ROBERT IRVINE
MAGAZINE

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

SUMMER 2020

CRAB SPAGHETTI MAKE THIS!

ALONE TOGETHER
WE COOK

- WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE COOKING
- DISHES FROM RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE
- GET SUPERFIT IN QUARANTINE
- ADVICE FOR THRIVING IN THE PANDEMIC

ROBERT IRVINE
MAGAZINE
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

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TIME FOR PLAN B

If you're just waiting for things to get back to normal, you're in for one hell of a wait.

There's an old saying that if you want to hear God laugh, just tell him your plans. If you didn't take its meaning before, you surely learned it in the past few months.

I don't know what you had planned for 2020, but whatever it was, I know that it isn't working out the way you had imagined. Right now, if you're lucky, you're still employed. If you're really lucky, you're able to work remotely. But like many folks, you may have been furloughed, taken a pay cut, or been laid off altogether. Worse yet, you may have lost a loved one. Or, like so many people, you might be struggling with the stress and emotional toll of isolation.

If you're like me and so many of my friends who work in the restaurant business, you've watched as the entire industry has been brought to its knees. Retail across the globe has been decimated, sports and live events have disappeared, and the cities and municipalities that rely on tourism dollars to keep their communities thriving have been left with nothing.

Follow Robert on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

ROBERT'S LETTER

Of all the safety precautions urged by the CDC since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the most effective one is still hand washing. Use soap and water and scrub for 20 seconds.

All the while, our neediest populations have been put in a dangerous situation as charitable donations have dried up as a direct result of plummeting income.

The term "vicious cycle" isn't strong enough to describe a cataclysmic event that has affected every person and every industry on the face of this planet. There is no one alive who hasn't been touched by COVID-19 in some fashion.

The kicker here? We can talk all we want about how we're going to get through this together, but we have no idea when it's going to end. Like most people, I initially had hopes that this would be over in a few weeks. Then a few months. Now? I don't know about you, but I'm getting the hell out of the prediction business.

So where does that leave us? Well, despair is—for lack of better words—having a moment. I've never seen or felt such pervasive negativity in all my life. And not just online, where it usually lives. It's in the air, more contagious than the virus that has turned our lives upside down. I instinctively resist negativity, but I'd be lying if I told you it hasn't gotten to me a few times since this all started.

But when your menu of options of "what to do" today shrinks as drastically as it recently has, it brings what is truly vital to your life into sharp focus. For me, that's my wife, my daughters, and my friends.

I'm not used to sitting around and having a lot of time on my hands. If you know me, you know the schedule I keep. It's 300+ days on the road. I loved living this life but the pandemic has taught me that I didn't need it. What I really needed was always right in front of me.

So, as I sit here and write this, I can tell you that I've been able to stay positive, focused, and grateful. I'm reconnecting with Gail in a meaningful way, spending more consecutive days at home with her than at any other point in our marriage. While I've always loved going to the gym to lift weights, I've developed a newfound passion—bike riding with Gail—and it's one I intend to keep long after the gyms re-open.

In short, I've learned the view this pandemic as the ultimate exercise in crisis-opportunity. It's a principle that every businessperson learns at some point; historically it applies to the fact that a downturn in one industry inevitably leads to growth in another, or how a stock market plunge gives you a chance to scoop up great investments on the cheap.

ROBERT'S LETTER

But today, crisis-opportunity has greater application to our daily lives than ever before.

Because whether or not you own a business or work a stable or job, you need to make peace with the new normal. A vaccine could be a long ways off, and it's impossible to say how long after that it might take to prove that it's safe or to produce enough of it to vaccinate the entire population. In the meantime, we have only the measures that helped us flatten the curve: masks, frequent hand washing, and social distancing. It's my firm belief that if businesses and individuals take these precautions seriously, we can begin to reclaim those parts of our lives that we had to leave behind back in March.

I hope this issue of *Robert Irvine Magazine* can help you begin to formulate your own plan making the most of this time and to figure out what your new normal will be. We've packed it to bursting with content related to the pandemic and how to not just get through it, but thrive in the process.

In the front of the mag, we have an article by Dr. Joseph A. Miller who outlines the real problem with waiting for things to get back to normal before we start living life. In it, he borrows lessons from fitness icon Jack LaLanne and applies them to the current situation.

Next, in what would typically be our IN THE GYM section—which we've temporarily renamed OUT OF THE GYM—trainer Mike Simone offers up a rock-solid no-equipment routine that will keep you strong and lean. He's also got a special offer just for our readers, so be sure to keep your eyes peeled to my Instagram page for an upcming contest.

Then, in our IN THE KITCHEN section, I selected some of my best recipes that can be made almost entirely from non-perishable goods that you probably already have in your pantry. I also recently created a Flipboard that houses just these type of recipes.

After that, our feature well kicks off with an interview with actor and EDM artist Adam Davenport, who shares how he's been productive with his time in quarantine, and shares intimate details of a rough childhood that no doubt helped prepare him for these hard times. Next up, past interview subjects like Gordana Biernat, Katie Linendoll, and Bill Oakley—as well as contributors like Senior Writers SJ McShane and Gavan Murphy—shared their favorite recipes for a feature we've dubbed Quarantine Kitchen. As a lover of all food from the fancy to the basic, this feature really hit a sweet spot for me. All of it looks like terrific food that I'd love to try, from Oakley's elevated hot dogs to Linendoll's cast iron cookie. One silver lining in all this is that everyone's culinary curiosity and creativity has been turned up to eleven and it's a beautiful thing to see. Thanks to all who contributed!

You're also going to get a look at Virus Safe Pro, a brand new technology that's going to help restaurants manage the plethora of new safety protocols that will be required to keep customers safe as they reopen. Employees and staff will access a mobile app to track when the last time a surface was cleaned, get reminders to disinfect certain areas, and much more. It's really exciting, and one that I'm proud to invest in.

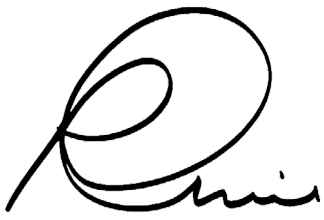
Robert Irvine Magazine editor Matt Tuthill pens a story about his wife giving birth to their second child just as the country was heading into lockdown. With hospital visitors limited to one non-rotating person, Matt was thrust into the role of doula. You'll have to read that story to find out how he fared.

Oh, and we've also got 19 pages of brand new recipes from *Restaurant: Impossible*.

And that, in a nutshell, is our Summer Issue. I have so much more exciting news I can't wait to share with you in the coming weeks. I'm going to have some new stuff for you to watch on Food Network, as well as some brand new projects that I can't share just yet, so stay tuned!

In the meantime, keep your head up, stay focused on the positive, and always remember…

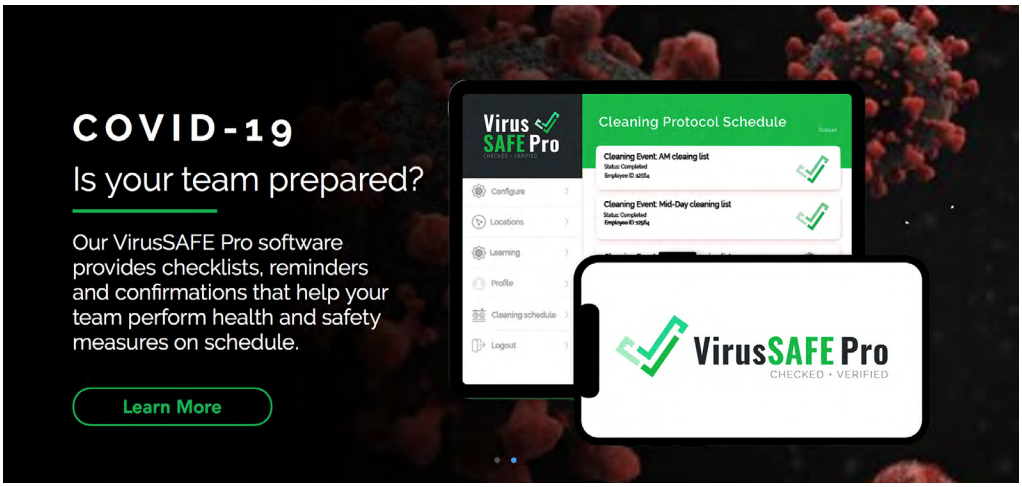
Nothing is Impossible,



LET'S GET TO WORK

When the economy shut down, Robert got to work figuring out how to—safely—get it firing again.

The playbook on how to safely reopen the world's biggest economy in the midst of a pandemic has never been written; today's leading health and business experts are writing it now. Among them: your favorite TV chef, Robert Irvine. Given Robert's successful track record of helping struggling restaurateurs get back on their feet, he was uniquely positioned to provide guidance on one of the trickiest and most negatively affected corners of the economy.



Click the image above to learn more about VirusSAFE Pro. Hear Robert explain it on CNBC right HERE.

He lent his expert commentary to nightly news programs on CNBC, FOX BUSINESS, and FOX NEWS, (click any of the all-caps links to see more) to talk about how restaurants can navigate the tough days ahead, while rolling up his sleeves to help WORKMERK—a veteran-owned software company—develop VIRUSSAFE PRO, new technology that will help businesses keep their establishments virus-free and give consumers peace of mind. This mobile app will allow workers to track when bathrooms, door handles, and other surfaces were last disinfected, and in the future, consumers will be able to scan a QR code on the front door to see this information for themselves. It's not just effective for business owners to stay on top of things, but provides ultimate transparency.

In the official VirusSAFE Pro press release announcing the product launch, which you can read HERE, Robert said, "Businesses – and restaurants in particular – have been dealt a very tough hand in this pandemic. But we've heard all the doom and gloom. This is the solution. We might not be able to dictate our circumstances, but we can control how we choose to react. For businesses that are ready to get back to serving their customers in the safest way possible – and give those customers real peace of mind in the process – VirusSAFE Pro represents the best way out of this crisis, and back to our way of life. There's nothing else like it, and I'm proud to stand behind it."

HOW THE IRVINE BRANDS HELPED OUT

Meanwhile, Robert put his own companies to work providing value to the lives of people in the community.

The chefs on Robert's team (you'll

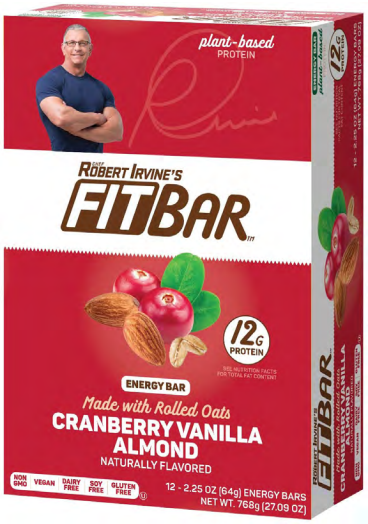
ROBERT'S WORLD

Nutrition Facts				
12 servings per container				
Serving size 1 Bar (64g)				
Calories per serving 280				
Amount/serving	% Daily Value*	Amount/serving	% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 15g	19%	**Total Carbohydrate** 30g	11%	
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%	Dietary Fiber 4g	14%	
Trans Fat 0g		Total Sugars 14g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	Includes 12g of Added Sugars	24%	
Sodium 140mg	6%	**Protein** 12g	24%	
Vitamin D 0mcg 0% • Calcium 89mg 6% • Iron 2mg 10% • Potassium 237mg 6%				

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

ingredients: organic brown rice syrup, almond butter, rolled oats, almond meal, pea protein crisp (pea protein isolate, pea starch, rice flour, calcium carbonate), hemp protein concentrate, almonds, cranberries (cranberries, sugar, sunflower oil), natural flavors, water, sunflower lecithin (emulsifier), vanilla extract and sea salt. contains almonds.

The ingredient list for FitBar is as simple and real as it gets.



recognize them on the masthead of this magazine, culinary editors Shane Cash, Brian Goodman, and Darryl Moiles) began whipping up dozens of recipes to share with people who were newly homebound and scraping through their cupboards to cook a decent meal for their families at a time when—not only was everyone confused about how safe it was to go out to get groceries, they encountered empty shelves when they did venture out. Many of these recipes are collected in a special Flipboard we made, which you can find HERE.

In addition, The Robert Irvine Foundation issued GRANTS to provide mental health and wellness services to first responders while his distillery, BOARDROOM SPIRITS in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, immediately began manufacturing and giving away bottles of hand sanitizer, 1,000 gallons in total, no purchase required. Robert's protein bar company, FitCrunch, donated over 24,000 protein bars to hospitals, military bases, and first responders. That was all while launching a new product, FitBar, a non-GMO, gluten-, dairy-, and soy-free vegan offering utilizing minimal ingredients and delivering 12 grams of plant-based protein. You can get them exclusively on Amazon at this LINK.

FUTURE OF BUSINESS CONFERENCE

If you're a business-owner looking for guidance at this time, you should consider registering for the Comcast Business Future of Business 2020 Virtual Conference HERE. Streaming on July 23, the conference will feature a dozen speakers on various topics related to the future of business, with Robert delivering the keynote address, focusing on how to use the lessons of COVID-19 to future-proof your business for any potential catastrophe.

LET'S HELP OUR HEROES

Text GIVE to 813-536-5006

The Robert Irvine Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of our military personnel, first responders, and their families. 100% of all funds raised go directly to those who need it most. To learn more about Robert's commitment to our military and first responders, please visit **RobertIrvineFoundation.org**

ROBERT IRVINE FOUNDATION

YOUR HEALTH AND THE PANDEMIC

Do you have what it takes to not just make it through the pandemic, but to thrive? If you get to know Jack (LaLanne), you just might.

BY DR. JOSEPH A. MILLER

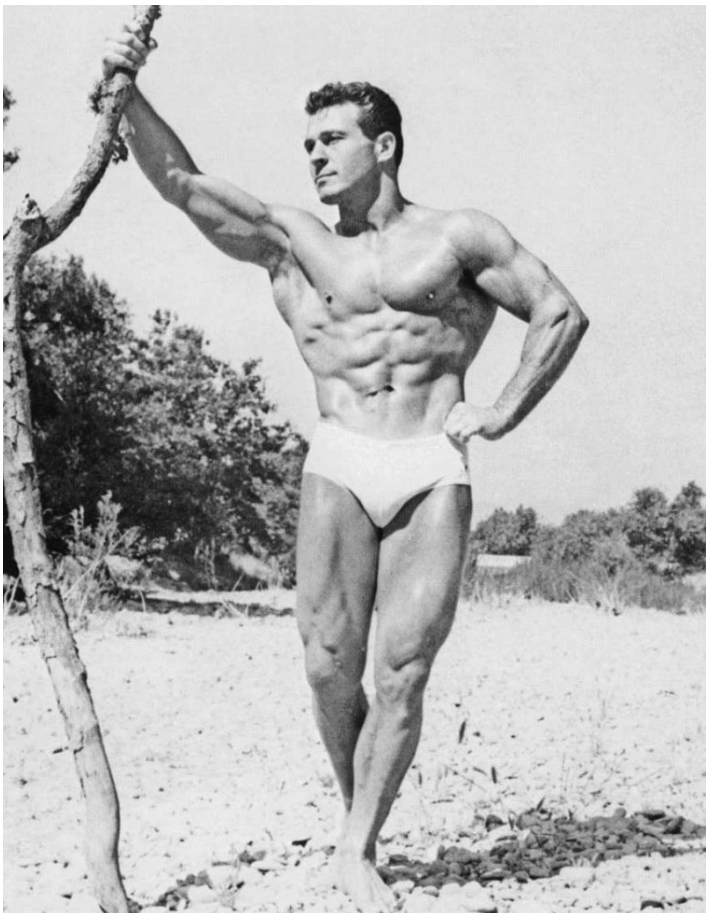
Stay well! Once a casual way to end a conversation, this phrase has taken on new meaning. The novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, changed all that, literally overnight. It drove people into their homes, made public areas vacant, overran hospitals, shuttered businesses, and pushed our health care system to the brink.

