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Interviews with Ellen Jaffe Jones

By OUR HEN HOUSE

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*Following is a transcript of an interview with **ELLEN JAFFE JONES** conducted by **JASMIN SINGER** and **MARIANN SULLIVAN** of [Our Hen House](#), for the [Our Hen House podcast](#). The interview aired on Episode 228.*

JASMIN: Ellen Jaffe Jones was a TV investigative reporter for 18 years in St. Louis and Miami, and won two Emmys and the National Press Club award for consumer reporting. Then she spent five years as a financial consultant at her downtown branch of Smith Barney, where she focused on socially responsible and animal-friendly investments, and in 2001 was the number one market performer. She was the only woman on the top 10 list two years in a row. Ellen then became a media consultant for Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and also a trained cooking instructor for PCRM's The Cancer Project. She is the author of *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day*, *Kitchen Divided: Vegan Dishes for Semi-Vegan Households*, and now is coauthor of *Paleo Vegan*. She intends to keep blowing up vegan myths until her last breath. Ellen has placed in 67 5K or longer races for her age group since 2006 and is currently seventh in the United States in the 1500 Meters W64, tenth in the 400 Meters, and sixteenth in the 200 Meters. Although it is rare for anyone with her sprint time to have ever finished a marathon, she's finished two and has also placed in one of the six half marathons she's done in the past four years. Learn more about Ellen Jaffe Jones at [vegcoach.com](#) or look her up on Amazon, Ellen Jaffe Jones. You'll want to read her books.

Welcome to Our Hen House, Ellen.

ELLEN: Thank you so much for having me. It's a pleasure to be here.

JASMIN: There's so much we want to talk to you about, and we've been hearing your name for so long that I'm just really honored that you've joined us today on Our Hen House. And you've been an ambassador for veganism for a very long time, and you must have seen veganism just change so much. How long have you been vegan?

ELLEN: I put the number at 34 years on and off. It was not a straight journey like for many of us who started back in those days. There was so much information and no internet to confuse us!

JASMIN: Yeah. Wow! 34 years, that's just amazing! What motivated you to go vegan in the first place?

ELLEN: Well, it was the same year my sister got breast cancer, and it was looking like we had some genetic component which eventually did turn out to be true. My mom and both

sisters would go on to have breast cancer, and we became part of the original breast cancer gene studies. So they don't tell you the results, but nobody in our family really needed a confirmation of what we already sensed. And it was also the year I almost died of a colon blockage. I had been a TV investigative reporter running around like a wild woman. I had no time for lunch, let alone anything with fiber in it. So when I was in the emergency room, the ER doctors said they'd never seen a blockage so large in someone so young and I would need to be on meds the rest of my life, and I thought, whoa, 28's too young for that. So, ran to the health food store, read all five books on fiber because that's all there was at the time, and that's where it started.

MARIANN: Wow, so it was fiber that got you there. Tell us a little bit more about what happened with your family. And have you actually also avoided cancer yourself?

ELLEN: I have. And knock wood or whatever stroke of luck that may be, although I prefer to say that it's been my diet that has kept me cancer-free. I became a cooking instructor, trained cooking instructor for Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and their great organization called The Cancer Project. And I would see this happen during my classes, where people would lose -- the best success story was a woman who lost 120 pounds in eight months, never counting a calorie. And she had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, one of the more fatal forms of bone cancer. And eight years ago, that was, and she's still alive and she had been given up for dead. So certainly my own story -- cancer is hard to really track and say what causes it other than cigarette smoking, and we're learning more and more about the value of a carrot. But my journey has also been combined with fitness as well, and I think that has been part of it too.

JASMIN: Yeah, we want to ask you about that. I just want to say that one of the funniest ways that I think my veganism and Mariann's veganism has worked to our benefit has been that our tattoos heal a whole lot faster. And I don't think there's ever been a study on this, but our tattoo artists are always like, "Wow, your tattoos heal!" So anyway, it's just a funny little aside.

MARIANN: You don't get cancer, your tattoos heal. The benefits are just overwhelming.

JASMIN: Hey, they're staggering!

ELLEN: There's a book in that, I'm sure.

JASMIN: There is! There's gotta be. And you just mentioned your athleticism. And can I ask you, if you don't mind, how old you are?

