

# Paleo Solution - 272

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Howdy folks. Robb Wolf here, another edition of the PaleoSolution podcast. Very excited for today's guest. He is a documentary filmmaker, very interesting background and as of just today, although this show will be going up possibly a week later, Jared Stone is the author of Year of the Cow, How 420 pounds of Beef Built a Better Life for One American Family. Jared, how are you doing man?

Jared: I'm doing great man. Thanks for having me.

Robb Wolf: Oh, I'm super stoked to have you on the show. Now, remind me who put us in contact?

Jared: Right. You and I actually met via the Savory Institute.

Robb Wolf: That's right. That's right.

Jared: Yeah, my buddy Chris Kirsten actually in a former life is the gentleman who is the rancher that I actually bought the cow from like several years ago. So he and I have stayed in touch and then the Venn diagram of our interest overlaps pretty heavily so I went to the Savory Institute Conference in Chico and met you up there.

Robb Wolf: That's right, that's right and I just got to see Chris this last weekend at Paleo FX so...

Jared: Oh right, very cool.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah, so worlds collide yet again.

Jared: I know right. He is good people.

Robb Wolf: He is a super good dude and it's exciting for me in this Paleo space, this ancestral health space is really finally starting to get excited about sustainability and food sourcing and all that type of stuff. A good friend of mine, Dallas Hartwig, he actually had an interesting observation, which was a lot of people that get into this ancestral health, evolutionary medicine story, typically, they've got some health problems that they are trying to deal with on their own and once they get those dealt with, then you start kind of looking outward like you really have to take care of your own stuff.

You can't necessarily save the world if you have ulcerative colitis so bad you need surgery, which is what my story was. But once you get that buttoned up, I think a lot of people start thinking about like, okay, what's next, what do I do to make things better for my kids and for the world around me and what not. I'm curious. What was the impetus for you to get into this story, like why did you reach out to Chris and let folks know a little bit about your general background, like you weren't like a rancher or a Paleo zealot like myself and most of these other people. What was the impetus for this especially given your background in documentary film making?

Jared: Yeah, well actually, I kind of approached it from the opposite direction. I'm a television producer. That's my day job and I was watching TV one day in my house and I've got this massive -- I'm a TV professional so you have to have the nice set in your house. So I was watching my big sexy 1080p wall-mounted monster of a television and I was watching a food show. I was watching this food show and it occurred to me that I knew

more about the TV that was hanging on my wall than I knew about the food that I was watching on that television.

So rather -- I knew more about my TV than I knew about the food, the material, the physical material that actually becomes me, that actually gets incorporated in my body and walks around and makes dumb jokes. So I thought to myself that has to -- how can that be, how can it be the fact that I knew more about television than I know about the food that goes into me.

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So I went ahead and I started researching it and I started researching grass-fed beef and beef production. I started with beef because I'm a Kansas kid originally before I moved out here to L.A. and they do a lot of beef in the Midwest. We also are well-situated in the mythology of the wide open planes and that sort of where my heritage is. So I looked into beef first and learned a lot about beef and then as I started learning about beef, I decided I would -- I really needed to get a grass-fed steer and the idea was that I would buy this grass-fed steer.

I don't really cook so much or I didn't at the time, now I sure do, but I would teach myself all about cooking and all about agriculture through the grass-fed steer. So I would make them the best use of every part of this animal that I possibly could. So if I'm going to cook something with a chuck roast, for example, what's the most chuck roastiest dish that I could possibly make with a chuck roast? I researched the hell out of it and I came up with an idea and I'd make it and a lot of times I was successful and sometimes I wasn't. I think that half of the time, those are probably the better stories. And then through that, I also started researching how we came to be so dependent upon this industrial food system. So as I was looking into that, that led me to ask the next iterative question, which is, how did we use to do it and so I looked into how we used to do it.

I came across a lot of revelations about the way our food ways and the way our institutional systems changed around World War II and then the aftermath of that event. Then I started asking like well if we used to do agriculture differently, how do we used to eat? So then I started looking into the way people used to eat and I came across the Weston A. Price Foundation and then over time, I started getting into that more and more. Then I came across your work and everything clicked and I was like oh, this makes some sense.

So I changed pretty radically the way I ate and that changed pretty radically the way I felt because back to what you were saying about the

ancestral health movement is just starting to draw the correlation between where their food comes from and in the similar situation, I started drawing a correlation on my end from -- I'm trying to get healthy here and I'm part of an ecosystem too just as these cattlers are in an ideal situation part of their ecosystem. I'm part of my ecosystem and by looking at that ecosystem, it changed the way I conduct my life.

