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[Lawsuit may expose nation's richest animal rights outfit's true nature](#)

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Recently the parent company for Ringling Brothers circus, Feld Entertainment, filed a lawsuit against the Humane Society of the United States (HUSUS) and its components, charging the non-profit with, among other things, bribery, tax evasion and racketeering. No, HSUS is not the Humane Society most people associate with the nationwide animal shelters such as operated by the SPCA, but rather a highly active and wealthy animal rights lobbyist that is apparently intent on turning us all into vegans.

In its lawsuit, Feld accuses HSUS of tax evasion, bribery, and falsifying records. During a lawsuit trial in federal court in 2009, it was disclosed that HSUS illegally paid a former Feld employee more than \$190,000 to give false testimony regarding mistreatment of animals. The judge dismissed the case when the payola was discovered and HSUS's "witness" failed to substantiate any of the claims, and this was the beginning of an intense investigation by Feld and HumaneWatch, the latter being a watchdog group that seeks to disclose false claims and illegal practices by such "animal rights" non-profits as HSUS.

The Humane Society of the United States presents itself as organization intent on saving animals, but in reality does almost nothing beyond increasing its wealth, which is about \$100M in tax-free donations annually. Only one dollar of every \$200 HSUS receives actually goes to animal shelters. Meanwhile it put \$2.5M of the money donated into its personal pension plan last year. Yet its ads often say "Join Us in Saving the Lives of Animals Everywhere. Donate Today!" So what happens is that many people are duped into thinking they're donating to help animal shelters and other highly worthwhile endeavors.

The vast majority of the donations HSUS takes in annually is used for hefty administrative salaries and benefits. It's also used for promoting and expanding its agendas via its large promotions and legal staffs. Additionally it's used to purchase advertising, buy mailing lists, lobby for a variety of animal rights agendas, including stopping all hunting, trapping, fishing, farming and ranching, medical research, and even pet breeding and ownership.

HSUS is big, rich, and powerful, and a "humane society" in name only. And while most local animal shelters are under-funded and unsung, HSUS has accumulated \$113M in assets and built a recognizable brand by capitalizing on the confusion its very name provokes. This misdirection results in an irony of which most animal lovers are unaware: HSUS raises enough money to finance animal shelters in every single state, with money to spare, yet it doesn't operate a single one anywhere.

An example is what happened during Hurricane Katrina, when there was a second "storm" involving the backlash of grassroots activists complaining that HSUS had obstructed their animal rescue efforts, and then commandeered the lion's share of credit and by doing so hauled in \$30M in donations. Subsequently, many activists groups and the Louisiana attorney general called for a criminal investigation into HSUS fundraising and demanded an explanation why this organization disregarded the clear intent of donors and spent such a puny percentage of a mountain of donated money on helping victims of a catastrophe. Thanks to HSUS expansive and expensive legal department, the investigation was stonewalled.

Instead of actually helping animals in need, HSUS spends millions on programs that seek to economically cripple meat and dairy producers; eliminate the use of animals in biomedical research labs; phase out pet breeding, zoos, and circus animal acts; and demonize hunters and anglers as crazed lunatics. HSUS spends \$2 million each year on travel expenses alone, just keeping its multi-national agenda going. HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle made a quarter million dollars in salary and benefits in 2009 and that amount is now probably over \$300,000. It annually shells out \$30.9M in salaries, wages, and other employee compensation. In contrast, it contributed only about \$3.1 million of its \$91.5 million operating budget to hands-on pet shelters.

The Feld lawsuit states that on the encouragement and advice of the named defendants, who falsely characterized the payments as "grants" for "media expenses" to the ex-employee/witness in order to hide the illegal and improper payment scheme and to avoid federal and state income tax consequences for the witness. During the period from 2001 through 2006, the witness did not declare any of the money that had been paid to him. During the 2009 trial The Court found that the witness was essentially a paid plaintiff and fact witness who was not credible, and "therefore afforded no weight to his testimony regarding the matters discussed herein, i.e., the allegations related to his standing to sue."

The manner in which the payments were handled and characterized was done to conceal or disguise the nature or source of the payments and/or with an intent to evade or defeat federal income tax with respect to such payments with knowledge of or willful blindness to the fact that the payments were proceeds of an unlawful activity, namely payment to and receipt by the witness of bribes and illegal gratuity payments. These actions violated the federal money laundering statute.