

PRIMATE FREEDOM PROJECT

Congressional Educator

The Primate Freedom Project encourages everyone to constantly contact their elected officials about laboratory animal issues. Primates and politicians depend on your efforts to educate others about this topic.

You can become a Congressional Educator by copying this issue and mailing to your congressperson, both US senators, Prime Minister and Members of Parliament.

**PRIMATE FREEDOM
PROJECT**

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A Deafening Silence

Scientific advancement often arrives as a stunning discovery. But stunning discoveries are the result of years of accumulated data. Any loss of this accumulated knowledge could be irreparable. The willful destruction of years of accumulated data is a crime against science and humanity itself.

Yet, when the University of Wisconsin-Madison destroyed sixty boxes of videotapes of its experiments on monkeys, the absence of outrage from the academic community was deafening.

Worse, the tapes were destroyed to stop people from learning what was occurring in the University's labs. So, not only were years of accumulated observation and records lost forever, but also the destruction was motivated by the University's fear of an educated citizenry.

How did this happen?

Scientific American published a special edition titled *The Hidden Mind* on August 31, 2002. On page 72, there was a revised version of a 1993 *Scientific American* article titled "The Neurobiology of Fear" written by Dr. Ned Kalin, a primate vivisector and chairman of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's department of psychiatry.

In the article, Kalin explained that monkeys from a few days old up to twelve weeks old were separated from their mothers and subjected to three fear-inducing conditions and that the events were videotaped.

We wrote to the university requesting copies of these videotapes under authority of Wisconsin's open records statute. Our requests were ignored. Under a different name, we again requested copies of the videos a few months later and finally received a denial of our request.

In 2005, we read a paper written in 2000, by Ruth Benca, a psychiatrist at UW-Madison, Ned Kalin, and others in the journal *Brain Research* titled "Effects of amygdala lesions on sleep in rhesus monkeys." Benca et al. explained that monkeys who had been used in Kalin's experimental brain mutilations were strapped into restraint chairs over night. Some of these monkeys were videotaped throughout the night.

Through a local attorney, we wrote to the university requesting copies of these videotapes. Shortly thereafter, in a letter dated December 13, 2005,



This issued of the Congressional Educator was penned by Rick Bogle, co-founder of the Primate Freedom Project. Rick and Lynn live in Wisconsin and work to educate the public about primate laboratory cruelty.

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senior UW legal counsel John Dowling formally denied our request.

Dowling said the videotapes were "primary data from the ongoing investigations of university researchers." He also said that, "the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the interest in disclosure."

We were able to interest a local weekly newspaper in this problem. The news editor, Bill Leuders, is also the president of the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council. When Mr. Leuders requested the tapes he was told: "They may have been damaged in a plumbing accident."

In a letter to the newspaper dated July 6, 2006, Dowling stated: "The videotapes and photographs in question were damaged, along with other data, when a steam valve broke on 1/18/05 releasing water and steam into the storage area. After the required time to keep these data had elapsed, they were destroyed."

The newspaper reported:

But the UW provided no information as to what was damaged, or how badly. "I don't know," says Dowling, when asked if the damage made it impossible to view the tapes. He also doesn't know what his own letter means in saying the tapes were destroyed "after the required time." He assumes this language, provided by others, refers to some records retention schedule.

In our April 2005 request, we noted that the Wisconsin open records law prohibits the destruction of a requested record until at least 60 days after access is denied. The tapes were shredded 62 days after Dowling's denial of the newspaper's request.

A record provided by the UW to the paper stated that 60 boxes of videotapes had been shredded on February 13, 2006.

A system completely out of balance

If activists had gained entry to the facility and had destroyed these tapes, it is likely that the university would have loudly claimed that the cure for childhood cancer had been lost and that the people responsible were terrorists.

On May 23, 2006, another UW primate vivisectioner, Michelle Basso, another brain mutilator, testified before the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security in support for the passage of the Animal Enterprise Protection Act:

... I received a magazine to which I did not subscribe. Then I received a couple more magazines. I started to receive statements from magazine companies indicating that I placed gift subscriptions to others on campus. I received in total approximately 50+ magazine subscriptions and other mail-order paraphernalia....

I have a right to live free of fear.

So, vivisectioners want people who send them unwanted magazine subscriptions to go to jail, but at the same time, don't want the public to know what is going on in the labs and feel perfectly justified in shredding boxes of primary data to keep the public ignorant.

The simple fact that the vivisection community has remained quiet about the loss of the primary data in the videotapes, and simultaneously lobbied for stiffer penalties for those who call attention to their activities should be sufficient reason to question any claims that they might make.

If they are willing to shred data to keep it hidden from the public, why should anyone believe them when they claim that they are humane or that their research matters one whit? Their shrill complaints about being criticized and targeted by animal rights activists must be considered in the context of their refusal to openly debate the issue of hurting and killing animals for questionable speculations, their refusal to open their labs to public inspection, and the millions of taxpayer dollars they receive.