

# What is the AETA?

The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act is a federal law written and lobbied for by big corporations to protect commercial interest in animal use and exploitation. President George W. Bush signed the AETA into law on November 27, 2006 at the urging of corporate lobbying group, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). ALEC is largely funded by corporations that have gained massive profits at the expense of animals. The Act subverts the constitutionally protected First and Fifth Amendment rights of individuals to free speech, assembly, and due process in order to give free rein to big corporations to continue exploiting animals uninhibited by animal rights activists.

The law's unconstitutionally overbroad and vague language makes it difficult for an individual to know if acts of expression or protest could land the individual in prison indicted as a "terrorist." It also leaves room for abusive discretion on the part of government agents regarding whom they choose to target for federal prosecution. In general, the Act treats corporate profits as superior to constitutionally protected rights such as picketing, leafletting, public rallies and boycotts.

Individuals convicted under the Act face severe punishment such as long federal prison sentences, massive fines, and are branded "terrorists" for the rest of their life – punishments that are way out of line with the federal sentencing guideline for similar offenses.

The AETA has the potential to chill protected forms of activism. Assigning harsh federal prison sentences and excessive fines for ambiguous activities which the government arbitrarily labels "terrorism" would make any person think twice before engaging in any form of animal rights activism. Protest and public advocacy are not terrorism under any reasonable definition; they are, rather, at the root of our democracy.

# What Can I Do?

**Share** this information with others. Contact us for more copies to distribute at your workplace, school, or community.

**Organize** an event in your community and make a presentation about the AETA.

**Continue** working for animal welfare. Don't let abusive corporations win! There are lawyers available to support you if the FBI comes knocking.

**Write** a letter to your local newspaper about the AETA and why you think it should be repealed.

**Contact** your elected representatives and let them know how you feel about the AETA. Organize a group of people in your community to contact elected officials. Demand a meeting with them to discuss how the AETA is a threat to basic constitutional principles. Contact us for more materials to help with organizing a letter writing campaign, petition drive, or to prepare yourself for a meeting with your elected officials.

**Join** the Civil Liberties Defense Center. We are a non-profit organization of grassroots activists, concerned citizens and lawyers working to defend activists in the courts. Help us work toward getting the AETA declared unconstitutional by the courts, raising further awareness, building public pressure, and mobilizing people locally and nationally to abolish the AETA. We need your help to succeed!

## Join us! Abolish the AETA!

For more information, check out [www.cldc.org](http://www.cldc.org) or contact us at [aeta@cldc.org](mailto:aeta@cldc.org).

Identification Order 4681  
July 4, 2008

FBI No. 661,124,938 D

# WANTED BY FBI

## PRIMATE 4-815162342

ALIASES: Koko, Babyface Koko, "Too Cute" Koko

NCIC: D0D009P7PID01  
Entered NCIC 7-4-08



Photograph taken September 2007 prior to captivity.

### DESCRIPTION

AGE: 18 months BUILD: slight  
HEIGHT: 11" EYES: green  
WEIGHT: 9 pounds HAIR: gray and brown  
REMARKS: may be wearing shorter hair and false mustache  
Warrants have been issued in Federal court for the immediate return of Primate 4-815162342 following his escape from Amalgamated Labs in June 2008 so that cruel and unnecessary experimentation may continue.

### CAUTION

Primate 4-815162342 is wanted by Federal officers for inciting human beings to sympathize with animal victims of scientific research and for instigating them to care about animal welfare within the industrial system. **WARNING:** Consider cute and extremely lovable.

**Known associates include opponents of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act and supporters of the Civil Liberties Defense Center**



