

**Vegan Freak Interview: Gary Francione Part 2** (February 5, 2007)

Transcribed by Connie Lansford

**Jenna:** Our next question comes from Chris and he says, “I absolutely agree with your position on discontinuing the use of nonhuman companion animals, but caring for the ones that already exist. My question is this: What are some steps that we can take towards effecting incremental change on discontinuing the use of nonhuman companion animals?”

**Gary:** Well, let me say Chris’s question, actually—he prefaced it with saying a lot of nice things about me that were embarrassing. [laughter] Thanks Chris. I like you, too.

**Bob:** We can read these if you want. [laughter]

**Gary:** But let me say this. It’s interesting, I wrote a blog several weeks ago about nonhuman animals and how we shouldn’t bring anymore of them into existence. That is a fundamental aspect of my theory. I mean my view is that if we regard animals as being morally significant, then the next step is not to give them the same legal rights that humans have because I don’t think that legalizing the conflict is the right solution. The right solution is to care for the nonhumans that we have now until they die, and we stop bringing anymore into existence. The conflicts between humans and animals are ones we create. It is absurd that we bring these animals into existence to be used as resources for us and then we sit around wringing our hands saying, “Oh, what are we going to do? What are our moral obligations?” That is absurd. We have brought them into existence exclusively as means to our ends and then we sit around wondering about what our moral obligations to them are. I mean it’s absurd beyond all belief. The right way of dealing with the situation, it seems to me, is if we regard them as being morally significant, we stop using them altogether and we stop bringing them into existence. Of course, that’s been my position for some time now, but I wrote a blog recently on animal rights and domesticated nonhumans, and I have to say it has touched off a firestorm. Because I take the position, which I do—I don’t deny that—that I don’t think we should bring dogs and cats and companion nonhumans into existence anymore either. And let me say this: I have five dogs that Anna Charlton and I live with, and we adore them. We had seven; two died. But that’s been the maximum number we’ve had of dogs—we’ve had seven dogs.

**Bob:** Seven—man!

**Gary:** And that’s a lot of work, let me tell you.

**Bob:** I know. [laughter]

**Gary:** Because we take death row dogs and we take dogs with medical problems, so we have deaf dogs, blind dogs, dogs that have all sorts of neurological problems and things

like that. But there is nobody on the planet who loves dogs more than Anna Charlton and I, and if there were two dogs left and it were up to us whether they were going to continue to breed so that humans could have dogs, the answer is, “Are you kidding me? Of course not. They shouldn’t exist.” I love them. Anna loves them. They are our nonhuman children. But they shouldn’t exist and we shouldn’t bring them into existence. And people have serious problems with that position. As a matter of fact, of all the positions I take, the position that causes the most problems with animal people—there are two things I say that animal people go crazy about. One is when I say, “I don’t care if you’re a vegetarian, I really don’t care. Frankly, if you ain’t a vegan, don’t tell me you’re serious about animal rights, because you’re not.” People get upset when I say that, and I maintain that. If you are an animal rights person and you’re not a vegan, then you’re not an animal rights person and if you want to get serious, become a vegan and then talk to me. But if you aren’t a vegan, you aren’t serious about animal rights, bottom line. And the other position that I take is that we ought not to have any domestic animals. We ought to stop bringing them into existence, and that includes companion animals. And people get very, very, very upset when I say that. And they say, “Well, but what if we treat them nicely?” Obviously, it’s better to treat them nicely than to not treat them nicely. But they’re still property.

**Bob:** That’s right.

**Gary:** The bottom line is we love our five dogs, but if we wanted to keep them all in horrible circumstances and beat them and make them guard dogs and whatever we wanted to do with them, the law would protect that decision, too. I mean the law protects our decision to give them greater than property value, but the law would also protect our decision to treat them only as property. And the response I always get is, “Well, what if we changed the status of dogs and cats and other companion animals and they weren’t property anymore and we gave them a legal status similar to the status that we give to human children?” And the answer is, “Well, that might happen in another 5,000 years, but even then, it would be wrong.” We ought not to be bringing these animals into existence. They are, for their entire lives, unlike human children who are dependent on us for a period of time before they become independent of us, nonhumans are always dependent on us. They are dependent on us for their entire lives—when they eat, when they drink, when they go outside—they have to make sure that when Gary is doing a show with Bob and Jenna that somebody is making sure that there’s water in the bowl.

**Bob:** That’s right.

**Gary:** Somebody’s making sure that they can go outside when they want to go outside. They are perpetually dependent. They are for their entire lives dependent on us. They are vulnerable. They live in this weird netherworld of—they’re not animals—they’re not living in the animal world. They’re not humans. They’re sort of stuck in this sort of weird, uncomfortable situation in which they’re not really full members of our world and they’re not members of any other world either. And they’re in this perpetual state of dependence and this perpetual state of vulnerability, and I think it is unfair and I think it’s not a good idea. Our five dogs, I think are very happy. But there is no doubt in my mind

that we ought not to be bringing these animals into existence and making them our pets. I don't care whether we treat them well or whether we don't treat them well. Obviously, it's better to treat them well, but it doesn't really matter whether we treat them well or not, or whether they're property or not. We've got no business bringing these creatures into existence for our companionship. We have each other for companionship. We have our species for companionship. We've got no business bringing them into our screwed-up world. Absolutely not. There's all these issues that are going on about—I have arguments with people in the animal community who say, “What do you do with cats? Do you let them wander? Do you let them go outside where they kill animals, where they get run over?” So it's crazy. We ought not to be in this situation confronting these situations. I mean, do you feed your cat meat? Do you not feed your cat meat? These are problems which we create by bringing these animals into existence. We ought not to be doing that. So I think the response to Chris's question is, let's take care of the ones we've got here. I feel very strongly we've got no business killing the ones that we have brought into existence through our stupidity, through our selfishness—we have no business killing them. But we ought to be sterilizing these animals, no more reproduction, take care of the animals that we have here, but no more. And what I've been getting since I posted that blog is an endless number of emails from people who are telling me that animals have a right to reproduce. I have to tell you something—I think that is just plain nuts.