COVID-19 has been described as a once-in-a-lifetime pathogen capable of wreaking unparalleled damage and death throughout the world. In the weeks it swept across America, we saw ample evidence of the pain it can bring.

My question to you is: Are you staying well? We're living in a time of unprecedented uncertainty and turmoil, and people are desperate for solutions. To date, the focus has been on survival tactics, and rightly so. But I'd like to advance the conversation a bit by discussing the role our personal health may play in this crisis.

I suggest that at the same time COVID-19 is striking, we have another pandemic going on—a biological pandemic marked by 72% of Americans being either overweight or obese, over 100 million suffering from high blood pressure, 29 million experiencing type-II diabetes and 1 in 3 Americans on deck with pre-diabetes. Topped off with the fact that only 20% of Americans get the recommended weekly amount of exercise.

In the urgency to mitigate the immediate threat of the virus this other pandemic has been largely ignored, but it's having a crucial impact that we shouldn't ignore. Here's the bottom line: If you have a underlying condition (i.e. diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity) you are more vulnerable to COVID-19 and more likely to die from it. This is the elephant in the room and no one's talking about it.



Jack LaLanne became the preeminent fitness icon of the 20th century with a simple set of principles that hold up today—and can help you thrive without access to a gym.

But I believe there's a potential silver lining here. In any situation where things are spinning out of control, the belief we can influence even one thing can help us cope. And the thing we can control right now

THE DOCTOR IS IN

is the commitment and effort we put into enhancing our fitness, health and wellness.

Experts tell us that eventually, COVID-19 will be arrested. But in the interim, can we really count on our health care system to save us? With all due respect to first responders and front line provider, who are true American heroes, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the fragility of our health care system and alerted us to the need for a deeper commitment to our personal health, wellness, and longevity.

No gym? No problem. You have access to a pair of sneakers, right?

COVID-19 has taught us that being around an infected person can be exceptionally dangerous to your health. But in a less obvious way, wouldn't you agree that letting ourselves become overweight, deconditioned, and generally unhealthy is risky as well? The former may put you in a position to contract the virus, but the latter may dictate how you fare with it. Or to put it more bluntly: whether or not you survive it.

So let me state my initial question in another way: Are you doing everything you can to stay well? Are you taking personal responsibility for your own fitness and health? Are you taking the necessary actions to bolster those essentials so you can more confidently deal with this virus now? Or if it returns?

With the ever-present danger COVID-19 presents, I feel people would openly welcome anything that would make their bodies more resistant to this life-threatening disease. But beyond hand washing, wearing a mask, and social distancing, they aren't sure what to do.

I have a somewhat radical answer that may surprise you. I believe there's direction in the works of Jack Francois LaLanne, he of the form-fitting body suit fame. Don't be fooled by outward appearances. Beyond his TV persona, Jack was a genius, light years ahead of his time in knowing what people needed to do to enhance their fitness, health, wellness, and longevity. Living during a period when people "breakfasted" on coffee and donuts, smoked cigarettes indiscriminately, and drank martinis to wind down, Jack was the first person to apply science to exercise and nutrition and develop a fully integrated wellness approach.

A pioneer and health innovator par excellence, Jack brought to

THE DOCTOR IS IN

light health and wellness principles that still exist today. His work brought inspiration, direction, and most importantly, results, to countless people—regardless of their age or how far off track their fitness, health and wellness had become.

Skeptical? I get it. Jack Lalanne's work was generated decades ago. How useful could it be today? Simple answer: A lot. The thousands of people Jack helped achieve better health and the fact that his books and DVDs still contain relevant information are a testament to the effectiveness of his approaches and enduring value of his principles. In short, Jack's work has stood the test of time. And now with many people concerned about their personal welfare, I think it's a perfect time to revisit the principles and tenets of healthy living he advocated many years ago.

I'm hopeful that if you dedicate yourself to following Jack's principles you may be able to take control over the one aspect of your life where you can still call the shots—and put yourself in a better position to handle whatever lies ahead.

JACK'S PRINCIPLES EXERCISE TO THRIVE

To say Jack LaLanne was an enthusiastic advocate for exercise is akin to saying Michelangelo was kinda into art. The man literally lived and breathed exercise. From the age of 15, when he began turning his sickly body around he never missed a day of exercise until his death at 96 years of age. The day before he passed away, it's reported he engaged in his normal exercise routine.

To Jack, exercise was life because he knew exercise brought life to people in the form of renewed fitness, energy, vitality and health.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY AND IT WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU

Jack believed inactivity was the essence of decay and the only way you could hurt your body was by not using it. Jack's personal dedication to his exercise routine was legendary. Even in his 90's he began each day with two hours of exercise, and even at that age, Jack's workout routine would put most of us to shame. But he didn't require people to do what he did, nor did he believe that was necessary to reap the full benefits of exercise. "If you just begin with a few minutes a day," he said, "and add to it slowly, you wont believe the changes you'll see in thirty days."

EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT FROM EXERCISE

Jack believed everyone should exercise and all were capable of obtaining a level of fitness that was right for them. While others scoffed at the idea or outright condemned it, Jack was the first person to advocate weight training for women, senior citizens, handicapped individuals, and (such were the times) even athletes. His belief in the power of exercise stemmed from his life-altering experience with it and the enormous changes he saw in the people he mentored over the years.

YOU DON'T NEED SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Jack routinely engaged in resistance training and aerobic exercise and these were his preferred forms of exercise. Yet on his TV show, he demonstrated how people

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could exercise effectively by simply using their bodyweight, a chair, a mat, and their will. His books also illustrated how one could simply engage in bodyweight exercises to improve fitness, tone and appearance.

JACK'S EXERCISE GUIDELINES

Resistance Exercise (weights, weight machines, hand weights, elastic bands): 2-3 times per week

Aerobic Exercise (brisk walking, marching in place, jogging, swimming, cardio equipment): Alternate days from resistance training.

Begin with a few minutes per session. Work at a pace that's appropriate for you. Eventually perform 12-17 minutes at a brisk pace.

BENEFITS OF RESISTANCE TRAINING

*Increase lean muscle mass making weight loss/management easier

*Increase bone density reducing risk of osteoporosis and fractures

*Improve strength and endurance, enhancing quality of life by making everyday tasks safer and more doable

BENEFITS OF AEROBIC EXERCISE

*Moderate daily walking may increase life span by 1-1.5 years

*Vigorous walking may increase life span by 3 years

*Rapid Changes With Exercise and Lifestyle Change: A single session of exercise can enhance the ability of the body to absorb insulin and with regularity can lead to better blood sugar control

EAT CLEAN

Long before it became convention, Jack LaLanne recognized the synergistic relationship between exercise and nutrition and the essential roles they played in one's health. Jack stated it succinctly when he said, "Exercise is king. Nutrition is queen. And together they make a kingdom."

The benefits of a sound nutritional approach are irrefutable. Consuming a healthy diet may reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, help you normalize your weight, increase your energy and vitality and even decrease anxiety and depression.

FOOD IS LIFE

Jack believed every food you ate had either a positive or negative impact upon your health and well-being. He counseled, "if you put lifeless, over-processed, junk food into your body, you're going to feel lifeless. But if you put vital food in, you're going to feel alive."

EATING RIGHT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE HARD

Jack was sensitive to this when he wrote, "people think following a nutrition plan means a Spartan existence. It doesn't have to be that way. "I want you to have plenty of food and enjoy all of it," he said. "What's the use of living if you can't have things that are most important to you? Eat and eat well." This didn't mean he felt you could eat indiscriminately. He be-

THE DOCTOR IS IN

lieved in consistently making good nutritional choices, but having the occasional dessert or glass of wine. In other words, keeping things in balance and perspective.

IF MAN MADE IT, DON'T EAT IT

Jack believed people should eat foods in their natural state. Free of the techniques man uses to modify foods, extend their shelf life, and artificially pump up their flavor Consistent with this tenet, Jack believed in a balanced diet of whole foods in their freshest state, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, healthy oils and plenty of hydration.

No denatured, empty foods. Simple foods rich in nutrients that make the attainment of health, fitness and longevity feasible. With his emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and lean protein, Jack's nutrition approach was very similar to the much-acclaimed Mediterranean Diet which has been shown to help people lose weight, reduce risks of co-morbidities (heart disease, diabetes, cancer, obesity) and enhance health. (Women who eat just 8 oz of fish per week cut their stroke risk in half.) Except Jack's nutritional approach preceded the Mediterranean Plan in terms of its public awareness by three or four decades.

GET YOUR MIND RIGHT!

Most people associate Jack LaLanne with exercise and nutrition and logically so. Yet in his books, interviews and TV shows, Jack talked about the importance of having the right mindset when trying to get healthy.

"What the hell do doctors know about exercise? Most of them know zero. You gotta push elderly people to failure like anybody else. Then the body responds."
- Jack LaLanne

What Jack unquestionably believed in was positivity, and what emanated from every cell in his body was a positive attitude. Elaine, is wife of 51 years Elaine who knew him best wrote in her recent book, "Jack was always positive. He believed you not only are what you ate, but what you thought as well. Here are additional tenets Jack felt were essential with respect to the mind.

MIND AND BODY ARE ONE

Long before it became universally recognized Jack understood there was a symbiotic relationship between the mind and body. Wherein the actions of one affected the other. He had this to say on the topic, "Negative thoughts lead to negative actions in the body while positive thoughts lead to positive actions."

At his core, Jack believed anything in life was possible with the right attitude. He believed even people who'd fallen into the trap of sedentary living and eating carelessly could break out if they confronted their challenge with a positive attitude.

BE A POSITVE "DOER"

As Jack often said, "positive thinking is great but you must become a positive "doer" as well. In other words you can only go so far by thinking positive thoughts. You must take action. That may mean standing up to unproductive ideas you've harbored about exercise, nutrition, health and wellness. And using your mind to reorganize those thoughts to better support your health and wellness goals.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Here are some reminders in how to go about that.

QUICK GUIDE TO JACK'S MINDSET

If you're going to conquer the force that's holding you back you must believe with every fiber of your being that you can.

Challenge yourself to live for today. Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow isn't here yet. So today is the most important day of your life.

You can become healthy with thought and effort. Decide what you want and act.

Nourish your mind with intellectual activities like reading, listening and observing.

Nourish your spirit through prayer, meditation and being grateful.

FINAL THOUGHTS

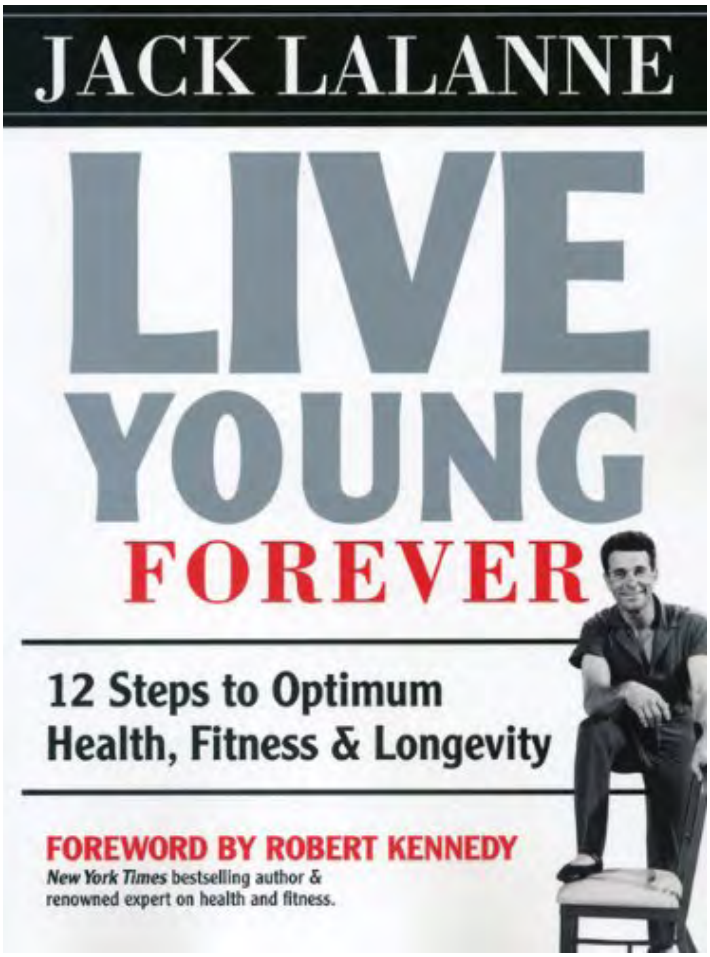
Jack LaLanne was the real deal. A man capable of performing 1000 pushups in a single session or towing boatloads of people while swimming across the San Francisco Bay with hands and feet shackled. And his personal exercise routine was legendary. But as Jack pointed out you don't have to do what he did to markedly enhance your fitness, health, wellness and longevity. Small, positive changes in your exercise, nutrition and mindset may lead to a significant payoff.

We're living in an unprecedented time. An invisible force has swept across our nation creating a pandemic that has robbed people of their jobs, preferred way of living and tragically, in too many cases, life itself. Simultaneously I suggest there is parallel pandemic occurring marked by our incidence of chronic disease including diabetes, cancer, hypertension, heart disease and obesity. A second pandemic that is not only putting people at greater risk with COVID-19. But robbing them of their health, vitality and wellness as well.

This is a time to evaluate our commitments. In addition to engaging in those actions that help mitigate the virus, I believe many would benefit from turning their lifestyle around with a new set of habits and behaviors

Jack LaLanne's principles of healthy living have stood the test of time and offer us a beacon of light and hope we need to positively alter our fitness, health, wellness and possibly our longevity.

Yes we're living in a challenging time. But it's not hopeless. By becoming more dedicated advocates for ourselves and our community we can come through this and prosper again. Let me ask you one last time. Do you want to become more well? If so, let's get after it. Or, to put it in another way, let's get Jacked!



Jack LaLanne was a prolific author, and the lion's share of his advice holds up today. You can buy this book and others at JackLaLanne.com

Jack Lalanne's numerous books, DVDs and products supporting fitness, health and wellness can be found at jacklalanne.com. His wife, Elaines, new highly acclaimed book, "If You Want To Live, Move," is also available there.

Dr. Miller—thanks to Jack's inspiration—is a lifetime devotee to fitness, health and wellness. Unlike Jack, however, he's a poor swimmer. Feel free to contact him at: docduke9@aol.com.

GET LEAN IN QUARANTINE

You've already got everything you need to get ripped. /// By Mike Simone

When it comes to fitness, quarantine could quite possibly be worse than the office life. You're more than likely walking less and standing less, and who wants to sit at a desk when the couch or lounge chair look so much more appealing? In order to keep your fitness on track while under quarantine, rule number one is to keep moving. And to cover all of your bases. That means, in addition to getting your sweat on, you've got to keep those joints loose and muscles strong.

HOW IT WORKS

This workout starts with a quick, but comprehensive warm-up to prep your joints and prime your muscles. Next will be a series of circuits, each with a primary goal. The first circuit focuses on core activation. The second is high-intensity interval training to get that heart rate up, then comes strength and endurance, followed by a cooldown that incorporates flowy mobility exercises to ward off any post-exercise tightness.