Robb Wolf: That's so incredible, powerful. It's fascinating because what you did, the process which you did and I don't know if that was two years or 20 years, I'm assuming closer to 2 years, but that's a process of education that I and a lot of other folks at Savory Institute, farm to consumer legal defends fund, and Weston A. Price Foundation struggle with constantly to get folks thinking about the world that we live in today isn't necessarily the way things have always been done.

Similar to the Paleo diet story, it's not that we necessarily want to overly glamourize or wax nostalgic about the way that we've done things in the past. But there are some elements of our modern world whether it's internet or social media or what not, that is looking kind of unsustainable from health and societal standpoints. Like it seems to be -- our rate of changes is occurring at such a clip that people are finding themselves ill-suited to deal with that rate of change. So we looked back a little bit, but there is an amazing amount of pushback by just kind of asking the question, well how did we sustainably raise food before the intensification process that occurred from the end of World War II forward and really took off in the 1970s with farm subsidies. You know?

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: I'm curious like you have like a 170 IQ or you're just incredibly a precautious person or how did you connect all those dots and I'm just fascinated?

Jared: Oh, well thank you. No, I just read a lot and work hard and I didn't do anything than anyone else couldn't do. I don't think I just made a decision to do it. Basically, what blew me away is we've got -- everybody knows about CAFO beef and the fact that so much of our agriculture comes from this confined animal feeding operations. I talk too fast sometimes. So that really grew out of the fact that we had just a glutz of nitrogen fertilizer after World War II. So after World War II, you had 10 nitrogen plants built in the Unites States and nitrogen fertilizer is ammonium nitrate is an oxidizer so you can use it in bombs. For example, if you put it with a fuel source, it will infuse a lot of oxygen very quickly into the detonation right so we used that. We built this 10

ammonium nitrate plants to bomb the Nazis and it was relatively successful.

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When the war ended, we had all this nitrate plants and they're like, what are we going to do with this? We've got all these plants. We've got all this infrastructure that can make nitrate. What should we do with it? So the idea that came about was nitrogen is a required element for plants to grow so what if we use this as a fertilizer. So that was really the beginning of a lot of the nitrogen intensive fertilizer that started being put on a lot of crops especially F1 hybrid feed corn because it turns out what they were after in the 50s, what they started realizing was you can increase your yield per acre directly in proportion to the amount of nitrogen you put onto the crops.

So turning the situation where it lets out a whole hell of a lot more nitrogen and we'll get a whole hell a lot more corn and it sure did. The problem is there are several folds, is one, if you add too much nitrogen, it turns into runoff. It pollutes lakes and rivers. The second thing that it does is nitrogen is a petroleum product so when you have this enormous nitrogen infrastructure, you have a lot of petroleum that's coming in to support that. So that is why when sometimes people say that CAFO beef is a petroleum product, that's what they mean because that corn, that surplus of corn, they had to find something to do with, it that had long been know that if you feed a lot of corn to cattle, you can fatten them up faster that you could if you raise them on grass.

So people started moving their cattle off of -- it became a volume business. They started moving them off of pasture and into industrial feed lots where they can feed them gigantic amounts of corn because they had so much corn and corn was so incredibly cheap with the subsidies you mentioned in the 70s, that it became much, much quicker to bring them to market weight. And that led to a glut of super cheap beef, which is kind of what we're used to know.

Robb Wolf: Right. So I forget the exact numbers, but early 1900s, folks in the US spent of 40% to 60% of their income on food. Lots of places around the world still spend significantly higher percentages of their yearly income on food but Americans spend about 12% to 14% now I think.

Jared: Yeah, it's crazy well. It's crazy and that's because we got those -- that's because corn is so cheap both because of the subsidies and both because of we over produce so much of it. You look at them in west and some gigantic -- I think it's like 36% of all crops grown are corn and most of that is feed corn. I mean it's a gigantic amount and then yeah, it's remarkable.

We've also got pushing us from behind. We've also got this myth of the American west so we've got the cowboy.

The other thing to consider was after the end of the civil war, we had soldiers from both sides who went west, to some extent to escape the bad memories of the fighting and to the other extent out west. It was still fairly, I won't say lawless, but there was more opportunity in the west. So you had this myth of the cowboy that was born and so in a lot of ways, with the cowboy, you could have a man who lived by his own code and you had a man who could make the most of his own life and that became heavily enshrined in our idea of what it is to be an American.

Frederick Jackson Turner put out a hypothesis that said that the Frontier was the crucible in which immigrants were made into Americans. By going out into the frontier and living this wide open free life and the cattle were strictly linked to that, that informed what it means to be an American. So in a lot of ways, we've come up believing that beef is our birthright and the beef is damn straight it should be crazy cheap and it should be accessible. The flipside of that is we don't value it as much. I think it is too easy to forget that it was once an animal and think of it as a product and that's one thing. When you buy the whole animal, you realize very quickly, now, this is an animal. That's a leg. You can't have 22 triceps because there is only one per side. You very much learn the scarcity and the sacrifice that happened so that your family could eat high quality nutritious meal.

