

RINGLING'S BIG CON

RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS

In a complaint filed with the U.S. government, a former Ringling Bros. employee says handlers batter elephants bloody and chain them inside train cars for days. Affidavit states: A handler beat an elephant's groin, "resulting in the metal hook penetrating the skin and causing an open wound from which blood began flowing." Another elephant was battered on his trunk, head and feet "until the handle of the bullhook shattered."

USDA #52-C-0137 (past #58-C-0106), 8607 Westwood Center Dr., Vienna, VA

22182: Ringling Bros. fails to meet basic standards for care of animals used in exhibition as required under the federal Animal Welfare Act. Ringling pays \$20,000 to settle U.S. Agriculture Dept. (USDA) charges related to lack of veterinary care for a dying baby elephant.

Ringling Bros. is routinely cited (but rarely penalized) for:

- trauma, physical harm and behavioral stress to animals;
- failure to possess records of veterinary care;
- dispensing expired medication;
- insufficient exercise, space and shade for animals;
- improper feeding, unsanitary food and dirty storage trucks;
- endangering tigers almost baked alive in poorly maintained enclosures.

In 2007, USDA has 4 open inquiries into Ringling Bros. Circus for deaths of a lion, age 2, a baby elephant, 8 months...abuse of an elephant with a bullhook...plus 2 elephants mis-handled in Puerto Rico. www.ringlingbeatsanimals.com



DEAD



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6/1/01: JASMINE

Endangered Bengal tiger, 7, is euthanized for chronic renal disease. Death is not publicized.

5/25/01: BIRKA

Elephant, 34, with abdominal neoplasia destroyed at breeding compound.

APR 12, 30 2001:

Two endangered Asian elephants succumb to chronic osteoarthritis. Deaths not publicized.

3/7/01: TIGER

Endangered Bengal tiger euthanized for tumors in ear canals, sinuses. Death not publicized.

8/5/00: ELEPHANT

Endangered Asian is euthanized due to degenerative osteoarthritis. Captivity-caused foot ailments/arthritis are top reasons for killing captive elephants.

8/1/00: TIGER

Endangered Bengal is destroyed due to degenerative osteoarthritis.

11/28/99: TEETCHIE

Endangered Asian elephant, 52, killed due to mass osteoarthritis joint deterioration + M. TB lung infection.

7/26/99: BENJAMIN

Elephant, 4, drowns in pond in Texas. Wild elephants nurse till 2 or 3, and stay alongside moms in herd until 10 or 12. Captured at 12-months, Benjamin is traumatized.

USDA records obtained under Freedom of Information Act (2003) show bullhook beatings cause "behavioral stress and trauma which precipitated in the physical harm and ultimate death of the animal." USDA never cites beatings and concludes "suddenly, without any signs of distress or struggle, Benjamin became unconscious and drowned."

2/22/99: SABRE

Horse fatally collapses in pre-circus parade in Scope Convention Ctr., Norfolk, VA. Ringling's vet is not on site at time of death. For years, Ringling knows this horse has asthma, but forces him to travel and perform anyway. Sabre's lungs finally hemorrhage during procession.

9/3/98: DOLLY

Asian Elephant Studbook, published by American Zoological and Aquarium Assoc., lists an elephant, 40, as dead. Ringling does not announce death.

5/22/98: SEETNA

Elephant, 30, is euthanized for prolonged dystocia (hard labor). In elephants dystocia often indicates the fetus is dead and decomposing in uterus.

8/31/98: GYPSY

Wild-caught sea lion, 12, is found dead in her travel crate in Moline, Illinois. In nature, sea lions may live 20 years.

1995: CITA, RANNI, RHANI & KAMAUDI

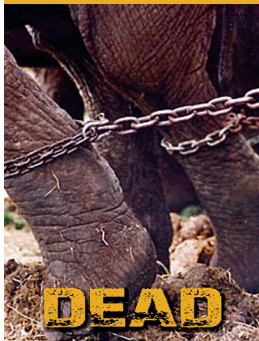
Asian Elephant Studbook lists these elephants dead: Cita, 53, Ranni, 53, Rhani, 45, Kamaudi, 34. Ringling doesn't announce deaths.

1/24/98: KENNY

Kenny, 3.5 years, prepares for his 3rd show in one day when he begins to bleed "profusely from his rectum." A Feld Entertainment legal document quotes veterinarian Dr. Gary West advising to, "not have Kenny perform the final show." But Kenny goes on...and dies one hour later. Kenny's lung tissue is tested for TB, but results are concealed. In a rare case of follow-through, USDA regulators find Ringling in violation of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

1/7/98: ARNIE

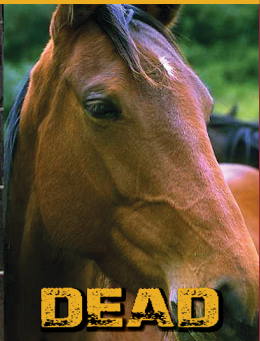
The Bengal tiger's shackles only come off when leaping through hoops or dashing over platforms under threat of a whip. He finally snaps during a photo shoot — lunging at trainer Graham Chipperfield's brother Richard. Graham Chipperfield pumps 5 bullets into Arnie at point-blank range, while the animal is locked inside his crate. In death, Arnie is finally free from shackles and abuse.



