

N I N E



“I HAD POLAR BEARS AND GRIZZLY BEARS AND BLACK BEARS AND pronghorns and African lions and Bengal tigers,” says Wayne Pacelle. “I mean I could go to ‘B’ in the encyclopedia and I would just hit a certain page and open the book and I’d come to a certain animal whose particular history I had memorized.”

We’re driving inside the Beltway, heading toward Wayne’s Silver Spring, Maryland, home. It’s Super Sunday and we’ve spent the morning standing in the cold outside of a local market named Magruder’s, protesting their selling “genuine trophy-mounted buffalo heads” for fifteen hundred dollars to promote today’s Super Bowl between the Washington Redskins and the Buffalo Bills.

Wayne, the twenty-six-year-old director for the most well organized and vocal antihunting organization in the United States, The Fund For Animals, is tall and darkly handsome, and has the politician’s device of leaning back and sticking out his center to create a podium from which to look down at you. Unable to project himself from the passenger’s seat of the rental car that I’m driving, he projects his voice, which is resonant and refined. “So I’ve always had an affinity for wildlife, and the direct assault made on that wildlife by hunters and trappers has always infuriated me. Even when I went out on a couple fishing operations, just when people were fishing you know, I was disgusted and so appalled by the animals suffocating in the air. I was less than ten.”

His black hair falls to his dark eyebrows; his nose is a little too fleshy to be classic; his lips are sensuous; a hint of beard stains his cheeks and strong chin, and he wears jeans, running shoes, and a comfortable blue

shirt. Across the back of his high-collared, black coat the words SEA SHEPHERD CREW are written. The *Sea Shepherd* is the vessel that has gone around the world, sabotaging whalers and disrupting seal hunts.

“At the same time,” he says, making sure that I don’t misunderstand him, “I don’t have a hands-on fondness for animals. I did not grow up with dozens of dogs and cats as many people did. To this day I don’t feel bonded to any particular nonhuman animal. I like them and I pet them and I’m kind to them, but there’s no special bond between me and other animals. The reason that I campaign on the issue of animal rights is that I intensely dislike suffering, and the fact that humans unnecessarily perpetrate suffering on animals. It’s more of an intellectual/philosophical motivation than it is a hands-on one.”

Abstractly motivated though he may be, he knows his politics. When Cleveland Amory, the founder of The Fund For Animals, offered him the position of executive director three and a half years ago, Wayne told the senior member of America’s animal rights movement that he had no salary requirements and no constraints on his travel, or the time he would invest. The only thing he wanted to do was develop a national antihunting campaign. “Both Cleveland and I noted,” he says, “how the hunting community, in particular the outdoor press, overreacts to everything. We thought that even a limited amount of activity would generate a fire-and-brimstone response from them which would serve our purpose. As the issue is discussed, especially in an unintelligible way, we win. When issues aren’t discussed the status quo is retained.”

Capitalizing on America’s increasing urban populations, who have little day-to-day intimacy with wildlife, he has successfully halted proposed hunts through the courts and the ballot, most notably in California. He also has organized “Hunt Sabs” in the East, sabotages or disruptions of legal hunts on public lands, the object of which is to scare animals away from hunters while simultaneously talking to the hunters about the wrongness of what they’re doing. He’s been arrested fourteen times, not only for civil disobedience associated with animal rights causes, but also for antiapartheid demonstrations while he was a Western history and environmental studies major at Yale. He has always been acquitted or has had the charges dropped. Wondering if he is a self-made social reformer, or if his parents were also active in the movement, I ask him about his background.

