamble

Yes. The winners of the wars are the ones who don't know about the wars.

James Acaster

But listen, even though we love Robert De Niro and we're very excited that Robert-, and I thought, obviously-,

Ed Gamble

Come on, mate. We can't do this for De Niro.

James Acaster

We're here to have a secret ingredient and if he says it, he gets kicked out.

Ed Gamble

Well, we can-, we're going to- Right, he's not going to know what the podcast is for a start. So, we're not going to be able to kick him out of something he doesn't understand what's going on in.

James Acaster

Well, that's exactly-, look, we've only ever kicked one person out. He's ripe for the kicking out. If he doesn't even understand it, we can get him.

Ed Gamble

I don't think I can kick Robert De Niro out, man.

James Acaster

Well.

Ed Gamble

Especially as we've come to him, where he's doing press.



James Acaster

The Langham hotel.

Ed Gamble

Yes, The Langham hotel, where you lived.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

So, I don't think we can kick him out. I think we'd just have to leave.

James Acaster

Okay.

Ed Gamble

Which is going to be baffling for him.

James Acaster

That's the rule. That's the rule for this episode. If he chooses the secret ingredient, we leave. That's fair.

Ed Gamble

Okay.

James Acaster

And today the secret ingredient is cheese and bickle sandwich.

Ed Gamble

So, he's not going to pick it. It's a cheese and bickle sandwich.

James Acaster

Yes, we deliberately made it something he won't pick.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Travis Bickle, obviously, the character that he played in Taxi Driver.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Sounds like pickle. And a cheese and pickle sandwich is a thing, so that's what we've done there.



Ed Gamble

Cheese and bickle sandwich.

James Acaster

Cheese and bickle sandwich. So, like, we're safe. If he does say it, yes, that's going to be bigger news than if he did his whole menu, I think.

Ed Gamble

Well, if he does say it and then we leave, baffling.

James Acaster

Baffling for him, but I don't think he'll care.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

I think he'll be, like, 'Well, that's me off the hook. I've got some time free.'

Ed Gamble

I'd imagine him being, yes, 'Got a bit of free time now.'

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

He's a busy man. James, just to remind you, it's Robert De Niro.

James Acaster

It's Robert De Niro. We've not even, you know, bothered to list his credentials.

Ed Gamble

Yes, come on.

James Acaster

Usually at the start of an episode we'd be, like, 'This is who this person is.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You know, obviously, you all know Robert De Niro.



Ed Gamble

(a) you know them, and (b) we don't have time to list all his credentials.

James Acaster

If anything, I think we should probably list our credentials at the start. Most people listening are going to be, like, 'I don't know who these two are.' Host of The Traitors: Uncloaked.

Ed Gamble

Uncloaked, please.

James Acaster

Over there. One of the judges on Great British Menu.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

A very successful stand-up comedian. Sell-out tours around the world.

Ed Gamble

Didn't start on you, though?

James Acaster

That's you.

Ed Gamble

Yes, alright. Okay.

James Acaster

That's still you. Does the Taskmaster podcast. He won series nine of Taskmaster.

Ed Gamble

Off Menu podcast.

James Acaster

He does the Off Menu podcast.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Okay.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I'm James Acaster.

Ed Gamble

Lars Pinfield.

James Acaster

I'm Lars Pinfield, John, the mouse. I also do stand-up comedy.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I did Hypothetical on Dave for a few series.

Ed Gamble

It's going to be awkward if Robert auditioned for Lars Pinfield.

James Acaster

That would be so awkward.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Or if he was, like, one of the people who nearly got John, the mouse replacement, and he couldn't make it work.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I bet if Robert De Niro had done it they wouldn't have called it John, the mouse. They'd be just, 'We'll change it to Robert De Niro, the mouse.'

Ed Gamble

I wonder what we call him?

James Acaster

My instinct is to go, Sir, or Mr De Niro.



Ed Gamble

Yes, but is that the relaxed restaurant atmosphere?

James Acaster

I've seen people be familiar with him and call him Bob. We mustn't do that.

Ed Gamble

Okay. That's a deal.

Ed Gamble

Go and watch Zero Day on Netflix, but only after you've listened to the Off Menu pod. Insane. The Off Menu podcast. The Off Menu menu of Robert De Niro.

James Acaster

Robert De Niro.

Ed Gamble

Welcome, Bob, to the dream restaurant.

James Acaster

'Woosh.' Welcome, Robert De Niro, to the dream restaurant. We've been expecting you for some time.

Ed Gamble

Were you impressed by the genie there?

Robert De Niro

Yes. I don't know why yet, but that was, you know, you've got a lot of energy.

James Acaster

It was pretty good. I gave it some extra for you because I wanted you to, like, believe I was a genie.

Robert De Niro

I believe it.

James Acaster

And, like, your whole career is making people believe you're other people. So, I was, like, 'If I can get this guy to believe I'm a genie, then everyone has to admit I'm the best.'

Robert De Niro

Yes. I mean, I thought maybe you'd be dressed differently, you know, the way we always imagine a genie would look.

Ed Gamble

Yes. He's quite a modern genie. Like, he just wears his own clothes really. Yes.



James Acaster

It's a nice modern twist, actually.

Robert De Niro

It is, yes.

James Acaster

But I should have gone more method and, like, dressed as the genie proper.

Robert De Niro

Yes, I guess. Either way, it's okay. I guess, this is on film?

James Acaster

Oh, yes, they're filming it as well. So, that is an oversight on my part.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

So, I'm now not going to, at all, look like a genie on camera. So, the people who see it-, actually, I don't think people have normally seen me do that bit at the beginning. Now you've pointed that out, I am mortified.

Ed Gamble

Going to spoil it.

James Acaster

Normally this is audio, and people can just imagine it through the magic of audio. And I make that sound effect, and people always believe that it's me bursting out of a lamp. They don't think it's me doing it with my mouth.

Ed Gamble

If James was auditioning to be a genie in a film, would you suggest he put on a genie outfit, or do you not agree with people dressing up for auditions?

Robert De Niro

Well, it depends on what the character is, aside from being a genie, what the story is and everything else, and what's demanded. It could be a modern, today story where the genie is dressed the way he is. Or he might have a little touch here and there, a little earring or something, you know, pierced-ear earring, god knows, a little goatee. Whatever the director would suggest to work with, or the wardrobe people, whatever they say.



Ed Gamble

If it was a Scorsese genie flick which, you know, might come up in the future.

James Acaster

Might come up in the future.

Ed Gamble

Do you think James would get in?

Robert De Niro

I don't know. It depends on the story.

James Acaster

Yes. I think if I do get the audition for Scorsese genie flick, I am going to wear the earring and grow a goatee. And then maybe you will say to him, 'You know I told him to do that?'

Robert De Niro

Yes. That's a start. That shows that you're thinking and that you're trying to-, you know, that you're being proactive about trying to get the part. So, that would make a difference. Could make a difference.

James Acaster

So, for Zero Day, this new series, what prep did you go in for that when you're, 'I'm playing the President, an ex-president, in this.' What were you thinking about him, in that character?

Robert De Niro

Well, I had a great team around me. Eric Newman, Noah Oppenheim and-, Noah Oppenheim was the head of NBC News at one point I think, and Michael Schmidt's is a Pulitzer prize author, writes for the New York Times. I mean, Eric and I met. I was talking to my agent about, 'What could I do in New York for five or six months without having to, you know, go somewhere else to shoot it? Or maybe you've heard about a limited series?' And he introduced me to Eric Newman and we talked. And then he came up with this idea, and he wrote me what you call a treatment, which is maybe twenty-or-so pages, give or take, whatever and then what the story is. It sounded good. Then he started sending me instalments every few weeks and it was good.

