

Improv is no Joke - Episode 71 - Solo

Peter: [00:00:00] The triple delight which is a soy-wrapped salmon avocado roll topped with diced yellowtail. Norwegian salmon. Tuna with ponzu. Siracha. Spicy mayo garnish with avocado. Oh my goodness. This was sushi heaven.

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Peter: [00:00:26] Welcome to Improv is no Joke podcast, where it's all about becoming a more effective communicator by embracing the principles of improvisation. I'm your host Peter Margaritis, the self-proclaimed chief edutainment officer of my business, the Accidental Accountant. My goal is to provide you with thought provoking interviews with business leaders so you can become an effective improviser, which will lead to building stronger relationships with clients, customers, colleagues, and even your family. So let's start to show.

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Peter: [00:00:57] Welcome to episode 71. And today I wanted to do something just a little bit different. And I got this idea years ago from Clarke price. If you remember, Clarke Price is the retired CEO of the Ohio society of CPAs. And when I would be visiting a city for the first time, I would email Clark and ask him for his restaurant recommendations. Now Clark traveled the United States extensively and he's eaten at a variety of restaurants, and he has kept records on these restaurants and what he had for dinner. Suggestions have always been spot on. And in a future episode I would like to interview Clarke on his vast list of restaurants. But today I want to share with you some of my favorite restaurants. The first stop is New Orleans Louisiana. One of my top five cities to visit in the United States. To be honest I can't tell you how many times I've been there since I was a sophomore at the University of Kentucky when my buddy Brad Montgomery and I jumped in the car one day and drove to New Orleans to watch Kentucky play Tulane University. I have been back at least 10 if not 20 times in my lifetime. And like I said is one of my favorite cities for the music for the atmosphere but especially for the food. Every time I visit my first stop is to the Gumbo Shop at 6:30 St Peter's Street, and I order the same thing every time. I order a cup with the seafood okra gumbo, which consists of okra onions bell peppers celery and a tiny bit of tomato sauteed and blended with shrimp and crabs and a thick brown creole soup served over rice. I follow that with the creole combination platter which is a large platter of shrimp creole, jambalaya and red beans and rice. And I wash it down with a nice ice cold Dixie beer or an abita beer. Oh man I can I can taste it right now. If you want to visit the gumbo shop, You can look at their website at www.GumboShop.com. They also have a retail outlet and I have bought their cookbook and it's one of my top 5 cookbooks that I go to, especially especially when I want to cook some seafood. After the Gumbo Shop my next favorite restaurant is Mr. B's Bistro, located at 201 Royale street. Every time I go once again I get the same thing. I get a seafood gumbo which as they describe it on the menu a classic New Orleans gumbo with Gulf shrimp crab meat oysters and okra. But the main entree there is Mr. B. Barbecued shrimp. This is Mr. B signature dish called shrimp barbecue New Orleans style served in the shells with a peppery butter sauce and French bread for dipping. Let me kind of describe a peppery buttery sauce. Think about a stick of butter that's been melted that contains pepper, worcestershire sauce and some other flavors that the shrimp are just swimming in. And it's a peel and eat, and when you're done you just dip that French bread in that butter sauce and

