

Reprint

The now famous case of the seventeen Silver Spring, Maryland, laboratory monkeys has spawned adjunctive debates, such as the one engaged in by William Raspberry and me in The Washington Post in October. The question here concerns the exclusivity of regard for various life forms.

A brief background:

Acting under the Maryland anti-cruelty law, Maryland police on September 11, 1981 seized seventeen monkeys from the Institute of Behavioral Research in the Washington suburb of Silver Spring.

The police had been notified of alleged improper care and treatment of the animals by an IBR volunteer worker, Alex Pacheco. The 23-year-old George Washington University student is also an animal rights activist.

In the wake of this action, the National Institutes of Health investigated the laboratory and studied the affidavits sworn to by veterinarians and primatologists who had viewed the conditions after closing hours. N.I.H. then suspended its \$200,000 grant to Dr. Edward Taub, IBR investigator, for his work on the effects of somatosensory deafferentation, i.e. severing the nerves of the primates' upper forelimbs. The limbs become useless and seemingly without sensation. Taub was developing techniques, such as shock and food deprivation, to stimulate use of the affected limbs -- techniques that might be applicable to persons with injuries to the central nervous system.

N. I. H. charged that veterinary care had not been provided, that IBR's animal care committee was improperly

constituted, that physical facilities for housing were inadequate, that conditions were unsanitary, that and employees had an inadequate occupational health program.

The N.I.H. suspension action and its report were not admitted as evidence at the trial on the grounds that the action was taken after the seizure. After a week-long trial, Judge Stanley Klavan of the Maryland District Court handed down the verdict of guilty of cruelty on six counts. Six monkeys, he judged, had been deprived of adequate veterinary care for fractured bones and serious infection. The conditions resulted from self-mutilation that characterized nearly all of the deafferented monkeys. The case is being appealed.

The trial was attended by a cross-section of individuals of the animal welfare and scientific communities. A few days prior to the Raspberry column, the Washington Post printed a column concentrating on the humane supporters prominent in the nation's social and theatrical life. After the Raspberry column the newspaper was flooded with protests. Only mine, in an edited form, was printed.

Ann Cottrell Free

(Editor's note: William Raspberry's column below, (c) 1981 by Washington Post Co., is reprinted with permission. Ann Cottrell Free's response is reprinted with her permission.)

William Raspberry

Saving Monkeys, Ignoring People

I've just been reading The Washington Post file on the monkeys, and I'm frankly fascinated.

A small group of animal lovers has been conducting a campaign, at considerable cost and personal risk, to rescue 17 monkeys from a Rockville research lab. They say the animals were being mistreated.

Understand: I admire the commitment, the sense of personal responsibility, the derring-do, of those in the forefront of the rescue effort. I'm just puzzled by their priorities.

There is, for instance, Alex Pacheco, the 23-year-old George Washington University student who infiltrated the Institute for Behavioral Research and whose description of what was happening to the monkeys there led to a raid by Montgomery County police.

Pacheco, who is affiliated with People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), said he had been influenced by the book, "Animal Liberation," to stop eating meat and start "doing what's best for the animals."

"Doing what's best" apparently came to include the gathering of photographic and other evidence of "cruelty" to the lab animals, a report to the authorities and even a rescue raid to free the animals from the authorities themselves, with monkeys being secretly transported to South Carolina.

It is all incredibly heroic. And yet I found myself wondering if this young man could be so profoundly influenced by reading "Animal Liberation," what might he have undertaken if he had read the Reagan-Stockman budget, or infiltrated school cafeterias featuring ketchup-as-vegetable in school lunches for low-income children.

The fund-raising efforts instituted by PETA, the enlistment of such big names as Cleveland Amory and Christine Stevens (wife of Kennedy Center chairman Roger Stevens), and the coordination among local and federal authorities, all had me wondering how many of the more important social programs might have been saved if the rest of us cared as much about people as this band cares about monkeys. They clearly care.

"I must tell you that after 12 years in the movement, my tears don't flow much anymore," actress Gretchen Wyler said of her involvement on behalf of the monkeys. "But I cried."

Does she cry, one wonders, at the loss of jobs and training opportunities for laid-off CETA workers? Do her tears flow for the old folks whose Social Security payments are still not out of jeopardy? Is anyone looking to infiltrate the courts to dramatize what happens to low-income citizens unable to protect their rights as a result of the slashing of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program? Is the death of the Community Services Administration—the end of the longstanding federal commitment to advocacy on behalf of the poor—less heart-wrenching than the plight of 17 monkeys?

