

Are We Right in Demanding An End to Animal Cruelty?

By Roger Caras

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was delivered as the keynote speech at the 1975 HSUS Annual Conference last October in Houston, Texas.

Our discussion has been titled "Cruelty—So What?" What kind of a question is that? Do we need an explanation for what we do, what we believe in, what we fight for? Surprisingly enough, we do. We should pause, and we should determine if we are right. Perhaps, and mind you I only say perhaps, we take too much for granted, for who here has really questioned our cause in a very long time?

If we are right, we would see an end to the fur trade. What would an end to the fur trade mean? Many highly skilled and creative people would have to re-channel their efforts—marginal income people on the wilderness fringes would lose a source of income as retail and wholesale operations simply shrivel up and die. Do we have a *right* to work toward these ends? Are we right in even wanting them to come about?

All right, that is the question, and here is my answer: You're darn tootin' we are right. Jobs will be lost—they would be lost if the drug trade shrivelled up tomorrow, too. Narcotics officers would be fired, U.S. Customs could cut back on labor, the courts would be under less pressure, and so would the public prosecutor; therefore, fewer would work in those quarters. Well, if it is right to ignore those imaginary pleas and work and pray for an end to drug addiction, it is right to say "enough" to the fur trade. Enough agony! Leghold traps, be

gone! Furriers, close down your salons. Leave our wildlife alone and close your mink and fox torture farms, whatever the momentary cost (and it will only be momentary as these things go).

I say we are right. I say the fur industry must die, every last shred of it. And if we have ever tried to accommodate ourselves to that industry and said "Think mink" in the hopes that ranch-raised furs meant less suffering than wild-caught furs, we can forget that one. The only way to get people to stop wearing the wrong furs is to get them to wear no furs at all. Jobs be damned! We are right on that count.

But are we right in calling for humane slaughter? Do we come close to a dangerous edge with that one? Are we not on the verge of interfering with religious freedom? That would be a dangerous, not to say unfortunate, posture for the humane community. No again, we are right for those things we hate—shackling and hoisting in uncontrolled slaughterhouses—have nothing whatsoever to do with religion. Nothing! And we must never be deterred by false claims that there is a connection. There is none.

I have personally visited slaughterhouses in Israel and discussed the matter with the veterinarians in charge. They were horrified by what I had to tell them. And I was told that meat slaughtered the

way it is done here in the name of the Jewish faith could not even be marketed in Israel, the Jewish state, because of the cruelties involved. As often as not, those uncontrolled slaughterhouses are not even run by the people of the faith they claim to serve. Shackling and hoisting is an economic expediency with no basis in religion and, therefore, it has no bearing on religious freedom. I would be glad to be questioned on that one. Again, we are right.

What about rodeo? This is a bicentennial year. We have had a bad time lately in this country, and self-image is not without importance. What about rodeo? Is it not Americana? Of course it is, much of it legitimate. But so was slavery, cannibalism in the Donner Pass, the Bad Day at Black Rock, Prohibition, the slaughter of the American Indians and the wasting of their priceless cultures, the slaughter of the bison, and the slaughter of the whale—all Americana. But which would you see persist? Lynching blacks and the Ku Klux Klan, Father Coughlin, Joe McCarthy, and the vigilantes—all Americana, like the rodeo, a part of our history. Is that excuse enough for a cultural artifact to persist? I should not think so. I think we are right.

I think rodeo can be modified so as to no longer torture animals. It need not go. It can accommodate itself. It can be a wild west show that will not cut into regional pride, will not deface self-image and will preserve a fragment of history. But those accommodations must be made. They persist in our time not as history, but as the huckstering of showfolk. They are quick buck tricks, crowd pleasers (they had real crowd pleasers in the Roman arena, too—Caligula loved them). Let us not mistake huckstering for historical pride and national image. We are right in calling for a modification, a *profound* modification of the present rodeo card, and let the devil have our enemy, for that is good company for both.

Well, we are raising havoc, aren't we? We have let the fur industry simply die, we have hacked out a cancerous sore in the meat processing industry, and we have asked the people of that branch of show business known as rodeo to straighten up and act like men and not monsters. Where else would we lay our heavy hand?