He lets out a small laugh, points to the tree-lined, semiurban streets through which we’re driving, and says that his boyhood home in New

Haven was cut "of the same cloth" and had a "multiethnic" background. His father was a schoolteacher and Italian, his mother a secretary and Greek. He grew up in a large, extended family, none of whose members spoke against hunting. "They just didn't do it," he says, adding that his training in political protestation was born when he began to fight his mother's attempt to get him to go to church. "That was where I perhaps developed the limited persuasion abilities that I might have today." Smiling at this bit of self-deprecation, he adds, "I argued vociferously that it was much more meaningful for me to watch Aquaman who led all the animals against the villains than it was for me to be bored while someone spoke literally Greek to me. That cartoon was my favorite. I don't know if you remember it. It was the aquatic equivalent of an *Animal Farm* situation where this guy would fight bad guys by sending out this signal to sea horses and dolphins and sharks, and they would all fight against the villains."

At his house, a white brick just off one of the main arteries leading into Washington, D.C., we find Gretel, a feisty dachshund, and Reiley, a thin black lab, languishing on a dilapidated sofa. They jump up to greet us, and true to his word, Wayne ignores them, mentioning, as he goes to the telephone answering machine, that Reiley steals his socks and that both dogs are vegetarians—he points to a case of canned food on one of the end tables. The animals belong to his housemates, both of whom are workers for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

While he listens to his messages, I look around. The backyard is full of leaves; the kitchen looks as if it's rarely used; hardwood stairs lead to the second-floor landing where a poster of two forlorn canines and a primate says VICTIMS OF VIVISECTION. A disheveled bathroom stands between the two closed doors. The third bedroom is Wayne's. It retains the air of a college dorm.

A closet disgorges suits and rumpled clothes onto the floor, a double bed lies unmade, and a file cabinet holds a small tape cassette player. A large desk is covered with newspapers, and above it hangs a photo of a breaching grey whale. On the opposite wall is a poster of a mountain lion that says, FOREVER WILD AND FREE CALIFORNIA COUGARS—a memento to Wayne's greatest achievement, the stopping of mountain lion hunting in California.

He joins me as I look at his overflowing bookcase. Moving aside a few magazines, he pulls out a copy of *Without Consent or Contract*, and finds the passage that he has mentioned he wants to read to me. "For 3,000

years—," he begins, "from the time of Moses to the end of the seventeenth century—virtually every major statesman, philosopher, theologian, writer, and critic accepted the existence and legitimacy of slavery. The word "accepted" is chosen deliberately for these men of affairs and molders of thought neither excused, condoned, pardoned, nor forgave the institution. They did not have to; they were not burdened by the view that slavery was wrong. Slavery was considered to be part of the natural scheme of things. "From the hour of their birth," said Aristotle, "some are marked out for subjection, others for rule." " Closing the book upon his finger, and giving me a direct look, he adds, "The same can be said of animals."

Opening the book again, he runs his finger down an accompanying table, "Chronology of Emancipation 1772–1888." The first date is when Lord Chief Justice Mansfield ruled that slavery was not supported by English law, laying the legal basis for the freeing of England's fifteen thousand slaves, the second marks Brazil's being the last nation to free its chattels.

"Social change proceeds like evolution," he says, "sometimes slowly and other times rapidly in punctuated equilibrium, just as Stephen Jay Gould proposes for biological evolution." Giving me another deep look from under his thick brows, he adds, "What we're now seeing is a period of rapid social change with regard to animal rights."

That point made, and his messages collected, we drive across town to a Super Bowl party given by one of his fellow workers at the Fund, Heidi Prescott. As Wayne directs me through a maze of suburban housing developments, I tell him that I'm still puzzled by his being committed to animal rights without having had any hands-on relationship with animals. He says that isn't exactly true. There has been one pivotal experience—his watching wolves and moose interact naturally on Isle Royale. Though he never actually saw a wolf while on the island, he came to believe that "animals could live without being manipulated by people." Thereafter, natural regulation of ungulates and prey, with humans trying their utmost to be no more than observers, became the management model he has advocated.

"Do you think that people were once a natural, interactive part of their ecosystems?" I ask.

"Maybe before the invention of agriculture," he says.

"Do you think that it's possible for modern people who hunt to have a respectful relationship with landscape and animals?"

