

POSITIVELY VEGAN

Magazine

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***Positively Vegan Magazine* here to showcase our
regions, as we all work towards a vegan future.**

Bearing Witness with Earthling Ed

Why is it important to bear witness to animals arriving at slaughter?

It is an upsetting subject for many vegans and non-vegans. Here we have a moving experience from a SAVE witness, Jane Antcliff-Wilson, at one of the many demonstrations across the north explaining why this is an important act of solidarity and compassion for animals.

People have arrived in the freezing conditions to be a voice for the animals, to be standing on the right side of history. This movement is growing. I can feel unity in the air, I can feel compassion, but most of all I can feel love: all are stronger than the violence and lies which surround this dirty business.

It is on one of the coldest nights in December, that we stood in solidarity with more than sixty animal rights activists outside a slaughter house somewhere in Yorkshire. We were Bearing Witness to the thousands of animals slaughtered here on a regular basis. This particular 'permitted' hell hole which they call an abattoir is surrounded by a high fence, on a main road, in the middle of an industrial estate, but most shocking is that it is next to a public footpath. When you walk along the public foot path the stench of decaying rotting flesh permeates the air and the trees shiver; knowing that only a few metres away atrocities against nature are being carried out. Sometimes the rain washes the blood of the dead, into the roots of the trees and neighbouring yellowing grass. Every so often the slaughter men hose pipe down the filthy wagons the poor animals have arrived in, as preparation to send the wagons back for more victims; empty but 'clean'. The underground communication system of the trees is contaminated with murder. This natural root system whispers about this secret holocaust and tells the tale of how it is happening all over the world. To me, the trees lament with despair, as man's cruelty is slowly destroying the Earth, and nature shows us the story of what happens behind the high fence, we need to listen, and I am now telling you this urgent tale.

Earthling Ed and the Surge team arrive. We all walk down the footpath and see the killing area, over the fence, which is metres away from the animal holding pens. The animals will witness the death of their own kind, their family, as they wait their turn; waiting for these humans to usher them through the gates of hell to death. I see the trees shake their branches as a breeze blows away the putrid stench, trees who are desperately trying to clean the air; but the stench comes back and we make our way back to the gate where the main demonstration is.



The drivers in their cars honk their horns as they drive past to show support for our peaceful protest. Each time we come to this place to hold a vigil, we receive more and more verification that the men and women on the streets are now waking up from a long deep sleep, to the realization of the deception weaved by the large industrialists; all is not well. The deception, cruelty and pretext which shrouds the meat industry is now being exposed. The slaughter men think the horn honking is for them, but they are fooled by their own lies. Just as they believe that all slaughter is humane; an appeasement to justify their own daily actions, which they will have to live with for the rest of their lives. Earthling Ed goes to the gate and asks would they be comfortable if they were slaughtering dogs, but the slaughter men and women just laugh and shuffle around uneasily, possibly thinking of their own dog companions back at home. Someone asks the slaughter men 'Would you eat a child' and one of them answered 'I would eat you first before I ate a child'.

"I would eat you before I ate a child"

Many of the animals slaughtered are the children of



some only weeks old. I have been told by many people that the vigils are a waste of time; that it prolongs the death of the animals or causes them distress, but these animals already exist in a world of terror and fear from which they have never known love or kindness, because they dwell in a twilight world of horror created by humans. **Bearing witness is not a waste of time – it is an act of compassion.**

I see the trees continue telling their story, but now they become excited and the whispers tell of the energy of compassionate humans surrounding this hateful place. There is much underground chatter of optimism, and the trees know there is a change coming, bringing hope. They usually see violent humans or humans who turn their back on the atrocities, but these new humans at the slaughter house gates are different, and are not afraid to confront the brutality with honour. These humans are pure of heart and body and they do not reek of consumed rotting flesh or animal secretions.

The animals who arrive in the trucks will have felt brief love when they are first born, with the first caress from their mother, but very soon that love turns to heart break; as both mother and child are separated from each other after only a few hours. From then on, their lives are one of slavery and oppression. Their final journey to the slaughter-house is their freedom from enslavement, and as their truck comes to a screech at the gates on their way to the final nightmare before sleep, they sense compassion, once again, coming from the crowd of humans which surround them with love and kindness. They get to hear soothing voices and they feel for the first time, a different kind of human, one they have not encountered before. They can remember that first kiss from their mothers and they feel the same loving energy from the humans at the gate. The brutal slaughter men often become

but the kind humans bearing witness have courage, and will not be deterred from this action because they have fire in their hearts and will never give in, and the **animals know, at that moment, that there is now finally hope.**

“When the suffering of another creature causes you to feel pain, do not submit to the initial desire to flee from the suffering one, but on the contrary, come closer, as close as you can to him who suffers, and try to help him.” – Leo Tolstoy



For more information on how and why to get involved in local and national campaigns see: thesavemovement.org

For more information on Earthling Ed, vegan activism through education, see: earthlinged.com

Photographs courtesy of [instagram/forliberation](https://www.instagram.com/forliberation)