DIRECTIONS

You can follow this routine up to three times per week on non-consecutive days. Add in one moderate duration, low-impact, low-intensity cardio session (20-30 minutes) per week and one long, low-impact, low-intensity cardio session (45+ minutes) per week.

Mike Simone is the former director of MensFitness.com and the founder of Human Fit Project.

Full workout appears on next page.

GET LEAN IN QUARANTINE

WARM UP

Walkout, push-up, walkback, squat x 5 repetitions (bend down, place your hands on the floor, walk your hands out until you're in a pushup position, do one pushup, and then reverse the move)
World's greatest stretch x 5 repetitions per side
Thread the needle x 5 repetitions per side (Check the fourth move in this LINK)

CORE

Hollow hold x 20 seconds
Superman x 20 seconds
Elbow to hands plank x 10
Rest 30 seconds. Repeat 3 rounds.

HIIT - High Intensity Interval Training

High knee x 30 seconds
Squat thrust x 10 repetitions (Check out the first move in this LINK)
Hop squat x 10 repetitions
Rest 30 seconds. Repeat 5 rounds.

Clockwise from top left: Simone demonstrates the SCORPION, COSSACK SQUAT, and WORLD'S GREATEST STRETCH. Follow Mike on Twitter and Instagram.

STRENGTH / ENDURANCE

Eccentric push-up x 10 repetitions (take 4 seconds on the way down)
Speed push-up x 10 repetitions
Eccentric squat x 10 repetitions
Speed squat x 10 repetitions
Rest 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 rounds.

MOBILITY / COOLDOWN

Scorpion in down dog x 5 repetitions per side
Cossack squat x 10 repetitions per side
Pretzel stretch x 20 seconds per side
Minimal rest. Repeat 3 rounds.

IN THE KITCHEN: CLASSIC PANTRY RECIPE

CRAB & CORN SPAGHETTI

Tastes like summer done right.

SERVES 6
YOU'LL NEED
1 quart vegetable stock
4 whole ears of corn
1 tbsp butter
3 tbsp shredded Parmesan cheese
2 tbsp heavy cream
1 tbsp bacon
2 lbs spaghetti
6 oz fresh crab meat
1 tbsp black peppercorns

MAKE IT
1) Begin by shucking the corn and removing the kernels with a knife, by standing the ears up vertically and running your blade between the kernels and the cob.
2) Place the bacon in a pan over medium high heat with a one tablespoon of butter. Render the fat from the meat and heat until butter begins to brown. Add corn and allow to cook for approximately 3 minutes. Next add vegetable stock and bring to a boil.
3) In a separate pot of boiling water, cook spaghetti. This should take approximately 10 minutes.
4) Add spaghetti to corn broth and finish with Parmesan cheese, heavy cream, black pepper and crab meat.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 369
PROTEIN: 20 g
FAT: 15 g
CARBS: 41 g

RED BEANS & RICE

Hearty food with no fuss.

SERVE 5

YOU'LL NEED
1 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 large red onion, diced
1 stalk celery, diced
1 green bell pepper, small diced
1 red bell pepper, small diced
2 16 oz. cans red kidney beans
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper
1 tbsp hot sauce
2 1/2 cups chicken stock
1 cup white rice
1 tbsp butter
1 tbsp minced fresh cilantro leaves

MAKE IT

1) Heat olive oil over medium-high heat in a large saucepan. Saute garlic, onion, celery, and bell pepper until tender. Stir in kidney beans, onion powder, salt, pepper, and hot sauce. Reduce heat to low and let mixture simmer slowly while you cook the rice.
2) Bring the chicken stock to a boil and stir in rice and butter. Return to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and cook for 20 minutes without removing the lid. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes.
3) Fold rice and beans gently together and transfer to a serving dish. Serve garnished with cilantro.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 361
PROTEIN: 14 g
FAT: 6 g
CARBS: 63 g

IN THE KITCHEN: CLASSIC PANTRY RECIPE

PASTA FAGIOLI

Adding protein power to an Italian classic.

SERVES 12

YOU'LL NEED
4 tbsp olive oil
1 ½ cups onion, chopped
1 cup sliced carrots
1 cup celery, diced
12 cups low-sodium chicken stock
4 cups canned cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup roasted red pepper, diced
½ cup minced garlic
Salt and pepper
5 cups cooked chicken, shredded
4 cups rough chopped tomatoes
¼ cup fresh parsley leaves, minced
3 cups cooked fusilli or penne
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 tbsp fresh oregano, minced
6 fresh basil leaves, rolled and sliced

MAKE IT
1) In a soup pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat until hot.
2) Add the onions, carrots, and celery, searing the veggies until the carrots have browned, 2-3 minutes.
3) Reduce the heat to medium low, then add the stock, beans, red pepper, garlic, and salt and pepper. Simmer until the veggies and beans soften.
4) Add the chicken, tomatoes, and parsley, and allow the soup to cook until the tomatoes have softened. Reduce the heat to low and add the pasta, cheese, oregano, and basil. Cook 20-30 more minutes.

ROBERT SAYS: "The cannellini beans add fiber and the Parmesan cheese adds a small amount of fat. The chicken, meanwhile, adds a huge amount of protein. All of this combines to increase your sense of satiety, which makes a little of this go a long way."

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 475
PROTEIN: 37 g
FAT: 8 g
CARBS: 64 g

MICROWAVE CAKE CUPS

A scrumptious baked treat in just a few minutes.

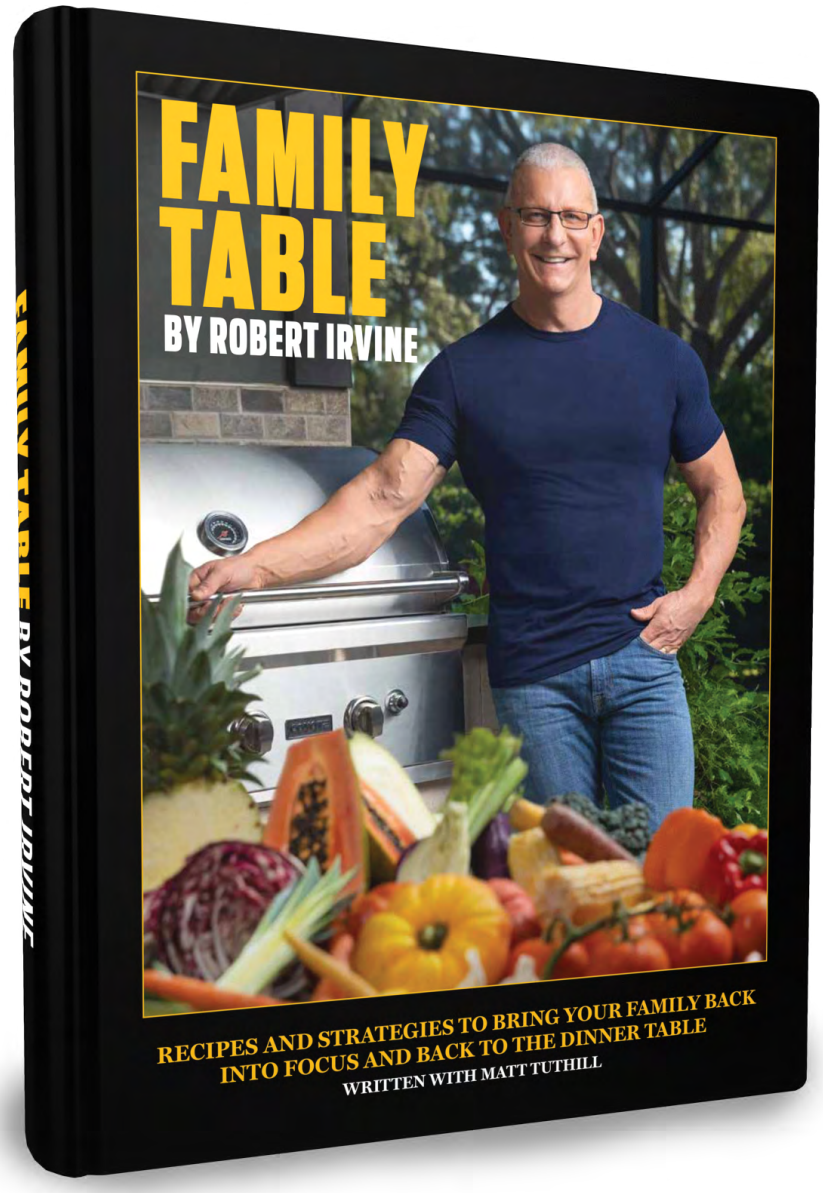
SERVES 3
YOU'LL NEED
1 cup almond flour
4 tbsp cocoa powder
1 tbsp shredded coconut
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
8 tbsp sugar
1 cup milk
½ cup canola oil
3 tbsp mini chocolate chips
3 tbsp espresso or coffee beans

MAKE IT
1) In a mixing bowl, add flour, cocoa powder, coconut, baking powder, salt, and sugar.
2) In a separate bowl, add the milk and oil together. Then add liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Use a whisk until there are no lumps.
3) Add batter to microwave-safe coffee cups. Fill ¾ of the way to the top. Add 1 tbsp of chocolate chips and 1 tbsp espresso or coffee beans to each coffee cup and stir in.
4) Place one coffee cup at a time into the microwave and cook on high for 1 minute and 20 seconds.
5) Dip a knife or spoon into the center of the cup to make sure the batter is cooked through. If part of the cake is still uncooked, add cook time, 20 seconds at a time, until cooked through.
6) Serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or whipped cream if desired.

THE MACROS
CALORIES: 564
PROTEIN: 10 g
FAT: 20 g
CARBS: 62 g

FAMILY TABLE

THE NEW COOKBOOK BY ROBERT IRVINE



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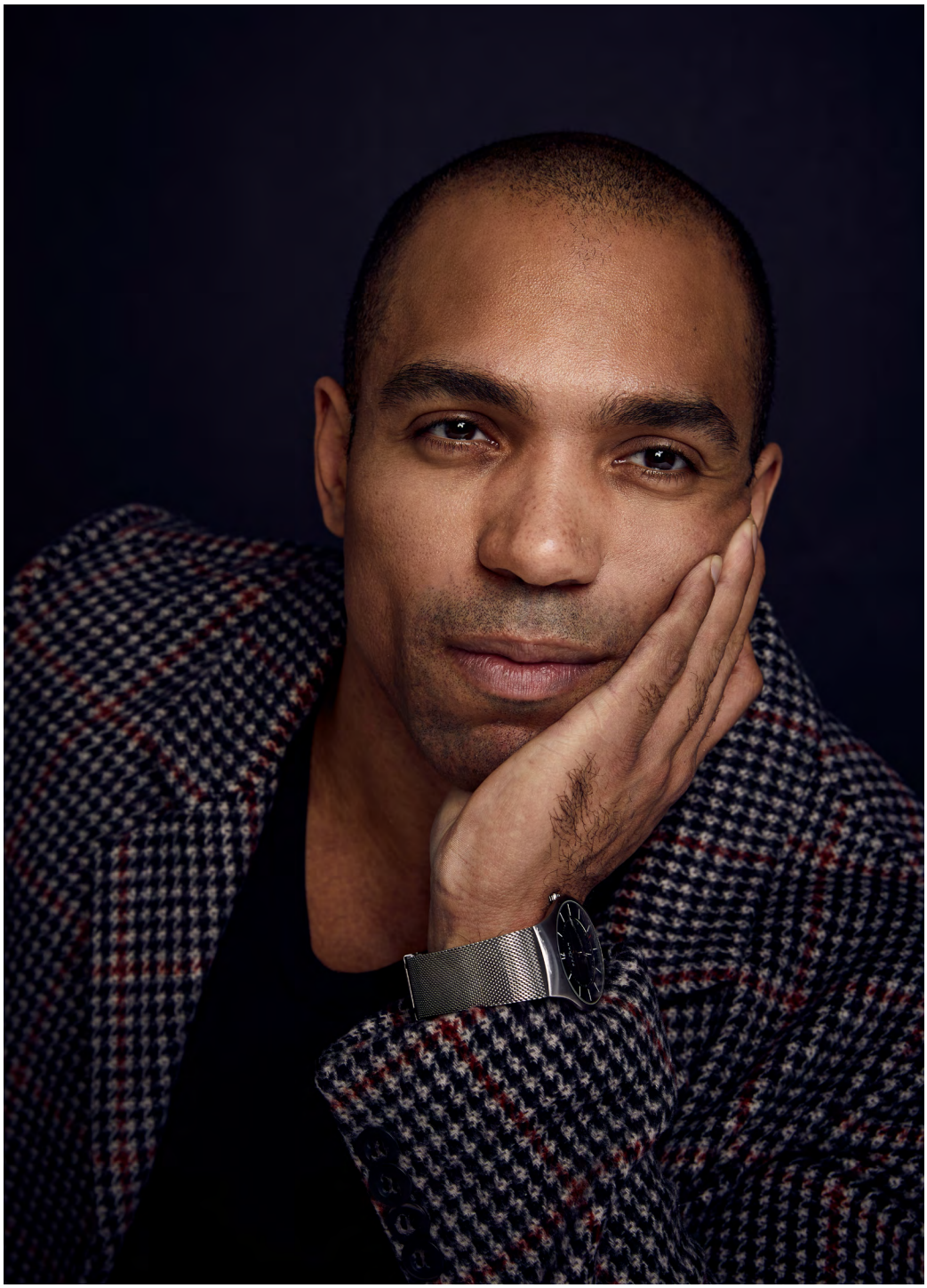
RI MAG INTERVIEW:

ADAM DAVENPORT

The EDM artist and actor overcame a harrowing childhood and built a career marked by total creative freedom. What he learned along the way holds valuable lessons for us all.

INTERVIEW BY
MATT TUTHILL

INTERVIEW: ADAM DAVENPORT



When a young Adam Davenport realized he was gay, his parents sent him to conversion therapy—and removed his bedroom door to keep a better eye on him when he was home. Despite the intense pressure to change who he was, he emerged from the experience even more certain of who he really was. Fast forward to today and the Yale-educated actor-writer-EDM artist has built a life that so many of us aspire to—one that allows him to chase whatever excites him. He sat down with Robert Irvine Magazine in April 2020, at the height of COVID-19 lockdowns, to talk about how his childhood built him for this moment, his upcoming projects, and making peace with his parents. The following interview has been edited for content and clarity.

RI MAGAZINE: How are you holding up right now? And how is the pandemic affecting your work?

AD: I live in Battery Park, two blocks from Wall Street, so it's very quiet here. I haven't gotten sick, but I know quite a few people here in New York who have gotten sick. A few of them didn't make it, unfortunately. No one who I was close to in my immediate circle, but I feel like it's a reminder to focus on things that are in our immediate control. So, I'm trying to use this as a gifted time and I'm finding ways to be productive.

