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For several years my dog Henry and I lived on the road making  
a film about people and animals.



We traveled through the United States meeting and interviewing people with a variety of backgrounds.





Some of the people depended on animals for their livelihoods, and others defended animals from those livelihoods.

I called the project *Moments Of Truth*.



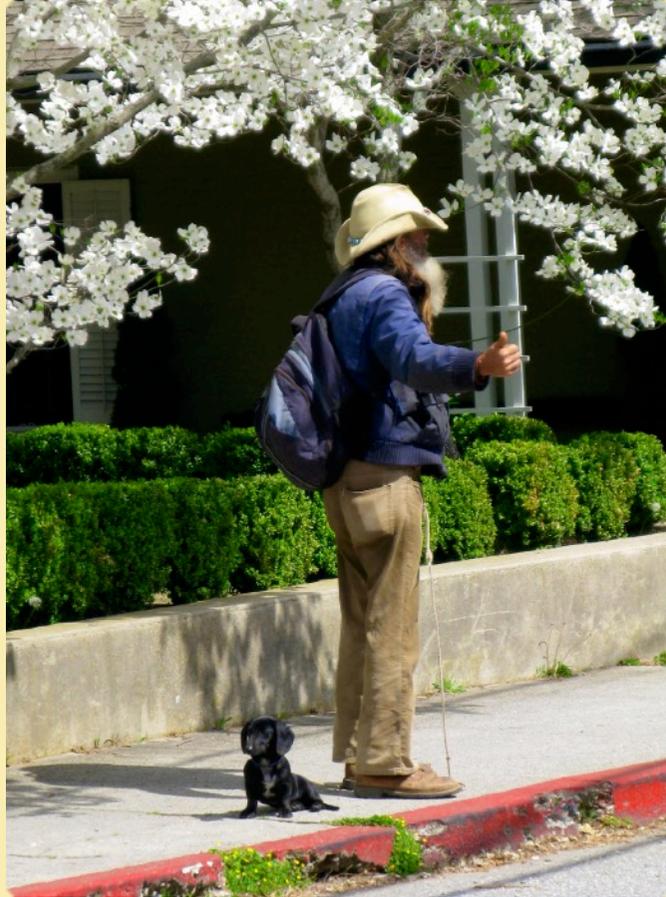
I found people very open to talking. My biggest challenge was making sure my camera settings were right and the audio was recording.



The fellow above was earnest and gentle when answering my questions about his fur products and his thoughts on the animals involved. He was simultaneously fond of the animals and able to see them as sources of fur and income.

Little-by-little the interviews accumulated, with authors, sanctuary founders, farmers, bioethicists, hunters, research scientists, animal rights activists, wildlife advocates, experts in religious studies, ecologists and willing citizens of all stripes.





Along the way I also captured spontaneous moments.

















# Peter Singer



I interviewed Peter Singer, an Australian moral philosopher and professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. His book *Animal Liberation* ignited a new awareness around the ways animals are treated and raised questions about how to justify this.

*“Why is equality limited to human beings?*

*Why do you have to be a member of the species Homo sapien to be part of this  
community of equals?*

*What is supposed to mark that boundary? And how can you justify that  
boundary?”*

— Peter Singer, *Moments Of Truth*









At the Oakland Zoo in California, children and adults speculated on what this chimpanzee might be thinking and feeling.

I'm not always sure what Henry is thinking, but his engagement with our surroundings is evident, as is the fact that he is thinking and feeling something.





This goat seemed very curious about following what held my attention.

# Carl Safina



I interviewed Carl Safina at his Long Island home. He is a marine ecologist and professor of nature and humanity at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His books explore the inner lives of animals, including whales, elephants, wolves and owls.

On the day we filmed outside his house, his dog and a few chickens wandered about while Henry napped in a writing studio. Our conversation ranged from Carl's childhood experiences with animals to the ways animal lives are entwined with humans.

I took the photograph of the elephant on the next page at the Oakland Zoo.

*“Almost everybody sees animals as just what species it is. Oh, there's a elephant, there's a whale, and that's all they see. But in our lives, our relationships define us. And many animals are exactly the same. They are defined by relationships that are extremely important to them. They have lives and experience life in ways that are not terribly different from human beings.”*

*— Carl Safina, Moments Of Truth*





While filming in South Dakota, I entered a Chevron gas station and was surprised to find a museum of animal trophies with piped in music and a guest book. It turned out the gas station owner was a hunter and veterinarian, and though he wanted to remain anonymous in the film, he seemed to welcome being interviewed.

