

**MIPCOM – OCTOBER 2017**

**MEDIA MASTERMIND KEYNOTE :  
GORDON RAMSAY,  
AWARD WINNING CHEF  
AND TV HOST**

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**Laurine Garaude**

Good morning. Hello and welcome to MIPCOM. I'm Laurine Garaude, Director of the TV Division at Reed Midem. Welcome to the first mastermind keynote. Today's first guest is award winning Emmy nominated multi Michelin Star chef, Gordon Ramsay. Gordon first came to Cannes in 1992 as chef on Reg Grundy's yacht, the Australian media mogul. Since then he's become the world's most famous chef and TV personality. Today, Gordon Ramsay will look back on the last 25 years, his motivations and how he maintains his brand across multiple platforms and across numerous restaurants around the world. Helping facilitate his remarks will be Cynthia Littleton, Television Editor for Variety. Welcome, Gordon Ramsay and moderator Cynthia Littleton.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Good morning.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Good morning. Gordon, thank you for coming out.

**Gordon Ramsay**

So happy to be back.

**Cynthia Littleton**

You are the busiest man in television. I don't know how you've managed to spare us this half hour, but we are grateful. Thank you

**Gordon Ramsay**

You're welcome. Thank you.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Everybody at this conference knows your bio and knows your trajectory over the last ten years. But, I thought we would just throw out some numbers that are incredibly impressive. 2,000 hours of Gordon Ramsay programming a year.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Shit, really?

**Cynthia Littleton**

Drink that in. Somewhere, at any moment in the world, Gordon Ramsay is on TV, yelling, investigating, fixing, probing. Something's going on with Gordon Ramsay.

**Gordon Ramsay**

2,000 hours a year?

**Cynthia Littleton**

2,000 hours of Gordon Ramsay, new and library shows, but nonetheless.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Across those 2,000 hours, how many fucks are in those 2,000 hours?

**Cynthia Littleton**

Or how many bleeps I should say.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Bleeps.

**Cynthia Littleton**

We'll have to do a count.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Shit.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Eight shows on the U.S. Fox Network alone.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yes.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Eight shows that bring in \$150 million a year in advertising. That's a good point for your next contract renegotiation.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Stop. [LAUGHS]

**Cynthia Littleton**

Not to mention, 31 restaurants, seven Michelin stars, books, merchandising of all types, very high quality. In fact, I bought a wooden cutter.

**Gordon Ramsay**

We're out of time.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Sorry.

**Gordon Ramsay**

I would have given it to you, trust me.

**Cynthia Littleton**

I bought one strictly because...

**Gordon Ramsay**

I don't want you buying these things. Let me send something to you.

**Cynthia Littleton**

...it was your branding.

**Gordon Ramsay**

That's very kind. Thank you.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Cutting board, that was the word that was eluding me. Even video games.

**Gordon Ramsay**

I would have sent that to you. You make me feel bad now.

**Cynthia Littleton**

It's god quality though. I've had it for years.

**Gordon Ramsay**

I'm going to be on the phone to Rupert straight after this. \$150 million a year in advertising?

**Cynthia Littleton**

Yes.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Wow. Yes. Exciting.

**Cynthia Littleton**

It's an amazing career. As we just heard, you first came here to Cannes and first to MIPCOM and your first visit to Cannes in 1992 as the chef on the yacht of Reg Grundy, the legendary producer.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Amazing man. First of all, it was a time in my life under immense pressure from that Michelin star world that I needed a break, so it was almost like a sabbatical. We were based on the Cusset and it's a beautiful yacht and I had no idea who this man was. So, it was just exciting to be in that position, cooking for him and Joy. He said, "Gordon, we have a big dinner coming up, and there's a conference at MIP." I had no idea what that was. He said, "Please, give us your best and don't fuck this dinner up." So, I made this incredible dinner, incredible canapes. I was 25, spotty chef and anaemic looking and they kept me on the boat. I wasn't even allowed over here. I went off in the morning, I got all the ingredients, came back and just made this incredible dinner. Then the time I spent with him then, listening to his thoughts, understanding his passion, and then it all

started to make sense just what this guy stood for and how much respect he had for his team and how long the team were with him. I just had the most amazing 12 months on that boat. I got super fit and I earned a decent salary and I got time to myself. We stayed in touch. He came to our wedding in Chelsea. He said, "I'm going to come to the most important part, the part of the church." Then he was sending the kids presents every year. so, yes, an amazing man. I would never have thought 25 years ago that I would be back here in 2017 at this incredible conference.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Do you remember at that time what your ambition was? You had Michelin stars, but was your ambition to grow in television or was that something that developed as you got to know Reg?