"There's no question that the shooting of some animals can be a sustainable activity," he says, gliding off the question. "I consider it more relevant to ask, 'Is it necessary as a management tool?' and I think in almost all circumstances it's not a necessary component to have a generalized sport hunting season. I'm not saying I don't believe in management. I firmly believe in management. But I think that lethal controls should be the last course, and it should be management on a nuisance basis, and only after animals have been identified as causing some problems."

"That's not what I asked."

He looks at me eagerly, eyes bright. He has told me that he has looked forward to our meeting and our engaging in one of his favorite pastimes, "polemic."

"What I mean is, would you let people hunt for food if they did it respectfully?"

"Well, it's a good question," he says, pondering what he's about to say. "I think that I would campaign against it. Yes, I think that I would. I believe in a majoritarian democracy. I believe in a market-oriented society as a political, economic philosophy, but it needs to be tempered. And I think that we need to have tolerance for minority views and minority rights, but I think that people cross the threshold when they harm others."

"So harm is the bottom line?"

"Yes. At baseline I'm against cruelty. I embrace the ideas of Henry Bergh who founded the ASPCA in 1866. He was an individual who stepped out of societal standards, and said we want to stop something that is going on. I consider myself following that tradition and taking it a step further, that is, establishing legal protection for animals, which is a logical extension of liberalism."

Feeling that we may have some common ground, I explain my least-harm theory to him, whereby a person hunting in their bioregion causes less harm to sentient wildlife by hunting some large food animals than by importing the equivalent amount of vegetable food produced through the use of fossil fuels. I also mention that I think this is quite in keeping with Tom Regan's "miniride principle." Tom Regan is the philosopher from North Carolina State University who has written one of the most closely reasoned books on the subject of the interrelationship of people and animals, and who represents the scholarly side of animal rights as Wayne represents the political. In *The Case for Animal Rights*, he

describes the miniride principle, short for "the minimize overriding principle," as that situation in which "we must choose between overriding the rights of many who are innocent or the rights of few who are innocent, and when each affected individual will be harmed in a prima facie comparable way." When these conditions are met, "then we ought to choose to override the rights of the few in preference to overriding the rights of the many."

"That's very interesting," says Wayne, clasping his hands and for the first time appearing truly uncomfortable at hearing an argument that, couched in rightist terminology, still produces a conclusion through which some life is harmed. "I've never heard it put quite that way, and I would like to hear what Tom has to say about it."

"I would too."

"We'll call him tomorrow," says Wayne.

"Excellent."

"In the meantime, I will say that . . . take a right there. No, no. After the stop sign. I'll say that agriculture is the way of least harm, light agriculture, organically produced, and an agriculture that is in the appropriate region, not the California desert."

"But being a farmer doesn't give me the same feeling about living in the place I live."

"I don't care how you feel," he says flatly. "I care that animals are being harmed."

I nod.

"I also believe in interstate transport of food items," he continues. "I believe in providing that food to people in other regions where it cannot be locally produced. My ethic is not a local food production ethic. It's an interlocal, interstate, and perhaps an international system of food distribution to allow people to tread lightly on the planet, and it should be a food production system that is as energy efficient as possible, and hopefully one day it will be an energy-based system that's not driven by fossil fuels."

"But are you a proponent of endless agriculture for endless people?"

"Oh, no, no. I don't believe in the green revolution as a means of feeding the world, and I certainly don't plan to have children. I take it as a very serious personal responsibility not to put another consumer on this planet."

After stopping for potato chips, pretzels, and beer, and making only two more wrong turns, we find Heidi Prescott's town house. She's the

national outreach director for the Fund and is famous—the first person to go to jail for animal rights. Rustling leaves with her feet during a public hunt at a Maryland wildlife management area, she was fined five hundred dollars under a state law that forbids the harassment of hunters. Refusing to pay the fine, she spent fifteen days in jail, which opened her eyes to the plight of inmates.