We filmed our conversation among his trophies, and when I asked how his veterinarian self rationalized doing harm to animals, he referenced passages from the Bible.



Religious perspectives came up a lot during my interviews. Many people cited the Bible as permission for using animals.





When I looked into it, I found that the Bible describes the Garden of Eden as a place where neither humans or animals kill one another. Only after the Fall, when the concept of sin is introduced, does killing enter the picture.





# Carol Adams



Carol Adams is an author and animal advocate with a divinity degree. We filmed at her home in Texas. I was eager to learn more about the ways the Bible talks about animals, and how those passages are interpreted.

In addition to her perspectives on the biblical texts, Carol described a childhood moment when she was deep in grief after her horse had been killed. While eating a hamburger she suddenly wondered what the difference was between her beloved horse and the cow that had also been killed.

*"You can look at the sacred texts, and you can say we are called to be compassionate. Why are we maintaining a species barrier? Genesis 1:26 says, "I've given you dominion," and the question is, what does dominion mean?"*

*— Carol Adams, Moments Of Truth*











After hours of driving on remote two-lane highways, I sometimes stopped in the middle of the road and walked around to take in the epic, treeless landscape.



And I usually encountered cows. If you drive long and far enough, you realize they are everywhere. They live alongside roads and highways, behind houses and shopping malls. They are squeezed into every possible space. Making room for cows around the world has cleared millions of acres of rainforest and removed countless habitats for wild animals.



# Keli Hendricks



Keli Hendricks is a wildlife advocate who fosters wild animals through a rescue organization. We met for our interview at the ranch where she and her husband live and work in Sonoma County, California.

She shared information that a lot of people don't know about the reasons and ways wild animals are killed, year after year, by poisons, snares, traps, aerial gunning and large scale hunts. In the United States, one of those reasons is to protect livestock, often on public lands. The USDA has a department called "Wildlife Services" dedicated to killing bears, coyotes, wolves, mountain lions and other species receiving the designation "nuisance."

The fox on the next page was a patient at the Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue.

*“If someone were to go and take some spray paint and spray a building, that would be a crime. You’re destroying property. But you can go out and just kill animals, wildlife, and that’s hunting. So if you destroy the work of man, that’s a crime; if you destroy the work of nature, that’s a sport.”*

— Keli Hendricks, *Moments Of Truth*



Keli bottle fed, raised and released these orphaned raccoons.



This fox also received care at Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue.



In South Dakota, I was intrigued by a tattered highway sign with the hand-painted words *Buffalo Gap* next to an arrow pointing down an unpaved road. Eventually I came upon a little town with faded street signs, more dirt roads, and shuttered businesses.





The only signs of life were four men gathered around a freshly-made casket. When I spoke with them I learned that making caskets was their town's only remaining business. After I described my project, the man sitting second from left asked if he could show me a picture of his dog, who had died long ago. As he set the picture down on the hood of his truck, he held back tears.

# Kim Sturla



Kim Sturla is the co-founder of Animal Place, a sanctuary for farm animals in Grass Valley, California. We filmed near one of their barns, with a sleeping pig in the background.

I asked Kim why she thought human society generally accepts, or perhaps doesn't realize, that animals are continually harmed for food, medical research, consumer products, recreation and entertainment, and she articulated some thoughts that reminded me to always keep in mind the realities humans face, when encouraging more compassion for animals.

*“When we find out how non-human animals are treated, why do we do nothing about it? That’s the million dollar question. I think some people just aren’t aware. It’s not on their radar about non-human animals and the suffering that they endure. I think for others, sadly, they’re aware of it, but they don’t care.*

*And, very sadly, humankind has a history of taking advantage of other humans. So perhaps asking to extend protection towards non-humans is too much to ask?  
I don’t think so.”*

— Kim Sturla, *Moments Of Truth*





The interconnected lives of people and animals is the heart of this filmmaking journey.































To watch the feature length documentary *Moments Of Truth* and see all of the interviews plus more photography and short films, visit [carolinekraus.com/moments-of-truth-documentary](http://carolinekraus.com/moments-of-truth-documentary).