**Gordon Ramsay**

No. He mentioned briefly, "Do you ever see yourself on TV?" I said, "There's no way on earth that I'm fit for TV." Secondly, I think when you're on that ambitious road and I had the training from Marco to Gavroche to Guy Savoy to Robuchon. I spent some time at Ducasse here. I wanted to strive for three stars, because three stars in Michelin was almost like a sort of, an Oscar, that's what it meant. It had that kind of kudos. I wanted no distractions and I think the foundations that had to be set having been selfishly in those kitchens and absorbing from the very best. Because I came to France to become French and literally understand that level of cuisine and master my craft, I think. That plays reverent today in terms of whether it's a challenge in Comedy Genius or whether it's the MasterChef Junior challenge, we need to put it to its absolute best. I always know when it's a success when we get copied and that confirms that we're on point.

**Cynthia Littleton**

By other TV shows borrowing your format?

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah. I think it's lazy to copy, but when I see others copying us and the team and what they do, that keeps you on your toes, so you move it before it gets stale.

**Cynthia Littleton**

As you did get into television, of course, first in the UK, was it hard for you to learn how to be on

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TV? How to work with the camera? How to be a TV personality?

### **Gordon Ramsay**

Have you ever seen Kitchen Nightmares? Cynthia, Jesus Christ. Kitchen Nightmares was almost me being let off the leash. To be honest, of course, we were filming it, but there was no stop starts. Do this, do that. It was literally get inside that business, turn that business around, give it a big shake and then piece it back together. They hate you for the first three or four days, then they sort of are inquisitive about you and then the last three or four days they fall in love with you. It was an amazing insight into the problems in our industry, because, unlike a doctor's surgery where you need to study medicine for ten years, or go to bar school to become a lawyer, anybody can buy a restaurant. I want to get back to that dinner party where, you know, Marjorie and Philip are sat having dinner and the neighbour's say, "The food's fucking amazing, you should open a restaurant," and they fall in love with the idea, as opposed to the passion of what it takes on a daily basis. Restaurants are business and it's tough businesses. So, you need to be passionate on a daily basis, not just when you feel like.

So, Kitchen Nightmares was the sort of first big insight to, I suppose, re-fixing and repositioning businesses. We flew in yesterday from New Orleans and we have an amazing new show called 24 Hours to Hell and Back and it is businesses that have literally got 24 hours. We have a surveillance team in there under cover for the first three weeks before I get there and we're, sort of, monitoring all the bad habits.

Then I go in under cover and I was a jazz musician and I had a beard and fedora and I'm sat eating quickly and then I go to the bathroom and change, come out. I was shocked at what you gather over three weeks when staff don't realise they're being filmed. But, more importantly, there were more rats in the kitchen than customers. I know Bourbon Street is laden with that. But I was asking the lady for some toast, because the po'boy and the Cajun chicken was terrible, so we just had some toast. All the band members had toast. Low and behold, 15 minutes later, I go to the toaster, I look inside and there's this dead fucking mouse inside my toaster. It must have been sat there since sort of 2004, long tail and crispy. Hold on, you didn't have to eat the toast. So, I showed the waitress this and she said, "Well, we don't use that side of the toaster." It's like, "Right, so you don't use that side of the toaster, but you're happy to send that shit to me." So, that's the issue. Businesses get lazy and I think like a viewer, customers vote with their feet,

like a viewer votes with their control, and so if it's not good enough, they're gonna switch or walk.

### **Interviewer**

Do you think that being such a successful business man, has in the restaurant business allowed you to prosper in TV in a way that you went into it with a CEO's sort of mentality as opposed to talent that was just dying to get their first break on camera?

### **Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah, that's a good question. We have an amazing team, by the way, behind me. So, I multi-task and so I think, you know, you could be the best chef in the world, but if you've got a bad business behind that then you look the most stupid. Stuart Gillies is our CEO and he runs that business side. As a Chairman, I just try to influence them as many ways as possible my way of thinking without being too, you know, assertive in the way that it should be done my way. So, when we have meetings, there's no long winded board meetings, it's just three or four times a week give me the key issues that piss you off when you come to work every morning. And what comes out of that is pivotal and I think that's the solution making and I think that's very similar.

