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.

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 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 rechannel their brains and moral income people on the wilder 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? Is it right to ask them to do things that mean so much to us?

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. traditional bird hunting is a big business and would work in those quarters. Well, if it is right to ignore those imaginary glass 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 shod of it. And if we ever have 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 fur 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 animals are not even run by the people of the faith they claim to serve. Shackling and hoisting in uncontrolled slaughterhouses 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 rodeos? This is a bicina- nennial year. We have had a bad time lately in this country, and the image is not without importance. What about rodeos? Is it not America? Of course it is, much of it legitimized slavery, cannibalism in the Donna Pass, the Bad Day at Black Rock, Pro hibition, the slaughter of the American indians and the wasting of their price less cultures, the slaughter of the bison, and the slaughter of the whole—all America. But which would you see persist? Lynching blacks and the Ku Klux Klan, Father Coughlin, Joe McCarthy, and the vigilantes—all America, like the rodeo, a part of our his tory. Is that 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 the number of animals used, and if that conclusion is a redubit 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 ahead, know it, clean it, and clean that mess up.

We have let the fur industry simply die, we have hacked out a cancerous sore in the land, we have stabbled and hoisted 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 on that count.

Hoyt, deported himself handsomely—and from that carefully orchestrated publicity another show was born at CBS. It was called "Echoes of the Guns of Autumn," and on it our president, John Hoyt, departed 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 Au tumn" lacked typicality—that was a word used by a lot of them: typically. It did not show all of hunting. Just what they thought Hunting was: Okay, if you asked to react to the show by CBS, I was forced to agree with the hunters
that the snow did omit too much. I listed these points as missing from "The Guns of Autumn"—points that would have helped viewers to a more representative 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 movie—no paro­chial scene with a hunter killed by another hunter. No dead teenage kids shot by mis­taken identity. No interview with an orphan or a widow of a man killed by hunters—no evidence that the show did omit too much. I listed these points as missing from "The Guns of Autumn"—points that would have helped viewers to a more representa­tive picture of hunting as it is in America. 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 more or less American than express our view or why they literally go wild when a network expresses a 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? Is it a right and someone else is wrong.

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 silly 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, in fact. That does not mean that we cannot decry unneces­sary killing and hunting. 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. In the humane community we 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 of man and woman, condemned like all of 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 non­hunters 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 terrifi ed of us while we fear them not at all. And they have the guns. Our voices send them into panic, theirs bore us. I like the side of 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 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 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 mistake there is this one singular overriding right. I have said it (Continued on page 21.)
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 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 Kloppe, 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

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