ELLEN: I am 61, although the last time I went through security at the Sarasota, Florida airport, the TSA agent looked at my driver's license, looked up at me, and sees that I'm wearing, as I always do, this obnoxiously bright vegan t-shirt, and she goes, "If I start eating a vegan diet, will I look like you at your age?"

JASMIN: Nice. Very nice. Well, you do. You look very young. I was just watching some videos of you. And Mariann just turned 64, so it's really inspiring for me as a 34-year-old, which is the amount of time you've been vegan, to just know these people in my life who are just thriving and giving me a run for my money. Let's talk about a "run" for my money actually. Let's talk about your running. You are, to put it mildly, an avid runner. Can you describe some of your accomplishments?

ELLEN: Well, just to give your listeners some inspiration, I hated running when I was a kid. I couldn't walk a mile in 20 minutes. I grew up in a place in the Midwest where the humidity was stifling and you just kind of went into hibernation during the summer. So I had started running, began about the time when I changed my diet around 28. I connected with some other women friends who, we just ran for pleasure. I started racing then, and I never placed in a race in my youth. There were so many people faster and better than me. And I took a long hiatus because there weren't the fancy running strollers that they have now.

And when we came to Florida about 10 years ago, I heard a shotgun go off outside my window, and I thought, either somebody's dead or there's a 5K starting. And fortunately it turned out to be the latter. And I went over to the park and said, "How do you run in Florida in the summertime?" and the answer universally was "Get up at sunrise." And so I started doing that on my own for a year; then I joined a local running club, and it took me a year of training with them before I had the guts to show up at a race.

So since 2006, I have placed now in 67 5K races or longer for my age group. And I'm seventh in the US in the 1500 Meters, tenth in the 400 Meters, and I did all that at last year's Senior Games in Cleveland. And what I found was, getting to your point of recovery, is that when I woke up on day three to do the 1500 meters, I had done, like everybody else who was competing in a lot of different events, the 100 and the 200 Meters on day one, the 400 and 800 Meters day two. And by day three, all my meat-eating colleagues were scratching, and that's the term that means they just dropped out. They couldn't compete on day three because they were so sore, tired. And I woke up a little bit sore but I could do the whole four times around the track, no problem. So that is, I say, a vegan diet is the best-kept secret in America.

And what I saw very early in my broadcast career was that newsrooms didn't take the whole animal rights thing very seriously unless PETA did something outrageous in front of the fur company. So I covered some of the worst animal abuse stories as a reporter, which certainly shaped my views. But I always thought, if I could find a way, like money or relationships or health, to focus in my writing, that that would draw maybe more people into the vegan universe that would never give it a second thought.

MARIANN: Yeah, I think you're absolutely right. I think the benefits for athletes are just starting to be known about, and I think they are motivating a lot of people. And I love your description, 'cause it's not something I hear get talked about that much, but the fact that your recovery time is so much better. People do mention that, but that it allows you to run different lengths, which other people really have to specialize and couldn't have done that longer race on your third day. That's something that I think people don't mention, and it's so important for people to know that that will help them. So what motivates you to do all of this running and everything else that you do? What would you say is driving you?

ELLEN: There was once a post on Facebook where -- I have too many followers, 35,000 followers on just my "Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day" page, which was my first book. But somebody asked, "What are you running from?" and the answer immediately was "disease," because I grew up basically in hospitals watching all my relatives kind of joke about, "Well, what hospital wing are we paying for with this disease that we're here for?" It was kind of the way that we had to deal with so many issues like that. My aunt died of cancer in her home when I was five. So that really shaped my thought process of, how do I avoid this mess? Because entire generations are losing each other and don't even know it.

And to the point of recovery, another kind of what I guess is sort of interesting thing that has service is that I write a monthly column for the Running Journal, which is just a publication about running that gets distributed around the country. And the publisher said, "You know, Ellen, it's really rare for anybody with your sprint times" -- which are close to NCAA college girls' sprint times for the events that I do -- "to have ever finished a marathon," because it is the fast twitch and slow twitch genetic disposition. We usually have one group of muscles more so than the other. And he said, "You know, you have actually finished two marathons and six half marathons, and most people who have the shorter twitch muscles just can't do that." And so again, I keep going back, "Well, must be the plants." And the recovery, it's just, I'm not gonna break any records doing the longer endurance runs, but at least I can do them. And I kinda joke with, at my age it's about showing up.