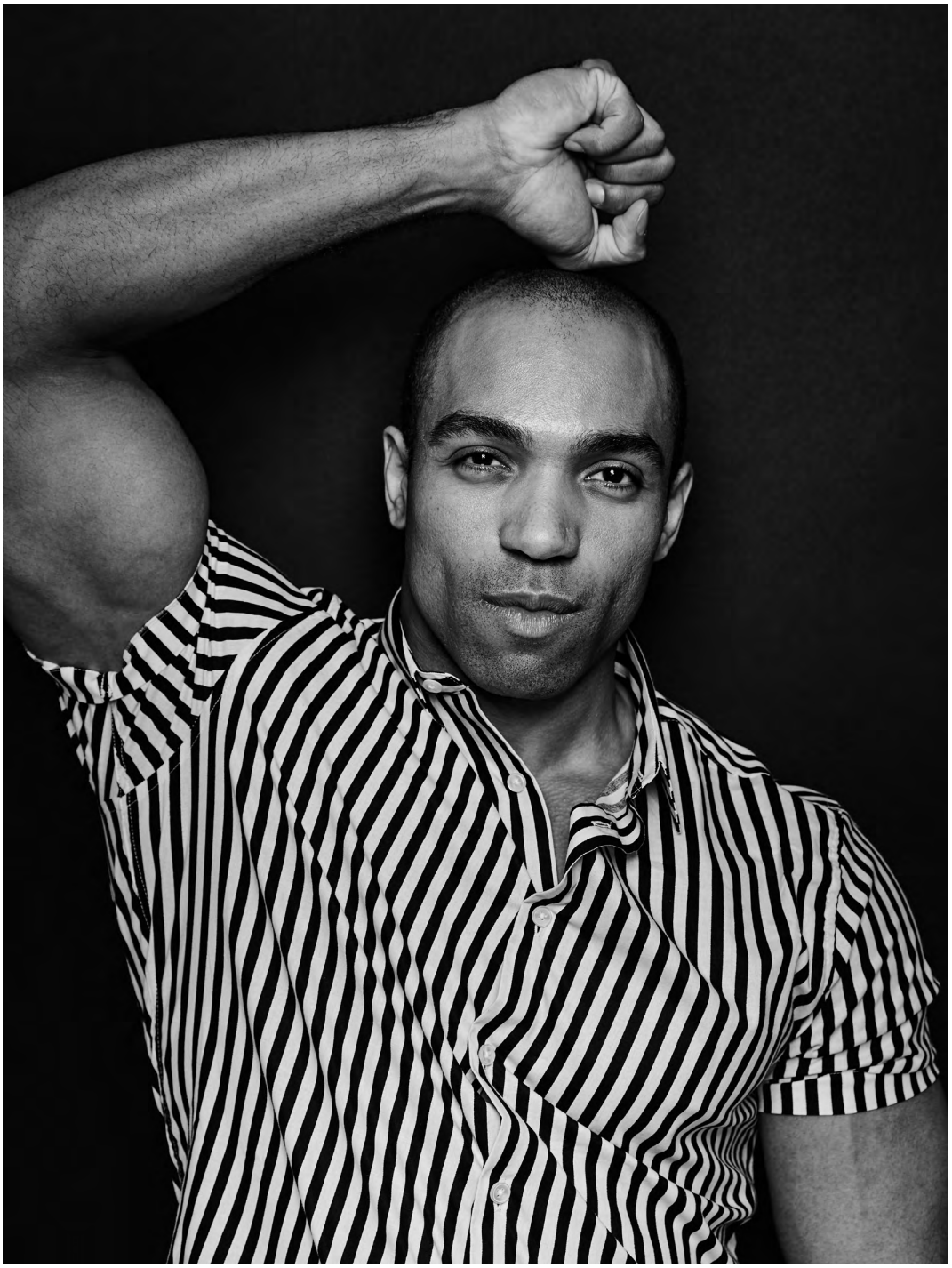
There are a few projects that I'm still in development on. There was

INTERVIEW: ADAM DAVENPORT

a film that I that I co-wrote, and I'm directing, and also acting in. So, I'm still putting energy in that and there are early pre-production tasks, that we can still do like make offers. The good thing is that actors are reading right now because nothing is shooting. So, I'm just trying to use that to my advantage.

I just finished a new track during this time, too. It's a collaboration with another producer, Kraiz; he's a big headliner DJ in Asia. So, we just tried to use this time meaningfully to work on that song.

I'm also really into fitness. Knowing that the gyms were going to close, I invested in this home project that turned the living room into a home gym. I have a squat rack in there now.



RI: Fantastic.

AD: There's also a new project that these filmmakers are writing for me. I would describe it as a gay version of *Misery*, the horror film with Kathy Bates… So in this, I'm playing the personal trainer from hell. I'm hired to move me into this guy's house in the Hamptons, to train him every day and get his nutrition straightened out. The relationship immediately is codependent and then toxic. Then it becomes a horror movie.

RI: That's a great setup.

AD: In that character's mind, he's doing what he needs to do to have the client reach his goals…

It doesn't really have a title yet. Right now we're just calling it *Personal Trainer*.

RI: And the one that you wrote and are pushing into production when things get back to normal?

AD: That's *Tar Baby*. It's set in a small town in West Virginia that's become the epicenter of a heroin epidemic. There's this autocratic sheriff who's running for re-election, and she's running her entire messag-

INTERVIEW: ADAM DAVENPORT

ing for her campaign as down with drugs. The campaign's imbued with racism. My character, I live with my father on the outskirts of town, and we're the only black family in town. And rumor has it that the nursery that I run is just a front for my drug dealing, that I'm the one who's supplying the community with heroin. But she's just trying to find a way to essentially get the black people out of town.

Where the genre element of the script comes in is all these people are overdosing from heroin and they discover this organism on their bodies that resembles tar. From there it gets wild.

RI: Your song *Hype* is a look at social media and how we're too addicted to it. Does the current situation with lockdown have you looking at some of the positives and how it can keep people connected?

AD: Nothing is completely black or white. Everything, whether it's social media, sexuality, or anything that has any level of complexity, there's gray. So I think that song focused on the culture of superficial that pervades social media. It can also be used in a very powerful, and meaningful way. I think I struggle with finding the balance, and finding where you can differentiate yourself from the superficial.

So, I think in that one song that was where I was at in that moment in time.

RI: Are you finding inspiration in this moment we're living through?

AD: Well, I think the personal trainer horror movie deals with one theme of this pandemic, which is this idea of how people deal with isolation, how isolation shapes us in both positive and pejorative ways. Unplugging from the external world does can invite introspection and self-examination. So there is that duality, because loneliness can be very hard… As an artist anyways you're always going to be drawing from a combination of personal experience, imagination, and sometimes drawing things from the outside world. I think that's how I've always operated. So I don't know that it's going to change my, fundamental approach to things.

RI: You grew up in a very poor, rough area. I'm curious if growing up with so little made you better able to weather this current situation? Are you, maybe more than other people, able to say, "This is enough and I'm good."

AD: Well, even as recent as early-adult, I've gone through periods of being without. When I first to New York 2016, my first two years I was on EBT and food stamps because I made a decision to support myself solely as an artist. I wasn't going to have a survival gig. I found this hole in the wall in Bensonhurst that rented me a room for $500 a month as the work that I was able to get at that time. I had to live on

INTERVIEW: ADAM DAVENPORT

very limited means for two years. So as you know that's humbling as someone in their early thirties with an Ivy League education.

But yeah, I think that being accustomed to being without started in childhood, but I've also been poor as an adult.

RI: You also overcame conversion therapy. How did you get into that? And did you commit to any of it before rejecting it?

AD: I was 13 years old. I just graduated from eighth grade and was going into my freshman year of high school. My parents, more or less what happened, is they found out I was gay. They demanded it.

RI: You didn't come out to them, they found out through some other way?

AD: Well, they found two pieces of evidence. You remember when America Online sent free trials? Like floppy discs?

RI: Yes.

AD: So I was like, "Well I have all these extra disks." I reformatted them and I was a ... lonely 13-year-old. I would download... just jpegs, no videos. Pictures of ... guys that I found and they were all muscular. I collected these images because I was fascinated to look at them, and so they found them. Then the other evidence a journal I had. Some of it was my thoughts, but a lot of it was just lyrics from INXS or The Velvet Rope like, they were my thoughts, but largely they were just like plagiarized lyrics from INXS or The Velvet Rope or Fiona Apple's Tidal – there was some erotic stuff on there. I could just identify with those lyrics. I just changed the gender pronouns and stuff, and I'd just collect these lyrics and write them down, but you know if my parents weren't that pop culture savvy.

RI: They thought you were writing all of it.

AD: When they confronted me, I felt my privacy was completely violated. So for about three months to this doctor. I was not that down with it. I was uncomfortable when we first went, they didn't even tell me where we were going, just that we were going to the doctor. And in your first few sessions, they don't tell you it's conversion therapy.

"Isolation shapes us in both positive and pejorative ways."

At first the doctor was trying to get a sense of my sexual narrative—like had I done anything at this point, but I was still a virgin. But finally, he sat them down one day and said this is only going to work for for anyone if they want to change. And when he concluded that I had no desire to change., he recommended family therapy. But of course there was nothing wrong with me.

So I resented my family for a really long time. Because my parents engaged the rest of my family to deal with the problem. My grandfather and my dad had me read literature from the 1950s that said homosexuality was a mental disorder. My uncle and his wife came and made me read Leviticus out loud, trying to make me believe I was going to hell. Then my parents took the door off my room a few and I always felt like I was under surveillance.

I just kind of coped with it by burying myself in my schoolwork. I had really good grades. I got in too early. I was probably over committed to extra-curriculars. But believe it or not I have a good relationship with them now. They met my first boyfriend in New York a few years ago.

I'm able to talk to my mom now about guys I'm dating. So we've come around. The world was very different in 1997. Absolutely. They both love me. We've come a long way so I want to I don't want to throw them under the bus, but those things did happen.

RI: That's a great story. Have you ever written it down?

AD: I have. And I've had this conversation a lot with a lot of people, people who have also suffered, so one I'll write about more, a coming of age story. But I have to get my thoughts down.

Follow Adam Davenport on Spotify, Twitter, and Instagram

The Unstoppable Chris Levi

An indomitable wounded veteran reclaims his independence with a little help from the Robert Irvine Foundation.

BY MATT TUTHILL

CHRIS LEVI

A few dozen people stood in the driveway of a modest suburban home in Melville, NY. They were a motley crew—members of the local chapters of the American Legion, the Rolling Thunder, and the Patriot Guard Riders—many wearing hats and other memorabilia signifying that they were veterans of Vietnam and other wars. Clad in leather biker vests, they served as color guard for the ceremony, American flags hoisted high in the air. Their motorcycles, parked all around the property, clogged an otherwise empty street.

At the head of this assembly: retired Army Corporal Chris Levi, standing on his two prosthetic legs, cloth mask on, his FitCrunch cap held over his heart, obscuring his new Robert Irvine Foundation T-shirt. The Star-Spangled Banner blared at top volume from his cellphone. When it finished, FitCrunch CEO Patrick Cornacchiulo read a brief statement, officially gifting Cpl. Levi—who lost his legs to an IED in Iraq in 2008—with a brand-new Freedom 6x6, a powered wheelchair with the ability to easily traverse any terrain, with sometimes shocking speed and power. FitCrunch raised the funds for the chair, which was purchased through The Robert Irvine Foundation.

Chris Levi takes his new Freedom 6x6 for a spin outside his home in Melville, NY. The motorized wheelchair was gifted to him through FitCrunch and The Robert Irvine Foundation.

Levi—outspoken, elegant, and heartfelt—addressed the crowd, thanking them for coming, thanking the Foundation and FitCrunch for the incredible gift, and thanking his fiancé Jenn Ryan for being his rock.

A brief reception followed. The crowd took down a tray of bagels, cupcakes, cookies, and plenty of coffee while Levi whipped around his front lawn at sometimes frightening speeds, riding it up and down hills and through thick brush. A local TV crew captured the action, which included Levi scarring his driveway with an aggressive series of doughnuts.

If the ceremony had started as a solemn moment, it was far from that now. The facts might be immutable—this was, after all, a disabled man receiv-

CHRIS LEVI

ing a charitable gift to improve his quality of life. And yet, it looked nothing like that. This looked a lot more like a 12-year-old kid getting behind the wheel of an ATV for the first time.

"You know when you hold a kid at the door before recess, how that kid is like a horse in a stall before a race?" Levi says. "That's what I felt like! Yeah, this is going to change my life and allow me to go places I couldn't go before, but it's also really fun!"

Robert called Levi on FaceTime soon after he received his chair. Levi thanked Robert profusely, and Robert did the same to Levi.

"What men and women like Chris have sacrificed for our nation is beyond measuring," Robert said later. "There is nothing that I or my foundation can give him that will ever equal what he gave us, but we have to find ways to say thank you. It's my hope that every time Chris gets in his new chair, it will remind him of our eternal gratitude."

FitCrunch CEO Patrick Cornocchiullo, left, stands during the Star-Spangled Banner, with Chris Levi (center), and Jenn Ryan (right).

*****

Choosing the military life was an "easy" decision according to Levi. He was always a kid who loved the outdoors and running through the woods playing paintball and capture the flag. He proved himself to be a natural leader at NY Military Academy, then a stint in SUNY Albany made him realize that he didn't love the classroom half as much as he loved the ROTC program, where he really excelled. He left Albany for community college, then made the decision to enlist in 2003 when the United States invaded Iraq. So many people enlisted at the same time, however, that he had to wait until 2004 to enter Basic Training.

He deployed to Afghanistan in 2006, then again to Iraq at the end of 2007. During his second deployment, he would find himself in the front passenger seat of a Humvee on March 17, 2008. On that day, his unit was attached to an Iraqi Army unit, patrolling south of Sadr City, a suburb of Baghdad. A roadside EFP, or explosively-formed penetrator, detonated. In an instant, the copper plate in the EFP became a molten copper slug, tearing through the armor of the Humvee, taking off both of his legs and badly man-

CHRIS LEVI

gling his right arm.

Levi is quick to note that the Humvee's older equipment, which included a handheld mic with a cord resembling an old telephone receiver—and was scheduled to be replaced by a modern headset—probably saved his life.

"I was communicating to the driver and the gunner, scanning by sector," Levi says. "If I wasn't doing my job on that radio, I would have been decapitated by the blast."

As it was, the other soldiers responding to the detonation initially thought he was dead.

"They made the assessment that I didn't look like I was alive and it looked very risky to get me out of the truck, so they took the gunner and the driver out and they were working on them," Levi says.

Levi came to on his own and began doing what every soldier in his situation is trained to do—a manual self-assessment.

"You start at your head with your hands and work down," Levi says. "I felt something bumpy on the inside of my thigh. At this point I couldn't see much… so I held my hand up to my face and saw that my thumb was dangling off my arm and saw all the exposed bones in the back of my hand. This explains a little bit of the infantry mindset, or dark comedy, I guess… because I started screaming to the guys, 'Holy shit! I'm a Terminator!'"

They heard him and came back. Eleven minutes after the explosion, he was being operated on by a surgeon. It was the first of 130 surgeries he would undergo after that day, 30

Top: The opening ceremony at Levi's house. Middle, a veteran thanks Levi for his service. Bottom: doughnut marks in Levi's driveway.

of which are considered life-altering.

For the next two years, he lived in Walter Reed National Medical Center. Despite the severity of his injuries, his stay should have only lasted one year. However, Veterans Affairs lost his files, compiled over eight lengthy out-processing interviews, which contained his complete medical history. He had to go through all eight of his appointments, each of which takes a month to schedule, again. For the final eight months of his stay, he didn't live in a hospital room, but in the barracks—which are not handicap accessible—with the other soldiers stationed there.

And yet, Levi shows no trace of bitterness. Not for the bureaucratic nightmare that consumed nearly a year of his life, "Everyone there is giving 100 percent," nor for the man who planted the roadside bomb.

"I never hated the people I fought against in Iraq," Levi says. "The guy who blew me up? I never held a grudge against him for a second. Because I knew from the intel that we were gathering that Al Qaeda was coming and finding people in the city that had a sick wife and six kids, two of whom were dying disease, and saying, 'We'll give you the equivalent of three years' salary if you kill an American. Imagine if you were offered $300,000 to just dig a hole and put a box in there in the middle of the night, and the next day, make a phone call and record it, send it to Al Qaeda, and they'd send you money.

