

MAN ON FIRE PRESENTS
**THE COMBUSTION
CHRONICLES**

**EPISODE TWENTY-SIX
A RECIPE FOR REINVENTION**

HOST: SHAWN NASON
CO-HOST: MATTHEW NADU
GUEST: CHEF BRYAN-DAVID SCOTT

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Shawn: Welcome to "The Combustion Chronicles" podcast, where bold leaders combined with big ideas to create game-changing disruption. I'm Shawn Nason, founder of Man on Fire, and your host for "The Combustion Chronicles." Throughout this series, we're bringing together the most unique and influential minds we could find to have honest conversations about not being okay with the status quo, blowing shit up, and working together to influence our shared future. We believe that when bold leaders ignite consumer-centric ideas with passion and grit, the result is an explosion that creates a better world for all of us. I'm here with my co-host Matthew Nadu.

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Shawn: So, on today's episode we're speaking with Chef Bryan-David Scott. He's known as the American celebrity coffee chef and luxury coffee specialist. And let me tell you, some of the foods I've had of his cooked with coffee have been amazing. Also known for cooking with CBD and cannabis. We'll dig into that a little bit in this episode. He serves as director of R&D and chef de cuisine of his business, Bryan-David Scott, where he creates unique and memorable private dining experiences and private coffee tastings. Luxury Coffee Roaster of The Year 2015 through 2018, and he serves as a celebrity chef ambassador for iconic brands such as KitchenAid, Naked Infusions and American Juice Company. But Bryan-David Scott has also had the pleasure of serving his award-winning 100-point coffee during the 89th Academy awards and 68th primetime Emmys. So we welcome Chef Bryan-David Scott to this episode. Welcome, Chef.

Chef Scott: Wow, thank you, guys, so much. Really, it's a joy to be here. I know some of you guys and I know this has been in the works for a while. It's great to be with you guys.

Shawn: Awesome to have you here. So, Chef, lots happening, for those in the audience that don't know, Chef lives in Las Vegas, we're going to dig into that some. But, Chef, cooking is arguably the oldest creative art form we possess as humans. What role do you see creative disruption playing in food and cooking today and how does that influence your work and your cooking?

Chef Scott: That's a great question. And I believe with all of my heart that pertains to creative eccentrics, I would say, wise chefs. I personally set a pattern for reinventing myself approximately every two to two and a half years. And that is in essence interrupting. You take a look at what the trends are calling for and you go completely in the opposite direction, but you absolutely have to have something that is impactful. And I believe that creative disruption plays a major role in both food and beverage.

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Shawn: So, Chef, digging in to being in Vegas right now, and whatever the new norm is going to be after COVID-19, how do you see, or how would you consult a restaurant owner right now to use creative disruption coming out of this into the new norm?

Chef Scott: You know, that's a great question. And what I would like to say to anybody listening right now, especially those that are chef-owners, you've got to be yourself. What is your vision? What is your passion? I would ask them, "Forget about what anybody else is doing. Drive down on what you love to create because that is what's going to distinguish you." I mean, you've eaten my food, Shawn, you know very well you couldn't say, "Oh, that piece of steak reminded me of another chef." Everything I do is highly unique. And it's that way by design, by purpose. I'm not interested in doing something that's cookie-cutter. If you came to me and said, "Well, this is how I've done it for this many years," it's time to reinvent yourself. What are you passionate about? Drill down, do that, offer that because that is what people want. People are tired of eating what is every other chef in the world does. Be yourself, live with passion, pick the vision that you have, and go rock.

Chef Scott: So, the whole idea of being able to... I guess when you take a look at what you were saying in terms of being interruptive in the food and beverage, you have to reinvent. Otherwise, food and beverage is going to stay the same. Like, when's the last time, I mean, think about it. If chefs would go back as a consumer, do you really want to go back and have the same thing that you took your wife to or your significant other the last 15 times? No, you want an experience. Every time you go out, whether by yourself or the person that you love and care for, I would hope that you're seeking something that is new and exciting. But that's what I love about being a chef that is famous for being interruptive in the world of food and beverage.