So, that was a big help. So, it wasn't, like, I did preparation other than even seeing presidents and political figures on television, in press conferences, in interviews and stuff like that. You get a lot from that.

Ed Gamble

Is this your first presidential role?

Robert De Niro

Yes. Well, I'm not a president. I'm an ex-president.



Ed Gamble

Ex-president, yes, but you've got to still have that-, I guess they all still have that presidential vibe to them, don't they?

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

They still get called Mr President, some of them, afterwards?

Robert De Niro

Yes. They do, yes.

James Acaster

That's pretty sweet.

Robert De Niro

Yes. That's, you know, it's nice.

James Acaster

We always start with still or sparkling water. Do you have a preference for your dream meal?

Robert De Niro

What was that?

Ed Gamble

James is from Kettering, so a lot of people don't understand him.

James Acaster

Do you know where Kettering is in Northamptonshire?

Robert De Niro

No.

James Acaster

It's in the middle of the country. It's a small town, used to make shoes and doesn't any more. One of those places.

Robert De Niro

Okay.

James Acaster

That's where I'm from. So, often, whenever we speak to people who aren't from the UK, I'm the issue.



Robert De Niro

Okay.

Ed Gamble

So, there'll be a few things coming up where you'll have to double-check what James has said, but I'm happy to translate.

Robert De Niro

Okay, good.

James Acaster

Would you like still or sparkling water?

Robert De Niro

Still.

James Acaster

Have you always been a still-water guy?

Robert De Niro

Pretty much. Sparkling is good too but I've, sort of, been more a still guy these days.

James Acaster

Especially, I guess, if you're going to step into a scene or something, you don't want to glug some sparkling water and be going in there a little gassy?

Robert De Niro

True. Yes, so another reason to have still water.

Ed Gamble

Have you ever been gassy during a scene, to the extent you needed to stop?

Robert De Niro

No, but what I have had is my stomach rumbling and growling.

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Robert De Niro

And I'm trying to stop it, and it's so annoying. And you're in the middle of a scene and it just won't stop. It has a life of its own. So, that can be annoying, surprisingly.



James Acaster

That would be good if, like, the scene was before a scene where you're eating? So, if it was, like, in Goodfellas and you're all in the car and then you decide to stop at the mum's house and then you're eating that big meal. If before, you're in the car, your stomach's rumbling, in the next scene when you're eating the meal, everyone's going to be, like, 'Well, good for him. He was hungry earlier.'

Robert De Niro

Yes. That's a good point. And what could have been done though, wasn't done. Marty could have, like, laid in a soundtrack of grumbling stomach. They, you know, can't think of everything.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, maybe at the future.

Ed Gamble

Yes, some people say that film's perfect, but they forget there were no stomach rumbles in there.

Robert De Niro

There's always something you can do better.

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Robert De Niro? Poppadoms or bread?

Robert De Niro

What?

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread?

Ed Gamble

Yes. So, this is one of these moments. I knew it was going to come up.

Robert De Niro

Yes, I need interpretation.

Ed Gamble

Yes. James shouted, 'Poppadoms or bread?' This is the next option within the dream meal.

Robert De Niro

What is that?

Ed Gamble

Poppadoms, a crispy, Indian snack that you might get before you have a curry.



Robert De Niro

Oh, yes. Okay.

Ed Gamble

And you get those with all the Indian dips. Or bread, I'm assuming you're across bread?

Robert De Niro

I'm what?

Ed Gamble

You're across bread. You know, now we need another person to translate this.

James Acaster

You know what.

Robert De Niro

I like both kinds of bread. So, that's Indian bread?

Ed Gamble

It's, sort of, a crispy, chickpea-based thing. So, that would come at the start of an Indian meal. So, what James is shouting is, 'Poppadoms? Or are you going to go with bread at this point in the dream meal?'

James Acaster

Or it can be just whatever you like to have before a meal when you sit down at a restaurant. Sometimes there's prawn crackers.

Robert De Niro

Right.

James Acaster

Sometimes there's chips and dips, olives, you know.

Robert De Niro

I'm easy. I like whatever they put in front of me, as long as it's good.

Ed Gamble

Are you a foodie? Do you like going out to eat?

James Acaster

Come on. This guy owns a chain of restaurants. He owns Tribeca Grill, this guy. He's a foodie, Ed. Sorry, Bob.

Robert De Niro

I do like good-,



James Acaster

That was embarrassing. That was frankly embarrassing, what he did just then.

Robert De Niro

You corrected him and that's okay.

Ed Gamble

Yes, well, you might just be a good businessman.

James Acaster

This guy-, I mean, I don't actually know the Nobu story and how you came to be involved in it, but I think it's amazing. But how did you get involved?

Robert De Niro

I was with Roland Joffé, who's a British director, and Roland took me to this restaurant called Matsuhisa, Nobu's last name. And I said to him, 'This is great.' I thought this could work so well in New York, and then I just start thinking, 'It would work well here in London.' But first, you know, in New York, it's easier to see. And so I said, 'If you ever want to open a restaurant.' It was a long couple of years. We finally opened it.

James Acaster

Man, I had a similar thing with a juice guy, but he went quiet on me.

Robert De Niro

Who?

Ed Gamble

James is trying to set up a juice business.

James Acaster

Yes, it's gone bad. It's dead now. It's dead in the water. The guy, he made these amazing juices at this restaurant in Copenhagen and I was, like, 'I want to start a juice business with this guy.' And he was on board for a bit, but he's been ghosting me. He's not replying to my emails any more. I don't know, you probably didn't have that problem with Nobu but, like, the guy just stopped. I suggested that we called it Juice Almighty, the thing. I think that turned him off.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it would do, yes.

James Acaster

Yes, it was a turn off, I think. It wasn't taking it seriously enough.

Robert De Niro

No, it's not a bad name.



James Acaster

Thank you.

Robert De Niro

Not a bad title, or whatever, yes.

Ed Gamble

You'd pick up a bottle of Juice Almighty if you saw it on the shelf?

Robert De Niro

Well, the juice has to be good.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Robert De Niro

That's the bottom line, you know? If the juice is good, it all works.

James Acaster

It was stellar juice.

Robert De Niro

Okay, well, well that's what you say. I have to taste it.

James Acaster

Absolutely, and I wish I could give you some now, but the guy's gone quiet on me.

Robert De Niro

Oh, well, now you have it.

James Acaster

He's gone fully quiet on me, on the emails.

Robert De Niro

What can you do?

James Acaster

So, I imagine you don't have that problem. No-one goes quiet on-

Robert De Niro

You've got to go to Denmark and chase them down?

James Acaster

Maybe. Look, I'm actually going to Denmark this week. If you want to come with me, Bob.



Robert De Niro

I can't.

James Acaster

I think it would help.

Robert De Niro

I have other things to do, but good luck.

James Acaster

Imagine, on the e-mail chain. I'll add you to the e-mail chain.

Robert De Niro

Oh, please don't.

Ed Gamble

I'm not sure if you heard, but he's got-, you're not a fan of being on an e-mail chain?

Robert De Niro

No.

James Acaster

No, that's not fun actually, is it?

Let's get into your dream meal, proper. Your dream starter.

Robert De Niro

I don't know. I just, like I say, like good food. I like to go to a good restaurant that I've heard about in, say, London or wherever and I can't give you that answer, really. I'm like, 'If it's good and it's known to be good,' known to be good, first step. Second step is to eat it, see for yourself whether it's good, that can be anything.

Ed Gamble

We're going to narrow you down, Bob. We're going to pluck this answer out and you're going to be amazed.

Robert De Niro

I mean, I wish I had an answer like, 'Yes, I like this pasta and that, and this, all that and yes,' but I don't know why.

Ed Gamble

Where do you like to eat in London, when you are here?



