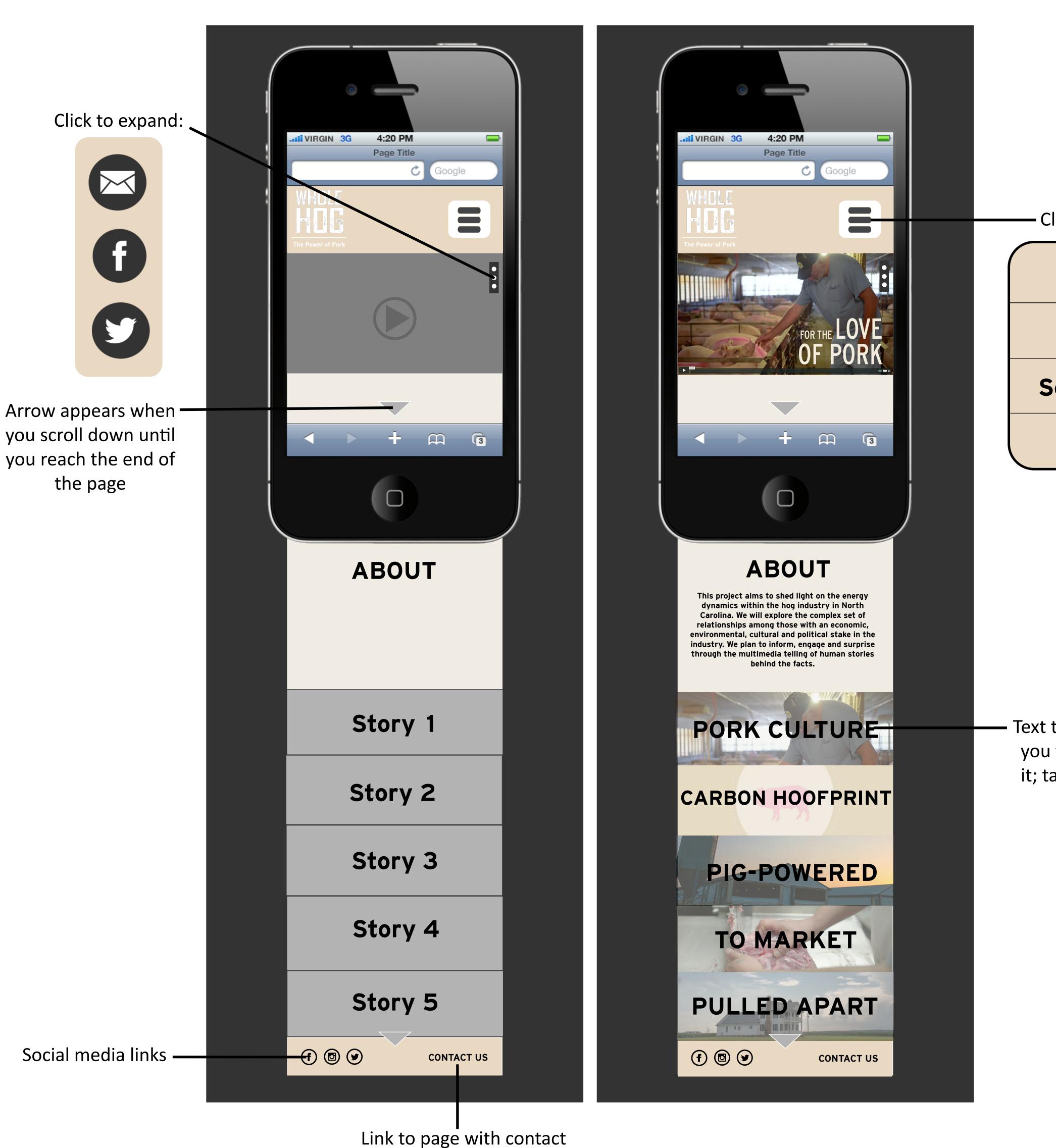
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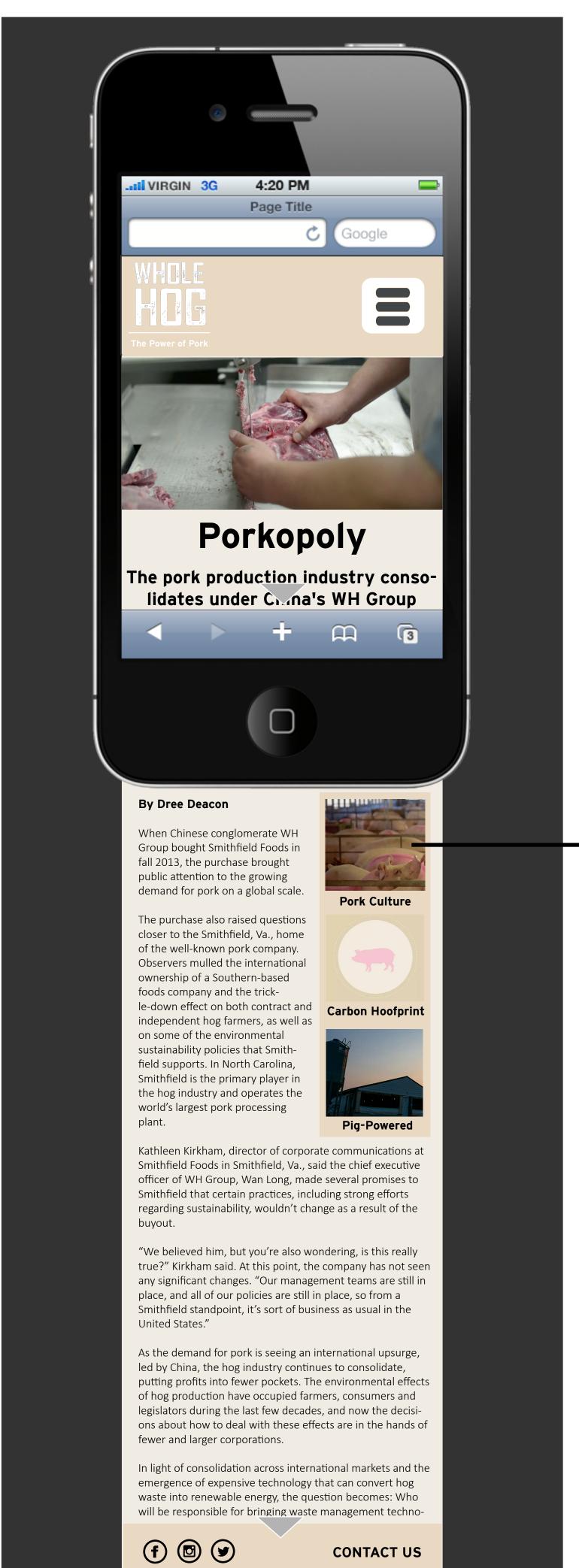
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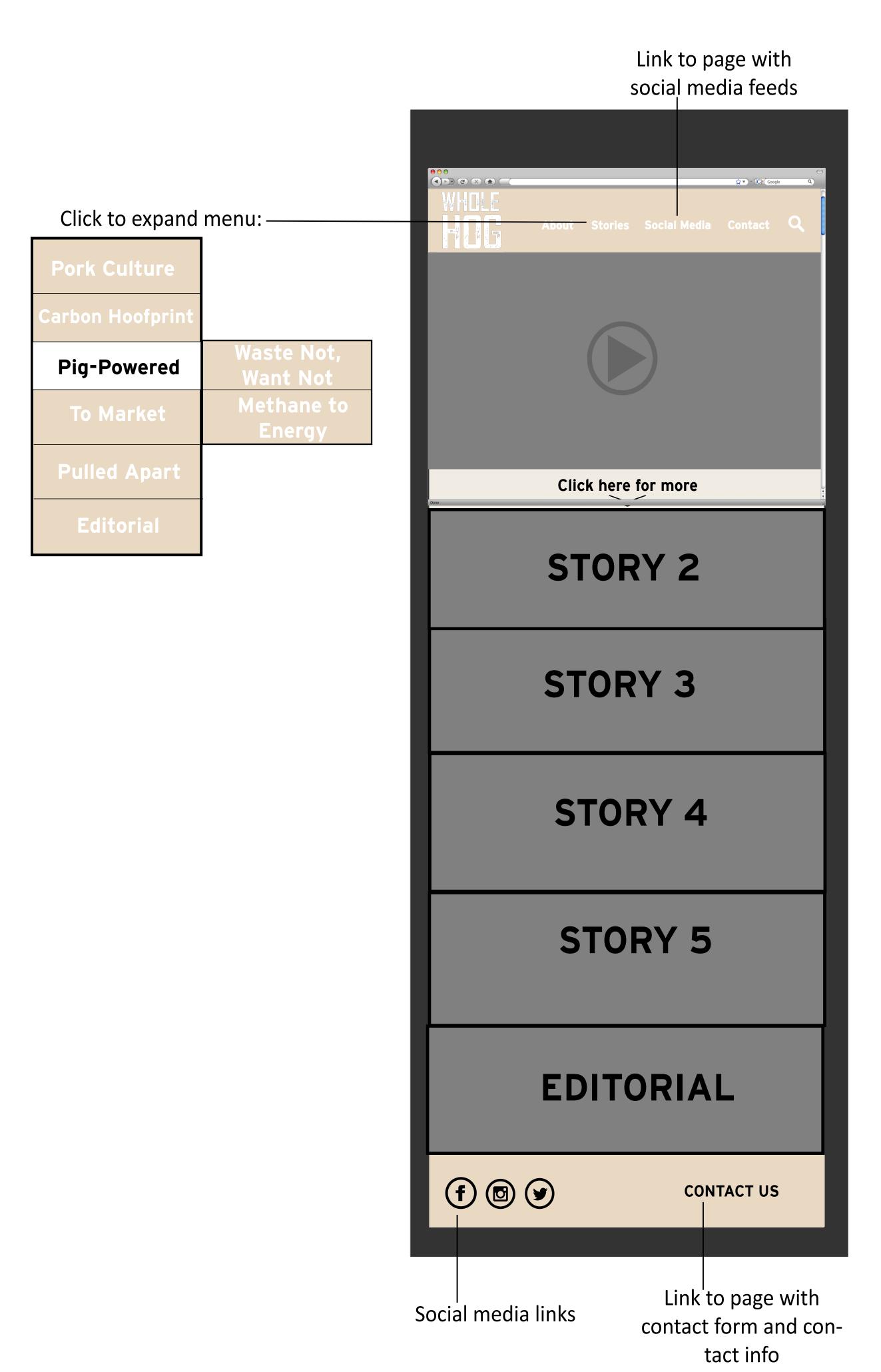


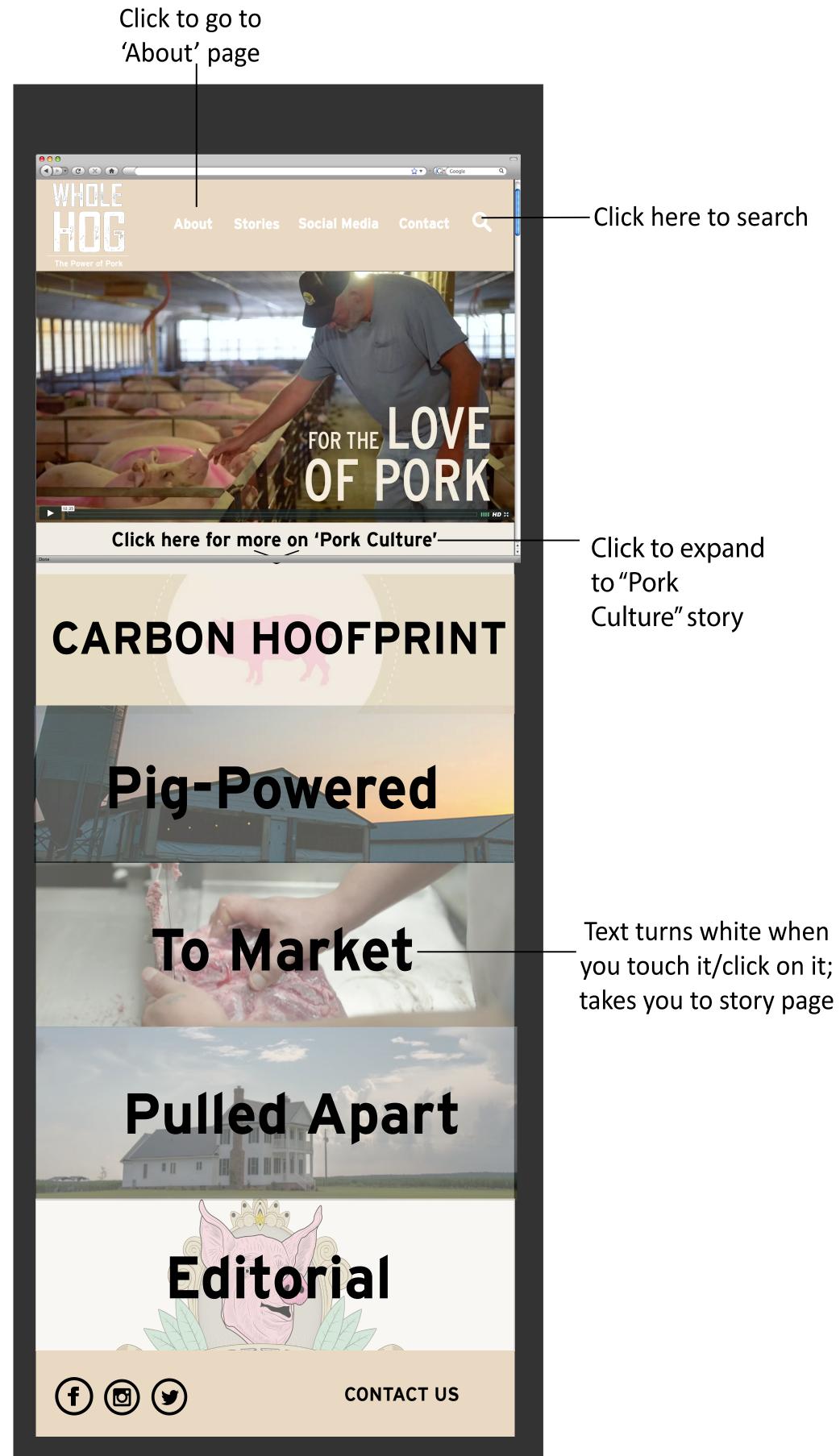
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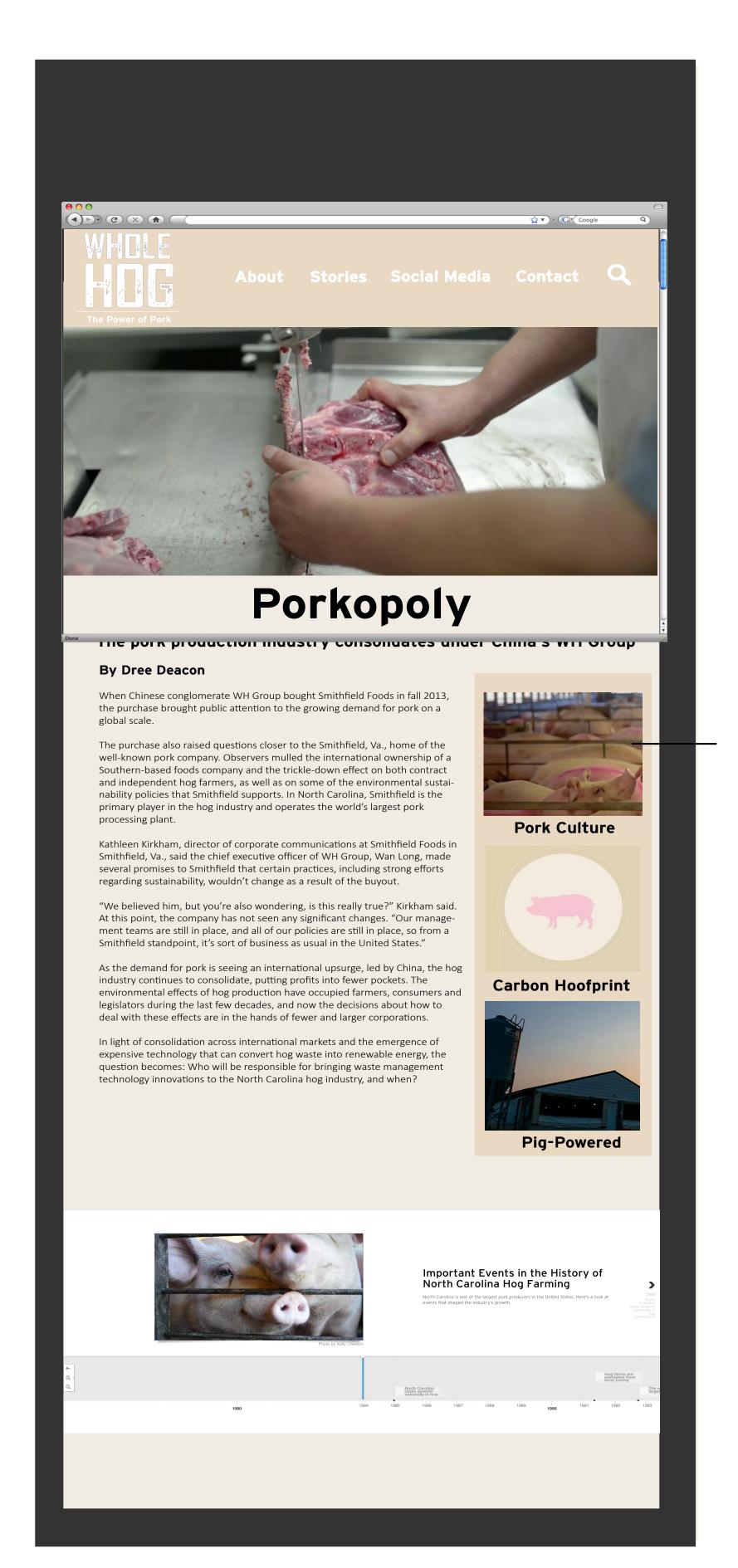
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COMPUTER SCREEN STORY PAGE

(1) P (2) X (1) (1) About Stories Social Media Contact Q Click here fromany page to