

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea



Zach Ireland:

Hello, everyone, welcome to the expat chit chat show! I’m your host, Zach Ireland, filling in for Madonna who is filling in for Eva Peron who could not be here as she is busy telling the people of Argentina who to cry and not to cry for. Our thoughts and prayers are with her during these trying times. Hello, everyone, welcome to the expat chit chat show! A show where we delve into in this new age of globalization what exactly is an expat. Who are these people? What are their stories and where in this new strange land, can I get a decent cup of coffee? Today, I am joined in the studio by actor, television personality and social media giant, Brian O’Shea.

Brian O’Shea:

Wow, that sounds way too much. You know I don’t...wow, thank you. Thank you for the nice words.

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Of course, but you are! You are! Thanks for joining me, first of all, I really appreciate it.

Brian O’Shea:

My pleasure.

Zach Ireland:

Describe the studio that we’re in today.

Brian O’Shea:

It’s very nice, very spacious. It has a lovely view. Can we actually say where we are?

Zach Ireland:

No, absolutely.

Brian O’Shea:

Okay, so we’re in this resort in the middle of Egypt somewhere. Very far from any civilization and we are in a really nice seaside resort and the view is kind of half nice, a lot of air-conditioning boxes but it’s very nice.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah? So right now, we are about three hours by car outside of Cairo in the West Suez, overlooking the red sea and this is a very special episode because we are actually here to attend one of my best friends in the whole wide world’s wedding here in Egypt.

Brian O’Shea:

And surprisingly, the Red Sea is not red.

Zach Ireland:

It’s not red?!

Brian O’Shea:

How? What?

Zach Ireland:

Do you know why it’s called the red sea?

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O'Shea

Brian O'Shea:

Let me guess, someone...no. No, I have no idea.

Zach Ireland:

The reason it's called the Red Sea is because the coral looks red. So, the water is super, super crystal clear and when you're going over in a boat and you look down, you see red coral so that's why it's called the Red Sea.

Brian O'Shea:

So it is actually red. Interesting.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, because the water itself is not red, the coral is.

Brian O'Shea:

There you go. Every day you learn something new.

Zach Ireland:

There you go. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, Brian, let's go ahead and start out with a very simple question.

Brian O'Shea:

Okay, hit me.

Zach Ireland:

Even though a tomato is technically considered a vegetable, technically considered a fruit, does it feel like a vegetable?

Brian O'Shea:

It does. If you ask me, I think tomato shouldn't be fruit.

Zach Ireland:

Let's actually start out with the real question. So where have you lived in the world? Starting from the beginning to now?

Brian O'Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Started from the bottom, now we’re here. So, I, obviously, I started in Argentina, that’s where I’m from, by the way. I lived there until I was 19 and then I decided to leave, looking for a place where I would feel more comfortable than I guess, I started travelling around Europe, just like kind of hitchhiking, couch surfing and just eating rice, basically, for months.

Zach Ireland:

Wow.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, left Argentina with 300 euros.

Zach Ireland:

Seriously?

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, that’s all I had.

Zach Ireland:

I bet your mother thought that you were just the stupidest child in the world.

Brian O’Shea:

They thought I was going back in 3 months crying back home but I’ve been out for 6 years now. Over 6 years. So, traveled for 3 to 4 months with that money and I went to more than 15 countries then I ran out of money and that’s when I settled in Berlin, Germany for like half a year. I got a job there in a fish shop. They’re gutting fish like opening up fish, selling fish. It was disgusting. The worst job I’ve ever done then I made some money there and I kept travelling. I went up north, Scandinavia. I ran out of money very fast there.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, things, it’s very expensive, isn’t it?

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah and then I ended up in this place called Stavanger which was beautiful. It’s like this little town by the seaside and I was, I just fell in love with the place and I said, “Okay, if I get a job today,” I printed some CVs so I said, “If I can get a job today, I stay here,” and the first place I went, I went to this Mexican restaurant and I said, “Dude, do you feel like I can work here even if I don’t speak any Norwegian?” He was like, “Do you have time tomorrow to start?” I said, “Well, for a trial?”, “No, no. You start tomorrow.”

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Zach Ireland:

Oh, wow! Oh, that’s great.

Brian O’Shea:

What the fuck?!

Zach Ireland:

So, the people there are just very, very nice.

Brian O’Shea:

Super nice and everyone speaks English. Perfect English and I stayed there for 7 months but then, winter came.

Zach Ireland:

Oh, okay, yeah. Winter in Northern Europe isn’t fun.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah. So, I was like, “No.” because I don’t like cold. So then after that, I went to, okay I had this thing, this idea in my mind that I wanted to be an actor and I wanted to study acting so after that I went straight to Australia, because its warm and they speak English there. I had London, too cold. The US, there’s a lot of guns so I didn’t want to go there so I was like Australia, let’s do it.

Zach Ireland:

Interesting. Did you go there on the, what is that, the working visa program?

Brian O’Shea:

Working [00:05:19] so I stayed there for 2 years, I studied acting and then I moved to China after that. When I was in Australia, the acting opportunities weren’t many and also they wanted to promote the local talent so they were very strong in sort of hiring Australian people and then while I was in Australia, I basically fell in love with Chinese food and then I was like, “You know what, let’s just go to China to eat” and when I went to China I was like, Oh, you know what, I can actually try doing my own content, being in movies or TV shows and stuff. so, yeah, I ended up staying in China now for 2 years and a half?

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

And when you first moved to China, you first stayed in Shenzhen, is that right?

Brian O’Shea:

No. The first time I went to China was, I actually went to Tianjin.

Zach Ireland:

Oh, okay.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, and then.