"That little box you put into the side of the road was a bomb, and that phone call you made killed Americans, but you have a family and kids and are being exploited by evil people. So, I don't hate the person. I hate the organization that's exploiting people."

"The guy who blew me up? I never held a grudge against him for a second... he was being exploited."

*****

The ceremony finished with the riders mounting their bikes and forming an incredibly loud procession that rode down Levi's street—with Levi in his new chair leading the way.

He and Jenn were all smiles afterward, and Levi laughed when musing about all the trouble he could now cause with his new toy. Later, he plopped down on the sofa of his specially-adapted handicap-accessible home—which was gifted to him by the Stephen Siller Tunnels to Towers Foundation—and began snacking on a FitCrunch bar, part of the contents of a care package brought to him that day by FitCrunch and the Robert Irvine Foundation.

Levi, now 37, exudes an infectious positivity, gratitude, humor, and perspective that are present in everything he talks about, from our divided political landscape, "We're 300 million siblings having a family fight—but we're still family," to the fact that he wants to write a book, "I'll call it 101 Reasons Legs are a Liability," he laughs, rattling off a series of jokes about how it never hurts when he stubs his toe and how he's better-suited to space travel on account of only needing a three-foot bed.

"I'm not modest—I'm the most modest person you ever met!" he adds. "Seriously, though, I'm not just grateful. It would be easy to think I'm getting all of this free stuff because of how cool I am. Or I can realize that nobody is this fucking cool. Nobody deserves this much stuff for free. So it can't

CHRIS LEVI

be me. It's got to be other people… and I want to find a way to pay that forward."

Levi will now gift his old motorized wheelchair—which is equipped with treads so that it can roll on sand—to a local surf school.

"He feels like so much has been given to him and so he wants to give to others," Jenn says. "I really admire him for that. Every day he wants to do something for someone else to make their life better."

Levi met Jenn when he was working to establish a charity with Jenn's mother, Lisa Ryan. That project became Long Island's Got Your Six, a charity that aids all veterans on Long Island—not just the ones with disabilities. Lisa, whose son is in the military and was also wounded while deployed, understands how hard that life can be and wanted to create an organization that could help with unexpected expenses and life emergencies.

"That mortgage payment that you can't make, or that utility bill you can't meet… that's why we created this," Lisa says.

If Jenn had her druthers, she would have been in the military, too, but a severe workplace injury cut that dream short. "She always wanted that life," Lisa says, "And she would see veterans in the street and just run up to them and give them a hug and a kiss and a thank you card."

From the jump, Lisa knew that Jenn and Chris would be perfect for each other. She arranged Jenn to come to a benefit honoring Chris, but never introduced the two. They found each other.

Levi, left, leads a procession down his street with members of the local chapters of the American Legion, Patriot Riders, and Rolling Thunder in tow. "They made it their mission to turn out for this," Jenn Ryan says.

"They say they set us up, but if we had bumped into each other in a 7-11 it would've ended up the same way," Chris says.

Without knowing that Chris was the honoree, Jenn approached him. "I saw those blue eyes and just knew that I had to get to know this man," she says. Feeling comfortable after a brief exchange, Jenn remarked, "You know? You've got a cute butt."

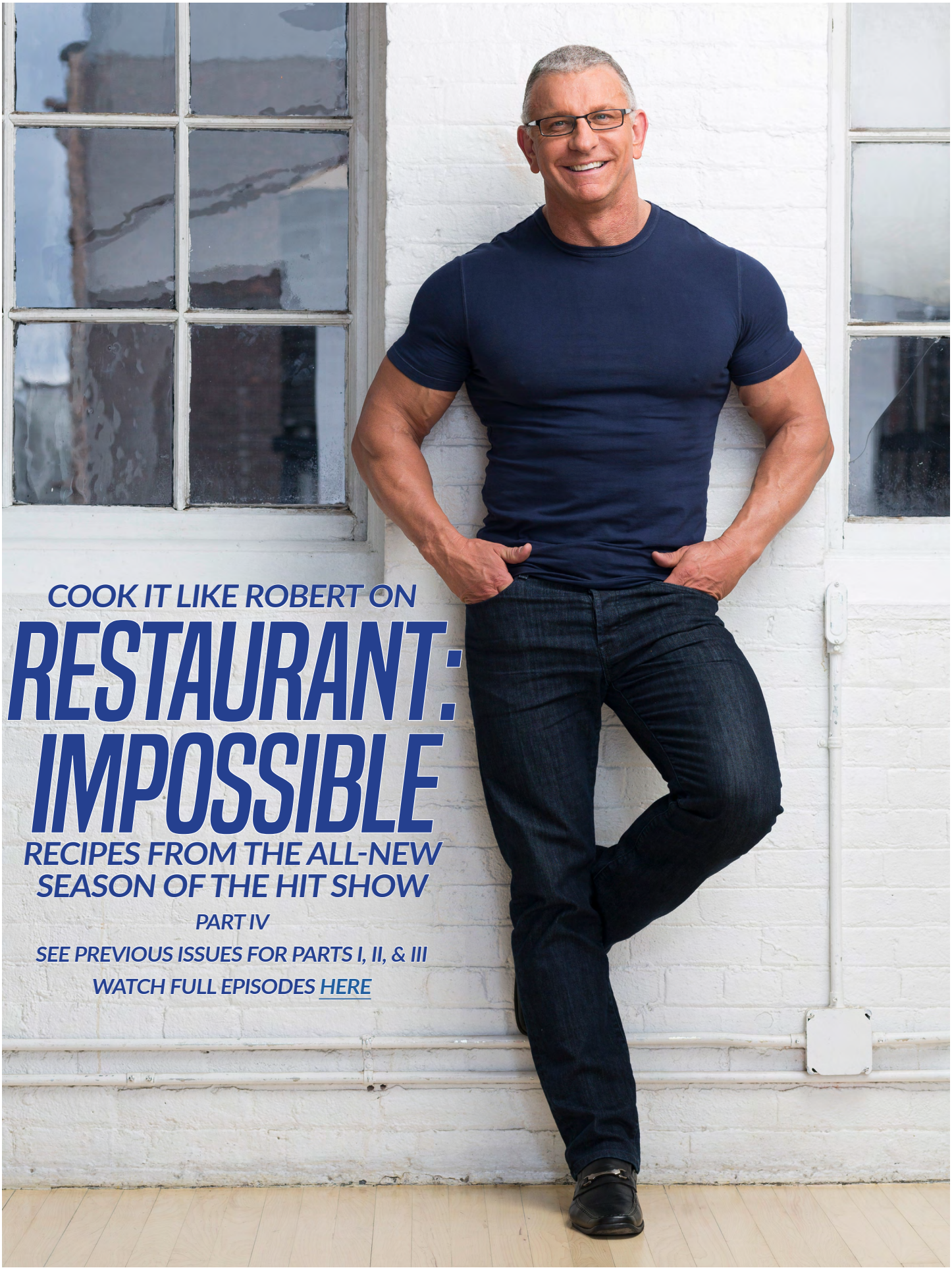
Without missing a beat, Chris quipped, "Yeah? You won't do anything about it."

Jenn responded by lightly slapping his butt three times. A moment later, she felt a tap on her shoulder. It was Chris' mom. It was a mortifying moment or two, but the spark was real, and they've never looked back.

Three years later, they both look to the future with a rosy optimism. The new chair from the Robert Irvine Foundation plays at least a small role in that.

"This is going to give Chris a whole new sense of freedom," Jenn says. "I can take the dogs for a walk and he can come with me now, whereas he would've been too exhausted before. Now we can go out and do so much more. We can go for hikes in state parks… the sky's the limit."

For men like Chris, that's always been the case.



COOK IT LIKE ROBERT ON

RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE

RECIPES FROM THE ALL-NEW SEASON OF THE HIT SHOW

PART IV

SEE PREVIOUS ISSUES FOR PARTS I, II, & III

WATCH FULL EPISODES HERE

Curry-Braised Oxtail with Sweet Potato Puree

From the episode, "Saving a Pastor's Passion"

SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED

4 lbs large oxtail cut into 4 oz. chunks (possible substitution short ribs, brisket, or beef rib)
1 tbsp kosher salt
3 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp curry powder
4 tbsp grapeseed oil
1 small yellow onion, chopped
3 medium celery stalks, chopped
2 small carrots peeled, chopped
2 cloves garlic, sliced
3 tbsp green or yellow curry paste
1 bay leaf
1 cup red wine
2 cups coconut milk
2 cups beef stock
24 Brussels sprouts, cut in half and blanched
3 tbsp grapeseed oil
3 French breakfast radishes, sliced thin
1 bunch parsley, chopped
1 lemon, zested and juiced

MAKE IT

1) In a large mixing bowl, add salt, brown sugar, curry powder, and mix.
2) Season the oxtail with the curry and salt mixture. Allow to cure for 12 to 24 hours.
3) In a large skillet or Dutch oven style pot, add grapeseed oil over medium-high heat.
4) Place oxtail into the pan and allow to sear on both sides. It should be dark brown in color.
5) Pull oxtail from pot and set aside.
6) Add carrots, celery, and onions and cook for about 8 minutes. Allow to lightly brown.
7) Add garlic and allow to cook for 2 minutes making sure not to burn.

8) Add curry paste and cook for another 3 minutes. Add bay leaf and deglaze the pan with red wine. Allow to cook for about8 to 10 minutes or until wine has reduced by half.
9) Add oxtails back to the pot. Bring to a boil, cover and place in a 300° oven for about 5 to 6 hours.
10) Allow oxtails to cool down in the braising liquid, for about 40 minutes. Then remove oxtail from the liquid.
11) Using a blender, puree braising liquid and vegetables until mixture is smooth.
12) In a large sauté pan over high heat, add grapeseed oil and Brussels sprouts. Cook for 3 minutes on each side allowing Brussels sprouts to brown lightly. Finish with lemon juice, salt and pepper.
13) In a mixing bowl add diced breakfast radish, chopped parsley, and lemon zest.
14) On a plate place sweet potato puree (see below), crispy Brussels sprouts and top with oxtail.
15) Finish with sauce and parsley and radish gremolata.

SWEET POTATO PUREE

YOU'LL NEED
2 sticks butter
1 large onion, diced
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup chicken stock
Salt and pepper

MAKE IT
1) In a large pot add butter and allow to melt. Add onions and allow them to sweat for about 5 minutes.
2) Add diced sweet potato and allow to cook for another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3) Add heavy cream and chicken stock and bring to a boil. Then drop to a hard simmer and cook for 25 minutes.
4) Mix sweet potato mixture together using a hand mixer or a blender until smooth.
5) Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Cajun-Seasoned Macaroni & Cheese

From the episode, "Saving a Pastor's Passion"

SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED
4 cups dried elbow macaroni
1 qt heavy cream
1 pint whole milk
2 lbs shredded white cheddar cheese
1 tbsp Cajun seasoning

MAKE IT
1) Cook elbow macaroni according to package directions.
2) In a large sauce pot add heavy cream, milk, and bring to a boil.
3) Using a whisk slowly incorporate shredded cheddar cheese and Cajun seasoning.
4) Next add blanched pasta and season with salt and pepper.

Mexican Hot Link

From the episode, "Fixing a Family in Houston"

SERVES 4
YOU'LL NEED
1 white onion diced
2 cloves garlic minced
2 tbsp grapeseed oil
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 tbsp chili powder
1 tbsp smoked paprika
2 tbsp tomato paste
2 tbsp chipotle peppers
12 oz ground beef (80/20)
12 oz ground chorizo sausage
4 Texas hot link sausages
4 hot dog buns

MAKE IT
1) In a medium pot, over medium heat, add 1 tbsp grapeseed oil. Add onions and cook through, about 3 minutes.
2) Add garlic and allow to cook for another 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
3) Add cayenne pepper, chili pepper, and allow to cook for another 3 minutes.
4) Add tomato paste and chipotle peppers and continue to mix.
5) Using a wooden spoon, add ground beef and chorizo. Stir until chorizo and ground beef are broken up and cooked through.
6) In a separate pan over medium heat, add 1 tbsp of grapeseed oil. Add hot dog buns—1 or 2 at a time—and toast until golden brown.
7) Remove the bun from the pan and turn the heat to high. Add the sausage and cook on all sides.
8) Place the seared hot link on the bun. Top with the ground chorizo mixture and top with triple cheese sauce (see sub-recipe below).

TRIPLE CHEESE SAUCE
YOU'LL NEED
2 cups heavy cream
2 cups whole milk
2 oz shredded cheddar cheese
2 oz shredded Monterey jack cheese
2 oz shredded pepper jack cheese
1 tsp cayenne pepper

MAKE IT
1) In a medium sauce pot add milk, heavy cream and bring to a boil.
2) Using a whisk, slowly incorporate cheddar, Monterey jack cheese, and pepper jack cheese.
3) Season with salt, pepper, and cayenne pepper.

BBQ Southern Meatloaf

From the episode, "Saving a Pastor's Passion"

SERVES 6

MEATLOAF
YOU'LL NEED
1 cup BBQ sauce
2 eggs
1 cup roasted red peppers
2 cloves garlic
18 oz ground beef (chuck)
18 oz ground pork butt
1 yellow onion, diced
½ tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp chili powder
1 tsp Cajun seasoning
1½ tsp kosher salt
1 tsp ground black pepper
2 lbs green beans, blanched
1 tbsp butter
1 tbsp lemon juice

MAKE IT
1) Pre-heat oven to 325°.
2) In a food processor or blender add BBQ sauce, eggs, roasted red peppers, and garlic. Puree on high until smooth.
3) In a large mixing bowl, add ground beef, ground pork, onion, cayenne pepper, chili powder, Cajun seasoning, salt, and pepper. Mix well.
4) Add pureed BBQ sauce mixture, using your hands or a wooden spoon to mix all ingredients together.
5) Pack the mixture into a 10-inch loaf pan. Place meat loaf in the oven. Cook for about 45 minutes or until meatloaf has reached an internal temperature of 155°.
6) Place a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add butter and allow it to melt. Next add green beans. Cook for about 4 minutes. Add lemon juice and season with

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salt and pepper.

MASHED POTATOES
YOU'LL NEED
5 Idaho baking potatoes, peeled and diced medium
1 stick butter
2 cups heavy cream
Salt and pepper

MAKE IT
1) Fill a large pot almost to the top with cold water, add potatoes, and season with 1 cup of kosher salt.
2) Bring potatoes to a boil and allow, to boil for 10 minutes. Drop to a simmer and cook for another 20 minutes.
3) In a small pot, add heavy cream and butter and bring to boil.
4) Strain potatoes and place in a large mixing bowl.
5) Using an electric mixer or potato masher, mix and incorporate heated heavy cream and butter.
6) Season with salt and pepper to finish.

CHEESE SAUCE
YOU'LL NEED
1 qt heavy cream
2 cups whole milk
2 lbs shredded white cheddar cheese

MAKE IT
1) In a large sauce pot, add heavy cream and milk and bring to a boil.
2) Using a whisk, slowly incorporate the grated cheddar cheese into the milk and heavy cream mixture.
3) Season with salt and pepper.

CRISPY ONIONS
YOU'LL NEED
1 large white onion
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1½ qt canola oil

MAKE IT
1) Using a mandolin slicer, thinly slice onions and place in a mixing bowl.
2) Cover sliced onions with buttermilk and allow to soak for approximately 1 hour prior to serving.
3) In a separate mixing bowl, add flour, salt, pepper, and cayenne pepper.
4) In a heavy bottom sauce pot add canola oil. Using a thermometer bring oil to 350°.
5) Remove onions from buttermilk and toss in the flour mixture. Coat the onions in the flour and shake off any excess flour.
6) Drop the coated onions into the 350° oil and allow to cook until the onions are golden brown, just about 1 minute.
7) Season with salt and pepper.

