

Cruelty for Profit

Deviant Pastimes

The people who hurt animals are commonly the same people who hurt children. There is something about hurting the innocent and the helpless that seems to appeal to a certain type of deviant personality. But deviants can also be very smart.

In the case of those who are paid by taxpayers to hurt animals, the deviants have successfully played upon the fears of the general public for their own health and the health of those whom they love. These deviant personalities have convinced the federal government and the majority of the citizenry that torturing animals is good for society. It's all mumbo jumbo and fear mongering of the worse sort, but it works: the vivisection industry is growing and getting rich on our fear while satisfying its own deviant interests

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Persons are encouraged to send a copy of this document to their representatives.

When citizens write to their Congressional representatives, or to the labs, with concerns about the animals' suffering, one common reply is that the labs are all inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture, and the very best labs are accredited by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC).

AAALAC says that it is "a private nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in science through a voluntary accreditation program." Of course, those doing the accrediting are themselves members of the deviant group.

The National Institutes of Health's Alamogordo Primate Facility, the University of California at Davis, The University of California at San Francisco, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison are all accredited by AAALAC. The treatment of animals in these facilities is a good measure of the treatment of animals in the nation's top-quality labs; the four labs are representative of the very best run labs with the very best and most humane animal care in the industry.

All four of these facilities have recently been in the news.

The NIH **California National Primate Research Center**, at the University of California at Davis made local headlines twice. The first time was in February when the university kept secret for ten days the escape of a rhesus monkey who was eventually found dead. She had become trapped in a water pipe after her escape. The university had been vying for a national biosafety level 4 laboratory (BSL4), the most secure type of facility, capable of handling dangerous agents such as Ebola virus. They lost the monkey and lost the contract.

The second time was in August when authorities fell asleep at their posts once again. A heater malfunction resulted in seven monkeys dying from heat prostration. It was undoubtedly a slow and hideous death. In an Orwellian moment, Center director Dallas Hyde said: "We regret and are saddened by the deaths of these animals. Our staff is dedicated to the compassionate care of every animal living in our program, and will be working to ensure this cannot happen again." But every monkey at Davis will be killed by this compassionate care eventually.

The NIH **Wisconsin National Primate Research Center**, at the University of Wisconsin at Madison has also been in the news twice recently. The first time was

when veterinarian Jennifer Hess, who had complained that monkeys were being treated “cruelly and improperly,” received a quarter of a million dollars in taxpayer money last year to settle her wrongful termination lawsuit against the university. (See *Congressional Educator* Spring 2004.)

The second time was at the end of August when an insider leaked information that three marmosets had been left in a cage and sent through a cage-washer in mid-July. The animals were scaled to death with jet sprays of hot chemicals intended to sterilize stainless steel. It must have been a horrific experience. Center director Joseph Kemnitz tried to assuage the public’s concerns with the comment that: “It was probably a very quick death.” He has also commented on the entire monkey lab industry: “We all operate in the same way.” Apparently so.

The **University of California San Francisco** is always the third or fourth top recipient of NIH funding. After years of insider leaks and damning U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection reports documenting the institution’s woeful lack of animal care and neglect, UCSF was recently certified by AAALAC. Ara Tahmassian, associate vice chancellor of research at the university, said that the university’s endorsement was a coveted stamp of approval from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, a

private, nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals. He said: “The accreditation is given to organizations exhibiting the highest standards for the humane care and use of animals in research.”

On August 31, 2004, the USDA charged the university with 60 counts of animal welfare violations between 2001 and 2003. Three researchers there, Stephen Lisberger, Henry Ralston and Robert Turner, who all receive public funds to experiment on the brains of living monkeys, were individually charged as well.

On September 11, the 12th Judicial District district attorney filed three complaints of animal cruelty against the managers and a veterinarian at the **NIH’s Alamogordo Primate Facility**, at Holloman Air Force Base. Operated by Charles River Laboratories, the facility is the single largest holding of chimpanzees for experimental purposes in the world. AAALAC has meant nothing for these prisoners’ welfare.

Commenting on the conditions and circumstances surrounding the charges, a renowned primate veterinarian, Dr. James Mahoney, commented that the situation within the lab demonstrated “a fundamentally twisted attitude on the part of the senior staff... and show[ed] a singular lack of compassion.”

The poor care the animals in these facilities receive should

come as no surprise to anyone. Those who make hurting animals their life’s work should not be expected to treat them with consideration. Wrapped in a cloak of pseudoscientific /quasi religious secrecy and sanctimony, these deviants receive the protection and support of the United States Congress whose members are prey to the political expediency of supporting biomedical research regardless of its cost or reliability.

As we learn more about the minds and emotions of the animals most like us – the monkeys and apes – the crimes against them become ever more obvious. How like us need they be before we stiffen our backs and say no more to the deviants practicing their dark pastimes?