

# Vince the Rhino: Killed at a Zoo

*Vince, a young four year old white rhinoceros, was brutally poached and killed at a zoo in Paris. While violent killings like this strike us as senseless and unnecessary, could there be an uncomfortable similarity to our every day food choices? Our co-founder, Dr. Sofia Pineda Ochoa, discusses in this video.*

- Sources
- Transcript
- Credits

- K. Willsher. French Police on the Hunt for Poachers Who Killed a White Rhino in a Zoo. *Los Angeles Times*. 2017 Mar. 8. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).

*"[S]hocked zookeepers found...Vince, a 4-year-old [whose] large horn had been hacked off with a chainsaw. The poachers had begun removing the smaller horn but fled before finishing the task."*

- WWF – World Wide Fund (formerly World Wildlife Fund) website: African Rhinos. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).

*"The number of rhinos poached in South Africa alone has increased by 9,000% since 2007[.]"*

- WWF – World Wide Fund (formerly World Wildlife Fund) website: Rhinos – Facts and Species. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).

*"Sumatran Rhino [has a] Population Around 100 [and] Javan Rhino[ has a] Population around 60[.]"*

- **Worldometers.info website: World Population. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*The "Current World Population" was around 7.49 billion as of April 14, 2017 when this video was filmed. As of May 1, 2017, it is now estimated to have surpassed 7.5 billion. It was around 3.7 billion in 1970.*

- **WWF – World Wide Fund (formerly World Wildlife Fund) website: Black Rhinos Overview. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*"Between 1970 and 1992, 96 percent of Africa's remaining black rhinos were killed."*

- **R. Morelle. World Wildlife 'Falls by 58% in 40 Years'. BBC News. 2016 Oct. 27. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*"The Living Planet assessment, by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and WWF..., estimates that wildlife populations have declined by nearly 60% since 1970."*

- **V Melina, WJ Craig, S Levin; Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association). Position of the American Dietetic Association: Vegetarian Diets. J Am Diet Assoc. 2016 Dec; 116(12):1970-1980. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*"It is the position of the American Dietetic Association that appropriately planned vegetarian, including vegan, diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases [and] are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, older adulthood, and for athletes."*

- **Harvard T.H. Chan, School of Public Health website: The**

**Nutrition Source – Healthy Eating Pyramid – 5 Quick Tips, Following the Healthy Eating Pyramid. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*“Go with plants. Eating a plant-based diet is healthiest.”*

**• Rush University Medical Center website: News: Top Cardiologist Preaches Vegan Diet – Kim Williams, MD, to Speak at Veggie Fest. 2016 Jul. 18. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*“The head of the Division of Cardiology at Rush University Medical Center and immediate past president of the American College of Cardiology, [Dr. Kim] Williams follows a vegan diet.”*

**• PJ Skerrett and WC Willett. Essentials of healthy eating: a guide. *J Midwifery Womens Health*. 2010 Nov-Dec; 55(6): 492-501. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*“Pick the best protein packages by emphasizing plant sources of protein rather than animal sources.”*

**• H Steinfeld, P Gerber, T Wassenaar, V Castel, M Rosales and C. de Haan. Livestock’s Long Shadow – Environmental Issues and Options. *United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization*. 2006 Nov. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).**

*“Livestock now account for...30 percent of the earth’s land service [and] may well be the leading player in the reduction of biodiversity, since it is the major driver of deforestation, as well as one of the leading drivers of land degradation, pollution, climate change, overfishing, sedimentation of coastal areas and facilitation of invasions by alien species. [And] livestock’s contribution...amounts to about 18 percent of the global warming effect – an even larger contribution than the transportation sector worldwide.”*

• B Machovina, KJ Feeley and WJ Ripple. Biodiversity Conservation: The Key is Reducing Meat Consumption. *Sci Total Environ.* 2015 Dec 1;536:419-31. Available here (accessed May 1, 2017).

*“The consumption of animal-sourced food products by humans is one of the most powerful negative forces affecting the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems and biological diversity.”*

Hi, this is Dr. Sofia Pineda Ochoa with Meat Your Future.

