

Dead Cow And Fish Kill

By : **Juggernaut**

While most Americans love to eat meat, very few know about Animal Rendering Business. A messy and stinky business that cooks all the inedible portionb of animals (guts, fat and bone, feathers, hair etc) to make fat and proteins for the industry. The next time you drive by an animal rendering company, if you smell stink, thats where it is coming from folks. You eat lots of meat, you create lots of crap to dispose off.



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Subba Rao

“How are things this morning, Joe?” inquired Neil, pulling his car into the animal rendering factory yard.

“As usual boss,” said Joe, a big burly man, who had been working at the animal-rendering factory for almost five years now. His friend Steve got the job for him. Joe didn’t like the job at first; the plant stunk from cooking various animals’ parts, dead cows and pigs, to make animal fat and meat meal. The working conditions were terrible in the plant with fat burning smoke and meal dust. Outside, the plant yard was always littered with stinking dead animals with bloated stomachs, animal bones scraped free of meat, slabs of animal fat, cow heads, ears, hooves, tails and heaps of dead poultry. The ground was always wet with animal blood, sometimes the excess blood channeled into the floor drains for collection. Truckloads of fat and bones from meatpacking factories kept arriving at the factory for cooking or rendering into animal grease and meat meal. The dead animals or deads as they were called waited for their turn in the factory yard to be crushed into small pieces for cooking into animal fat and bone meal.

Joe never went to high school, but made good money at the factory. Above all, nobody competed for the stinking job. Sometimes, he worked over seventy hours a week. Joe always remembered Steve’s advice: never stand still at any one spot; keep moving in the factory to look busy doing something; more importantly, make yourself stink more to avoid the factory manager coming too close to you to give more work. His old friend Steve died some time ago. Too much alcohol and alimony payments killed him. Joe remembered his friend’s words, like a mantra about his stinking job: “It smells like money.”

Cindy, Joe’s girl friend, didn’t want Joe to work at the rendering factory. “You stink all the time Joe, leave the job,” she told him.

“Honey, to me it smells like money,” he loved to say that to her.

Every half-hour or so, using a front-end loader, Joe picked up a few deads from the heap and dumped them into a large metal pit for grinding. Boy, it stunk. Then he corrects himself. “Smells like money to me.” Neil, the General Manager, stepped out from his car and walked several yards from the deads and glanced across the heaps of offal, animal bones, and deads with a great sense of satisfaction. “This winter is too frigid for the animals,” Neil said to himself. “I should charge more to pick up the deads from the farmers.” He made mental notes on this and a quick calculation, how much more money he could make in total as a collection fee.

“Are you expecting any visitors from corporate today, boss?” Joe inquired, parking the loader along side Neil’s car and jumping off.

“Aah, some fat cats from corporate will be here today, wasting company money on trips,” Neal said, making a 180 degree rotation on his heel, trying to look around the yard. “Get some men and clean up the yard.” “Not too long ago, you know Joe, I was working as a truck driver in this company,” said Neil, walking around slowly or wobbling like a penguin, as if to save his body fat. “And then, I was promoted to route manager, then to plant manager when John was fired, and now as you know I am the General Manager.”

Joe stood with both hands across his stomach and listened to Neil like a child listening to his teacher.

Neil’s black hair neatly cut in a corporate short style in contrast to Joe’s unruly long blond hair and unshaven face was an indication of his progress up the seniority ladder and social standing at the company. Neil preferred Khaki trousers and striped shirts. He wore a blue overcoat while inspecting the factory.

Neal learned one important thing from his old boss, Joel Bernstein, about the corporate staff. “Never make those assholes mad.” Every corporate officer visiting his factory got the royal treatment. Neil made sure to make reservations in top class-hotels and trendy restaurants in town. Neil’s boss, Bernstein, a Jew from the northeast was an unlikely person to rub shoulders with animal renderers, and yet he worked for thirty-five years in the business, breathing the foul smell from the factory until he retired.

