

Similar sausage joints battle in University Village

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BUSINESS MANAGER

Around Illinois Tech, there are very few exceptional restaurants, but take a short trip over to UIC and everywhere there are good places to grab some grub.

Two that stand out are Jim's Original and Express Grill, both are Polish sausage joints. Oddly enough, these places are located within feet of each other, featuring identical menus, prices, and color schemes. Between the two, there is some fierce competition, both grabbing for the title of best Polish sausage. Many people have tried to convince me one is better than the other, so I took it upon myself to taste test them both.

My roommate and I ventured out to try both places one cold Tuesday afternoon. After fumbling around the city to find an ATM, we headed over to Maxwell street to grab some food. In celebration of Black History Month, both Jim's Original and Express Grill held a sale that could not be beat; one Polish sausage and fries for only \$2, making this block the cheapest place to eat in Chicago. Neither place offers any seating, only a metal ledge on the outside of the buildings to rest food on. Forced inside by the bitter temperatures, we retreated to the warmth of a Cold Stone Creamery to enjoy our sausages.

The sausages were alike in almost every way. They looked the same, tasted the same, were wrapped the same, and both came with the same toppings, onions, mustard, and hot peppers. They were both big juicy sausages, and along with fries is enough to fill anyone up. Because the sausages were practically indistinguishable, the service and fries were the only distinguishing features. At Jim's Original, the staff was lively and energetic; Express Grill, not so much. However, Express Grill did have

a Polish man serving the sausage, adding a bit of authenticity. Jim's Original's fries were crisp, but Express Grill had a larger quantity of fries. Whether one is better than the other is still a mystery. Both have positives and negatives, but they are so closely related to each other that it is practically impossible to distinguish between the two.

Their menus do not stop at Polish sausage, and also include: pork chop sandwiches, hot dogs, fish sandwiches, burgers, and chicken. I have not tried them all, but after my experience with the sausages, I would guess that they taste exactly the same. The food at both places tastes amazing, but be warned this is not healthy food with all the grease, and there are no vegetarian options.

These two places are fantastic. The winter temperatures this time of year make it difficult to eat here without a car, but there are plenty of other restaurants and UIC buildings around to provide protection and warmth. If you want a good place to eat for less than \$5, can't stand what Sodexo has for lunch, or are craving some sausage at 4 a.m., head on over to Jim's Original and Express Grill to see which one you like better.

Jim's Original

1250 S Union Ave
Chicago, IL 60607

Scale (1-10): Best sausage around

Cost: less than \$5

Oddities: 24/7 and instant food
jimsoriginal.com

Express Grill

1260 S. Union
Chicago, IL 60607

Scale (1-10): Best sausage around

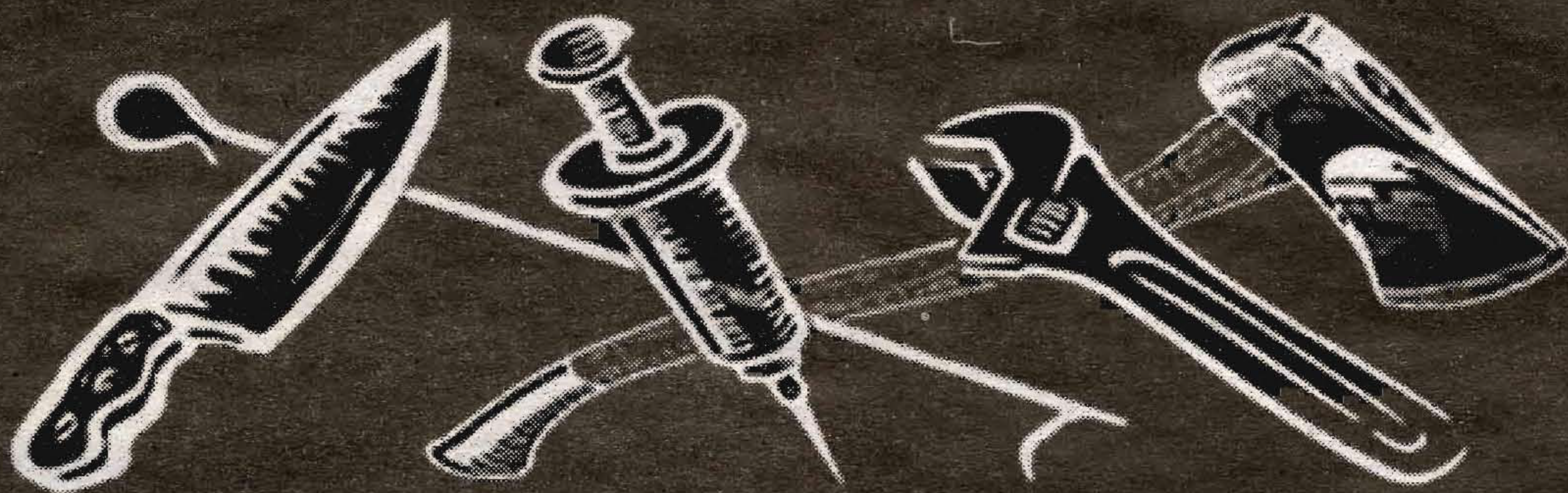
Cost: less than \$5

Oddities: 24/7 and instant food
expressgrillinc.com



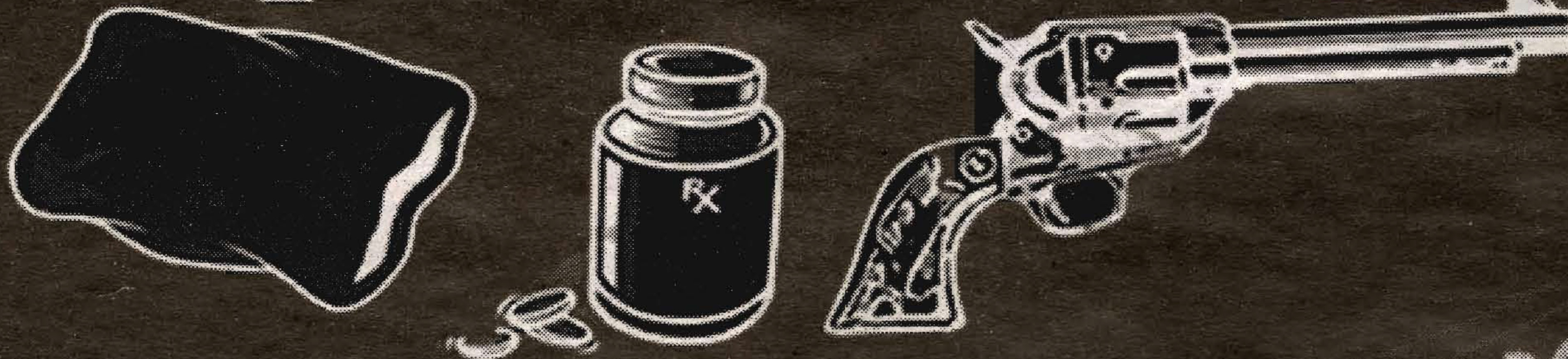
Photos courtesy of seriouseats.chicago.com & expressgrillinc.com
Note: These photos are of Jim's Original & Express Grill (top to bottom) though they are remarkably similar.

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