

Homemade Apple Pie, Collateral Damage and the Humane Society

Am I a prone to making irrational statements and wild accusations? Maybe. Should I be accused of being clouded by bias, unable or unwilling to separate fact from fiction; the way the world is versus the way I want it to be? Perhaps. Are my words worthy of making you contemplate your perspectives? You probably don't know me well enough to say for sure. I might be a loon or maybe I'm one of the most lucid people you'll ever know.

After almost forty years on this planet I have long since learned that nobody likes a zealot. Zealots are tantamount to crazy people. People on the extreme end of any particular topic are typically discounted, written off. It's not too different from the way some teachers grade papers in college. She grades on a curve and starts by throwing out the highest and lowest scores to determine the scale upon which everyone else will be measured. If you are on the fringe you don't count. Too far right or too far left and your contribution is relegated to babble. In order to be taken seriously, to be listened to, you have to temper your passion. You cannot let emotion sway your judgment or the presentation of your ideas. Don't get me wrong, it's OK to be a zealot but you have to keep it a secret. If you don't and you get outed and people detect that you have an extreme position they will turn you off, block you out and dismiss the things you say.

Because some organizations are heavily infested with zealots they have spent most of their political capital. Their ability to sway larger portions of the population are all but lost. They have who they have but who they have isn't anyone they would not have had in the first place. Converts are few and opponents are many. Think about outfits like PETA, the ACLU, NORML, the NRA and GLAAD. Do you expect anybody from any of those groups to say anything that will surprise you? Probably not. There is nothing moderate about them. They are almost always too far to one extreme, unable and unwilling to listen, learn and perhaps most important, be modified. You see, zealots don't want to be swayed. They like what they believe and taking the time to understand, truly understand, what the other side says means they will be open to a new idea. Being open to a new idea means you are open to changing the one's you already have. That is too dangerous a proposition for a zealot.

I don't want to be a zealot. I'd rather not be written off. I write these words because I want them to be pondered. I would like to sway your opinion to be more closely aligned with mine. My words may not ultimately convince but I need them to give you pause; a moment when you are open to ideas that may differ from your own. That's my window, my opportunity.

Despite my conscious desire to want to avoid behaving like a zealot I sometimes get careless and say or write things that firmly plant me out on the edge, the place where crazy people hang out. I am, after all, a zealot in hiding. Sometimes I let my guard down

and go rolling through crazy town, frothing at the mouth, wearing mascara, eating handfuls of dog food and screaming obscenities at nuns and small children. Well, maybe it's not that bad ...I hope. For example, a few days ago I was talking to my accountant about the proposed ban on pythons. As we talked I explained how animal rights groups were behind the legislation and how it was their aim to end the ownership of exotic animals in the United States. My accountant was with me, nodding. Seeing that I had an agreeable audience I began to rant. Like Sly Stallone in *Over The Top* I flipped my hat around, kicked it up a notch and drove straight into crazy land. My passion for the topic got the best of me and I stepped up on my proverbial soap-box and began to explain to my accountant how it wasn't just exotics like pythons that the Humane Society of the United States wants to ban. I proclaimed, "The Humane Society of the United States wants to eliminate the rights of all Americans to be able to have a pet dog or cat, too! They want to completely end pet ownership of any kind and have a systematic, multi-year plan in play to make it happen!"

... Whoops! Wait! Hold up. Party foul! That, my friends, was the *wrong* thing to say. In the eyes of my accountant I could see very plainly that I had just crossed over into crazy-town (he actually rolled his eyes at me). By transforming into a zealot I had crapped out, spent my capital and completely lost my audience. Just moments before I had been a credible voice, full of insight, logic and reason. I was educating a fellow pet owner about the fear-based lies being spread by the HSUS about pythons in America. And just a sentence or two later, I was being discounted as a zealot. Damn, that was quick.

My failure to prove my larger point with my accountant sticks with me. I often reflect on the conversation and where I went wrong. My accountant has no interest in pythons and could ultimately care less what happens to them. He helps me add up how much money I lose breeding them year after year but that's about it. He does, however, have a dog. The thought that an organization like the HSUS is actually plotting to take away his right to own a dog is just too far of a stretch. He would tell me that banning dogs and cats was impossible. I might as well have started talking about alien abduction, parallel universes where evil Captain Kirk is real (an celibate), and how the Girl Scouts killed Jimmy Hoffa. You know, stuff crazy people say. In his world I went there. Proposing that dogs and cats were on the chopping block was too far a stretch.