Robert De Niro

I like where I'm staying, I eat there. I like the food there, it's simple, but because I'm here for such a short time, it's like I'm doing press all day, I go home, I go to the hotel, eat, go to sleep, get up. So, that's what I do.

Ed Gamble

So, we're stopping you eating the good meals, really?

Robert De Niro

No, no. The meals are good where I'm staying.

Ed Gamble

Whereabouts are you staying?

Robert De Niro

Chiltern.

Ed Gamble

Oh, okay, Chiltern Firehouse.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

So, what do they have on the menu there? Do you have, like, a go-to, on that menu?

Robert De Niro

Just whatever they have is all good. I don't, you know, even at Nobu, I like, they bring me stuff and anything that Nobu has is always great.

Ed Gamble

That's when you know you've got it, isn't it? When you just walk in and they bring you stuff.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Do they let you come in through the kitchen?

Robert De Niro

I go through a lot of kitchens because I sometimes go-, just its easier to go in whatever place. It's not so glamorous.



James Acaster

Every time you do it, does someone go, 'Oh, this is like Goodfellas,' and then you're like, 'Yes, yes, I know.'?

Robert De Niro

Well, I didn't think of it that way, but that's true. That scene, yes.

Ed Gamble

When you're walking through the kitchen, do the chefs notice what's going on and, sort of, stop working?

Robert De Niro

Maybe.

Ed Gamble

You're sneaking through?

Robert De Niro

I'm just walking through quick so, you know.

James Acaster

I'd be awful. If I was a chef in that kitchen, you'd never go through that kitchen again because I'd just be like-,

Robert De Niro

You might force me, then, to taste something?

James Acaster

Yes.

Robert De Niro

I don't want to offend you, so of course I say, 'Okay, let me see what this tastes like,' and I'm going to say it's good, even though I wouldn't be sure.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Chasing you through the restaurant going, 'Try my juice, Bob.'

James Acaster

Oh, yes. I'd be chasing you with a glass of Juice Almighty.



Robert De Niro

A captive audience.

James Acaster

Well, I quite like the idea. We've never had a menu before that is, 'If it's good, I'll eat it,' and they can bring it over and, if it's good, you'll have it. Whatever they'd like, you know? That means it almost puts it in our hands to just bring you good stuff.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, do we have to? Are we going to do that, then? Are we going to decide what we're bringing to Bob in the dream restaurant?

James Acaster

Yes, we should do that. Do you want to take the starter, Ed?

Ed Gamble

Yes, sure. I mean, if we're talking Nobu, obviously, famously, the dish that everyone loves there is the Miso Black Cod.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Which is fantastic. Are you a fan of that particular dish?

Robert De Niro

Yes, of course, yes.

Ed Gamble

So, if we brought that over to you in the dream restaurant as your starter, how would you feel about that?

Robert De Niro

That's good.

James Acaster

You'd say, 'You're doing your job well guys,'?

Robert De Niro

I'm happy, good. It's all good.



James Acaster

Now, just full disclosure now, Bob. The rest of the format of the podcast is me asking your dream main course, your dream side dish, your dream drink, and your dream dessert. Now, I think I know the answer to all of those.

Robert De Niro

Why don't you tell me, I'll tell you whether you're right or wrong?

James Acaster

Yes, that works for us, we can do that for the whole pod.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Also, it's worth noting for the listeners, we've not recorded here before, in the Langham Hotel in London. Did you know, Bob, I lived here for a week. This was my home.

Robert De Niro

The hotel?

James Acaster

Yes. I was meant to go to America and my Visa got messed up.

Robert De Niro

Oh.

James Acaster

And I had builders at my flat, so my agent put me up here for a week and this was where I lived. So, it's nice to be back in my house.

Robert De Niro

Yes, it's a nice hotel.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Nice home for you.

James Acaster

They're all very familiar with me.



Ed Gamble

I don't think they are, mate.

Robert De Niro

No, it's a nice hotel. I've stayed here over the years and I was just saying that I saw that it was remodelled, renovated and I hadn't been, I guess, in eight or ten years. I used to come here in the old days.

James Acaster

I mean, it's my favourite place when I'm in town and I need a wee. I just come here and I use the ones downstairs, because they don't think anyone would be as bold as to go into a posh hotel like this, just to go to the toilet.

Robert De Niro

Well, you mean, the public toilet?

James Acaster

Yes. I haven't got the keys to my room, still, but I'll go to the public one downstairs.

Robert De Niro

Then how do you get into your room?

James Acaster

I'm not even staying here, when I do that.

Robert De Niro

Oh, now, you mean?

James Acaster

Yes, now. Now I'm just, I'm just in town, I've misjudged it, I've had a few juices and now I've got, I can't make it home. It's an hour on the tube.

Robert De Niro

So, you live where you're from?

James Acaster

Oh no, I don't live in Kettering. I live in East London.

Robert De Niro

Oh, okay.

James Acaster

But even then, that's taking me too long to get home. I mean, I wish I had a better control of my bladder, but I just know that I don't.



Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

The tube, I'm panicking.

Robert De Niro

Everybody's got a story and it's a valid one.

Ed Gamble

I think it's important though, in a city, to have somewhere that you know you can get to quickly to relieve yourself.

Robert De Niro

Yes, I wouldn't, you're right.

James Acaster

This is my place.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And I'd recommend it to anyone.

Ed Gamble

Are there any hotspots in New York that we should be checking out to use the toilet of, if we're there next?

Robert De Niro

Well, that's, God, I don't know. A place known for it's toilets?

James Acaster

Yes.

Robert De Niro

I don't know, and you guys probably know places better than I do in New York.

Ed Gamble

I guess you can just walk into any kitchen and use the toilet in a restaurant, right?

Robert De Niro

I suppose. I don't know, I manage as we all do. We time ourselves, so we make sure we find a bathroom of choice.



Ed Gamble

Well, you do.

James Acaster

Your dream main course, Robert De Niro. Now, obviously, we're going to recommend something to you, we're going to bring it over. You can tell us if we've got it right, if it's good. My, my, we've done our own dream menus on this podcast and, twice in a row, I have said that my dream main course is the beef wellington from Ron Gastrobar in Amsterdam. It's a perfectly cooked beef, not too much of that mushroom sauce that you get in a beef wellington, very little amount of that.

Ed Gamble

Duxelle.

James Acaster

Huh?

Ed Gamble

Duxelle.

James Acaster

Oh, alright.

Robert De Niro

What?

Ed Gamble

The duxelle, that's what the chopped mushroom around the edge is called, the mushroom duxelle. I just need to pick him up on that.

Robert De Niro

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

Because otherwise, yes, people will write in, you know.

Robert De Niro

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

I mean, sometimes I don't understand him and what he said then seemed offensive.

Robert De Niro

What he said?



James Acaster

Yes, I didn't, not you. Listen, I would never say that what you're saying is offensive, but this guy?

Robert De Niro

I hope not, I'm trying my best.

James Acaster

Frankly, had enough of this fellow. And then, the pastry is golden brown, crisp pastry, perfect. With this lovely, but still quite subtle meat gravy on it. And that, twice in a row, has been my dream main course.

Robert De Niro

Sounds good.

James Acaster

If I bought it over, you would be into it?

Robert De Niro

Yes. Sounds good.

Ed Gamble

You enjoy a bit of beef? Beef wellington?

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

In terms of the meats, where would you put beef? Which is your favourite meat? Can you do a little ranking for us?

Robert De Niro

Well, I-, you know, can you make beef wellington with wagyu?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Surely.

Robert De Niro

I can imagine that would be good.



Ed Gamble

We're going fancy. That's great.

James Acaster

We could upgrade the beef wellington dish to a wagyu wellington.

Ed Gamble

A wagyu-lington.

James Acaster

A wagyu-lington.

