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TO THE RESCUE

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: **THE TRUTH BEHIND GRAND CANYON'S** **HAVASUPAI FALLS**

by Karen Pomroy



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As you hike down the eight-mile stretch of switchback trails and rough terrain, you experience the serene beauty as you anticipate reaching the bottom of one of the most beautiful places on Earth, Havasupai Falls, where tourists from all over the world make the long journey from their home countries to feel the magic and visit this enchanted site. If you hike, you need to be in good shape to handle the steep terrain and treacherous footing. Hiking is one way of getting in and out of the canyon. Another is by helicopter; although a wonderful and easy way to arrive at the bottom, you may have to wait for hours to get a thrilling ride on the "chopper."

There is one other way to visit Havasupai Falls...on horseback. In fact, if you hike, you will pass by several strings of horses and mules carrying heavy packs, supplies, and tourists. Truly a sight to be seen. It feels like the Wild, Wild West, and what a memory to hold on to for life.

Behind the scenes, however, is a horrible abuse that many are not aware of. Horses and mules are burdened down with packs so heavy they collapse in the hot sun, only to be beaten, kicked and forced to stand in order to reach the top of the canyon where there is no shelter, water or rest. Upon arrival at "hilltop," they are forced back down the eight-mile stretch, with a new load. The brutality has existed for decades. Only a few know the truth behind the scenes. Hundreds of horses and mules have suffered at the hands of their owners, being abused so badly that they could barely stand, and at times were left to die.



Above right: Samson had been beaten to the point of blindness and left with a broken nose. He now resides at Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary where he will live in sanctuary for the rest of his life, never to be abused again.

Meet Samson: When Equine Voices heard about Samson. We had to help. In October 2016 we received a call from Stop Animal Violence (SAVE) who asked if we could help a horse in Havasupai who had been beaten to the point of blindness and left with a broken nose. His knee was permanently injured from being forced to navigate the canyon a minimum

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Brownie, one of four horses who left the canyon in April 2016. His abuse was so severe, it took over a year to rehabilitate him.

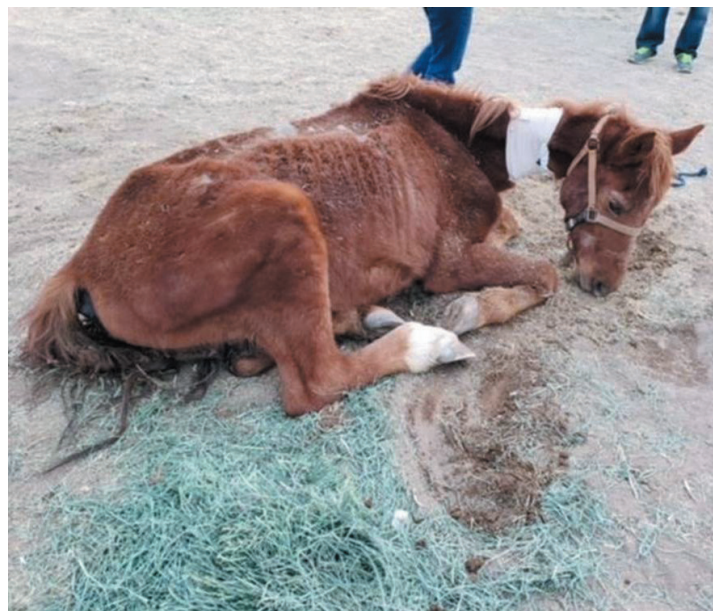
of five times each day. Samson was walked out of the canyon by then Ranch Manager of Equine Voices, Ricky Williams, and Ranch Manager of Healing Hearts Animal Refuge, Adam White. A six-hour trek, one step at a time, they finally made it to hilltop where he would be loaded onto a trailer to Flagstaff prior to his long journey home to safety. Samson is one of the lucky ones. He now resides at Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary where he will live in sanctuary for the rest of his life, never to be abused again. He is here to tell his story and to help stop this violence and abuse.

Watch a video of Sampson being rescued:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KztmZKSzYg>

Meet Brownie: Brownie, one of four horses who left the canyon in April 2016, was used as evidence in the Leland Joe animal cruelty case. Brownie's abuse was so severe, it took over a year to rehabilitate him. Blinded in one eye by his attacker, he will never see fully again.

Meet Elliot: Elliot was left tied with no food or water, was left completely tacked with his saddle and bridle for ten days. Scars and maggot infestation took over Elliot's body.

