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Serving a Life Sentence *for your viewing pleasure!*

The case for ending
the use of great apes in film
and television



In the late 1960s, Washoe, a female chimpanzee, was taught American Sign Language under the care of Drs. Allen and Beatrix Gardner. The Gardners hired a young researcher named Roger Fouts to work closely with Washoe, and Fouts would later write about his remarkable experience in the book, *Next of Kin: What Chimpanzees Have Taught Me About Who We Are*.

In the following excerpt, Fouts describes an incident involving Washoe and a volunteer researcher named Kat. Capitalized words and phrases are used to indicate the signs exchanged by Washoe and her human friends.

“In the summer of 1982, Kat was newly pregnant, and Washoe doted over her belly, asking about her BABY. Unfortunately, Kat had a miscarriage, and she didn’t come in to the lab for several days. When she finally came back, Washoe greeted her warmly but then moved away and let Kat know she was upset that she’d been gone. Knowing that Washoe had lost two of her own children, Kat decided to tell the truth. MY BABY DIED Kat signed to her. Washoe

looked down to the ground. Then she looked into Kat’s eyes and signed CRY, touching her cheek just below her eye. When Kat had to leave that day, Washoe wouldn’t let her go. PLEASE PERSON HUG she signed.”

This report is dedicated to Washoe and all great apes who, for better or worse, are now reliant on their human cousins for protection and survival.

“Please
Person
Hug”



Friends of Washoe/ Fouts

Acknowledgements

The Chimpanzee Collaboratory is a partnership of attorneys, scientists and public policy experts who are working to make significant and measurable progress in protecting the lives and establishing the legal rights of chimpanzees and other great apes. The Collaboratory gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their contributions to this report:

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An open letter to members of the Hollywood creative community



Carole Noon

What *Were* They Thinking?

Without question, film and television have the power to advance the ways we look at our world. From “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” to “Antwone Fisher,” from “All in the Family” to “Will & Grace,” Hollywood’s creative community has demonstrated time and again its ability to help us look inward and see our higher selves.

By the same token, Hollywood’s archives also contain works that only perpetuated outdated and destructive attitudes, even if this wasn’t immediately apparent at the time. Take another look, for example, at Frank Capra’s much-heralded comedy “It Happened One Night.” Describing the woman he hopes to marry, Clark Gable’s character gruffly declares, “What she needs is a guy that’d take a sock at her once a day, whether it’s coming or not.” At the time, that jaw-dropping snippet of dialogue dropped no jaws – in fact, the film was rewarded with five Oscars, including Best Screenplay – but then again, that was 1934. Times change, understanding deepens, and as we watch this film (and others like it) today, we can only wonder, “What were they thinking?”

Which has led us to wonder: what will audiences think years from now as they look at the films and television programs of our era – particularly those that put great apes on display for public amusement? As time passes and understanding of the terrible suffering endured by these individuals increases, will audiences look back at films such as “Planet of the Apes” or episodes of “Lancelot Link” and wonder, “What were they thinking?” We believe they will, and we believe you will have similar thoughts as you read through this report and follow the lives of typical captive chimpanzees from birth to retirement.

A word of warning: their story is disturbing. To provide a steady stream of performers for an industry that must constantly churn out new product, chimpanzees (and other great apes) are bred in captivity in deplorable conditions. Often separated from their mothers within weeks of birth, these infants suffer irreparable psychological harm, and this damage is only compounded by a training process that brutalizes them both physically and mentally. When their brief career in front of the camera is over, many are forced to live the rest of their lives in sub-standard zoos and roadside attractions, and this can mean as many as fifty years of isolation in an undersized cage.

In short, the life of these captive apes is no life at all. It is a life sentence, served for our viewing pleasure. For contemporary television and film audiences, ignorance of this ongoing abuse is bliss.

The mischievous chimpanzee who bounds from one adventure to another across screens large and small appears healthy and happy. What's more, chimpanzees and orangutans are seen frequently enough that audiences perceive their species must be healthy as well. Such depictions are deceiving on two fronts: the apes perform on cue because in many cases they have been brutally beaten—suffering their own version of a “sock a day, whether it's coming or not”—and their species may face extinction unless current trends are reversed.