**Bob:** I agree.

**Gary:** I do not think that animals have a right to reproduce and I think that that makes no sense whatsoever. Let me give you an example, an analogy that I discuss in *Introduction to Animal Rights*. Let's assume that—we are getting very sophisticated scientifically, sort of—and we are shortly going to get to a point where we can genetically engineer human animals who have adult strength, but the intelligence of two-year-olds. And we can get them to do all sorts of things, work in all sorts of environmentally hazardous situations that we don't want to have “normal” people working in. Let's assume that we do something monstrous like that and we create this genetically weird group of people so that we can exploit them. And then let's assume that we come to the conclusion that that's a horrible thing, which it is. This idea that we made a mistake so we've got to continue going on and making the mistake—that's sort of like this whole discussion we're having about Iraq right now. We made a horrible mistake, but we've got to continue making the mistake and indeed we have to make it worse. I mean that makes no sense to me. If we make a mistake, we acknowledge we made the mistake and we stop the problem. And if we were to genetically engineer these mentally-challenged people who were physically strong—if we were to do something monstrous like that, and then recognize it was in fact morally monstrous, the solution is we stop perpetuating the problem. We don't say, “Oh well, we brought them into existence, so now there's nothing we can do. We've got to let them reproduce and let them continue to exist.” I mean that is crazy. So the idea that, “Well, we screwed up. We domesticated animals. So we've gotta continue domesticating animals because they've got a right to reproduce.” That is absolutely crazy. It is as crazy as saying, “We made a horrible mistake in Iraq, so let's perpetuate it.”

**Bob:** I couldn't agree with you more. I get really frustrated, also, by the people who defend killing animals in shelters, for example. And I guess I get bothered by that for the obvious wrong of it, but also one of our dogs spent a year in a shelter before she came to us. And I think about our dog and it's very personalizing to me, and I think had our dog been in a kill shelter, she would not be alive. And all these dogs that are being killed—I think what we're doing is taking kind of the short cut out of solving the human problem of creating all of these animals by killing them. And I'm always bothered by animal advocates who defend that killing.

**Gary:** Part of the problem is that animal advocacy is, unfortunately, very cultish in a lot of ways. And so you have these very large organizations like PETA that take a position that trap, neuter, return work is a bad idea and that we ought to capture all these cats and kill them, or that we ought to kill every animal in a shelter and the idea that there are no bad homes in heaven, or whatever PETA thinks. But I agree with you completely. It's a humanocentric, hierarchical and speciesist solution to the problem. We've created the problem. We have brought interest-bearers into existence. We now have an obligation—a moral obligation to deal fairly with those interest-bearers until they die. But we shouldn't bring anymore into existence. But I'm a big supporter—I have to tell you something. For the past several years, I've been giving all my book royalties—I made the decision years ago that I would never make any money doing this—so all the legal work I did over the years I did pro bono. And all the royalties that I've made from books or any speaking fees I get go to various animal causes. And the thing that I have been promoting over the past several are no-kill shelters which I believe very strongly in. Some are better than others.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** And it's very, very difficult—no-kill shelter—that's a difficult job to have.

**Bob:** Yeah, it is.

**Gary:** It's a difficult thing to do. But I'm a big believer in trap, neuter, return work. That's why I support Shell Sullivan and The Animal Spirit because she's out there doing TNR education and her own TNR work. I mean that's hard work. And particularly when you're doing it in a context where the largest animal organization in the United States, PETA, is busy opposing you and saying, "You ought to kill all those animals." I mean that's simply not right. The idea, whenever you get to a point where you say animal rights means dead animals, you've got a problem with the concept.

**Bob:** Absolutely. Yeah, I couldn't agree with you more. Why don't we move on now. We have some other questions here. We have two questions from Ryan and I think they're both really good so I want to make sure we get to both of them, but I'll go in order because they're kind of different. But they both draw off of Lee Hall's recent book *Capers in the Churchyard*. And Ryan says that he recently finished Lee Hall's *Capers in the Churchyard* and found himself disagreeing heartily with Hall's argument that we shouldn't rely on graphic footage to help convert omnivores to veganism. "Rather," he writes, "Hall argues we should attempt to convince them based on simple merits of the

‘animals aren’t ours to use’ argument.” Hopefully, he says, he’s not misstating Hall’s statements and he agrees that it would be nice to be able to simply convince people that we shouldn’t eat animals. He thinks that the graphic footage initially grabs so many people’s attention, and it grabbed his attention. And he’s wondering what your thoughts are on the use of undercover footage and exposes on the worst cruelties as a method to grab the public’s attention.

**Gary:** Well, I mean—I’ll be honest with you—I haven’t read *Capers in the Churchyard*. I haven’t read it, so I don’t know what she says or what she doesn’t say. But assuming that what Ryan is saying is accurate, I disagree with it. I certainly think that rational argument is very important. You have to make it clear to people, and challenge them in the view that it’s morally acceptable to use animals for human purposes—any human purposes. And I certainly do that—I’ve done it every day of my life for the past 25 years. But I also don’t see what the problem is with using graphic footage. I mean I have to tell you something—I came to this—I was in law school and a friend of mine took me to a slaughterhouse. And this is going back, I think, 19 ... I don’t know. It was a long time ago. It was probably ’78, ’79, somewhere around there. I’d never thought about this issue my whole life. My father was a meat dealer. He was involved in the restaurant business.

**Bob:** Wow.

**Gary:** It never occurred—the only relationship I had with animals was I ate them. That was my only relationship to nonhuman animals. We never had any nonhumans growing up in the house because my brother was asthmatic and we never had any animals. I didn’t have a dog or a cat or anything like that. I had things like snakes and turtles and whatever. But I didn’t really relate to animals in any way. And I went to a slaughterhouse and it changed my perception of the world in a matter of an afternoon, basically. And I think that the idea that we don’t want to show people what goes on, I think that’s just dead wrong. Look, you try to find on the web pictures of slaughterhouses if you want to use them in your animal advocacy, and you know what? It’s hard to find them. It’s very hard to find them, and why is that? The reason why that is is because those slaughterhouses don’t want you to know what goes on there. They don’t *want* to reveal to the public what goes on there because it would horrify—I’m firmly convinced if most people, not all people, but most people if you took them to a slaughterhouse, to an egg battery, to a dairy farm, to most of the places where animals are exploited in institutionalized exploitation—people would be horrified. And very many of them would stop exploiting animals. This stuff is carefully shielded from our view. So I disagree completely with the idea that we shouldn’t use graphic footage. I mean I certainly think we ought to be making rational arguments, and I’m a big believer in that. I’ve been doing it myself for a long time now, much longer than Lee Hall’s been doing it. But I also believe—I can’t see what the problem is with using graphic footage. I really can’t. And so I think that to the extent that—for example, I think Gail Eisnitz—Gail has a welfarist position that I don’t necessarily agree with, in a lot of respects, but I think her photographs of slaughterhouses are terrific—are absolutely terrific. And I think it’s important for people to see what they are participating in when they eat meat, and what they’re participating in when they eat an egg, or what they’re participating in when they

drink milk or eat a cheese pizza or have an ice cream cone, or whatever. I think it's important for people to see. So the idea that graphic footage is bad—I'm not sure I even understand the argument. But as I say, I haven't read the book and, given the long number of things that are of interest to me that I will read, that I hope I can read before I die—I have to be honest with you, it's not high on my list.