In the laboratory, for one place. Are we right when we ask for modification in the research community? You better be-

lieve. Unlike some of you, perhaps, I am not an anti-vivisectionist. My mother died of lung cancer, and I know what that means. I would see a lot of mice die of that disease before I would see another member of my family, or one of you, die of cancer. I do not know enough about medicine to know point-for-point what must be done with live animals and what can be done instead with cell cultures and computer models.

Perhaps none of us knows quite enough or quite as much as we should. But I do know this from long association with the scientific community (not as an adversary but as a friend): about 80% of what goes on in the laboratory has nothing whatsoever to do with the good of mankind. Only 20% can be exalted to that level. That remaining 80% is for the fun, profit, reputation, or other benefit of the experimenter. I am not a mathematician but that would seem to say to me that we can start with an 80% reduction in the number of animals used, and if that conclusion is a *reductum ad absurdum*, I'll settle (for the time being) for 75%. We may be a little less sure of ourselves beside the laboratory bench than we are by the rodeo chute or the slaughterhouse ramp or the leghold trap set. But this I can tell you: We have enough right on our side to push on ahead, know it better, and clean that mess up.

Next, what might we question ourselves on next? A very complicated one—hunting. That is a multi-billion-dollar industry. The per capita incomes of some states are raised almost \$50 each year by out-of-state hunters. The transportation complexes in this

country, the hotel and motel industry, the chemical industry, real estate values, the whole outdoor sport and equipment industrial complex—all are tied up with hunting. Billions of dollars and some first-rate conservationists are involved.

"Are we right when we ask for modification in the research community?"

And who are we to ask them all to stop? We are duck eaters who say do not shoot duck for your table, although you pay more for that duck in the shooting of it than we do while asking some unseen person to stick a knife in the throat of ours. We who say do not hunt and eat venison, eat beef and lamb and veal—mind you, *veal!* Do not hunt and eat pheasant, say we who eat chicken (a related bird, by the way, simply gallinaceous cousins under the feather). We who bring that 25-pound turkey to the table on Thanksgiving and Christmas say "Hold! Stop! You are wrong!" to him who would gain a traditional bird by gobbling away in the woods and shooting his own. Our bird is antiseptic because we do not watch its death. He who will, we call wrong. It is not uncomplicated unless you are a vegetarian, and then it is very straightforward and simple. We who eat meat, though, had better search a little deeper before we sit in judgment.

Let us study a recent series of events that reflects on this matter. CBS television had a special. It was called "Guns of Autumn." Despite some spurious advertising claims, that show was not

based on any one book, nor was it inspired by any one member of the humane community. It was an idea born in the mind of the show's producer, Irv Drasnin. My book "Death as a Way of Life," as well as other books on hunting—38 in all, was consulted and used as source material. On top of that, my files were loaned to CBS, and I was a paid consultant to the producers, as were other people with some knowledge of this field.

Word leaked early, and hunting groups, the National Shooting Sports Fdn. and the National Rifle Assn., among others, began their campaign. They tried to coax and then later coerce CBS not to do the show—although they knew nothing of the content. When they failed there they started on the sponsors and did in fact get all but one—Block Drugs—to back out. Even that failed, and on Sept. 5 the show was aired. The scream went up—they howled and roared and moaned.

And from that carefully orchestrated outcry another show was born at CBS. It was called "Echoes of the Guns of Autumn," and on it our president, John Hoyt, deported himself handsomely—coming off as the reasonable, intelligent, and informed gentleman he is. Not everyone on the show did as well.

The claim made by the hunting community was that "The Guns of Autumn" lacked typicality—that was a word used by a lot of them: typicality. It did not show *all* of hunting, just what they call "slob hunters." Okay, when asked to react to the show by CBS, I was forced to agree with the hunters



Photo by Frantz Dantzier

that the show did omit too much. I listed these points as missing from "The Guns of Autumn"—points that would have helped viewers have a more representational picture of hunting as it is in America. A picture painted by an Andrew Wyeth instead of a Paul Klee.