Robert De Niro

And the name sounds good, too. Wagyu wellington.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It just sounds nice to say. I recommended it to a friend, the Ron Gastrobar beef wellington, and they went last week and they said it was delicious. But, they had changed the presentation since I was there and they sent me a photo and thought that I'd been pranking them, because it did look pretty bad, what they've done to it now.

Robert De Niro

What did they do to it?

James Acaster

They've, kind of, put-, they grated truffle on the top, but to the point where you can't really see the nicely cooked meat. So, it just looks very dark brown. And then, they've-, instead of pouring the sauce or leaving it in a jug, they've just put a line of the sauce along the bottom of it. So, it's, like, there's two eyes and a mouth, but it looks like the plate is haunted by the ghost of diarrhoea.

Ed Gamble

Which is not a good ghost.

Robert De Niro

Yes. What's the name of this restaurant?

James Acaster

It's called Ron Gastrobar and I must say, the dish is absolutely delicious. But, the way that they've changed the presentation, I think is not for the better.



Ed Gamble

I'm not sure that's a quote they're going to put up in the window.

James Acaster

No, I don't think they will.

Ed Gamble

'Haunted by the ghost of diarrhoea.' James Acaster.

James Acaster

I don't think they will put that. But I will say that he still was, like, 'That tasted amazing, but to begin with, I thought you'd played a prank on me and sent me just somewhere that wasn't good.'

Robert De Niro

Is this-, it's a well known restaurant?

James Acaster

I think so, yes. It's doing well.

Robert De Niro

What's the name?

James Acaster

Ron Gastrobar.

Robert De Niro

Ron Gastrobar. There was a-, this is in Denmark?

James Acaster

Amsterdam.

Robert De Niro

Oh, Amsterdam, yes.

James Acaster

In Holland, yes.

Robert De Niro

There was another restaurant in-, maybe, it was in Denmark. It's a-, Nome or something.

James Acaster

Noma.



Ed Gamble

Noma.

Robert De Niro

Noma. Is that still around?

James Acaster

Yes, that's still going. I think they're-

Ed Gamble

I think they're closing, I think they said.

James Acaster

Closing it and reopening and doing a Noma 2.0. So, they're getting ready to revamp it all and-

Robert De Niro

Oh, I see. For renovation?

James Acaster

Yes, and, like, changing the way they're doing things with the dishes, I think, a little bit. I think they're doing a whole makeover.

Ed Gamble

Have you been there?

Robert De Niro

I haven't, no. I was curious to go there, but I haven't been there yet.

Ed Gamble

It's quite an experience. When I went there, I ended up eating duck's brain. They had duck's brain on the menu and bear. It was bear meat. How do you feel about things like that, when they're quite challenging?

Robert De Niro

I don't know. If it's good, okay. Depends if it's good and how it's prepared.

Ed Gamble

Well, the duck's brain was served in the duck's skull.

James Acaster

It looked insane. He sent me the photo of it.

Robert De Niro

Yes, wow. And what did you think?



Ed Gamble

Well, I mean, they couldn't get much flavouring into it because it was still in the head. But, it felt weird.

Robert De Niro

So, they didn't take it out to cook it, then put it back in?

Ed Gamble

No, I think they cooked it in the head.

Robert De Niro

They just cooked it, like-, you sure about that?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Are you sure about that, Ed?

Ed Gamble

That's what-, it felt like they'd done that.

James Acaster

Like, at the end of Hannibal? The duck's just sitting there, glazed over, talking to Julianne Moore?

Ed Gamble

Now you say it like that, Bob, I think they might have taken it out the head.

Robert De Niro

I'd imagine that they took it out, then, prepared it, then, placed it back in the skull. That would make more sense.

Ed Gamble

I don't know. The duck looked pretty shocked.

Robert De Niro

It's just to chop the head off, cook it and then, serve it, that's, kind of, gross.

James Acaster

Yes, I don't think that could have happened. I think what they do-, I'd go even further. I think they get all the ducks that they're doing that with and they saw the top of the head off, they take the brains out and they cook the brains, and they don't even remember which brain was in which duck. And then, they're putting them back in, all in different ways. So, they're, like, Freaky Friday-ing them, in a way. They got each others memories.



Robert De Niro

Kind of, assembly line thing. That, kind of, takes the personal touch out of it. Because it's-, you know, they should put the brain back in the skull that it originally came from. That would make more sense.

James Acaster

Be more respectful.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, otherwise, it's, sort of, Frankenstein stuff, isn't it?

James Acaster

Fully Frankenstein.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Franken-duck.

James Acaster

Franken-duck?

Ed Gamble

Yes. So, you're happy to try things like that, if they-,

Robert De Niro

Yes. I was in a restaurant in Thailand about eight months ago and they showed us-, it was a good restaurant. They had showed us pictures of the things that we had eaten. You know, kind of, little-, like, they do in Japan. They have the pictures made out of wax whatever, the food and stuff like that. And they-, this was something like that like and they had, like, a big water bug on this thing and that was one of the things we ate, inside of it or something or whatever. You know, I wasn't that excited to know that I was-, but, at the same time, it didn't taste bad. But, I'm glad they showed it to me after I ate it. I think that's-,

Ed Gamble

Oh, they brought the pictures out after you'd eaten it?

Robert De Niro

They brought this, kind of, presentation. It was a live thing. It wasn't, like, a picture. It was, like, they had little-,

Ed Gamble

Like, models of the stuff?



Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

A couple of days ago, I ate, like, a shit tonne of crickets. I ate so many crickets at this meal where they were all about sustainability and the future of food. And, it was a pilot for a TV show. So, like a food cooking competition and I was a judge on it, which I'm not stepping on your turf, Ed.

Ed Gamble

Please, step on my turf.

James Acaster

But, one of the things they had to use, the ingredients they had to use was crickets and I was starving, and I ate so many crickets. Like, I couldn't stop eating them.

Robert De Niro

Do they eat crickets? I don't-,

James Acaster

Big time.

Robert De Niro

Really?

James Acaster

It's, like, alot of source of protein and I had it in a kofta. I had a cricket kofta.

Robert De Niro

What's that?

Ed Gamble

Kebab. Like, a mince kebab.

James Acaster

Yes, like a mince kebab. Like, a sausage looking kebab, kind of thing. I had a cricket kofta. I had cricket in ice cream. So, cricket that was dipped in salted caramel and then, put in ice cream for a bit of crunch. That was very nice. Like, a rum and raisin ice cream. If I'm honest, I was just hoofing them out of the glass. I was given a bowl of them and I was just eating those as they were, because when I arrived, I'd not eaten and was unaware at how long you have to wait for the food on a food cooking show. So, I just ate crickets for ages.

Robert De Niro

I would imagine that crickets could be, kind of, dry roasted or something, like potato chips or something. That would be another way to have them.



James Acaster

Exactly.

Robert De Niro

With whatever they put in to give it a little extra flavour. I don't know what they taste like just plain, but-

James Acaster

You're exactly right, that's what they did, to begin with when I was having them out the bowl they were dry roasted.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

So, you're spot on, and they were great. They're very moreish, crickets.

Robert De Niro

Wow.

Ed Gamble

We've had ants before, haven't we?

James Acaster

We've had ants, we ate some ants once.

Robert De Niro

Yes, sure.

Ed Gamble

And this is the future of food, apparently, Bob.

Robert De Niro

I could see that. Where did you have the ants?

Ed Gamble

This was at a test kitchen of a brilliant Mexican chef who's got a restaurant in London, he's called Santiago Lastra.

Robert De Niro

Oh wow.

Ed Gamble

And he turned his house into a test kitchen and invited us and gave us some ants, that was the opening snack.



James Acaster

Yes.

Robert De Niro

How big were the ants?

