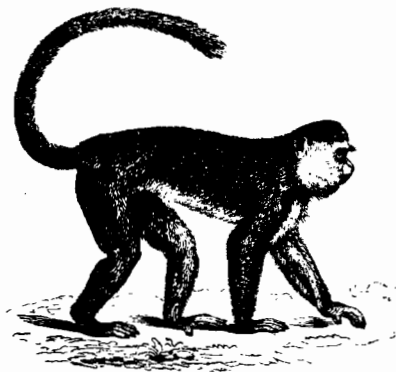


# THE CHOICE OF A LIFETIME

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A visit to a slaughterhouse changed the course of my life. I was traveling through Canada on summer vacation from college, and stopped to visit friends. They had a friend who worked in a slaughterhouse, and, having nothing better to do, we said let's go see Fred.

The experience was unbelievable.

As we walked up to what looked like a warehouse, two men wearing long aprons came out through a garage-type door. They were red head to toe with blood. They were big guys and carried between them a soaking wet, newborn or ready-to-be-born calf, upside down by his ankles. He was three to four feet long and two to three feet high, and he was very much alive and struggling.

The top of the dumpster was at least eight feet off the ground. They stood there and swung the thrashing calf like a sack of potatoes, one, two, and then heaved him up. But he didn't go over the top; he hit the side and fell to the pavement. They picked him up and threw him again, and again he didn't go in. The third time, they managed to hurl him over the top and into the dumpster.

We then went inside. There before us was all the stark horror of terrified cows, chickens, and pigs undergoing grisly deaths. Pregnant pigs were disemboweled and all the wriggling baby pigs were on the conveyor belt among the animal organs and treated just like the organs.

Sickened by all I saw, I felt incredible pity for

the animals, but I didn't realize my part in that suffering. I didn't stop eating meat. But later that very week someone gave me a paperback copy of Animal Liberation. Reading just one chapter showed me I was directly contributing to that slaughterhouse nightmare. I quit eating meat that night.

Animals have always fascinated me. As a child, I was crazy about turtles, snakes, birds, and monkeys. I would go out of my way to help a turtle across a road. Our family had a parrot who had one wing clipped severely before we got him. Whenever he fell off his stand or out of a tree, the wing bled. He can never fly.

One incident I'll never forget happened while we were living in Mexico. A man used to come around every few days with all these bamboo cages piled on top of one another, filled with birds, all kinds of birds. We kids would run out to look at them. Once we were able to buy two, so he pulled one out of the cage--a small bird--flipped open her wings like a deck of cards, and pulled a pair of scissors from his back pocket. Just before he chopped off a huge chunk of the wing so the bird would never fly, we yelled and stopped him.

When I returned to college in Ohio, I was the only vegetarian I knew of in town. I couldn't get any of the priests or brothers in my Catholic school to become vegetarians. Some of them stopped eating veal, but they wouldn't give up meat, even after I showed them pictures. I had



## AUTO- BIOGRAPHY

thought of joining the priesthood, but I asked myself how I could give my life to a faith whose leaders wouldn't see their part in this suffering and simply stop eating meat.

Those who need help the most desperately, I realized, are the animals. As atrocious as human suffering can be, the animals suffer more in terms of number of beings, severity of suffering, and duration of suffering. Billions of animals endure physical and mental agony for their entire lives. And animals are helpless. Luckily, people can often fight back, protect themselves, physically and even in court. Animals never can.

On top of all this, most churches and charities help people, which is good. But almost none help animals.

It became clear to me that where my time and energy were needed most, could stop the most suffering, was working for the animals. This, I resolved, was how I would spend my life.

I began by organizing an animal rights group on the Ohio State campus. We demonstrated against furs and rodeos and did a lot of interviews about slaughterhouses. This was one of the universities established by Congress to promote agriculture, so we made many enemies on campus. I'd always do my best to get into the stories for the campus paper that on today's farms cattle, pigs, and other animals are castrated, dehorned, and have their tails cut off--all violent physical mutilations--without pain-killers.

People in the agricultural community and trappers phoned members of our group at all hours of the night, threatening to blow our heads off.

At the end of the year, Cleveland Amory came to Columbus to give a speech. Afterward, I went up to meet him. Somehow, the subject of the Sea Shepherd, a ship that protected seals and whales, came up. I pleaded with him to sign me on. He said okay, we'll try you out. So I spent three months working in the engine room and on the bridge, going from Boston to Portugal, involved with dolphins and sea turtles and learning a great deal about marine life. (Later I studied endangered humpback whales in Alaska aboard the RV Jigur.)