Zach Ireland:

A lot of grapefruit in Tianjin. A lot of grapefruit.

Brian O’Shea:

And then I went to Shandong and then I went to Guangzhou and then I went to Shanghai and now, I’m in Beijing.

Zach Ireland:

There you go. That’s all over. Okay, wow. So, for those of you who are keeping track, he started in Argentina, backpacked around Europe and then Australia and then finally went in China where you’ve been for in the past 2 years and a half.

Brian O’Shea:

2 years and a half.

Zach Ireland:

2 and a half years? Your Chinese is very, very good for 2 and a half years.

Brian O’Shea:

Thank you.

Zach Ireland:

Very, very impressive. Once again like we learned in the last episode, podcasting is a very, very good way to connect with old friends. So how would you describe your job because, in

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

my eyes, you're an actor, you're a television personality, you're, like I said, a social media giant.

Brian O’Shea:

Best job in the world. So, I would say, as of right now, I would just say food vlogger.

Zach Ireland:

Food vlogger?

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, that’s how I would describe it because the other things are...they're sort of, how do you call it? Supplementary. I wish I could say actor but, as of yet, I have not yet been in that many productions to call myself a fulltime working actor so I would say food vlogger who is also an actor, who’s also...because DouYin is also not food vlogger and its one of the biggest things I’m doing. Social media public figure?

Zach Ireland:

DouYin, for the listeners at home who would may not know, is the Chinese version of Tik Tok or this sort of new answer to Vine, if you will.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, so a short video platform. 15 to 30 seconds.

Zach Ireland:

So you’d say you're generally a food vlogger and a social media influencer, if that’s the right term?

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, I guess.

Zach Ireland:

So, I normally ask this question a little bit later but because this ties in directly with your job, where could people find you on social media?

Brian O’Shea:

The name is actually [00:08:10] Taste Buds so if you actually write LYLC it will come up because that—yeah. It’s just LYLC and then the rest of all the platforms is xiabobobrian. You could write that X-I-A-B-O-B-O and it should come up.

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Zach Ireland:

Alright so for our western media listeners?

Brian O’Shea:

Tastebuds88. You can find my Instagram.

Zach Ireland:

Tastebuds88, there we go. Alright so why taste buds then?

Brian O’Shea:

Why taste buds? So originally the idea came out years ago with a friend of mine. We went to Thailand together and I was like “Holy moly, the amount of food that no one knows is out there,” because coming from Argentina, Argentina is very far from Asia and we don’t know shit. Like mom used to make Italian noodles and add beansprouts to it and say, “I made Chinese tonight,”

Zach Ireland:

Oh, interesting!

Brian O’Shea:

It was like and I thought it was Chinese food, you know? And I then I come to Asia and I discover and I was like “Oh my god, we have no idea what’s going on here,” so we decided we were going to start a food channel together. We bought a camera and this and that and then we moved together to start the whole thing and we put a name to it and we were like alright, let’s call it taste buds because it comes from your tongue and it’s also taste buddies like friends of taste.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, I follow that.

Brian O’Shea:

But then we found out that we couldn’t stand each other and it never happened and we sold the camera and you know.

Zach Ireland:

Well, sometimes you have a really good friend and you're better off friends than roommates or sometimes you're better off friends than business partners and sometimes you find out that you're better off friends than lovers, in some situations as well.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Yes, that’s very true

Zach Ireland:

It’s normal. You have to be receptive to letting the relationship change and mold and sometimes, letting go isn’t the same as giving up. A lot of times, I think, without getting too deep, I think a lot of times we’re afraid of failure and so we force ourselves to stay in a relationship or stay working on a project or stay working with a business because we don’t want to admit that it’s not the right fit because sometimes it feels like you’re giving up but really its more about letting go and if you didn’t let go of that situation then you wouldn’t be where you are right now which...so across all of Brian O’Shea’s social media platforms is a combination of about 6 million followers. I’m going to say that one more time because it’s a very impressive number and hard for social media influencers to really grasp that 6 million. To give a comparison, I’ve been working as an actor and talk show host for about 6 years or so and I have an accumulative of maybe 300,000 or so and I say that and westerners are like “Whoa, that’s so many numbers!” but you’re just sitting over here, giggling, looking down on us. [laughs]

Brian O’Shea:

Oh, come on. It’s even hard! Like for me, when people ask and I go red and I go like, “I don’t know. 6 million?” I don’t know. I just don’t feel comfortable boasting.

Zach Ireland:

Which is why I brought it up because I’m legitimately very proud of you. I talked to you about this earlier but honestly, I would say, maybe two years ago or so, when the market wasn’t so saturated with westerners working in Chinese social media, I was on a project called Informal Talks [00:11:49] and there were about ten other guys in the show and we had what at the time was considered a very large number of social media followers for a westerner and I remember you reached out to me to go on your show, Taste buds and I really wanted to do it and it didn’t work out because I may or may not have been incredibly hungover that day.

Brian O’Shea:

Yes, you were.

Zach Ireland:

I was. I was so hungover. It just didn’t work out and then we tried to meet up again and it didn’t work but we became very good friends.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, right. The reason I think you didn’t come because I had 2 fans back in the day.

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Zach Ireland:

No, honestly, I’ll tell you it was because I was so hungover and you wanted to get tofu or something and I was like man, I’m going to throw up. I remember back then you had just about 10,000 followers just about.

Brian O’Shea:

Probably, yeah, around, yeah.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, just about and now you're sitting excited about 6 million and it’s amazing within 2 years and you worked in a couple different, you’ve worked in several different talk shows. Made television appearances all the time. Yeah, you're doing great. Okay, I’ll stop friend bragging now but I’m very proud of you. So, let me get to the question I have prepared. What’s something that not everyone would know about your job?