But even one time I was at the doctor's just -- one thing a vegan diet doesn't cure is flat feet. I just want to fully disclose that. And so I was reading the current edition of *Arthritis Today*, and right in that very mainstream magazine, they were saying, "If you want to cut back on your arthritis symptoms, dump the meat. Don't eat it." And I'm going, "Wow, why isn't more of this message getting out to the mainstream?" because I really see that in my running circles now, in the 10 years since I've been actively competing, that many of my competitors who I know are huge meat eaters just can't do it anymore.

JASMIN: Mm, that's so fascinating. And hearing everything that you're doing is just so motivating for people of any age and any experience level. And we do want to talk about your newer book, *Paleo Vegan*. But you mentioned a previous book of yours called *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day*, which we have, and we love this book. And I know that this explodes another myth about veganism, that it's elitist and expensive. Can you tell us about *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day*?

ELLEN: Sure, and thank you for your kind words, really. I just wrote that because I kept hearing all these stories on the news saying you can't eat well on a budget or food stamps. And I do wish Cory Booker had called me when he was doing his food stamp challenge. I could have given him some delicious recipes. He was complaining as mayor that there just wasn't any good food around. So maybe next time he does it he'll give me a call. But I've been doing this for 34 years and thought, somebody needs to get this information out there, that it can be very tasty and easy.

And what I started doing -- in 2008, Dr. John McDougall wrote in his newsletter that he believed that all the recipes in all of his books could be done under \$3 a day, so the original title of that book was "Eat Well on \$3 a Day." And I had an agent chopping it for a year, and she got turned down by all the big boys. And she had wanted, as did some others, it to be sort of a backdoor vegan book like *Skinny Bitch* and *Quantum Wellness*. But fortunately about the time my publisher picked up the book, Bill Clinton came out of his vegan closet, so the title then changed to, accommodating for inflation, "Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day."

But every recipe in the book has an estimated price based on ingredients you can find at a big-box store. And people always go, "Ew, are you recommending we shop at Walmart?" And I go, "Ew, if you live below the poverty level of \$23,000 in this country, then you probably already are shopping at Walmart."

And in my tracking of prices, what I would find is that if you would buy in bulk and put your beans in the hermetically sealed jars with the rubber silicon gasket, the beans will last

forever. And if you trade out the meat and dairy and exchange it for beans, you have all this money left over to buy produce. And if you have listeners who are trying to convert their families, this is really one big area where you can sometimes get their attention, when you show them that the price of beans, for example, at a big-box store is about a nickel an ounce, compared to the cheapest form of hamburger meat is about seven times more expensive. And beef tenderloin is thirty-seven times more expensive, and that's not even considering restaurant prices.

JASMIN: Wow.

MARIANN: I can't tell you how many people I've recommended this book to because I hear that all the time. "Well, I would love to go vegan, but it's so expensive and I'm really not there yet." And it's just a myth, it's a crazy myth. And I'm so glad that you wrote this book to actually explode that myth. But now I want to talk to you about your latest book, which is really making waves. And can you tell us a little bit about how you came up with the idea to write *Paleo Vegan*, which sounds like a contradiction in terms?

ELLEN: Yeah, I've been surprised that some people have been really angry with me for putting those two words in the same sentence, let alone a book title. But I'll tell you why. I kept hearing about, oh, three years ago, in my running club and as a personal trainer, people were starting to do this paleo diet. And I started reading some books on it just so I would be educated as a certified personal trainer myself and a running coach. And to me, because I had tried all the high-protein diets coming out of college, going back to the Stillman Diet, Atkins, and all that nonsense, it just seemed like another high-protein diet repackaged, maybe a little closer to the Zone Diet or South Beach minus the dairy. And so we were at Earth Day a couple of years ago -- I was eating there at a restaurant with some vegan friends -- and the waitress sees us ordering vegan and she goes, "Well, I used to be vegan, but now I'm paleo and I've lost so much weight so quickly." And I'm rolling my eyes and the people across from me go, "What's paleo?" And I thought, wow, we better stop this leak in the dyke really quickly or people are just gonna be running out the door and looking for the quick fix or, as Dr. McDougall likes to say, "good news about our bad habits." And so I just looked for a way that I could combine the best of both diets and that's really what I did in *Paleo Vegan*. There is a list of foods that both could eat. And most of the paleo books I read also had this 15-20% cheat because they understood that long term it was not a sustainable way of eating.