So rather than writing something as far-fetched as what I said to my accountant, let me instead offer an end-around. I cannot come right out and tell the average person that the HSUS wants to ban the ownership of all pets in the United States. The idea is ...crazy; something only an irrational zealot would say. So, for the moment, let's say that it is not true. I don't think it and I don't think you should either. All better now? Knowing that our dogs and cats are safe we are free to ponder the following interesting pieces of information.

- In our society it is generally accepted that things produced on a small scale are inherently better than things produced on a large scale. Homemade apple pie is always better than apple pie made in a large-scale baking facility. Despite the

similarity in the ingredients the homemade apple pie is better because it is given personal attention and made with love. Large juggernaut operations, focused only on profit, can only make products inferior to those produced in Momma's kitchen. The corollary to the point above is that things produced on a large scale are somehow intrinsically bad. They are not of the same quality as things made on a small scale. For instance, if you choose to buy a purebred dog you are going to get a better quality one if you buy from a smaller scale breeder. Their animals are better. Better cared for, better quality, better, better, better. Really? Maybe. Maybe not.

- The devil often masquerades as an angel. In the movie *The Usual Suspects* Kevin Spacey's character says, "The greatest lie the devil ever told was to convince the world he didn't exist." During the masquerade the devil is kind, helpful, and gracious. He speaks in compelling half-truths that sound quite genuine. He gives you truth 90% of the time. With so much truth floating about it is effortless for you to buy into the other 10% (the lie). If you need additional perspective I recommend reading the [Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis](#).
- There is a famous cautionary anecdote that suggests that a frog placed into hot water will immediately jump out but a frog placed in cool water will sit still as the temperature is gradually raised to a boil. Even though it is not true it can serve as a warning that if you are complacent you will find that your rights and freedoms can be taken away slowly, in seemingly painless pieces until the day you turn around and say, "Heeeyyy?!?! What happened to all my rights?"
- In July 2009 the governor of Tennessee signed a "commercial breeder" bill for dogs and cats that requires any individual/business with more than 20 female animals to be licensed (and pay an annual fee) in the state. The real kicker is that the law also limits the total number of animals that any breeder can have to 75. Breeders who maintain larger populations are persecuted by the media (sometimes justifiably so) as being inhumane "puppy mills". I have never seen the media report on a great breeding facility. They only report on the bad ones. Well-run, clean breeding facilities are not newsworthy and the media is happy to let us, the zombified public, infer that all large dog breeding operations are abusive and inhumane puppy mills (Juggernaut- brand apple pies). The reaction of Tennessee dog breeders to this new legislation has been to A) move out of the state, B) reduce the number of breeding females to under 20 so they can avoid having to pay fees and endure inspections or C) limit the size of their business to 75 animals. It is worthy to note that the HSUS was behind this bill and that they "partnered" with kennel clubs in Tennessee to craft the legislation. The HSUS convinced them that legislation was imminent and that it would be better for them to draft legislation of their own rather than having it come from somewhere else. [Snake owners, please take a moment to see the parallels in this type of maneuvering by the HSUS](#). I can't seem to get the image of [harakiri](#) out of my head right now. Not sure why I'm thinking about that...

I see a few things that will come true because of this “commercial breeder” law:

1. Haters of so-called puppy mills will celebrate because facilities with fewer animals are more likely to receive better care. That’s true, isn’t it? Smaller is better, right? Homemade apple pie versus Juggernaut-brand pies...
2. [Fans of the idea that there is a pet overpopulation problem will cheer because breeders will not be able to produce as many dogs, meaning more people may choose to adopt from shelters.](#)
3. There will be fewer pure-bred dogs produced. Owning one will become more difficult as the supply within the state decreases.
4. Purebred dogs will become more expensive as breeders pass the additional costs on to their customers. They will also increase their prices to compensate for the reduced production capacity (evil commercial dog breeders have mortgages, too).