Brian O’Shea:

That’s a good question.

Zach Ireland:

Thank you. I’ve prepared.

Brian O’Shea:

That’s a very good question. Let me see. About my job, okay.

Zach Ireland:

Something that it might even surprise people to know.

Brian O’Shea:

Okay. Just to give a little context, I am known mostly for my short videos in which I make dumplings so I grab everything that I can find and just put it inside one dumpling, cook it and then eat it and say if its good or not, basically and this is actually something that people wouldn’t know about me, not my job, sorry.

Zach Ireland:

No, actually, now I'm curious. You can’t just leave that out there.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

I’m actually not that big on dumplings. [Zach laughs] People keep finding me on the street and they go like are you eating dumplings right now? Are you eating dumplings tonight? Are you eating dumplings before coming? And I’m like “No, I’m actually not that into dumplings!”

Zach Ireland:

This is my Walter Kröhnkite moment right here.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah people really like, I don’t intend to say this because it would ruin people’s dreams like

Zach Ireland:

Absolutely.

Brian O’Shea:

Dumpling man doesn’t like dumplings? It’s not that I don’t like them. It’s just that I’m not that big. I’d rather eat other things.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, it’s not like your thing.

Brian O’Shea:

Something that people don’t know about my job...okay, so, because of the release rate, I would release for example a short video every two days and a long video a week, people tend to think that happens kind of at the same rate within your life. But since it’s all about creative content and inspiration, it’s not always there. You not always have an idea and you have everything planned so sometimes you just come up with a bunch of ideas and you film five videos in one week or maybe 6 videos in one day if it’s the short ones and then you’re just thinking what to do next for the next 4 weeks while you release content slowly and you’re like shit I’m about to run out of content and I don’t have any new ideas.

Zach Ireland:

I mean essentially, you’re talking about like writer’s block but for writer’s block for a social influencer and yeah, that is something that you wouldn’t have. Like you essentially have to backlog so many ideas.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Yeah because you never know when a good idea’s going to come so you have to prepare.

Zach Ireland:

Do you have any advice for people when they deal with creative block or writer’s block at all? What gets the juices flowing?

Brian O’Shea:

I think...Okay, so one piece of advice would be watch other people’s content and especially other people who are not, like for example, if you're doing food, maybe check food from another country. Like a food vlogger from another country and see what other people are doing because like for example, if you're in the US, and you're doing your food vlogger, you should not check other US food vloggers because then you're not going to get a new thing from it. The other thing I would say is don't sit down if you have the block. Don't just sit down and try to keep squeezing it because it's not going to come out. It's just like when you want to sleep and you can't? Just stop trying to sleep. Do something else for a bit. Go off for a walk, go for a bike ride, go to the supermarket, go watch a movie.

Zach Ireland:

It's like one of those things, the more you force it. There's a saying my dad always likes to say. He's like an idea is like a fart. If you have to force it, it's probably shit.

Brian O’Shea:

Oh my god, I love that sentence.

Zach Ireland:

Isn't that good?

Brian O’Shea:

That's so good!

Zach Ireland:

I'm sure a lot of other people’s dads say that as well but [00:16:50]. I was going to ask you, what's something annoys you about your job but it sounds like writers' block is what annoys you.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, that's a big deal. That's a big part. Something that annoys me of my job is that I kind of do it myself. It doesn't come with the job but it's something that I keep doing and that it

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

annoys me. So, for example, if one day I slept like shit and I have this big ass eye circles, I just don’t feel very good-looking. I don’t want to—I can’t live the house or I have to, because I’m scared if someone’s going to want to take a picture with me and then the picture’s going to be out there and I’m going to be looking like shit. I feel like when that happens I’m like, “Fuck. I can’t be myself.” But then that’s something I can, I can actually go out and don’t give a shit.

Zach Ireland:

No, I understand where you're coming from. I know that very, very well actually. That’s something, to this day that I do struggle with because in my daily life, I don’t do my hair. I really—I don’t care because when I’m working every single day, someone’s playing with my hair for 2, 3 hours and it gets really annoying. I just want to get up and go outside but then as more and more projects I’ve worked on gain traction and people get, you get recognized on the street. I don’t take the subway anymore in Beijing and people always want to take photos and it makes you feel like you're living under a microscope.

Brian O’Shea:

It does and its exhausting. If you haven’t experienced it, you might not be able to grasp—it’s exhausting.

Zach Ireland:

Oh, my mom makes fun of me all the time. “Oh, poor you, everybody loves you, wants to take photos of you.” It’s very draining but also...

Brian O’Shea:

Sometimes you just don’t want to talk to anyone. You just want to be on your phone and listen to music and just like “Okay, yeah sure,”

Zach Ireland:

You don’t have anonymity. You don’t have the ability to just go out in a big city and disappear into it. I’m a little bit lucky, in the sense that, every single person who sees me, “Oh wow, you’re so much uglier in person than you are on TV,” But what that means when I’m dressed up and I’m clean shaven, I get recognized more as opposed to when I’m not and then people don’t recognize me so much. Yeah, that is troubling.

Brian O’Shea:

But then the other part is that, for example, if it happens one time, someone wants to take a picture with you, it’s fine but then if it happens several times in a day, you're just not in the mood anymore and then kind of that person, it’s not their fault because they don’t know you met all these people before.

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Zach Ireland:

And it’s probably their first time seeing you in person.

Brian O’Shea:

Exactly so you owe it to them and you have to be nice to them.

Zach Ireland:

And truthfully without them as well...

Brian O’Shea:

I’m nothing.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, you wouldn’t have a job.

