



# Interview with Regina Rheda, abolitionist author and translator



Corey Wrenn, Roanoke Vegan Examiner  
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Regina Rheda, abolitionist author and translator  
**Credits:** Regina Rheda

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 interview is with Regina Rheda of Florida who is an abolitionist author, [blogger](#), and translator.

**Regina, please tell us about yourself. How did you become vegan? What type of activism do you participate in?**

I'm a Brazilian writer living in Florida since 1999. I became a vegan when I was 43 years old after I saw an explanation on the internet about all the suffering and injustice that animals are subjected to in the industry from the moment they are born to the moment they are slaughtered. I was shocked and cried for hours. I swore that I'd never again consume anything that had been produced at the expense of animals. That very evening my meal (and my husband's) was completely plant-based and I never went back to animal products. My only regret is not having been a vegan much earlier in my life.

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I've been translating Gary Francione's [Abolitionist Approach](#) website (see "Translations/Portuguese" on the side bar) since 2006. I'm about to translate one of his books, [Introduction to Animal Rights: Your Child or The Dog](#), for one of the best university presses in Brazil.

I'm also a fiction writer with several books published in Brazil and US. My most recent novel, [HUMANA FESTA](#), which came out in 2008 with a major Brazilian publisher, has been considered by some analysts to be the first novel in the world to dwell upon veganism/animal rights. Because it is a work of imagination, my novel cannot (nor is its goal to) act as an objective, theoretical book or an educational pamphlet. Yet my novel has a vegan abolitionist worldview and among its main characters are animal rights activists who regard sentient animals as having a basic right not to be humans' property or resource. It conveys a serious message but has plenty of comic moments. I actually worked really, really hard and tried to create a literary work of art full of wit and poetry that would not be easily dismissed by critics as merely "preachy."

Besides spreading Francione's ideas on the web, I talk about veganism to people I meet and to people that read or listen to the interviews that I give about my vegan novel. And because I think that it is very important to show that vegan food can be really tasty, I also use to take delicious vegan food (and vegan wine) to the meetings that I'm invited to.

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

It should be to educate the public about the moral imperative of going vegan. Advocates should make clear that [veganism is the least – as opposed to the "supreme sacrifice" -- that people can do for the animals.](#)

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

One obstacle is that there are many animal "rights" advocates who perpetuate the misconception that people can help animals by being [ovo-lacto vegetarian or by eating organic or "humane" animal products](#). But that only makes the public feel OK about using animals, which puts the goal of ending animal exploitation even further away. As long as we're using animals for whatever purposes, we're harming animals. Another obstacle to reaching our abolitionist goal is the misconception that vegan food cannot be delicious. People don't really need to eat animal products; they do it because they think that animal products taste good. So it is very important to promote delicious and accessible vegan food during activism.

#### **How is your activism impacted by where you live?**

There are many vegans in the small city I live in (in north central Florida), so it's not that I'm speaking another

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### **Corey Wrenn's Preferred Links**

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language when I talk to people about abolitionist veganism. And, nowadays, we can all use the internet, too. My translations online of Francione's work have been making a considerable difference in the Brazilian animal advocacy movement since 2006. As for my novel *HUMANA FESTA*, it has brought veganism to the table within the Brazilian literary milieu and among Brazilian readers of fiction in general. It's been very well received by Brazilian animal advocates (especially vegans) who regard it as a form of solidarity with their struggle, and who can see themselves in its representation of collective mythology. In the US, my novel has been the subject of some essays and lectures with academics (vegan and nonvegan alike) specialized in human/nonhuman relationship in works of fiction. Some literature professors expect it to come out in English so that they can adopt it in their courses... and I'm looking for a publisher! :)

**Suggested by the author:**

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