A public outcry for change is unlikely because audiences do not perceive a problem, and the cost of educating them is prohibitive. Although networks and studios have alternatives to animal performers (e.g., actors in suits, computer generated images), these are more expensive, and a cost-cutting mentality dominates. Even provided with evidence of abuse, some production executives have simply looked the other way or hidden behind agencies such as the Hollywood Unit of the American Humane Association, even though its monitors have largely failed to offer truly effective protection.

If a change is to come, it will begin with individuals within the entertainment industry who read this report, who recognize a practice that is inhumane and unnecessary, and who decide that it is time we moved beyond it.

Individuals, we hope, like you.

About This Report

This report was prepared under the supervision of The Chimpanzee Collaboratory. Assertions about the psychological development of great apes, their treatment in training and on sets, and their life after “retirement,” have all been verified by the experts listed in the Acknowledgements unless otherwise cited.

In addition, to relieve readers from constantly tripping over the inelegant “him or her” construction when referring to chimpanzees and other great apes, we have arbitrarily elected to refer to all great apes as females.

Additional copies of this report can be downloaded at www.chimpcollaboratory.org.

A Life Sentence Begins

Separated from their mothers in infancy, captive chimpanzees often suffer severe psychological damage that irrevocably condemns them to life in human hands.

By human standards, chimpanzees born in the wild enjoy extraordinarily close relationships with their mothers. Infants are held almost constantly for the first two years of life as they cling to their mother's stomach and sleep with her in a nest at night. Typically weaned around age four, wild chimpanzees are considered infants until age five and don't begin to exert independence from their mothers until age eight. During these formative years, young chimpanzees learn how to forage, avoid danger, and acquire the life skills that will help them smoothly integrate into the larger community (often numbering around one hundred).

The first two years of a captive chimpanzee's life stand in sharp and disturbing contrast. For decades, chimpanzees destined for placement in the entertainment and biomedical industries were abducted from the wild. Seeking infants (who would be easier to handle, transport, and train), hunters tracked mothers with their young still clinging to them. Brutally shot out of trees, the chimpanzee mothers would fall to their deaths, sometimes crushing their offspring in the process. Those infants who survived were taken from their dead mothers and sold to the highest bidder.

International law now recognizes wild chimpanzees as an endangered species and has virtually eliminated this type of procurement for the entertainment industry. Consequently, captive chimpanzees used in entertainment today generally come from two sources: breeding and purchasing. (Interestingly, chimpanzees who were in captivity as of March 12, 1990 and their progeny are considered only “threatened” under federal law and are not accorded the same level of protection as their “endangered” wild cousins.) If an animal trainer owns many chimpanzees, adults of reproductive age may be housed together to produce offspring. Once an infant is born, the trainer may remove the infant from the mother after sedating or completely anesthetizing her. (Sedation may not be necessary for mothers who are losing a child for the first time—i.e., they don't realize the child is never coming back, so they may actually hand over their babies voluntarily—but after a chimpanzee mother has lost one child, she will be extremely unlikely to willingly hand over another infant to a trainer.) Trainers who don't have breeding chimpanzees must purchase infants from outside sources



Carole Noon

The Thousand Mile Stare

"[Jane Goodall and I] saw chimpanzees housed alone in machines called solettes. These were small metal and Plexiglas boxes with ventilators on top. They were about the size of a very small refrigerator. I'll never forget the moment we saw our first chimpanzee in one of them. The young chimpanzee was clinging in despair to the bottom of this small container. When we opened the door she turned her head toward us. But when she looked at us she seemed to look right through us. She was mentally gone. Jane called it 'the thousand mile stare' that she has seen in young children starving to death in Africa. This chimpanzee had given up. She was no longer a chimpanzee."

Dr. Roger Fouts, describing a tour of a biomedical lab

such as research facilities, roadside attractions, primate dealers, or via the Internet. (An infant female can cost as much as \$55,000; an infant male, as much as \$50,000.) Chimpanzees in these facilities may also be removed from their mothers soon after birth and usually live either alone or with a group of other infants. When they are sold to trainers, they are removed from the only family they have ever known. The actual removal is an extremely traumatic event for the infants. They will scream in fear and attempt to defend themselves by biting the person trying to remove them. If the infant is housed with other chimpanzees, the others also may attempt to defend the chimpanzee being taken.

