Life in the fast lane—for an hour

I jumped into the fast lane this week.
Only for a scant 65 minutes, but I was there.
And dammit, I managed to survive.

Wednesday I took part as a volunteer during McHappy Day, in which McDonald's restaurants across the country invite individuals from the community (some call them 'mini-celebrities' but I hesitate to accept that title) to take a shift behind the counter to raise funds for local charities, in this case the local hospital foundation.

I confess I didn't go willingly— I was coerced. Covering a McHappy Day press conference at William Osler Health Centre (which I still stubbornly call Georgetown Hospital), a few weeks ago, I happen to be standing in front of a group of 40-odd people in the lobby of the hospital.

Dave and Lucy Beatty, owners of the Acton, Brampton and Georgetown restaurants were on hand, addressing those assembled.

"... And we're just asking local 'celebrities', you know, like Ted here," said Dave, "To take a shift during McHappy Day activities... you WILL take part, won't you Ted?"

As a hush blanketed the room, I suddenly realized there is no way in hell one can graciously bow out of an 'invitation' of that nature.

During that brief 10 seconds another voice piped up from the front of the press conference.

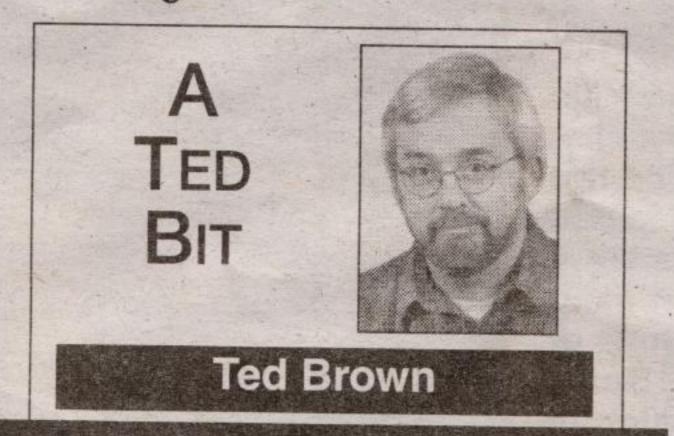
"I want Ted for an hour—Dave, Lucy, make sure he's mine for an hour!"

Ordinarily, if a guy heard a line like that, he might be inclined to feel complimented.

But coming from Beatty's Georgetown restaurant McHappy Days co-ordinator Sandra Denis, I knew her motives were a little more pointed—perhaps bordering on vindictive.

I've known Sandra for years. Affectionately referred to as 'The Silver Bullet' by co-workers, she's the person I see at the drive-thru window.

I love to give her a hard time, suggesting she's shortchanged my order or insinuating she added extra sauce to my Big Xtra so it drips on me.



She handles my abuse so well. But it was now pay back time.

Arriving at McD's at my appointed time, I walked in the door to be greeted by The Silver Bullet's smiling face, knowing full well my fate.

The fast lane—the drive-thru window.
"You're gonna be a 'presenter' Ted," she said,
grinning from ear to ear, "Your job is to pass the
order out the window to the customers."

Directed by Kumar Deonarine (he does the final check on each order) he placed orders on a countdown mat with 3,2, and ready squares.

With McD's Jenny Jackson filling drinks, my job was to greet the customers with my best smile and sunny disposition, then hand over their order, once it moved to the 'ready' square.

Drive-thru runs like a well-oiled machine, as staffers converge on that window with the items on the order, fired into action the second the order is punched into the computer.

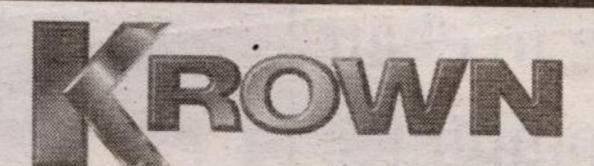
Kumar said the goal is to have a customer's order out the window within 90 seconds of ordering. Most times I was well under the 90, a fact I HAD to share with The Silver Bullet.

She was duly impressed (or so she said.)
We serviced about 55 cars during my hour shift, a credit to all those staffers behind me.

Okay, it was fun, and I now have a respect for those staff behind the window in the 'fast lane.'