CIVIL LIBERTIES DEFENSE CENTER

# What does the AETA do?

- It violates constitutionally protected First Amendment rights by deterring protests, leafleting, boycotts, and participation in animal rights or environmental organizations. While the AETA does not explicitly prohibit these activities, its vague and broad language scares people from participating in these activities for fear of being branded “terrorists,” and it has given rise to federal prosecutions for these very acts.
- It exploits the public’s fear of terrorism in the wake of 9/11 by utilizing rhetoric that demonizes animal rights activists despite the fact that animal rights activism has never cost a single human life in the history of the U.S. animal rights movement. Instead, the movement consistently advocates respect of all living beings.
- It is unnecessary and redundant, because it prohibits activities that are already crimes, such as burglary, criminal mischief, and trespassing. Further, its predecessor law, the Animal Enterprise Protection Act (AEPA), had already provided protection to animal exploitation industries and was only used twice since its passage in 1992.
- The AETA punishes people for their ideology, not their actions, because it prescribes disproportionately harsher penalties for violations of its provisions compared to similar crimes.
- It deters the investigation of animal enterprises that may be breaking the law, because an illegal animal enterprise operation is still protected under the AETA.
- It diverts government resources from investigations of real threats, such as anti-abortionists (who killed 7 people since 1977), and violent white supremacists and militia figures (killed 5 people in 2003, and were responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing)
- It favors corporate interests over your First Amendment rights.
- It opens the door for similar laws that could target other legitimate environmental and social justice movements.
- Silencing dissent in this way violates the rights of all citizens.

# Impact of the AETA

*(As of June, 2010; check [www.cldc.org](http://www.cldc.org) for updates):*

Using the Internet to threaten to destroy an FBI building by explosives will land you one year in federal prison. Mailing anthrax threats to a U.S. attorney will get you five years in federal prison. But using sidewalk chalk to write animal rights slogans and using the Internet to look up professors that engage in animal testing research, under the AETA, will land you up to 10 years in federal prison.

## AETA 4:

On 2/20/09, Joe Buddenburg, Maryam Khajavi, Nathan Pope, and Adriana Stumpo were arrested and charged with federal conspiracy to violate the AETA in San Jose, California. The indictment lists three acts: a home demo of a UC Santa Cruz professor and chanting animal rights slogans (i.e. “picketing”) and using sidewalk chalk to write “defamatory” messages; trespassing and allegedly getting into a fight with an occupant of the house; using the internet to look up information on bio-medical researchers at UC Santa Cruz. The AETA 4 are currently awaiting trial, and if convicted of these “federal conspiracy and terrorist crimes,” they will face between 5-10 years of federal prison, and huge fines.

## SLC 2:

On 3/5/09, William Viehl, 22, and Alex Hall, 20, were arrested and indicted on two counts of violating the AETA in Federal Court, Salt Lake City, UT. The indictment accuses the pair in connection with the 2008 release of 300 minks from a South Jordan, Utah fur farm. Viehl plead to the AETA count and was sentenced to 24 months in prison, supervised release for 36 months, joint restitution of \$66,753, and no contact with the ALF. Hall also plead guilty to the AETA count and will be sentenced 6/30/10. The SLC 2 are the first to be convicted of the AETA.

## JORDAN HALLIDAY:

Utah animal rights activist Jordan Halliday was jailed on 3/12/09 for refusing to testify before a grand jury about his political beliefs and associations with the Utah animal rights community. Halliday invoked his right to remain silent, and rights to speech and association, and was held in civil contempt of court for refusing to testify. He was jailed for four months before being released. In an exceptional act of retaliation and political bias, the U.S. Attorneys office has now indicted Halliday for criminal contempt. Halliday is currently awaiting trial on this charge, scheduled for 7/19/10. This will be a major precedent setting case.

## SCOTT DEMUTH - Iowa AETA:

In November 2009, U.S. attorneys in the Southern District of Iowa subpoenaed Scott DeMuth, a 22-year old grad student, to testify before a federal grand jury investigating an incident involving the ALF that had occurred five years prior — just days before the 5-year statute of limitations expired. DeMuth refused to testify. In clear retaliation, the prosecutor had DeMuth indicted under the AETA for conspiring to commit the break-in, despite the fact that the statute of limitations had expired; they indicted DeMuth retroactively (the break-in occurred in 2004, but the AETA was not enacted until 2006), and DeMuth was a minor at the time of the break-in. DeMuth awaits trial in September 2010.

In addition, DeMuth’s former girlfriend, Carrie Feldman, was summoned before the same grand jury. She withheld cooperation as a matter of principle and was jailed for four months for civil contempt before being released in March 2010.

**Civil Liberties Defense Center**

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