- There were no scenes in the morgue—not one picture of a hunter killed by another hunter. No dead teenage kids shot by mistake.
- No interview with orphans or widows of men and women killed by hunters—no evidence of shooting accidents.
- No dead cows or horses—no livestock shot by mistake or in frustration or in retaliation for a farmer posting his land.
- No cut fences or gates—no trespassing by hunters.
- No farm houses or barns shot up and vandalized by hunters.
- No highway signs or "No Hunting" signs shot up by hunters—although hundreds of thousands of dollars a year are spent repairing that damage.
- No hunting from aircraft—we saw none of that.
- No misuse or abuse of off-road vehicles—no hunting from snowmobiles, dune buggies, 4-wheel drive vehicles, or swamp buggies. All omitted.
- No drunk or careless hunters.
- No hunting out of season.
- No hunters exceeding the bag limit.
- No hunters shooting endangered species or non-game species like songbirds.
- No hunters jacking deer at night with a spotlight.
- No hunter turning a living animal into a pincushion with his bow and arrow—no animals being bled to death.
- No trophy hunters shooting six animals because they can't decide which one has the biggest set of horns or antlers—then picking one and leaving the rest to rot.
- No deer being run by hounds.
- No hunting dogs being given live raccoons and other small animals to tear apart and practice on.
- No hunters threatening farmers or local law-enforcement officers who try to interfere with their plans.
- No carcasses left to rot because the hunter didn't want anything but kicks anyway.
- No tally sheet from state or federal game officials showing what enormous percentage of the much-vaunted hunting license dollar must go to police the licensee and not help wildlife at all—and how much of the general tax revenue must be diverted into control of hunting and hunters.

Well, there are 20 points "The Guns of Autumn" never got to make, so I would have to agree with the hunters that the show did fall somewhat short of real typicality. Paul Klee won.

But there is something else about that show, and I think it reflects on what we are talking about here. It was the reaction of the hunting community and the industrial complex that helps them bolster their fading self-image. Our libraries are chock-full of books that further the fiction that the hunter is the original and true great American. The hero-in-the-field-type book is found in all public libraries by the hundreds.

Our newsstands are covered with American Rifleman, Guns and Ammo, Guns Magazine, Sports Afield, Field and Stream, Outdoor Life, and all of the other magazines that are filled with nothing but articles about how great the hunter is and how brave and how durable, how the hunter is the only real sportsman and the only real conservationist and the only real animal lover.

Most newspapers today have hunting and fishing columns—sometimes more than one. "The American Sportsman" was on ABC for years featuring every imaginable kind of supercelebrity shooting everything that moved and always made to look the cool hero. Manufacturers from shoes to cigarettes, from camper trucks to tent pegs, feature hunters in their ads. Sporting goods manufacturers issue catalogs filled with the things for killing.

"Why are the hunters afraid?"

Now, wait just a moment at this point. Has the humane community asked that those books come off the library shelves? Has the humane community asked that the hunting magazines stop publishing? Have we insisted that "The American Sportsman" be banned from public airways? Have those of us in the humane community tried to ban catalogs for killing gear from the U.S. mails? Then why are the hunters afraid? We are not afraid of free speech in America, but *they* are. We frighten them, you know.

I have seen a lot of bumper stickers on cars, trucks, jeeps, and hunting rigs. The stickers read "Register Communists Not Guns." I am sure you have all seen those charming and logical bits of contemporary American folk art. For shame.

I think the hunters have acted an awful lot like communists. Isn't that what communists do, try to get the other side muzzled so that they can't be heard? Isn't that what the hunters did? Didn't they try to force "The Guns of Autumn" out of existence? I think the American hunter is too guilty of communist tactics ever to wear such a bumper sticker with pride again, except perhaps in the middle of his forehead where it would look as silly as it really is.

Why do you and I frighten the hunter? He has his magazines, books, catalogs, national ads, television shows. He has a President that calls for National Hunting Day. He has all of that, yet, unlike us, he is afraid to have us speak. While I, at least, welcome his voice, I have never heard a hunter talk for very long without making a bloody fool of himself. It is not without reason that the National Shooting Sports Fdn. and the National Rifle Assn. and other interested groups print brochures telling hunters how to reply if challenged by a non-hunter. Imagine you and me needing a guide to tell someone why it is wrong not to spay a cat or why it is bad to play coon-on-a-log!

I think it is very germane, very important for us to understand why we instill such fear in hunters when we do nothing more or less American than express our view or why they literally go wild when a network expresses a point of view that isn't dictated chapter and verse by their party line. The answer to all of that contains the answer to the question, "How can meat eaters still object to hunting?" Think about this.