DEAD



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3/19/10: LIMA

A zebra escapes and dashes through downtown Atlanta for 40+ minutes. He is later euthanized for wounds incurred while loose.

1/8/10: JOSKY

A wild-caught Asian elephant girl, 43, is euthanized. Abducted from her natural home in 1967.

7/8/08: CALCUTTA

Asian elephant, 62, captured in wild in India and shipped to U.S. as infant, is euthanized.

SINCE 2007: BABIES

4 baby elephants die under Ringling's care. All deaths are controversial.

9/11/06: ELEPHANT

Endangered Asian dies from unreported causes.

9/12/05: BERTHA

Ringling doesn't report infant elephant birth or death.

8/31/05: GILDAH

Endangered Asian, wild-caught for Siegfried & Roy's, dies at Mirage Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. Feld refuses to do necropsy.

8/5/04: RICCARDO

8-month elephant dies after he slips mounting a training tub and shatters both legs. Ringling says he had "metabolic bone disorder." Necropsy shows active tuberculosis.

10/9/04: ROMA

Endangered Asian elephant, 44, is destroyed due to osteoarthritis. Necropsy shows tuberculosis.

7/13/04: CLYDE

Former Ringling lion handler Frank Hagan's affidavit states that a lion, 2, dies from heatstroke, dehydration inside poorly ventilated boxcar traveling across the Mojave Desert. No one checks or provides water for Clyde entire trip. USDA investigates.

7/1/04: ELEPHANT

Endangered Asian elephant suffers aortic aneurysm. Ringling doesn't announce death.

5/11/04: 2 HORSES

Freight train hits horses as unloading from circus

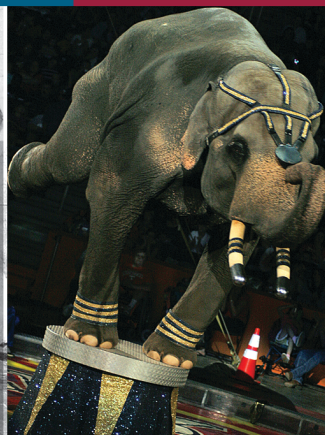
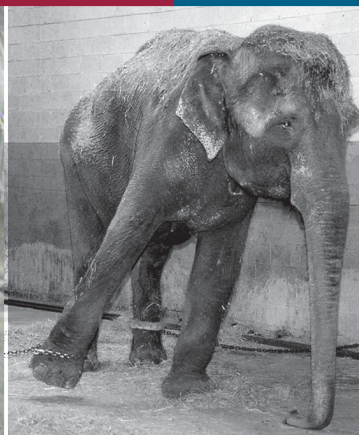
train near Dayton, Ohio. One horse dies instantly. Another is euthanized.

1/24/03: ELEPHANT

Endangered Asian is euthanized due to osteoarthritis. Death is not publicized.

12/22/02: KING TUSK

Endangered elephant, 57, is destroyed due to osteoarthritis. Captivity-related foot disorders are primary reason for euthanasia in confined elephants.





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THE BIG CON



USDA ignores evidence, halts investigations, contradicts its own inspectors, and permits Ringling's we-love-our-animals spin to fool the public and media.

Animals in circuses are the “most enriched animals on the face of the earth,” *John Kirtland, Ringling's executive director for animal stewardship* contends. So where are the treats and positive reinforcement? Circuses pack bullhooks, chains, ropes, cinch collars, shock prods, axe handles, baseball bats, metal pipes and whips. In comments filed with USDA, Ringling opposes a draft policy to ban hot shots, shocking collars, belts, ankuses.

SUBORDINATION-STYLE TRAINING

“Their training is fear-driven, revolving around punishing and hurting animals. The main weapon of education is the bullhook or ankus — like a heavy, sharp fireplace poker — and trainers hit elephants, repeatedly, with the bullhook in various parts of their body, so they comply and ‘learn.’” *4/11/08, TNT's Ringling Reality Series: Sickest Show On Earth? Duncan Strauss, Huffington Post & “Talking Animals” syndicated radio show.*

6/13/00: Tom Rider, Ringling barn man for 2.5 years, testifies before Congress: “[Elephants] live in confinement and are beaten all the time when they don't perform properly... I was told, “That's discipline.” In sworn testimony to USDA and Fish and Wildlife Services, Rider says elephants live chained up to 23 hours daily and are regularly beaten, including babies, with bullhooks. Rider recalls over 12 bullhook gashes each on aging elephants Zeena and Rebecca, and describes violent beatings of baby elephant Benjamin.