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And I think you would agree that do you want to do the same old, same old or do you want to go somewhere where you know even though it's the same person you're going to eat with, you're going to have a totally different experience, but it is still going to bend your mind? You know, if you had the choice of go to someplace that's never going to turn the same thing out twice or go and have the same old, same old, same old, which one would you choose? That's what I want chefs to do. Create something from vision and passion that you've never done before twice. And that is what people will run to.

Matt: Bryan, Matt here. And I love how you say that because people don't expect that in other industries, for things just to stay same and to just flat line. So it kind of baffles my mind that so

many people in this country are content with the same old, same old. And I love you being on here as a disruptor because you're changing that. This is one of the oldest art forms/ways of communication and bonding in the world. So why do we not treat that like it's always an experience?

Chef Scott: It's so funny, I had some chefs comment on a video that I had posted where I had taken some Shiitake mushrooms and they were kind of mocking me because the way I threw the salt to the mushrooms and then when they got me on the phone, a couple of the guys, and we're friends, and so I say mocking, they'll just kind of jabbing me a little bit like we do as guys. And they were like, "What's with you throwing it like being across the room?" I said, "It's simple. You don't see where I had sprayed the mushrooms with French butter. I wanted a specific area of the mushroom to be hit with the salt."

And they were all like, "What?" They were like, "We never thought about that." And that's exactly the kind of thing that I will do. To the outside world, they think I'm just trying to show off. Of course, I'm a showman. That's a part of what I do. But there is a reason. There's a methodology behind what I do, and it is going to bend people's minds and that's what I'm all about. I'm all about creating that amazing experience that I guarantee you'll get from no other chef anywhere in the world. That's what interruption is by definition.

Shawn: So how do you take a ribeye, my favorite steak, right?

Chef Scott: Yeah, mine too. Yeah, absolutely.

Shawn: And I remember the first time I had your ribeye, I told everybody in the room that it was really bad, and I needed to eat it all and to save them from that. But Chef, how do you stay continuously creative and innovative in that? Like, how, at some point, do you go, "I can't come up with another idea of what to do with coffee or throwing salt across the room at a mushroom," right? How do you get energized and stay creative and innovative in that space?

Chef Scott: So, this is where humanity meets supernatural. I personally have a very deep belief and a faith in God. And for me, and I told you this when I met you, that for me and what I do to stay in the moment is every time I walk into a kitchen, whether it's my own or I'm being brought in as a guest celebrity chef, I literally lift my hand and I say a prayer and I say, "God, please bless my hands. Bless my imagination. I want to bend these people's minds." And the only comeback I've got and that is if you can find a way to describe God in a way that people can understand, you're way ahead of me. All I know is I recognize that I am finite and I believe

in an infinite God. And when I ask him for help, I believe with all my heart and it's been proven, he never fails to show up.

Shawn: Yeah. Food and cooking can be one of the most polarizing things in our society. Everyone has an opinion and a taste, and it actually can become highly politically charged at times. Do you ever face really hard backlash for being a disruptive chef?

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Chef Scott: The first and most honest answer is yes. But then simultaneously, I really don't. Let me explain what I mean by that. Dolly Parton taught me that we are first entertainers and that we are there to put smiles on people's faces and to lift their hearts. Although I do have my own, and I wouldn't even dare say firm beliefs, I don't deviate from the bottom line, which is I am there to entertain. I'm exceedingly fortunate because I'm a chef and particularly one that has a tenure of seven years plus as a celebrity chef, there haven't been any real complaints. I mean, look at the night that you first signed with me. I ran vegan menu, I had the total carnivore menu with the ribeye steak and the smoked espresso, we had, like, three or four of my different sauces and breads and, I mean, just, it was phenomenal. But not one person said that they walked away unhappy.

They all were ecstatic with what they got a chance to eat. And for me, the flavor combinations have always totally rocked. Asking... Okay, like, Shawn, if you think back, we had a couple of people that said, "Chef, it's a little underdone for my taste, would you please put this on the grill?" That is not a complaint. That is a genuine person saying to their chef, who is there to please them, "Would you please put this back on the grill so that it is more accommodating to my taste?" That's easy. I'm an entertainer. If it's gonna make you smile, it's going to lift your heart, I'm all about it. So that whole thing is the way I would answer your question.