Ed Gamble

They were pretty small, they weren't big, they weren't like big, scary ants. I'd say they were the sort of ants that if you saw them running around in your house you'd be like, 'Oh no.'

Robert De Niro

So, he had a bunch of dry roasted ants?

Ed Gamble

Yes, they were sort of dry roasted.

James Acaster

Yes, it's a little mouthful.

Robert De Niro

Something. Yes, oh, interesting.

James Acaster

They were small enough that you're like, 'How did you even go about cooking these?'

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

'How did you gather them together-,'

Robert De Niro

Yes, right.

James Acaster

'Knock them all out at the same time, or whatever you did, and then cook them all individually and get them to us?' Like, I'm sure that's harder than for a big ant.

Robert De Niro

How did they do that?

James Acaster

Absolutely no idea how he did it. I mean, I personally would probably-,



Ed Gamble

You don't want to know, do you?

James Acaster

Huh?

Ed Gamble

You don't want to know.

James Acaster

Oh, I'd love to know, I'd love to do it.

Robert De Niro

Yes. Well, they must go to a place where there are a lot of ants.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Robert De Niro

Gather them all up, put them in something and just dump them in a deep fryer, I guess?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You reckon they deep fry the ants?

Robert De Niro

I'm surmising, I don't know.

Ed Gamble

There's sort of no humane way of doing it, really, is there, with ants?

Robert De Niro

I guess if you're, yes, for ants' rights, you know?

James Acaster

Yes, ants' rights quite important now actually. I would maybe just build an anthill around an oven.

Robert De Niro

Another way to do it.



James Acaster

Trick them.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

I reckon they're pretty easy to trick.

Robert De Niro

Yes, well, okay, that's-,

James Acaster

It's a bit Wile E. Coyote.

Robert De Niro

Yes, that's a Wile-, yes.

James Acaster

So, maybe for your main course you'd like a mixture of the duck brains, the ants and the crickets?

Robert De Niro

Okay.

Ed Gamble

Well, that's with-, we're definitely doing the Wellington I think, because you-,

Robert De Niro

That's a good start.

Ed Gamble

The wagyu Wellington and then, yes.

Robert De Niro

All those things that you guys said.

James Acaster

The wagyu Wellington, yes.

Robert De Niro

Yes, that and the other things, the ants, the crickets, what's the other one?

James Acaster

The duck brains.



Ed Gamble

Duck brain.

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

In the duck skull.

Ed Gamble

But what we'll do, because this is the dream restaurant we can make sure that the brain that's in the duck is its original brain.

Robert De Niro

Yes, that's just a nice touch.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Or if you like, we can put it in the head of anyone. We can take a duck brain and a person who maybe you're not a fan of and, real insult to injury is that they got duck brains.

Robert De Niro

No, this is food, we're trying to enjoy. It's the one neutral thing we all can enjoy.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

That's such a good point, Bob's not out for revenge.

James Acaster

I don't know, there's some people-

Robert De Niro

You know, I tell you once, years ago when I was in Thailand shooting The Deer Hunter, and we were shooting at the River Kwai and somebody said, 'Do you want to have some cobra meat?' So, I ate cobra.

James Acaster

Wow, and what was it like?



Robert De Niro

It was okay. It wasn't great but it was, like, cooked literally over a fire just like marshmallows, and I ate it, so it had nothing on it to give it a different flavour or enhance the flavour, or whatever.

James Acaster

So, the whole making of that film sounds like it was pretty uphill from what I understand, it was hard to get it, like, you know, made the way you wanted to and then it was such a huge success and now it's a classic. But it was pretty hard making it, right?

Robert De Niro

It was. The toughest thing, making it, well, it was hard but the helicopter stuff we did. Because it was very complicated, on the River Kwai, to shoot the chopper coming down to pick us up and take us off the bridge because we were on a log, which you just think it's a log but the log in reality would roll, so they put a big thing below it to give it ballast, like a boat, so it would stay that way. So, we had to come down the river on the log, get onto the thing but the chopper couldn't land because the bridge was too low and it was between two rock faces and it was a narrower part of the river so that the water ran faster. So, we had to raise the footbridge higher so that the chopper could get down so, as I remember, we couldn't get on the thing, the chopper come down and take us away in one shot, or whatever. So, we did the first part, going down, climbing down, climbing up onto the footbridge, did that. Then the next thing we would do the chopper would come down, it was able to come down because the bridge was higher, so it came down. And in the meantime, they have these boats called longtails, so they had them there, which is a car engine up here and a long pole and then the propeller at the end, and they steer the boat. And it had fallen down, it had sunk, right, on the other side of the bridge, one had. And it had these pointers, I don't know what they were, sticking up. So, we did the one shot where the chopper came down and Chris Walken got on, John Savage got on, I sort of got on but I couldn't hold the runners because the runner was too thick to really grasp the way I should have and get my legs up, so I was just hanging from it and the chopper went down, turned around and flew back up. And then I just dropped into the water as we got close to the edge of the river and I fell in. Then we did it again, but this time I said, 'Let's make the chopper back in so we're not turning around, wasting a lot of time.' It backs in, Chris gets in, John gets in, I-, that's fine, backed in, came back.

The chopper, for some reason, started rising before it should have and the runners were under the cable, so there were two walk cables, you put your arms as you're walking. It lifted the cables so we were all of a sudden hanging below the chopper, above the water and I said, 'John, let's drop, drop in the water' and we did, because I thought it was going to fall on top of us. And so we went under the water, and what they do sometimes, in my experience on another movie too, in a river or something they have, like, two outboards going with a rope across, they go at the speed of the river so you grab onto the rope and you're okay, so that's what happened. Downstream, we came up, sort of came up, grabbed the rope and as we were up I see the co-pilot of the chopper stepping down and lifting the cable over the runner, because they realised what they had done, and then they lifted it up and flew away. And that's when we said, 'Alright. That's it. We're done.'

James Acaster

'Yes, we've got that shot.'



Robert De Niro

'We got it.'

Ed Gamble

'We got it, that's a wrap.'

Robert De Niro

In those days, they had six cameras shooting and that was it.

Ed Gamble

It's phenomenally dangerous. I mean, film making must have changed quite a lot since then in terms of what the actors can and can't do.

Robert De Niro

I don't know. I don't know who does what with stunts and stuff. Some actors, I hear, like to do-, I don't know. It depends. It's always tough to think about food when you're in that situation.

Ed Gamble

So, you'll take a bit of Cobra.

James Acaster

Yes, you'll have the Cobra.

Normally, now, would be dream side dish. But, maybe, your dream side dish is the-, we've already added the duck brains and the ants and the crickets to the wagyu wellington. So, are those the sides?

Robert De Niro

Yes, those are okay.

Ed Gamble

But, what about fries? Are you man who enjoys fries, Bob?

Robert De Niro

Sometimes. But, maybe, it should be something a little more exotic.

Ed Gamble

It would be good to get something exotic in this meal.

Robert De Niro

Potato fries, even sweet potato fries, they're good.

Ed Gamble

Are they the more exotic option, do you think?



James Acaster

Yes.

Robert De Niro

Well, in some ways.

James Acaster

Different. You know, for Raging Bull, when you put the weight on, what did you eat for that? Because I know that you ate brown rice and vegetables when you were getting in shape, but I don't know what you ate for the end of the film.

Robert De Niro

In those days, I didn't even know what brown rice was.

James Acaster

Yes?