JASMIN: Interesting. Yeah, I've noticed that especially in the CrossFit community, there's just so much about paleo this and paleo that. And Mariann and I were staying in Portland, Oregon for six months when she was a visiting professor of farmed animal law there, and they have a vegan CrossFit gym there. And they are all about talking about vegan diets, but it seems to me that with that exception, everyone I know who does CrossFit is so into paleo. And I even know some runners who have been vegan who have kind of transitioned into the CrossFit community and the paleo community and it's just really sad. I feel like there's no long-term studies of what it would do to you long term to eat that way because at the time when people were, I guess -- and I'm not sure if I'm -- correct me if I'm wrong. But in ancient history when people were eating the way that they purport, that paleo folks eat, the lifespan was so much shorter. So now that we're living to be 80 years old or 90 years old, the health ramifications of consuming the large amounts of meat that would be part of a paleo diet are just completely devastating.

ELLEN: Yeah, and I really just, again, wanted to attack a myth, and the myth is that our Paleolithic ancestors, which range anywhere -- depending which book or interpretation you want to read, and I did read some anthropology and archaeology books to get some background in this -- a million to two million years ago to about seven thousand years ago roughly. And the concept was that we should be eating how our ancestors did. But the idea that we were running around three times a day, first of all, being able to find meat and then catch it and then cook it in a way that we didn't die, really is not, I don't think, given that there was no Instagram back then, any way of documenting that. And the people who have written the paleo books, up until the time that mine came out a couple of weeks ago, it just was -- there wasn't anything looking at it from the vegan perspective. So the way I address it is I say, "it's time for vegans to redefine and reclaim the paleo title," because the reality is the folks that were staying at home tending the nest, they were the ones who were doing the foraging and looking around their own environment for what they could pick and gather. We were way more gatherers than hunters, and this concept of eating meat so much just, I don't think was very real. And the other part of this is that the fossil record, it preserves calcium from bones much more clearly than plants. Occasionally you'll find ferns in the fossil records, but plants just -- the record just doesn't really tell us what we were doing with regard to plants.

JASMIN: Now, I love that you're taking these really hot topics, like the quote-unquote inherent expensiveness of veganism, and now the trend of paleo diets, and you're just saying, "I'll write a book about that. I'm gonna prove them wrong." I love that you're doing that. It's such an important advocacy tool for people like us to just have at our disposal. I like to buy a couple copies of books like yours just because I -- there's someone who will always bring this up, and then bam, you have this book that you could hand off to them. And I know that there are -- in the paleo community, people tend to feel very strongly about their dietary choices, and you have a tremendous online following. Have you had any reactions to your book, more combative reactions?

ELLEN: Oh yeah. There's a review up on Amazon. There were all these five-star reviews, and then this one person comes in with a really awful one-star saying, "How dare you put these two words together. You're a terrible representation of what the word 'vegan' means." And it's like, "Wait a minute! Let's find some common ground here." But what was fascinating is that a bunch of other people then jumped in at that point and kind of made the argument for me. At the beginning of my publishing career as a former investigative reporter I wanted to jump in and respond. And now, first of all, I don't have time, but it's just great that people really are getting this message.

And what's fascinating about the paleo books that I've read anyway, none of them have been written by doctors. They're just good marketers. And one of them is a researcher out in Colorado, but other than that there's really no medical connection to the high protein, meat heavy paleo diets at this point. And since I have done marathons, I can't imagine doing it without carbohydrate loading the week or the day before a race. I think I would have just collapsed at about mile six, if that. And you need that storehouse of energy to go the long distances. And if you study, and you can easily find this online, like the Kenyan marathoners have a diet that is about 60-80% complex carbs. So that's the conventional wisdom that is out there, and the wonderful medical benefits of a plant-based diet for even somebody who doesn't want to do all of the athletic stuff, it's just I think so that we can live to be 100. And one of my favorite running training books is *Running till 100*. That's my goal.