There's so many synergies between running a business as a restaurant as there is to TV, because you have to stay fresh. You have to be the next best thing and you have to be raising the bar. So, this year we just celebrated 18 years at Royal Hospital Road with three Michelin stars. We got asked the question on the day of the launch of the Michelin Guide, "If you're such a hands-on chef, who does the cooking when you're there?" Well, it's the same people when I'm not there. We have that kind of synergy. It's the exact same in TV. MasterChef, A Culinary Challenge, Elimination, you know, we move the goal posts.

### **Cynthia Littleton**

The F Word is a fun.

### **Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah, F Word was live, so that was a tough one to break in. That was a moving target and there's so many moving exciting things that every chef in the country worth their salt should be cooking live, you know. So, it was a great insight to see how much fun you can have live and it

was an amazing summer.

**Cynthia Littleton**

You enjoyed it? You'll do it again?

**Gordon Ramsay**

I did. You know, I can cook. I promise you, I can. I stop what I'm doing now and get in the kitchen and cook. So, yeah, I loved it. Yeah, I mean, I really do enjoy that level of vulnerability. I think never shying away from that and the more success you have, the more wrapped up in cotton wool you get, and so I'm the opposite, you know. I need to be at that coal face. I need to be where the heart beat is and I need to be in that level of trepidation and I also need to be under pressure. I think pressure's healthy, you know. A couple of months back we were landed into the middle of a jungle in Colombia, ahead of a documentary on cocaine this week, and the Major said to me, "Look, we can do the shots from above. We can shoot this thing above and we're going to torch that lab and we're going to spray that crop." I said, "No. Fuck that. I want to go in the jungle. I want to go down on that patch and understand how big this problem is.

**Cynthia Littleton**

You're talking about Gordon Ramsay on Cocaine, your documentary.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yes. I don't do it. Shit. [LAUGHS]

**Cynthia Littleton**

It's a provocative title. It grabs people's attention in the television listings guide.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yes.

**Cynthia Littleton**

But it is a very serious look at the soup to nuts issues of you go look from the very beginnings of the supply chain in Colombia through the devastation of cocaine addiction. You make the point that what cocaine addiction takes out of people, particularly in the cooking business, I think you

make a very interesting point in the documentary that cocaine is sort of seen as very recreational. It's fun, it's not the degradation of heroin. But you make the case that it is an incredibly debilitating addiction and it's rampant in the food business.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah, it's everywhere. I mean, it bugs the hell out of me when chefs have this sort of rock and roll image.

**Cynthia Littleton**

The sexy, you know.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Ah, it's all bullshit. Chefs are like sportsmen today. They prep for hours and hours for that three minute of magic across that entrée or appetiser. But, the issue in our business is shocking. We're responsible for 30 tonnes of it coming in every year and that's not just in our business. But, I also personally lost an amazing young chef. We had dinner the night before he died. So, if you'd asked me did I know? I should have known because I have a brother who's an addict, so it's close on a daily basis. So, offering that branch, highly confidential, behind the scenes, to members of staff that may have a habit. Customers giving side plates back to my waiting staff because they've just been in the bathroom and done several lines. You know, it's a lot of crap for service to take. They shouldn't be up against that. I was a little bit shocked when I tested the bathrooms and they came up positive throughout.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Like the counter tops?

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah. Not just the customer toilets, the staff toilets. So, who knows. So, it's a very fine line, because we can throw the team under the bus. So, it's look, you know, I'm there to help. I don't want anymore casualties. You earn incredibly well, it's not recreational and, you know, the demands get stronger. Yeah, we went off the beaten track in some pretty horrific places. I didn't tell Fox I was going. [LAUGHS] They'll find out on Thursday. Again, that passionate project for me was like the Shark documentary, or the Bad Boy Bakery sat in the prison behind bars when

these guys are sat on the arse for 18 hours and they come back into the society with no further qualifications and they re-offend within 90 days of being out. So, give them that kind of certificate to hold onto.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Skill. A marketable skill.

**Gordon Ramsay**

A skill. Exactly. Going into prison at Brixton and watching a five course menu, they had a choice for dinner. [LAUGHS] Going to gym, you know, going to see the doctor, playing five-a-side football every day, nominating their programmes, the films, what they're going to watch. This prison was like a fucking hotel. So they were coming out worse than before they went in. So, it was giving that stimulant to go back in society with more confidence and a skill to stand alone.

**Cynthia Littleton**

You're doing such a range of production, who would you say were your mentors as a producer, because you're a very hands-on producer now?

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah, hands-on producer, but not scared of being produced and taking that advice.

