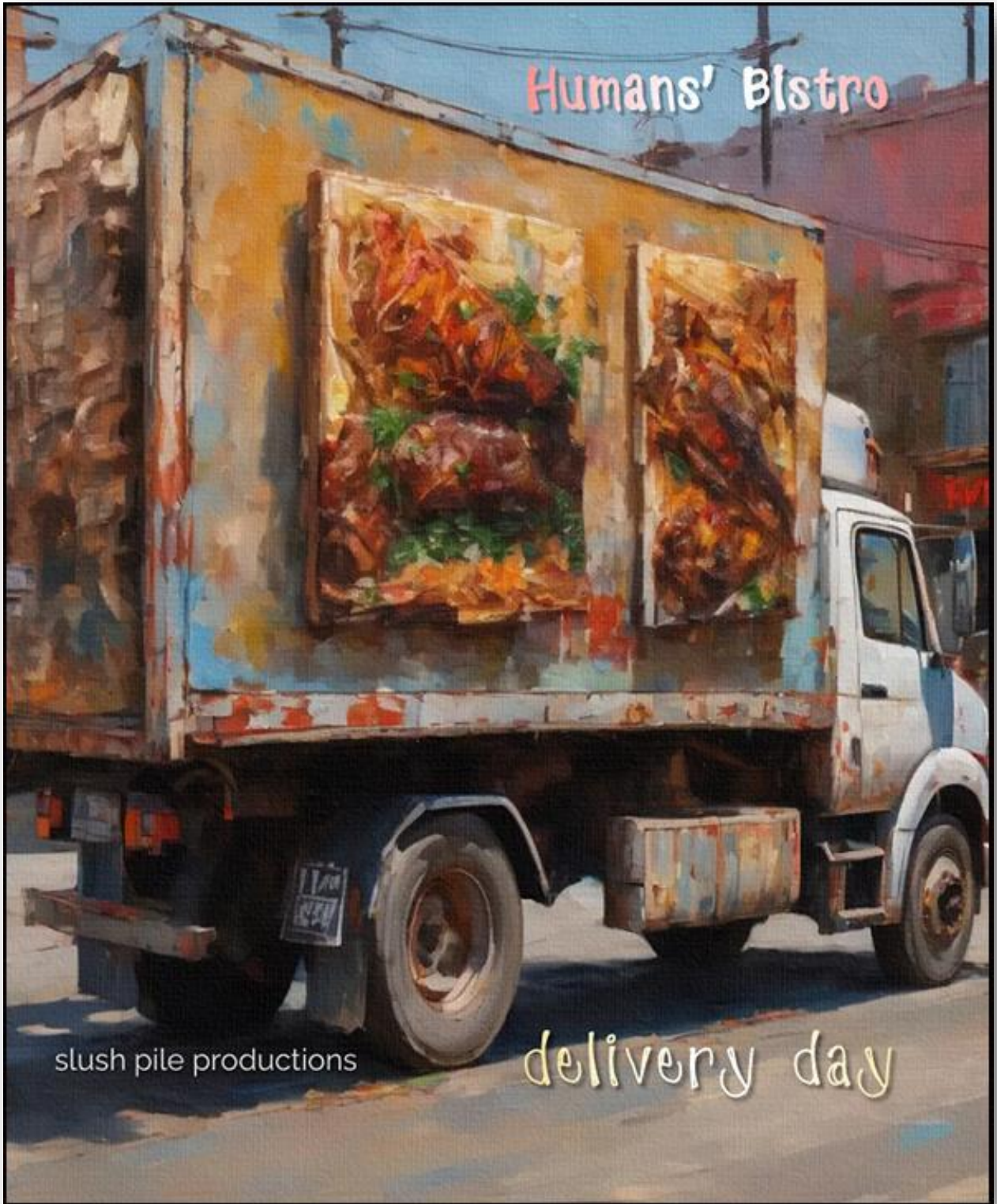


LINDSAY WINCHERAUK



HUMANS' BISTRO: DELIVERY DAY

## DELIVERY DAY



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**T**hursday is a significant day in Foodville, as it marks the arrival of human meat deliveries. Penitentiary Meats dispatches twenty-seven trucks to collect fresh cuts of meat from the Foodville Penitentiary for the nineteen local restaurants. Cheetah's fast-food chain requires eight trucks alone due to their substantial meat purchases.

Inside the penitentiary, an army of Grizzly bears with razor-sharp claws diligently works the kill floor, passing the meat to a group of Gibbons who expertly package it in cellophane.