Robb Wolf:

Right. It's amazing and you know what, it's interesting for me. This topic becomes very contentious almost regardless of kind of sociopolitical affiliation. If you tend to be more conservative, then you definitely buy into that kind of rugged individualism that I think kind of grew out of that frontier cowboy kind of perspective. If you're a little bit more on the eco-liberal side of things then the CAFO food story is kind of horrifying. If you're a little bit libertarian-leaning with some network system stories, then you're a bit appalled by the inputs of limited fossil fuels going into a very inefficient system that looks very efficient from one perspective, but quite inefficient from another.

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Jared:

Right.

Robb Wolf:

What you're proposing here I think will piss almost anybody off. What's the response been thus far? The folks that I see that have reviewed the book, I would say are pretty savvy folks, like they seem to think in a little bit of both in market centric but also global systems centric approach. Like Joel Salatin I think is able to have a foot in both worlds, both thinking

globally and how things network together, but also kind of a market orientation like I don't see -- I think that this is an incredibly important incredibly powerful book and it will piss a lot of people off like what's going on on that front?

Jared: Well, to some extent, if I'm pissing a lot of people off, I'm probably doing something right.

Robb Wolf: Doing something very well, yes, yes.

Jared: But on the other hand, I try to steer clear of not to get too political, but one of the things I think we suffer from is there is a little bit of -- in the media and a lot of political discourse, there is a little bit of blind tribalism. So because side A says this and I'm side B, I have to believe that side A is full of shit and vice versa. So I try to steer clear of a lot of that because I don't think that -- nobody has a monopoly on honest to God truth so I feel like -- the fact of the matter is that does industrial agriculture cause pollution problems? Sure it does. Is it inefficient way from an environmental perspective to take an animal that's built to eat the lawn than raise essentially human food in the form of corn and then truck it across country and then feed that to set animal, is that inefficient from an environmental standpoint, yes, it is.

At the same time, that animal is made to eat the lawn so let the animal eat the lawn. But does that take longer from an economic perspective? So from an economic perspective, i.e., getting meat to market, is that less efficient, well yes, it is less efficient, but I think if you pit economy versus environment, it's kind of a false battle because economy, you're speaking of allocation of natural resources and environment, you're speaking of natural resources directly. So you have to have that conversation of yes even though economically, it may be more efficient, environmentally, the environmental side will have to win out.

Also I wouldn't even posit that the economic side would definitely lose in that situation because when you have grass-fed beef at this point in history, you have to charge a premium for it. Because it does take longer to go to market, but at the same time, when you're charging a premium for that, you're not charging that premium going to a bunch of middle men. You're not sending to from the rancher to the CAFO to the processor to the middle men to the supermarket. What you're having is your paying a premium, but you're paying it to a guy. You're paying it to your rancher, because that's generally the way you're going to buy your grass-fed beef. So it supports small businesses and it supports the local communities because these guys are generally small processors. These

are not sure gigantic agribusinesses that are producing most of this grass-fed beef.

So you're really -- so yes, you are helping -- so on the one hand, the one side of the political discourse might think I'm a green hippies who's going to wander around barefoot and unwashed and preach the gospel of grass pastured agriculture. But on the other side, you could argue that I'm supporting small businesses and then I'm encouraging people to get to know where their food comes from and get to know their local rancher and make sure the butcher down the streets still has a job because that's a hell of a trade and that's one that we're losing fairly quickly.

Robb Wolf: Yeah and maybe even another group to appeal to, I know a lot of the intensification of the food supply grew out of the cold war and wanting to shore up the amount of food that we have and that was when oil was very, very inexpensive. Even though we currently today are in a moment when oil is relatively inexpensive, it was almost three times more expensive a year ago today.

Jared: Right.

Robb Wolf: And there is every indication and potentiality that it could be 6 or 8 times more expensive a year from now which creates a -- when you have an energetic input that drives so much of our food supply, one could really make an argument that from like a national security standpoint, we should really have decentralized robust, resilient systems, which means using as little oil inputs as possible to make that happen.

Jared: No doubt, yeah, without question. Again, if you have a situation like that, you have a by and large that still in its product. I mean you have and I don't think it needs to be, I think this could -- you know, when you have a large, a high price for petroleum, it definitely makes the economics of grass-fed beef work much better.

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Robb Wolf: Right.

Jared: The problem that we bumped into sometimes is people will be like well there just simply not enough arable land of the United States in order to raise enough grass-fed beef to feed the country and I have a problem with that because that's a very industrial agricultural way to describe our land use.