PLATING
Place mashed potatoes on the plate and top with green beans. Place a slice of meat loaf on top of greens beans, coat in cheese sauce, and finish with crispy onions.

Beef Cheek Tacos

From the episode, "Fixing a Family in Houston"

SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED
FOR THE CABBAGE SLAW
1 avocado, mashed
1 jalapeno, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 head red cabbage, shredded
2 tbsp diced pineapple
1 jalapeno, seeded and diced
2 tbsp sour cream
2 tbsp mayonnaise
1 lime, juiced

FOR THE TACOS
4 lbs beef cheeks (Brisket, beef short rib)
1 tbsp kosher salt
3 tbsp brown sugar
1 tsp smoked chipotle powder
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp ground cumin
½ cup grapeseed oil
2 white onions diced
2 carrots diced
5 ribs celery diced
2 cloves garlic minced
16 oz mole sauce
1 gallon beef broth
6 corn tortilla shells
6 tbsp cabbage slaw
6 tbsp Cojita cheese, crumbled
2 scallions sliced

MAKE IT
CABBAGE SLAW
1) Place avocado, jalapeno, and garlic in a food processor. Mix until smooth.
2) Add sour cream, mayonnaise, and lime juice. Continue to mix.
3) Season with salt and pepper.
4) In a large mixing bowl, add shredded cabbage, pineapple, jalapeno, and avocado dressing.
5) Dress with avocado dressing.
6) Season with salt and pepper.

TACOS
1) In a mixing bowl, add kosher salt, brown sugar, chipotle powder, smoked paprika, and ground cumin.
2) Coat the beef cheeks with the mixture evenly and allow to cure for 4 to 6 hours.
3) In a large roasting pan over medium-high heat, add grapeseed oil and beef cheeks. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes on each side.
4) Remove beef cheeks from roasting pan and add onions, carrots, and celery. Cook for 7 minutes until vegetables have some color on them. Add mole sauce and allow to cook for 3 minutes making sure to stir.
5) Add beef broth and beef cheeks back to the pan and bring mixture to a boil. Cover pan and place in a 320° oven for 4½ hours.
6) Allow beef cheeks to slightly cool down in the liquid. Using your hands or a pair tongs shred the cheek meat.
7) Place corn tortillas in warm pan and warm through on both sides.
8) Fill with beef cheek mixture. Top with cabbage slaw and Cojita cheese.

Chiles en Nogada

From the episode, "Fixing a Family in Houston"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

FOR THE CHILES

8 Poblano peppers, roasted, peeled, and seeded)
1 onion, diced
3 cloves, garlic sliced
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced
2 lbs ground pork
12 oz tomato puree
8 oz chicken broth
1 sprig thyme
1 sprig oregano
5 sprigs cilantro
1 cup corn pulled off the cob
1 tbsp golden raisins
1 tbsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground cinnamon
3 tbsp pomegranate seeds

FOR THE WALNUT CREAM

3 cups milk
1 cup sour cream
1 cup queso fresco
1 tsp chili powder
½ cup walnuts, toasted

MAKE IT

WALNUT CREAM

1) In a large sauce pot, add milk and sour cream.
2) Using a whisk, incorporate and bring mixture to a boil.
3) Add queso fresco and chili powder mix, allowing cheese to melt. Next, add walnuts and allow to simmer for 10 minutes.
4) Puree mixture in a food processor or blender until smooth.

CHILES

1) In a medium pan over medium heat, sweat out onion, garlic, and jalapeno until translucent or just cooked through.
2) Add ground pork and allow to brown lightly, about 6 minutes. Stir continuously.
3) Deglaze pan with tomato puree. Add thyme, oregano, chicken broth, and 2 sprigs of cilantro.
4) Add raisins, corn, cumin, and cinnamon. Season with salt and pepper.
5) Place ground pork mixture inside or on top of peeled and seeded Poblano chili. Finish with ground pork mixture. Top with walnut cream, pomegranate seeds, and 2 cilantro sprigs.

Beer-Braised Beef Sub

From the episode, "Back on Track in Glendora"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

FOR THE PICO DE GALLO
2 red onions diced
8 Roma tomatoes
2 cloves garlic. minced
1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
1 jalapeno, seeded and diced
1 lime, zested and juiced

FOR THE CRISPY ONIONS
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp smoked paprika

FOR THE CHEESE SAUCE
8 oz sliced American cheese
8 oz cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup milk

FOR THE SANDWICH
3 lbs beef chuck
1 tbsp Montreal seasoning
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp ground black pepper
2 carrots, chopped
1 white onion, chopped
3 celery ribs, chopped
2 garlic cloves sliced
16 oz stout beer
3 sprigs rosemary
3 sprigs thyme
16 oz beef stock
4 baguette rolls
1 tbsp butter

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MAKE IT
PICO DE GALLO
1) In a large mixing bowl, add onions, tomatoes, garlic, cilantro, jalapeno, and season with salt and pepper.
2) Add lime zest and juice and mix well. Make at least 1 hour prior to serving.

CRISPY ONIONS
1) Place sliced onions in buttermilk and allow to sit for about 3 minutes.
2) In a large mixing bowl, add flour, cayenne pepper, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper.
3) Add sliced onions to the flour.
4) Dust off onions and place in a 350° fryer for 3 minutes until onions light brown in color and crispy.

CHEESE SAUCE
1) In a medium sauce pot, add milk and heavy cream. Bring to a simmer.
2) Using a whisk and hand blender, slowly incorporate American cheese and cheddar cheese.
3) Finish with salt and pepper.
4) Cover prior to serving.

SANDWICH
1) Season beef chuck with salt, pepper, and Montreal seasoning 24 hours prior to cooking.
2) In a large sauté pan, sear beef on all sides. Remove from pan. Add carrots, onions, celery and garlic. Cook for 5 minutes allowing vegetables to lightly brown.
3) Deglaze the pan with beer. Allow the beer to reduce by about half. Then add rosemary, thyme, and beef stock.
4) Bring mixture to a boil. Add beef chuck back to pot. Cover and place in a 325° oven for 4 hours.
5) Pull beef from oven. Allow to cool. Using a fork or your hand, shred beef.
6) In a large sauté pan, add butter and baguette, open face down in butter. Toast about 2 minutes until golden brown.
7) Add cheese sauce to pulled beef and mix.
8) Place pulled beef on baguette. Top with Pico de Gallo and crispy onions.

Tuna & Baby Pink Shrimp Tartare

From the episode, "Helping Our Own"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED
FOR THE AVOCADO PUREE
2 avocados, diced
1 cup mayonnaise
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 shallot, minced
1 tsp tajin
2 tbsp cilantro, chopped
1 tbsp lime juice

FOR THE PONZU VINAIGRETTE
½ cup soy sauce
½ cup ponzu sauce
2 tbsp miso paste
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, minced
1 shallot, diced
3 cups grapeseed oil

FOR THE MAIN DISH
12 oz. sushi-grade tuna, diced
10 oz baby pink shrimp (fully cooked)
2 shallots, diced
5 red radishes, diced
3 tbsp chives, sliced
1 lemon, juiced
8 sesame crackers

MAKE IT
AVOCADO PUREE
1) In a large mixing bowl, add avocado, mayonnaise, garlic, shallots, tajin, cilantro, and lime juice.
2) Using a wooden spoon, mash avocado until smooth.

PONZU VINAIGRETTE
1) In a large mixing bowl, add soy sauce, ponzu sauce, miso paste, and slowly incorporate grapeseed oil, creating an emulsion.
2) Next add garlic and shallots and incorporate.
3) Season with salt and pepper.

MAIN DISH
1) In a mixing bowl, add tuna, shrimp, shallots, radish, chopped chives, and lemon juice.
2) Season with salt and pepper.
3) On the bottom of the plate, place ponzu vinaigrette. Next place 1 oz. of avocado. Then top with tuna and shrimp tartar.
4) Finish with sesame cracker.

Crispy Chickpeas & Peanuts

From the episode, "Back on Track in Glendora"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED
Oil, enough for deep frying
1 cup chickpeas, cooked through
1 cup peanuts
1 cup hominy, cooked through
1 tbsp tajin spice
1 tbsp BBQ seasoning
1 tbsp cilantro, chopped

MAKE IT
1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2) Bring oil in deep fryer up to 350 degrees, then add chickpeas and hominy. (A large pan or pot deep enough to submerge these ingredients can also be used.)
3) Cook for 4 minutes until chickpeas and hominy are crispy.
4) In a mixing bowl add tajin, BBQ seasoning, and chopped cilantro.
5) Place chickpeas, hominy and peanuts in a mixing bowl. Season with tajin and BBQ spice.
6) Place in preheated oven for 4 minutes and serve.

Chicken-Stuffed Potato Skins

From the episode, "Back on Track in Glendora"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED
FOR THE RANCH DRESSING
¼ cup sour cream
¼ cup heavy cream
½ cup mayonnaise
1 tsp red wine vinegar
1 tbsp dill chopped
1 tbsp chives chopped
1 tsp black pepper

FOR THE POTATO SKINS
3 strips bacon, diced and crisped
3 chicken thighs, diced
1 onion, diced
1 tbsp smoked paprika
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
2 russet potatoes, baked, cut in half, and hollowed out

MAKE IT
RANCH DRESSING
1) In a large mixing bowl, add sour cream, heavy cream, mayonnaise, and red wine vinegar. Mix well.
2) Add dill, chives, salt, and black pepper and mix again.

POTATO SKINS
1) In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, add bacon and allow to cook for 3 minutes until bacon is crispy and light brown in color.
2) Next add chicken thighs and onions and allow to cook for another 5 minutes.
3) Next add smoked paprika and continue to cook for another 4 minutes until chicken thighs are cooked through.
4) Evenly fill each potato skin with chicken and bacon mixture.
5) Top with cheese and place in a 350° oven for about 8 minutes until cheese is melted and potato is hot all the way through.

Ginger Gochujang Wings

From the episode, "Ginger Monkey is Going Under"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED
24 chicken wings
Salt and pepper
Oil, enough for deep frying
1 cup gochujang
½ cup sambal chili sauce
1 cup soy sauce
3 tbsp ginger, minced
5 cloves garlic, minced
2 bunches scallions, sliced

MAKE IT
1) Season chicken wings with salt and pepper 24 hours prior to cooking.
2) Place chicken wings in a 200-degree fryer for 1 hour remove wings and allow to chill.
3) In a large mixing bowl, add gochujang, sambal, soy sauce, ginger, and garlic.
4) Place chicken wings in a 350 degree fryer and allow to cook for 4 minutes, until chicken wings are golden brown.
5) Place chicken wings and sambal and gochujang sauce in large bowl until all wings are fully coated.
6) Top with sliced scallions and serve.

Cookies & Cream Tart

From the episode, "Helping Our Own"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED
2½ cups milk
4 large eggs
½ cup sugar
¼ cup corn starch
8 oz Oreos, crushed (reserve 2 oz for garnish)
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp salt
8 Luxardo cherries for garnish
3 tbsp Luxardo cherry sauce
4 individual three ounce tart shells
2 tbsp confectioners sugar

MAKE IT
1) In a medium saucepan, heat milk, egg yolks, sugar, and corn-starch over medium heat.
2) Mixture will thicken and come to a boil. Allow to cook for 8 minutes.
3) Next incorporate crushed Oreos, vanilla extract, and salt. Allow to cook for 3 minutes.
4) Allow filling to cool, then fill tart shells with mixture.
5) Top with crushed Oreos, Luxardo cherries, Luxardo cherry sauce, and dust with confectioners sugar.

Miso-Crusted Filet

From the episode, "Helping Our Own"

SERVES 4
YOU'LL NEED
FOR THE FILET
1 stick butter, room temperature
4 oz miso paste
4 oz panko bread crumbs
4 center cut filet mignon (6 oz each)
16 fingerling potatoes, roasted, halved
16 baby radishes, roasted, halved
8 red beets, roasted and quartered
12 oz saki demi glace

FOR THE CAULIFLOWER AND CARROT PUREE
4 tbsp butter
1 medium white onion, diced
2 tbsp ginger, peeled and minced
2 cups cauliflower, cut into florets
4 carrots, peeled and diced
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup milk

FOR THE SAKI DEMI GLACE
2 tbsp grapeseed oil
3 shallots, chopped
1 medium white onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, sliced
2 cups sweet saki
1 bunch thyme
2 bay leaves
2 qts beef stock
4 tbsp butter
1 tbsp heavy cream

MAKE IT
FILET
1) Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2) In a large mixing bowl using a rubber spatula, or stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, add room temperature butter and miso. Mix together until smooth.
3) Add panko bread crumbs and incorporate. Mixture should be soft but able to be handled.
4) Season filets with salt and pepper and place in a large sauté pan over high heat. Sear on all sides.
5) Form miso mixture into a small 2 oz. balls and place on top of seared steak.
6) Place steak in preheated oven until it reaches an internal temp of 135°.

CAULIFLOWER & CARROT PUREE
1) In a medium sauce pot over medium-high heat, add butter and onion and allow to sweat, making sure not to get any color on them.
2) The onion should be cooked through after about 8 minutes. Next, add ginger and allow to sweat for another 3 minutes.
3) Add cauliflower and carrots and allow to cook for another 12 minutes.
4) Add heavy cream and milk. Bring to a boil. Add salt and pepper.
5) Using a blender, puree until mixture is smooth.

SAKI DEMI GLACE
1) In a medium sauce pot over medium-high heat add grapeseed oil, shallots, and onions. Allow to cook over medium heat for 5 minutes. Onions should be light brown in color.
2) Add garlic and cook for another 2 minutes. 3) Deglaze pan with saki. Stir and lightly scrape any fond from the bottom of the pan. Allow saki to reduce by half.
4) Add thyme and bay leaves. Add beef stock and bring to a boil. Allow to boil for 3 minutes, then drop mixture to a low simmer and allow to reduce by half. Strain sauce. Discard onion mixture.
6) Using a whisk, add butter and heavy cream to strained demi mix.

PLATING
1) On a plate place cauliflower and carrot puree, then top with roasted potatoes, radish, and beets.
2) Place steak on top of puree. Finish with saki demi glace.

Classic French Onion Soup

From the episode, "Out Of Date"

SERVES 5

YOU'LL NEED
4 white onions, sliced
2 shallots, sliced
3 tbsp butter
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup butter
1 cup dry sherry
4 qts beef stock
2 bay leaves
5 slices rye toast
8 oz Gruyere cheese, shredded

MAKE IT
1) In a large sauce pot, add grapeseed oil, onions, and shallots.
2) Cook over medium heat for about 12 minutes, stirring frequently. Onions should be brown in color.
3) Season with salt and pepper. Add butter.
4) Using a wooden spoon, incorporate flour.
5) Add sherry and bay leaves and cook for 3 minutes. Use caution as sherry is flammable! If sherry does ignite, simply step back from pan and turn the heat to low. Once the alcohol has cooked off, the flame will go out.
6) Add beef stock and bring soup to a boil for 3 minutes. Then drop soup to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper.
7) Lightly toast rye bread in the oven for about 1 minute on each side.
8) Top toasted bread with Gruyere cheese and melt.
9) Serve soup in a bowl. Place toast with melted cheese on top.

