

Interview with Shannon Tweedie, editor of The Abolitionist



Corey Wrenn, Roanoke Vegan Examiner
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Shannon Tweedie, freelance journalist, writer, and editor of "The Abolitionist"

Credits: Shannon Tweedie

In celebration of [World Vegan Month](#), I will be hosting a collection of interviews with vegan abolitionists from across the globe. I'm excited to have this opportunity to showcase vegan activists and give a face to our beautiful movement. Be sure to check back for regular installments throughout the month of November.

Today's featured vegan abolitionist is Shannon Tweedie, freelance journalist, writer, and editor of *The Abolitionist*. Shannon is from London, England.

Shannon, tell us a little about yourself...

In April, 2006, a few months after Hurricane Katrina ripped up the coast of New Orleans, a dear mate and I drove 24 hours south from Wisconsin to live in a lovely grassroots effort called [Emergency Communities](#) which served donated food from all over the USA. Since meat, milk, and eggs were perishable, the food was all fresh and vegan. Fresh chicory coffee, cornbread, soyamilk, granola, and fresh greens littered the place. I thought "I could do this for the rest of my life", and I did. Activism has been a slow climb, and only in 2011 have I finally realized the moral implications of what I know to be true. Once you go vegan, you can never, ever, really go back. I am an [abolitionist vegan](#) and will be for the rest of my days; I am involved in a mass research project now, writing a journalistic article which will present abolitionism to a mainstream news audience; and my next endeavor is to study to become a vegan nutritionist.

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What do you think should be the focus of the non-human animal rights movement?

The plight of non-human animals *and* humanity are so interlinked that I simply see no distinction in the protection of interests. One need not take precedence over the other, but they interlock in a grand harmony that cannot be pulled apart. Speciesism means that humans and non-human animals should be contained in a hierarchy; I reject that. Somebody once said to me: "When the dog-rescuer drives by a group of starving human beings, we know we are failing." Does anybody sincerely believe that the phenomenally small amount of animal protection and rescue and moral consideration in our world hinders our goal to further protect and rescue other humans? Because vegans see how non-human animals are invaluable and individual and beautiful, it is no secret that human beings are just as significant to us!

What are some of the biggest obstacles to reaching our goals?

Cultural outreach and breaking the barriers inside long-rooted tradition is going to be the most difficult step to take. An Irish university student brought up on a "meat n' potatoes" diet will see the road to veganism different than a Hindu vegetarian brought up drinking the milk of her cow.

Advocacy takes me from introvert to extrovert. To find the right expressions to advocate veganism is quite an endeavor, since we all have different talents. I have so much emotion inside at times about the plight of other species that is hard to express - that is why I am a writer. That is why [Leah Comerford](#) is an artist. That is why [Rob Johnson](#) expresses himself through philosophy. We need to harness those expressions.

How is your activism impacted by where you live?

I definitely encourage and support the written word about abolitionism; the blog-sphere already supports abolitionism from the UK to New Zealand and America. I am seeing an increasing number of mentions in other written endeavors online. In Britain, [Vegan:UK](#) who operate out of Aberdeen have created a great zine: *The Abolitionist*. I hope to create a media storm and spark controversy in Britain after presenting my article to *The Independent* or *The Guardian* early next year.

What are some ideas you have for increasing the abolitionist presence in the animal rights movement?

I live in London, one of the most multicultural and bustling nations on earth... and people come up to me and ask "What's an abolitionist?" Veganism, and abolitionism specifically, needs to weave its way into the media by way of radio, journalism, writing, and public speaking so that it



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Corey Wrenn's Preferred Links

- [The Abolitionist Approach](#)
- [Vegan Freak: Being Vegan in a Non-Vegan World](#)
- [On Human-Nonhuman Relations](#)
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- [Vegan Essentials](#)
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reaches a mass audience. With that, I say, contact me if you want to create a podcast!

Suggested by the author:

- > [It's World Vegan Day...so where are the vegans?](#)
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By Corey Wrenn
Roanoke Vegan Examiner

Corey Wrenn is a doctoral candidate in sociology currently researching the vegan movement. She is an abolitionist vegan and is adviser to a...

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