Robert De Niro

No, of course I did. No, I just ate light, didn't eat. You know, stayed light. But when I was gaining the weight, I ate pancakes in the morning. I had to eat, in the morning, three full meals, which was hard to do. And then, digestive food to eat lunch, and then, dinner. And then, I thought, 'Well, I'm enjoying this food binge.' It was, kind of, fun for the first ten, twelve, fifteen pounds, then it's drudgery. I was going to go to France to have great meals, which I did, and that was good. The food in France is great, at that time, but it was a little rich. So, you couldn't eat as much as you thought you could. I should have probably gone to Italy. So, I ate all the time, but it was really, really-, I gave myself a time limit, like two months or a month and a half where I gained about fifteen pounds to do it in. Interim shot where he's out of shape, overweight. A scene in Florida that we shot in L.A. Then, we waited another two months or something and I gained more weight to get-, or a little more than two months. I forget. I think it was about four, five maximum, or whatever I could gain by that point would be it. So, I gained 60 pounds. I was 152, I went to 212. Is that 60?

Ed Gamble

Now you're asking. We're not mathematicians. Yes. That sounds right. When you'd done that, how long did it take you to get rid of that 60 pounds?

Robert De Niro

It always takes-, you know, the first 40 pounds, you go right back to your old eating. You have to be careful not to eat too slowly and eat-, you let yourself down easily. But then, of course, the last fifteen pounds were the hardest to lose. And then, I had a doctor watching my cholesterol and all that stuff.

James Acaster

And did you have anything on the pancakes when you were eating all those pancakes? What did you put on the pancakes or was it just as they were?



Robert De Niro

You know, sausage, even some-, what do you get, sour cream or whipped cream, something to put on-, syrup. Yes, I loaded it up.

James Acaster

And you had a lot of people telling you not to do it, is that right?

Robert De Niro

No. Nobody was saying, 'Don't do it.' That's what the deal was. We were going to do it. I was going to do it. But everybody's hoping that it would work.

Ed Gamble

There's people letting him hang out the bottom of the helicopter. 'Don't put sausage on your pancakes.'

James Acaster

Could have done-, I mean, don't combine the two, I'd say.
Your dream drink?

Robert De Niro

I like good wine. Red, white, Martini from time to time.

Ed Gamble

We can definitely do-, we'll do you a Martini. Do you like that to start a meal or do you like to have it during?

Robert De Niro

At the beginning and then, that's-,

Ed Gamble

Vodka Martini? Gin Martini? What's-,

Robert De Niro

Gin.

Ed Gamble

Gin. That's your preference?

James Acaster

Dry?

Robert De Niro

Dry, cucumber. That's it. No Vermouth.



Ed Gamble

No Vermouth at all?

Robert De Niro

No.

Ed Gamble

Not even the suggestion of Vermouth?

Robert De Niro

No.

Ed Gamble

Straight gin. I respect it so much.

Robert De Niro

Just one and move on.

James Acaster

One thing actors always get asked about and debate about is how best to play drunk, and there's loads of different answers to it. And I think a lot of people would look to you for the definitive answer, Bob? How would you say was the best way to go about it?

Robert De Niro

Well, I think it makes more sense to not be actually drunk. You could do that, too, but it's probably better not to. Because there are other things that you have to be aware of and do. That's what I would say.

Ed Gamble

Don't actually get drunk, is the top tip. I guess with multiple takes as well, if you're steadily getting drunker.

Robert De Niro

And that's another things.

Ed Gamble

Yes. You can't replicate it.

Robert De Niro

Well, that's another thing, too.

James Acaster

Bet there are some actors who have a sniff of it first. They don't drink it, but they'll sniff it?



Robert De Niro

Well, that's interesting, yes. That's okay.

James Acaster

Or some people say the key is to try and act as sober as possible, because that's what a drunk person's doing.

Robert De Niro

Yes, that could work.

James Acaster

He's not-, not going to give away your secrets. Not going to tell us how to act drunk.

Ed Gamble

Is the secret mainly just do it well? Just act well.

Robert De Niro

Well, yes, to do it well. Whatever your technique is.

James Acaster

Do you ever find that on films now that, maybe, people who are in scenes with you and whatever are looking to you a lot? And are you a bit conscious of that sometimes, that people are trying to learn from you as well as acting alongside you, or is that not really the case?

Robert De Niro

No, I don't-, I mean, I'm not aware of that.

Ed Gamble

People must ask you for advice a lot though, like newer actors.

Robert De Niro

Not too much. I don't mind giving advice, but not too much.

James Acaster

New comedians always ask us.

Robert De Niro

Oh, they ask you for-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Like, where's the best hotel to go for a piss. Stuff like that.



Ed Gamble

We just tell them to stay off our patch and-, I mean, tell them to not do it because we're the rulers of the roost, really.

James Acaster

We're the rulers of the roost.

Robert De Niro

You guys? Okay.

Ed Gamble

You might not know that because you're not plugged into the UK comedy scene, Bob. But, we're the rulers of the roost.

Robert De Niro

Alright.

James Acaster

Although, you have-, and, actually, I can't believe we've not mentioned this. King of Comedy is one of my favourite films.

Ed Gamble

Same.

James Acaster

I think it's incredible and it's one of the few times where someone does a comedy monologue in a film, and it's actually funny and works, which is so rare. As a comedian, we watch a lot of films and TV shows where people might be playing a comedian in a comedy club or doing a monologue, and you're, kind of, like, 'Yes, this wouldn't really work in the room' or 'This wouldn't land.' Yours really genuinely does and the whole film hinges on it as well. What was the secret to that? Because it's such a hard thing to do.

Robert De Niro

No, that-, the person who wrote the script was a film critic. A very well known film critic for Newsweek named Paul Zimmerman. He passed away years ago. And he gave me and Marty Scorsese the script, and I thought it was great and the monologue is great. And, in fact, when we shot the monologue, we did it once and I said, 'Marty, I think we've got to do it again because I don't have it right. We've got to do it again.' So, we did. We shot it again, as I remember. But I thought it was a terrific script and he-, you know, Paul wrote it.

James Acaster

I've seen out-takes of it where a lot of the-, some improvised moments are making you laugh a lot when Scorsese's mum is shouting down to you. You're in the basement and she's playing your mum.



Robert De Niro

Yes. I said to Marty, 'What about your mother playing-,' and she's yelling down to me and he's got all these cut outs of famous people. And I took Marty to a couple of-, I got to know some of these autograph seekers and I'd say, 'These guys in years to come will become the paparazzi of the future for the tabloids.' And some of them did, or they're writers, one or two, but they were nice kids. And one kid took me down into his cellar and, you know, it wasn't what we had, the cutouts and stuff, but the idea of it made sense. So, Marty's mother was great.

Ed Gamble

So, do you do quite a lot of research before you take on a role? Like meeting people who are similar to the character.

Robert De Niro

I try to. I try to. And I took Marty to meet some of the kids. Like, you know, drag him along with me.

James Acaster

Well, we've arrived at your dream dessert. Before we make recommendations to you, do you have much of a sweet tooth? Do you like desserts?

Robert De Niro

I do but lately I don't have dessert but sometimes but, you know, after I've had the meal, that's enough.

Ed Gamble

Well, we could always bring you some cheese instead of the dessert.

Robert De Niro

Cheese is okay. Yes.

James Acaster

Well, it would be nice to have a sweet dessert, you know.

Ed Gamble

James is obsessed with desserts and I'm more of a cheeseboard guy.

Robert De Niro

I like cheese too. I had cheese last night.

James Acaster

Oh, yes?

Ed Gamble

What cheese did you have last night?



Robert De Niro

Oh, I forget. You know, Camembert. The usual cheese plate that they give you.

James Acaster

Yes. Because that's the thing, isn't it? It's not very memorable, like, cheeses and stuff. Whereas, a good dessert, a nice ice cream. Like, I remembered that cricket ice cream earlier, for example, you know. Not that we're going to feed you more crickets.

Robert De Niro

Yes. You know, there's a limit but some restaurants are known for their great desserts. Sometimes what I do with friends is if we're at a restaurant we ask them just to pick out the three best and we'll share it.

