

# 'We have many challenges in the Tenderloin and a rooster is now one of them'

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Ryan Kost



A rooster walks in a yard in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. The crowing of the rooster has been disturbing neighboring residents for the past two months.

Lea Suzuki/The Chronicle

The rooster that lives in the Tenderloin first announced himself in January with an early-morning crow.

For a while, Adriel Lively, who lives in a building next to the yard where this rooster lives, was content to let it go. She thought, perhaps, that he might be a temporary resident. Maybe the rooster's owner (still unidentified), who Lively says had kept hens for some time, was equally surprised to find a rooster in the bunch and would soon find him a new home.

But as the weeks went on and the crowing continued, she began to feel less sanguine.

“It’s so perplexing,” she says. “It’s so confusing ... .”

For the record, Lively, 39, understands that a rooster living in the Tenderloin, the city’s densest, most urban neighborhood, sounds like a punchline.

She laughs a little, too, when she talks about the situation. How can you not?

“What’s frustrating is that I know — I know it sounds ridiculous. I can hear myself talk,” Lively says during a phone call. “Oh, wait, is it doing it right now? Oh, yeah ... .” And, yep, there it is, at 2 p.m. on a Wednesday afternoon, the loud crow of a rooster. (Contrary to popular belief, roosters — this one included — do not just crow at dawn; they crow all day.)

“Until it happens to you every day,” Lively says, “it doesn’t register how annoying it is.”



Adriel Lively points out her window in the Tenderloin, from which she can sometimes see a neighboring rooster. The bird’s early morning crowing has disturbed her sleep for months.

Lea Suzuki/The Chronicle

Neighbors, apparently, agree.

“I’ve lived in San Francisco — I’ve lived here more than half my life and I’ve never heard a rooster crow, and I’ve lived from the beach to the Bay View,” says David Rieker, who lives in the same building as Lively. “We live in a densely populated area where we all have to be cognizant of the effects of our actions ... it’s intrusive to keep an animal like this.”

What's more, it's not uncommon to hear people yell at the rooster. The other morning, one man "just lost it" and started shouting death threats at the rooster, Lively says.

*Where is it? I will kill this bird!*

This, of course, did nothing to quiet the bird and only added to the noise.

"I mean the rooster didn't listen," Lively says.

So, for two (plus) months, Lively has been on a mission to get the rooster removed, though so far she's found only dead ends.

First stop was the neighboring building's property manager. The building, she says, "is kind of like a mess," charred from a recent fire, windows all boarded up. After some detective work, though, she tracked down the manager's name and number and gave him a call. He did not respond to multiple requests for comment for this story.

"Oh, yeah. I think I know about that," Lively says he said. "I'll talk to him (the owner) about it."

"I was stoked," Lively says. "And honestly the next two days he (the rooster) didn't crow and I was like, 'Dude, I fixed it. I did the right thing.'"

"And then on the third day it crowed again."

This began a pattern.

"Every couple weeks I would just get fed up again," she says, and call somebody new.



The crowing of a rooster has been disturbing Tenderloin residents.  
Lea Suzuki/The Chronicle

Next up was San Francisco Animal Care and Control. They, too, could offer no help. Roosters, it so happens, are legal in San Francisco. (This is not the case in Oakland, or in the city of Portland, Ore., one of the epicenters of the urban farming craze.)

“It is true — you can legally have a rooster in San Francisco,” says Deb Campbell, a spokesperson for the agency. And Rooster crowing, she says, is “a very common complaint.” However, the agency, investigates only neglect, not noise.

“The crowing and disruption is considered a noise ordinance disruption,” Campbell says. “It’s common people will contact us for barking dogs and we will investigate cruelty and neglect but barking dogs are, again, a noise complaint for the police department.”

This is what they told Lively, too.

“So I was like, ‘OK, fine, I’m going to make a noise complaint with the police,’ ” she says. “What other options did I have?”

“Immediately it became clear to me how hard it was going to be to make a noise complaint about this because, first and foremost, the rooster has to do it when the police are here.”

A few weeks passed before Lively (as she puts it) “just lost it again one morning.”

Lively cuts hair for a living, and, as it turns out, Supervisor Matt Haney, whose district includes the Tenderloin, was a former client of hers. She tried to be measured, she says. So, rather than text him directly, she sent a message through Facebook.

No response. But later that night — this was now late February — while Lively was sipping on a White Claw at a local bar, Haney “just happened to walk in.” They chatted briefly, shared a moment of laughter, and Haney said that he, too, could hear the rooster from his apartment. Haney asked Lively to send his office the relevant information (address, etc.). She followed up that night, she says, over Facebook.

And yet.

This week, after another 5 a.m. wake-up call, and with no relief in sight, Lively hit yet another breaking point. She posted a video of the rooster (a very handsome rust-colored bird) perching on a chair in an overgrown yard, shouting at the sky — and tagged Haney.

“I’m not on vacation, this is the Tenderloin, in the backyard right next to mine. This rooster has been waking me up before dawn for months ... I don’t think it’s funny. I don’t wake up before dawn. I don’t live in the country for a reason. How do I get rid of this asshole?”

Haney responded to her story and told her that he thought the public call-out was a bit unfair. He lives further away from the rooster, he explained during an interview with The Chronicle, and didn’t realize it was still a problem.

“I called the police captain about it ... and he’s looking into it,” Haney says. “We have many challenges in the Tenderloin and a rooster is now one of them.”

“Let’s just see it gone,” Lively says.

In other words, she’s still waiting for results.

So is Rieker: “I firmly believe if this were (Pacific) Heights and we were complaining ... something would have been done already.”

The other day, Lively remembered something else about her run-in with Haney, who is facing off against former Supervisor David Campos for a seat on the state assembly.

“The last thing he said before he was walking away was: ‘Maybe banning roosters in San Francisco will be my last act as supervisor.’”

Haney had an update the morning this story was posted online.

“The police captain and I are planning to refer this to the city attorney so they can approach the property owner directly,” he said.

In theory, that could lead to fines — or even a lien — for the property owner.

Obviously, he added, police can't just go into the yard. They would need a warrant for that.

As of Saturday, though, a rooster still lives in the Tenderloin.

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