



LOOTING in the **AFTERMATH**

How the Humane Society of the United States Takes Advantage of High-Profile Events for Monetary Gain

HUMANEWATCH.ORG

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is commonly confused with the scores of local pet shelters across America. Despite sharing the “humane society” name, HSUS is not affiliated with a single local humane society—or any pet shelter.

In any high-profile disaster or seizure of animals from situation of animal fighting, hoarding, or neglect, there are generally many groups helping out, from law enforcement to local animal shelters. But if there’s one constant, it’s that HSUS hogs the media—and uses the events for endless promotion, giving credit to others only as an aside.

When it comes to high-profile disasters and media events, HSUS knows how to make a killing. The following examples should serve as a cautionary tale to the public and the media.



HURRICANE SANDY

WHAT HSUS SAID:

“We’ll all be dealing with its negative impact upon people and animals for weeks and months to come. ... I hope you’ll help support our disaster relief efforts.”

THE REALITY:

HSUS only spent one-third of the millions it raised on Sandy relief, pocketing the rest.

Following Hurricane Sandy’s devastation of the New York City and New Jersey in late 2012, HSUS raised money along with a bevy of other groups. Because of the amount of money raised, the New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman required charities to disclose how they were spending donations. His office released an interim report in July 2013 finding that 58% of the money raised had gone to Sandy relief, and 68 of the 90 groups reported that they would spend all funds raised on Sandy relief.

HSUS was one of a small number of groups that was not spending the money raised after Sandy solely on relief for victims of the storm. In fact, of the \$2.2 million HSUS raised, only 33% was spent on Sandy relief, with HSUS keeping the rest.

In contrast, other animal organizations that reported to the New York attorney general that they were spending all or a high percentage of the funds raised on Sandy relief. The ASPCA pledged to spend all of the \$2 million it raised for Sandy relief, as did the Humane Society of New York. The American Humane Association reported spending 83% of the support it raised on Sandy relief. Over 80 animal charities that helped out after Hurricane Sandy were profiled in the newspaper Animal People.



While HSUS only spent a third of the money raised on Sandy to help the victims, HSUS made sure to get lots of photos of themselves helping and even made a well-produced fundraising video of its experiences.

HURRICANE KATRINA

HSUS raised \$34 million after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and promised to reunite pets with their owners. It quickly became apparent, however, that something didn't smell right. The Louisiana attorney general opened an 18-month investigation in March 2006 after receiving complaints about how HSUS used the money it raised, closing it after HSUS agreed to fund a new shelter at a prison. In May 2009, WSB-TV in Atlanta reported that of the money raised by HSUS after Katrina, only \$7 million could be publicly accounted for.



“[B]ased on the HSUS’s performance during and after Katrina -- if you care about starving creatures, you’re probably better off grinding your dollars into a nutritious paste and feeding them directly. This may not be the best use of dollars, but at least all of them would be guaranteed to reach the animals.”

—Animal activist Douglas Anthony Cooper

Help Pets Hurt by Hurricane Katrina



Please donate to our Disaster Rescue Teams today.

THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Pants on fire? “We do not raise money for specific disasters, but for our disaster program as a whole.” —HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle, answering a question about Katrina fundraising, 8/25/07

HAITI EARTHQUAKE

WHAT HSUS SAID:

Raised money because “Haiti’s animal survivors desperately need care.”

THE REALITY:

Quietly revealed elsewhere that “no animal issues are here that are related to the event of the earthquake.”

After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, HSUS unscrupulously begged for “emergency donations” despite a disaster relief expert with HSUS’s own international arm admitting that nothing could be done at the time to help animals there. Lloyd Brown from Wildlife Rescue of Dade County deployed to Haiti with Humane Society International, HSUS’s international arm, and told *The Horse* magazine that there was nothing that could be done at the moment to help animals there:

Our team has been doing assessments for several days now and it is our professional opinion that no animal issues are here that are related to the event of the earthquake. There are a lot of animal issues here, but after speaking with a local American expatriate veterinarian here (who is very well connected in this country) we must agree with her that now is not the time to deal with them.

Let me give you an example: If we were to set up a spay/neuter clinic while so many people are displaced and homeless, it could be disastrous—they don’t understand neutering here. People are hungry, they have no homes, they have no shelter, they are sleeping in the streets. They don’t understand the concept of a PET, they are an agricultural community—animals are for work or to sell food or to help them feed their families.

HSI had helped with two—yes, two—dogs at that point, Brown said. But owned pets are very rare in Haiti, he noted.

Yet despite there being no animal issues that HSI responders could help with at the time—again, according to an HSI responder on the ground—HSUS spun a different story on its website. HSUS wrote at the time that “Humane Society International’s team on the ground in Haiti continues its work of helping animals in distress.” HSUS had also begged for an “emergency donation”—to do what, exactly, remains unclear.

