



CROP MILK  
Natalie Edwards

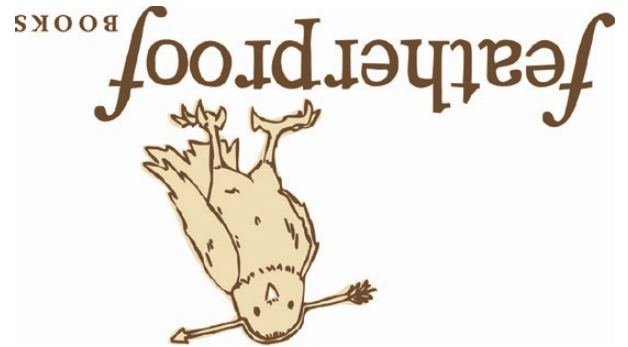
Each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 76 million people are affected by foodborne illnesses, resulting in 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths in the United States alone. These illnesses and deaths result in an annual cost of \$22 billion due to medical expenses and loss of productivity.

In 2004, *Dateline NBC*, a popular television news magazine, investigated sanitation practices of well-known American family restaurant chains such as:

- Chili's
- Bennigan's
- Denny's
- and Waffle House

measuring the number of critical violations per inspection. The Waffle House, a largely Southern chain with over 1500 stores, averaged 1.6 critical violations per inspection, an unacceptable number of violations according to Chris Hansen, *Dateline NBC* correspondent. Waffle House's response to the study pointed out they prepare all meals in an open kitchen, and consumers can readily observe their sanitation practices themselves.

The most common critical food violations in Waffle Houses throughout the US that year included:



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1



Natalie's fiction has appeared in the *Chicago Reader*, *therumpus.net* and *McSweeney's* Internet Tendency. Recently on her food blog, *ourdindin.wordpress.com*, she featured a recipe for gator tail that she learned from some guy on the side of the road.





1. In the Old Testament, doves or young pigeons were acceptable burnt offerings for those who could not afford a more expensive animal.

2. In the book of Genesis, Noah released a dove after the great flood in order to determine how far the floodwaters had receded.

3. In the Song of Songs and even today, "Dove" is used as a term of endearment.

Inspector Boone and Manager Robert Vaughters squatted down on the floor, joining Maryanne, who had laid a towel down in order to kneel next to the bird without harming her knees. The bird pulled his head in as close to his body as he could. This head, smooth and slick for aerodynamic purposes, juxtaposed against the largesse of Maryanne, a bird enthusiast and believer in the Holy Ghost, had recently taught a Sunday school class centered on the subject of Doves, and was eager to share with her fellow pigeon discoverers, including loyal Waffle House customer Lucy McLoone that:

Realizing that the bird did not pose an immediate threat due to limited mobility caused by avian obesity, Inspector Boone and Manager Robert Vaughters squatted down on the floor, joining Maryanne, who had laid a towel down in order to kneel next to the bird without harming her knees. The bird pulled his head in as close to his body as he could. This head, smooth and slick for aerodynamic purposes, juxtaposed against the largesse of Maryanne, a bird enthusiast and believer in the Holy Ghost, had recently taught a Sunday school class centered on the subject of Doves, and was eager to share with her fellow pigeon discoverers, including loyal Waffle House customer Lucy McLoone that:

Manager Robert Vaughters, anticipating the shame and criticism he would face at the hands of Waffle House upper management, suggested they remove the pigeon immediately. He insisted he had no idea that the bird was there, nor could he pinpoint the method the bird used to enter the Waffle House. He also suggested that the bird, based on its size, had arrived under the Waffle House grill prior to his transfer from store #9875 in Ocala.

However, Inspector Boone noted that pigeons, not excluding the dove under the grill, were potential sources of illness and infection, and requested that the bird be left where it had been found until a pigeon removal professional arrived on the premises.

Pigeons, Inspector Boone mentioned, are known to cause, transmit and carry:

1. Histoplasmosis: a disease caused by a fungus which grows in pigeon droppings. Symptoms of histoplasmosis tend to appear 10 days after initial infection and include fatigue, fever, and chest pains.
2. Psittacosis (also known as ornithosis or parrot fever): a rare disease mainly found in parrots and parrot-like birds such as cockatiels, but also found in pigeons. Human contraction of the disease and symptoms are similar to the aforementioned, but also accompanied by a high fever.

While Inspector Boone and Manager Robert Vaughters discussed pigeon removal services that might be available, Maryanne had slipped her hands into food-service-grade rubber gloves and picked up the bird, which squirmed unenthusiastically and seemingly out of obligation to an instinct it thought it should indulge.

Maryanne, who was known in her neighborhood as not only a bird lady, but a lady who would rescue and rehabilitate many types of animals, including:

- squirrels
- turtles
- snakes
- raccoons
- and feral cats,

declared that she would take the dove home and nurse it back to health. Inspector Boone, emasculated by Maryanne's defiance, and confronted yet again by his inability to assert his professional authority, masked his shame by joking that the bird looked healthy, fattened by hashbrowns as it was, and should be released back into the Winn Dixie shopping center habitat, where it had probably come from anyway.

Maryanne felt pressured to remove the bird from the building, not because of Inspector Boone's position of power, but because of the attention the violation

- T-bone steaks
- omelets
- cheese 'n eggs
- USDA Choice hamburgers

Popular grilled items at the Waffle House include: breakfast scraps of so many months beneath the grill.

Inspector Boone, Manager Robert Vaughters, loyal customer Lucy McLoone, Sam Frisk and the rest of his family, abandoning their waffles, followed Maryanne behind the building where she placed the confused bird in the sheltered space between the dumpster and the exterior wall. The eight individuals stood staring at the dove, the children anticipating its flight, the adults anticipating the disappointment of the children, until, finally, the bird attempted to stand, but quickly collapsed under the weight of its body, enhanced as it was by the breakfast scraps of so many months beneath the grill.

Loyal customer Lucy McLoone, invited The Frisks, a family of four including two children similar in age to Maryanne's own children, over to the counter to get a better view of the bird. Sam Frisk, a victim of childhood obesity and first-grader at Pasco Comprehensive Elementary, mentioned that he would like to see the bird fly home to its family, though pigeons are not known to show affinity for other pigeons, even members of their own flock. Flocks are also referred to as flights or kits.