Robb Wolf: I did a little poking around on this and there was once a bison herd in the United States that was as large as our current CAFO system and you hear for quite awhile.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: You know, somewhere between 6000 years if you're on one end of the theological spectrum may be millions of years before that. The folks like Allan Savory and Joel Salatin, they possibly upward of two-thirds of the land mass that humans could occupy may be appropriate for nothing but raising animals.

Jared: Right, right and then there's also that it doesn't even bring into the question the stuff like Joel does at PolyFace where you've got different animals that are all using the same land. So for example the steer that I bought from Chris at Chaffin Family Orchards back in the day, yes, that was grass-fed steer, but it was grazed in an olive orchard. So if you were looking at the land use of that particular plot of land, it's an orchard. It's growing olive trees, but what they did was they run the beef herd through the olive trees and what that does is that trims down the grass that would otherwise grow up between the olive trees.

So they're actually using the animal instead of putting on dedicated pasture to grow, they're using it to eat what the rancher or what the olive folk consider a waste product, eat all the grass between. And then they send those cattle through and they would also send through goats who would eat shrubs that are widely pollinated and want to grow up in between the trees too. Because like another big problem they had there was blackberry bushes would grow up and show cut the trees in about 3 weeks if you left them to their own devices. So they'd send through cattle to eat the grass. They would send through goats to eat the bushes and the shrubbery, right and the goats would also climb up around in the trees. Believe it or not, there are tree-climbing goats and they would prune the bottom 6 feet of branches or so, which isn't another job that a guy would have to do if they didn't do it and if they didn't use animals to do it.

Instead of paying a guy and instead of paying a tractor or buying a tractor and then paying for fuel for the tractor, they send through livestock and instead of a net carbon sink on that, they have a near on that carbon output on that, they actually save some fossil fuel inputs by doing that.

Robb Wolf: And potentially much more than what we're even ware of yet because that's re-nitrifying the soil, increasing the microbiome in the soil, fixing carbon to the soil...

Jared: Totally.

Robb Wolf: Leading nitrogen fixing ecosystems in the soil that the grass isn't being sprayed with round up to...

Jared: Correct.

Robb Wolf: knock it back, so there's a lot. Fascinatingly, it seemed like almost a more economical system and I have this kind of wacky faith in evolution having figured out very thrifty ways of dealing with things.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: That's where my heart kind of goes to this. Well, just to shift gears a little bit...

Jared: Sure.

Robb Wolf: I recently watched or listened to the very successful and popular podcast startup and the very first episode involved this guy pitching his wife, hey, I'm going to start a company. I've got a super cush job with national public radio. I'm very well known in this scene. I'm going to quit my job. We have one kid, one kid on the way, and I'm going to quit my job and start a podcast company from scratch and he throws this out to his wife. She was just appalled and so what was the pitch to your wife about this project?

Jared: Oh my gosh. My wife is the most patient woman on the planet. Basically, what I said was, so she saw my browser history and she saw an inordinate number of agriculture links. And then I said, so she was like, what you're looking at, ranching for, and I said, so I think I want to buy a cow, and then there was just this stunned silence for a minute, but she knows me, she's known me for 10 years now and I occasionally do ludicrous things and so...

Robb Wolf: She regrets 9 of those years.

Jared: Yeah totally and so she kind of looked at me and she's like, okay, and then I had to explain it. And then I had to go into the ifs and buts about the whole thing. She took a day and she considered it and then she's like,

so you cook this, and I was like, yeah, and then she's like, you would cook this for me? I'm like, yeah and she goes, how long will this last, and I was like, oh a year, a year and a half, as an aside it wound up lasting almost 5.

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Robb Wolf:

Wow.

Jared:

Yeah, right and then she took a day and I didn't push it because that would not well for anybody and finally, she said, okay, go get your cow. I was like, okay, but I got to drive 9 hours and pick it up and blow weekend on it. She was like, geez, are you really, and then so that was another conversation. I'm going to be gone and then I'm going to leave the boy and the dog with you for a weekend while I scamper to Northern California with a buddy to go romp in olive orchards, but she eventually relented and then we had to buy a freezer because it's a lot of beef. It's 420 pounds of beef.

There was a little bit of time after we brought the thing home that I had some serious consternation that I had misjudged the size of the freezer, which I don't recommend. Because say you buy like 5 pounds of beef right and then you misjudge by 10%, you only get 10% of 5 pounds, that's not really that much beef, that's not really a whole lot of area, like oh I've got 10% waste. If you buy 420 pounds of beef and you misjudge the size of your freezer by 10%, you're staring at 42 pounds of wasted beef. It was June and I was in the backyard with hockey pucks of beef scattered all around me and it turned into a thing, but eventually with a little beef tetris, we've got everything to fit, but it was a scary afternoon.