All of these scenarios – abduction in the wild, breeding, and purchase – break the mother-infant bond at a critical time in the chimpanzee's psychological development. Clinical research has clearly demonstrated that when a mother and infant chimpanzee are separated, no matter how well the infant is cared for afterwards, the result is serious emotional stress that is likely to create long-term wounds. Similarly, primates who were forcefully separated from their mothers and raised in barren cages from an early age in laboratory experiments showed self-destructive behaviors, overly aggressive behaviors, and "stereotypies," i.e., abnormal, compulsive, repetitive behaviors such as rocking back and forth, pacing, slapping, and self-mutilation.

Young chimpanzees who have been separated from their mothers may also lack even the simplest of exploratory and play behaviors because they are so paralyzed with fear and anxiety. Even the sight of another primate can be terrifying for them. Some will never successfully interact with other chimpanzees, and the hope of bonding with another individual may be lost.

For many captive chimpanzees used in film and television, the first two years of life – a critically important time that would have been spent clinging to their mothers – are instead largely spent sitting in a cage. Because they often are housed alone or without an adult companion, these chimpanzees don't have the opportunity to learn normal behaviors. They also don't have a mother figure to comfort and reassure them when they are frightened. As a result, they often are left with profound problems that are not easily remedied. One study of previously deprived chimpanzees that provided twelve years of enriched recovery found that extreme psychological, maternal, sexual and social deficits still existed.

And for those captive chimpanzees who will eventually perform on camera, the problems are only beginning.

Trained to Fear

To prepare captive chimpanzees for life on the set, trainers may punch them, beat them with heavy objects, and do whatever they deem necessary to establish physical dominance.

By nature, young chimpanzees are active, rambunctious, and easily distracted – qualities diametrically opposed to what trainers need if they are to deliver specific behaviors on cue. Consequently, many trainers rely heavily on physical domination and fear to ensure constant attention and compliance from their performers-in-training. Eyewitness accounts have documented the fact that some trainers pummel chimpanzees with their own fists, beat them with hammers, metal rods, and mop handles. Electric devices also may be used to shock them into submission. This calculated abuse turns the chimpanzees into fearful individuals who will pay attention and cooperate if only to avoid further abuse.

Starting as early as age two, captive chimpanzees are trained to behave more like humans and less like the wild creatures they are. In one of their earliest – and frequently most painful – lessons, they are taught not to bite, which would be a normal part of their playful behavior in the wild. Trainers sometimes respond to bites by biting the chimpanzee back, or they might place their fingers around the cheeks of the biting chimpanzee so that the chimpanzee bites down on her own cheek. The trainer may also hit the chimpanzee with a fist or other object when she bites. Other instinctive behaviors that are completely normal and natural in the wild, such as vocalizing and self-grooming, also may be harshly punished.

This domination and fear-based training continues through the next phase where commands such as "No," "Come here," "Leave it," and "Give me your hand" are introduced.



Michael Nichols, National Geographic Image Collection

Life Inside the Cage

"[A young chimpanzee] tried to bite me when I entered the enclosure, so the trainer who was already inside the enclosure threw a tool at him. It was a large rubber mallet, and it hit him pretty hard. The trainer also threw the mallet at another young chimpanzee in the enclosure to keep him from getting in the way of the trainer's work. Later, when I had to work by myself in the enclosure, the trainer handed me a metal hammer and said that if I had any trouble, I should hit them 'with this' and pointed to the handle end of the hammer."

Eyewitness description of an incident at a training facility.

The "No" command is sometimes associated with a physical beating so that the chimpanzee learns to freeze up (or suffer physical abuse) whenever the command is given. These day-to-day commands will be used throughout their lives.

Because many of their future jobs will require captive chimpanzees to hand items to a human actor, it is very important to trainers that the chimpanzees learn to willingly release anything they might have. This means that if a trainer notices infant chimpanzees becoming too attached to an item such as a blanket or toy, he may immediately take it away from them. Since the chimpanzees don't have a mother to cling to, they often seek solace in objects, so this learning process can be particularly stressful.