it's just so wonderful and the whole time you can hear your arteries. You can find them at www.MrBsBistro.com. The next restaurant I went to in New Orleans is called the Pelican Club and they're located at 312 exchange place. Last time I went I got to Louisiana Cioppino, which in its own pot filled with gulf fish shrimp scallops mussels and little neck clams with the side of linguini and a tomato basil sauce. Oh my God this stuff was so fabulous. And you can find them at www.PelicanClub.com. This next restaurant I'll be honest I hadn't been there in years but I can still taste the food today and it's k-paul's Louisiana Kitchen at 416 Charter Street and what I remember about this restaurant was that my wife and I had to stand in line and it was a long wait wait a while, but when we got there I do remember ordering a Cajun martini which had a nice little kick to it. But what I remember most of all was that plate of classic crawfish etoufee... Oh man. It is crawfish smothered in brown gravy made in a rich seafood stock. Brown flour onions bell pepper celery garlic seasonings and served with rice veggies. I can still tell every time I have crawfish at any other restaurant. My mind immediately goes back to K. Paul's, and you can find them at KPauls.com. Now this last restaurant in New Orleans was just introduced to me by my good friend Mike Sciortino. Mike came down and took me to Drago's seafood which is located at 2 Pointers Street inside the Hilton Riverside Hotel. See I was actually delivering a conference I was speaking at a conference and Mike came down and asked me this question. Do you like oysters? I said oh my god I love oysters. Have you ever tried grilled oysters? Never even heard of them. And he had this look of amazement on his face because he knew how much I've been informed he knew. He knows how much I enjoy their food. And he said Well luckily that this restaurant is actually in the hotel that you're staying in. So we went down and ordered a... I ordered a dozen of these original charbroiled oysters and it's been known as a single best bite of food in New Orleans and I can tell you what. That's absolutely correct. I'm craving them and it's been maybe five or six months since I've been there. And now that it's September, it's a month with an R, I'm looking to find oysters here in Columbus Ohio and actually try to make this recipe because it's along the same lines that Mr. b.s Bistro. What gives its deliciousness is butter. They are charbroiled in the shell and there's a special buttery mix that they have on top of it. Look on the website or look on line and see if I can find the recipe. But I tell you what. It's well worth the price of admission. So next time you are in New Orleans and you love oysters you've got to go to Drago's seafood and order the original char broiled oysters and you can find them at dragosrestaurant.com. Now the next city or the next area of the country will go to the Baltimore Maryland area. Now I've been in and out of Maryland and the Baltimore area a number of times over the last seven eight years because of my relationship with the Maryland association and the business learning institute, and I will be transparent here. Normally when I travel on business and I've got a speaking engagement I rarely go out to eat and I usually order food in. But this is one of the times that I have ventured out or been taken out by some of the team at the Maryland Association of CPAs. And the first place I want to mention... it was new introduced to me just this year called Cunninghams. It's at 1 Olympic place in Towson and this is a restaurant of farm to table. And one of the appetizers we had that night was pork belly and shrimp dumplings. You know what pork belly is? It's bacon. Pork belly and shrimp dumplings with citrus soy dip in sauce and sprouts. Oh my god. My mouth is water and uncontrollably it was so so good. And then I ordered that evening... I love ahi tuna and I love it as lightly seared as possible almost almost shishimi style. There's seared ahi tuna was prepared with a jerk rub which cantaloupe and corn salsa. It was out of this world and the Web site is CunninghamsTownson.com. The next restaurant is called Micheal's and said to one 2119 York Road in Timonium, Maryland, just just outside of Baltimore. Now what I would say is that they have probably the best if not second best crab cake I have ever eaten. And this is in line with a place that I went to many many years ago. My wife and I were visiting St. Petersburg.

