

Lesley Fox: Whistler sled dog massacre should be a lesson to all of us

By Lesley Fox

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The [news](#) was absolutely shocking: 100 sled dogs [gruesomely killed](#) because of slow business in Whistler.

And now, the finger pointing has begun.

Was it the fault of the man who shot the dogs and buried them in the giant pit? Or was it the fault of the company which may have ordered the massacre? Maybe we should blame the veterinarian who refused to humanely euthanize so many dogs in the first place?

It is a lot to consider. But remember when you point your finger, there are three fingers pointing back at you.

The truth is maybe we all played a small part in this horrible tragedy.

Killing healthy dogs is completely legal. Even shooting them in the head is legal. Healthy animals, including adorable huskies, are killed every single day in shelters across Canada just because there is a so-called surplus.

The investigators involved in the murder of the sled dogs in Whistler are not concerned about why these dogs were killed, but rather, “How were the dogs killed, and was it humane?”

Really? Should the investigation focus on if the dogs were killed humanely or not? I think the investigation should focus on why the animals were in that situation in the first place.

True, this story has elicited a public outcry. Good. It should. But now, let's take a deeper look at the real issue.

Those sled dogs died because a very large percentage of society has no real regard for animals and our current

legal system simply reflects those views.

Exchanging money for animals and their services, as if these beings were commodities, products, or inventory, usually results in such disaster.

Furthermore, society not only tolerates this kind of commerce, we promote it, endorse it, market it, derive our livelihoods from it, and even take great pleasure in it.

I am sure a dog-sled ride is a good time.

Just imagine the fun those people had. It was likely the ultimate so-called Canadian experience for many Whistler tourists. The dogs likely seemed happy, families paid their money, took photos, and went home. I bet no one ever thought to wonder what happens to those dogs when business slows or they can't run anymore.

It reminds me of when I was a kid. It was a real treat to get a Big Mac combo (hold the pickles). I ate animals all the time. I never bothered to think much about those animals I ate, or how they ended up on my plate. Not until I became much older anyways.

Each year in Canada, over three million cows, 30 million pigs, and 600 million chickens are slaughtered for food. Approximately 2.5 million fur-bearing animals are killed for their coats and over 300,000 baby seals are killed on the East Coast for their meat, oil, and fur.

In addition to these staggering numbers, an unrecorded number (in the millions) of other animals including monkeys, frogs, fetal pigs, cats, dogs, guinea pigs, and mice are used and killed for testing, education, and research.

The tragedy of the Whistler sled dogs should be a lesson to all of us.

It is time to give real thought to our choices, to ask tough questions about where the animals we use come from, what happens to them in the future, and who is looking after them in the meantime.

It is an opportunity to also examine our attitudes toward all animals. Do dogs suffer any more than other animals and what actions in our daily life contribute to the use and abuse of animals? Do we love all animals, or just some animals, like the husky dogs in Whistler, and why?

Lastly, we need to pressure our members of Parliament to take action and tighten the laws in this country to give animals real protection and rights, and to severely punish the abusers.

And why should you care? Because by saving animals, we can save ourselves.

In the words of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, "We must fight against the spirit of unconscious cruelty with which we treat the animals. Animals suffer as much as we do. True humanity does not allow us to impose such sufferings on them. It is our duty to make the whole world recognize it. Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace."

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