

Last Chance for Animals

I am profoundly grateful for this honour.

And I humbly accept it, not for myself, but on behalf of all animal rights activists like Chris DeRose and others in this room.

AR activists like you are the Bravest of all FIRST RESPONDERS.

Because you confront a deeply entrenched Status Quo of vested interests, industry, Politics, and Culture.

You are Lincoln's better angels of our nature - the beacon on the hill.

And a day will dawn when civilization will owe you a debt of gratitude it can never repay.

They say that behind every successful man, there is a very surprised woman.

My debt of gratitude is to my beloved wife Trix.

Rudyard Kipling wrote of young men dying in WW 1:

"And if they ask you why we died; tell them that our fathers lied".

That legacy of lies continues today.

Everything we think we know about the Animal Industrial Complex is a preposterous lie.

The world crying out for two things . . . Leadership and the Truth.

Civilized people tell the truth.

The wise Chinese have a word for it. "Zhengyou" - listen to the friend who tells you the truth - even if it hurts.

So let's just tell the truth. Fearlessly and forcefully.

That is what the Sanskrit word Satyagraha means. . "The Truth Force".

Brendan Kennelly in the Book of Judas wrote "If you want to Serve your Age, Betray it."

But what does it mean? To betray your age?

It means "Expose its lies; Humiliate its conceits; Debunk its arrogance; and condemn them to face harsher truths."

Alvin Toffler said "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn".

I have long admired Count Moltke, the Prussian general, a soldier who preferred to think, rather than speak. A man silent, in seven languages.

It takes courage to stand up and speak. It also takes courage to sit down and listen.

So what made me decide to leave the world of lobsters and Lear jets – in exchange for shelters and slaughterhouses?"

To:

- **T**ake nothing but pictures;
- **O**wn nothing but memories.
- **L**eave nothing but footprints.
- **K**ill nothing but time.

Something happened to me. I had been to Dante's Inferno, but unlike Dante Alligheri, I did not have Beatrice for my love, nor Vergil for my guide.

I heard the screams of my dying father as his body was ravaged by the many cancers that killed him.

And I realised I had heard those screams before.

In the slaughterhouse, on the cattle ships to the Middle East and the dying mother whale as a harpoon explodes in her brain as she calls out to her calf.

Their cries were the cries of my father. **They were identical.**

I discovered when we suffer, we suffer as equals.

And in their capacity to suffer, a dog is a pig is a bear. . . . is a boy.

When I look into your beautiful faces tonight I recall the words of the Greek poet Horace “Change only the names and my story is also about you.”

In human history:

- **100 billion** people have ever lived.
- **7 billion** are alive today.
- And we torture and kill **2 billion** land animals every week?
- And stab and suffocate **1 billion** ocean animals every **8** hours.
- If humans were killed at the same rate we'd be wiped out in a weekend.

Trillions of fish are ground up into pellets to feed livestock.

Vegetarian cows are now the world's largest ocean predators.

The great astrophysicist Carl Sagan's picture from the Voyager Spacecraft showed the tiniest, microscopic pin-hole of space.

He described it as “Our Pale Blue Dot, suspended on a Sunbeam”.

Well, Human beings comprise 30% of the mass of land animals. Slaughter farm animals 66%. Wild animals decimated down to 4%.

We have turned the Carl Sagan's Pale Blue Planet Earth into Bloodstained Planet Slaughterhouse.

The oceans are dying in our time. By 2048 all our fisheries will be dead. The lungs and the arteries of the earth.

If any of my algorithms are correct, it means no child under the age of 5 will ever reach retirement age.

10,000 entire species are wiped out every year because of the actions of one species.

We now face the 6th mass extinction in cosmological history.

And the Meat Industry is killing us too - with cancers, diabetes, and heart disease. It is deforesting the planet, poisoning the oceans, draining the rivers and aquifers, and bankrupting global economies.

If any other organism did this a biologist would call it a virus.

It is a crime against humanity of unimaginable proportions.

The anthropologist, Margaret Mead said "Never doubt that few committed people can change the world. It is the only thing that ever has".

- There are only 13 million Jews in the world. But they play a vibrant role in international affairs. Look at the number of Nobel Prizes they win every year.
- Trix and I sat in the Stadium at the Olympics. Full of pride. As Australia, with a population less than Florida won more Medals than every country in the world, except the US and Russia.
- Tibet's population is only 3 million. But who hasn't heard of the plight of the Tibetans?

But there are over 600 million vegetarians and vegans in the world.

That is bigger than the US, England, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Canada, Australia, Israel - combined!

If they were one nation they would be bigger than the 27 countries in the European Union!!

- They are bigger than NATO
- They are bigger than OPEC

Despite this massive footprint, they are still drowned out by the raucous huntin', shootin', killin' cartels who believe that violence is the answer - when it shouldn't even be a question.