I, for one, believe a woman has a right to decide whether or not she is ready or able to become a mother. I firmly believe in birth control and abortion, but that doesn't mean I have to work in an abortion clinic in order to justify my belief. I believe autopsies should be done on the deceased for the proper determination of cause of death and for the further education of medical practitioners. Must I then want to work in a post-mortem room? I believe that Charles Manson at least belongs in prison for the rest of his life—at least that. Must I then want to be a prison guard? In some cases I believe in capital punishment. Must I vie to become the hangman? I believe in a strong professional and honest police force to keep order in our cluttered urban lives. Must I rush after every siren and run to the scene of every mishap, crime, and disaster? I know our surplus dogs and



"Hunting is a poison for our children. It is a shame on us who have failed for yet another generation to clean it up."

Photo by John Dommers

cats must be euthanized in great numbers. Must I want to do the job? (At one time, for a time, I did do it and know what it is like well enough!)

Must I want to do every dirty job that there is to be done in our society? Must I have leprosy to care about the leper? Must I be paralyzed to want to contribute to the handicapped? The argument that meat eaters are in trouble on this hunting thing only *seems* like a sensible argument. There is no sense to it at all.

We have the digestive system of the carnivore, and many of us still eat meat—most of us do, in fact. That does not mean that we cannot decry unnecessary killing and hurting. And it certainly does not mean that we cannot scream bloody murder when fellow men get their kicks out of inflicting pain and death, for when one of us does it we all do it. Let there be no mistake about that: We in the humane community are not isolated—we have no ivory tower and no corner in heaven. We are of man, of the union of man and woman, condemned like all men to a human life span, and we live in the company of our fellows. We share the glories and the disaster of being human. It is mankind we seek to elevate not just our own egos.

Hunting is an absurd anachronism; it is a leftover thing. It is a shard of a buried culture, an unwelcome artifact of another kind of man. We are trying to excise it, or exorcise it, not reaffirm in some incestuous little cluster that we are right and someone else is wrong.

We all know you can photograph wildlife and not shoot it—or that you can just look at it. We all know these things, so what we are trying to do is get rid of something that is sick in society and something that retards the growth of all men and all mankind. It is a poison for our children. It is a shame on us who have failed for yet another generation to clean it up. Remember this always: In your lifetime you will meet many non-hunters who were former hunters, men and women who have matured and stopped the nonsense. You will never meet a non-hunter who has matured into a hunter.

If we want to question ourselves at all on the subject of hunting, let us ask ourselves why we have failed to phase it out, this nasty little mean thing so many of us still do. Remember this as well: There is hope in what we saw in "The Guns of Autumn" affair. We now know

that they, the hunters, are terrified of us while we fear them not a bit. And they have the guns. Our voices send them into panic, theirs bore us. I like our side the better, much the better, of the two.

We could go on, of course. We have other fights—racing green-legged, 2-year-old horses, racing greyhounds, dog fighting, cockfighting, the protection of our feral horses (mustangs and others), predator control, and a score more. But in each of them I promise you, you will find our side right. We err in occasional fact, we misjudge an enemy, we say things that sound not as good as we thought they would before we started speaking. We lose our tempers, and we get intemperate. We fight among ourselves. We squabble like naughty children. We disagree on procedure and technique, and we never seem to agree on priorities because as individuals we are each more horrified by one thing than another. And so we tangle on that again and again, as individual personalities.

But behind all of that, behind our efforts and mistakes and miscalculations, behind every misstep there is this one single overriding right. I have said it

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enforcement of the Endangered Species Act more difficult, if not chaotic. The bill would exempt from the act's provisions those inventories of parts or products of endangered species lawfully within the United States by or on Dec. 28, 1973. The problem the bill would create for enforcement authorities lies in the difficulty of distinguishing legal from illegal inventories. The result would undoubtedly encourage smuggling of products derived from endangered species. Also, the dumping of existing inventories on the market would re-establish their use and encourage further smuggling.

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The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, the agency in charge of the execution and enforcement of the U.S. Animal Welfare Act, reported in July that the number of animal dealers, exhibitors, and researchers licensed and inspected under the act rose sharply in 1974.

