

Inside the Mind of a Master Baker

Bo Bellamy, who prefers to be referred to as Ol' Bellamy, considers himself an *auteur* amongst the modern confectionery landscape. While he sees himself as pushing the limits of what a *pâtisserie* can be, many bakers, both hobbyists and professionals, have opposed his ideologies. We at *The Thoughtful Conversation* sat down with Mr. Bellamy to discuss his rise to infamy and divisive methods.

TTC: We appreciate you joining us here today, despite your responsibilities, Mr. Bellamy. We understand how strapped for time you are otherwise.

Bellamy: That is the struggle of many working professionals today, is it not? Time rushing, leaving us wondering where it's run off to? That issue, I plan to resolve for us all, starting with this *institution*.

TTC: How thoughtful, Mr. Bellamy. On that note, how does your bakery so efficiently create goods for the public? Our team has timed your output: an hour for croissants, 15 minutes to assemble a croquembouche, and 30 for some opera cake. How do you do it?

Bellamy: Ah, well, not to downplay the work of my wonderful staff, but I'd say the majority of that speed can be attributed to the efficiency of my creative direction. My ability to articulate, *extract* the most out of my words is the biggest contributor to my success. I bring out the best of each of their respective talents, you could say.

TTC: Interesting, Mr. Bellamy. Now, one controversy that has followed your bakery since its inception are the alleged accusations that you steal recipes from some of the biggest names in baking. Many are outraged at you taking these recipes, some built up over years, decades, even. What do you have to say about this?

Bellamy: Ridiculous. I have merely taken inspiration from my confectionery forefathers and mothers, as we all do.

TTC: Your rendition of the cronut mirrors the original from the *Dominique Ansel Bakery* (how'd you find that, anyhow?) while any unique flourishes yours has seem to come from the grandma with progressing dementia down the street. Your thoughts?

Bellamy: Traditionally taught pastry chefs learn from the greats all the time, do they not? Forced to replicate previous recipes, study their techniques and regurgitate. The way I see it, I am simply doing that... faster! I consume the brains of ten-thousand grandmothers simultaneously, and regurgitate as I see fit. It's the same process, just without so much unnecessary effort.

TTC: ... About your staff earlier, Mr. Bellamy; our team couldn't help but notice the lack of bustle coming from your kitchen. They *did*, however, notice the movement of a concerning amount of workers beneath them.

Bellamy: (shifts in chair slightly) Of course, *those* are my assistants! Many of my most vocal critics love to focus on their conditions, their mistreatment... what they don't realise is that I am *freeing them*. Freeing them of responsibility, expectation, of *accountability*! Without the limelight on their individual talents, I have enabled them to best serve m- (*ahem*) *our* vision!

TTC: Would you say that you maintain a strong working relationship with your assistants, Mr. Bellamy? That they are paid their dues?

Bellamy: I don't see why they'd want the spotlight. They seem quite shy...

TTC: Could you *name* any of them? Just to bring some publicity to the hard work they've done for your bakery?

Bellamy: I *believe* they're all named Jacques? I apologise, I have a difficult time putting names to faces, and the whole 40 of them are French and- *hey*, what're you writing?

TTC: Nothing to worry about, Mr. Bellamy. Sticking to the topic, though, how would you say this system you're innovating can be used to support bakers?

Bellamy: I would argue that the system I'm innovating makes baking more accessible. By popularising this call-and-response kind of system, I am opening the doors of baking to more than ever before! You no longer need the drive, the effort, the discipline to get up at the break of dawn to prep! With my system, if you think it, you can do it, and isn't that just wonderful?

TTC: How do you respond to those who'd argue that the goods being created by your bakery aren't your creations at all?

Bellamy: Behind the times, the lot of 'em. It's merely a tool that allows me to reach my desired outcome more quickly. You wouldn't say that using an electric mixer means the bread I make from that dough isn't mine, would you? *Would you?*

TTC: No, I suppose not, Mr. Bellamy.

Bellamy: *Exactly*. Likewise, the 40 Frenchmen in my basement simply grant me greater control over my finishing touches. I am still the *artiste* holding the brush, at the end of the day.

TTC: Fair enough. However, the *cost* of these "tools" is another matter. Between the underground infrastructure and ventilation, your institution runs at a -95% profit margin. Wouldn't a regular bakery be more rewarding?

Bellamy: (chuckles) You sound just like *them!* No worries, provided a few more months of funding and fine-tuning, the sheer output this bakery will have achieved will become the model going forward!

TTC: Mr. Bellamy, you seem like an awfully jolly guy. Tell us, before you began all this, did you ever *enjoy* the craft of baking? The smell of fresh pastry after countless hours of work?

...

TTC: Are you alright, Mr. Bellamy?

Bellamy: I- I made a nice sourdough, once. *Had a hell of a crust, too...*

(He stops himself. He corrects his posture, plasters the smile back on his face)

But passion wasn't enough, so here we are. Sure, the smell of *bread* may keep most satisfied, but what about the smell of financial security? *That* is why I plan to expand this bakery next quarter. My next assistants? 50 *pizzaiole* from the heart of Italy! Together, there's nothing stopping those Italians and I from creating the perfect *product*.

TTC: *Right.* Thank you, Mr. Bellamy, for your time, and this is *The Thoughtful Conversation*, signing off.