

Food Faces

Ian Ross

"Food Faces" is one of Ian Ross's monologues, featuring his 'Joe from Winnipeg' persona.

Hey you guys, this is me, Joe from Winnipeg. Today I'm gonna be talkin' to you about food faces. "What the heck is that Joe?" you're wondrin'. Well, just wait a minute an I'll tell you. So anyways, I was sittin' down to watch the news an I'm feeling kine of hungry eh? An you know there used to be a time when I had to learn how to ignore that hunger, but now since I got my own bachelor pad I tell myself, "Joe, live high on the pig. You deserve that to yerself." So I get up an walk across the room to my cupboard an I'm telling myself, "Joe," I says to myself, "make sure it's somethin' low fat an no additives or preservatives." "I should just have some water," I answer myself. It's funny how we can talk better to ourselves than other people eh? What's up with that? Anyways, I get to my cupboard an, boy, did I ever feel like that ole goose. My cupboard was bare. Well OK, that's eggsagerating. I did have a 2.25 kilogram bag of Quaker Oats. The quick kine. Come to think of it, I've never had the slow kine. They should be offrin' that to us consumers. What's up with that? Anyways, I look at that smiling white guy with the white hair an the big kine of cowboy hat an, son-of-a-gun if that guy ain't got a bib on already. So I pick up the bag an read it. Low fat. That's good. Source of dietary fibre. That's good too. Hun'erd percent whole grain. No additives or preservatives. I start thinkin', "No wonder this stuff needs lots of brown sugar." But you know what? I had no Quaker Oats lef. I'm kind of mad at first, but then I figure, "Just go get some more." An I look on that bag an I see it says, "It's the right thing to do." Trade mark. I guess I gotta do somethin' now for sayin' that. Anyhow, I take that as a message an head off to the new SuperValu. Boy, that place is big, an I tell myself, "No impulse buying today, Joe. Just get the oats an get out." So I go to the cereal section to find the guy with the white hair an the big kine of cowboy hat an I pass by the pancakes. "That's temptin'," I tell myself an then I did that with my head. Oh, I guess you can't see that, but if you picture me twistin' my head to the side twice, that's what I did. An I look at the pancakes mixes an there's Aunt Jemima. Smilin' away, with that one pearl earring an a lace collar. 'Cept she looks diff'rent. An I look closer an I hit my head with the bottom of my hand. "Holy smoke," I says. "Where's her kerchif? They took away Aunt Jemima's kerchif. What's up with that?" An my voice in my head says, "You know Joe. You know why she's not got that kerchif on her head no more." An I pick up that box an look closer at her, twist it around a bit an there I see that white-haired guy. He's on the box too. Same company, I guess. An then I look up an I see Cream of Wheat an there's another person of colour on that box. Smilin'. Just lookin' at me. Smilin'. An right away I grab a bag of wild rice to see if there's an Indian guy on there. Smilin' or somethin'. But there wasn't. An then I think, "Hey, what about that Betty Crocker, isn't she some kine of ethnic mix or somethin'? Not even real." Was Aunt Jemima someone real? How 'bout the creamed wheat guy? Or Uncle Ben? Who's uncle was he? Is he s'posed to be my uncle? Your uncle? An then I ask myself a question, "Using people of colour as food faces. Is this the right thing to do?" An then I answer myself before I even finish the question. Boy, that's neat how our brains can do that. "If it was the right thing to do, how come Aunt Jemima doesn't got a kerchif no more?" I ask you, what's up with that? So I bought No Name Oats an went home. This is Joe from Winnipeg. Meegwetch¹.

Ian Ross received the Governor General's Award for English drama in 1997, making him the first Métis to win the award. Ross obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in film and theatre from the University of Manitoba.

¹ Meegwetch means thank you in Oji-Cree.