Over time, chimpanzees are introduced to more complex behaviors such as performing handstands or riding skateboards. As both the complexity of the tricks and the strength of the chimpanzees increase, the fear and domination tactics of the trainer become even more severe. Larger items (broomsticks, mallets, hammer handles, shovels, rakes, water hoses, and metal pipes) may be used to hit the chimpanzees, and beatings often become more severe and frequent.

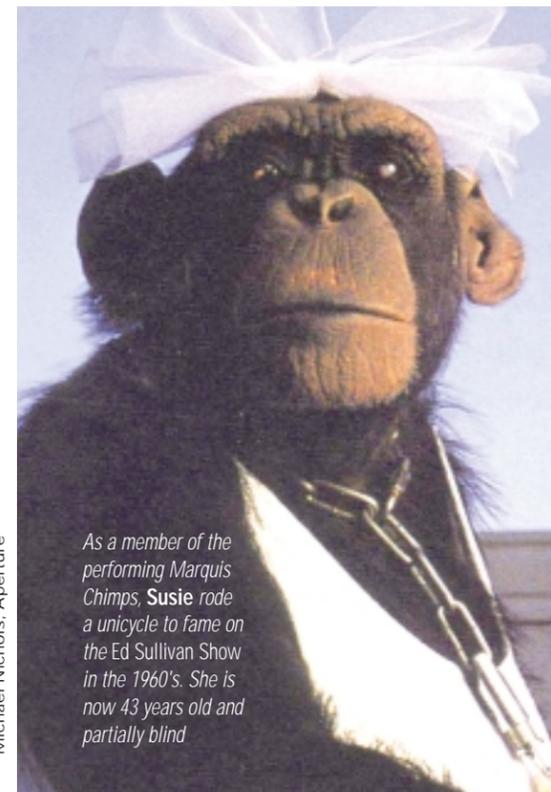
"A training technique sometimes called 'the two-by-four technique,' is used by trainers in various forms," according to Dr. Fouts. "They hit the chimpanzees for no reason whatsoever, just completely out of the blue. Since the chimpanzees never know when they are going to be hit, they have to watch the trainer all the time. So the trainer avoids the problem of the chimpanzees' attention drifting, and when they give them a command, the chimpanzees will see it and obey it."

The Myth of "Affection Training"

Confronted with accusations of abuse, animal trainers will often claim to use "affection training" or "humane training" to develop the behaviors that will eventually be used on set. Whatever the terminology, these techniques rely on the same initial theory: positive reinforcement. If a trainer wants to teach a young chimpanzee to clap on cue, for example, he will give the chimpanzee a reward (such as a jellybean) when the chimpanzee randomly claps on her own. As the reward is given, the trainer will give a verbal command, such as "Clap!" If the

chimpanzee likes the jellybean, she is likely to clap again, and the trainer will repeat his reward-command response to reinforce, or "capture," this particular behavior. Soon, the chimpanzee will make the association between the verbal commands and doing the behavior (which includes the tasty reward), and at that point the behavior is said to be "on cue."

Unfortunately, young chimpanzees don't always respond to positive reinforcement alone. Just like their human counterparts, two and three year-old chimpanzees have short attention spans and plenty of energy. Sometimes the prospect of a raisin or jellybean won't be enough to make them sit down and concentrate, especially if they're not hungry or if the behaviors being sought aren't interesting to them. Chasing after a bird that flies by or checking out a new toy may be far more interesting than being forced to sit still and perform mundane repetitive tasks. And as the behaviors required of them become more complex, positive reinforcement can become even less reliable. A jellybean simply isn't enough of an inducement to make a chimpanzee want to do a handstand or a back flip.



Michael Nichols, Aperture

As a member of the performing Marquis Chimps, Susie rode a unicycle to fame on the Ed Sullivan Show in the 1960's. She is now 43 years old and partially blind.

In high-pressure situations like film shoots, trainers cannot afford to lose the interest of their chimpanzee "actors". Consequently, if a chimpanzee's attention drifts during a positive reinforcement training session, the trainer may take strong and sometimes brutal measures to regain her attention, including grabbing her, hitting her, or kicking her. Once this sort of conduct becomes part of the training session, it ceases to be "affection training." The sad fact remains that punishment often is a regular part of training. If it weren't, chimpanzees simply would not be willing to perform. It is not in their nature.