Reuben Burger

From the episode, "Ginger Monkey is Going Under"

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED
FOR THE BURGERS
4 burger patties, (six oz each, 80-20 beef)
Salt and pepper
4 brioche buns
1 tbsp grapeseed oil
1 tbsp butter
1 cup sauerkraut
1 cup pastrami, diced
4 slices Swiss cheese

FOR THE THOUSAND ISLAND DRESSING
1 cup ketchup
½ cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp sriracha
1 tbsp relish
Salt and pepper

MAKE IT
THOUSAND ISLAND DRESSING
1) In a large mixing bowl, add ketchup mayonnaise, sriaracha, and relish.
2) Combine all ingredients and season with salt and pepper.

BURGER
1) Season burger with salt and pepper.
2) Sear burgers in a pan over high heat on both sides.
3) In a separate pan over high heat, add sauerkraut and pastrami until hot all the way through.
4) Top burger with sauerkraut-pastrami mixture and sliced Swiss cheese and place in a 350° oven until cheese is melted.
5) Place burger bun in a medium sauté pan over medium heat with butter. Toast until golden brown.
6) Place burger on toasted bun and top with Thousand Island dressing.

Into The Sunset

How the Robert Irvine Foundation helped a veteran-owned business through COVID-induced shutdown.

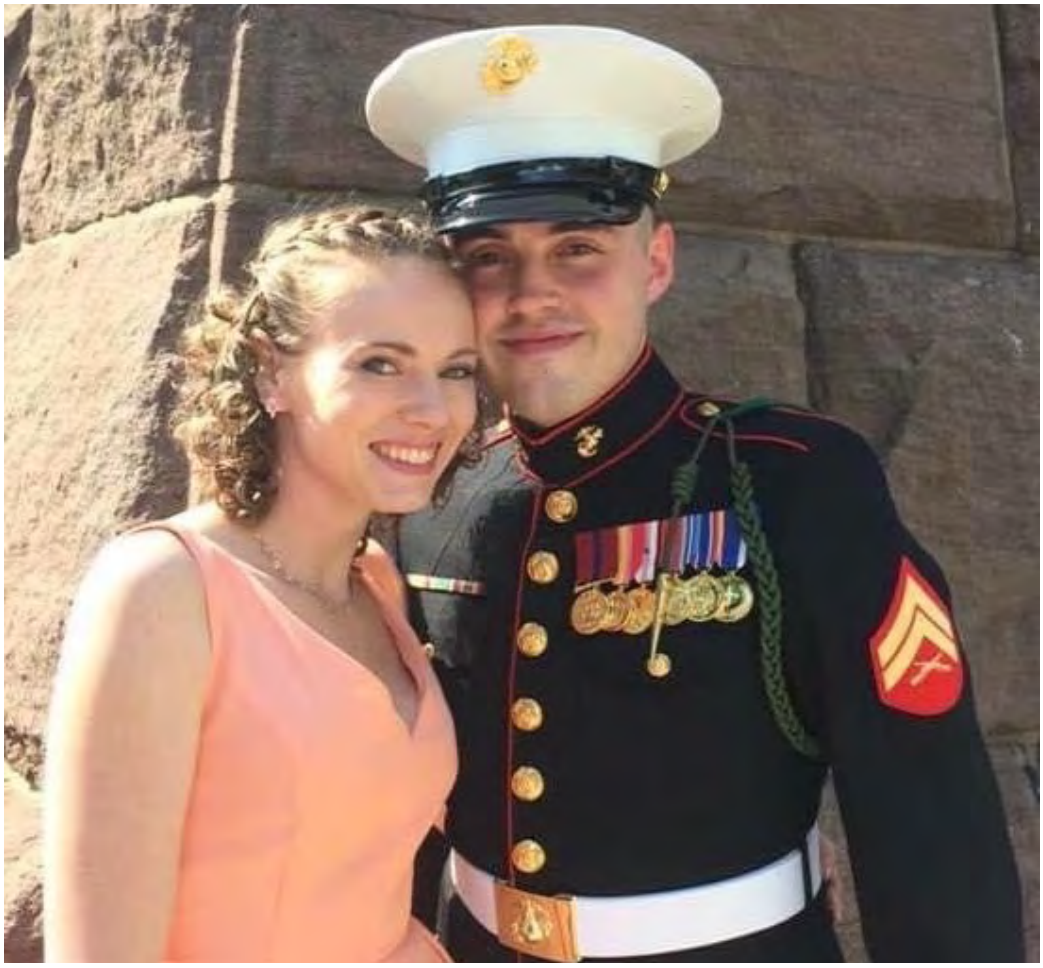
BY PAUL ROBERTS

In early March, as COVID-19 spread throughout the world and zeroed in on the United States, Jessica McDermott started to worry. Not only was she—as a cancer survivor—considered high risk, the business she had invested so much of her life building wouldn't be able to operate under the coming lockdown guidelines. Within a couple of weeks, all non-essential businesses were required to close, and the Sunset Ice Cream Parlor in Williamsport, PA that she owned and operated with her husband Brett was considered a specialty food store by the state—and forced to shutter.

From late March until early June, Sunset couldn't serve up a single cone or cup. The McDermotts soon faced the same problems so many businesses did during this time: There was no revenue coming in, but plenty going out as bills piled up.

"It was definitely a stressful time," Jessica says.

Friends of the McDermotts got to work creating a GoFundMe Me page for the couple, whose budding young family includes four children: a boy and a girl ages 8 and 7, and a pair of 2-year-old twin girls.



Brett and Jessica McDermott, owners of Sunset Ice Cream parlor, which has just re-opened to the public.

Jessica, a fan of Robert Irvine who follows him on Twitter, tweeted the GoFundMe Me page at him, asking for a share. He obliged, but took it a step further. Brett is a retired Marine who served from 2007-2011, deploying twice overseas to active combat zones, the first time with a 24-7 on-call MEU, or Military Expedition Unit, and the second time to Afghanistan.

While Robert has spent over 200 episodes of Restaurant: Impossible helping struggling restaurateurs, Brett's military service set the McDermotts apart.

"I created the Robert Irvine

SUNSET ICE CREAM PARLOR

Foundation to help military veterans and first responders in any number of capacities; it's a very broad mission statement," Robert says. "The fact that this small ice cream parlor was co-owned by a man who put his life on the line for his fellow Americans, yes, it made it extra special to me."

After an interview with Robert Irvine Foundation Executive Director Dave Reid (US Army Rangers, ret.), the foundation issued a $5,000 grant to the McDermotts to help the ice cream parlor through the COVID-induced downturn in business. This money, combined with $3,200 from the GoFundMe Me campaign and a $7,000 EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loan), meant that Sunset Ice Cream Parlor wouldn't become another statistic, one of thousands of eateries that will never re-open post-pandemic. (While it's difficult to gather data on how much of the restaurant industry will be permanently shuttered, Robert estimates the number could be as high as 40%.)

Specifically, the RIF grant enabled the McDermotts to modernize their point-of-sale system to accept credit cards; they had previously been a cash-only business.

"With the grant from the Robert Irvine Foundation being something so unique and special, we wanted it to go toward something to really improve the parlor, rather than just pay bills," Jessica said, noting that it also makes the business safer as young employees won't have to deal with a late-night close involving a register bursting with cash.

On Friday, June 5, Sunset Ice Cream Parlor re-opened, with the state of Pennsylvania allowing businesses like theirs up to 50% capacity. Customers are required to wear masks, and Brett taped out lines and x's on the floor to make social distancing easier. He also erected a large Plexiglass shield in front of the register to protect employees and customers.

It might look different than in years past, but the fact that it's open at all is a blessing.

"All of our local fairs—which are really big—are canceled," Jessica says. "We're a Little League World Series hometown, and the Little League World Series is canceled, so there have been a lot of disappointments in Williamsport. Right now, our main goal is to bring back some of the smiles and typical happy times of the summer. As much as we can."

Sunset Ice Cream parlor isn't just the main source of income for the McDermotts, but holds special sentimental value to the couple. Brett grew up on the same street where the original parlor was located; Rebecca worked there for her first job.

The couple met through mutual friends at Williamsport Area High School. Brett, then a senior, took Rebecca, a sophomore, to his

Brett and Jessica enjoy a snack at Sunset Ice Cream Parlor with their four children.

SUNSET ICE CREAM PARLOR

senior prom and the two began dating that day in May 2007. But Brett, a member of the Young Marines—an organization that emphasizes youth leadership and adventure, much like the Boy Scouts, but with an emphasis on Marine history and the culture of camaraderie—had already enlisted. Four months after prom, he left for Paris Island.

Yet even that considerable hurdle couldn't keep the two apart. And to the never-ending surprise of observers, they had a lot more than the spark of young love working in their favor.

"We strangely get along so well," Rebecca says. "We know that Robert says it's really hard to run a business with your spouse, but we're the odd exception to the rule. We've found that we actually operate better as business owners together."

"We see eye-to-eye on just about everything when it comes to the business," Brett adds.

In 2011, the owner and manufacturer of Sunset Ice Cream—for whom Rebecca was still working—announced their intent to get out of the retail business and stick to manufacturing. Rebecca had seen firsthand what the place meant to their community—the line out the door every night in the summer, the people who came from miles around for a taste of something truly unique—and spoke to the owners about buying the equipment and taking over.

In October of 2013, using Brett's military savings, they did just that. Today, there's a map on the wall of Sunset Ice Cream parlor asking customers how far they came to get there. All 50 states are represented, as well as 10 foreign countries.

"It's exciting to get back to work," Jessica says. "The Robert Irvine Foundation gave us something really cool to look forward to."

The improbable success of Sunset Ice Cream parlor isn't the only way the McDermotts have defied the odds.

In October of 2014, Rebecca was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. As of April 2020, she is five years in remission and considered cancer-free. When she finished chemo treatments, the couple was told they couldn't have any more children. Then twin girls arrived, "a miracle" as Jessica puts it.

Outlasting COVID and bouncing back would be just one more line in a life story defined by resilience.

"It's a relief and it's exciting to get back to work," Jessica says. "After two months of being closed and having four kids, I thought I might like not having the stress of running a business, but we're a close-knit group with our employees, most of whom are high school kids like I was. The Robert Irvine Foundation gave us something really cool to look forward to. It's still stressful for sure, and there's uncertainty, but it's exciting."

The smiles on the customers' faces so far have made it all worth it.

"There's always been a unique community thing with ice cream parlors," Jessica says. "It's a very special, uplifting environment. That's our biggest focus, bringing smiles to people's faces. Even with the masks and other precautions and the stress, we will operate around that to have the opportunity to cheer people up."

QUARANTINE KITCHEN

Robert Irvine Magazine interview subjects and contributors share the recipes they've been cooking up ever since the world shut down.

Due to the obvious, everyone is cooking a whole lot more at home these days. Some have taken it as an opportunity to tackle bigger culinary challenges than they previously would have endeavored to attempt, finally trying out that complicated 20-step recipe that always looked so good but they never had time for. At the same time, the pandemic has been a call to appreciate some of the basics that we've always taken for granted. Hey, when going out to the grocery store becomes a time-consuming chore fraught with risk, the discovery of a can of tuna or tomato soup at the back of the pantry is a welcome thing, indeed.

Now… how to spice that up?

The answer varies wildly, of course. Everyone's culinary creativity has gotten one hell of a workout right now. In the spirit of the motto of the day—Alone Together—*Robert Irvine Magazine* canvassed previous interview subjects and contributors for a dish they've been cooking during quarantine. The answers were as eclectic as the mix of personalities we've featured over the years.

Read on and see what the *Robert Irvine Magazine* family has been cooking up!

Last Night's Dinner Omelet

Recipe by: SJ McShane, RI Mag Senior Writer

SJ SAYS: No lie, I used to eat an omelet once a year; now I'm averaging one daily! I know that doesn't sound like a big deal; we all go through phases of eating foods we love more than others, but it's the interesting twists I've been able to put on the omelets during this time in Quarantine.

As we've been hunkering down inside and trying to avoid going out more than we need to, I've been using all of my leftovers within other meals. Each morning I make an omelet with the leftovers I have from dinner the night before as the filling, and I'm happy to say, I haven't been disappointed yet!

So, let's say you have grilled chicken or turkey, a mix of veggies and pan-seared potatoes the night before for dinner; the next morning you simply chop those leftovers up as you would "normal" omelet filling and there you have it- a yummy meal that is using leftovers and expanding creativity in the kitchen.

So far, my favorite has been ground turkey, peppers, green onion, onion, tomatoes, and goat cheese!

YOU'LL NEED

1) 3 whole eggs
2) Last night's dinner (½ to 1 full cup) chopped
3) Your favorite spices

MAKE IT

1) Heat a pan to medium heat.
2) In a bowl, beat 3 eggs. Add seasonings.
3) Chop last night's dinner into desired size pieces.
4) When the pan is hot, pour the egg mixture in. After the eggs cook for 1 minute, pour the leftovers in the center of the egg mix.
5) After another 3 minutes, using a spatula, lift the right side of the omelet and fold over the left side – cook for another 3 to 5 minutes depending on the size of pan and amount of food.

Follow SJ on Twitter and visit her WEBSITE.

Skillet Cookie and Turkey Roll-ups

Recipes by: Katie Linendoll (featured HERE in our March 2017 issue) and her mother, Debbe Linendoll

KATIE SAYS: I am accustomed to being on the road over 250 days a year filming TV segments, public speaking, or emceeing high profile tech events.

I have had the opportunity to eat at so many four-star restaurants, catered events, and fancy room services across the world—but absolutely nothing compares to my mom's home cooking. Being together right now is a blessing as I get to enjoy extended family time and watch my mom's expert cooking in action.

We are a big family (all in Boston) and always enjoy sharing a ton of meals together. Since I purchased a home across the street from my 'rents (you never get rid of your kids!) I am spoiled and crash many meals. My mom prepares every breakfast, lunch and dinner from scratch. I wanted to share two simple, delicious dishes that are always Linendoll hits. The supermarket's inventory has been touch and go in Boston, but these recipes require ingredients that are (at least now) readily available and usually staples that you have in your pantry. My mom wears an apron that says, "I don't need a recipe I'm Italian", but we've placed all the details below.

Follow Katie on Twitter and Instagram and visit her WEBSITE.

CAST IRON SKILLET CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE

Cast Iron Skillet Chocolate Chip Cookie – You can use a cast iron skillet to cook many dishes, which adds a delicious flavor. I am a big fitness nerd, but love my treats and this one is delectable. There are also lots of nieces and nephews in the family (all chocolate lovers) and this is always a hit with them.

YOU'LL NEED

*Note: the Linendolls use organic and/or Non-GMO when available

1 cup butter (2 sticks)
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups + 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

QUARANTINE KITCHEN

1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
½ cup milk chocolate chips
½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ cup dark chocolate chunk chips

MAKE IT
1) Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2) In a 10- or 12-inch cast iron skillet, melt butter over medium heat, stirring often, until it starts to bubble and is completely melted. Turn heat to low and add sugar and brown sugar, stirring well. Stir until smooth and shiny. Important: Chill for 10-15 minutes (dough is too hot to add raw eggs)
3) Remove from refrigerator or freezer, add eggs and vanilla, stir well.
4) Stir in flour, baking soda, and salt. Mixture should be cool now, if not, your chocolate chips will melt.
5) Mix in chocolate and quickly stir.
6) Bake at 325 degrees for 26 - 33 minutes or until the edges are lightly golden brown. A 10-inch skillet may need a few more minutes than a 12-inch skillet.
7) The inside may be soft – but do not overbake. Cast iron retains a lot of heat when you take it out of the oven. If the edges are browning, line rim with foil.
8) Serve warm with a scoop of ice cream or whipped cream!