Heavy set, jovial, and blonde, she has told me, “If I gave up animal rights and zero population work, I’d go into prison reform.” At twenty-nine, she’s already had her tubes tied for four years and declares that “she’s never regretted the decision.” After all “population is the bottom line.”

She leads us down to her finished basement where a TV blares and food has been laid out on a table alongside it—vegetarian chili, chips, salsa, soft drinks, and beer. As we watch the Redskins demolish the Bills, Peter Wood, one of Wayne’s housemates, and a worker for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, joins us. An abrasive New Yorker with stickers like MEAT STINKS and FUR IS DEAD plastered on the back of his Ford Bronco, he has been upset with Wayne for allowing my visit and letting an enemy in their camp. Sitting on the edge of the couch, with Wayne between us, he now leans toward me and vents. “Tell me,” he says, his eyes blazing, “do you get pleasure out of killing? I lead a normal life. I have a good time. And I don’t have to kill things.”

“No, I don’t get pleasure.”

“Then why do you do it?”

“For food.”

“I eat vegetables,” he snarls, “and I lead a normal life.” Unable to stay in the same room with me, he stalks upstairs.

“Peter has a rough edge,” says Wayne.

In a few minutes he returns, sits down with ill-concealed agitation, and demands, “Do you hunt with a gun?”

“You bet.”

“What’s the sport in that? Why don’t you use a bow and arrow?”

“I thought you guys were against primitive weapons because they’re cruel.”

Muttering something under his breath, he gets up and leaves.

“You know you walked into the belly of the beast here,” says Wayne.

We don’t stay until the end of the game. Wayne has work to do at home in preparation for an upcoming lecture tour. While I unroll my sleeping bag on the floor of his bedroom, he makes a few phone calls then comes upstairs in a chatty mood. Sitting at his desk, he asks about the

trophy hunters with whom I’ve travelled—where do they come from, what do they do for a living—seeming to file what I tell him in some mental folder for future use. He notes with particular relish that all the trophy hunters I accompanied are members of Safari Club International, as if this is exactly what he expected.

Then he picks my brain about the Greenlanders with whom I lived. After hearing about their seal and narwhal hunts, he says, “I’m not going to say that I support what they do, nor will I say that I oppose it. I will say this: I can understand that they want to retain their distinct cultural food-gathering activity. But does someone in New York City have an obligation to buy a sealskin coat or a fur coat to keep that market alive?”

This seems like an excellent phrasing of the issue, but I’m too sleepy to continue the discussion. It is now past midnight.

“But why do they stay there?” he asks. He is wide awake and fired up for talking.

“What?”

“Why do the Greenlanders stay there? What’s the name of the place—” He pulls at the air with a hand.

“Kullorsuaq.”

“Yeah. It seems like such a barren place to live.”

Of all the questions we’ve discussed, this one seems to have the most obvious answer. I say, “It’s their home.”

He shrugs and turns to the stack of newspapers on his desk. Long after I’ve fallen into fitful sleep, I hear him turning the pages of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

The alarm wakes us in the dark and Wayne marches off to his shower. Other than brushing his teeth, he claims showering to be his only form of ritual. When he’s done I have to hurry, for we’re already late and the day is tightly scheduled: a lecture at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in the morning, followed by a radio show, followed by campaign work at the Fund office, followed by a dinner meeting with a potential donor.

He’s in uniform quickly—light-charcoal-grey suit, raspberry-colored tie, pinstripe shirt, black belt, and marching dress shoes. In case I mistake the origins of his belt and shoes, Wayne points out their synthetic composition, saying that they’re as stylish as any leather product, and adds that all the cosmetics, shampoos, and detergents in his house have not been tested on animals. He wears a plain gold watch and his dark brown eyes are fresh and clear despite his few hours of sleep.

He drinks no coffee; he has no breakfast; we drive directly to the high

stunning Chinese woman in red, gives us our choice of tables. Wayne opts for the downstairs room, which he says will be quieter for his meeting.