Smile for the Camera!

One of the first tricks that chimpanzees learn is "smiling." This facial expression – mouth wide open, teeth clamped together and exposed – exists in natural chimpanzee behavior but usually expresses extreme fear. To teach this behavior for performance purposes, trainers may begin by shouting, "Smile!" and giving a hand signal. The young chimpanzee has no idea what this means, so the trainer will physically compel the behavior by sticking his thumb and index finger into the infant's mouth and forcefully pushing the edges out into a grin. As one can imagine, this is a confusing and frightening process for the chimpanzees, so eventually they may begin to involuntarily grimace in fear. When this occurs, the trainer will offer a small reward such as a jellybean or raisin. Since making a full open grin is an involuntary response which young chimpanzees can't easily control, the process of learning to "smile" on command is long and stressful, requiring several five to fifteen minute sessions per day over a minimum of six months.

Disquiet on (and off) the Set

The familiar “No animals were harmed...” advisory is not a reliable guarantee of safe treatment and may, in fact, belie severe physical abuse suffered by chimpanzees during their performing years.

In the 1978 film “Every Which Way But Loose,” Clint Eastwood’s scene-stealing sidekick was a mischievous orangutan named Buddha. Tragically, this movie would be his last performance. Near the end of filming, Buddha was caught stealing doughnuts on the set. Back at their compound, Buddha’s trainers allegedly beat him so severely with an axe handle - nicknamed the “Buddha Club” - that the orangutan eventually died of a brain hemorrhage.

“Project X,” a film depicting the U.S. Air Force’s experiments on primates, became infamous when, according to a report filed in October 1987 by the Los Angeles Department of Animal Regulation, “At least six animal trainers employed by Twentieth Century Fox physically and/or mentally abused a number of chimpanzees during the production of this motion picture.” The department eventually filed criminal complaints on 18 felony counts of cruelty against the trainers involved with the film.

How were such abuses possible when the production of television programs and feature films was (and continues to be) monitored by the American Humane Association, an independent nonprofit organization? A closer look reveals that the AHA’s guidelines for monitoring the treatment of great apes are woefully insufficient.

Insufficient Guidelines

Protection for animals in the film industry began in earnest in 1939 after the public expressed outrage at the sight of a horse leaping off a 70-foot cliff during the filming of “Jesse James.” The horse died during the shot, and the Motion Picture Association of America lobbied the Hays Office on Censorship to establish minimum standards for the treatment of animals during filming. After the Hays Office was abolished in 1966, the primary responsibility for animal protection fell to the American Humane Association.

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Since its earliest days of monitoring film production, the AHA has been guided by the following overarching principles (according to the AHA’s web site):

- No animal will be killed or injured for the sake of a film production.
- If an animal must be treated inhumanely to perform, then that animal should not be used.
- Animals are not props. If an animal is used off-camera as background or to attract the attention of an animal being filmed, the same humane guidelines must apply to that animal.
- “Animal” means all sentient creatures, including birds, fish, reptiles and insects.

Today, the association reviews scripts and procedures that include animals in television and advertising productions as well. In addition to the broad principles above, AHA monitors have a 28-page booklet entitled “For the Safe Use of Animals in Filmed Media” to guide them. The booklet includes chapters on Basic Principles, General Guidelines, Veterinary Care, Technical Guidelines for Production, and Species Specific Guidelines.

The Species Specific chapter covers dogs, cats, birds, fish, insects, horses, livestock, exotics, apes and monkeys, reptiles, and wildlife. The section on horses, which is the most detailed, extends for eight pages. Most of the other sections are one to two pages each. The section on apes and monkeys takes up about three quarters of a page and consists of just eight bullets:

(The following text is a verbatim excerpt from the booklet. Italics have been added to call attention to certain problematic phrases that are open to interpretation, essentially rendering the guideline meaningless.)

- Stages should be checked by the animal handler for escape routes and potential hazards. Because apes and monkeys can quickly climb heights and are capable of opening and closing doors, drawers, and other objects, any products containing harmful chemicals or sharp items must be removed from the area. Props used on set should be checked by the animal handler.
- Human contact with apes and monkeys should be *limited to those persons necessary* for filming. People with colds or other contagious viruses should remain *at a distance* from apes or monkeys.