And I want to be around for my grandkids in ways that my parents never were. And that's -- I think, Bill Clinton has said the same thing, so I think as we kind of understand our own mortality, we just get very driven to figure it out because there's not a lot of time left at this point. So you just do what works.

MARIANN: I see, like me, you recently entered your 60s. You start thinking in these directions, don't you? You realize it's a finite amount of time and we want to do the best we can with it. And I'm sure that one of the reasons that people who do paleo say, and I don't think that they're lying that they feel so much better, is because it cuts out the junk food, and that's gotta be good for anybody to cut out junk food. But can you tell me what elements that the diet in your book, *Paleo Vegan*, have in common with, or what are the basic foods? Because I know that in addition to cutting out junk foods, paleo diets frequently cut out a lot of foods that we tend to think of as very healthy, like the complex carbs, and I don't know that much about it, but I think they cut out beans as well, which just seems like crazy talk. So what are the basic foods in this recommendation?

ELLEN: Well, let me just to your point briefly say what the traditional paleo diet is because a lot of people may not know that, and sometimes I assume that and realize, "oh wait a minute, they don't know." So whole, unprocessed foods, lean meats, and of course, they say, from grass-fed or free range locations, and seafood. Of course, if you watch the movie *Bag It*, and I highly recommend that, you'll understand that most fish now are eating plastic more so than plankton. So that's one of the problems they've had in finding this plane that went missing is that there's so much junk in the ocean that they got a lot of false positives, thinking it was a plane but it was really debris. So that's what we're eating if you're eating seafood. A paleo diet also includes low carb foods that are high in fiber and potassium, healthy fats, and then generally no grains, legumes, potatoes, dairy products although that varies between authors, and then no processed foods with added salt, refined sugar, or refined vegetable oils, to some extent. Again, depending on the author of the book, oils are allowed.

So what I did on page 11 of *Paleo Vegan* is I formed a list that included what both diets would enjoy. And so the protein generally would come from nuts and seeds, and of course there's protein in vegetables, and then some grains are allowed in moderate consumption, like quinoa, sweet potatoes and wild rice, so some protein sources there; amaranth as well, buckwheat. And that's a very slenderized boiled down list, but keep in mind too that most of the paleo books do include this 15-20% cheat that you can do during the day, during the week. And so we have defined that to say, "Okay, that's when you can eat your beans and grains," and that's four or five meals a week. So again I just wanted to address the idea, if somebody wanted to go paleo and they were vegan, that they could still do it under the vegan umbrella. And I've got in the book vegan protein sources that if you have concerns about that -- I know at the CrossFit gym I went to locally just to see what that was all about, I was greeted at the door with whey protein canisters, and it's like, NO! We can't do this, it's just so unhealthy to be consuming whey protein for lots of different reasons. Yes, it may bulk up your muscles, but go to the website [Vegan Bodybuilding](#) and you'll see what those guys and gals are doing just on plants. They look great and they're winning competitions too.

JASMIN: Oh, totally. And is paleo dairy-free traditionally?

ELLEN: Again, it depends on the author. Some books say you can have ghee, which is an extracted form of butter. And some books will say they will allow dairy, but it just depends. But most of them say no, because 7000 years ago somebody looked at a cow and said, "Oh, I wonder what that animal's fluid would taste like."

JASMIN: Right. It's so gross actually when you take a step back and you wonder, who was the first person that thought, "I'm gonna drink that animal's milk!" or like, "I wonder what raw fish eggs taste like," or "What if we started filtering wine through fish bladders?" It just boggles my mind to think sometimes of like, who was the first guy who thought of exploiting animals in this particular way that we're so used to now?

ELLEN: Well actually, somebody posted on my Facebook page, "Who was the perv who thought of that?"

JASMIN: Yes!

ELLEN: I was like, "Yes, that's it."

JASMIN: Exactly! Exactly, it's so true. Now, you had another book as well, right?