Brian O’Shea:

I owe them everything. They are the best thing that happened to me.

Zach Ireland:

And also, 1000% were in the same boat in this and imagine that, we’re in the same career field.

Brian O’Shea:

What a coincidence!

Zach Ireland:

It’s interesting because I also find that I go through phases where I get recognized quite a bit and like quite a lot like in the same day and I’ll go 2, 3 weeks and maybe I won’t get recognized but also, maybe I’m not in Beijing or maybe I’m not going out as often as I should and in those instances, I wonder “Oh, am I fading, am I losing popularity, what’s going on?” and there’s so much ego involved. What’s something that sparks joy about your job? What makes you happy?

Brian O’Shea:

Okay. There’re so many things. I’m just thinking about like what’s the one that makes me the happiest.

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Zach Ireland:

Your eyes just lit up there.

Brian O’Shea:

I mean, obviously, whenever a video goes viral. That sense of achievement you go like “Yes! That idea was good,” but I think mostly it’s when fans actually send you a text and say something like, say things like, “You are the reason I smile every day” or “I look forward to your videos every single week” or “I’m a student and I spend 20 hours studying but whenever your video comes out, I can smile” and whenever they say something like that or whenever you have a fan with depression and they say you are the only reason they—yeah, there’s a lot of people who say, “You’re the only reason I’m still alive,” and that’s, even if it’s serious and it’s like wow but that’s—it makes me happy to know I can provide that to someone and I think those moments are what make the whole thing worth it and knowing that you make people happy and when, cause the only reason you know that is when they tell you so I guess the happiest moment of the job is when you get those messages, those comments with the letters.

Zach Ireland:

And you have a fan whenever you put out a video within it seems like within 10 to 30 minutes, all of a sudden you have a drawn caricature of yourself.

Brian O’Shea:

She’s very good at it. She’s very good.

Zach Ireland:

She’s very good. God, that video that we did 2,3 months ago or whatever [00:21:55] which was very good I had a great time doing it. Yeah, I remember the videos, photos that she puts out, the pictures.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, she makes the drawing, cartoonish sort of drawing but she makes, she would replicate the clothes everyone’s wearing to perfection and the faces are like, she’s just really good at doing what she does.

Zach Ireland:

She did one of you and your mom. That was so cute. How did your mom feel about that?

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

She loved it! She actually...her...I think, WhatsApp profile photo is one of those drawings or her Instagram or something like that.

Zach Ireland:

Your mom’s amassing a fanbase. When I go on your social media, I see people comment about how cute your mom is and it seems that some people are really wanting your mom to open up some social media accounts.

Brian O’Shea:

To open up a Weibo?

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Brian O’Shea:

Oh my god. She doesn’t even speak English properly. That will be so hard to just say “Hola!” and just put a phone and everyone will be like...

Zach Ireland:

But that happens a lot with some social media starts. You see like Elle Mills, her mom opened up an Instagram and she just post pictures of her and food that she makes and she has 50,000 followers or something just because people want to be closer to you and love the relationship that you and your mom have.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, she has an Instagram. She has an art gallery in Argentina and she posts things related to that. It could be kind of boring, I think, for my fans to...I mean, Mom has an Instagram guys, you can follow her [00:23:24].

Zach Ireland:

There you go. You got the Mom plug in there. That’s great.

Brian O’Shea:

Mom, some advertising.

Zach Ireland:

How does your mom feel about your fame?

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Brian O’Shea:

Okay, it’s so weird to just go with fame and she came to China recently for a month and I guess she didn’t understand because she can only follow Instagram and Facebook. She doesn’t know what the reach we’re talking about

Zach Ireland:

DouYin and Weibo.

Brian O’Shea:

Whenever I put a photo in Instagram saying, “Oh, I got to 5 million fans,” I guess she didn’t realize but then when we were walking around Beijing, she would get surprised like “Holy shit! You got recognized 5 times in the last hour,” like “Holy shit, you are actually famous!” and I was like “I guess”?

Zach Ireland:

These numbers aren’t fake, Mom. No, it’s cute. My aunt came to visit me and we had some weird things and there was a poster up of me somewhere and she was like “Oh, wow, that guy looks like you” and I’m like “Yeah, that is me.”

Brian O’Shea:

That is me.

Zach Ireland:

What is something that you want people who don’t work in your profession to know about your profession? So, for example, I had a writer on earlier in this season who told me that he wants people to know that there’s no such thing as the media because so many people blame the media for fake news or things like that and he says we’re not one solid entity but everyone treats us as an entity or for me, as an actor, I would want people to know that fame doesn’t happen overnight. It’s not something that you, like everyone says, “Oh, they’re an overnight success story,” but truthfully, like Tiffany Haddish had worked as an actress for 14,15 years and it was a culmination of all of those work that she did to get her to where she is.

Brian O’Shea:

Right and then the only thing they see is that that person suddenly became famous and for them, “You can become famous overnight,” but no, it’s actually

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Exactly. I was going to say and because of that later positions of my jobs because people are always giving me suggestions and are like “Have you thought about doing a big Hollywood movie or something?” and you're just like well, those things don’t just happen.

Brian O’Shea:

So, I guess it would be something around the lines of it’s not that easy. People tend to think that the things we do, like our industry, is kind of super easy and it’s something you were lucky and you’re like [snaps finger] [00:26:04] you just said that people think that you got lucky and you just don’t do anything and then one day whatever you do you just film it and people love it, it’s not really like that. It requires a lot of planning, a lot of research, requires a lot of things. Even putting yourself in the mindset when you're doing the video, sometimes you just plan that this day you going to be doing this video and this and that day you wake up and you don’t feel like doing anything.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah!

