

# A taste of competition

*by* Chris Miller

We called him Mickey Habanero, because he could fill his mouth with the hottest food imaginable, the kind packed with the sort of heat that would melt the gums from the teeth of a novice, all without taking a drink of milk or anything else that would otherwise soothe the spiciness from the raw taste buds.

Mickey would entertain other bar patrons here with a series of contests to determine who could eat the most spicy food without taking a drink of anything, both combatants filling their mouths with peppers, the zesty juices dripping down their chins the only relief for thirst. The loser would have to pay the bar tab of the winner, who would often soak his tested taste buds in top-shelf liquor for the rest of the evening. It was usually Mickey who had this honor, meaning he could basically drink for free all week.

Tonight, though, spicy peppers wouldn't be Mickey's downfall; rather, it was that damn Gina, who decided to have him served with a court summons while Mickey's mouth was stuffed full of peppers. The surprise of being tracked down at his comfortable haunt, mixed with the shock that he had a 10-year-old love child whom he never knew existed, caused Mickey to spit jalapeno pepper juice in the general vicinity of anyone around him.

So now, the court can add the charges of blinding a delivery kid to the years of back child support in its attempts to leave a bad taste in Mickey's mouth.