ELLEN: Yes, *Kitchen Divided: Vegan Dishes for Semi-Vegan Households* because as I went around the country talking about *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day*, I asked the audience, "How many of you live in a mixed marriage where one of you is veg and one of you is not?" and so many people raised their hands. And I think what was happening is after Bill Clinton and other celebs embraced eating vegan that you had a lot of people who were just doing this on their own in the middle of a family that was going, "What are you doing?" So I tried to address that myth again that you can't survive in a family or a living situation where other people eat differently from you. And so the recipes in there are very flexible, where the meat eater can dump whatever they want to dump into the main dish for them, but it still can be your main dish and you don't have to feel like a short order chef.

JASMIN: Mm. I love that. I think a lot of our listeners will find a lot of use in that book because we constantly hear from people who -- honestly it's usually the woman in a heterosexual marriage who's emailing us and saying, "My husband is not vegan and just doesn't get it." And of course I'm not the best person to ask that question to because my partner is vegan, but I think that book would come in handy a lot.

MARIANN: Yeah, I think all of your books, Ellen, really address serious quandaries that all vegans are kind of asked about or up against. All of these are big roadblocks in the way of people thinking about being vegan or proceeding with wanting to be vegan, like the spouse and the money and this rampant theory that we have to eat all of this grass-fed meat. All of these are things I think that are such current things that people are really struggling with. I love that you have addressed them all.

JASMIN: Yeah.

ELLEN: Oh, thank you.

JASMIN: And now, you live in, is it right, Anna Maria Island?

ELLEN: Yes.

JASMIN: Now, where is that exactly?

ELLEN: It is about 30 minutes north of Sarasota and a little southwest, an hour southwest, of Tampa.

JASMIN: Okay. We live in Brooklyn, and I'm trying really hard right now to imagine what it would be like to live on Anna Maria Island. What's it like?

ELLEN: It's heaven. I try and run on the beach most mornings I can. I worked 18 long months in Des Moines, Iowa early in my television career, and so I just really appreciate the weather. What I don't appreciate is that often when I do run, I see people with these PVC poles stuck in the sand fishing. And I've had to really deal with that. It's not a very vegan-friendly community where I am right here, although I do think it's gonna be. I mean, I see so many sick and diseased people, so much suffering. And it's like, I just want to run up to people sometimes, like when I was doing my price checking at Walmart, and go, "Hey, there's a great deal on beans two aisles over! Follow me." And I don't do that, but I think we all are confronted with those situations and just trying to bloom where we are planted. And the great thing is having such an online support group in ways that I never could have dreamed of 34 years ago when I started off.

One of the things I've done, I was a La Leche League leader because, again, doctors said, "At an early age, you better breastfeed your kids 'cause that's preventative against breast cancer for yourself," and, we now know, in female offspring. How incredible is nature to make sure this natural process that we are supposed to be doing -- mammalian milk is very species-specific. Cow's milk makes a baby cow grow into a large cow very quickly. And the research that is now finally starting to be done shows that baby tumors affected by cow's milk maybe grow into large tumors really quickly as a result. So this whole idea that we should be drinking milk from another species, I hope 100 years from now they will think, "Wow, what were they thinking? What were they doing?"

JASMIN: Yeah. Well, you reminded me of something. I run as well, and like I just mentioned we live in Brooklyn now, but when we were living in Manhattan up until about two months ago I would run on the river.

MARIANN: Next to the river.

JASMIN: Well, next to the river, not on the river. I'm not that amazing. Maybe one day. And there were all of these fishermen all along the river. And it was so sad for me 'cause where do you put that when you're running and you're taking in nature and you're taking in beauty? And it was actually kind of funny, I've told this story before. There was this one guy fishing, and he took his fishing line and kind of like flung it backwards 'cause then he was gonna fling it forward. And when he flung it backwards, the little sharp edge -- I don't know what you call it -- of the end of the fishing line came, like, I swear within like an inch of grabbing me. And I completely lost my shit and overreacted so much and I was like, "Murderer! You're a murderer!" I think everyone was like, "Okay, calm down, he didn't get you." Of course I'm not thinking about myself, but anyway...

ELLEN: If you have time for a quick story a similar thing happened to me.

JASMIN: Yeah.

ELLEN: I saw this fish was just struggling on the end of the hook and this little girl, about four or five, was just watching in horror. I guess it was her father who was doing this. And I just stopped briefly and I said to her, "Not very humane, is it?" and then kept running. And I posted that on Facebook and so many people said, "Oh, that wasn't very compassionate of you. You should have just kept running." And I'm going like, I just -- it was in the moment, I did what I did. I'm sorry, Facebook fans, but...