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Neal had more Italian in him than any other European blood. He was short and stocky with olive skin. His voice had the distinct New Jersey accent. Early in life, he worked in a restaurant and was a part owner of a small Italian delicatessen before it went broke. A rendering truck used to pick up fat and bones from his restaurant once a week, and that was how he got to know Joel Bernstein, the rendering factory-manager who offered him a job as a truck driver when Neal went broke.

Every time Neal got a call from corporate, he felt jumpy because of his lack of total understanding of the rendering process. His old boss Bernstein, who was totally self-educated in rendering, used explanations containing technical terms every time the factory broke down. Bernstein used explanations such as, "Not getting enough vacuum in the evaporation system." "The conveyor screw is not pulling enough material to feed the cooker." "The material is too sloppy to cook." "The press is not pressing properly." "The refractory in the boiler is in bad shape, needs a replacement soon," etc. Neil regurgitated these every time he had to explain something about factory breakdowns to corporate.

Jim Jones, JJ for short was the senior Vice President at the corporate office of Dead Cow Rendering Company. He had a checkered past. While in high school, he got a summer job in an animal-rendering business belonging to his friend's dad. His work was to schedule the route trucks to pick up the fat and bone trimmings from various supermarkets in the town. That was how he became a route manager. A short man, JJ's perpetual crooked smile brought fear among his subordinates.

In an unexpected corporate shake up, an Investment Company from northeast bought "Dead Cow Rendering Company" hoping to "make a kill," financially speaking. Mad-Cow Disease, although it did not kill any cows, almost bankrupted the company. The investors promoted the crooked smile JJ to COO, CEO, and President all at once, to show their confidence in him. With over thirty years in rendering business, he realized that the business of animal rendering would never go down like coal or steel since as long as people eat meat, animals, had to be slaughtered and the waste animal parts had to be disposed of by rendering. Since millions of pounds of waste animal parts had to be rendered daily across the country, his job was as safe as a parish priest's.

It was a dream come true for JJ. JJ drives an emerald-green Jaguar. While driving to work it occurred to him that his initials JJ and the first letter in Jaguar, made a "Triple J," a symbol for his recent promotion to three positions at once. He always liked to see the pattern in everything. If he didn't see one, he created it. He compared himself to a Jaguar, which went for the jugular vein of its prey. His competitors were his preys in the nasty business of the animal-rendering. He saw himself as a lion holding the jugular vein of his competitors.

As the new president of "Dead Cow Rendering Company", JJ designed a new company logo of a dead cow with a bloated stomach lying on its back with all four legs straight up in air and the words "Cook Me Quickly" coming from its mouth painted on all the company vehicles.

Whatever he read in trade magazines, JJ would repeat in meetings. "If we don't render animal parts, the whole country will become a landfill full of animal parts and the whole nation will stink." Or "Huge harvests of soybeans in China and Brazil was hurting our business," so on and so forth.

JJ fired several corporate staff members from the previous administration and recruited new ones. The one and only qualification for any job was total loyalty to him. His inner circle staff was all "Yes Men." He behaved like a Jaguar on a tree with his handpicked staff on the ground, looking to identify any disloyal person to be caught at the jugular vein.

The people at the Investment Company on Wall Street who owned Dead Cow Rendering Company didn't like to eat red meat, preferring tofu and veggies instead. Obsessed with their blood cholesterol, LDL, HDL levels, and cholesterol/HDL ratio, etc., they made sure their blood vessels were clear and clean. During lunchtime they jogged around their office building as a show-off. One of their company's new recruits with an MBA from an Ivy League School presented impressive results from a study showing a close relation between the eating habits of an average Joe and his company stock value. The MBA almost choked while eating a baby carrot during lunchtime while sharing his joke "If an average Joe doesn't eat more red meat, we are dead meat."

JJ hand picked Neil and promoted him to work at Corporate Office. Neil was happy to be part of corporate, his life-long dream.

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JJ likes the expression, "brain storming." He read about this in a trade magazine. Since then, he uses it a lot in every meeting and conference calls. During one of his brain storming meetings with Neil, JJ asked if he had any new ideas to get more raw materials to render at the factories. This caught Neil off guard. After all, his knowledge was very limited to what he learned from Bernstein. His days in the restaurant business quickly flashed into his mind like a saving grace.