**Bob:** Well, actually, I don't remember that argument from the book. I read it a long time ago. I think you would find a couple of things in the book you'd agree with. So you should check it out at some point.

**Gary:** Well, I'm sure that there are some things that I would agree with. I know that she makes a distinction between animal rights and animal welfare and she criticizes animal welfare, but I did that 12 years ago. [laughter] I came to that conclusion, but I don't understand this business about graphic footage. Do you know what the argument is?

**Bob:** I don't remember that argument. I mean like I said, I read the book a long time ago, but I don't remember the argument about graphic footage. The argument I most remember from the book was that the "animal rights movement" needed a kind of third way, a way that shied away from welfarism, a way that shied away from kind of the imposed hierarchy of kind of violence and intimidation campaigns, and that we needed a kind of third route that forged a new way of thinking about how to approach these questions. So ...

**Gary:** Well, I don't disagree with that, but in *Rain Without Thunder* I made very clear that violence wasn't a good idea and welfare wasn't a good idea and that what we needed was to pursue vegan abolition activism. So, I don't disagree with that.

**Jenna:** Indeed. Well, Ryan had another question that related to Lee Hall's book and that sort of relates to another question from Karen. Ryan asks, "In Lee Hall's book, Hall seems to imply that groups like Farm Sanctuary are exploiting animals in their own way by promoting things like 'adopt a turkey' at Thanksgiving and using cute language to describe animal stories. I have trouble finding too much fault in this approach because of the positive results that it has on the public's view of animals and animal advocacy. What roles do you think sanctuaries and shelters should play in our movement?" And then Karen asks, also what role should they play in educating children.

**Gary:** Well, I think, again, I haven't read the book so I don't know—I'm assuming Ryan is accurately characterizing Hall's position.

**Bob:** He's a pretty smart guy so I think he is.

**Jenna:** Probably, yes.

**Gary:** Okay. Well, I don't see the problem. I don't know what cute means. I mean cute's a funny word—I don't know exactly what it means.

**Bob:** Well, they're kind of personalizing them, anthropomorphizing animals, giving them kind of these names and turning their stories into these cute little things that people can follow. It kind of has a campaign mentality to it and Hall does critique that in the book.

**Gary:** Well, I mean look—as far as Farm Sanctuary is concerned, that's an organization I have been critical of for a while now, since they did their downed animal campaign, which I thought was really ill-advised, and I discuss that in *Rain Without Thunder*. I'm not exactly sure what she's referring to. I certainly don't think as a general matter—let me give you an example of what I think is excellent writing from a sanctuary about sanctuary animals. Let me go back to this [peacefulprairie.org](http://peacefulprairie.org) organization. Are you familiar with that group, by the way, Bob and Jenna?

**Jenna:** Yes, we are.

**Gary:** Okay. There's a woman who's involved with that organization named Joanna Lucas who writes stories on their blogs about the animals in the shelter, and I have to say I think that her writing is some of the best stuff I've read, in terms of—anthropomorphizing is a problem only to the extent that you attribute to nonhumans characteristics which are human and not nonhuman. And I view nonhumans as having a lot of characteristics that are very, very much in common with ours, and so I don't think of it as anthropomorphizing at all. I think the concept of anthropomorphizing is itself very speciesist because we assume that animals don't have a lot of the emotional and intellectual attributes that we have.

**Bob:** Mm-hmm.

**Jenna:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** And so I think, as I say, I've only recently discovered Peaceful Prairie and I started reading the stories on their blog. And Joanna wrote a story about a pig named Celeste. It was their New Year's blog. And I thought it was one of the most beautiful things I have read recently. It was wonderful. Again, I confess I don't read Farm Sanctuary stories. Farm Sanctuary, as a group, doesn't interest me. They're very, very welfarist. They promote Whole Foods. They promote things like the Downed Animal Act. They promote things like the *foie gras* ban in California. They promote a lot of welfare stuff that doesn't interest me at all. And I used to be a regular speaker at Farm Sanctuary events until I refused to come out and speak at their—they had an event celebrating the movie *Babe*. And I refused to participate in that and I was roundly criticized as being divisive and horrible and evil and Rasputin-like, or whatever they thought I was because I wouldn't participate in their *Babe* fundraiser. And I have a very simple black and white position on that like I have about most things and that is, I don't support the use of—I don't care what the message of the movie is—I do not support the use of nonhumans in movies under any circumstance. I don't care how good the message is, how bad the message is. It's irrelevant what the message is—I do *not* support the use of animals in movies. And I explained that to Jean and Laurie, and they got very upset

with me because they wanted me to come out and participate in this thing, and that was sort of the end of that relationship. So Farm Sanctuary doesn't really interest me all that much, but I certainly think that sanctuaries are important, and I think with respect to Ryan's question and Karen's question and the role of sanctuaries in education—again, I'm so interested in Peaceful Prairie that, as soon as this horrible season called winter lifts from the east coast and from Colorado where they're getting it really badly, I intend to go out there and see what the people at Peaceful Prairie are doing because everything that I'm seeing coming out of that organization seems to me to be exactly what it is I'm talking about. These are people who aren't being equivocal. It's veganism—not vegetarianism, not being conscientious omnivores—they have stuff on that website about how free-range eggs are no better than other eggs and how the solution to the egg problem is: you don't eat eggs. I don't care how they're produced—you just don't eat them. But they take a vegan position. They're doing vegan education. And they're taking care of individuals. They describe themselves as an abolitionist sanctuary so that really intrigues me and, as far as I'm concerned, it is precisely that sort of organization that has the greatest potential for education. So the idea that we shouldn't describe the stories of these animals in ways that Lee Hall might find anthropomorphic—well that's her problem. But my view is that the only reason why we regard this as anthropomorphism is because we aren't willing to understand that these animals are just like us and they have the same emotional attributes and the same intellectual attributes. So they don't speak the same language—who cares? But to say that's it anthropomorphic or cute is in my judgment to miss the point, so I disagree with that.

**Bob:** Well, I think one of the concerns though would be that it would be kind of another way of exploiting animals—kind of creating stories around them or using them to raise money for the kinds of new welfarist campaigns or for the sanctuary itself. I think that was the concern.

**Gary:** Well, to the extent that you're new welfarist, it doesn't matter what you're doing because I don't agree with new welfarism, so whether you're doing it by promoting downed animal acts, or whether you're talking about “cute”—whatever that means—stories about animals, I don't agree with it. But when I look at an organization like Peaceful Prairie and I say, “Well, wait a minute now. These people are...” I mean, I don't read—maybe you read it differently. If you're familiar with them, maybe you have a different cut on this, but when I look at those stories, I see those stories—and those stories of those animals are pulling people in. As a matter of fact, I think Joanna Lucas has a real—are you familiar with her blog?