Robb Wolf:

So do you remember what your first meal was when you dug into this?

Jared:

Totally, New York strip steak.

Robb Wolf:

New York strip steak. So that was such an easy one. You probably as you were doing your tetris, you just made sure the strip steak stayed out on top. What was the accompaniment with that?

Jared:

Say you say that, you say that like a smart person. But no, I didn't do that at all. I finally got the thing to fit in there and then I was like, alright, so now, we need to get out a New York strip steak, long pause, staring. We to repack 420 pounds of beef three times. So I stood there and I looked out, I was like, I am a mental giant. I can't believe -- and so I had to dig there and of course, they were on the bottom. They were under a 5.5 pounds standing rib roast. So I had to like dig all the way down to the bottom. It delayed dinner for an hour. So anyway, but yes, so I eventually got there.

We did it really simply on the grill, nice sear to to medium rare grass-fed beef. A lot of people don't know it cooks faster than corn-fed beef because it doesn't have the same intramuscular fat. It doesn't have the same marbling and so we did that with a roasted broccoli and a nice pinot noir.

Robb Wolf: Nice. That's sounds amazing.

Jared: Yeah. It was pretty good. It was late on a Sunday because we've driven 9 hours, visited the ranch and then driven 9 hours back so it was one of the better meals that I've had have I think. You know, hunger is the best sauce.

Robb Wolf: Absolutely. So we've bought several half cows. We've never done a full cow. We've done several half cows so we did learn that the things that we would squirrel some strip steaks and ribeyes and stuff over on the side and then more on the roast in the bones that we make bone broth out of. They end going up in the bottom and so there is a little bit of a plan that occurs, but it's hilarious for my wife and I. I do the bulk of the cooking, but my wife -- I do B+ cooking, but it takes me like 10 minutes to get the whole meal done. My wife does A+ cooking, but it takes 6 hours and the kitchen looks like a demilitarized zone afterwards. So it's impossible for her to clean up. It's just a disaster.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: But I will go in and basically whatever is on top and it doesn't matter if it's like spinal column or whatever. I'm like okay, that's what on top, and that's what I'm going to figure out something to make today. My wife will look in her cookbook, find something that she wants to make and then it becomes the scavenger hunt through the freezer and this thing is subzero so you've got to put gloves on or you end up with frost bite by the time you riffle through it all. How did you tackle that? Did you have a dedicated plan or did you start just literally foraging in there and grab whatever was on top and then fixing that?

Jared: I'm a little between the two of you. So when I cook -- I used to work in a restaurant once upon a time. I was the front of the house so I was a waiter. I wasn't one of the guys who did the actual work. But when I put together my meals, my meals on plus on the kitchen, I'm pretty locked down. So I cook like you, like I'm doing my prep. I've got everything sorted and by the time it's go time, I'm a machine and so everything happens.

I didn't come to that easily. I used to cook a lot more. I've referred to the technique as Schrodinger's kitchen where you blow the place up and then you know the meal is simultaneously ruined and sublimed and you don't know until the end when the wave function collapses and you figured out whether you screwed it up or not. So I found out that I like to pull the variables out.

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Now in terms of addressing the freezer, I did both. So my goal with this process was to make the absolute best use of every part of the animal that I possibly could. So I did a lot of research beforehand. I go back there and be like what's a tri-tip for really about. So then I go and I research what a tri-tip was and then I figured out six ways from some of the best tri-tips reacts this way when you treat it this way and reacts that way when you treat it that way. Because it has a fair amount of connective tissue and I don't want to do x, y, or z or whatever. So I'd treated, I went like that with every single piece.

And then once I started getting better at that and better at that, I was like okay, so a chuck roast and I'm going to braise this thing. I've got this brisket and I'm going to smoke it. I'm going to do this low and slow because it's got a lot of connective tissue.

Eventually, I was like, alright let's see. I don't know what this is. Let's see how I can -- let's take a look at this and let's just look at the meat itself and see if I can figure out something to do with that. So I'll just pick up like a sirloin strip steak or something like that and I'll be like this looks like it's x, y, or z and then I'd treat it the way I thought it should work and then judge whether I was correct or not in the execution. And about the half the time I was right and about half the time I did some terrible, terrible things.

Robb Wolf: [Laughs] So what was the most successful meal that you feel like you pulled off either with some great preplanning or just some inspiration or just a stupid luck, like what was the best meal that you pulled off?