return to home page GIF **Story Title** Story lagline **Story Author** When Chinese conglomerate WH Group bought Smithfield Foods in fall 2013, the purchase brought public attention to the growing demand for pork on a The purchase also raised questions closer to the Smithfield, Va., home of the well-known pork company. Observers mulled the international ownership of a Southern-based foods company and the trickle-down effect on both contract and independent hog farmers, as well as on some of the environmental sustainability policies that Smithfield supports. In North Carolina, Smithfield is the primary player in the hog industry and operates the world's largest pork Story 2 processing plant. Kathleen Kirkham, director of corporate communications at Smithfield Foods in Smithfield, Va., said the chief executive officer of WH Group, Wan Long, made several promises to Smithfield that certain practices, including strong efforts regarding sustainability, wouldn't change as a result of the buyout. "We believed him, but you're also wondering, is this really true?" Kirkham said. At this point, the company has not seen any significant changes. "Our management teams are still in place, and all of our policies are still in place, so from a Smithfield standpoint, it's sort of business as usual in the United States." As the demand for pork is seeing an international upsurge, led by China, the hog Story 3 industry continues to consolidate, putting profits into fewer pockets. The environmental effects of hog production have occupied farmers, consumers and legislators during the last few decades, and now the decisions about how to deal with these effects are in the hands of fewer and larger corporations. In light of consolidation across international markets and the emergence of expensive technology that can convert hog waste into renewable energy, the question becomes: Who will be responsible for bringing waste management technology innovations to the North Carolina hog industry, and when? Story 4 Timeline Interactive timeline; scrolls side to side



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