But better still I've got two full years to appear

But better still, I've got two full years to annoy
The Silver Bullet, before the next McHappy Day.



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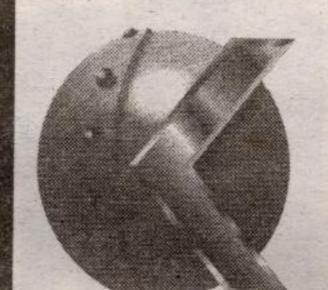
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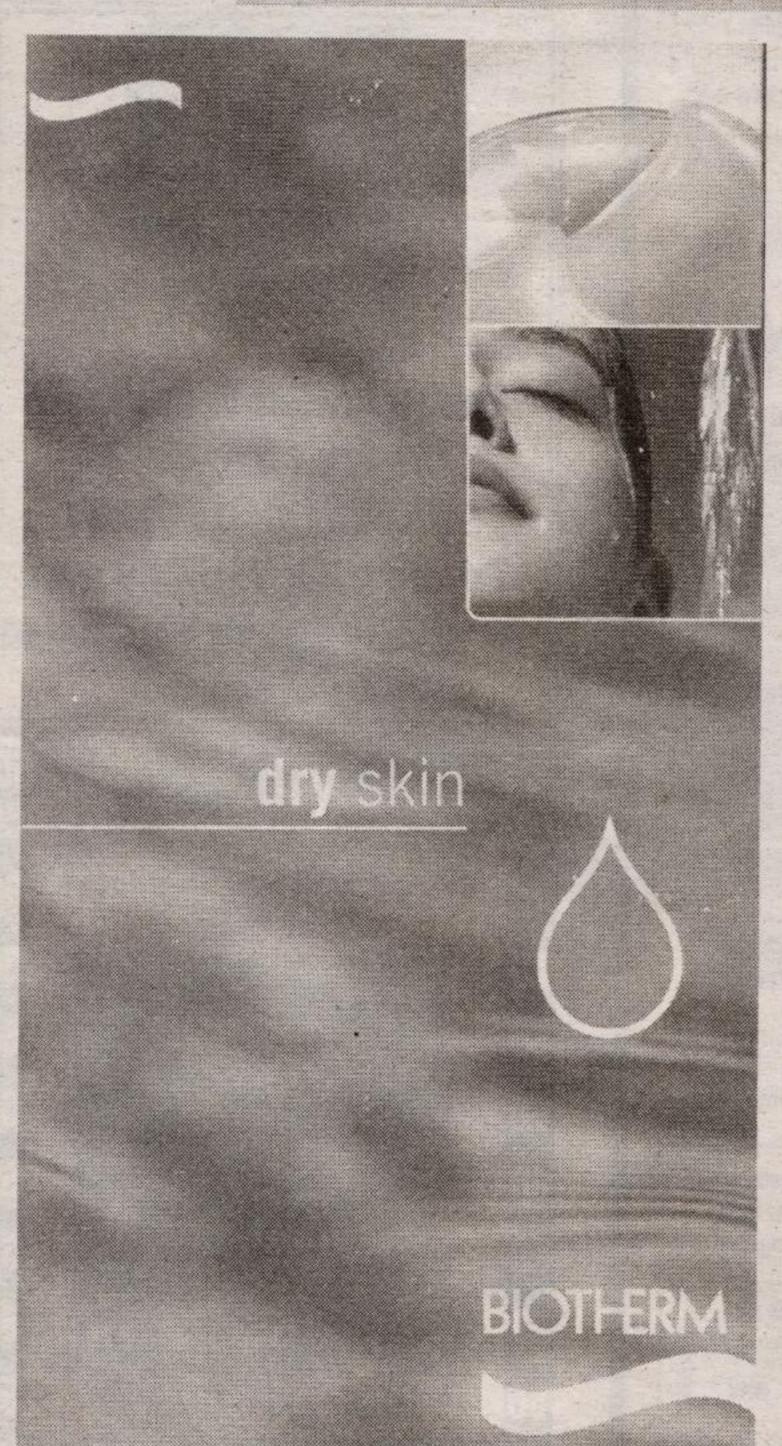




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