Jared: Oh my gosh. I think one of the best that I did was a little bit of a combination of both of those things. I call it the Christmafestivakwanza feast. I didn't really -- so I'm one of the -- both Summer, my wife and I, our family lives 2000 miles away. So we were -- it was our first holiday where we were going to spend Christmas here because we didn't -- my son was getting old enough to ask about Santa Claus and we didn't want to have to explain, but sometimes Santa Claus comes to my grandpas.

So we decided to stay home, but we've got a lot of Kansas friends out here. We've got a lot film school friends whom we called the Kansas expats and so we had a big -- most of them were not going to home to Kansas either. So we did a big feast where we had all of them over and I was just like okay, there might be a little home sickness here so we're going to blow the doors off these things. So I did a standing rib roast. I did it in seven courses. So I started with a nice appetizer and then I moved into like a Caesar salad made from scratch with coddled egg, table side and then I moved into a little palate cleanser of peach grapefruit granata. And then I moved into the main course, which was the standing rib roast done as prime rib, though technically it's not prime rib because that's a USDA definition, yada yada.

Robb Wolf: Right, right.

Jared: So I did basically prime rib with Yorkshire pudding and then did a cherries jubilee at the end of it, which we got to set on fire, if you know which film school kids, setting stuff on fire is a big plus.

Robb Wolf: Oh hey, I'm a chemist so that's one area, that Venn diagram overlaps, yeah, fire is good. So that sounds amazing. The one thing that I have not been able to figure out with the cow are kidneys.

Jared: Kidneys, yeah. No, they didn't give me the kidneys. I wish they had given them, because what they did was they had to dry age the beef so they keep that and they keep the kidneys out because it's attached to the suet, which is used as a fat cap to when they dry age the thing. So I didn't actually get those. I know same thing. I don't know how to do kidneys.

Robb Wolf: I've been on just about everything, but the kidneys taste like pee no matter what so [laugh].

Jared: Really, oh that's too bad.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Jared: Have you had to be done hanger steak?

Robb Wolf: We've done hanger steak. We do a pretty sleek beef heart chili where we use...

Jared: Oh nice.

Robb Wolf: The beef heart and liver and you can't go overboard on the liver. It's usually about 4 or 5 parts beef heart for one part liver. But I cut the stuff up and do, you know not the... decent size chunks and then I throw that into a food processor, basically get it to the consistency of ground beef and then you make either a classic chili or we've playing around with like a Mediterranean seasoning chili with like all spice and garam masala and stuff like that and this turned out great.

Jared: Oh nice.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Jared: So you do the heart in a braise then.

Robb Wolf: Yes.

Jared: Oh, how cool. I haven't done that.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Jared: I did it. I made the beef where it comes in two halves when you buy the whole thing and so I did one half as anti-cucho, which is like Peruvian steward things. I did that for my wife on Valentines Day.

Robb Wolf: It says heart like heart.

Jared: Right. That's what I thought. I was alone in that assessment.

Robb Wolf: Not alone anymore. We're there.

**(00:35:00)**

Jared: But then the second thing I did was I did it as a tartar. If you have the opportunity to do a tartar, yeah, that's fantastic. That blew the doors off. We were really lucked out on that. We did a char-char Puttanesca thing. So we had all the Puttanesca flavors with the capers and the garlic and the onions and it was diced really fine. It has some olive oil. It was really lovely.

Robb Wolf: Oh wow. So how about beef tongue? I've had some winds on that. I've had some epic failures.

Jared: We did that as lengua tacos.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Jared: And yeah, do that.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Jared: That one works out. So basically what you do is you make a broth. You do it basically as a braise and then you braise it with a lot of onions and a lot of garlic and you braise it forever. And then you pull it and then you remove it from the braise, let it cool for 5 or 10 minutes until you can handle it. And then I actually had to sanitize some pliers, which was something I could say have done now. I sanitized some pliers and then you pull the outer casing of the tongue off and all the taste buds and all the weird texture stuff comes off in one kind of fell swoop and then you slice that into -- it's always nice when you braise to have a sear. So you slice it into big slices and then you sear it on either side and you dice it from the slices and it turns out really, really nice.

Robb Wolf: It took me one go of not peeling the taste buds off that I realize that that was a huge tactical error.

Jared: Oh no.

Robb Wolf: I will save all the stuff and just run with it and that was a disaster.

Jared: Yeah. What was it like? It's chewy, right.

Robb Wolf: Well, you knew that something had been using those papillary structures for tasting something at some point so.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: It was a bit more intimate than even I was comfortable with. I've eaten some really funky stuff, but that was a tough one and I ended up eating all of that because Nikki was just like, yeah, this is all you.

Jared: Well, blew me away on that is that there is the texture like when you rub, it's kind of like of cat's tongue where it goes one direction and it's rough and the other direction it's smooth. Because the cow actually use their tongues as prehensile limbs to pull the grass up at the ground when they eat it.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah and that prehensibility was very evident when I made that lengua taco deal.