Just last month, Twiggy, a horse rescued from Havasupai reservation, did not survive the abuse inflicted on him. Emaciated and beaten, he had to be euthanized.



Twiggy, a recent victim of Havasupai Falls abuse.

As recently as last month, a horse, name unknown, was seen by a tourist after collapsing with packs so heavy he could no longer carry the weight on his back. Too weak to stand, he was being beaten and kicked in the face by his handler/ owner. He is still working in the canyon.

Meet Moab and Sedona: In March of 2017 Healing Hearts made the very emotional journey to Flagstaff to rescue two Havasupai Horses. It was heartbreaking to hear that Moab could barely walk without falling, and that Sedona had survived a fall off the switchback the prior month, despite a lack of medical care. Their 8-mile journey up the canyon and respite in Flagstaff was their first breath of freedom and compassion in years. It takes a village to be part of a rescue effort like this. The continuum of care at Healing Hearts involved immediate x-rays, medical and dental care for

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Horses and mules are burdened down with packs so heavy they collapse in the hot sun, only to be forced to stand in order to reach the top of the canyon where there is no shelter, water or rest.

both (especially for Sedona, who's teeth were worn to her gumline), and in-depth farrier work. Both horses are now thriving, social and expected to live very long lives.

These are only a few of the atrocities inflicted on the equines who reside in this place of heaven. For the horses, it's a place of hell. So many have not only suffered at the hands of their owners, but died painful and tragic deaths. Still, it continues, day in and day out. These animals are forced to

endure record high heat in the summer and brutally cold days and nights in the winter. Food, water, proper hoof care and overall proper treatment of the horses and mules is lacking by far. Something must be done. Rescues are not the answer, change is. Notifying the public about the horrific offenses to these hard working, majestic creatures is the only true way to help save these animals in need. If you decide you want to visit one of the most magical places on earth, please think twice before riding a horse or a mule—and think twice before using them to pack your supplies.



It was heartbreaking to hear that Moab could barely walk without falling, and that Sedona had survived a fall off the switchback the prior month, despite a lack of medical care.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP THE HAVASUPAI HORSES AND MULES:

CONTACT:

If you witness abuse, neglect, starvation, horses tied without food or water for days, report the abuse to:

LAURA NARANJO,

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Justice Services (OJS)
District III Office, Special Agent in Charge
email: laura.naranjo@bia.gov

Please also contact the following organizations/ individuals and demand that they take immediate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all Havasupai pack animals.

ABBIE FINK,

the tribe's Public Relations Representative
602-957-8881
email: afink@hmapr.com
<https://hmapr.com/>
www.facebook.com/HMAPublicRelations

WILDLAND TREKKING

1-800-715-4453
www.wildlandtrekking.com/havasupai-falls/havasupai-tours.html
www.facebook.com/WildlandTrekking/

ARIZONA OUTBACK ADVENTURES

1-866-455-1601
<https://aoa-adventures.com/arizona/havasupai-havasupai-falls/>
www.facebook.com/AOAadventures/

- Two of the largest outfitting/ guide companies who contract for the use of these animals to carry their gear and customers.
- These companies are complicit due to their silence.

TO HELP HORSES LIKE SAMSON, BROWNIE, AND PACE, DONATE TO:

EQUINE VOICES RESCUE & SANCTUARY

www.equinevoices.org
520-398-2814

HEALING HEARTS ANIMAL REFUGE

www.healingheartsaz.org
602-714-0241

ARIZONA COALITION FOR EQUINES

www.arizonacoalitionforequines.org

Please visit the SAVe Havasupai Horses Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/HavasupaiHorses
and website: <https://havasupaihorses.org/> 

Watch a video interview with
Karen about the abuse of
the Havasupai Horses:
<https://vimeo.com/275088642>

About the author:

Born in Nuremburg, Germany, Karen Pomroy, Founder of Equine Voices, traveled extensively around the world in her younger years. In 1994, after working in sales and marketing in Los Angeles, CA, Karen embarked on a backpacking trip to several developing countries, which changed her life forever. An avid animal lover, Karen has always had a passion for rescue and philosophically assisting in raising the level of compassion for all living beings. In 2004, Karen embarked on her lifelong passion by creating Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary, a nonprofit equine rescue located at the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains in Amado, AZ. Today, Equine Voices is run primarily by volunteers, a very small staff and a board of directors, and currently has 65 equines at the sanctuary and 16 Premarin mares in Canada. For more information on Equine Voices, log on to www.equinevoices.org



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