"Cabbage rendering," blurted Neil.

"What? JJ's mind couldn't catch up.

"You know, how much rotten cabbage is thrown away into dumpsters every day at large grocery stores?" Neil's voice gained confidence as if he discovered some thing totally new. "If we can collect all the cabbage and other rotten veggies from all the supermarkets in the country and render, we can make a ton of money."

Neil's idea has now created a real storm in JJ's brain.

"You mean to say, we can render rotten veggies like scrap meat?" JJ started jumping up and down with excitement.

"Why not, any thing can be cooked."

"What do we get out of rendering veggies any way?" demanded JJ.

Neil found himself in trouble now, he never thought that this conversation would continue this far with JJ, whose attention span generally lasted a few seconds at best.

"I am sure there is something in everything," Neil tried to avoid eye contact with JJ while putting out all the rubbish that just came to his mind.

"Okay, we will talk about it later, I have to make an important call," JJ waned toward Neil to leave his office.

Neil took a deep breath for getting off the hook and thought of thinking more about cabbage rendering later. JJ immediately called his bosses at the Investment Company to explain about rendering veggies as if it was his own novel idea to expand the business beyond animal rendering. The bankers, who loved to eat veggies, liked the idea and asked their new MBA recruit to work on economics of veggie-rendering.

Steve Dick was one of the "yes men" JJ promoted to corporate office as Director of Factory Maintenance. When Dick received the company credit card with his name followed by the title "Director, Corporate Maintenance," he was ecstatic. He kissed the company credit card lightly several times and placed it in his wallet carefully between other cards for safekeeping.

Steve Dick never liked his last name; not very many people had the last name Dick. When he was a boy, his grandfather said to him that in Britain where their family roots were, Dick was a respectable last name and meant another "Person" or "Fellow." Instead of calling somebody, "Hey, Fellow," they said "Hey, Dick." All these explanations did not satisfy Steve. He would rather preferred Dickson, Dixon, or Dickenson but not Dick. None of his friends called him by his first name Steve. Everybody liked his last name Dick or variations of such as "Dicke" or "Dickling" or worse "Moby Dick." "Don't DickaroundDick," they teased him all the time when he was young boy.

Dick worked as a mechanic in one of the factories Dead Cow Rendering Company owned before he became corporate. Dick worked under Howard, the Plant Manager, for several years. Howard was very knowledgeable when it came to equipment and plant operation though he didn't know how to manage his people. He constantly abused his men with rude remarks and foul language. They in turn thought he was crazy. Dick learned quite a bit from Howard about equipment and plant operation the hard way since he had to put up with all kinds of insults from Howard. Dick saw a light at end of the tunnel. Howard would get fired one day and Dick waited for his opportunity. Howard as usual stuck his neck out every time and expressed his opinions loudly and put his foot in his mouth so often that not long after Dick got Howard's job. The only problem was Dick didn't learn everything about plant operation and wasn't smart enough to figure out how to fix problems. One thing he learned was to shut up and never to stick his neck out to say anything as Howard had. That approach worked very well for Dick or Dicky or Dickling.

Dick continued his approach of solving the plant problems by letting the mechanics solve them, a risk free-approach unlike the one his old boss Harold took. If a piece of equipment broke down, he talked vaguely at length and gave a lot of fluffabouthow to fix it. So the mechanics called him "fluff" or "fluffy"

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behind his back.

When Dick visited one of the West Coast factories, he got a telephone call from a mechanic at an East Coast factory.

â Dick, we have a serious problem here. Grease from the cooker is getting into the boilers somehow, we are not able to figure it out, we need your help.â The mechanic sounded panicky.

â You guys checked everything?â Dick asked calmly.

â Yeah, yeah, yeah, we did check everything, still, we canâ t figure it out.â

â Umm, grease is lighter than water, right?â asked Dick.