Jared: Oh dude, that's -- I'm sorry, you had to go through that.

Robb Wolf: Well, you live in learning and now that just goes in my bone broth mix, which is that something that you guys did?

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Did you have a lot of the spinal column and all that and do some bone broth or how did you treat all the bones and connective tissue and whatnot?

Jared: We didn't have any spinal column because we're not allowed to -- Basically, when you take home a whole animal, you're not allowed to bring home any of the lungs or any of the spinal tissue, so no head, no spine, no lungs. That's because the processors were concerned about mad cow disease, which hasn't been a problem in grass-fed, but it's still a thing. So we brought, but we had plenty of marrowbones so we had lots of marrowbones sliced up and we used a fair bit of them.

Well, first of all, we did -- Fergus Henderson has a really famous dish he does where he slices it. He roasts the marrowbones and insert with a salad of parsley and shallots and that is magical. I was like, oh it's going to be marrowbone and shallots. I'm sure that will be delicious and everything. No, no, it's insane. It's absolutely madness and it really is god's butter.

Then the other thing we did with this is yes, we used it to make stock and that was probably the single most -- single biggest up to my culinary game that I did. it took me embarrassingly long time to do it because I was so busy making roasted marrowbones to eat by themselves and then I was like, why would I ever give this to the dog. What was I thinking? How would -- anyway, long story short. Eventually, I got around and I was like I need to make stock. So I made stock and then that just makes everything better. I mean, it's so easy to buy stock in the store, but the stuff you make at home is more nutritious and has a bigger depth of flavor and yeah, that was probably the biggest improvement that I managed to make.

Robb Wolf: Yeah and I've done that for ages whether it was a chicken or turkey or whatever. I had always just thrown all the fiddly bits into a Ziploc bag, throw that in a freezer. Once the galloon Ziploc bag is full, then I have like an 8-quart pressure cooker and so I would throw all that stuff in there and then I would get 4 to 6 quarts of water into that and I was set. And I've always used that, but definitely within the Weston A. Price Paleo

primal scene like the bone broth soup tock deal has become very popular and...

Jared: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah and my stuff comes out basically jelly, like once it cools off in the freezer, you actually have to scoop it out. The stuff does not pour.

Jared: Yeah, a lot of gelatin in them, that's great.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Jared: Do you roast them first? Do you roast them before you put them in?

Robb Wolf: I do, yeah, yeah. So the dog -- my father-in-law actually lives about 6 houses up from us and his dog does get those shin bones and what not, but it's after they've been roasted and typically pressure cooked twice and so the dog still enjoys them, but I'm sure, she would enjoy them much more if she got them straight out of the...

**(00:40:10)**

Jared: Yeah, totally. You guys have extracted a lot from that. That's great.

Robb Wolf: So Jared, what...

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: You know the folks that listen to the podcast. They're typically pretty geeked on performance health longevity stuff. I'm trying to meter out this idea of sustainability in bite size doses so that people aren't freaked out by it. What's the Year of the Cow going to give to folks if they want to buy the book and read it, if they want to get it for somebody they know? Like I feel like this book could be a great, a gateway drug, gateway book to much better eating and much better understanding about where our food comes from. What's your take on that, like what's your elevator pitch for why is somebody wants to get Year of the Cow?

Jared: Yeah, well basically, what I learned about this is that this started when I wanted to make the best use of an animal that I possibly could. I come from a family of hunters and that's sacred. When you take a deer, you're going to make the best use of every part of that animal that you possibly could because an animal died for that meal. So you don't hunt more than you need and you make good use of what you have so that's what I wanted to do with this cow. So then, that taught me how to cook and that taught me how to -- that taught me a lot about gastronomy and a lot

about agriculture and when I was considering it, it became -- I started asking myself what does it mean to make the best use of this animal that I could possibly could.

If I eat this grass-fed cow, right. If I eat this grass-fed steer and I used the energy, the metabolic energy that it gives me and I go and I play video games for four hours, am I making the best use of that animal that I possibly can? If I go mindlessly surf the channels for two hours, am I making the best of that animal that I possibly can and that's the other side that this forced me to confront and I didn't expect it at all.

So I wound up saying, well, how can I make the best use of this animal that I possibly could. First of all, am I as healthy as I could be. And as I researched that and I came to your work and I came to the work of Mark Sisson and a number of other people and it occurred to me that no, I'm not. What I really love about your book is that you gave me the why behind what you should do, but your geek facts and your why you should do that was fantastic and that was like manna to me.