With the law now in effect in Tennessee it appears that efforts are being made (backed by HSUS) to again lower the maximum number of animals a breeder can keep. HSUS’ top three skills are litigation, lobbying and legislation. With no real adversary on the battlefield it is likely they will be successful. When successful I can speculate that many breeders will get out of the dog breeding business. They will not be able to produce enough animals to make a living. This will further decrease the number of purebred dogs available which will cause animals rights activists to celebrate even more. And of course prices on purebred dogs will continue to rise as availability continues to decline.

The decrease in availability will be partially compensated for by individuals choosing to breed the family dog. The “backyard breeder” will breed his purebred dog and offer them into the marketplace. These dogs are [supposedly] better. They are produced by the smallest of the small breeders. What could be better than a breeding operation consisting of only two dogs? These puppies *are* homemade apple pie.

Enter mandatory spay/neuter laws. There are several areas around the United States that require you to spay/neuter your dogs and cats. If you choose not to you must pay an annual fine. Oops, I meant to write ‘annual fee’. Not wanting yet another recurring bill many people will choose to spay/neuter their pets. In many areas of the country this can even be done for free (or close to it). We spay our animals because we love them, because it saves us money and because we are sometimes told that it is better for the long-term health of the animal. All three of these things are true. We also spay them because the [HSUS says there is a pet overpopulation problem in America](#). Let me take a moment to remind you about the level of truth the devils tells while masquerading. Did you just swallow some lie with all of that truth?

Here is the question I want to ask you: If Tennessee is stage one of a planned national assault on the size of commercial dog breeders and spay/neuter laws continue to gain momentum, where is your next pet dog going to come from? Legislation forcing dog breeders to be smaller in size will mean that there are fewer dog breeders and less production. Mandatory spay/neuter laws mean you and your neighbors will not be able to breed your dogs to make more. Fewer and fewer dogs will be available. Is it possible

that owning a dog will become unusual, perhaps limited to the more financially affluent portions of the population? You see, the HSUS doesn't have to introduce legislation that will ban the ownership of dogs in this country (we already established that doing so would be crazy); they can achieve the same result by gradually eliminating the ability to produce them! The future *inability* to own a pet dog *is* the collateral damage. The HSUS is way too smart to go head-to-head with dog ownership. It will be far easier for them to take away little pieces here and there. Think about it. Thanks to the wonderful picture painted by the media most Americans applaud the idea of smaller commercial dog breeders. The truth we are being sold is that the animals will be treated more humanely. We are also buying mandatory spay/neuter laws for the reasons I mentioned earlier. Masquerade!! ! By buying the supposed humane treatment of animals could you actually be buying the inability to own one in the future? Give it some thought.

I believe that the Humane Society of the United States is the single biggest threat to the rights of pet owners we will ever encounter. Their attacks on the outskirts of the pet owning population are overt, brazen and direct. They want to flat out ban the ownership of pythons and boas. Such a seemingly small portion of the population is not worthy of tip-toeing around. We, the snake owners of America, are not large enough nor organized enough to have a voice that a Senator, who sits atop a pedestal constructed with HSUS money, can hear. Dog and cat owners, which number in the multiple millions are too large a voice to treat with such disregard. Dog and cat owners dwarf the HSUS many times over. They are wise not to wake a sleeping giant.

The only way the pet owning community in America is ever going to be safe against the cleverness and resilience of the Humane Society of the United States is to join together as a collective unit. Specialized associations are nice but cannot mount a fight that will equal that of the HSUS. We need (and have) an association of pet owners that are represented by one collective lobby; an organization that represents the millions of pet owners from one platform. That is an organization that can be powerful enough to take on the Humane Society. Divided, we fail. Reptile associations. Fail. Bird associations. Fail. Dog breeder associations. Fail. Fish keeper associations. Fail. Everybody joining a National Pet Association? That's power!

If you have not already done so, please join the [National Pet Association](http://www.natpet.org) (<http://www.natpet.org>). It's free, they won't ask you for any money (not today, at least) and they are interested in protecting the rights of every single pet *owner* in this country. Please also consider asking everybody you know who has a pet (of any kind) to join.

Under the banner of humane treatment the HSUS is running amok all around this country. They have got to be laughing at how easy their job is.

Cheers,

Colin Weaver