Ed Gamble

That's good.

James Acaster

Well, that is nice.

Ed Gamble

Are you good at sharing?

Robert De Niro

Yes. I usually eat off other people's plates because I don't want to have too much. So, I nibble here, I nibble there. And, plus, you save one full meal that you have to buy. So, you know, it's also economical.

Ed Gamble

So, you'll go with friends, won't order anything, and they'll be like, 'I know what he's planning.'

Robert De Niro

My kids were complaining today that I take from their plate.

Ed Gamble

Will you ask or will you just reach across and go for it?

Robert De Niro

At this point I just do it, you know. I might have to ask sometimes, you know, be polite, because the kids might be annoyed with me.

Ed Gamble

That's a power play, man.

James Acaster

You could do that for your dream meal. We could invite your kids to dessert, they all have a different dessert, and you can pick off all their plates.



Robert De Niro

Could do that.

Ed Gamble

But now you're going to have to choose three desserts for Bob's kids.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, you've got to have some ice cream in there.

Ed Gamble

Yes. what flavours though?

Robert De Niro

I like pistachio. I'm forgetting what place I've been to that had a great ice cream. Whatever the flavours were. I can't even remember but it was really terrific.

James Acaster

And sometimes you get obviously cows milk ice cream but also, like, they do goats milk ice cream, sheep milk ice cream. You can milk anything with nipples.

Robert De Niro

Right.

Ed Gamble

He always says that.

Robert De Niro

Yes. You know, that's his shtick.

Ed Gamble

He's the nipple guy. So, which nipple are you going to pick for Bob?

James Acaster

Cat. Cat nipple.

Robert De Niro

It's come down to this.

James Acaster

Meet the Parents.

Robert De Niro

Yes, I know. I know.



James Acaster

Meet the Parents. A huge film for me. A huge film for me growing up. Also, that was one of my first introductions to you. Because I was a certain age I hadn't seen-

Robert De Niro

How old are you?

James Acaster

I'm 40.

Robert De Niro

Okay.

James Acaster

So, like, when Meet the Parents came out I was probably a teenager. I was, like, 'This guy is one of the funniest guys ever.' And I was saying to my dad, like, 'Look at this.' So, he went, 'That's Robert De Niro. That guy will rip your head off. Don't be laughing at that guy. He's a tough guy.' And I was like, 'I don't know what you're talking about. This is a really funny man.' And then, I watched all your other films and I was like, 'Oh, yes. I see what my dad was talking about now.' You've played a variety of characters over the years but, yes, I was first introduced to you as just, like, a straight up comedian but that was the start of you doing a lot of comedic roles in a row?

Robert De Niro

What do you mean? King of Comedy or-

James Acaster

Oh, no. For, like, Meet the Parents. It was, like, a new chapter.

Robert De Niro

Yes. Well, I did Analyse This, Analyse That. Meet the Parents I think we did between Analyse This and That.

James Acaster

When I watched Analyse This for the first time it was probably under some of the saddest circumstances I've ever watched a film. I'd turned up at a kid's birthday party and no one else had showed up.

Robert De Niro

Oh, boy.

James Acaster

And it was just me and this other kid.



Robert De Niro

Really?

Ed Gamble

Was it your birthday party?

James Acaster

It wasn't my birthday party. It was a different kid. And we sat there and just watched Analyse This while eating cubed up watermelon.

Robert De Niro

How old was the kid? How old were you?

James Acaster

Teenage. We were in school. Like, fourteen, fifteen.

Robert De Niro

Nobody else came to his birthday but you?

James Acaster

No one showed up but me.

Ed Gamble

Imagine if it's your birthday and no one shows up apart from this guy.

James Acaster

Just me.

Robert De Niro

It's sad.

Ed Gamble

It is sad.

James Acaster

Very sad.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Me asking them, you know, stupider questions than this. Imagine, like, I'm 40 now and I'm saying this, kind of, stuff. Imagine what my conversation was like when I was a teenager.



Robert De Niro

I don't want to imagine.

James Acaster

So, yes, I think some ice cream. Maybe a lemon tart.

Robert De Niro

Yes. Okay.

James Acaster

No?

Robert De Niro

No. I don't dislike a lemon tart. It depends again if it's done a certain way. In a very special way that it's known for. The restaurant is known for this lemon tart. Okay.

James Acaster

River Café lemon tart?

Ed Gamble

The River Café.

Robert De Niro

Okay. Yes.

Ed Gamble

Fantastic restaurant.

Robert De Niro

I've not been to The River Café. I don't think I've ever been. I might have. Here? In London?

Ed Gamble

Yes. It's in Hammersmith. It's right by the river and it's beautiful.

Robert De Niro

Yes. Yes. I wanted to go. I have not been there. I don't think. Maybe I did but I don't think so.

Ed Gamble

Very, very nice.

Robert De Niro

I might have been.



Ed Gamble

So, we've got some pistachio ice cream.

James Acaster

Yes. Pistachio ice cream, lemon tart from The River Café and then maybe the cheeseboard, so you can get your way as well.

Ed Gamble

Maybe the cheeseboard. Yes?

Robert De Niro

Yes. Okay.

Ed Gamble

Feeling good about that?

Robert De Niro

Yes.

Ed Gamble

This is a good meal. And I think you should order like this in all restaurants from now on, Bob. Just let them say things to you and then you go, 'Yes.'

Robert De Niro

Yes. It's easier, though in a restaurant that is well known and well known for its food, whatever specialities they have, I ask the waiters, you know, 'What does everybody like here? What's the best thing that you would consider that's here?' And I start with that.

James Acaster

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

Robert De Niro

Okay.

Ed Gamble

It's ended up as quite a mad menu I think.

James Acaster

No, it's good. Still water. You would like some bread. Starter, you would like the miso black cod from Nobu. Main course, the wagyu wellington. Side dish, duck brains, crickets and ants.

Robert De Niro

Duck brains in the original duck's skull.



James Acaster

In the original duck's skull. Drink, a gin Martini, dry, no vermouth, with cucumber.

Ed Gamble

And some nice wine as well.

James Acaster

And some nice wine. We're supposed to have nice wine in there. Dessert, pistachio ice cream, River Café lemon tart, and a cheeseboard.

Robert De Niro

Sounds good.

James Acaster

Sounds good.

Ed Gamble

Are you feeling good about that?

Robert De Niro

Yes.

James Acaster

I feel pretty good about that and, like, you know, we made a lot of those suggestions and I think we did well.

Ed Gamble

I think we did really well. Thank you so much for coming to the dream restaurant, Bob. You've been fantastic.

Robert De Niro

Oh, thank you. Well, you guys have been good too.

James Acaster

Thank you.

Robert De Niro

Thank God.

Ed Gamble

There we go.

James Acaster

Well, we did it.



Ed Gamble

What a nice man.

James Acaster

A lovely man. He let us pick for him.

Ed Gamble

He let us get away with a lot of shit, man.

James Acaster

I think some of the fans of Dan Aykroyd's episode will appreciate elements of that episode.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I think so.

James Acaster

But also, what an honour to hear some of those stories about films that I absolutely love.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I'm really glad you had some film questions in the back pocket, man, because, you know, otherwise-, you know, and I asked him where in New York he knows to go for a wee if he needs a wee.

James Acaster

That was appalling when you asked him that.

Ed Gamble

No. You've got to take those big swings sometimes when you're a broadcaster because that's where you get the exclusives, right? I asked him about being gassy for a scene. He talked about having a gurgly tummy-,

James Acaster

Yes, you said that as well. God. Yes. Yes.

Ed Gamble

During Goodfellas.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. The gurgly tummy was fine.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Yes. But then, how do we know? You know, you've got to ask the questions to get the gold, right?