Nor were those tears shed for the monkeys futile tears. The National Institutes of Health, as a direct result of the efforts of these committed activists, moved to cut off funding for the Rockville laboratory. Wouldn't it be encouraging if the federal government moved to cut off funding for federal contractors found guilty of discrimination? But the government, instead of cutting off funds, is cutting its efforts to end employment discrimination against minorities and women, virtually ending its affirmative action efforts. Is cruelty in the personnel office less heinous than cruelty in the research lab?

Curious priorities indeed. I am reminded of the attitude of the right-to-life people—or rather the right-to-birth people, since so many of them seem to lose interest in the children after they are born. If they cared about life, as opposed to seeing to it that women who indulge unwisely in sex are

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properly punished by carrying their pregnancies to term, wouldn't their programs include a commitment to birth control, infant nutrition, early childhood education, day care for children of working mothers and more effective schools?

Likewise with the animal lovers. Does not their concern for life extend to human beings? At least the case can be made that what appears to be animal cruelty—subjecting laboratory animals to various diseases, disabilities and discomforts—has a payoff in reducing human suffering.

Perhaps they do care about human beings. Perhaps they see their role as fighting on behalf of those—whether animals or preborn children—the rest of us seem to ignore.

Still, all this heroism on behalf of 17 monkeys, when the situation for millions of human beings is desperate and growing worse, strikes me as, well, inhuman.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1981

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FREE FOR ALL

*Ann Cottrell Free***Animal Lovers Are Not People Haters**

This is a plea to people who call me, and those like me, an "animal lover." Please don't call me that until you understand what it really means.

When someone calls me an "animal lover," as William Raspberry [op-ed, Oct. 14] called the rescuers of the 17 laboratory monkeys, it usually means one thing: people hater. It means that we care nothing for distressed human beings. Somehow, we must abolish the mind-set about the term, erase it completely from our lexicon, until it is clearly understood that it is part and parcel of life-loving.

Today's "animal lovers" are coincidentally acting in the 18th century Quaker tradition; Quaker abolitionist John Woolman would not ride in a stage coach, so distressed was he by the sight of the exhausted drivers and horses. Later, his co-religionists helped set up the underground railway and secretly taught slaves to read and write.

The false equation—that animal loving equals people hating—had nothing to do with getting the police to seize the 17 monkeys on grounds of violating the Maryland anti-cruelty law. (Those individuals have a record of helping human beings, as well.)

The equation has nothing to do with picking up a lost dog or kitten off the streets. In the 1950s, it had nothing to do with seeking a federal law providing a more merciful death to pigs, sheep and cattle. In the 1960s, it had nothing to do with passing laws to clean up laboratory animal dealers and labs. Today it has nothing to do with trying to get Congress to overhaul and sufficiently fund the Animal Welfare Act, and

to try to get the Agriculture Department inspectors to stop glossing over gross violations. Nor does it have any bearing on trying to get members of the public on animal care committees so that scientists will not be the only policemen. Animal loving/people hating has nothing to do with the push for more funding for research into non-animal substitutes, at a great saving of federal funds.

Certainly, animal loving/people hating has nothing to do with the growing movement to bring more companion animals to the homes for the aged, infirm, mentally disturbed or criminally incarcerated. This is a new role for companion animals (a more meaningful and dignified term than "pets"). Now animals, in addition to giving their bodies for testing, are giving us, in another kind of institutional setting, their souls—in a sense—to get us well another way, their way: people loving. (Fortunately, these animal "people lovers" are not usually classified as "animal haters.")

Proof that a pet is better than a pill is being scientifically documented (not that we didn't know it all along.) University of Pennsylvania scientists studied 92 cardiac patients and came up with the fact that of the 53 with pets, only three died in the following year. Of the 39 without pets, alas, 11 died. Pets are proving to be blood pressure lowerers, too, so potential stroke victims should take heed.

I invite those who denigratingly call me and my type "animal lovers" to join me. Come with me to the Hurt Home for the Blind. There, visit with me the black and white, men and women, all in their 80s and 90s. Stand there and watch as I



By Susan Davis

remove a tattered and worn toy dog from the lap of one blind lady, who sits motionless nearly all day. She has trouble getting about since she broke her hip. Watch as I place a gray kitten adopted from the Animal Rescue League in her lap.

The color returns to her pale face. She strokes, hugs and even kisses the kitten.

Sometimes she recites long-remembered verses about animals. She is happy and at peace.

Now, I ask you, is this "animal lover" really the "people hater" that legend would have me, and my kind, be?

Ann Cottrell Free, a free-lance writer, is the editor of "Animals, Nature and Albert Schweitzer."