Brian O’Shea:

But you still have to because you told all your fans you need to upload on that day and it’s not, so what are you going to do? You going to be, you going to not have, when you in a bad mood doing it? Nah. No one’s going to watch that video. Sometimes you have to put a mask. It’s not really a mask. You have to force yourself to be in that mindset and that, when you do it once, it’s fine. When you do it several times, it gets to you. It doesn’t feel right so I feel like what I want to say is that, there's way more behind doing a vlog or doing a video and what people see and if I had to tell someone who’s not in this industry, there's way more effort in doing it and it would be nice to get people to know that, to appreciate that.

Zach Ireland:

I can definitely see that with all the comments. You never should go into the comments section of YouTube. I don’t even like to go on the comment section on Instagram or even on my Weibo just because everyone’s a critic and no one ever actually does it. They always say that “Oh, it’s so easy what you do,” or on a lot of, because literally you work on with [00:27:51] and [00:27:53] and all those guys, what’s they called again?

Brian O’Shea:

[00:27:54] like white China.

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Yeah, yeah, white China. So, everyone who does that, they're all close friends of mine. I have known all of you guys for a long time, worked with you guys on several other projects and I find myself getting really pissed off for you, guys, reading some of the comments but normally, you get like 3,4,500 comments that are all good and are all positive and you get that one that just says something.

Brian O’Shea:

And it’s the one that ruins your day?

Zach Ireland:

It does! It absolutely something that ruins your day and it’s something that a lot of creative people deal with this and do you have any advice on that?

Brian O’Shea:

Well, I get a lot of comments like that because sometimes I get cut up reading the comments.

Zach Ireland:

Oh, it’s a spiraling journey.

Brian O’Shea:

But even things like just from the ignorance of people they would just like comment things like “Oh, this guy’s Chinese is not that good, why is everyone liking his videos?” How about you go to another country and learn a language in two years and start doing content but how will you do that and then come back and call me.

Zach Ireland:

It’s always the people who don’t speak another language that criticize your language.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah but I guess my advice to people, your question’s basically what would you tell people who are dealing with the same thing?

Zach Ireland:

Yeah. Yeah. How do you avoid?

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

How do I cope?

Zach Ireland:

How do you cope with it? Just don’t read the comments?

Brian O’Shea:

Well no. I mean you could. That’s definitely an option. For me, personally, I don’t get affected by it but maybe that’s just who I am. I just don’t really—it’s not that I give a shit. It’s just that I don’t get affected by it.

Zach Ireland:

You’ve developed a good thick skin, would you say?

Brian O’Shea:

Right. I understand what he means. My Chinese is not perfect and I also understand that he probably doesn’t know my story so he’s just talking from a random, maybe he was having a bad day, whatever. I don’t let it get to me. I think what people should do is if you’re going to read the comments then be aware that that’s going to be there. Those kind of hate comments and just don’t let it get to you.

Zach Ireland:

That’s very true because when I was first dealing with a lot of people commenting and stuff on my social media posts and there’d be these negative things because at first, it’s all positive. “Oh, wow! This is great! Feed my ego! More, more, more!” but then also, when I’m putting stuff out it is, legitimately, a good way of interacting with your fans and followers because if you know what kind of content that they want, you can square into that. You can see how they respond to certain things and you see some really beautiful interactions there and what’s funny to me is that the stuff that I am already self-conscious about like if I gained a little bit of weight and I lost a little bit of weight and I say that like I can definitely needle into your ego but for example, when I broke my arm and I started gaining weight and there’s a reason I broke my arm, there’s a reason I started gaining weight so this isn’t affecting like this and then it’s funny, sometimes they’ll say something and it really undermines your ego and it’s there for days and days and days. Someone made a comment when my fingernails were super long, they were longer than normal and I didn’t even notice that and I didn’t even think that people even think about so sometimes it just makes me laugh.

Brian O’Shea:

People look at the tiniest detail.

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Zach Ireland:

Everything.

Brian O’Shea:

They have a lot of time in their hands. First of all, never reply to negative comments. That’s very good advice, I think.

Zach Ireland:

It’s what they want. A lot of them do this professionally to get extra followers.

Brian O’Shea:

And then also, personally, it’s not good for you either. It’s not going to give you closure especially online. You’re never going to have closer. Just leave it there, ignore it, reply to the good comments.

Zach Ireland:

That’s some good advice for me, personally, as well because sometimes I see something and it’s always when it’s something about a friend where it usually really gets me. There was this guy who, right before I went into Egypt to study, my second time coming here. He sent me this private message and it was this long, detailed thing and it sounded educated. This guy sounded like he really thought this out, read a lot of books and he basically was, it seemed like okay for a while until it took this weird right turn and it was incredibly Islamophobic and he was talking a lot of things personally against our friend [00:32:30] and I could’ve set fire to that keyboard. I was typing so fast. I stopped for a minute and it made me so angry especially because he seemed so intelligent and I’m just no, he just made a right turn and he changed this and he fixed this and it kind of spiraled and then, once, I had proven my point, there was no way he could argue with it then all of a sudden just switched to, “Wow, I really, really liked your show, by the way” and he didn’t want to admit he was wrong. He didn’t want to admit any of that sort of stuff and so you’re right, it gave me absolutely no closure whatsoever.

Brian O’Shea:

Exactly. You will never, it will never get you closure and it’s not going to help. It’s just going to get you more and more angry and upset so, yeah, I think that’s the advice. Just don’t engage with negative comment or negative feedback. Just consider what they say, if you must. Critique is good for improving but just don’t engage with it.

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O'Shea

That's some really good advice.

