

## Project Chimps Lawsuit vs Alba and Vanderhoogt

Memo July 31, 2020 addressing recent misinformation



Some rumors and questions have recently been circulating about the lawsuit Project Chimps filed against former employees Crystal Alba and Lindsay Vanderhoogt.

**Rumor:** *HSUS (The Humane Society of the United States) is suing whistleblowers.*

**Truth:** HSUS is not involved in the lawsuit in any way and has no control over any aspect of the litigation or Project Chimps' operations. Project Chimps filed the lawsuit solely on its own behalf and in direct response to learning confidential human resource files were stolen and Alba shared information from documents taken during that hacking incident on her social media accounts.

**Rumor:** *Project Chimps does not provide adequate care to its chimpanzees.*

**Truth:** Project Chimps has fully cooperated with external agencies contacted by the defendants and others, and each of those agencies has completed inspections of our facilities and animal welfare. The results of these inspections are posted on our website under Reports, and *none of them identify any animal welfare violations*. Additionally, Dr. Steve Ross the Director of the Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes, will be completing an independent welfare assessment with public results expected to be available in October.

**Rumor:** *The lawsuit is intended to silence whistleblowers.*

**Truth:** The defendants were making false public statements about Project Chimps for five months and during that time Project Chimps never took legal action. The cybertheft was the triggering event for the lawsuit, which charges the defendants with claims including breach of contract, violation of computer systems protection and trade secrets laws.

**Rumor:** *The chimpanzees are prisoners with no enrichment.*

**Truth:** The chimpanzees live in dynamic social groups in complex, multi-storied, multi-roomed enclosures that include climate controlled indoor spaces and enclosed outdoor porches. These open to a forested multi-acre yard where the social groups take turns exploring, thus introducing themselves to other groups. All of these areas have structural enrichment such as vines, hammocks, bridges, tire swings, and climbers. Physical enrichment items such as stuffed animals, music, plastic toys, puzzles, and even movies are provided on a daily rotation. Additionally, two food-based enrichment items are provided daily between the three large meals.

**Rumor:** *The chimpanzees are suffering.*

**Truth:** The photos that are being used by protesters and detractors are of chimpanzees who had wounds that healed; all of the chimpanzees are in good health at present. Those images were often taken within minutes of an injury and are from the chimp's medical files. Appropriate care was administered in every one of these cases and the chimps are doing well.

**Rumor:** *There are 22 former employee whistleblowers.*

**Truth:** The number 22 comes from one document that the defendants have used in their claims with names and titles redacted, wrongfully implying all of the names on the list were former and current employees. In fact, the majority of the individuals who signed that document were never employees of Project Chimps and some are spouses of another individual on the list, thus increasing the number of individual names signed to that document.

**Rumor:** *Project Chimps is paying tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees.*

**Truth:** Project Chimps is fortunate to be represented in this case by a legal team for free.

To learn more about our response to these allegations and our organization, visit [projectchimps.org/about/truth](https://projectchimps.org/about/truth)