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Carriage Company in New Orleans Disposed of Dead Mule Before SPCA Could Conduct Autopsy

January 23, 2015 by Donny Moss

Will the death of mule on the street during rush hour finally bring attention to the plight of the beasts of burden who pull 9-person carriages in the hot and chaotic streets of New Orleans? Evlin Lake, a local activist and one of the lone voices for the downtrodden mules, is desperately hoping it will.



On January 19th, the Nola Defender, a local newspaper, reported that “the death of a mule caused traffic delays” in the French Quarter. If it wasn’t for that article and the photo that accompanied it, neither Ms. Lake nor the Louisiana SPCA, which is responsible for humane law enforcement (HLE), would have learned about the mule’s death.

Amanda Pumilia, the SPCA’s Animal Control Supervisor, told TheirTurn, “We would have liked to investigate the death, but they dragged the mule away on a flatbed truck.” The SPCA does not know which mule died or the carriage company that hauled him or her away.

The SPCA's HLE department responds to cruelty complaints, but it does not patrol the streets on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the mule-drawn carriage drivers obey the law. According to local activists, the lack of enforcement gives the drivers free rein to overload their carriages and work in the extreme heat.



On January 19th, when the unidentified mule died in the street, Ms. Lake quickly organized a rally to raise awareness of the tragic incident. Two local carriage drivers posing as “reporters from Philadelphia” kept her fully occupied to prevent her from speaking to tourists, but a fellow activist did manage to capture video of a distressed mule, which, activists say, is a common site in French Quarter.

“In New Orleans, the mules really suffer,” said Ms. Lake. “They work in the sweltering heat and humidity amongst rowdy, drunk tourists. I often see them foaming at the mouth. How could anyone think this is okay? The mules here have it just as bad as, if not worse, than the horses in New York and mules in Charleston, but, sadly, our victims don’t seem to attract much media attention.”

The mule-drawn carriage drivers argue that they treat their animals – the source of their livelihood – well.

Please sign the [Change.org](#) petition directed to city and state elected officials to ban mule-drawn carriages in New Orleans.