As we take our seats and Wayne's eyes follow the hostess across the room, I say, "About fishing . . . do you avoid campaigning against it because there isn't a ground-swell movement in our culture to eliminate it?"

"That is correct."

A plump waitress, dressed in a tight blue dress, takes our order for an appetizer, and when she leaves, he continues. "We're out to minimize suffering wherever it can be done, and wherever our limited resources can be utilized most effectively—abusive forms of hunting for now, all hunting eventually."

"And fish aren't furry and cute."

He hesitates a moment, then says, "That's right."

"How about pets, Wayne? Would you envision a future with no pets in the world?"

"I wouldn't say that I envision that, no. If I had my personal view perhaps that might take hold. In fact, I don't want to see another cat or dog born. It's not something I strive for, though. If people were very responsible, and didn't do manipulative breeding, and cared for animals in all senses, and accounted for their nutritional needs as well as their social and psychological needs, then I think it could be an appropriate thing. I'm not sure. I think it's one of those things that we'll decide later in society. I think we're still far from it."

The dumplings that we've ordered arrive quickly, and when we open them we discover that they're filled with meat. Wayne drops his chopsticks as if he's touched acid, and calls after the waitress, explaining that we can't eat these, and that we ordered vegetarian dumplings. "Those special order make," she says, "take much longer."

Wayne says that's just fine, we'll wait. Looking at him dubiously, she takes the plate away.

"They eat a lot of pigs in China," I say, pushing him.

"Clearly," he says, "there are other cultures that are using animals very intensively. Right now, in our society, our cultural standards dictate activity to mitigate the impact on animals."

Knowing that my next question will get no slack either, I say, "Would you consider that there might be different cultures in the U.S.? That Wyoming isn't the Beltway? Tom admitted that."

"Absolutely," he says in his deep voice, which lets you like him even while he's disagreeing with you. "Absolutely. But even if people have distinctive aspects to their life-style, they adhere to certain fundamental tenets and are part of the society. If they want to be part of our society then they choose not to murder people because it happens to be their prerogative, they happen not to cannibalize other people because it's their preference. To me there is no apparent logical distinction between other basic standards in society and the use of animals."

The hostess, pointing from the doorway, shows Melanie our table. A willowy blonde with milky skin and a pleasant Southern accent, she's dressed in a rich suit and wears a large diamond ring. The director of the Summerlee Foundation, which has the diverse goals of supporting animal welfare as well as the research and preservation of Texas history, she is taking a workshop here in the capital, and is staying at the Ritz-Carlton, which she points out has presented her with an ethical dilemma—being in the nonprofit sector and staying at such an expensive hotel.

After Wayne introduces her, and we search the menu and order, she asks about the various preserves the Fund operates and Wayne describes what I've heard him often repeat: the animal rehabilitation center in southern California, the six-hundred-acre animal sanctuary in Texas, and a rabbit and woodchuck sanctuary in South Carolina. Melanie is interested in sanctuaries because she is currently working on a project to rescue animals from the Panama City zoo, where several species are being ill-treated years after the war has come to a close. Two crocodiles have had their eyes poked out. A chimp has died when its keepers gave him drugs and alcohol. One male lion out of a pride of three has died.

Wayne closes his eyes and says, "Oh, my god. That's hard for an animal lover to hear."

The animals still can be saved, says Melanie. A sanctuary in northern California is willing to take them. But she's been unable to get an air carrier to fly them without charge beyond Miami. United Airlines has discontinued their wide-body jets on that route, and the person with whom she spoke at Delta was positively rude to her. Wayne wishes that he could help her, but he doesn't have the means to charter a jet. Melanie nods understandingly and says, "If there were only more people of good intentions." Wayne replies that they just need to be motivated, and she's doing a fine job of that.

She smiles at his flattery and admits that she tries. But sometimes she