In March of this year, a young rhinoceros was brutally poached and killed while inside his enclosure at the zoo in Paris. The poachers broke in at night, removed his horn with a chainsaw, and the white rhino – named Vince – was found dead the next morning. So, if this rhino could be poached and killed in a secured and guarded setting like a zoo, what hope is there for the remaining rhinos who live in their natural habitat in the wild? It turns out we humans are poaching and killing them to extinction.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF):

- The number of rhinos poached increased by 9,000% in the last 10 years in South Africa;
- Some subspecies have already been declared extinct; and
- Other subspecies are close to extinction: like the Sumatran rhinos, which are down to only about 100 left in the world; and the Javan rhino, with only 60 animals left in the world.

It's worth noting that, since 1970, our human population has doubled, from 3.7 billion to 7.4 billion today. In contrast, between 1970 and 1992, we lost 96% of the black rhino population due to poaching.

Will the poaching ever stop, or will this be another animal that we drive to extinction? I don't know the answer to that.

We should obviously not buy anything made from rhino horns; that would help. But, poaching is a complex issue and other things, like poverty coupled with our growing human population, also exacerbate poaching and snaring activities.

A lot of our population growth is happening in nations where many struggle to support themselves and meet their most basic needs. And, poverty in general makes it more likely for people to engage in lucrative poaching activities. So, supporting things like education and family planning in general could probably help as well.

Of course, the killing and poaching of animals for their horns, like the brutal killing of Vince in Paris, strikes us as a senseless and unnecessary tragedy that we wouldn't want to support. But, what about what we fund with our money in restaurants and grocery stores for our every day food choices? Could we possibly draw a comparison?

Obviously, from a psychological perspective, it's completely different to go to a store and buy a chicken sandwich, or a steak, or piece of cheese – as many of us have done countless times – compared to poaching or killing an animal. But, there are still some uncomfortable similarities between these events and our food choices.

Let's consider the following: We humans don't have any biological need to consume any animal foods for our health. Even the very conservative Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics – the largest organization of nutrition professionals in the country – says in their official position statement that vegan diets “are healthful, nutritionally adequate, [and] appropriate for individuals during all stages of their life”, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, adolescence, and for athletes. Harvard's Healthy Eating Plate also says a plant-based diet is best. The president of the American College of Cardiology recommends a vegan diet over all other diets, and even the Chair of Harvard's Department of Nutrition recommends

you pick plant protein over animal protein.

So, since we don't need to consume any animal foods, what justification is left for inflicting harm and death on so many animals we use for our food? At best, we're left with mere pleasure, habit or convenience. And, in that sense, the killing of billions of animals used for food (like chickens, cows, fishes and pigs) can be viewed as equally senseless and unnecessary as the killing of Vince, which is very troubling and disturbing.

Additionally, the livestock industry is also wrecking immense environmental devastation on the planet. According to the United Nations, animal agriculture:

- Uses up 30% of all the land surface of the planet;
- Is the leading driver of deforestation in the world; and
- Produces more greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change than the entire transportation sector combined.

So, in addition to standing-up for species like rhinos, please consider also aligning your own values with your daily actions, and leave animal products off your plate forever. It's very easy to do, it's healthy, and it's urgently needed to help protect and restore our environment. Thank you very much.

***This transcript is an approximation of the audio in above video. To hear the audio and see the accompanying visuals, please play the video.***

This video was written and narrated by Sofia Pineda Ochoa, MD, and was edited by Bob Rapfogel.

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- Excerpts from the following videos and films: (1) "World of Discovery – Last Charge of the Rhino" from FilmRise; (2) "Demand for rhino horn in Asia fuels African poaching crisis | WWF" from WWF International; (3) "Rhino Poaching for Horn" from Shenry923 YouTube

channel; (4) "Save the Rhino, Not its Horn – Trailer #1" from Maxim Wanderlust; (5) "The Rhino War || Full Documentary with subtitles" from Superb Documentaries; (6) "Rhino poaching: After the killing" from Mail & Guardian; (7) "Bloody rhino horn trade in Vietnam – BBC News" from BBC News; (8) cow inside a slaughterhouse by Bob Rapfogel/Meat Your Future; (9) "How It's Made – Hatchery Chicks" from the Science and Discovery channels; (10) undercover investigation at Hy-Line Hatchery from Mercy for Animals; (11) the documentary Earthlings from Nation Earth; and (12) "La Industria de la Leche en México" from Igualdad Animal.