Brian O'Shea:

Thank you, I thought about it. I'm prepared.

Zach Ireland:

Okay, moving on from that, because any efforts to find or discover who exactly are expats in this incredibly global world that we live in. Global world, that sounds so stupid and pedantic. As globalization continues and people are moving all over the world, we're trying to find out who expats are, where are they from, my question is how do you identify? What makes you you?

Brian O'Shea:

Well, definitely I have a bit of trouble identifying myself as Argentinian even though I am Argentinian, I'm not anything else. I'm not something else. I never felt that I can relate to the average Argentinian so it's a hard question. Right now, for me, home is Beijing, for sure. That's where I live and that's where I feel very comfortable and it's my home. I love the place but I'm, obviously, not from there and I'm obviously, culturally, because obviously my Chinese is not that good and I'm still studying so I don't fully understand China because it's a huge place with huge history.

Zach Ireland:

Okay, we can go from here, though. So why, what makes you not identify with Argentinian stuff?

Brian O'Shea:

Because Argentinians are so caught up with football, soccer and I never liked football. I honestly never liked football as much as everyone else. I didn't watch the matches. I didn't watch the world cup. I didn't even like playing it when I was growing up so that got a lot of hate from my friends, from my colleagues and stuff.

Zach Ireland:

Like actual hate not like...?

Brian O'Shea:

I didn't have any friends growing up. I was bullied at school.

Zach Ireland:

Because you didn't like football?

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah. I mean, bullied, mild bully. I wasn’t getting punched or anything. People were making fun of me and they were saying I was girly and feminine because I didn’t like football or I didn’t like cars. It’s a very macho society which you have to be violent and aggressive and like football and like cars and grow a beard and be tough.

Zach Ireland:

Be very much like machismo.

Brian O’Shea:

I grew up having little to no friends and the friends I had, we just didn’t have much in common. I grew up knowing that I wanted to leave one day and then I left trying to look for a place to call home, basically, where I feel like I would belong.

Zach Ireland:

That just sparked a quote in me that I read somewhere. It’s like, wanderlust or the desire to travel is being homesick for places you’ve never been.

Brian O’Shea:

Oh, fuck, I love that quote. I love that sentence.

Zach Ireland:

Isn’t it good?

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, I knew it from before, yeah. Being homesick for a place you’ve never been.

Zach Ireland:

yeah and I ask you how do you identify and even from a simple question and just where you’re from and how do you identify and we still haven’t landed on that, do you think you personally you just haven’t found it yet?

Brian O’Shea:

What? Who I am? I feel like I don’t have to put a location to it. That’s how I feel about my identification doesn’t need a place. I just feel like I am a guy who loves food, loves travelling and who right now is very happy of living in Beijing.

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

That, I can actually use that to segue into something earlier in the break we were chatting about that I think our listeners would really enjoy. Tell me more about when you picked up with the 300 pounds in your pocket, the 300 euros and you went and you lived in Europe and you essentially couch surfed and backpacked around. You said you’ve been to over 15 different countries in 3 months?

Brian O’Shea:

4 months.

Zach Ireland:

4 months and you didn’t finish spending that 300 euro.

Brian O’Shea:

That’s why I stopped travelling. Because I ran out of money.

Zach Ireland:

Okay but still 4 months, 15 different countries, that’s insane. Because a lot of people they always tell me, “I wish I can travel but I can’t afford it.” “I wish I could travel but I don’t have the money.”

Brian O’Shea:

You don’t need money to travel. That’s the thing. Do you want to travel or do you want to travel fancy? So, you have to figure out what is it that you want to do. If you just want to travel, you don’t need money.

Zach Ireland:

Explain.

Brian O’Shea:

Unless you have trouble getting visas and stuff and you're from a country that finds it hard to get visas. For me, it was easy because I had a European passport as well so I could go straight, no need for visa. I could stay for as long as I wanted.

Zach Ireland:

And you have a European passport because your parents are Spanish, is that right?

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

No, it’s because my great grandmother was Italian. Never met the woman, never been to Italy, I was born with the blessing of having dual nationality.

Zach Ireland:

Oh wow. So, you are Italian and—

Brian O’Shea:

And Argentinian.

Zach Ireland:

Okay. Please continue.

Brian O’Shea:

So, you have to figure out what you want. I met so many people say, “How do you travel so much? You’re probably rich. I don’t travel because I don’t have money.” Do you just want to travel or do you want to go to a nice hotel? There’re options. What I wanted to do back then, was to travel. I was curious. I want to explore. Go on an adventure. If that’s what you want, you don’t need money.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, there is something in that, as well, because when I go on vacations, I usually go for quite a while because that’s how my work works as well. So, I did a month in Vietnam, I did what was originally was supposed to be one, my first time in Egypt was one month and the second time was to study and that was four months but I don’t like to travel fancy either. Five-star hotels are nice and its okay but you're going to blow through your money and also, truthfully, you're not experiencing the country.

Brian O’Shea:

Exactly. All five-star hotels are the same.

Zach Ireland:

Exact same. They have the little tiny bottles of shampoo. Do you know there's a string of hotels from New Zealand all the way into Southeast Asia into, I want to say Laos or Vietnam or something, it’s called Banana Pancake Hiker Hostel or something but a lot of people go through city to city to specific hostels and the reason they call it the big Banana Pancake Hostel String or whatever, I don’t know, we’ll have to google it. Something along those lines. Pop into Google, you’ll find it and these people they go to, five, 10 different countries but every day, they're in Banana Pancakes because these hostels always have them so it’s

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

basically knocking on these people who want to say that they’ve travelled or they want to, they basically want to take Instagram photos but they don’t want to actually experience the culture.

