

In support of retiring the Carriage Horses of New York City – by Lynda Spillane

Tradition once forced 100,000 women in Japan to become Geishas.

No choices.

No dignity.

Today there are 100 Geishas left in Tokyo.

By choice.

Tradition once meant that in order to be given certain jobs in China men were castrated.

No choice.

It was carried out when the men were under age.

Not today.

Tradition once meant that slavery in the United States was a legal institution.

No choice.

No Freedom.

No dignity.

Not today.

The thirteenth amendment formally outlawed slavery.

**Tradition is no reason to continue doing something.**

From 1858 Central Park Carriage drawn horses have been available for hire to take tourists on a ride through central park.

In 1858 there were no taxis in NYC.

In 1858, NYC was a safe place for the Carriage Horses.

In 1858 NYC had a population of 813,000.

That's the equivalent population to Austin Texas today.

Today NYC has 8.5 million people.

That's more than 10 times the people in 1858 when the Carriage horses were introduced.

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In 1858 there were 0 cars in NYC.

The first car did not arrive until 1895.

The carriage horses enjoyed 37 years working happily without cars.

Today there are 2 million cars in NYC!

We expect these horses to do the same job today as they were doing in 1858.

**One hundred and fifty seven years later!!!**

Yet their environment is not even remotely like it was in 1858.

High density living.

Millions of people.

Loud noise.

In 1858 0 people were killed in car accidents – there were no cars!

In 2013 155 people were killed in car accidents. Over 15,000 injured.

In 2014 263 killed. Over 16,000 injured.

In the past year there have been more than 30 accidents involving carriage horses.

At least seven carriage horses have died.

Two horses bolting out of sheer panic in the middle of 21<sup>st</sup> century New York City traffic and noise.

A horse crashed and collapsed when he was expected to cope with a bus that roared it's way past him inches away from him.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century leisurely pulling people through central park would have been a good life.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is hell.

Imagine for a moment.

Let me take you on a ride.

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You walk 1 – 2 miles in dangerous rush-hour traffic from your stall in Hell's Kitchen to Central Park.

Sometimes in stinking humidity, sometimes in freezing temperatures.

You haven't seen green pasture for a very long time even though it is well known amongst the veterinary community that you desperately need green pasture to lead a healthy life.

When you get to Central Park you stand for hours.

If you're lucky you'll get to closely follow the worst smelling fumes coming from the car or bus in front of you. Inches in front of you.

You work nine hour days, every day.

If you have a sneaky owner you'll work longer because he knows how to get around the rules.

There's no day off for rest.

Every single day you pull a carriage that weighs hundreds of pounds on hard unforgiving pavement.

You're frightened most of the time because the number of cars and buses crammed on the streets where you walk is terrifying.

The noise is often deafening.

And they sometime honk their horns so loudly it makes you jump in fright.

One of your mates actually got spooked out and tried to escape.

But he was caught by a human and put straight back to work.

The accidents are increasing. It's getting worse.

There were more than 30 accidents in the past few years alone -- but those are just the known accidents reported by the public.

No one talks about the stuff that goes on when no one's looking.

At the end of the day you travel 1-2 miles again through dangerous rush hour traffic

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to your stalls in stables in Hell's Kitchen by the Lincoln Tunnel and the busy West Side Highway.

Someone once called it, "The sad-eyed horse carriage district" and he'd be right.

After you work these unsafe streets you will probably be sold to auctions in Pennsylvania.

Maybe it would be ok if you all then had a nice life out on the pasture.

But no, this does not happen.

You are sold to kill-buyers who transport you all to Mexico or Canada where you are brutally slaughtered for exported meat.

## **PAUSE**

Let me tell you about some of the horror on New York's streets.

On September 26, 2013 a horse named Chris spooked and bolted through Columbus Circle, sideswiped a car and flipped the carriage.

Chris was pinned under the overturned carriage and freed after a group of bystanders lifted the rig off of his hind legs.

The driver, Frank Luo, owner of Manhattan Carriage Co, had been charged just the previous day for operating a carriage for more than 12 hours in a 20-hour period, and for overcharging riders.

On August 16, 2012 a spooked horse took off into the busy traffic, dumped the driver and two passengers, struck two cars, split the carriage in two, and ran for four blocks before being captured. The two passengers and the driver were treated for minor injuries. Oreo was tranquilized before being taken back to the stables.