James Acaster

Yes. Yes. I mean, personally I think I went a bit too far down the Meet the Parents corridor at one point. I had to reverse out of that. Everyone heard it. But, you know, look, full disclosure for the listeners-,

Ed Gamble

Was that a quote from Meet the Parents that you tried with him?

James Acaster

Yes. Ben Stiller says, 'You can milk anything with nipples.'

Ed Gamble

Right. Okay. Do you think he realised then what you were doing?

James Acaster

He knows what it is because his response to that in the film, and this is what I was hoping for, is, 'I have nipples, Greg. Can you milk me?'

Ed Gamble

Yes. So, you were hoping for that?

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I mean, I still don't know how it happened, how we got Robert De Niro but your plan for the episode with Robert De Niro was to re-enact a bit of Meet the Parents with him?

James Acaster

Well, it would have been brilliant and I would have been on cloud nine if it had happened.

Ed Gamble

I wouldn't have known what was had gone on and I would have thought he'd called you Greg by accident.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, as it was, it was the only point in the podcast I thought he might go now. He was looking around the room for the exits, going, 'This guy's quoting Meet the Parents at me.'

Ed Gamble

His PR passed him a small bit of paper, he read it, and then he said, 'Cheese and bickle sandwich.'

James Acaster

'Cheese and bickle sandwich please. Goodbye. Get out of my fucking hotel.'



Ed Gamble

No. I thought he was delightful. We got some amazing stories from him. The Deer Hunter stories, come on.

James Acaster

The Deer Hunter, Raging Bull, look, like, The King of Comedy, all that, amazing to hear it. All week on the Off the Menu WhatsApp group Ed, Benito and I have been just going, 'Has Robert De Niro cancelled yet? Because surely-,'

Ed Gamble

'Surely someone's worked out what this is.'

James Acaster

'Surely it's not going to happen.' So, obviously now we're just very giddy, sitting in a hotel, can't believe that it actually happened and, I guess, waiting for the PR to come back in and go-,

Ed Gamble

'Delete that.'

James Acaster

'Delete it. You can't use that. I can't believe you asked him where he goes for a wee in New York.'

Ed Gamble

He didn't say, 'Cheese and pickle sandwich.'

James Acaster

He didn't say it. I mean, he couldn't really. We were picking them for him. It would have been very cruel of us to just pick a cheese and bickle sandwich for him and then gone, 'There you go. You can have it.'

Ed Gamble

'See you later.'

James Acaster

'It's good.' And then, kick him out. Or kick ourselves out, I guess.

Ed Gamble

I'm knackered.

James Acaster

It's been a tiring day. We've been on edge. I think I'm going to go home and unwind and watch Zero Day on Netflix, which is out now.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I'm not going to because I've literally watched the full series already.



James Acaster

I wasn't able to watch anything on the lead up to this. Are you kidding me?

Ed Gamble

But it is a fantastic show and it's very exciting.

James Acaster

Yes. An exciting show. It's starring Robert De Niro, who has been on the Off Menu podcast.

Ed Gamble

Star of the Off Menu podcast, Robert De Niro.

James Acaster

Robert De Niro has been on this. Just to list some past guests, Huge Davies-, maybe just leave the list there. This is the podcast that has had Huge Davies and Robert De Niro and that is no shade to Huge. I have no problem doing that to Huge. He came on and told an awful sex story about me and ruined my life for a good month. Well, we've got a meal booked now because Ed very wisely said, 'Look, this obviously isn't going to happen. We're going to get to the hotel and be told it's cancelled. So, I'm going to book us a nice meal and we'll all do that.'

Ed Gamble

It was actually Ben's idea to have a nice meal afterwards.

James Acaster

As if.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But, yes. Ed booked it.

Ed Gamble

I booked it. Your suggestion. It's in keeping with Benito's dietary requirements.

James Acaster

Oh, yes? That's good.

Ed Gamble

It's veggie.

James Acaster

It's veggie?



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Oh, no. No, good. That's great to hear. Well, that's good. Yes. So, we're going to go now for a meal and probably just keep laughing about this every now and again, remembering bits of it.

Ed Gamble

I think the moment you should listen back to and maybe we can get a clip of it and zoom in on our faces is when at the starter he said, 'I just like good food.' And then, from that point-, but you were the one brave enough to do it, was to say, 'Just to let you know, the upcoming format-,'

James Acaster

I had to. I had no choice because otherwise he'd think we're just annoying him. Because otherwise it's just, like, every time we brought it up it would be like, 'Can you guys fuck off? I've told you. I told you it would just be whatever. I just like good food and whatever they bring. So, why do you keep saying courses to me?' I had to say to him, 'We're locked into this format, Mr. De Niro.'

Ed Gamble

Yes. 'We are going to have to ask you every time.'

James Acaster

'We can't fully help this. We have to go down this route but how about we do what you like? Which is bring food and say it's good and then you'll have it.' And then, that's how we got Robert De Niro to have duck brains and crickets and ants on his dream menu. Yes. We should plug stuff because this will probably have, like, loads of listeners. Probably not at this point.

Ed Gamble

No. They turned off at the outro.

James Acaster

They've turned off now. It's just me and you.

Ed Gamble

They tuned in to hear Bob. I call him Bob.

James Acaster

You did call him Bob. I couldn't believe it.

Ed Gamble

Then you joined in.



James Acaster

I had to, otherwise it would seem like I'd standing on ceremony while you're all pally with him but, yes, we called him Bob. We met Robert De Niro today and we called him Bob all the time and we talked to him about pissing and shitting like we do with everyone.

Ed Gamble

We didn't go shitting, did we?

James Acaster

Yes. I said a plate looked like it was haunted by the ghost of diarrhoea.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you did say that actually.

James Acaster

That's what I said to Robert De Niro.

Ed Gamble

He wasn't quite sure what to make of that I don't think.

James Acaster

No. He wasn't sure.

Ed Gamble

I was. I loved it.

James Acaster

Yes. I knew you would like it. And do you know what? The PR team liked it. They were laughing over there in the corner, the PR team, at the ghost of diarrhoea.

Ed Gamble

Once the show got going it was very clear as to how this happened.

James Acaster

If you were wondering who is laughing in the room it is the PR team.

Ed Gamble

Yes. It's like The Big Breakfast.

James Acaster

It was like The Big Breakfast and we're in a hotel. We could have done it on a bed. I mean, basically, Benito will have to edit out-



Ed Gamble

You were talking to him about your juice company. What was that all about?

James Acaster

Holy hell.

Ed Gamble

Have you just remembered that as well?

James Acaster

Oh, yes. I forgot I told him about Juice Almighty.

Ed Gamble

He loved that.

James Acaster

He liked the name, didn't he?

Ed Gamble

Yes, he did. And I said, 'Would that make you pick it up off the shelf?' And he said, 'No. It depends on how good the juice is.'

James Acaster

Yes. I was just like, 'Yes, that's his thing, I guess. He has to be told it's good.' It would be brilliant but, like I said, the guy's gone quiet on me. I don't think I come across very well to, like, food people.

Ed Gamble

Well, you came across well to Robert De Niro, who was just on the podcast.

James Acaster

Who was just on the podcast, who did our podcast. Robert De Niro just did the podcast.

Ed Gamble

Robert De Niro. Yes. Shout out to Huge Davies.

James Acaster

Shout out to Huge Davies. Thank you for coming on, Huge, in the past. We appreciate when you came on.

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much for listening. We'll be back next week somehow. It's not the last one in the series.



James Acaster

It's not the last one in the series. We'll carry this on for a while. Yes. And hello, Bob, if you're listening back to this. Hello. Thanks for coming on.

Ed Gamble

Cheers, Bob.

James Acaster

And thanks to Huge.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Thank you, Huge. And thanks so much to you for listening. Goodbye.

James Acaster

Goodbye.