Brian O’Shea:

That’s so sad.

Zach Ireland:

Oh, it’s so sad.

Brian O’Shea:

It’s what I travel for. In my mind, why would you go all the way...the people who live in China and they’ve been there for 10 years and don’t speak Chinese and all their friends move from their own country to country. But why would you go somewhere else to do the same thing you did at home in a place that feels like your home? Stay at home. What’s the point? If you, for me, that’s the thing. This area is subjective. For me, travelling is all about experiencing. Eating local food. Staying with local people, making friends with local people, living the local life and I think that’s the essence of traveling. That’s why I travel.

Zach Ireland:

There’s something so beautiful in the absolute other side of the world and discovering something from home there as well. I’ll give you an example. I’m from a town of about 178 people. Right next to my hometown is a little bit bigger town about 250. A friend of mine from there, she was doing a Fulbright education scholarship in Taiwan and while she was there, she was talking with this little girl and she showed a picture and this little girl said [00:41:41] which is my grandmother in English, right? And she looks at the photo and she hear the girl, and she said, oh my god, you call your grandmother [00:41:49], I also call my grandmother Nana and it was so, these words are so similar but they grew up on opposite sides of the world and they found that similar spark. It’s a simple one but I think it’s beautiful and there’s something nice about the human experience in that regard.

Brian O’Shea:

Well, again, because at the end of the day, we’re all human.

Zach Ireland:

We’re all sentient monkeys.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Yeah, we have that in common. So, you're going to find little variations of the same instinct that we have as far as animals so I think, yeah, that's definitely, you can relate but that's the other thing. People feel like they cannot relate to a different culture and that's why they look for their own but you can definitely relate. I can relate to any culture I come across to, at an extent, obviously. So, I'm feeling that's the beauty of it even though you're from different countries, different parts of the world, you can still have a drink together, have a meal together. Enjoy.

Zach Ireland:

You can still be Taste Buds.

Brian O’Shea:

You can still...Dude! I love it. [laughs]

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, it's good. I give you that one for free.

Brian O’Shea:

Thank you, I'll still use it anyway. I'm still Argentinian.

Zach Ireland:

[laughs] What are some challenges that you have living in Beijing?

Brian O’Shea:

Challenges?

Zach Ireland:

Yeah.

Brian O’Shea:

There's actually not many. People that always ask me this, especially people who went to China before and kind of had a bad experience or went to China and [00:43:23] they always talk about the traffic, people being rude and spitting on the streets and this and that. I think its fading away. When I gone to China, it was not very, how do you call it?

Zach Ireland:

Prevalent?

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Not very often that I would see that.

Zach Ireland:

I mean, honestly and that’s something that...I lived in Beijing for 7 years and I first went 2011 and people would always talk about Beijingers are walking around spitting and hacking on the street but when I actually found out the reason behind it because the mentality is better out than in. If I’m hacking up this flu, if I’m spitting because there’s something in there to [00:44:09] which is to get the ickiness out and so a friend of mine, I was like, you guys are [00:44:18]. Well, yeah, I’m not going to swallow it, its disgusting and when I thought about it, its kind of is.

Brian O’Shea:

It’s just a different train of thought.

Zach Ireland:

I mean you’re putting that in and it’s just sitting into your stomach and you have digest it, right?

Brian O’Shea:

But it’s like other people don’t do it.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, other people don’t do it.

Brian O’Shea:

It’s like cutting the lines. That’s fading away so, I guess, what I’m trying to say is that all those things don’t bother me. I understand them. They make sense, right? But for me, I guess challenges, the pollution, which is also fading away.

Zach Ireland:

It’s getting so much better.

Brian O’Shea:

Surprisingly, last year, there were only 5 days of pollution.

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Yeah, no, it’s changing so fast and again, my first time in China was in 2011 and it was pretty bad but again, Chinese people were more critical of it than foreigners were at that time and then now, it’s interesting to me to see people when they first come and the moment they’re like 3, 4 days and they’re like “Oh god, the pollution is so bad. I’ve been here for like a month.” One, you have no idea and also, this isn’t bad. This isn’t even considered bad in New York or LA. I mean, there are some days where it’s pretty awful but it’s all surmountable and you can overcome it.

Brian O’Shea:

Yes, so I guess, this pollution which is not a problem almost. But when there's a polluted day and you're, “Oh shit,” and you have to put the mask on but then it’s very odd right now and then traffic.

Zach Ireland:

Oh yeah, okay, traffic is a really big one in Beijing.

Brian O’Shea:

But then I learned how to avoid it. I cycle a lot. I go with a bicycle everywhere, like everywhere. I go from [00:46:01] to [00:46:02].

Zach Ireland:

Wow.

Brian O’Shea:

Two hours.

Zach Ireland:

That’s how many kilometers? That’s a long trip.

Brian O’Shea:

I don’t know but I go, I come back from school back home by bike.

Zach Ireland:

You do that? Oh, no wonder you’re in such good shape. That’s insane. For listeners at home, I would say, at least, 15 kilometers one way.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Yeah, it takes 2 hours to cycle not in a proper speed but yeah.

Zach Ireland:

That’s insane. That’s very impressive. You do that every day?

Brian O’Shea:

No, not every day. Whenever I know there's traffic, I don't get on a taxi and then, I take the subway. I try to avoid rush hour so it's fine but whenever I get stuck in traffic, it is a pain, yeah.

Zach Ireland:

What about, what are some things you love? What do you love about living in Beijing?

Brian O’Shea:

Now we’re talking!

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, your face just lit up.