Shawn: Yeah. Leaning into that even a little bit more, is it possible to actually be too disruptive, and in your world when it comes to cooking for others, you know, sometimes I have people accuse me of, "Shawn, you need to tone it back a little bit. You're a little too disruptive. You're a little..." And you know, chef, you've seen me in a couple situations, right? So do you feel like there's a point where you can actually be too disruptive when you're cooking for others?

Chef Scott: I believe the answer to your question is a very unequivocal no. I am as eccentric as it gets in the world of food and beverage. People that are close to me would even say that technically, I'm a pain in the ass. So what I would rather say is that I demand excellence from myself and those that surround me, and in a way that supersedes that of your average chef.

And there's a reason that I have Michelin star-rated chefs that come to me for counsel. Interruption is precisely what I'm all about, guys. Pushing food and beverage not only to the extreme edge, but even over that edge. So too extreme? Never.

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Matt: I love your passion and just the way that you speak not only about the food, but the experience and then what you bring into that. Where did you get that? Like, how did you initially harness that?

Chef Scott: God, you know what, guys? I'll never forget the day. I must have been, maybe...I might've been eight, but I grew up with Betty Crocker cookbooks on my mom's, literally, the kitchen shelf next to the coffee maker. And one day, I will never forget it, she had been working all day, scrubbing walls and floors, she still had her bandana on and I looked and I said, "Mama," I said, "I look at your cookbooks, your baking books, but I don't have a single memory of you ever cracking any one of those books." And she said, "Oh, sweetheart, I don't follow recipes." And I was like, "Mama, you make the most amazing food on earth, in my opinion. How do you know when to add, you know, this spice or whatever?" And she literally, she said, "Let me show you, baby."

And she opened up her pantry and she said, "This is how I cook. I look up there and I think, 'Oh, a little bit of this would taste good with a little bit of this and a little bit of that.'" You know, what my mother and my grandmother taught me is how to create flavors that would pop on the palette. So by the time I became a chef's apprentice in Kansas City, Missouri, I knew how to create flavor profiles that would blow people's minds, and I was addicted at that point to doing precisely that. So in your vernacular, I learned at a very early age in life how to interrupt every damn thing that there was in the world of food and beverage.

Shawn: Yeah. I love that. It's a great story. I love that you're sharing that about your mom and grandmother. Chef, Matt and I and the group of us, you know, in this group called Truthtellers, our tagline is "Living authentically in the land of bullshit." When I say to you, Chef, living authentically in the land of bullshit, what does that mean to you as a man, a husband, a father, business owner?

Chef Scott: So, I think it's very important because you're talking about the land of bullshit and the reality is there are way too many liars and bullshit artists in this land today. When I talk about the land, it used to be I meant the United States. I personally, when I say throughout the land, I'm talking about universal because my reputation extends to the UK, the EU, Australia,

New Zealand, most parts of Asia. The reality is if most people would just be honest about who they are, where they are, if they would just come out and say, "Hey, I struggle in these areas," it would make life so much easier for guys like you and guys like me that provides consulting to say, "We can help you." But when people are not honest, they're flying blind. Honestly, it's like taking a beautiful...remember of the old sailing vessels of old? They relied on that weather or they relied on that wind. And if you have no wind, and you have no weather, you're fucked. There's just no getting around it. Did you ever see the movie, and I have to segue for a second, "Captain and Commander" with Russell Crowe?

Matt: Great movie.

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Chef Scott: So, check it out. There came that moment where there was no wind and the humidity was so intense, that ship just sat in the middle of the ocean and they were like, "Please, God, send some wind." And so that is why I love, I relish being an interrupter because I constantly have wind in my sail. If you're ever challenged with me, it's because I'm creating too much. You will never find me saying, "Oh, God, what do I do? I've created the same thing so many times." I guaran-fucking-tee you, if you walk into my room right now, you would have five different kinds of foods to choose from right now. If you came back four hours later, you'd have at least five, if not more. It's because I want you to experience something that will blow you away, bend your mind, and that'd be so different every single time you walk through my door.