And so I started -- I said, well how did people -- I was exploring how things used to have happened. How do people used to run because I've always been something of a runner? And that got me into barefoot running and I started running more and then I got in probably the best shape of my life as a result of doing whatever -- buying a grass-fed steer, which everybody thought would be gigantic death sentence for me because red meat is evil yada-yada.

So from that, I've started getting outside more. I started getting in way better shape and I wound up getting -- my mental space got a lot better because I realized in doing this, in getting out in the world that what am I really focusing on and what should I be focusing on. So I started doing a lot more camping and hiking. I wound up summoning the tallest mountain in the contiguous 48 states twice.

Robb Wolf: Wow.

Jared: Once was an attempt and then the second time was successful. I've run more than I've ever run in my life now. I feel better. I have much better energy and I really pay a lot more attention to what I give my attention to if that is not too metaphor, but it made me question a lot of like how we live, why we live that way, and how we should.

Robb Wolf: That's amazing and all from just buying a grass-fed cow.

Jared: Yeah, it surprised me too.

Robb Wolf: That's totally amazing. Jared, what was the last meal that you made?

Jared: Tail.

Robb Wolf: Tail.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: The oxtail, what do you with that?

Jared: We braised it.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Jared: Yeah, we braised it and made a nice little braise that came with it...-- When you have -- there's a lot of connective tissue in the tail and we braised it and it turned it and then reduced it into a new sauce. Yeah, because we made some hay of the fact, no pun intended, that we were actually eating in those literally tail.

Robb Wolf: Right. Right.

Jared: So yeah, we thought the tail was the appropriate last thing to do.

Robb Wolf: Oh, that's smart.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Clearly, the tail probably went on the bottom, so that made it easier too.

Jared: You know, odds are good. Everything went on the bottom. Whatever happened to be looking for that day, I'll bet it was on the bottom.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Jared: Yeah, that's just the way I rolled. I made some logistical errors packing that beef into a freezer.

Robb Wolf: Ah, details. So how long did it take between that and the re-order?  
**(00:45:00)**

Jared: I haven't actually done the re-order yet, but I need to do that. But no, I haven't actually gotten around to doing that yet, but yeah, it's definitely coming.

Robb Wolf: That's awesome. Well Jared, I was really tickled that Chris introduced us at the Savory Institute gig. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book. It was very enjoyable. My daughter Zoe was just fascinated with the cover and we've been -- even though she is quite young, we tried to be very transparent with her about life, death, circle of life.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Lion King type stuff and it's just the cover with the cow kind of partitioned out with the season. She practices her letters with that because they're all in capitals.

Jared: Oh, that's great.

Robb Wolf: So she -- we did that for a couple of weeks while I was reading the book and then also, she has asked me each time I cook dinner, she says, dada, which part of the cow was this.

Jared: Oh, cool.

Robb Wolf: And then I will go and try to figure out, okay, so they're on the cow. You is where it's at. You see some real depth of understanding. We saw -- we were on the walk the other day and there was rabbit that had been hit by a car.

Jared: Right.

Robb Wolf: She's like, dada, that rabbit is dead, and I'm like yeah. She's like that's too bad and we walked for a while and she said, dada, a coyote will probably eat that rabbit and I was like, it probably will.

Jared: Absolutely.

Robb Wolf: That's a 3-year-old kid really getting I think some pretty life lessons right out of the gate.

Jared: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, so your book has been useful to my family for both learning on a variety of levels so...

Jared: Oh good.

Robb Wolf: I enjoyed it, yeah.

Jared: Oh good. I'm really glad to hear that. Yeah, we had similar experiences with my son and my daughter that we haven't yet and I'm sure we will. It's always sad to have that conversation about like, well, yeah, that animal is dead and no, it's not going to get better. But something else will get better as a result of it because it's better to have that moment of sadness I suppose than it is to have them blindly assuming that the world exist solely for their nurture and comfort.

Robb Wolf: Right, right. Although you guys did bail on family to perpetuate the fantasy of Santa Claus, but you know, nothings perfect [laughing].

Jared: There is that, there is that. Nobody is perfect I suppose.

Robb Wolf: Jared, where can people track you down and learn more about all this?

Jared: Absolutely, you can find me at [yearofthecow.com](http://yearofthecow.com) and also I'm on Twitter as @yotcjared and I'm on Facebook as yotcjared as well.

Robb Wolf: Awesome. Well, Jared just again, thank you for writing the book. Thank you for sharing with me and my family and I'm excited for the folks that listen to the podcast to check this out. It was just a very enjoyable reading, very educational.

Jared: Thank you. I'm glad you enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun.

Robb Wolf: Well, take care and we'll talk to you soon.

Jared: You as well man, take care.

Robb Wolf: Bye-bye.

**(00:48:04) End of Audio.**