**Bob:** Well, I just started kind of paging through it. Man, they are very powerful.

**Gary:** That's exactly the word I would use. I would say “powerful.” I mean I read that stuff and I thought, “This is a person who has ...” and I don't know this woman. And I don't know who she is. If she walked into my house right now, I wouldn't know her. But I can tell you, whoever she is, she has an enormous ability to understand the nonhuman other. Much more so than the ethologists at Harvard, Yale and anyplace else. Again, I

don't want to say anything about Farm Sanctuary because, I'll be honest with you—like *Capers in the Churchyard*—I haven't read that book.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** And I don't pay much attention to what Farm Sanctuary says or doesn't say. And I don't participate in their activities anymore, and I don't really pay attention to them. So I don't know what they're doing and what they're not doing, and to the extent that they're using animals to raise money for new welfarist or welfarist campaigns—I don't believe in that. I think that's nonsense. But I do think that it's perfectly appropriate to sort of give people insights into the emotional and mental life—I mean Jeff Masson does that to some degree. I mean, I think that's fine—that's not anthropomorphizing. Anthropomorphizing is only a problem when you start attributing characteristics to nonhumans that they don't have. And I think that's the problem, is that we just sort of miss the point that they *do* have these characteristics.

**Bob:** Sure. Speaking of raising money though, Garden Variety, one of—that's a form user? Jenna?

**Jenna:** I don't know.

**Bob:** Someone named Garden Variety—someone with the *nom de plume* of Garden Variety wants to know if abolitionist campaigns would raise enough money, or whether we actually need welfarist or new welfarist campaigns to raise money. Because we were just talking about raising money and using animals, and I thought this question would fit there.

**Gary:** Well, I mean first of all, I think that welfarist campaigns are counterproductive. So the fact that they raise a lot of money is irrelevant.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** [laughter] The more money they raise, arguably the worse it is, because these campaigns only reinforce the property status of animals in the first place. So the fact that they raise money, I don't really—yes, they do. Welfarist campaigns raise money, but think about it. That's logical because they don't really challenge anybody. When welfarist campaigns basically take the position that it's all right to exploit animals as long as we do so humanely—well, that's a position nobody disagrees with. And so, obviously it's a big tent sort of position.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** But it's meaningless in terms of its content. And so the fact that those sorts of campaigns result in a lot of money being raised, so what? I don't see the campaigns as helping anyway. The thing I think we've got to focus on is abolitionist campaigns don't need a lot of money. I mean, these organizations need a lot of money because, first of all,

most of the people who are involved in these organizations, or many of the people involved in these organizations—not all of them, but a lot of them—are making a lot of money.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** I mean these people are making six figure salaries. They have huge expense accounts. They have all their meals paid for. They have all their expenses paid. At some point in time, I'm sure an investigative journalist will get into the finances of the movement, and when they do, they are going to be horrified. The public will be horrified to find out—I mean some of this stuff is already known about some of these organizations, but ...

**Bob:** Oh, yeah.

**Gary:** These organizations are engaged in conduct which I think is scandalous in terms of the amount of money that people make and the benefits that they have and the number of family members that they have on the payroll, and stuff like that. I mean it's just scandalous. But abolitionist campaigns require very little money. First of all, the most important thing is becoming a vegan. That doesn't cost you anything. As a matter of fact, you save a lot of money when you're a vegan.

**Bob:** That's true.

**Gary:** [laughter] So becoming a vegan is really cost-effective. People ask me what do I mean by vegan education, and the answer is, it's as unlimited as your imagination—there's all sorts of things you can do.

**Bob:** Yeah.

**Gary:** It's putting up billboards by the Denver Livestock Exchange with "Go Vegan." It's going to your local community college or your adult education program, giving lectures on animal rights and veganism and abolition and why people ought to sort of get rid of this stuff completely from their lives. It's doing things like these people in Spain who are setting up every Sunday and giving out literature about veganism and the relationship of speciesism, sexism, racism and homophobia. It's things like Ana Maria Aboglio in Argentina. Are you familiar with Anima at all?

**Jenna:** No.

**Bob:** No, I don't know anything ...

**Gary:** She's a very, very interesting person. She's been doing this—she's been taking the abolitionist position now—I think she read *Rain Without Thunder* in the 90's and it really turned her on, and she's really pushing forward with this and very, very articulate, bright, very hardworking person. And she's basically got a small group down there and

she's promoting animal rights and abolition in Argentina. There are a lot of things people can do, and it's not all that expensive. I mean, I have a website. It's reaching a lot of people, and basically I'm doing it with a former student—a person who graduated a couple of years ago, and somebody who's very good with computers and with HTML.

**Bob:** He's like a nerd now. [laughter]

**Gary:** I found a computer person who's very good with HTML and Flash and all of these other things. And he's volunteering time. And people like Karen from Germany who's volunteering time to do translations, and my other translators who are all volunteering time just because they're into the abolitionist thing. It's not costing us anything. I mean it's basically not costing us anything. And we're busy reaching 700 people, 800 people, 900 people a day. And it's not costing anything. So there are all sorts of things that we can do that are very, very cost-effective. And I reiterate that if you want to support things, find local things to do. I mean the sorts of things that you and Jenna are doing—fantastic.

**Bob:** Thank you.

**Gary:** You're doing more and reaching more and educating more people than these multimillion zillion trillion dollar animal organizations. You're doing much more effective education and you're reaching a lot more people with a coherent, consistent, intelligent message. And if people want to support things, support what you're doing. If they want to support things, support the trap, neuter, return work that people like Animal Spirit are doing. Support Peaceful Prairie and support these small, local grassroots organizations because ultimately that's where we're gonna get the change. It's not gonna be imposed by these corporations. The way change happens—and you know this as well as I do—you're a sociologist. You understand this stuff and you know that the way change happens—you don't impose change—change comes from the grassroots. Change comes because people feel, because the moral paradigm shifts. And that's how change happens. It doesn't happen because you have people flying in. I used to say this all the time when I was really actively involved on a day-to-day basis with the animal rights movement. As a matter of fact, when I first got involved with PETA, they had chapters. This is a little-known fact. PETA had chapters in different parts of the country and Ingrid decided that she was gonna close the chapters, and this was something I opposed because I thought that the best way to spread the message was locally, and have local people working in local communities spreading the message, and that the last thing in the world we want are people flying in from Washington or people flying in from New York to various other places to tell people what the truth is. That never works; it has never worked; it's never gonna work. The only way you change things is by changing things on a local level.