That is where most chefs fail today. That is where I believe food and beverage needs to go. You know what? Michelin star system is great, but look, it has its own weaknesses. Chefs want to aspire to be a Michelin star-rated chef and I'd say, "You know what? You're coming up way too short for me. You need to find out who you are, what your vision is, what your passion is, and then just go do it. Go do it." And that's what's going to draw people in. And you know what, guys? Let's be honest, that will transcend any industry. Shawn, you and I have a particular passion for helping kids, those that struggle with cancer, but we also share a vision and a passion for veterans that need healing. That's why I got involved in cannabis, guys.

Cannabis is the game-changer for everyone of all ages regardless whether you are a bodybuilder in top condition or you're a tiny kid struggling to be able to stay alive because your body is riddled with cancer. What we know scientifically and medically about cannabis is it's life-changing and it's natural and it's organic. So to the government, I say, fuck you. You can't approve a drug that is natural and grown by God, that's your problem. I was told, just so that we're very clear, guys, I mean, I realize I've gone down a long rabbit trail, New York Police

Department told me, "If we find out you're doing cannabis here in the state of New York, we have to arrest you."

And I said, "You know what, guys? I'm looking at you as men and I'm telling you guys, I understand you're law enforcement, you have laws to uphold, but I'm telling you right now as a man, fuck being a chef, as a man, if I can help people feel better, more comfortable, and bring healing to people, that transcends any fucking law on the land, and I am called first to be able to bring healing and lift hearts and make people feel good again. That is more important to me than your fucking law." And they looked at me and they said, "You know what, we love you." The whole time I did cannabis in New York, they turned a blind eye because they knew that I was right. That's what I want to bring to the world today, that is what makes me an interrupter, and that is what makes me say, "Fuck the status quo."

Matt: That lights the shit up out of me, number one, dude. I'm salivating just on your words, not even your food yet. Number one. Two, my background is working with men and men's group. And I love what you said about just like, it doesn't matter if you're young or old, all men are feeling like the same way. And if we can't get out like of these boxes that we're in, whether it's government, whether it's what we're taught, whatever these stereotypes or whatever it as men, it breaks my heart because people can't turn into disruptors like yourself. And I just think of all the potential that people have, and we sit in the status quo and we wonder, like, "Well, can I live authentically or what are people going to think about me?" Or we just build up these false ideas and then we live by them. So I love that you're like "F it. This is who I am and this is what I'm doing," because you're bringing joy to a lot of people and that's something special.

[00:20:07]

Chef Scott: I wanna see people living to the max and there's no way of getting around it. I've been a trailblazer my whole life, man. For me, it's the only way to live. I look at what is right and I look at what is good and I look at what is just. And just does not necessarily mean according to the law of the land. Just is what makes sense for all people. What is going to bring peace and calm to the masses. That is the definition of justice. And that is what I deliver. And I feel fortunate because I'm able to do that through food, through beverage. And I'm able to take people that have cried for so long and hurt. Our veterans, children, parents dealing with kids that are riddled with cancer or the myelinating diseases. And I'm able to bring comfort to them and healing. And I mean, seriously, what is not good, right, or just about that?

Shawn: Yeah. Chef, you know, from the beginning when we met, we've had this connection. Love your passion, love your heart, how you lead. And I'm so honored to have you in my life

and in the work and the good that you're doing. I mean, even how you challenge me. So, you know Chef, at the end of each of these sessions, we do three questions called the combustion questions and there's some fun questions that you might be caught off a little with some of the questions. And so the team during this has come up with three questions for you. The first question, Chef, is what's your favorite sound or noise?