Training, what Rider calls “daily systematic abuse,” includes beatings and food/water deprivation. Front paws are burned to coerce animals on to hind legs. Big cats are choked down with neck ropes. Elephants are bound from tusks to feet in martingales. Trainers keep animals “constantly in pain or fear of pain,” *Tufts University veterinarian Paul Waldau* says, to break their will. **“If it will not sink in, then beat it in. It's the only way to make an elephant do the performance right.”** *Ringling trainer, in affidavit filed by fellow worker.*

RINGLING'S BIG FAT FEDERAL LAWSUIT

2000-2003: American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Fund for Animals, Animal Welfare Institute, and former barn man Tom Rider file lawsuit against Ringling Bros. (world's biggest animal act with \$100+ million in yearly revenue) under Endangered Species Act for cruelty to Asian elephants. *ASPCA v. Ringling Bros., 317 F.3d 334 (D.C. Cir. 2003).* Records acquired under Freedom of Information Act disclose:

- In 9 investigations spanning 5 years, USDA's undue rapport with Ringling lets circus harbor tuberculosis positive elephants. Virtually all elephants are exposed to TB. Former high-level employees say over last decade, TB-positive and TB-infected animals perform in closed arenas. “They blow moisture from their trunks, hitting people in the face,”

one claims. In sworn deposition, former Ringling CFO Charles Smith says, “Children who rode the elephants at the circus were constantly exposed to [TB].” *The Elephant in the Room, Leslie Griffith, award winning story on Ringling Bros. Circus abuse 2005*

- USDA says use of chains and ropes to forcibly separate nursing elephants from mothers at Ringling's Center for Elephant Conservation inflict “unnecessary trauma, behavioral stress and physical harm.” But USDA ends investigation with no enforcement action.
- Feld Entertainment, the vast empire that owns Ringling, permits its employees to beat, chain and wound endangered Asian elephants with bullhooks.

2/4/09-3/18/09: Ringling Bros. federal trial: Plaintiffs argue that bullhooks, chaining elephants up to 20 hours in barns and freight trains, and other training practices violate Endangered Species Act's ban on “harming, harassing or wounding” an endangered animal...

12/30/09: Ringling walks away unscathed, again: Judge Emmet Sullivan of U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, rules the federal case against Ringling Bros. lacks adequate standing and doesn't focus on merits of the case — despite powerful evidence submitted at trial.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH LAWS

- 4/9/08:** USDA cites Ringling for failure to clean/repair tigers' transport cages/vehicle, improper storage of food/bedding, filthy food prep area, unsanitary feeding.
- 2/20/08:** USDA cites Ringling for lack of required perimeter fencing around 2 tigers.
- 1/11/08:** Insufficient housing to contain 6 dogs...
- 12/11/07:** USDA cites Ringling for lack of records of acquisition and disposition for its tigers.
- 9/19/06:** Failure to maintain required 8 ft. high perimeter fence around dangerous animals.
- 7/11/06:** Cited for improper handling of dangerous animals by failing to ensure adequate security when a train with animals is stopped on railroad tracks.
- 5/24/06:** Lack of veterinary care to elephant Jewel who has abnormal gait, stiff front left leg.
- 5/18/06:** Failure to dispose of expired medications.
- 5/3/06:** USDA cites Ringling for failure to provide adequate veterinary care and administer prescribed medication for elephant with large swelling on her rear leg.

2/15/06: USDA cites Ringling for lack of veterinary care to a camel with two bleeding wounds.

1/6-7/06: Cited for trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm and discomfort to elephants Rudy and Angelica, who sustain cuts and scrapes from arena seats when startled by a barking dog while performing in Puerto Rico.

2001: California humane officers charge Ringling handler Mark Oliver Gebel with cruelty to animals after he strikes an elephant with a metal bullhook that leaves a gaping shoulder wound. Gebel's metal? The elephant faltered before entering the ring.

FULL VIOLATIONS LIST: RINGLINGBEATSANIMALS.COM

ARCHELE HUNDLEY, IN HER OWN WORDS

11/3/06: Former Ringling employees Bob Tom and Archele Hundley give PETA signed statements on Ringling Bros. Circus animal abuse. Among allegations: Elephant is covered in blood after 30-minute beating; horse is whipped with metal snap on a lead for 10 minutes, later found with broken tooth; miniature horse is knocked senseless after slugged in face so forcefully, echoes of handler's closed-fist punches are heard 20 feet away...

petatv.com/tvpopup/Prefs.asp?video=ringling_expose “Ringling's handlers are taught to keep animals afraid. I saw elephants, horses, and camels get punched, beaten, and whipped by circus staff members. Everyone from the head of animal care to inexperienced handlers abused animals.”

“I complained to my supervisors about outright cruelty to animals, but was told repeatedly I was overreacting. I quit Ringling because I couldn't stand the cruelty... I am a mother of 5 children... I will never again take them to a circus that exploits animals...”

Among the horrors I saw, one stands out. I saw Ringling's head trainer viciously assault a sweet elephant who was chained by her front and back legs, unable to escape the blows. For at least half an hour, the trainer beat her with a bullhook — a heavy, steel-tipped club. At one point, I saw the trainer swing the bullhook into the elephant's ear canal with all his force as she screamed in pain...” **Facts / Other Circuses: circuses.com/circuses.asp**