WellBeing International
WBI Studies Repository

8-1977

HSUS Spotlights Circus Cruelty

Follow this and additional works at: https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/cu_reps

Part of the Animal Studies Commons, Other Anthropology Commons, and the Other Business Commons

Recommended Citation
"HSUS Spotlights Circus Cruelty" (1977). Close Up Reports. 5.
https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/cu_reps/5

This material is brought to you for free and open access by WellBeing International. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the WBI Studies Repository. For more information, please contact wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org.
The Humane Society Has Sideshow Operator Arrested in Three States

Who can deny the sense of excitement the young and the young-at-heart feel when the circus comes to town? The sounds, smells, and attractions create a fantasy world where everything is fun.

But is it all good clean fun? Evidence in recent years suggests quite the contrary. The worst problems seem to be with the smaller circuses. In the past year, The HSUS has assisted several local societies investigating cruelty to animals in traveling circuses, rescued elephants and lions abandoned by a circus, and signed three complaints against one of the largest of today’s small big tops.

According to Frantz Dantzler, chief HSUS cruelty investigator, “The traveling circus of today is a poor imitation of the great circuses of the past. The tents are a little worse for wear. The paint is chipped. The music is a little off key, and the costumes need pressing. But worst of all—the animal exhibits are without doubt very, very cruel.”

“They Might as Well be Stuffed”

In midsummer, HSUS investigators followed the Carson and Barnes Circus through Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. Carson and Barnes claim to be “America’s Largest Wild Animal Circus.” During this four day jaunt, The HSUS signed complaints alleging violations of...
each state’s anti-cruelty laws. Mr. William examined the animals and declared leased on bond in each state.

The ventilation, availability of water, and sanitation were very poor. “They might as well be stuffed. They do nothing but sit or lie down and get stared at by the people.”

The state trooper who assisted in the arrests. There’s very few people who have studied animals and have understood the law. Instead, it seems to help exhibitors get around the law.

Question: From the exhibitor’s point of view, what is the major advantage of being licensed or registered?

Answer: By posting the licensing or registration certificate, the exhibitor can quickly establish that he operates under government standards whenever he is challenged about his treatment of animals.

Obviously, many animal exhibitors must “get challenging” about their treatment of animals. The law requires licensing and registration, yet this answer implies it is optional and the only reason one should do so is to protect one’s self from accusations of maltreatment.

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.

Elephants Abandoned Last fall, Sue Pressman received a call from officials of Northeastern Ohio Animal Service. Three large elephants and a lion cub had been abandoned by a small circus, The George Mathews Great London Circus. Pressman flew to the scene and attended to the needs of the animals.

Pressman learned that the circus “had been having a bad year” and simply ran away.

TV NEWS Washington TV newsmen interviewed HSUS’s Phil Steward about the conditions at Carson and Barnes. Steward labeled the conditions as “cruel.”

Cruelty is By-Product of the circus. By the very nature of the business, the small traveling circus moves by truck. They may strike the tents in one city in the evening, drive all night, and set up the tents in another city the next day. They may visit as many as 150 cities and counties as many as 350 performances in one year.

The customers of the small circus are usually only associate with fiction. The customers learn nothing about the animals. All they get for their money is a dim view of an unhappy primate looking back at them with sad eyes.”

This is how the primate exhibit at Carson and Barnes Circus appeared from the outside. Hidden within the walls of this trailer are the cruel conditions which caused the arrest of the circus.

HOT! It was 102 degrees and this tiger at the Carson and Barnes Circus had no water. In addition, as a non-working cat, it’s supposed to have two 4 x 8 cages to live in – one. No other empty cages were available.
This artist’s view of the primate exhibit clearly illustrates the tight quarters in which these animals were kept. HSUS investigator Marc Paulhus described the van as “a prison on wheels.”

out of funds to repair the elephant’s truck and feed the animals.

Again, the USDA and local officials were called in. Through Pressman’s insistence and financial help from his relatives, the circus owner (on his way back to California at the time) had the truck repaired and brought up to USDA standards. Pressman then arranged a permanent home for the animals.

In another incident this February, Pressman was summoned to Baltimore to handle a complaint against the Hannaford Circus. It was reported that elephants were injured and several tigers were living in very crowded conditions.

Pressman found the elephants in good shape. However, she found four Siberian Tigers confined to one 4’ x 8’ “pull along” cage. (These are the cages the circus goer normally sees transporting the big cats to the show cage.)

Placing the four big cats in one cage was a clear violation of the Animal Welfare Act. Further, these cats were “not working” and the law requires each non-working cat be placed in two 4’ x 8’ cages whenever they are not performing.

Pressman found no empty cages that would allow the circus owner to meet the requirements of the law. Pressman informed the owner of the violation and at the circus’ next stop in New Jersey, the owner had arranged for adequate caging.

HSUS believe special regulations aimed specifically at circus animals need to be developed by the USDA and the Department of the Interior. Apparently, Interior has decided not to administer laws affecting endangered species when those animals are traveling with circuses even though they are charged by Congress with regulating all activities relating to endangered animals. Interior leaves all regulatory and enforcement activities relating to circuses up to the USDA.

Member Action Needed

HSUS President John A. Hoyt has called for maximum member participation in the small circus problem. In a recent address, Hoyt said, “We need everyone’s help in this situation. Urge local authorities to check the circus when it comes to your town. Pay careful attention to how the animals are housed and cared for. Encourage animal welfare groups to sign complaints. The traveling circuses must be forced to end their cruel treatment of animals. Our children are being desensitized every time they see a gorilla crammed into a tiny cage. Soon, they will come to accept this as normal and acceptable. They must be taught to see the suffering. If we don’t put an end to these traveling cruelties, we will all be affected.”

Hoyt went on to point out that HSUS investigators will provide guidance and assistance whenever possible to those who uncover suffering animals. “Because these shows are constantly on the move,” Hoyt said, “we must be vigilant and act quickly.”

You Can Help

In order for HSUS investigators to follow these traveling circuses, and follow up on complaints, your financial support is essential. This is only the beginning. We must compile a track record of successful complaints so that the small circus industry gets the message. Your dollars will enable staffers to travel, seek evidence, and press for convictions under existing laws.

Use the enclosed envelope to send your tax-deductible contribution today. There are thousands of animals living miserable lives confined in cruel cages, and ferried around the country like the goods of a door to door salesman. We must end these cruelties for the animals—and for us.

The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 452-1100

Copyright, 1977, the Humane Society of the United States