â Yeah.â

â Well, go figure it out now. I gave you the clue, how to fix the problem now.â

The mechanic practically received no advice from Dick to fix the problem, hung up the phone muttering

â your are full of fluff.â

Dick spent most of his time taking photos of used and dilapidated factory equipment at various rendering factories and junkyards from East Coast to West and showed it to JJ as a novel idea of acquiring used equipment to save money for the company. None of the equipment he bought was either useful or saved him from facing to solve any specific maintenance problem at any factory. Once while flying in a plane, he wrote his corporate responsibilities in few verses on the back of the boarding pass as follows:

My Corporate Responsibilities

By Steve Dick

I take pictures, pictures of equipment,

Old and new, inside out, outside in,

Upside down and downside up;

I log a lot of travel time raking up frequent flyer mileage,

Quality time is suck-up time for me,

I am ready to step in as V.P., now,

I hang on to my company cushy job by hook or crook.

Dick read what he wrote again and again and thought what his grandfather said once about their British ancestral roots and respectability in his name â Dick.â For the first time, he felt proud to be named â Dick.â

JJ was under pressure from the Investment Company back east to expandâ Dead Cow Rendering Company.â JJ kept chanting, â acquisition or liquidation,â in his mind all the time. In the acquisition frenzy, he bought a small meat-meal mixing company in the Midwest. The factory had no buildings except two rusted silos and a mixer located outdoors to mix the meat meal. The Investment Company was happy about the acquisition deal, at least on paper. This was JJâ s first acquisition and was proud to expand the company. He brought on board Duke, the former owner of the blending company and gave him the title of â Director of Hazard Control and Safety Promotion.â A rotund, five feet tall person with deep eyes buried in thick lenses, Dukeâ s life-long dream was always to write memos. Before acquisition, his company was a one-man show, just himself. But now he was in charge of several managers. He wasted no time in sending memos on safety to all persons at every level in the company. Following was one of his memos:

From: David Duke

Director of Hazard Control &
Safety Promotion

To: General Managers

Plant Managers

Route Mangers

Garage Managers

Drivers and Workers

Waste Water Treatment Operators and to whom ever it may concern.

I am writing this memo as the recently appointed Director of Hazard Control and Safety Promotion. Safety is the utmost in plant operations particularly in our kind of operations where we walk on slippery greasy

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floors. Therefore I remind you to be careful on slippery floors. If a worker inadvertently slip and falls into the huge hoppers containing dead animals during night shift and nobody notices, he will end up as part of meat meal mixture by the next day. Therefore, I suggest every one of you to walk carefully near the hoppers. Lastly, I want to share an observation I made during my recent visit to one of our poultry rendering facilities. I saw one of our workers chasing a few live chickens that were dumped along with a truckload of dead ones; he could have drowned in the mountain of dead chickens without anybody noticing him. I advise managers to instruct their workers not to repeat this risky behavior at our plant premises. Again, as a recently appointed Director of Hazard Control and Safety Promotion, I assure you my services are available 24 hours a day. Please remember our company motto when it comes to safety: It is not worthwhile to die for a dead animal.

Sincerely,

David Duke

Director of Hazard Control and Safety Promotion

CC: Jim Jones

COO, CEO, and President

Dead Cow Rendering Company

P.S. Please display the placards with the motto "Be safe and it is not worthwhile to die for a dead animal" prominently everywhere in the factory yard.

JJ loved the memo, particularly the company motto on safety.

Through a recruiting agency, JJ selected Victor or in short Vicky for the position of Vice President of Pollution Control. Victor's physique and his athletic achievements as a former college football player impressed JJ very much.

Though Victor's qualifications did not even remotely meet the job description, the recruiting agency padded Victor's resume to meet all the job requirements and got him the job. As a Vice President of Pollution Control, in short V.P.P.C., he convinced JJ to introduce a new method of doing business called "outsourcing" or contracting out all company projects to outside contractors. JJ liked the new terminology and started out sourcing all the company's work to outside consultants, not realizing the hefty fee, the consultants charged the company.