On June 8, 2012 a carriage horse named Doreen was smacked by an SUV in Columbus Circle. Her head cracked the windshield.

On October 23, 2011 Charlie dropped dead on 54th Street, minutes after leaving his stable. A necropsy revealed that he died with an ulcerated stomach and a fractured tooth.

On November 3, 2010 a New York City bus hit a carriage horse during rush hour. The horse was grazed by the bus on 7th Avenue, at around 54th street. A witness said the horse was evidently frightened out of his wits.

On September 19, 2009 a cab plowed into a horse-drawn carriage near Central Park. Both drivers were taken to the hospital.

On December 14, 2007 carriage driver Cornelius Byrne was arrested on bribery charges of paying \$100 to an undercover investigator to overlook violations at his stable. He is still in business today.

On September 14, 2007 a horse that was spooked by a street performer's drum ran nearly a block along the sidewalk before slamming into a tree, collapsing and dying. The horse's panicking caused a second horse, which was still attached to a carriage, to dart into traffic and collide with a car.

On June 2, 2007 a spooked horse, which was pulling a carriage, was hit by an SUV at an intersection after the horse galloped away from his driver. When the horse fell, the carriage broke loose, was propelled into the air, and landed on the curb, barely missing pedestrians.

On April 28, 2006 a young horse being trained to pull carriages became spooked and bolted, colliding with, and critically injuring an elderly bicyclist in Central Park.

On January 3, 2006 a horse got spooked and galloped into a station wagon on Ninth Avenue and 50th Street on his way back to the stable. The carriage driver was hospitalized in critical condition with a fractured skull. The horse was pinned under a car for half an hour and later died.

Horses and heavy city traffic are a deadly mix. Horses are in a constant state of terror.

**This is no longer 1858!**  
**This is 2015 traffic in NYC.**

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## **It's hell for these beautiful animals.**

### **PAUSE**

The smoke and exhaust fumes from our traffic today are also dangerous for horses.

In a study by veterinarian Jeffie Roszel, "tracheal washes and samples from respiratory secretions of these horses showed enormous lung damage, the same kind of damage you would expect from a heavy smoker."

Horses' nostrils are usually only 3 to 3 1/2 feet above street level, so these animals are "truly ... living a nose-to-tailpipe existence."

Carriage horses are constantly walking and standing on hard streets, therefore lameness and hoof deterioration are inevitable.

### **PAUSE**

What could be more romantic than a leisurely carriage ride on a warm summer evening?

In the late 1980s, Whitey, a nine-year-old gelding, collapsed while pulling a carriage during a summer heat wave in New York City. A passing nurse gave Whitey an IV saline solution, and sympathetic police officers sprayed him with cool water for two hours. Eventually Whitey managed to get back on his feet. Another carriage horse, Misty, died from apparent heat exhaustion during the same heat wave.

### **PAUSE**

**How many more accidents will there need to be before this city council replaces these suffering animals with a viable solution in the form of electric carriages?**

**What kind of accident will it take?**

Let's not forget Pumpkin?

Pumpkin was waiting at the hack line at Central Park South when something spooked him and he bolted, charging into the park, dragging his driverless carriage – coming at people. A tourist jumped into the carriage trying to control him.

His driver was on the sidewalk and obviously not paying attention – something often seen.

Mets outfielder Matt den Dekker, who was in the area, tweeted "*Almost got ran over by a horse carriage running wild through the city.*"

What would have happened if he had been trampled and permanently injured or killed?

**Would it have been a game changer?**

It is only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured or killed.

**Do we need a human death first?**

**Is that what we're waiting for?**

Well...how many innocent pedestrians need to be killed before the City decides it's too many?

How much money does the city need to be sued for?

When will the New York city council start taking responsibility for the tourists and visitors who come to New York believing they will live to go home again after an enjoyable visit?

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## **PAUSE**

And all for what?

There is a viable solution.

The electric carriage is available. It doesn't require the expense of maintaining the health and feed of horses. It doesn't require the cost of housing that the horses need. The electric carriage will work in all weather conditions.

The electric carriage doesn't drop poop everywhere costing the city thousands of dollars in clean-up. The electric carriage does not provide any health risks.

The electric carriage is a sound business case for those who operate in this industry – yes – they will be better off. They will make more profit.

**THIS IS A NO-BRAINER NEW YORK CITY**

**I ask you...how many deaths will it take?**