Haiti’s animal survivors desperately need care.



photo by Nick Kozak/Sipa Press

We’re on the ground to help them.

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GULF COAST OIL SPILL



The 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico affected wildlife. And the federal response excluded HSUS, instead opting for several hundred Fish and Wildlife Service employees.

HSUS constantly announced that it was “on standby” and “ready, if needed, to deploy,” but in the end, HSUS did very little. HSUS bragged that it “delivered 12.5 tons of pet food, generously donated by Mars Petcare, Inc. and The Humane Choice Company”—as if it was an equal partnership. In fact, the lion’s share—24,000 pounds—was donated by Mars Petcare, Inc. HSUS only donated 700 pounds of its own HSUS-branded (vegetarian) dog food. HSUS also created a panel of experts that—to no surprise—recommended that groups like HSUS should be more involved in the cleanup efforts. HSUS also transported a few dozen dogs from Louisiana to D.C.

HSUS made a 3-minute video of the pet food delivery. It made another video of the transportation of the 33 dogs. And its “impact assessment panel” turned into a self-serving press stunt.

Perhaps this publicity-seeking attitude wasn’t unnoticed. Mars Petcare made a second donation of pet food. This time, HSUS didn’t do the delivery—the Louisiana SPCA did. And much less braggadocio was involved.

THE CASE OF "FAYE"

WHAT HSUS SAID:

“Your gift of \$20.10 a month for 2010—just 66 cents a day—can help thousands of animals like Faye not just survive, but thrive in the new year.”

THE REALITY:

Missouri-based Mutts n’ Stuff cared for Fay. More generally, the Humane Society of Missouri managed the sheltering, veterinary care, behavioral evaluation and eventual placement of the 407 dogs that were rescued, plus 100 puppies that were born after the seizure.

A December 2009 HSUS fundraising campaign featured “Faye,” a dog that had been used for fighting. “Faye” was one of 500 animals seized as part of a well-publicized bust of a multistate dogfighting ring. HSUS promised that funds raised with “Faye’s” image would go to an animal survivor’s fund—yet HSUS wasn’t even caring for “Faye.”

The care of Fay—the dog’s actual name, despite the HSUS misspelling—was being provided by the St. Louis-based Mutts ‘n Stuff. When HSUS started its fundraising campaign, it had not given a dime to help care for Fay. And while HSUS’s fundraising pitch noted that “[Faye] now sleeps in a warm bed in a safe place,” HSUS wasn’t providing care for “Faye” at all.

HSUS’s fundraising pitch noted that promised that “Your gift...can help thousands of animals like Faye not just survive, but thrive in the new year.” (The letter was signed by

John Goodwin, an HSUS employee who is a former spokesperson for the terrorist group Animal Liberation Front.) Yet HSUS regularly gives seized animals to local groups to care for, because HSUS does not run a single pet shelter. Other groups that took in dogs seized in the dogfighting bust included the Humane Society of Missouri, MABBR, Our Pack, Bad Rap, Bless the Bullies, and Butte Humane Society.

HSUS hoped to raise \$1 million from its deceptive “Faye” campaign. Only after HSUS’s deceitfulness was exposed did the group pledge \$5,000 for the care of Fay—0.5% of what HSUS hoped to raise. Fay required several surgeries, the cost of which would have exceeded \$5,000, but ultimately perished before the New Year.

The Humane Society of Missouri was actually the lead animal group in the seizure, working with the investigation and then managing the sheltering, veterinary care, and behavioral evaluation of the animals. HSMO identified 31 groups that were involved in sheltering efforts, and five months after the raid—around the time HSUS performed its “Faye” fundraising—200 animals were able were placed in private homes or rescues. Despite trying to raise \$1 million from Fay, HSUS only made \$20,000 in grants to HSMO in 2009.

HSUS announced on January 4, 2010 that it had exceeded its goal and raised \$1.2 million thanks to Fay and misleading, opportunistic marketing. The fundraising pitch for Fay still exists on HSUS’s website.

“After watching Fay’s video (don’t worry, it’s not graphic – just incredibly moving), please consider becoming a monthly donor to this special fund.”

—HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle



A Humane Society of Missouri investigator with Fay, the dog HSUS didn't care for but tried to raise money off of.

“ One figures they [HSUS] had a little pow-wow — lawyers, fund-raisers and accountants — and then did the math, figuring any howls of protest would be more than offset by the sight of a dog with her lips cut off by a dogfighter, and the number of people who'd click on that link and give, give, give.”

—Gina Spadafori, PetConnection.com



Source: kcdogblog.com

MICHAEL VICK DOGFIGHTING

WHAT HSUS SAID:

“[Y]our gift will be put to use right away to care for the dogs” seized in the Vick case.