I went to this restaurant called Fetishes. It's a restaurant with the name Fetishes. Small place in St. Petersburg only beer and wine. But their crab cakes were to die for. Just like Michael's. I mean buttery and they were they were broiled and I think we actually had some fried ones too and I could have just ate them all night long. Topped off with some Maryland crab soup. Because when you go to Maryland you've got to have the crab. Now this last restaurant I'm going to mention... you might think it's a little strange because it's a Gachu house of sushi located at the BWI Airport. That's right it's it's Airport sushi. But please don't don't. I've tried airport sushi all around the country. I've got one I'm going to share here in Atlanta. I even tried airport sushi in Philadelphia. And People don't think I'm a risk taker? Wow. That was taking a risk. But this place it's it's in concourse A of the BWI Airport. And the last time I was there I had the triple delite which is a soy wrapped salmon avocado roll topped with diced yellowtail Norwegian salmon to know what ponzu. Siracha. Spicy mayo garnish with avocado. Oh my goodness. This was sushi heaven. So if you're ever in the BWI Airport and you love sushi and I've eaten there a number of times over the years and the quality of the food just keep stepping up higher and higher and higher and higher. Now one of my goals over the next year or two in the Baltimore area is to visit more restaurants because I'm a fan of the Food Network and diners drive ins and dives. And when you've got a special a one hour special just on Baltimore you know there's a lot of wonderful restaurants that I have yet to visit and that will be on my bucket list over the next two years. Next city I want to stop in to is Bloomington, Minnesota, which is just north of Minneapolis. And this restaurant that I frequent every time I go there it's called Ciao Bella and it's located 3501 Minnesota drive. Now I'm Greek. I grew up in restaurants. I'm probably very critical as it relates to customer service. I have written two blog postings about this restaurant because they take customer service to the nth degree to a level that only very very few restaurants I've ever seen. And the back story of this is as I walked into the restaurant around five o'clock and the place was packed, and since I usually sit by myself I usually sit at the bar and bar area was packed except for this one seat right behind the bar taps. So immediately I knew I was going to be invisible. Within a matter of moments somebody came up took my drink order, and then soon thereafter gave me a menu and it was almost like I wasn't invisible - The bar taps were invisible. And when it came time to cash out, I noticed that they didn't charge me for one of my cocktails, which I made a comment to them and they said well you're not from around these parts are you? I said no I'm visiting from Columbus, Ohio. Well we thought so, so the first round's on us. We want to make you feel at home. Shut the front door - Are you kidding me? Who does that? So I came back the next night and once again packed. But this time I had to sit at the other end the bar behind the bar taps. And once again I wasn't invisible but I sat next to this guy who said that he's been coming there for a number of years and will not eat anywhere but there, and he went on to tell me that the turnover in this restaurant was almost minimal. He started the name of all the waiters and waitresses and the bar back and give me the background and children at first it kind of creeped me out but he said it's like one big happy family here. And when the bartender walked by he looked at me and kind of shook his finger because he kind of recognized my face from the night before. You're your maker's mark on the rocks. So every time I go back and it's been at least two times a year for the past three to four years. They remember me now and I share the story and like I said I've written a couple. They get it when it comes to customer service. And when I even mentioned when I'm in my classes if anybody has ever eaten at Ciao Bella, there's nothing but wonderful things to say. And there's always some great story in their comments back to me. So one of my favorite dishes there is... you might find this little surprising after the last thing I mentioned about sushi but it's the ahi tuna burger, which is number one sushi grade avocado with Fresno chili Aoli. Or the tortillioni rosa Molinari, which is sausage sweet peppers roasted red peppers Romano

cheese and a thick kind of tomato sauce. Now if you go in ask for the bar manager Susan or one of the bartenders Damien, and ask for some of the wait staff. One person taught me this. Tell them that Pete Margaritis said hello. They might remember me but they might not, but if you tell them that I've written a couple articles for them, I'm in there as much as possible. I actually love the place. They'll remember me and you can find them. CiaoBellaMN.com. I love going to the west coast and one of my favorite cities is Seattle. I mean as you can tell I love my seafood. I love seafood in all way shape and form, and one time I was in Seattle and my brother worked as a vice president of visual merchandising for Express, and he happened to be in Seattle at the same time. So we met downtown at the restaurant called Purple cafe and wine bar, which is located on 1225 Fourth Avenue. It kind of really kind of an eclectic place you know big windows kind of dark and somewhat of a noise level. But I had the pan roasted Alaskan halibut. It was like butter. It just melted in my mouth. It had this cheery carrot puree and poached leeks and fava beans with a pea shoot salad. I'm starting to get a watery mouth as I'm speaking here but there's another fun restaurant to go to and they're looking at purplecafe.com. Now I love sushi and when I'm in Bellevue, Washington, which is where the Washington society of CPAs is located, I stop off at Seastar, which is located at the corner of 108th Avenue Northeast and 2nd Street. I mean they've got wonderful sushi and they've got a wonderful sushi and happy hour, and some of my favorite sushi there is a jalapeno salmon roll or you know traditional kind of spicy tuna roll or a the red salmon nigiri. I've had a variety of sushi there. I've had a variety of food. But those three stand out in my mind. And if you're ever in Bellevue or you're heading that way, look up Seastarrestaurant.com and check out the menu. Great place. As Clarke Price would say, they get great groceries there. The city of Atlanta, Georgia and I recently was taken to this restaurant called Canoe by the CEO of the Georgia society's CPA, Boyd Search, and the COO, Greg Wilder, with two other members of the Georgia society of CPAs, Brandon Vernon and Leslie Bucy. This place is pretty cool. It's you know tucked away overlooking I believe is the Caloosahatchee River. It's located at 4199 Paces Ferry Road. And we had something really interesting that night we started off with as an appetizer we had peppercorn crusted kangaroo loin. That's right. I said kangaroo loin. And this was just wonderful. It was all hoppy. Put a little spring back on our step. I'm sorry I couldn't help myself, but it was really really good. It was extremely tender. That night I had Alaskan halibut with an east coast shellfish noodles pickle and coconut with lemon grass broth, and I can just say that it just kind of disappeared rather quickly because it was absolutely wonderful. And Boyd got this really interesting burger. It was called a duck and beef burger and it had a Sunnyside egg on it with wilted spinach pickled onion and truffle fries. The truffle fries were to die for. I couldn't pry that duck burger away from him. But man it looked really really good. And you can find them at CanoeATL.com. Now my all time favorite airport sushi restaurant is called One Flew South and is located in Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Airport in Concourse A. This place is packed all the time. And the reason why is because they have outstanding food. It's a blend of it's like a blend of sushi and a blend of Southern food. I haven't had the Southern food because once I went and tasted the Kamakazi role it had me hooked for life, which in the Kamakazi really good tuna salmon hamachi spicy mayo white seaweed and eel sauce. And it's just so fresh. The other one I like a lot is the salmon and avocado roll, which is a spicy salmon cracklin with a cucumber Greek yogurt sauce accompanied with it. It is fabulous and you can find them at oneflewsouthATL.com. This next city I've recently been introduced to about four years ago is Charleston, South Carolina, and that's where my publisher is located, Advantage Media Group, and the restaurant that I absolutely love when I go to Charleston. The name of it's called SNOB, and it stands for slightly north of broad. It's located in 192 East Bay street. Now if my memory serves me correct I did ask Clarke for a recommendation for a restaurant to go and I think it was

