

KING OF THE JUNGLE?

2A Friday, March 9, 2001





The Natural Cafe Has Seven Dollars and Seven Cents on Emu Antibiotics and Carcinogens are for McDonald's Fans

The brutal life of a degenerate journalist affords few meals. Breakfast is pot and a pot of coffee. Lunch is the leftover fries from the significant other, or perhaps a cold Dr. Pepper.

By 5 p.m. the blood sugar so perilously low, senseless violence is a very real option. Random strangers start rubbing the journalist the wrong way and vivid fantasies of red carnage unfold in his cortex. These thoughts are not his own; he is just another victim. Hunger has turned the world sour and sapped his strength. Near the end he lacks the energy to even feed himself, or the desire to choose a meal.

If the journalist is lucky, he may have one last resort. Sensing that writing is no way to feed oneself in a world which holds literature in contempt, he will have aligned himself with the nefarious ranks of the Advertisers and seek out a way to prostitute his skill for

calories. If he is supremely skilled, he will have positioned himself to receive free meals (up to \$30 for any one outing) and then write complete nonsense about the food he ate. Such is the life.

The journalist entered The Natural Café

tents himself with his symbiotic relationship to The Natural Café until his food arrives. Steaming, fresh, hearty, healthy — these are the adjectives the journalist conjures. He loses himself in the bliss of calories, oh it has been too long.

There is not time to gaze from the window. The amazing food is wolfed down like a jackal had possessed the journalist. Pulling hard on his beer after the last bite, his mind is lost in flavor, fullness and light.

Food soothes everything. Fills in the aching mental gaps. The journalist thinks. It tastes even better when you know it's super-healthy and good for you. And it tastes best when you don't have to throw down a penny for it.

The journalist was still \$2.77 under his allotted tab and he moved slowly, happily, back to the counter and the natural employee of The Natural



Café. -"How much is that chocolate cake?" the journalist asked.

-"Two-fifty. Did you enjoy your meal?"

-"It was delightful," he said, "but how

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A man and woman suddenly rise from their corner booth and scream, "EVERYBODY FREEZE; THIS IS A ROBBERY!"

All across the room silence descends, chips are left mid-dip in their fresh green-and-red salsa. Silverware is dropped. The cook looks confused while the waitress just looks angry.

The mad couple jumps off the corner booth and orders everyone to take out their wallets, then they point to the waitress and demand money from the register.

The waitress opens the register, only to reveal a paltry collection of ones, fives, two tens and a twenty.

"Where's the rest?!" the crazy male robber yells.

The waitress laughs and says, "no mas." She points at the empty barstools and the one young couple sitting across the room.

The female gets panicky and starts waving the gun around screaming, "You said this would be the one, baby! This was supposed to be the last one, and you



messed it up."

A passing IVFP patrol car sees the hysterical woman through the window and U-turns into the driveway. His headlights surprise the crooks, and they begin firing blindly into the windows.

A hip, intelligent college couple debates the finer points of nihilism as they sample their large portions of tacos, burritos and enchiladas. This is no fast food, greasy Americanized version of Mexican food. These are restaurant-style plates with tasty extras like beans and Spanish rice.

A Spanish radio station drifts through the seating area as the cook works fast and furious on the speedy, tasty meals. Suddenly the mariachi music cuts out and a serious sounding Mexican DJ starts talking rapidly and ominously.

The lovely couple notices the large amount of people running past them on Embarcadero. At first it appears they are running toward the park. But closer inspection of their demeanor their furtive looks over the shoulder — says they are running AWAY from the beach. They are carrying strange things like computers and pictures.

The cook leaves the kitchen and talks to the waitress. He points at the little radio and makes a gesture of something massive in size. The waitress looks at him like he's joking, but they both turn to the radio as the announcer keeps talking, more urgently now. They move toward the windows just as the golden glare from the reflecting sun bouncing off the ocean disappears from the windows.

The couple puts down their scrumptious, low-cost food and looks out the window. The street is now full of people moving away from the beach. Some are being trampled; debris is strewn about the road. Behind them, looming up from the beach access, a mountain of water dwarfs the apartments and moves quickly over them, moving up the street like an unstoppable giant.



Ooops... It's my roommate's (friend's, boy/girl friend's)

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