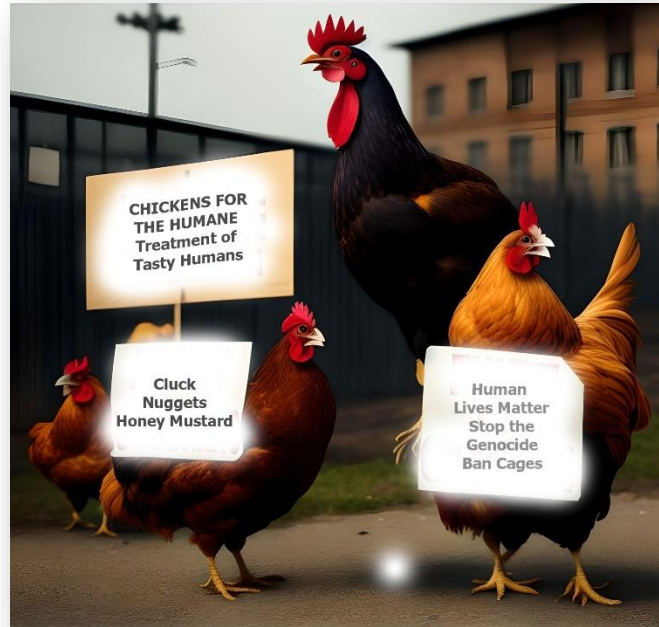
The refrigerated trucks, driven by house cats, who need to work to eat, because their owners are unemployed, and struggling financially, through no fault of their own (the cat's humans not the cats), transport the meat to its destinations.

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Outside the penitentiary, a group of activists, led by Clucky and smattering of other chickens, protest the inhumane treatment of the incarcerated humans.

These individuals are raised in stacked cages and force-fed to fatten them up before slaughter. But that's a discussion for another time.



Depression has resurfaced, becoming a daily battle in my life. The reality is that my family's well-being is at risk, and I find myself in denial. Nevertheless, I persist in my efforts. I exercise, walk, read, and write. I never cease trying, although I struggle to grasp the purpose behind it all.

Recently, I've even reached out to my former employer, swallowing my pride, and hoping they understand the devastating impact their decision to let me go has had on multiple lives, forcing my cat to find work as a truck driver.

As I walk, attempting to clear my mind, a squirrel scurries past me. In one graceful motion, it effortlessly leaps halfway up a tree. This sight fills me with excitement and prompts me to wonder if a squirrel's life could be a source of happiness.

Curious, I turn to Google for answers. To my disappointment, Google informs me that wild squirrels typically live between 5 to 10 years, with an average lifespan of less than 18 months.

Perhaps a pet squirrel would be a better option?

Google dashes my hopes, explaining that squirrels are impossible to domesticate. My mind is left reeling from this conflicting information.

Eventually, I arrive at my favourite watering hole after weeks of absence. 2G, a familiar face, is there. Each morning, I hold Hana, our cat, on my lap, reminiscent of a famous black and white photo capturing JFK and Robert Kennedy's mood in 1960. Each time I hug Hana the photo slips into my mind.



I share this observation with 2G, he insists I had a different photo in mind. We'll leave that part of the story here for now.

Upon returning home, tears escape my eyes as I confront the harsh reality of our financial situation.

The next day, J (J is Korean) and I decide to visit McDonald's. At a nearby table, two young Koreans converse in their native language, intentionally making sure J overhears their conversation. They boast about being better than McDonald's and express their ignorance in how to order the food or what McDonald's even is. J finds their arrogance annoying.

Meanwhile, engrossed in my reading, I hear an aged voice coming from the McDonald's counter. The man asks, "What types of sandwiches do you have here?" I check my watch—it's 2023.

I can't help but chuckle to myself. "J," can see the man, I refuse to turn around and look, "how old do you think that man is?" I ask. J estimates he's in his seventies.

The counter attendant replies, "We have Big Macs, Double Big Macs, and many other sandwich options."

I continue to laugh silently.

Suddenly, a German Shepherd begins barking at the counter, and when I finally swivel to look, the man has transformed into a dog. We'll leave that part of the story here.

Today, I set a goal of reaching 25,000 steps while J focuses on capturing photos. I desperately try to distract myself from the clutches of depression. Each time J stops to take a photo, I pace back and forth in a small circle behind him, covering about 200 steps each time.

J's frequent pauses and my continuous pacing strike me as comical. If extraterrestrial beings were observing this scene, they might find it perplexing trying to understand Earth's inhabitants and decide to leave.

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Meanwhile, Clucky and the protesters persist in their efforts.

Why, may you ask?

Foodville has begun to adopt inhumane practices, deviating from its initial values.

Initially, the restaurants sourced meat directly from unaware individuals going about their daily lives. However, the Animal Kingdom, through a narrow vote, deemed all human activities illegal, leading to a never-ending source of incarceration (meat). Humans were then stacked in cages (with one hour per day out to stretch their legs as if that is anything) throughout the penitentiary, with their placement determined by a wheel spin upon arrival. Todd spun fast-food. And Mary spun Japanese.



Each day, they were force-fed specific diets, such as fast food or Japanese cuisine, until they met the requirements for human meat production. Eventually, Grizzly bears arrived to end their suffering, coincidentally around the time of the “Slop and Kombucha Day,” the only joyful occasion when humans were allowed to interact with each other, offering a semblance of reunification. And so, the slippery slope of Foodville’s descent into inhumanity began to unfold.

Clucky is nine years old.

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