

PROTECTING PEOPLE and ANIMALS: _____

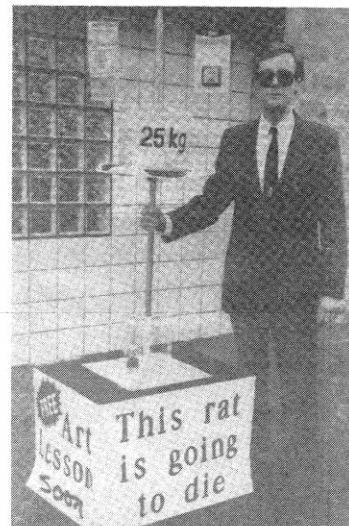
LIFEFORCE SAVES SNIFFY!



Lifeforce founder, Peter Hamilton, holds Sniffy after rescuing him from Rick Gibson who had planned to crush him outside the Vancouver Library.

On January 6th, 1990, LIFEFORCE, the ecology organization which abhors violence against people and animals, diffused a potentially violent situation by confiscating a crushing device which Vancouver "artist" Rick Gibson had planned to use to crush Sniffy the rat and other animals.

As soon as Gibson sent out a press release on December 27, 1989, LIFEFORCE founder Peter Hamilton stated that "Sniffy will be rescued" and "If Gibson plans to drop a 25 kg. (approximately 50 lbs) brick on a living animal, then he'll have to drop a brick on me!"



Gibson and his crushing device which LIFEFORCE members confiscated in order to save Sniffy and to protect people from indecent, violent acts.

Rick Gibson's intention, in the name of art, was to rent a moving van, place a homemade crushing device inside the van, drive to the Vancouver Library and proceed to kill Sniffy.

Lifeforce had developed two plans to stop Gibson. (Plan B was to have Lifeforce volunteers at the site to form two protective circles---one around Sniffy and the other around Gibson---to keep them both safe.)

Plan A was implemented at approximately 10:25 am, Saturday, January 6th, when four Lifeforce members confiscated the device which Gibson intended to use to crush Sniffy to death. The device was obtained outside Gibson's house in a peaceful manner and Gibson was informed that Lifeforce intended to protect him and Sniffy from a potentially volatile situation.

Even though Gibson did not have Sniffy (he was at another house), we hoped that our act would obtain a reprieve for Sniffy and allow a cooling-off period until more rational thought could prevail.

Thankfully, our plan deterred Gibson. He arrived at 1:00 pm by foot and announced to a crowd of approximately 250 people that he had returned Sniffy to the pet store; only 20 members of the crowd were Lifeforce volunteers there to protect Gibson, Sniffy and the public from any abuse. (When we later learned that some hostile people had chased Gibson and threatened him, we were appalled and disgusted.)

Lifeforce then went to the pet store, purchased Sniffy for \$3.99 and took him to a two-story retirement "rat home" which a Lifeforce volunteer provided so that he can live out his natural life in peace.

This bizarre event brought to light numerous issues which lead to and perpetuate violence in our society.

Firstly, the media should not have given so much attention to Gibson. Publicity makes an abnormal act appear normal to people like Gibson who may have psychological problems. He should not be credited with making any "statement" about art. An artist controls his medium; Gibson did not control this situation; he admitted that he had not expected the responses he received.

Secondly, both the Vancouver SPCA and the Vancouver Police refused to take any action against Gibson for his cruelty to animals and for violating public decency. The SPCA even stated that "although the perception is that it's totally inhuman, the reality is that it is probably a humane way of killing a rat" (Globe & Mail, January 5). (The killing method is not the issue; the point is that Gibson had no right to kill any sentient being---but, for what it's worth, "crushing" is not considered an acceptable euthanasia method by the Canadian or American Veterinary Association.)

Lifeforce believes that Rick Gibson should have been charged under the Criminal Code of Canada for "Causing a disturbance" by creating an "indecent act" (Section 173(1) and by openly exposing or exhibiting an "indecent exhibit in a public place" (Section 175(1)(b)), and under the Cruelty to Animals Section "Everyone who wilfully and without lawful excuse kills, maims, wounds, poisons or injures" animals (Section 445(a)) and when someone "wilfully causing unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal"(Section 446(1)(a)).

Since the group of people ran after Gibson threatening him, it is obvious that violence begets violence. Non-violent methods must be used to persuade change. Failing that, legal remedies are our best tools to counteract ignorance and violence in our society.

The exhibition of killing is abominable. Death is not entertainment. The ending of life---whether human or animal---is not frivolous. And we humans have a special responsibility towards animals since they cannot speak for themselves.

The anti-human, anti-animal acts of Rick Gibson, both past and present, depict an unbalanced person seeking to gain publicity at any cost. These acts include eating human testicles and using dehydrated human fetuses for earrings; in 1982 Gibson exhibited freeze-dried biological specimens including the fetuses of kittens and a human uterus.

Gibson has contacted Lifeforce on several occasions to help him create controversy by attending his atrocious, repulsive shows. A compassionate society cannot condone such publicity stunts or so-called new "art medium" which involves the killing of sentient beings. The lifeblood and viscera of animals must not be used as art paint.

Exploitive and violent forms of "entertainment" militate against the development of a compassionate society. Wanton cruelty to animals debases us all and makes a mockery of our inherently humane nature. We as a species have a moral responsibility and obligation to defend those creatures who cannot defend themselves and to protect ourselves from grossly offensive, violent exhibits.