In the beginning, bloated dead cows, pigs and animal parts made Vicky very sick. Then he realized that he could conduct the business from cushy hotel rooms without even visiting the stinking factory sites. For crying out loud, I don't have to visit the ghostly factory site, though I love to visit the city where the factory is located, Vicky thought. For Victor, the rendering factory locations were like recreational retreats. In San Francisco, he stayed at Fishermen Wharf area overlooking the Bay. In Los Angeles, he stayed in Long Beach. In Ft. Lauderdale, he stayed at luxury hotels, and so on. From airports, he drove straight to hotels and never visited the factories at all. Sometimes he strayed in cities where no factories existed at all. This was an extended luxury vacation with endless golf and feeding frenzy in steak houses and specialty seafood restaurants with company money. Once while he was flying in an airplane, all of a sudden thoughts rushed to his mind about his new-found fortune as VPPC, then he scribbled the following verses at the bottom of an advertisement in a complimentary travel magazine which asks a young executive, At what age you want to retire, forty, forty five, or fifty?

Am I Lucky or What?

In and out, in and out,
Flying-in during the morning,
Flying-out in the evening,
Let nature take its course in resolving,
Pollution problems and environmental noncompliance;
I am happy, happy, happy,
Bam, Bam, Bam,

The Investment Company saw a direct correlation between family size and meat consumption, and immediately instructed JJ to appoint a Hispanic person at corporate office. Firstly, it would fulfill minority representation on corporate staff and secondly, Hispanics represented the largest growing minority group with

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large families. That translated to more meat consumption and more animal parts to render. JJ saw the connection and immediately recruited Jose Carlos Rodriguez de la PeÃa as director of Human Resources. Jose's parents were from Guatemala. Before he immigrated to the United States, Jose's dad worked as a cowhand in a large cattle ranch. His small house on the ranch in Guatemala, a concrete block dwelling with galvanized sheet roofing, was so hot during the daytime, he slept under the shade of trees in their yard in a hammock. When he moved to the United States, the trailer home his father rented was like heaven for him. Jose received a degree in mass communication from a community college in the United States. Being bilingual got him the job as Director of Human Resources. He was excited to wear a tie and jacket every day to work and sit in his air-conditioned corporate office.

One day while Jose read a trade magazine to kill time in his office, JJ crashed into his office demanding that Jose start writing memos in both Spanish and English to show that Dead Cow Rendering was serious in its "Equal Opportunity Employer" policies. "We conduct nasty and stinking business but we are committed to equal opportunity employment here." JJ talked like a mad man. For Jose, JJ reminded him of the ranch owner back in Guatemala who always spoke as if pulling his guts out.

Jose prepared a Company Newsletter with a title appropriately "Guts" or in Spanish "Las agallas."
"Guts"
or
"Las agallas"

It is a great pleasure for me as the first Hispanic Director of Human Resources of Dead Cow Rendering Company to send this first edition of our company News Letter "Las agallas" or "Guts." I am grateful to JJ, the COO, CEO, and President to employ me at the corporate level to look after Human Resources Division (HRD). While the great explorers like Balboa and Magellan discovered Central America and Pacific Ocean, JJ discovered me, as I am originally from Central America.

As you know we are in the business of collecting animal guts (offal) to render at our factories, but you the managers have to go beyond collecting the animal guts, and also show your own guts in employing more minorities at your facilities. Your guts and the animal guts should go hand in hand to prove that our company is an equal opportunity employer (EOE).

Sincerely,

Jose Carlos Rodriguez

Director

Human Resources Division

CC: Jim Jones

COO, CEO and President

Dead Cow Rendering Company

JJ loved the Newsletter particularly, how he was compared with great explorers such as Balboa and Magellan though he never heard their names before.

Most managers did not take Jose seriously. Everybody believed that he was filling the minority requirement at corporate level. They called him "Las agallas," a new word they learned in Spanish behind his back.

Some called him "Pepe," nickname for Jose. But they all agreed that Las agallas or Pepeknew how to grease JJ's elbows.

The investment bankers were not satisfied with JJ's performance so far in improving the stock price of Dead Cow Rendering Company on Wall Street. As an incentive, they promised JJ additional commission and stock options for bringing in more dead animals to cook. For every additional dead cow or pig brought in, JJ would get a small commission.