Brian O’Shea:

Number one, food. I know Beijing like the back of my hand when it comes to food and I know the local food, places where only locals go. I know where to get foods from other place like Szechuan food or Cantonese food that is still similar to the authentic one. All my friends are there in Beijing, almost all my friends in China. I don't know. Beijing has a thing.

Zach Ireland:

For me, when it comes to a city, the most important thing about the city is the people. It's not the architecture, it's not the food, it's absolutely the people. I need somebody, I need a place where there's humor or they're very loving or something like that so here's a question for you. What is something incredibly quirky or unique about the people of Beijing? For example, something random about people in Cairo or Egypt, in general, is when you ask somebody or when you're looking for a place and you say, "Oh, I was told it was here," and one of the first thing they say to you is, "Who told you that? It's here," And then they give you proper directions or sometimes because they don't want to feel like they don't know, they don't want other people to think they don't know where they're going or people are just giving completely wrong directions but they will do it with total and complete confidence.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

Let me think. I guess they're super friendly but I feel like that's everywhere in China. They would just come to you even when you're just standing there, minding your own business, they will come to you in the middle, "Do you need help? Are you lost?" They would just come to you and be like "are you a foreigner?" and you will just stand there and be like "Yes."

Zach Ireland:

What do you think? What do you think I am from?

Brian O’Shea:

And they're asking all these questions and I feel they're super curious and friendly and they really want to interact with you but they just kind of don't know but they feel themselves...okay, this is how I would describe it. They suddenly look at you as a foreigner and they go like [gasp] and they feel this urge within themselves that they just want to talk to you. They want to know more about you. You are this new thing, this new alien that dropped out in their life and they're just [gasp] and you're a foreigner and that's the first thing they can think of and they just start from there and they want you to know their city and "Oh, I can recommend some food, you could go here for food," and this and that and "How do you like Beijing?" I don't know. I feel like they're just very...is there a word for this?

Zach Ireland:

They're very friendly. They're very caustically friendly in some ways and they just come on so incredibly strong and all at once.

Brian O’Shea:

And also, that comes with, not only friendly, but they, it comes with a very strong honesty as well which is why a lot of people say that Chinese people or Beijingers are rude.

Zach Ireland:

Because they're very blunt.

Brian O’Shea:

They're very blunt, yeah! If they don't like you, they'll be like "I don't like you" and then you'll be like, "Well, that's rude." No, it's not. They're just saying what they...

Zach Ireland:

They're just being honest.

Brian O’Shea:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

They don’t want to offend you, they're just being honest.

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, for example earlier I told you, a lot of times when people see me and they recognize me from a TV show, one of the first things that they say is “Oh, wow, you're so much uglier in person,” or “Oh, you look so much different from TV,” or whatever and Because I’ve lived there for so long, I get it. It’s just like they’re honest, they're just really very blunt.

Brian O’Shea:

But they're not trying to offend you, they’re not doing it to hurt you. They can be like, “Oh you got fat? How did you get so fat?” and you're like “Well, nothing I can do about it right now.”

Zach Ireland:

It’s a concept called [00:50:50] where they think it’s very much a way of taking care of a person’s heart because it’s like if I didn’t care about you, I wouldn’t say these things. A person that didn’t care about you wouldn’t notice subtle changes in your body and so when they see that someone has gained a lot of weight because it’s a way of saying to them that hey I'm paying attention about you, I notice what’s going on.

Brian O’Shea:

It’s also not such a bad thing in China.

Zach Ireland:

Alright Brian, do you have any last-minute advice for people?

Brian O’Shea:

The last-minute advice when it comes to what? To being an expat?

Zach Ireland:

Yeah, being an expat.

Brian O’Shea:

Alright, so my biggest advice, if you're not comfortable at home, just leave. There's no shame on leaving. There's no, if you're not comfortable then change it. That’s my biggest advice. The best choice in my life was leaving Argentina.

Zach Ireland:

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O’Shea

What do you say to the people who maybe are incredibly uncomfortable where they're at like the place they grew up but there's something holding them back from going? Let's just say they completely hate the place, everything, they hate their job, they're just dissatisfied with the people but they're worried about being so far away from their family? How do you deal with that because you are very far away from your family?

Brian O’Shea:

What we do is usually once a year, I go with my family, because my parents are divorced and my brother lives in London so I just basically pick a family member and we go travel somewhere.

Zach Ireland:

Oh, cool, that’s great.

Brian O’Shea:

So, what I would say is that don’t worry about that because if you're not comfortable, staying because of that? you’re going to regret that for the rest of your life and you're going to resent that person. If it’s one person and you say, “No, no, I'm staying because of them,” subconsciously you're going to resent that person. You’re going to blame that person for you staying and that’s terrible. You're doing worse.

Zach Ireland:

I could not agree with you more. I gave that advice to so many people. They say I can’t go because I want to take care of my mom and a lot of times, your mom doesn’t need you to take care of her. She was there, she was living just fine 34 years before you were born.

Brian O’Shea:

Maybe this is really intense, maybe you’ll die tomorrow? What is she going to do? She’s going to find a way so if you're not happy, she will understand or maybe...

Zach Ireland:

Absolutely and if she didn’t understand and she truthfully wants you to stay for selfish reasons. She doesn’t care about your well-being. She cares more about your relationship to her than your happiness but it is true. If you stay behind because of the job or you stay behind because of your partner or you stay behind because of your family, you're going to eventually resent that person. I personally believe.

Brian O’Shea:

Yeah, a hundred percent. I guess that’s my advice. If you're not happy, change something.

// THE EXPAT CHITCHAT SHOW

by ZACH IRELAND //

EPISODE 2 – Brian O'Shea

Zach Ireland:

Alright.