THE REALITY:

HSUS wasn't caring for the dogs at all and was recommending the animals be killed.

On July 17, 2007, a federal grand jury indicted Michael Vick and his associates with running an interstate dogfighting ring and seized animals allegedly used in the operation. And the Humane Society of the United States was involved—or, at least, it was putting out fundraising pitches saying that it was.

The next day, HSUS issued a fundraising alert related to the Vick dogs (below). HSUS promised to “care for the dogs seized in the Michael Vick case. ... your gift will be put to use right away to care for the dogs.”

However, it turned out that HSUS didn't have custody of the dogs—and wasn't even advocating for their care. HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle told *The New York Times* that not only was HSUS not caring for the dogs, but that HSUS was recommending that the dogs be “put down”—killed. However, local animal rescue groups were ultimately able to successfully rehabilitate and find new homes for many of the seized dogs.



Yes! I want to make a special gift to help The Humane Society of the United States care for the dogs seized in the Michael Vick case and to support other vital animal protection programs.

The HSUS has assisted federal authorities in the case against Michael Vick and his co-defendants, and is now overseeing the care of the 52 pit bulls seized from Vick's property in southwestern Virginia.

We desperately need your help to care for these dogs while the case is pending. Please donate today by completing the fields below. **Your gift will be put to use right away to care for these dogs and to support all our**



This dog was one of 52 pit bulls seized from Michael Vick's property -- dogs now being cared for by The HSUS in cooperation with shelters. ©The HSUS

The false fundraising promise to “care for the dogs seized” smells like fraud.

Ironically, Vick became an HSUS ambassador after he left prison (after the ASPCA reportedly declined to work with him). After the Philadelphia Eagles signed Vick and made a \$50,000 grant to HSUS, Pacelle went on record to say that he thought Vick “would do a good job as a pet owner.” Vick has since obtained a dog

“HSUS advocacy for seized animals to be unilaterally killed continued after Vick's case. In February 2009, HSUS advocated in Wilkes County court for 146 pit bulls—including 19 nursing pups—to be killed. HSUS now says it has a new policy.

DOG SEIZURE IN WILKES COUNTY, NC

WHAT HSUS SAID:

“Provide us with the resources” to take on rescues and seizures like this.

THE REALITY:

HSUS pushed for the animals, including 75 puppies, to be killed.

In December 2008, following an investigation by Wilkes County Sheriff's Office, Wilkes County Animal Control agency and HSUS, seized 127 dogs from an alleged dogfighting operation in Wilkes County, North Carolina. HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle blogged about the seizure, ending with a fundraising plea to ensure that “members provide us with the resources.”

The resources, it appears, includes seeing the dogs and their puppies killed.

HSUS told the court in Wilkes County in February 2009 that it recommended the animals all be killed. While HSUS claimed it would cost a lot to rehabilitate each animal, it was actually recommending that puppies that hadn't been exposed to animal fighting be killed. In total, 75 puppies were ordered to be destroyed. Seven animal welfare groups publicly criticized HSUS following the court's decision to kill the animals, noting that the county had been offered resources for spay/neuter, rehoming, and evaluation of the animals.



700 CATS SEIZED IN FLORIDA

WHAT HSUS SAID:

“In June of 2011, The Humane Society of the United States rescued approximately 700 cats from a hoarder’s residence.”

—HSUS promotional video with no mention of other groups’ assistance

THE REALITY:

Multiple groups assisted. University of Florida veterinarians provided care and examination; RedRover provided volunteers; ASPCA provided evidence examiners and other support.



In June 2011, the Alachua County Animal Services asked HSUS for assistance in seizing 700 cats in connection with a hoarding case at Haven Acres Cat Sanctuary. While HSUS was sure to tout that it—alone—“rescued” the animals, such a claim distorts the record.

Multiple groups assisted in the effort. PetSmart Charities donated food. The ASPCA’s forensics team helped gather evidence. United Animal Nations (now RedRover) provided care for the animals. Alachua County helped perform the initial investigation. University of Florida veterinary students helped spay and neuter the animals.

A court later ordered that HSUS should receive restitution totaling \$626,770 from the defendants, but the other assisting groups may not have seen a dime from HSUS, which would be particularly unfortunate given that HSUS is financially secure with \$200 million in assets. The Alachua County Humane Society “will not receive funds from the restitution,” said a spokesman. The same year as the raid, HSUS made no grants to the University of Florida, no grants to RedRover, and no grants to ASPCA.

“The restitution is to be paid over time to the Humane Society of the United States...the Alachua County Humane Society does not receive funds from HSUS and will not receive funds from the restitution.”

—Alachua Country Humane Society



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