**Bob:** Hm-hmm.

**Gary:** And that's hard work.

**Bob:** Yeah, it is.

**Jenna:** Hm-hmm.

**Gary:** But that's the only way it works, people. That's the only way it works. And that's why I say—people ask me all the time, who do I support. And I always say, “Look, I'm not an advisor. I can't advise you as to who to give your money to. I can tell you, I give my money to local people who are doing trap, neuter, return work. I give my money to local people who are doing no-kills. I give my money to local people who are trying to get death row dogs adopted. I give my money to people who are doing sanctuary work—abolitionist sanctuary work. I give my money to people who are doing abolitionist education on a grassroots level because that's the only things that works.”

**Bob:** Absolutely. And one of the things that we talk about on our show fairly often is the idea that everyone—this sounds kind of like new agey and a little flaky—but everyone *is* a unique and beautiful snowflake. Everyone does have some talent or some ability that they can bring to this cause. And I think everyone needs to recognize what that talent is. And it isn't just giving money. I think everybody has some ability to do *something* out there. And I really think that that's one of those vital things for people to do.

**Gary:** Well, Bob and Jenna, you know one of the problems with modern animal activism is that these welfarist corporations have now convinced everybody that activism is taking your checkbook out and writing *them* a check.

**Bob:** That's right.

**Jenna:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** And that is very, very, very counterproductive and dangerous. People ought to be doing things themselves. Since I put up this website, a number of people have written to me saying, “Why don't you start an organization? We need to have you as a leader.” And I write to them all and say, “The last thing in the world we need—more leaders.”

**Bob:** That's right.

**Gary:** If this is ever gonna work, we need all of us to see ourselves as centers of change—each of us. And the idea that we're gonna look to somebody else to do that is absurd. And we can't do that, and that's what we've done already. We've ceded the authority to these leaders of these national organizations, and activism has become, “Let me write a check to this group or to that group.” And that's never gonna work. We need to see ourselves as moral centers for change—each of us. And each of us is capable of affecting and influencing other people. And if all of us who care about this were to only be concerned about the people that we have immediate contact with—and the people that we can have contact with in our communities—we would have a nonviolent, paradigm-

shifting abolitionist revolution in a fairly short period of time. We just need to believe in that vision and do it, and act on it and have the confidence to do something about it.

**Bob:** Absolutely.

**Jenna:** Indeed. And that's the beauty of the internet, like you were saying before. You can do more with less. It allows us to do amazing things at the grassroots level.

**Gary:** You know what? The two of you are professors at St. Lawrence. I'm a professor at Rutgers. None of us has a lot of resources and here we are sitting talking on a blog, and you know what—this Vegan Freaks thing that you do gets out to a zillion and a half people, and I cannot believe the number of people who heard my interview with you in November, and the responses are terrific. You're reaching a large number of people, and here we are three academics. [laughter] I mean think about it. And think about the power of that. And what we need to do is sort of turn everybody on to the whole idea of we're all centers. All of us are leaders—I hate that word. I don't like it.

**Bob:** Yeah.

**Gary:** But all of us are centers. And what we need to do is to sort of focus on (a) ourselves become vegans—that's the primary thing. Each of us has to become a vegan. And then what we need to do is work on the people who are close to us. And if we all did that, my God, what a fantastic result that would be.

**Bob:** I couldn't agree with you more and I think what you talk about with the large organizations is we end up losing our own agency. We forget that we can do it. And, to me, that is so frustrating because people often ask me, "What can I do?" and I say, "I don't know. What *can* you do? You tell me."

**Gary:** Exactly.

**Bob:** So I think we need to remember that, and your words are very powerful, and I very much appreciate those. So why don't we change gears here for a second—a couple more questions to get through that I think are really good, and I want to make sure we get to them. Someone on our forum is named End Cruelty. He wants to know if veganism is similar to a religion because it involves strict adherence to guidelines that require that we avoid animal exploitation. What are your thoughts on that?

**Gary:** Well, no—I mean, is it like a religion ...

**Bob:** [laughter] I don't think so, but ...

**Gary:** Look, we have all sorts of absolute—I'm absolutist about a whole bunch of things in my life. I'm absolutist about child molestation. I'm absolutist about rape. I'm absolutist about animal exploitation—I'm a vegan. Nobody ever asks me if I have religious views about rape and about child molestation because I absolutely reject that.

It's only when you get to animal issues, and you say, "Well, look. I'm absolutely opposed to animal exploitation just like I'm absolutely opposed to various forms of human exploitation." And I think in certain ways—and again, I'm not saying that End Cruelty is speciesist. I'm saying that ...

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** Whenever I get the question, "Aren't you being absolutist?" I always say, "Yes, and proudly so. Just like I am about various forms of human exploitation." And so the fact that I'm absolutist when it comes to animal exploitation—I don't see that as a problem, not for me. It may be a problem for you, but to the extent that you say, "Well, your absolutism about animals is somehow problematic," my response is, "Well, that's because you think that discrimination on the basis of species is somehow not as serious as discrimination on the basis of other sorts of criteria relating to humans." And I don't rank evils. I don't believe in ranking evils—I simply don't. But all forms of discrimination have their particular characteristics, but they share in common the commodification of the sentient other, and in that sense, they are all the same. There are differences—sure there are differences. But they're all the same. And so my view is, "Hey, I don't like any of them." And so, do I regard this as a religion? No more so than I regard my feelings about child abuse or abuse of women or abuse of anybody else—discrimination against anybody else.

One thing I think that is problematic—I think there is a cultish aspect. I'm sorry, but I believe that there is a sense in which the modern animal movement is very much a cult in the sense that we don't have discussions about these sorts of issues. The three of us are having it on your podcast, and I have it with a variety of people, and you have it with a variety of people, but the bottom line is these discussions don't go on at the level of the national organizations. Because there is a movement in which you have people like Peter Singer who takes the bizarre positions that it's all right for us to exploit people who are mentally challenged or that it's all right for us to have sex with animals as long as they consent to it—and we take them to dinner and a movie before we have sex with them, or whatever, he said. [laughter] So you have Singer saying these, in my judgment, bizarre things. You have Newkirk who takes the position that animal rights is—the only good animal is a dead animal. You have these bizarre positions, and if you even question them, if you even say, "Gee, I'm really concerned that people are articulating the position that it's all right to have sex with animals under certain circumstances, or that the only good animal is a dead animal—we ought to try to kill every animal we can because there are no bad homes in heaven, or whatever. If we even question these things ...

