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June 18, 2007

Mr. Mark G. Parker  
President and CEO  
NIKE, Inc.  
1 Bowerman Drive  
Beaverton, OR 97005-6453

Dear Mr. Parker:

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (The HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization with more than 10 million supporters, I write regarding the ongoing dogfighting investigation into an alleged large illegal dogfighting operation at a Virginia home owned by Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick. Specifically, this letter is to request that Nike disassociate itself from Vick and terminate its relationship with him as soon as is contractually feasible, based on evidence that suggests at least a tolerance for this barbaric practice.

We recognize that Mr. Vick has not been charged with a crime. But we know that Nike has high standards for its spokespersons, and we urge Nike to terminate its relationship with Vick as soon as is feasible.

As you know, in late April, the Surry County Sheriff's Office in Virginia raided Vick's 15-acre property and found evidence of an alleged illegal dogfighting operation, including blood splatters on the floor and a blood-stained, rolled-up carpet. Authorities also seized 66 dogs, some of them heavily scarred with gashes on their bodies, including one dog whose severely-injured leg was bent at a grotesque angle. In addition to the scarred dogs, police on Vick's property seized treadmills to exercise animals for fighting matches, and a "rape stand" -- a contraption that holds aggressive dogs in place for breeding.

When interviewed by a reporter, a store owner close to Vick's Virginia property stated, "Yeah, he comes in here often to buy supplies, lots of supplies, for the dogs, including things like syringes." Additionally, an informant has come forward to ESPN's *Outside the Lines*, placing Vick at dogfights in 2000. The Commonwealth Attorney for Surry County has publicly stated that he is confident dogfighting took place on Vick's property, and investigators on the scene agree.

Promoting the protection of all animals

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Federal authorities have now stepped in and are actively investigating this case, as are local law enforcement officials. At the very least, Mr. Vick was not vigilant enough and an unacceptable situation developed on one of his properties. It still remains to be seen whether all of the personal accounts and information about his role in dogfighting are sufficient to connect Mr. Vick to the alleged dogfighting operation.

Dogfighting is a widespread and particularly violent form of animal cruelty. During the fights, trained dogs suffer bloody mutilations, debilitating exhaustion and often death for the amusement of wagering spectators. Dogfighting is often associated with other criminal activities, including illegal weapons possession, narcotics and illegal gambling. Indeed, the raid on Mr. Vick's property was prompted by concerns about narcotics. In addition to the deaths of thousands of animals, media accounts report almost one murder a month associated with animal fighting in 2006. For these reasons, dogfighting is illegal in every state and a felony in forty-eight—including Virginia. In early May, President Bush signed legislation making violations of the federal law against dogfighting a felony.

Despite strong laws against the activity, organized dog fights occur throughout the country, at enormous cost to law enforcement and the communities they serve. The HSUS and law enforcement spend millions of dollars a year to combat animal fighting; even now, humane organizations are being asked to provide tens of thousands of dollars for care of the 66 dogs confiscated from the raid on Vick's property.

Once confined mainly to rural areas, dogfighting has metastasized in urban areas because of lyrics and images in rap music and hip hop culture that celebrate the practice. These social trends do not need a further boost from a possible association with a star athlete.

We trust Nike does not want to be associated with any celebrity who is linked to this odious form of animal cruelty. Air Tran Airways recently decided to drop Vick as a spokesperson because of the controversy surrounding these allegations, and we encourage Nike to do the same as soon as any contract terms permit.

Thank you for your attention to this situation. We look forward to continued correspondence on this issue so that we can report a positive resolution to our many concerned members. I encourage you to contact me at any time if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Pacelle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wayne Pacelle  
President and CEO