something along the lines of Cotton, but they were actually closed that evening for a private party and this was a sister restaurant across the street. And I sat at the bar and ordered the barbecued tuna which is topped with fried oysters green onions and a country ham butter along with a mustard barbecue sauce, a South Carolina barbecue sauce. It was absolutely fabulous. And my publisher actually published a cookbook for this restaurant that they sent me a copy of and that's on my list of something to make is that barbecued tuna, and you can find them at snobcharleston.com. Now I love BBQ and one of my favorite barbecue towns is Nashville, Tennessee, and my favorite restaurant at Nashville, Tennessee is called Puckett's Grocery and Restaurant but I'm not. I think it originally was founded many many years you know it was a grocery and a restaurant. They kept it. But it's actually just a wonderful restaurant. There's multiple locations. But the one that I ate out was 500 Church Street downtown Nashville. So I had the Puckett's barbecue and you get your choice of pulled pork chicken or brisket slow smoked over cherrywood and you top it was slaw to make it Memphis style. And I had this pulled pork sandwich topped with this slaw and fries with it. And it was it was really really wonderful. But the one thing as I'm sitting at the bar eating this I was watching the bartender and he was making this bloody Mary, and at a glance I thought he put in barbecue sauce into the bloody mary and actually he did. They make their bloody marys spicy barbecue sauce which really sends a bloody Mary to a whole other level. So if you ever in Nashville, Tennessee, I like Jack's barbecue which is in downtown across from sort of cross from Bridgestone Arena... But by far this is my favorite barbecue place in Nashville and it's Puckettsgro.com/Nashville. When I'm in New York there's so much wonderful food everywhere. And I've been to New York City and a New York area a number of times, and I could do probably just a whole episode on New York City area restaurants. But there's two that just really jump out at me. And one of them is Taverna Kyclades, which is located at 33-07 Ditmars Boulevard, Astoria, New York. Now this is a Greek restaurant and I don't normally go out to Greek restaurants because my family does a wonderful job and I'm an extremely big critic when it comes to Greek food because I've had some of the best from my grandmother my mother my mother in law goes on and on and on and on. But this place stood out. And the thing that really made it stand out for me is I love I love calamari. I love squid. But I'm not much of a... I don't really like it when it's fried. There's a few places I've had it fried but I prefer grilled, and they had on the special that night at this restaurant a stuffed squid that I wish I could remember what it was stuff with but all I just remember it was tender. It was wonderful. My niece lives there and when I do get a chance to visit with her I we go to this restaurant or try something new. But of all the ones that I've tried in the Astoria area, which is basically little Greek Town, this restaurant by far head and shoulders wins every time especially with a stuffed squid as an entree. The next restaurant in New York City area is Estiatorio Milos, which is located on one 125th West 55th Street in New York. And this is another Greek restaurant. And what makes this restaurant so unique is they fly their seafood in every single day from the Mediterranean. That's right. Fresh fish fresh seafood that's flown in every day from the Mediterranean. And yes it is expensive. But let me tell you it's worth it because if you get the fish of the day or something along those lines you get up from your table and you pick the fish that you want to have prepared for you from the ice display near where the kitchen is located. And it is the freshest by far best fish that I've ever eaten. It's right up there. I mean it's... those restaurants that I've said in this podcast have fresh fish whatever. They all do. But this... must be because it's from the Mediterranean. It just takes it to a whole new level. And they've got a wonderful variety of food. They've got a lot of obviously Greek food on the menu. And there used to be on the menu. I'm actually looking at it now. They used to have a soup for two. I believe they've probably taken it off because of the amount of heart attacks people would have because the soup was priced at about \$130 for a bowl of two. And