**Bob:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** Then we're being divisive and we're harming animals. I think that starts smacking of cult behavior.

**Bob:** Absolutely. No, I was gonna say, recently we've been accused of our abolitionism being politically divisive. And I think it's an absurdity. It's an absurd argument to argue

that abolitionism is politically divisive. I mean, why is not welfarism politically divisive from the true ...?

**Gary:** But you know, that's no different from the argument that if you criticize what's going on in Iraq right now, you're giving aid and comfort to terrorists.

**Bob:** That's right.

**Gary:** If you disagree with us, you're a bad person. [laughter] This is presently the level of discourse—if you disagree, then you're harming the thing you claim to care about. And I don't see the discourse ... I mean, look—the two of you have been doing this a lot—you've come to it more recently. I've been doing this for a long time now. If I had five cents for everybody who said my positions on animal rights were divisive, I would be able to retire now. [laughter] Because, let me tell you, when I wrote *Rain Without Thunder* in which I took the position that the rights position was different from the welfare position, and that the rights position was in danger of collapsing into the welfare position—what's happened since I wrote that book is that it *has* collapsed into the welfare position, but that's what I was arguing in '96.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Gary:** When I wrote that book, I actually received hate mail including death—I received some very nasty mail from “animal people” who were very angry that I criticized PETA and Farm Sanctuary and all these other groups because I disagreed with their positions. Again, I never went after anybody personally. I just said, “Look, I disagree with these positions. I think that PETA's position on sexism is wrong. I think their position on killing healthy animals in sanctuaries is wrong. I think Farm Sanctuary's position on the Downed Animal Act is wrong.” And I didn't get letters explaining to me why I was wrong—I was just told, “You disagree. You should never, ever express disagreement.”

I remember there was an instance that came up in the '90's where Cleveland Amory, who headed Fund for Animals—he's now gone, he's now dead—but Fund for Animals had a sanctuary in Texas that was being run by a guy who was involved in the meat business. And there were all sorts of concerns about the fact that these animals in the sanctuary were giving birth to offspring that were being slaughtered and things—there were all sorts of problems. And I remember there was a *Village Voice* article that came out about the Black Beauty Ranch in Texas that was run by Fund for Animals. And it was well-known within the movement that there were all sorts of problems with that. And those of us who criticized—I being one of them—what was going on at Black Beauty, were criticized by the movement—we should never air our dirty laundry in public. And my response was, “Well, isn't that exactly what we criticize the vivisectors for when we find something wrong?” When we find that there's some vivisector who's doing some horrible thing, all the vivisectors rally around the guy who's done the bad thing and we criticize him for doing that, aren't we doing the same thing? And I think that we really do need to have discourse about these things, but we're not allowed to. In a sense, you can

understand it. I mean, it's an opportunity cost that most of these organizations don't want to incur. If they have these discussions, it just gets in the way of their fundraising.

**Jenna:** Sure.

**Gary:** So they don't want to have these discussions, so they don't. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't be having these discussions because we need to be having these discussions. So let me just tell the two of you now, if you think that you've been called "divisive," get used to it because you're gonna get called "divisive" a lot more.

**Bob:** I'm fine with it—no problem.

**Gary:** You know what I say? I'm divisive and proud.

**Jenna:** [laughter] Yep, we've gotta live what we believe, so ...

**Bob:** Absolutely, and I'm not in this thing to make friends. That's the way I feel.

**Gary:** You know, it's not that I particularly enjoy making enemies, because I don't. I'm actually a very—whatever people think, I'm a very friendly guy. [laughter] But when people like Newkirk say, "Well, you know, I just don't understand why Gary has to disagree so much. Why can't we just all work together?" And the answer is because we're doing different things.

**Bob:** That's right.

**Gary:** My vision is very different from Ingrid's vision. And it's not a question of, "Why don't we all work together? Why don't we all bury the hatchet, forget the differences and work together?" The bottom line is, we can't, because we're doing something very, very different. Just like if you go back to 19<sup>th</sup> century America and you look at the abolitionists and the regulationists with respect to human slavery—they did not see themselves as the same group. The people who were in favor of abolition were not willing to support humane regulation of slavery. Similarly—they didn't see themselves as involved in the same enterprise—I do not see myself as involved in the same enterprise as Peter Singer. I see him doing something completely different. When he's talking about being a conscientious omnivore, I see him as involved in a fundamentally different enterprise from the one I'm involved with. It's not that I wish him any harm—I don't. I don't wish Newkirk any harm or anybody else any harm. That's not the point. The point is I just disagree with them, and what I'm involved with is a completely different enterprise.

**Bob:** Absolutely.

**Jenna:** Mm-hmm.

**Bob:** Go ahead.

**Jenna:** Yeah, that relates to actually one of our next questions. We had two questions from someone named Dan. And he asks, “What is the difference between you and someone like Singer and Regan?”

**Bob:** [laughter] That’s a long answer.

**Gary:** That’s a long answer. I’ve written a lot about that and you can read stuff I’ve written about that. As a matter of fact, *The Personhood of Animals*, the book I have coming out from Columbia addresses that to a considerable degree, and I have an interview coming out in Britain. The Vegan Society discusses that, but let me just give you a short answer. I distinguish between use and treatment. That is, I think those are two separate issues; whether we use animals and how we treat them are separate issues. For example, whether we use animals for food at all is a different question from how we treat those animals. So I distinguish the issue of use from the issue of treatment. And my view is we don’t have a justification for using nonhumans, irrespective of how humanely we treat them. I mean, obviously it’s better to treat them better than treat them worse—if you’re gonna commit a murder, it’s better to murder somebody and not torture them, but that doesn’t mean that murder’s all right. And I draw this distinction between use and treatment and say, “I don’t think we have a moral justification for using them.” And for me, the issue of treatment is very much a secondary issue.

For Peter, he does not view—and again, I’m compressing a lot of stuff in a short answer. But, with the exception of animals like the great apes that Peter thinks are—which is why I think GAP is a problem and why I think GRASP is a problem, because it sort of regards nonhuman primates as being special or something. But people like Singer view nonhuman apes as having an interest in life and being different, but by and large Peter—like Jeremy Bentham, the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher who Peter traces his theory to, didn’t—Peter and Bentham don’t believe that animals have an interest in living. They don’t care; an animal doesn’t care. I mean nonhuman primates might, but all the other animals that we exploit don’t really care whether we use them—they only care about how we use them, which is why Peter is able to say that if we can be conscientious omnivores and we can really treat animals well, it would be okay to eat them, because he doesn’t really think that animals have an interest in living at all. Now, I disagree with that; I think that that’s crazy. I think that if you’re sentient, by definition you have an interest in continuing to exist, because sentience is a means to the end of existence. So I think that there’s a fundamental theoretical problem with Singer’s views. But the bottom line is, Singer doesn’t think that use *per se* is problematic. He thinks that the primary issue is treatment.