DEBBE'S TURKEY ROLL-UPS
Katie Says: A comfort meal that has all the feels of Thanksgiving!

YOU'LL NEED
FOR THE GRAVY
Butter
Flour
Organic Chicken Broth
Chicken Bouillon

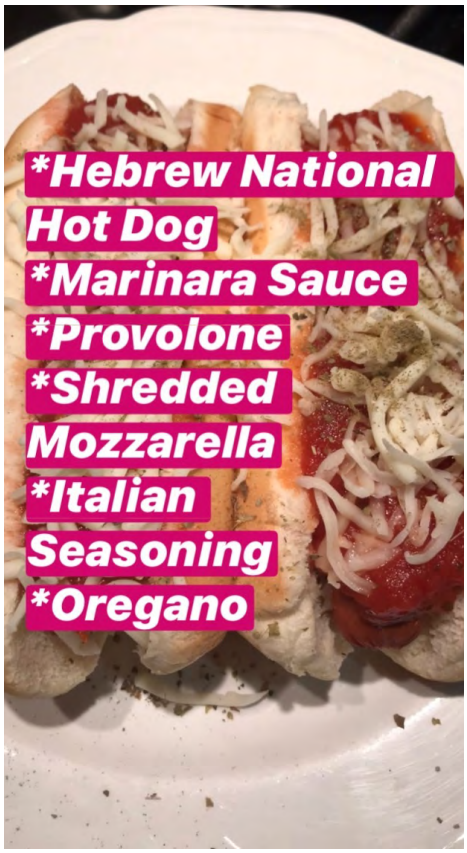
MAKE IT
1) Melt butter and stir in flour to make a roux. Cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
2) Add broth and bouillon. Stir till thickened, then set aside.

FOR THE ROLL-UPS
(Use ingredients in proportion to how many rolls you want to make.)
Medium-sliced turkey breast
Bread, cut into cubes
Celery, finely chopped
Onion, finely chopped
Salt and pepper
Poultry seasoning
Butter

MAKE IT
1) In a skillet, melt butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and celery and cook until translucent. Add bread and seasons and mix until fully incorporated.
2) Assemble Rolls: Add ½ cup of stuffing to each slice of turkey. Roll up and tuck end under.
3) Cover rolls in gravy.
4) Place in a glass baking dish. Cover with foil and heat in a 350-degree oven until warmed through and gravy is bubbling.

MEXICAN-ISH

ITALIAN



NASHVILLE

Bill Oakley's "Elevated" Hot Dogs

Recipes by: Bill Oakley, featured in this INTERVIEW from our special print edition

In our interview with the former Simpsons showrunner, we dubbed him "America's Foremost Authority on Fast Food," a title he honored during quarantine with an everyman move that's so simple and perfect it seems almost obvious in retrospect. He dressed up hot dogs in a variety of styles and shared them to his Instagram story (and to this magazine in the accompanying photos). Inspired, Oakley's fans sent him their own creations, which he then shared with the wider audience in a glorious circle of culinary invention. Hey, they may not look like much, but taste is what counts, and these deliver big-time.

BILL SAYS: I came up with these because I am lazy and confined to the house. The great thing about hot dogs is that they require almost no work to prepare. You can boil them for about 5 minutes or microwave on one of those special trays for one minute and PRESTO! But growing weary of regular hot dogs with traditional toppings I decided to experiment with stuff I already had at home.

These are a great quarantine dish for those who are not ambitious chefs but want some delightful new flavors and textures. Yes, I will continue to experiment with them and have my next one in mind — The Seattle Dog with cream cheese, grilled onions, and sweet spicy pepper sauce!

Follow Bill on Twitter and Instagram.

TRADITIONAL IRISH SODA BREAD

Recipe by: Gavan Murphy, ("The Healthy Irishman") creator of the outrageously delicious Sunday Provisions Pecan Butters

GAVAN SAYS: Who doesn't love the smell of freshly baked bread? During this current quarantine, yeast has been hard to find in the stores with more people cooking at home and making their own staples. This is an easy-to-make no-yeast bread that takes minutes to make and is a recipe you can get the kids involved with. This is a traditional recipe my mother taught growing up in Ireland. Once you make this it'll become part of your repertoire forever.

YOU'LL NEED

2 cups all-purpose flour, sieved
2 cups whole wheat flour
2 cups buttermilk
1 ½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt

MAKE IT

1) Preheat oven to 450° degrees
2) Combine the flours, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. Mix thoroughly.
3) Make a well in the center **of** mixture. Add buttermilk to flour mixture; mix with your hands until blended (dough will be sticky). Turn dough out onto a generously floured surface. Knead lightly 4 to 5 times. Shape dough into an 8-inch round loaf; place on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray.
4) Traditionally, Irish soda bread has a cross on the top for either religious purposes or to make quartering the bread easier, depending on which story you're told as a tot. To do this just score a ¼-inchcross on top of loaf before baking.
5) Bake at 450° for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 400 and continue to bake for another 15 minutes or until loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on a wire rack.

Follow Gavan on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter

BEFORE

AFTER

OVEN-BAKED TURKEY SANDWICHES

Recipe by: Gordana Biernat, Featured on the COVER of our Winter 2020 issue

GORDANA SAYS: These Oven Baked Turkey Sandwiches not only look fantastic and taste delicious, they are quick to prepare and so simple to make! It is the perfect quarantine food because it just involves a few ingredients that we usually have at home. Pair it with a great wine that's easy to drink like a nice, oaky American Chardonnay or a fruity and aromatic Italian Fiano with hints of yellow pears, rosemary, and honey melon.

SERVES 5

YOU'LL NEED

6 slices ciabatta bread (or other thick crusty bread)
2 tbsp butter
20 slices of cheddar cheese
½ cup of Philadelphia cheese
4 tsp Dijon mustard (or similar gourmet mustard)
12 oz turkey breast, thinly sliced
9 cherry tomatoes, thinly sliced
2 cups arugula
Freshly ground black pepper

MAKE IT

1) Cut the Ciabata bread in half, lengthwise and place on a baking sheet with the open sides up.
2) Spread butter and mustard, then top with some arugula and slices of meat. Ground some pepper and top with sliced tomatoes, cream cheese and slices of cheddar cheese.
3) Bake in the oven until the meat is warm, the cheese is melted, and the Ciabata bread is soft, but crispy on the edges.
4) Serve with the rest of the arugula and tomatoes.

Follow Gordana on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Childbirth In The Time of Coronavirus

Our doula wasn't allowed in the hospital for childbirth, so my wife and I were limited to "virtual" support. It turned into one of the greatest experiences of our lives.

BY MATT TUTHILL

BIRTH IN A PANDEMIC

Axel Shawn Tuthill at five days old.

A little more than two weeks before our second child's due date, my wife Jill and I got the news that, in response to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic, the hospital where she was set to give birth—Stony Brook University Hospital on Long Island—would be limiting its maternity ward to one non-rotating support person per mother.

This came as a tough blow for a few reasons, chief amongst them being that Jill gave birth naturally—meaning no induction or pain meds—to our first child, a son, Quinn, who is now four years old. It was her goal to go naturally again with our second. Not out of some strange sense of personal challenge, and with no knocks to anyone who gets an epidural; she simply has a deeply-held belief about being fully present throughout labor.

During Quinn's birth, we leaned heavily on the doula for support. She turned out to be especially helpful to me, explaining what my wife was feeling at various stages and directing me on what to do—and what not to do—to make her more comfortable. Labor, after all, is a strange thing for a husband who can't shoulder any of the pain, but is nevertheless desperate to be helpful in the process.

For folks who have never experienced childbirth before—either themselves or as a support person—it's helpful to know that it's wildly misrepresented on television and in movies on a number of levels. Without getting into all of them, just know that the doctor doesn't guide the mother through labor. That job falls to the support people—a husband and/or doula—and the nurses. The doctor checks in from time-to-time, but their job doesn't really begin until the "end"—late-stage labor, or when it's time to push.

Suffice it to say we were upset to

BIRTH IN A PANDEMIC

lose in-person support, but understood. Our doulas—a group of three doulas who rotate on-call responsibilities and operate under the company banner True Birth (Truebirth.com)—offered to support us virtually, via phone calls, video conference, and/or text. I immediately balked at that, telling Jill that I'd be of no use to her if I was monkeying around with the camera angle on my phone or texting updates to people outside the hospital.

But after my wife spoke to the doulas to tell them where our heads were, she changed her mind. Her reasoning: the doulas put her at ease, and if all we could do is relay information to them during labor and have them help us understand the process, then it was worth it. Again: the doctor isn't there to answer every little question you have.

Besides, we were going this alone at an unprecedented point in history. Might as well have some type of security blanket. Of course, I agreed. It falls under best practices for any man to agree with his very pregnant wife. With about two weeks to go until the due date, this becomes even more true.

Little did I know then how instrumental the doulas would be.

At about 1:00 am on March 19, a full 11 days before Jill's due date of March 30, she woke me up in a panic.

"My water broke," she said.

I shot up out of bed, my body alert before my brain.

What do we do? Do we go to the hospital? But wait, you're not having contractions yet? And isn't the hospital swamped with COVID patients? We shouldn't go until we absolutely have to, right?

Jill had the wherewithal to call the doulas. Susanna Gatz (who has her own business, HeartShine Doula) was on call that night, and she told us to let the doctor know and get everything ready to go to the hospital. However, she said that absent any contractions, we should actually go back to bed and get some rest if we could. We'd need it for the day ahead.

We tried. I slept for an hour or so. Jill not at all. At around 4 am, contractions started, but they

Left, Axel at just a few days old in the arms of his daddy, the author of this article. At right, Axel at three months old—and siginificantly chunked up—in the arms of his mama, Jill.

were minor, and by 7 am they had stopped altogether.

During this entire time, Susanna was texting us with signs to look for, calling us when it was easier than explaining over text, and letting us know that we were taking the right course of action. Already, her impact had been immediate. We might not have been relaxed enough to sleep, but we didn't have any of the fear that we absolutely would have felt had we simply tried to judge for ourselves.

By 10 am, contractions still had not yet re-started, and our doctor told us in no uncertain terms that she wanted us at the hospital; with Jill's water broken, she needed to mitigate the risk of infection.

An hour later, we were at the hospital, through the COVID-screening checkpoint, and Jill was hooked up to a monitor. The baby's heartrate was perfect. But Jill was barely dilated—only 2 cm—and contractions were still a distant memory. Labor had stalled.

And that's where things got tricky.

The doctor wanted to give Jill a low dose of Pitocin. A synthetic form of oxytocin, it would induce contractions and hopefully get Jill into active labor. What ensued wasn't a heated discussion, but it wasn't entirely comfortable. The doctor said she wanted to respect Jill's wishes, but it was also clear that she didn't want to waste time, and sitting around waiting for labor to magically begin on its own seemed, in her mind, to be a waste of time. In the end, she said she'd give us an hour to think it over and try to naturally help labor begin. Then she'd back and check on us.

In the meantime, here are some "birthing" balls. Good luck!

The doctor didn't leave a shot clock hanging over the bed, but she might as well have. The message was clear.

So was Susanna's. She sent me a PDF of various exercises for Jill to do and pressure points for me to hit. She then called me to talk me through it as I reviewed.

Every challenge, no matter how unprecedented or unfair, offers us a chance to rise up.

I looked at the diagrams. I had no doubt that some expert somewhere in the world could induce labor after dedicating a lifetime of study to this information, but me? The least handy guy you know? I couldn't follow the directions to build a crib by myself. And now I'm going to hit the right pressure points to induce labor?

I didn't express any of these doubts to Jill. I didn't let her see the tears in my eyes, either. I just excused myself to the bathroom for a minute and resolved to follow Susanna's instructions as best I could. I had to give it an honest effort until time ran out. I owed Jill at least that much.

I started above the ankle, applying increasing pressure with my thumbs and holding it for about 20 seconds. Then migrated to the next pressure point in the middle of the calf. Then between the shoulder blades. Then rotating through.

Ten minutes went by.

Then 15. Then 20.

Still nothing.

And then…

Ooooh! … Ooooooooo!

Honey, was that--?

Yeah… Oooooo! … Keep going.

I kept going.

Then I let Susanna know. She was thrilled, but wanted to know what happened if I stopped.

So I stopped. Minutes went by. No contractions.

OK, then keep going. Eventually, her body will take over. You've got this! I'm so proud of you both!

Hey, I was too. With newfound confidence, I cracked my knuckles, took hold of her ankles, and got back to work. The contractions started right back up. I cycled through everything a few more times. By my reckoning, we probably had 10 minutes left until the shot clock expired. I needed to know, so after inducing one last contraction, I stopped squeezing, then looked at my watch. Exactly five minutes later…

Ooooooh!

Then five minutes after that…

Ooooooh!

BIRTH IN A PANDEMIC

Success! Jill's body had taken over, just as Susanna had predicted.

Five minutes after that, the nurses came back in.

Oooooooh!

They were shocked, but supportive, and from there we were off to the races. Active labor. No Pitocin. No pain meds.

Through it all, Susanna's calls and texts sustained me. Not only did I get everything I wanted and needed out of doula support—where to stand, what to look for, when to go get help from the nurses—there was that critical information, the PDF from some holistic medical textbook. The detailed explanation on how to pull it off like a pro.

At one point, Susanna told me that my wife needed to rotate her hips to help the baby into the birth canal.

"You could slow dance with Jill," she said. "Maybe to your wedding song."

A few hours prior, I would have scoffed. But she was right about the pressure points, so what the hell.

We danced. My wife wept. Pain and joy. I wept too. Elvis never sounded so beautiful.

We both said how much we loved the other. We've never renewed our wedding vows, but I'm certain this counted.

When it was time to push, the doctor came in. "Wow. You really are ready," she said.

"Those pressure points are no joke!" I blurted out.

I was legitimately thrilled. The comment certainly wasn't meant to be in-your-face. The doctor's face says she might have taken it that way. Oh well. Her bedside manor notwithstanding, everything from that point on was smooth sailing.

Doula Susanna Gatz of TrueBirth and HeartShine Doula. After being shut out of NY hospitals at the onset of COVID-19, Susanna and her colleagues have since been allowed back in to coach women through childbirth. "I'm so blessed to do this work," she says.

After less than 15 minutes of pushing, at 7:33 pm, Axel Shawn Tuthill arrived perfectly healthy.

Mom stuck to her guns and had the birth experience she wanted. Dad didn't just bear witness to the mythical feminine energy of childbirth, but became part of it.

During labor with Quinn and Axel, at a point somewhere after active labor but before pushing, there was a long stretch of eerie quiet. After Quinn's birth, I first described this as a "lull" which made Jill laugh pretty hard. No, she explained. That's a point in labor where the pain is so intense that she can't speak or open her eyes.

I couldn't feel that pain or take any of it away. But this time around, while Jill lay face down on the bed with her head in her hands, I instinctively collapsed just beside her. When her consciousness ascended to some other place to allow her body to deal with the pain… well, I know what I felt, and mine went with hers. Our minds took a walk while we waited for our baby to arrive. Where they went, I'll never be able to say. But I can say I've never felt more connected to her, or more aware of the incredible strength and courage she possesses.

For many of us, the silver lining of this pandemic is that it has been an opportunity to recognize what is truly vital in our lives. While the cost of COVID-19 is catastrophic and its disruption to every other facet of our lives is immeasurable, every challenge, no matter how unprecedented, frightening, or unfair, offers us a chance to rise up. To not let what we can't do take the focus away from what we can do. To be grateful for what we have right in front of us.

For my part, I've never been so grateful for my family. Or for a doula I've never met, yet was there every step of the way.

WORDS TO LIVE BY