MARIANN: I like what you did. That child felt validated.

JASMIN: Yeah. It's true. It's like, we have to be so careful all the time, and every now and then I do the same thing when there's kids over there next to the fishermen. I'll sometimes stop and say something like that and then keep running. Maybe it's not my best advocacy moment of all time, but it makes me feel good. And every now and then I deserve that, so I hear you. And also another thing I hear you saying a lot, Ellen, is your passion for animal rights is coming through loud and clear in your words, which is something that really drives us and it motivates us. Can you just speak a little bit about the role that animal rights plays in your veganism?

ELLEN: Well, as a reporter, I won't go into detail about some of the stories that I had to cover. But it's like, how we treat our world and our neighbors is based on how we treat animals. And if we just dispose of them or treat them as property, it reflects in how we raise our children and what this world is coming to.

And I keep up with all the environmental stories. I would love to write an environmental vegan book, although my publisher keeps saying, "Oh, those don't sell. We've tried this in the past" kind of thing. But I think all these dots are so connected in ways we are only beginning to learn about, and the research is beginning to show. I say in my book *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day*, "There's no money in broccoli." And when you understand that, you have to be your own investigative reporter and figure out the truth about food and watch how animals are being treated and do what you can.

One of the most inspiring videos I saw -- I can't remember on which site this was, but I think it was when I was preparing to go speak at the Animal Rights Conference in Washington. And one of their organizers was saying, "Wear vegan shirts every time you can," and I do that at every race I do. And I will be standing there holding one of the 67 5K race awards in my hand, and people will come up to me and say, "Oh, you can't run on a vegan diet" or "You can't compete in the Olympics on a vegan diet." And I'm going, "Ever hear of Carl Lewis?" And I just want to be out there, and I encourage your listeners to put on those vegan shirts and just be very polite and only speak when spoken to, and then just drop a zinger when you can because that's when people are most receptive is when they engage with you and kind of look at you and go, "Yeah, what's that about?" And thinking outside the vegan box, it's very comfortable being in the vegan zone with all of the 35,000 followers on Facebook, but if you can get new people to the table... 'cause as I often joke in my cooking classes, "I hope you love the food and the recipes because we're all gonna be eating this way in 10 to 30 years from now, whether we want to or not, just because of what's happening with our environment."

JASMIN: That gives me hope, to think that our planet is declining so quickly...

MARIANN: That gives you hope?

JASMIN: Yeah. Well, no, it gives me hope to -- well, okay, it doesn't give me hope to think that the world is declining. But it gives me hope that Ellen Jaffe Jones is saying that we will be evolving into a society where we're embracing the broccoli and the beans. And I think that rather than my usual go-to place which is, "Well, that's it, we're done, it's over," thinking in terms of hopefulness and in terms of possibilities. And if we all do start to wear our vegan shirts and hand people *Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day* and *Paleo Vegan*, then the world will change, and that's because people like Ellen are providing resources for it to change. So I guess my final question for you today, not to put you on the spot, but I would love to know what you had for breakfast this morning.

ELLEN: Oh, the same thing I always do whether I am not gonna be running or I'm running a marathon: either steel-cooked oats or old-fashioned oats. I boil water for my green tea, and I just -- if it's the old-fashioned oats I pour the water on that. If I have time I do the steel-cut oats and cook them in a pot, with a big batch of berries, some sliced almonds. And I don't eat a lot before I run because it just bothers me when I do, but after I come back from a run then I always have a protein and carbohydrate recovery snack or lunch.

JASMIN: Well, there is nothing like the power of good old-fashioned oats. And I love to bake with them, I love to eat them for breakfast, I love to throw them in my smoothie. They're a remarkable food, and they're very affordable too! So I thank you so much for shedding light on so many important issues today for us and for our listeners. Ellen, you're such a hero to animals and to people alike, and we're really honored that you shared your wisdom with us today. So thank you for joining us today on Our Hen House.

ELLEN: Oh, back at you guys. You are all my role models too, so thank you for having me, it's been a pleasure.

JASMIN: That was the fabulous Ellen Jaffe Jones. Learn more at vegcoach.com.