Regan believes that, in order for an animal to be a member of the moral community, the animal’s got to be what he calls “subject of a life” and, although he’s not quite clear on that, that seems to suggest that an animal has got to have cognitive characteristics that go beyond mere sentience. And I think Tom is wrong about that. I think that if you’re sentient, if you’re subjectively aware, that’s all you need to be to be a full member of the moral community. Regan, I think, thinks that you need to have cognitive characteristics

that go beyond mere sentience. And a support for that interpretation of Regan, Tom believes that nonhumans have—that for nonhumans death is a lesser harm than it is for humans. And I think that’s wrong. I don’t even know what that means. I mean I think that, for all sentient beings, death is a harm. I may not understand how a nonhuman interprets death because language is—but that’s a problem of my epistemological limitation—that’s a problem of *my* limitation. I’m limited; I can’t understand. I may not understand what death means to a dog, but I certainly know that the dog regards death as a harm. And to say that death is a lesser harm for nonhumans than it is for humans—because Tom’s view is that death forecloses more opportunities for humans than it does for nonhumans—that strikes me as being very elitist because it would suggest that—well, you could also say that death forecloses more harm for intelligent people—I mean it forecloses more opportunities for intelligent people than it does for less intelligent people, so more intelligent people matter more than less intelligent people. I mean, I find that sort of elitism or perfectionism to be deeply troubling in Regan’s theory. I would also add this—I’m a little confused about what it is Regan believes, because on the one hand he says that he believes in abolition; on the other hand, at his conference last year, The Power of One, which celebrated the ability of the individual to help the oppressed, his keynote speaker was John Mackey from Whole Foods. [laughter] And I have to tell you, that just puzzles me incredibly. But, in any event, this person Dan had another aspect of his question, didn’t he, about civil rights, Jenna?

**Jenna:** Indeed. He asks, “Why isn’t animal welfare like civil rights? That is, the civil rights movement sought to make incremental improvements in rights for minorities. Why can’t we see animal welfare doing the same thing?”

**Gary:** That’s an excellent, excellent question. Again, unfortunately, it’s a complicated question. The short answer is because animal welfare has nothing to do with rights and it’s really not a good analogy. Look, civil rights—when we talk about civil rights, we’re not talking about slavery or human property. The discussion about civil rights deals with persons who have rights, and the issue about civil rights is whether we ought to make incremental additions to give right holders more rights. The problem is animals are property; they’re like slaves. And animal welfare regulations are not incrementally adding rights to animals, but animal welfare regulation—what it does is it incrementally makes the exploitation of animals more efficient. It doesn’t add to the rights animals have because animals don’t have any rights—they’re property. Animals don’t have any—they’re not persons—they don’t have any inherent value. They’re property that has only extrinsic or conditional value. Animals have the value that we accord to animals as a result of our greater or lesser largesse, but animals don’t have any inherent value; they only have extrinsic or conditional value. And as a result, animal welfare regulations basically involve making animal exploitation more efficient.

Let me give you an example—you have the Humane Slaughter Act which says you’ve got to stun animals unless it’s for—unless they’re in kosher or halal slaughterhouses—you have to stun animals before you shackle and hoist them. Animals have all sorts of interests. Why is it that we protect the interests of animals—that we require that they be stunned in some circumstances, not in all circumstances? Why do we respect that

particular interest? The answer is clear—because if we don't stun them, they'll jump around a lot when they're shackled and hoisted, and these are 2,000 pound animals and they're gonna knock into workers and they're gonna have bruised carcasses and they're gonna cause work injuries, etc. So we respect the interest of animals in being stunned before they're shackled and hoisted and stuck with the knife because to do so gives us an economic benefit, but there are all sorts of interests that animals have that we don't respect because we don't get an economic benefit from respecting those interests. And my whole thesis about animal welfare going back to the stuff that I started writing in the early '90's is that animal welfare basically respects animal interests only to the extent that it's economically beneficial for humans. It doesn't result in animals having rights and it doesn't move us closer to rights. What it does is it makes exploitation more efficient. The whole point of Chapter 7 in *Rain Without Thunder* that I alluded to before in the context of talking about Dunayer, I was saying that if you want to seek regulation, which I wasn't advising people to do anyway, you should at least seek regulation that incrementally moves away from property status. Because, basically, traditional animal welfare does nothing but make exploitation more efficient.

**Bob:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** It doesn't move away from the property paradigm. What it does is it helps property owners to act more rationally with respect to their property. So to talk about animal welfare as analogous to civil rights, it's not an appropriate analogy because civil rights—we're not talking about slaves. We certainly treat a lot of people horribly.

**Bob:** Yeah.

**Gary:** But most of us don't think that chattel slavery is a good idea. We're talking about people that we've already recognized are not chattel property and that are moral persons, and then the question is making incremental changes to make sure that they are treated equally with respect to others, and adding to their rights package. When we're talking about animal welfare, we're not talking about regulations which add to the rights package of nonhumans because the nonhuman animals don't have any rights. They are property; they don't have any rights. So I think that the analogy doesn't work.

**Bob:** This is a question that we have from Amber. Amber originally sent us a voice mail—left a voice mail for us, but because of my technical screw-up, we can't play it. But the gist of her question is about burnout. She wants to know, "Gary, do you ever get burnout? If you don't get it, how do you avoid it and, generally, do you have any reflections on the whole idea of burnout among activists within kind of the 'movement'?"

**Gary:** Well yeah, I have some reflections on it. I've been doing this for 25 years now. I started doing it, basically, around 1981-82. So I've been doing it for a while, and my view is this: I'm not the one in the factory farm. I'm not the one in the slaughterhouse. I'm not the one in the laboratory. I'm not the one in the fur farm. I'm not the one stuck in the trap. I'm not sure I've got a right to burn out, I guess. And I think that a lot of animal people focus a lot on their own suffering. I've seen this over the years. I have seen this

happen a lot where animal people focus a lot on their own suffering. I think we need to move away from that. I think we need to recognize that the world is a depressing place in a lot of ways. There are a lot of horrible things going on—it's not just the animal oppression. I mean, even if you don't care about animals, the things that go on with respect to humans are pretty upsetting.

