

WEIRD MEAT

THE TACO COMPANY
THAT NEVER WAS.



A FILM TREATMENT — OFF THE GRID STUDIOS

WEIRD MEAT

(working title — alt: Rocco's Tacos / The Permit King / Sandflea)

*The making of a fictitious taco company that was never really about the
tacos.*

Prepared for Jay Johnson & the team at Bajío Sunglasses
Written & Directed by RA Beattie • Off the Grid Studios

01

LOGLINE

Three friends set out to launch a fictitious taco company built on the weirdest, most unexpected ingredients they can catch, hunt, or scavenge across Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula — iguana, raccoon, scorpion, whatever the jungle and the flats hand them. Deadpan, mockumentary, ridiculous on purpose. But the trip keeps pulling them toward Isla Holbox, and toward one man: a fishing guide named Sandflea, who just quietly became the greatest permit angler who has ever lived. The taco company was always the excuse. Sandflea was always the destination.

02

FORMAT & TONE

Gonzo, front to back. No script to hit, no clean plan — three guys, a fake company, and a camera, letting the trip go wherever it actually goes. That's the format as much as it's a tone: the journey *is* the story, and the film is honest about finding it as it happens, the way the best gonzo journalism always has.

It opens as a straight-faced mockumentary — pitch-meeting cutaways, market research interviews, three guys treating a truly bad business idea with complete sincerity — and slides, almost without the audience noticing, into a real and moving profile. Short-form (25–40 minutes), built for the fly-fishing film festival circuit and for Bajío's own channels: funny enough to share in the first five minutes, and carrying enough weight to be the thing people are still talking about a year later.

03

THE STORY

ACT ONE — THE PITCH

RA, Jay, and Robbie are starting a company. Straight-to-camera “founder” interviews, a whiteboard, a deck with a slide that just says “WEIRD MEAT.” The premise: build a taco brand around ingredients nobody else is brave enough to use. Robbie — the Alabama Renaissance man who can build a smokehouse and cook whatever comes out of it — is head of R&D. The team flies to the Yucatán to “source ingredients.”

ACT TWO — THE RESEARCH TRIP

Comedy engine: driving the peninsula hunting iguana, chasing rumors of a good scorpion taco (a wink to Off the Grid's own *Scorpion Trilogy*), asking every local chef about *tepezcuintle* — a real, large jungle rodent (called *jaleb* locally in the Yucatán) that is, in fact, a genuine regional delicacy in parts of southeastern Mexico. They hear Isla Holbox has a raccoon problem and head there specifically to “source” raccoon. On arrival: the raccoons are protected wildlife inside the Yum Balam Biosphere Reserve, with a sanctuary on the island that takes in injured ones. The bit collapses in the best way — and that's the excuse that puts them on a boat with a local guide everyone on the island seems to already love.

ACT THREE — SANDFLEA

The guide is Alejandro Vega Cruz — “Sandflea.” Schoolteacher, outfitter, the man who has run Holbox Tarpon Club and guided these flats for more than two decades. The film drops the joke and just starts listening. We learn who he actually is: the guy every visiting angler calls first, the guy Off the Grid already made a film about once before — *Corazón* (2017 Fly Fishing Film Tour) — and the guy whose community once raised the money to save his life. In 2015, Sandflea needed a third open-heart surgery. RA Beattie himself was quoted in the fundraising push at the time: “*The man with the biggest heart of anyone I know needs a new heart.*” The fly-fishing world showed up, got him to the Cleveland Clinic, and he made it through. This film picks the story back up ten years later, at the moment he's become the best to ever do it.

The through-line the film sets out to actually document: Del Brown's lifetime permit record — 513 fish, a mark that stood for decades and made him a legend of the sport — is widely regarded as the standard permit anglers measure themselves against. By Sandflea's own count, he's now well past it. The film doesn't just repeat that number — it goes and verifies it on camera, with Sandflea, his logs, and the guides and anglers who fished alongside him for it. The record becomes the thing that finally gets him his due, on film, from the people who love him.