**Cynthia Littleton**

That's a rare quality, I think. [LAUGHS]

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah. Also, when I fuck up I want to be told. But, you know, Pat Llewellyn was an amazing influence growing up, from The Two Fat Ladies to The Naked Chef to Kitchen Nightmares, she was legendary. All three have given me the platform without the straitjacket in a way to incubate, develop and create some incredible ideas. So, from a producers point of view, I just get creative, because I put the team to the test. Is that the best? Are we at that cutting edge? Is it something that Top Chef's going to copy. Is it MasterChef UK, are they going to copy our ideas? What are we going to learn from that and how real can we make it? Then also I think taking off that jacket and getting in the trenches and doing it with them, I think is really important. So, it's almost like a

conductor than can play an orchestra at the same time. So that multi-tasking insight to producing amazing drama, you need to be in the thick of it. But, I'll go back to 25 years ago, I still work at mastering my craft behind the scenes. I.e. in the kitchen, you know, coming up with the latest idea. If a new restaurant opens up in Barcelona or on the outskirts of Chicago, our team are there. There's something to learn from a bad experience as much as there is from a good experience. That whole social media platform now has kept every business globally on their toes because there's no six week lead in for a critic. You get the feedback seconds later, and that's healthy.

### **Cynthia Littleton**

I mean, the blessing of the curse of celebrity is if somebody goes and has a bad experience in your restaurant and they start talking about Gordon Ramsay, that has more resonance in social media and on the reviews. I mean, that's got to be something that is, you're talking about keeping you on your toes, your reputation.

### **Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah and unfortunately you start getting judged by individuals who know less about food than you do and so everybody's a critic. So, you get thick skinned and you learn to take those blows. Is it significant damaging to the business? If you're doing it wrong, yes it is. If you're not, then you have to accept that and just move on. So, you know, it's important to stay on top and not ignore those issues. If they're fundamental and it's consistent with six or seven customers saying the same thing or six or seven viewers complaining about the same issue on that programme, then you move quickly, really quickly, and that's important.

### **Cynthia Littleton**

In terms of your producing, you've recently done a very big venture with All3Media to launch Studio Ramsay.

### **Gordon Ramsay**

Yes.

### **Cynthia Littleton**

As I understand that, there is a limit to the space and time to how much you can do on camera.

But, in this deal, you really envision doing a lot of producing of shows that you will produce, but maybe not appear in.

### **Gordon Ramsay**

I think the important part is to pull back from fronting it and get creative with that experience over the last three decades that I've had and some of the talented producers I've worked with. Chris Brogden is heading the company. He has an amazing background at Sky and Tinopolis and so he knows his stuff. So, for me, again, I want to get involved with that kind of jeopardy. What can I bring to the table and how new are we, how cutting edge are we, how cool is that idea and will it travel? So, incubating those ideas and setting up workshops, even in our business, without the team realising they're being filmed at the same time, you know, we're looking for characters, we're spotting new ideas, and then just tweaking those little pressure points and seeing what happens.

So that level of creativity for me is crucial. That's the way I am. That's me naturally. So, you know, I am the biggest pain the arse in the world when it comes to that level of development, because I want the very best and I will push the boundaries, because I push myself to the boundaries. So, I think that's a healthy relationship, because it's not about an ego, it's about are we the best, because we need to be, and if we're not, then don't bring it to the table. It's really important to nail it.

### **Cynthia Littleton**

In terms of your experience in kitchens and in that pressure cooker of delivering a great experience to the guest, would you say that the TV Gordon Ramsay tones it down from what the real life is like in the kitchen?

### **Gordon Ramsay**

That's a really good question. I mean, let's be honest, flipping a burger and dressing a Cesar salad, you could do that shit tomorrow. If you've got to go and cook at the very best and you get to the top with three Michelin stars, no disrespect, but, you know, working for Joel Robuchon, Guy Savoy, Marco Pierre White, I had their reputations in my hand, so if I fucked up I'm going to take the rap. And if there's a multi-million dollar production coming out of Fox and I fuck up, I'm going to take the rap. So, when I'm in the zone, you know, don't disturb me. Don't poke me,

because I'll be like an angry bear. Let me do my work. That's how serious I take it I think. So, mic goes on, it's nothing to do with a camera, I just need to do my work. They'll follow me and they'll pick up what they need to pick up. I never change that attitude in a way that, do I honestly go home and sit and watch and edited version of Kitchen Nightmares after filming 85, 90 hours to watch a 44 minute clip? No. Not when you've lived that, been there, done that. I do process things and I review them constantly, but I'm not one for stopping and looking behind, I'm looking forward, what's happening.