Chef Scott: Oh, that's easy guys. I grew up all my life on the East Bay of San Francisco. And when I was lacking peace, even at an age where I would have to sneak past the gates, I would jump on Bart and I would make my way to the bay or when I could to Monterrey or Carmel. And I would literally sit myself among the rocks and I would listen to the sound of the birds and the wind and the crashing of the ocean. There's something that is very centering and that pulls me back into alignment when I can hear water. So whether it's the ocean or a river or a babbling brook, the sound of the earth, the water, the majesty thereof always pulls me back to my center.

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Shawn: Love it. So very soon, Chef, we're gonna have to meet on a beach someplace. That's probably one of my favorite... Besides the craps table in Las Vegas, that's probably my second favorite place to be, is on the beach.

Chef Scott: Awesome.

Shawn: So, second question, if you had a personal flag, what would be on it?

Chef Scott: Oh, wow. You know, this reminds me, I'm not going to go too deep, but I will tell you that Gideon, my now 18-year-old, along with my now 25-year-old Timothy, and then 17-year-old Noah, they were challenged by their teachers to create a family crest and we went deep into our Scottish and our Italian heritage. I come from the family line Bucci as well as the clan Scott. And so, at the top of that, when you look at our flag, I see colors of green and gold, red, white, and black. Black representing the everyday guy that has to work his ass off to take care of his family. The red, because we know that we're exceedingly powerful, but also because of the blood of the patriots that went before us and also the blood of Christ. I take a look at white, which to me represents the majesty of heaven.

I take a look at the green, which is who we are as Scotsmen, as Irish men, and the way that we've faced the world, which is facing. And when you look at the armor, I'd point out to you briefly, armor was always on the front side because nobody ever expected the knight to retreat.

That's why you don't see a hind armor. It's only for those that would advance. And so the lion and the shield of armor would be part of what we would have on our flag, and then the sword because it's not only a physical property, it also represents the word, the word of truth that would guide us into generations. So the sword, the shield, the armor, and then those colors, and the lion.

Shawn: Awesome. All right. Here's the really one you have to think deeply about those, Chef.

Chef Scott: Okay. Okay.

Shawn: What do you think about squirrels? (Chef laughs)

[00:25:01]

Chef Scott: You guys are going to laugh, I hope. One day I was in the sixth grade and I had a friend of mine and he and I, we'd just gotten into trouble together and he was like, "Have you ever thought about eating an acorn?" I said, "No." And so, I kid you not, the next day we went to school and we learned about different Indian tribes that ate acorns. Little did I know that there's a certain way that you prepare those things. And only, you could do your own homework, only squirrels are unaffected by unprepared or raw acorns. And so when I look at squirrels, they have the adventure. If I had to be an animal, I would ask a squirrel to lead me because they have fun. They know how to do shit that is so crazy like, "Hey, Chef, I want to go run across this wire, and you may or may not get electrocuted depending on whether you're grounded, but let's fuckin' do it anyway."

I'm just like, "Yeah." And their tail is all bushy and they're like, "Come on, Chef, let's go do it." And they're like, "And we're going to eat the fucking acorns along the way." I'm like, "Yeah, acorns. I can prepare those." "Oh, come smoke this espresso, a little other and add some salt." "Oh, we could..." And the squirrel would be like, "I'm in. I'm in." You'll never hear a squirrel say, "Oh, fuck that. I don't want to do that." Squirrels are like, "Yes, let's do it." Because if it's going to kill you and then make your stomach upset, they're all about like, "Yes, let's do it. My tail is totally bushy over it. Go for it." So I love squirrels.

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Shawn: Well, awesome, Chef. It has been, again, honor and privilege to have you on with us.

Chef Scott: Thank you, guys.

Shawn: And looking forward to having you on again, and I can't wait to be in Vegas to see you again. So thanks for being on here and stay safe and be well.

Chef Scott: Guys, thank you so much. Shawn, thanks for the joy of being a part of your podcast. It's been amazing. And I've had a great time. And all of you guys, thank you so much.

Shawn: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of "The Combustion Chronicles." None of this is possible without you the listener. If you'd like to keep the conversation going, look up Man on Fire on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and at manonfire.co. Give us a shout. Let us know what you think. And please, subscribe, rate, and review if you like what we're doing and if you don't do it anyways. And remember, always stay safe and be well.