From Portugal, where the Sea Shepherd sank the notorious pirate whaling ship, The Sierra, I went to England. Here I joined and worked with

hunt saboteurs until my tourist visa expired. Hunts are very different there and hunt sabotage is common. The riders use their horses and their whips to attack the sabs.

Hunters on the ground gang up and pulverize the sabs. The husband and wife team who founded the Hunt Saboteurs Association have permanent whip scars across their faces.

From England I came to Washington, D.C. Upon my arrival, I went right to the local pound. There I met Ingrid Newkirk, who had moved through a series of victories for animals from animal law-enforcement officer of the society to its director. We decided that the time had come for a grassroots movement for animal rights. That Fall we formed People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Although we would fight for all the animals, our primary focus would be on those animals largely ignored by traditional humane societies--animals used for experimentation, food, and fur.

In the summer of 1981, after finishing my third year as a political science and environmental studies major, I decided to get first-hand experience in a laboratory. The first place I applied was the nearby Institute for Behavioral Research (IBR). Surprisingly, the owner, Dr. Taub, said I could start the next day.

When I arrived for work, he walked me through the place. I was shocked. In a small, windowless room with filthy, feces-splattered walls and a sickening stench, in rusty, feces-encrusted cages, sat 16 macaques and one rhesus monkey. Desperately hungry, they reached forlornly through the bars of their tiny, foot-and-a-half-wide cages for urine-soaked, feces-coated food that had fallen through the cage bottoms into the waste trays below.

If only God had made the animals so they all cried out when they are suffering, it might be a different world. Something so simple could mean so much less agony.

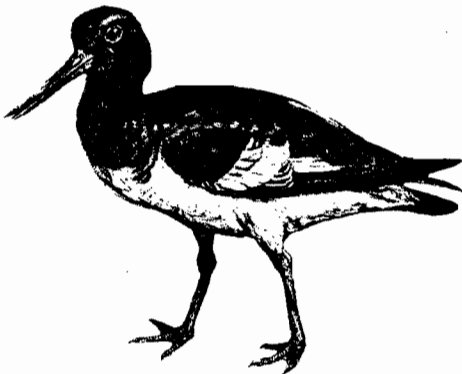
When a dog is being hurt, he or she howls and you instantly recognize the pain and react, but when a seal gets clubbed to death, he or she doesn't make a sound. A rabbit seldom screams, but when one does, everybody understands. At Ohio State, they were cutting the legs off salamanders without a painkiller, but you couldn't hear anything. You chop up a worm and hear

nothing. As a kid, I fished, and the fish never made any noise. You rip out their guts, their eyes, suffocate them--they are silent. Crawdads--you crushed them and use their tails for bait, they never made a sound. If you did that to a cat, you'd hear him scream and think, this isn't right.

Dr. Taub said his research on surgically disabled primates was to monitor the rehabilitation of impaired limbs. Twelve of the 17 monkeys had surgically crippled (deafferentated) limbs. They had torn or bitten off 39 fingers on these limbs.

Sarah, purchased when she was one day old, had been left alone and forgotten in her cage for eight years. She would attack her foot and spin around incessantly, calling out like an infant. Another monkey, Milton, seemed crazy. He attacked his arm mercilessly and masturbated constantly. Another, Chester, saw himself as the leader, powerless to defend his troupe, enraged at the world.

The surgery room had to be seen to be believed. Records were strewn everywhere, even under the operating table. Soiled, discarded clothes, old shoes, and other personal items were scattered about the room. Rat droppings and rodent urine covered everything; live and dead cockroaches were everywhere.



Bandages were never changed, no matter how filthy or rotted they became before they finally fell off. I saw discolored, exposed muscle tissue on the monkeys' arms. Two had bones protruding through their flesh. Several had festering stubs where they had bitten off their own fingers. With these pitiful limbs they searched through their waste pans for food.

I was put in charge of two crude "experiments," one involving starvation and the other pain. The first was to record reactions when starved animals were shown food. The second was to observe pain when surgical pliers were raked against the teeth and gums or locked to the tightest notch onto the testicles of an immobilized monkey. As I was working alone, I fabricated data to avoid hurting the animals.