**Bob:** Absolutely.

**Gary:** There are children starving. There are people in horrible situations—humans in horrible situations all over the world—in poverty, in various forms of oppression, and it's dreadful. And there are certainly billions of animals that are suffering, and so I think you need to make a decision and that is if you care, you do something about it, and if you don't care you don't. And if you do care and you do something about it, you always have to put it in perspective and remember you're not the one who's suffering. You may suffer indirectly and I don't want to minimize that, but the humans and the nonhumans who are being oppressed are suffering a hell of a lot more, and I think that we need to make sure that we don't indulge our second-level suffering too much. And so, no, I've been doing it for 25 years and I'm grateful that I'm *able* to do it. And I live in a world of incredible violence, which goes back to the first question you asked me—how I feel about violence—I *hate* violence. I'm violently opposed to violence. [laughter] And I live in a violent world—I live in a world full of people who think that violence is okay, or that violence is a good reaction when violence is imposed on them and we need to, at some point, break this idiotic cycle of violence and say “no”—just stop participating in it altogether, which I believe the most important first step we make in that respect is by becoming vegan. That is an extremely important fundamental step in the road toward *ahimsa* or nonviolence—is to stop exploiting them in our own lives. As I've often said, veganism is more than just a matter of diet or what you wear. It's applying the principle of abolition to your own life. And so I think that's really important and I think, it's a sad world we live in, but as a friend of mine once said to me, “*Otro mundo es posible.*” Another world is possible. But we have to visualize it, we have to believe in it, we have to work toward it, we have to realize that we are fortunate to be able—and we have to see ourselves as privileged, privileged to help the people who are themselves struggling. We don't struggle; we're not struggling. We're trying to help those who *are* struggling. And that is a privilege and a great gift, and we need to see it that way, and to not see ourselves as the ones who are sort of—we're not the ones in the slaughterhouses. We're not the ones living in oppressive and cruel situations—certainly not relative to the rest of the world. And I think we ought to avoid indulging that view.

**Jenna:** I guess this is a follow-up to that. I mean, even if you recognize that we're not the ones that are suffering, how do you not get overwhelmed by just the vast amount of it that goes on in the world?

**Gary:** I mean, look—it's horrible. I'll tell you something. Since you've asked the question, I'll answer it. There are very few material things I own that I really care about, and one is a ring that I have that I wear. And it's a coin. It was minted by Mark Antony to pay his armies and navy at the Battle of Actium which occurred in 31 BC. He lost that

battle and he and Cleopatra went back to Egypt, where they killed themselves. And I don't often explain why I wear this ring, but I'm going to explain it to you, so now the world knows. I wear it because it reminds me that if it ever gets too oppressive, I always have the choice of killing myself [laughter] and so I don't. I mean, I have a choice, and I choose to stay here and to struggle and to regard—I mean, it's all a question of how you look at it. And I look at it as a privilege; I look at it as tomorrow morning I hope I will get up and have the privilege of being able to continue to do the work that I'm doing to play my small role in shifting the paradigm. And I have the choice—I could exit the world any time I want. I choose not to because I choose to continue to view it as a privilege.

Yes, it's horrible, Jenna. Of course, it's horrible. It's absolutely hideously horrible. But what can you do—what are your choices? You either give up and crawl under a rock and die, or you say, "I'm gonna struggle. And I'm gonna try to figure out a different way of looking at this." And you know, the sad thing is that the world could be a really wonderful place. And all we've got to do is will it as such. It's not a question—it's a question of will, it's a question of vision, and it's a question of whether we really want it. Do we really want it? And I sort of view my role in life as trying to stimulate people into wanting it. And I know there are a lot of people out there who do, and I say, "Let's work together. Let's do it. Let's shift that paradigm. And let's move it away from patriarchy. Let's move it away from violence. And what will come from that is moving it away from speciesism and sexism and racism and homophobia, and all of the idiotic things that small minds have produced in order to create divisions." All of that's unnecessary. It's all silly. It's all stupid. It's all indefensible. And it could all be gone tomorrow if we willed it to be such. And that's what we have to do.

**Bob:** I couldn't think of a better place to call it to a close.

**Jenna:** Yeah. That's wonderful.

**Bob:** Jenna's almost crying.

**Jenna:** [laughter] No, it's very moving.

**Bob:** It is.

**Jenna:** Like you say, it's important to remember you're not alone in the struggle.

**Gary:** No. No, you know what? The three of us are talking—we've been talking for three hours plus and we obviously share a similar vision of the world. We probably have some differences, but you know what, my guess is that the differences are minimal relative to the similarities.

**Bob:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** And you know what, there's a zillion people out there—we haven't been able to talk to each other because communication has been impossible. But now communication

is not impossible. And there are going to be a lot of like-minded people. Yes, there are going to be people who are gonna listen to this who aren't gonna be convinced and say, "It's all right for us to breed dogs and cats. I love my dogs and my cats. What's wrong with that?" Or there are gonna be people who say whatever, but there are also a lot of people who agree. And what we need to do is all focus on that agreement, and on the common areas of agreement, move forward and try productively and creatively to teach everybody we can about nonviolence, about veganism and about abolition. We can do this. We can do this. It's not easy, but so what? Nothing really worthwhile is all that easily accessible, I guess.

**Bob:** Good point.

**Jenna:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** I want to thank the two of you for this opportunity to be able to talk to the marvelous people who are subscribers to Vegan Freaks and I love all you freaks. You're terrific. And I love your questions, and I encourage you—people keep writing to me and that's fine. And even, if you disagree with me that's even better. Argue with me. Tell me what you disagree with and let's talk about it. And I really appreciate, and I'm very, very grateful for this opportunity.

**Bob:** We're grateful to have you on. It's always a pleasure to talk to you and always incredibly enlightening. You're so articulate about these issues and it's just impressive. It's a model for me.

**Gary:** Thank you very much and I hope that I talk with you again.

**Bob:** Absolutely.

**Gary:** And as I say, I really encourage your listeners to write to me and if you've got things you want to talk about, talk about them.

**Bob:** And while we call it to a close I just want to remind people that your website—they can go to your blog at [garyfrancione.blogspot.com](http://garyfrancione.blogspot.com). I'll put a link to that in the show notes. I'll also put a link to your new animal—the site where you have all the flash animations and the information on your abolitionist theory. And I'll put up links to Peaceful Prairie and a couple of other things we've talked about throughout the show. So I want to thank you again. Go ahead.

**Gary:** Thank you very much and I hope you enjoy all the snow up there in upstate New York. [laughter]

**Bob:** Will do.

**Jenna:** Thanks once again to Gary Francione and hope everyone enjoyed this part of our interview. As always, you can contact us several ways. You can go to our website,

podcast.veganfreak.com. You can send us email, [podcast@veganfreak.com](mailto:podcast@veganfreak.com). And you can always send us a voice mail 267-295-1944. That should be on your refrigerator door. And thanks once again everyone for listening. Hope you have a great week.