**Cynthia Littleton**

You have another member of the family that has followed in your footsteps.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yes.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Matilda is now well into her show Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch. What advice did you give her about being on camera, about being a personality?

**Gordon Ramsay**

I told her not to date a fucking chef. [LAUGHS]

**Cynthia Littleton**

Not my daughter.

**Gordon Ramsay**

If you come back and date a chef, I'm going to kick you out the house. Here's the thing, I mean, for me, cooking at that age, they all grew up with ... from The F Word, and whilst families in London were buying kids iPads and XBox's, you know, we bought them animals. Fuck it, you've got to know how a turkey gets bred and you know what a pig gets taught and you know how to look after sheep. So, it was installing that, don't waste things. The pressure of kids with exams today is way, way too severe about these charts and performing at school and I think we all peak differently in life. There's different times. We don't all peak at 16 or 18 or 21. So, getting them to cook early was really important, because where they didn't have the academic qualifications,

they had the confidence in cooking. So, I really wished that we'd had more of an imprint across the educational platform in order to make sure that this confidence comes out early. Teaching them to cook was crucial. Tilly's a natural. They all cook, but she just popped in an amazing way. She's got no idea how successful she is and it's really important for her to understand that it's just work.

**Cynthia Littleton**

She's 15?

**Gordon Ramsay**

She's 15, yes. But, Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch on CBBC is an exciting insight to teenage life, cooking with no fear, and cooking having fun. So, yeah, she doesn't let me do too much, it's all about what she puts. It's that canvas, that blanket canvas of confidence that you can come out and just explode on that plate. Just have fun with it, cooking with no fear. We see that across MasterChef Junior in a way that, the first thing I say to them, "Look, there's no mum and dad, there's no teachers, you're going to love me, you're going to hate me, but you're going to leave a much better individual, and when we have a problem I'm going to help you with a solution." And it's salvaging those last 15 minutes of that 60 minute cook off that, okay, we've screwed the New York Strip and the burger's overcooked, but we've got 15 minutes to make something incredible here. Then at that the end of that, that's life. You're going to go up, you're going to down, understand that. So, working with eight year olds, nine year olds, ten year olds and watching them bounce back from adversity when they've got tears coming out of them because they think they've lost this big opportunity. Their parents wanted them to go on MasterChef Junior. It's really important, really important. The kids are great. The pain in the arse are the parents in that bloody green room.

**Cynthia Littleton**

I can only imagine. Certainly, your parenthood experience has probably prepped you for MasterChef Junior, but is it hard to deliver a tough verdict when you have somebody who's visibly shaking?

**Gordon Ramsay**

That's a good question. Here's the thing, it's tough love, because it's being honest with them. I

always say to my kids, I started at the age of five, sat them down, "Look at me, the earlier you tell me, the more I can help." They look at me like I'm some weirdo, and all of a sudden they get it. 15 years of age, Megan, our eldest daughter, comes up to me and said, "Dad, I really understand what you said to me five years ago," the earlier you share it, the more I can do and it's exactly with those young kids today. What's the solution, how do we get out of this and let's turn that negative into something positive and you're going to have some fun with it. So, yes, it's hard, not crushing their dreams, because to be success is not about just winning.

You're not a failure if you get into the top ten. It's giving them that kind of confidence that you got into the top 20, you know, top 15, top ten, top five, you are bloody good, remember that and get hungry. Find that passion in life. Because once that light bulb flickers and you find out that's what you want to do, that's your calling, it's an amazing journey.

**Cynthia Littleton**

With all the accomplishments over 25 years, what is illusive to you? What are you still striving for? What achievement would you like to have in hand when you come back in 25 years?

**Gordon Ramsay**

If I come back here in 25 years.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Well hopefully it won't be 25 years.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Oh no, no. I'd like to get the same size boat that Reg got. [LAUGHS] I think just keeping it fresh. Keep it fresh and not getting stale, because it is so exciting, you know, with the team and the development and then coming up with that next cutting edge idea. That's what keeps me awake at night.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Thank you so much for taking the time out to speak with us, Gordon.

**Gordon Ramsay**

You're welcome.

**Cynthia Littleton**

We really appreciate it.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Thank you.

**Gordon Ramsay**

I'm sorry you had to pay for that board. I'm going to send you some boards.

**Cynthia Littleton**

Don't. I tell you, it's a good cutting board.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah, I know, but I feel bad that you paid for it.

**Cynthia Littleton**

For goodness sake.

**Gordon Ramsay**

Yeah, but I get them for nothing.