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UPDATE

# Lions, Tigers, Pigs Et Al; Animals Missing From Unfenced SA Sanctuary

A Witness Steps Forward

SAL Political Snitch - Copyright 1-9-2008

(UPDATE: Click for a partial list of some of the animals, that have been housed, and reported "dead," at the unregulated facility. If any readers know more about the fate or location of these animals, or others, please [contact the Lightning.](#))

Jeannette Ferro, an animal rescuer in Louisiana, thought she was doing the right thing when she entrusted 100+ potbellied pigs and thousands of dollars with a local, Texas sanctuary.

Now she says the "orphanage" won't answer questions about the disposition of the pigs.

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Hundreds of wild animals, including lions, tigers and others are unaccounted for by the Wild Animal Orphanage (WAO) which operates two facilities in San Antonio -- one is 102 acres of unfenced land, which is unlicensed, but still "shelters" dangerous and exotic animals. (See stories below.)

Despite State, County and City law, no retaining fence has ever been installed, and if the animals escape their crude enclosures they will be free to roam the streets.

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The animal sanctuary, run by Carol Asvestas, continues to be the target of probes by numerous Federal, State and local agencies.

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The following is a letter sent to the Lightning by Ms Ferro:

This is Jeannette Ferro, President and founder of Nanny's Fannys, Mini Pig & Animal Rescue, Inc in Louisiana.

I wanted to let you know I have asked for an investigation as to what happened to 100+ potbellied pigs sent to Wild Animal Orphanage on January 31, 2000. I say "100+" because some of the females were pregnant. The pigs were confiscated from a breeder in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana and the owner charged and convicted of animal neglect and cruelty.

It took me 3 months to place those pigs. The breeder had taken 2 mini pigs and within a 2 year period, had a herd with over 100 pigs. He couldn't afford to feed them, spay and neuter them, provide any other kind of medical care for them, nor house and confine the pigs in a properly fenced area.

Animal control and the sheriff's office finally confiscated the pigs after repeated complaints from neighbors.

Carol Avestas (Wild Animal Orphanage) agreed to take them. At the time she was a board member of The American Sanctuary Association, and I had heard and knew nothing but good about her and her sanctuary.

She required I send her \$4,500.00 up front that she said would be used to build a large barn and fence off several acres for the pigs. It was agreed that she would not adopt the pigs out as they were all inbred pigs and not in the best of health, and because they had already been traumatized enough in their little short lives.

The \$4,500.00 was collected from the general public through television news casts and newspaper articles covering the rescue in order to save the pigs. I also solicited funds from larger nonprofit animal rescue organizations.

Carol Asvestas also solicited funds on her own to her donor base and other nonprofit organizations. She mailed out one newsletter giving a woman credit for donating \$5,000.00 from her foundation and was thanked by Carol for "saving the pigs." Neither my name nor contributions were mentioned.

I later sent her another \$500.00 of my own money as well as donating 3 pieces of jewelry for which Carol advised me she received \$1,500.00 for.

I called numerous times and spoke with Asvestas about the pigs and repeatedly requested photos of them and their new barn and fenced in acreage. While she agreed to send photos, she never did.

All I ever got from her was, "They're fine!"

This went on for several years. I began to hear rumors that the pigs were no longer there and some people had never seen or heard about 100+ mini pigs at WAO. I then found out that Ron (Asvestas) and one of his workers brought a large truck in within 2 months after the pigs' arrival at WAO and took them all off.

No one knows where they were taken to. I fear the worst.

Carol did tell me several months in that she sent approximately 40 pigs to one of her board member's home, but that the pigs were near by and she could and did check on them regularly. She assured me she had the rest of them. Again, she would not reveal to where or to whom she sent my babies.

"They're fine!" is all I ever got from her. I then spoke to the professional animal transporter who took the pigs to WAO, along with other animals from another abuse case in Tangipahoa Parish. Two of that parish's humane investigators accompanied the transporter to deliver all the animals.

I paid for the entire amount of the transport fees out of the donated funds for the pigs. The other animals were several fox, a capucin monkey and his "blanky", and some wolves.

I have no idea what happened to those other animals either.

Carol/WAO has always advertised to the general public as being a "no kill sanctuary" where "animals that would have otherwise been killed" were allowed to live out their lives in peace at WAO.

I'm told WAO has solicited (with photos) for the care of certain animals when those animals were no longer alive.

I'm sure you are aware that there are currently formal investigations being conducted by several agencies. I filed a formal complaint for my little pigs to be included in the investigations.

I want to know once and for all what those people did with my little pigs.

For 3 seemingly never ending months I worried, lost sleep over, couldn't eat, and cried over those pigs. I had never taken on such a large rescue on my own before. Once committed, I was scared to death that I wouldn't be able to pull it off and those pigs would end up being killed.

I trust you will not do anything with the information I am sharing with you that would interfere or disrupt the ongoing investigations.

As it seems now, those babies would probably have been better off without my interference. They would have been killed, but their nightmares would have ended with their deaths. I have no idea what other horrors they were forced to endure after I sent them off that day.

I have lived all this time with strong guilt and a very heavy heart and never forgetting those little faces. That money needs to be refunded, but my main concern is to once and for all find out what those people did with these babies.

I would love to be face to face with Carol Asvestas and have her tell me the truth.

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Asvestas refuses to talk to the Lightning, and has made threats as well.

She is offered unedited free space here to respond.

More to follow.

- DEVELOPING -