One day, JJ was driving home in his Jaguar, he heard on the radio that the climate change El NiÃo was returning to hit United States again, and that meant unusual weather patterns would hit the country again with severe drought in some places and heavy rains at other locations. This can't be good for cattle, pigs or soybean crop, he thought. JJ imagined dead cows and pigs with bloated stomachs piling up in the plant yard waiting to be crushed and poor farmers in China and Brazil losing their soybean crop from bad weather. JJ saw the pattern and the jigsaw puzzle pieces coming together, all this spelled good luck for Dead Cow Rendering Company. Everything happens for good, JJ thought. He immediately called his bosses to let them know the

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possibility of a steep rise in prices of the finished products and abundance of dead cows and pigs from bad weather. The Ivy League MBA immediately jumped on conducting a study to find how El Niño affected the animal-rendering company stock price.

JJ had no specific business model to run the company. Most of the business acquisitions JJ made looked good on paper but later proved to be a financial burden. His inner circle of "yes men" spent more time crisscrossing the country on planes and writing memos. The outsourcing policy Vicky introduced to make him free of workload ate all the company profits and proved to be "Voodoo Economics." At every company brainstorming retreat at an expensive golf resort, JJ relentlessly chanted his business principles, which were based on simple natural consequences such as "All businesses are cyclical." "What goes around comes around." "What goes up comes down." And more importantly, "It is the human emotions, stupid, when it comes to stock market prices."

After moving to corporate office, Neil didn't get a chance to speak to Joe back at the factory for a long time. One day Joe called him on the phone.

"Hi, boss, it is Joe, remember me?"

"Yeah, how are things up there, Joe?" inquired Neil.

"We are cooking an awful lot of stuff you know, thanks to you."

"We got to make money."

"You know, I noticed recently a lot of dead fish in the creek behind our factory, I am wondering whether the blood and juices from the dead cows killing these fishes?"

"What dead fish?" Neil inquired.

"The dead fish I see next to the factory storm drain that discharges into the creek."

"We don't have any storm drain that discharges into the creek as far as I know," Neil replied.

"Well, the storm water from the factory yard containing blood and the juices from the dead animals on the yard, and all that crap discharges into the creek through the storm drain, you know."

"Is blood not good for fish?" inquired Neil.

"I don't know, boss. I read in the local newspaper that a leak from anhydrous ammonia tank from a farmer's field seeped into the same creek and killed an awful lot of fish," said Joe.

"May be that ammonia killed these fish too." Neil reasoned.

"Yeah, but the farmer lives way downstream to our factory storm drain."

"So, fish do swim upstream. Don't you know in Pacific North West, Salmon swim upstream to spawn every year?"

"You think that the fish poisoned by the anhydrous ammonia from the farmer's field were able to swim upstream a few miles to our storm drain site to die?"

"I think so." Neil showed confidence in his voice.

After two days, Neil received another call from Joe. This time, Joe's voice was desperate and frightened.

"Neil, this morning, I saw a few guys from the State Pollution Control Agency collecting samples at our storm drain at the creek."

Neil realized that this incident was getting out of hand. "Joe, I couldn't talk to you on this matter any more, okay?" "You deal with it locally, remember, I am now corporate, any way I am getting another call." He hung up the phone.

Since Neil worked at the corporate office now, he mentioned to JJ about fish kill during the lunchtime.

"How can blood and juices from dead cows kills fish?" inquired JJ. "What's the connection?"

Neil tried to explain the connection between water stream contamination with animal blood and fish kill. JJ abruptly stopped Neil, and said he needed to go to his dentist for an appointment. Instead he drove straight to the country club.

Joe after speaking with Neil that morning realized that he was a dead fish. That was exactly how Neil felt about himself after speaking with JJ after lunchtime.

How dead cows could kill fish, thought JJ while having a drink at the country club but again, "it is the human emotions, stupid," that kills the company stock prices, he reminded himself. JJ decided not to break this news immediately to his bosses back east after all, he don't want to be a dead fish either.

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