04

THE CAST

SANDFLEA (Alejandro Vega Cruz)

The heart of the film.

The “grandfather of fly fishing” on Isla Holbox. Schoolteacher, outfitter, the man who somehow knows everyone on the island and somehow gets everything done. Survived a childhood bout of scarlet fever that damaged his heart, and three open-heart surgeries since — the last one funded by a fly-fishing community that showed up for him the way he's shown up for every angler who's ever stepped on his boat. Now, by his own count, the winningest permit fisherman alive.

JAY JOHNSON

Industry, but not corporate. The anti-industry industry guy.

Fly-fishing lifer, Bajío's own leading man from *Fishing With Jay* — the converted-school-bus series that took him across the country chasing water and old friends. He's spent his career inside the fly industry without ever really belonging to it — the guy who knows everyone, has walked away from the polished version of this business more than once, and is funniest and most alive exactly when things stop being buttoned-up. The engine of the trip, and the walking argument for why this shouldn't be a normal brand film.

ROBBIE

The wildcard. Head of "R&D."

Alabama, jack-of-all-trades, can build it, farm it, grow it, or cook it — genuinely gifted in a kitchen and genuinely fearless about what goes into one. Funny, magnetic, the character who will actually try the raccoon.

RA BEATTIE

Director / on-camera. Off the Grid Studios.

The connective tissue between the joke and the real story — the filmmaker who's known Sandflea for years, made *Corazón* about him once already, and is the one person in the boat who understands exactly what they've stumbled into.

05

THE LOCATION — ISLA HOLBOX

A small island off the tip of the Yucatán Peninsula, inside the Yum Balam Biosphere Reserve — better known for whale sharks and flamingos than for its fishing, which is exactly why the guides who work it, Sandflea chief among them, have become legends in a much smaller, much more devoted world. Real wildlife, real raccoons, real protections — the island runs its own sanctuary for injured ones. Sand streets, golf carts, a village where, per Orvis's own reporting on Sandflea in 2015, “there were few good things in life not connected to him.”

06

THE RECORD

Del Brown is a genuine legend of the sport — 513 permit landed on fly over a lifetime, plus an IGFA fly-caught permit record (41 lb 8 oz, Key West) that has stood since 1986. For decades, his lifetime mark has been the number every serious permit angler quietly measures themselves against. Sandflea, by his own account, has now passed it.

Note for the record (literally): I haven't found a third-party, publicly documented count confirming Sandflea's current total or the exact number he's at — that number needs to come from him directly, on camera, with his logs. That's not a problem for the film. That's the film: we're not reporting the record, we're there for the moment it gets counted and made official.

07

THE BAJÍO CONNECTION

This isn't a bolt-on sponsorship — Bajío and Sandflea already have a real relationship. His signature frame, the Vega, is named for him. A special edition of that same frame — part of Bajío's “Temples of Change” program — features a permit scene etched into the temples, with proceeds supporting the Fish For Change Scholarship program. The film gives that story a face and a reason to exist: the frame named after him, worn by the man who just became the best to ever chase the fish etched onto it.

08

WHY OFF THE GRID, WHY NOW

Off the Grid Studios has spent close to 25 years making fishing films, and already has a real, personal history with this exact story — *Corazón* premiered on the 2017 Fly Fishing Film Tour and told an earlier chapter of Sandflea's life. This isn't a crew parachuting in for a story they read about. It's a friend picking the camera back up, ten years after helping save his life, to document the moment he becomes the greatest to ever do it — wrapped in a comedy engine absurd enough to travel far outside the fly-fishing world on its own.

Research sourced from public reporting (Orvis News, The Fly Fish Journal, Bajío, Flylords, MidCurrent, and IGFA) as of August 2026. Flagged items above should be confirmed directly with Sandflea before this goes any further. — RA