- 1 billion people today are hungry. 20 million people will die from malnutrition. Cutting meat by only 10% will feed 100 million people.
- Going Vegan ends malnutrition forever.
- Food prices are skyrocketing. Thai rice traded at USD 197 per ton. It went up to USD 1,015. A 5 fold increase in 5 months.
- Poor countries sell their grain to the West for hard currency while their own children starve in their arms. And the West feeds it to livestock. . . So we can eat a steak? I bet I am not the only one in the room who sees this as a crime?
- Every morsel of meat we eat is slapping the tear-stained face of a starving child. When I look into her eyes, do I remain silent?
- If everyone ate a Western diet, we would need 2 Planet Earths to feed them. We only have one. And she is dying.
- The earth can produce enough for everyone's need. But not enough for everyone's greed.

There are two Peak Predators on the planet - Humans on land and Orcas in the ocean.

In the 20th century, humans killed 200 million members of their own species. Orcas killed none.

Don't expect protection from Governments either.

In the 20th century, 100 million people were killed - by their own governments.

Victor Hugo said there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.

But I say there is nothing more destructive than a bad idea whose time has passed.

The time for Meat has Passed.

Happily, the world is changing.

20 years ago Twitter was a bird sound, www was a stuck keyboard, Cloud was in the sky, Skype was a typo, 3 g was a parking place, Google was a baby's burp, and Al Kider was my plumber.

The most beautiful word ever written in any country, in any language, at any time in human history came from India. In the Upanishads 3,000 years ago.

Ahimsa - Non-Violence to ALL living beings.

Not because it describes our nationality, our politics, our religion, our diet or our lifestyle.

But because it describes our CHARACTER.

It is a revolutionary event more powerful than the Industrial Revolution, The Reformation, the Hubble telescope, or anything conceived by Galileo, Copernicus, Einstein, Darwin or Freud.

Because it protects the most precious of all things. . . . **Life.**

People in this room are creating The New Enlightenment, The Second Renaissance.

We know **The Golden Rule** “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” from the New Testament of Jesus. But it goes back to the Babylonian Jew, **Hillel in 70 BCE**. It actually goes back even further to the **Analects of Confucius in 500 BCE**.

In fact, it was enshrined in - human heart long before dawn of writing.

Veganism is the Swiss Army Knife of the future. One instrument solves our ethical, economic, environmental, water, health problems - and ends animal cruelty forever.

I recently delivered speeches in The Senate in The Hague, the Israeli Knesset Parliament in Jerusalem and also addressed the World Parliament of Religions.

And I said:

“Veganism gives us “THE PEACE DIVIDEND”. The Peace Map is drawn on a menu. Peace is not just the absence of war. It is the presence of Justice”.

So talking of Peace while killing animals is like loving literature and burning books. They are mutually exclusive ideas.

In my journey through Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, I have learned that:

1. A man is measured not by how much money he makes. But how much of it he is willing to give away. Particularly to strangers.
2. If you wish to increase a man's share of happiness, do not increase his possessions. Simply decrease his desires.
3. Socrates and Epicurus were right. An unexamined life is not worth living.
4. You do not find your character on Wall Street. It lives on the Road to Damascus.
5. My heart resonates to the poet WH Auden "If equal affection cannot be. Let the more loving one be me".

Martin Niemöller, the German priest, philosopher and U Boat captain spent 8 years in prison for condemning German intellectuals for being cowards.

*When the Nazis came for the communists
I remained silent;
I was not a communist.*

*When they locked up the democrats
I remained silent;
I was not a democrat.*

*When they came for the trade unionists
I did not speak out
I was not a trade unionist.*

*When they came for the Jews
I remained silent
I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me.
And there was no one left to speak out.*

Men and women of integrity must speak out. And act courageously.

Is it not better to light a candle than curse the darkness? All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of a single candle.

I believe another day is dawning. And if I close my eyes, I can feel her heart beat.

Let's not re-live history. Let's make history.
Because that is what leaders do. . . They make history.

Judge White's closing words in the "Bonfire of the Vanities" were "The Law is humanity's attempt at Decency".

So I ask you to join the battle in the war that Decency cannot afford to lose.

Because, in the end only 3 things matter.

- How deeply you loved.
- How gently you lived.
- And how gracefully you let go of things that were not meant for you.

The brutes and bullies have been Goliath.
But David is coming.

Maybe he is in this room?
Maybe he is one of you?

If not you, who?
And if not now, when?

I leave you with the words my mother read to me as a little boy.

The same words I use each year when I launch the Sea Shepherd Campaign against the Japanese whalers in Antarctica.

Christopher Robin is reading to Winnie the Pooh.

“If ever there is a tomorrow when we're not together... there is something you must always remember.

You are:

Braver than you Believe,
Stronger than you Seem, and
Smarter than you Think.
But most importantly, even if we are Apart.
I will always be with you.”