then all this fresh seafood in that soup. So if in the Greater New York City area those are my two favorite restaurants, and they happen to be two Greek restaurants. And finally the newest addition. I just recently came back from two days in Lincoln, Nebraska, and I was introduced to this restaurant called The Dish Restaurant which is located at 1100 O street in Lincoln Nebraska. I was introduced to this restaurant by Ryan Parker, who's the CEO of Endicott clay products and is the current incoming chair at the Nebraska Society of CPAs. This restaurant was located near my hotel that I was staying. And as I as I've been reading this most of most of what I've had to eat is seafood related and once again it was I had coriander dusted scallops, which had summer succotash tomato coolly chive oil cilantro watercress lime confit and carrot salsa. It was wonderful. I mean it just disappeared. But the one thing I would say about this restaurant if you go to the dish restaurant just know that they have mushroom scallops on the menu, but they're not scallops. they're mushrooms that look like scallops. And the waiter shared a story that he had somebody say these are the worst tasting scallops ever. And he said sir they're really not scallops. These are mushrooms that look like scallops. And I said well still. Worst-tasting scallops I've ever had. We all got a big laugh at that. But the seafood was wonderful. It's a quaint little place in downtown Lincoln Nebraska and well well worth a visit. And thank you Ryan for introducing me to this restaurant because hopefully when I'm back in the Lincoln Nebraska area I'll go back there again and sample more. Oh and the other thing I just thought about - another reason I liked this restaurant is... you know people ask ask me what do you think the world's worst invention is. And I find that very easy. I think it's the alcohol pour regulator. You know the thing that pours that collects an ounce and then lets it loose? This place pours free handed. All these restaurants I go to, I prefer a free handed port just like most people would prefer a free handed pour versus the alcohol regulator poor. So that was another thing that just impressed me. I just thought about this since it's so fresh in my mind. Well I hope you've enjoyed this little trip down restaurant lane through a variety of cities in the U.S. I think it's fun. I do have the opportunity to visit a lot of different restaurants in my travels and I'm going to do a better job of eating out more and maybe doing more of these because I really love. I love restaurants and I will say all these restaurants I've mentioned the one theme outside of just outstanding food the one theme that they all have is great customer service because I've always said you can have... You can have the best food and the worst service and most people won't come back again. But all these places had wonderful service with Ciao Bella being a step above all of them. But I had great service great food great conversation. The places weren't overly loud. And it was a lot of fun so I hope you enjoy this episode on restaurants. Thank you.

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Peter: [00:29:50] Now before I close this episode I would like to take a moment to talk about [the first five episodes of this podcast are now qualified for CPE self-study credit](#) in the NASBA category of personal development. Those interviews are with Clarke Price, former CEO of the Ohio society of CPAs. Mike Sciortino, author of Gratitude Marketing. Tom Hood... Well you've been introduced to him and you will be introduced to him again. Ed Mendlowitz, who's a partner at Withum, Smith, and Brown. And Karl Ahlrichs, who's H.R. professional at Gregory and Appel. These episodes are located on the MACPA-BLI self-study Web site and they are mobile friendly. Create an account and purchase an episode. You can listen to them on your daily commute or while working out, or even at your desk! When you're finished, take the review and final exam on your mobile device or your computer. It's that easy. While all Improv is no Joke podcasts are available on my web site, only those purchased to the [MACPA-BLI self-study Website](#) are eligible for CPE self-study credit. This is not nano-learning - this is self-study

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