By the end of 1974, APHIS had licensed a total of 5,133 animal dealers, a 20% increase over the total number (4,287) licensed in the previous year. There were 1,097 licensed or registered animal exhibitors, up 23% from the 890 listed a year earlier. A total of 967 research facilities were registered at the end of 1974, compared to 865 the previous year, a 12% increase. The result of the increase of licensees and registrants, plus stricter enforcement, more than doubled routine compliance inspections during 1974—22,939 compared to 10,965 in 1973. Searches to find persons evading regulations went to 11,691 in 1974, up from 6,001 the previous year. Litigation was under way in 31 cases of alleged violations, up from 11 cases the previous year.

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Last October a federal administrative law judge issued a cease and desist order against a Fayetteville, N.C., kennel operator charged with violating the Animal Welfare Act. J. L. Joyner, owner of the Twin Oaks Kennels, was charged by APHIS with shipping puppies in poor health without proper forms and identification. APHIS and Joyner reached an agreement, endorsed by the judge, to eliminate the violations. □

Sale of Monkeys Banned by HEW

The U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) has banned the importation of monkeys for commercial sale into the U. S. because they threaten humans with a variety of infectious diseases. HEW issued the order last October to prohibit the importation of nonhuman primates except for *bona fide* scientific, educational, or exhibition purposes. The order also establishes a mandatory disease surveillance and control program for monkeys imported under provisions of the regulation.

Although significant, HEW's action will reduce only slightly the massive number of exotic animals being imported into the U. S. by the pet industry. The industry continues to import many species of animals that pose a disease threat to people, domestic animals, and native American wildlife. This, coupled with a high mortality rate of wild animals caught and shipped by commercial animal dealers, as well as a high euthanasia rate for animals rejected by their owners after they have been purchased, has made the traffic in imported pets a national scandal.

For the past 2 years officials at the U. S. Dept of the Interior have been talking about issuing regulations to limit the importation of wild animals that would be injurious to people by employing the little-used Lacey Act of 1900. HSUS has encouraged Interior to proceed with the proposal, but it now appears as though the agency has reached an impasse on the issue.

Congressional opposition has been a major reason for Interior's dilemma. Last June, Rep. Robert L. Leggett (D-Calif.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Wildlife Conservation of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, held a private, unrecorded meeting with pet industry representatives and subsequently rejected Interior's proposed regulations. Leggett said the regulations would be burdensome to importers and nearly impossible to discharge.

In July, Nathaniel P. Reed, assistant secretary of Interior for fish, wildlife, and parks, assured Leggett that Interior would review his recommendations. But Interior has not yet submitted any new proposals to Congress.

HSUS is convinced this issue will be ignored by Interior and Congress unless the public protests the lack of government action. HSUS urges all members and supporters to write immediately to

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again and again, and I will say it on the day I die if I have time. **It is wrong to cause pain. It is wrong to cause fear, and to allow preventable pain and preventable fear to exist is not less a culpable offense than causing it.** That is my credo. I will argue it in heaven or hell. I will face any man or woman alive and argue it forever. It is wrong to cause pain and fear—to allow it is as bad as causing it. And just as long as that credo and that belief can be introduced into any specific argument, we need never fear a test or a challenge. That is a clear and positive right. I am more sure of it than I am of my private view of God and religion. I am more sure of that than I am of anything else in my experience as a man. As long as I believe that that credo is a valid view of my responsibility on earth, I, for one, will fear no argument and no man—I can live on and with it.

I hope you can find in your own heart a conviction as strong, for together we will strike fear in more than the heart of the hunter. We will one day eradicate all among us who are vestigial, all who are left over from the cave, all who have come forward into our time and threaten to contaminate the future of mankind (our children) with the stink and the rot of pain and terror glorified. They are wrong; we are right. I can state no other certainty with so much conviction. God bless you for what you stand for, and for what you do, and for where you are leading mankind. □

the Dept. of the Interior urging the Secretary to issue the final regulations and protesting the continued sacrifice of exotic animals by the pet industry. Write to: The Hon. Thomas Kleppe, Secretary, The Dept. of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. □

Regional Office Moves

The HSUS Gulf States Regional Office has been relocated. The new address is:

**HSUS Gulf States Regional Office
Building A, Room 209
5333 Everhart Rd.
Corpus Christi, TX 78411**