When I asked the purposes of the experiments, I was told that the researchers hoped to find something "interesting," for which they might "get grant funding."

I kept a log of my observations and took photographs. After several months, I cautiously approached five people with expertise in various related fields and asked them to accompany me through the laboratory at night and afterwards sign affidavits.

On September 8, 1981, I took my affidavit and those of the five experts, along with my notes and photographs, to the Silver Spring, Maryland, police. The first police raid of a research facility in the United States took place at IBR on September 11, and on November 23, 1981, Taub was found guilty of six counts of cruelty. He appealed twice, and on his second appeal the court ruled--incredibly--that animal experimenters who receive federal funding do not have to obey Maryland state anti-cruelty laws and could not be prosecuted no matter how heinous their deeds.

The reversal of Taub's conviction enraged the Maryland State's Attorney's Office and many scientists and supporters who saw Taub slip through a crack in the criminal justice system.

For eight years PETA has been fighting for transfer of the monkeys to a retirement haven, where they can enjoy their remaining years. Three have died. Five were sent to the San Diego Zoo. The National Institute of Health continues to warehouse the remaining nine in barren cages in a small, windowless room.

While we continued to fight for the Silver Spring monkeys, other cases came and went. In 1983, PETA exposed a Department of Defense wound lab built on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. Military personnel were to fire "high-velocity missiles" into stray dogs and other animals to examine "tissue damage." Public outcry led by PETA forced a moratorium on the experiments and a permanent ban on the shooting of dogs and cats in wound labs. For the second time in U.S. history, federally funded animal experiments had been stopped.

That same year we also got federal funding to the City of Hope animal research program in California stopped because of documented gross mistreatment and lack of veterinary care.

1986 brought our expose of the chimpanzees kept in severe confinement and driven insane at SEMA laboratory in Maryland, and the launching of our national "Save the Chimps" campaign, which compelled Dr. Jane Goodall to vow to work to improve the miserable lot of chimpanzees confined to laboratories.

In 1987 we launched our Compassion Campaign, to tell consumers nationwide about the cruelties of the Lethal Dose 50 and Draize Eye Irritancy poisoning and blinding tests conducted by most manufacturers of cosmetics and household products, even though they are not required by law. Our demonstrations, stockholder resolutions, lobbying, and public education programs are building national awareness about choosing cruelty-free products.

1988 brought major victories in our Compassion Campaign. Noxell announced they will switch 80% of their testing from animals to non-animal products, and our international protest of Benetton resulted in their announcement that they will no longer use animals at all.

This was the year we exposed the cruelties at Biosearch Laboratory in Philadelphia, where thousands of animals are blinded, poisoned, and killed in cosmetics and household products tests each year.

We also were able to relieve the suffering of hundreds of sick and starving beavers on a fur "farm" in Montana. Summer saw our Animal Rights Music Festival at the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., draw international performers and more than 35,000

spectators.

Winter of 1989 brought our major anti-fur campaign, which climaxed with our Rock Against Fur Concert in New York City, and coincided with announcements by top designers Bill Blass and Oscar de la Renta that they will no longer design fur garments. Celebrities, reacting against the cruelty of the fur industry with artists' sensitivity, are jumping almost en masse onto the anti-fur bandwagon. Rue McClanahan has helped tremendously from the beginning.

Our Compassion Campaign chalked up major victories in 1989, when Avon, Revlon, and Amway announced they will no longer test their products on animals.

During the past year, PETA's activities and momentum have grown and spread like seeds in a strong wind. From our summer-long educational tent on the Smithsonian Mall near the Capitol, to our countrywide Animal Rights 101 seminars, to major media interest and coverage, the idea that animals matter is taking hold everywhere. From the five of us who organized PETA that (fall-summer-spring) evening eight years ago, membership has grown to, at this writing, 300,000 dedicated, caring people across the country.

The most important lesson I've learned and want to pass on to others is that you don't have to be wealthy or have a Ph.D. or political power to do a great deal to stop suffering. You can be just an ordinary person.

If you believe in a cause, commit yourself to it, and dedicate your efforts and time, even your life, to it, you can stop a lot of suffering and save a lot of lives. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Why spend your life just passing time, just working to pay the rent?

For those of us in this movement the rewards are priceless--no amount of financial success could equal them. The honor of what we're doing makes us feel good about ourselves, our colleagues, our value as human beings, and our lives.