What One Tarzan Heard

“[The commercial] was for a suntan product and I played “Tarzan”, and I had a loincloth on and everything. And the... chimpanzee, was supposed to spray suntan oil on my back, but accidentally he kept spraying my eyes, my chest and everything. The trainer was furious and came up to him and confronted him and said, ‘What are you, a wise guy? You know how we handle a wise guy? Come with me!’ So he took him in the back. I didn’t see any brutality but I heard a whack and then whimpering and then a whack again and [more whimpering] and then after a couple of minutes he led the chimpanzee out and the chimpanzee seemed very subdued, and he did the job. And that’s all there was to it.”

Howard Mann, actor

But She Seems So Happy

Captive chimpanzees on sets often appear to have extremely close, loving relationships with their trainers. They may be observed hugging or kissing their trainers or simply holding their hands. In truth, these may be signs of abusive relationships and may actually reflect the fear the chimpanzee is feeling. By remaining close to her trainer, a chimpanzee is much less likely to get hit than one who strays away. Paying close attention to what the trainer is saying and doing helps the chimpanzee anticipate what will happen next and behave accordingly. Paradoxical as it may seem, the abused chimpanzee (much like a battered wife or child) ends up seeking reassurance from the only person who can provide it: the abuser.

- When apes are to be used in productions for two or more consecutive days, care must be taken to ensure *adequate* rest. *Animal handlers must know each animal's capabilities for dealing with workloads.*
- When an ape is working on set for more than three consecutive full days (six or more hours per day), a play area, empty room, or private park where the ape may *exercise and relax* must be provided.
- Working apes after sundown is *discouraged* and should only occur when the ape has been conditioned to work after sundown.
- Clothes used on apes must be *loose fitting, easy to take on or off* (Velcro is preferred), and may not obstruct the ape's ability to walk, hear or see.
- Prior to filming, apes must be introduced to characters or moving objects that are *frightening or otherwise unnatural*. For example, apes should be familiar with any animatronic objects or costumed persons such as clowns or beasts.
- Stages should be kept *cool* around apes. Apes should not be on set for reasons other than *filming, rehearsing, preparing, or otherwise becoming familiar with objects, persons, or other animals that will be in the scene*. Apes should not be used as stand-ins or for lighting adjustments.

These few and brief suggestions are the only guidelines specifically applicable to productions using apes or monkeys on set, and the ambiguity of the language allows productions to circumvent many rules without actually violating them. "Adequate rest" is called for, but there is no explanation of what "adequate" means or who should make this determination. "Working apes after sundown is discouraged" but not forbidden. "Otherwise becoming familiar with objects, persons, or other animals" is a condition that can be an open door to permitting the presence of apes on the set at all times, even though rest periods are essential.

Other general guidelines elsewhere in the booklet provide gaping loopholes for abusive behavior: (again, italics have been added)

In the "Veterinary Care Guidelines" section it says:

- "If an animal is injured, sick or becomes incapacitated it shall be treated immediately. Such animal shall not resume work until it has been determined by the *animal trainer* or the veterinarian that the condition has been corrected"

In short, the animal trainers have the authority to assess whether their charges are well enough to perform, and if they decide that a chimpanzee, who may appear fatigued to an AHA monitor, is ready to continue, the monitor has no real basis for intervening.

In the "Costumes, Makeup, Rigging, and Props" section it says:

- "Tie-downs shall not be used on animals *not properly* trained to wear them, or if the animal struggles or resists. Animals shall not be tied down any longer than *what is necessary* to accomplish the shot."

Instead of prohibiting or at the very least defining a length of time allowable, this gives the production team carte blanche to tie animals down for as long as it wants. Under this rule, a chimpanzee could be tied to a chair for an hour (or longer) while the filmmakers get their shot.

In the "Special Effects" section it says:

- "Carbon dioxide and artificial smoke is hazardous to certain animal species. These substances should not be used around animals unless *first consulting with the animal handler* and the AHA representative."

Again, there is no prohibition of the use of harmful chemicals; simply the suggestion that the animal handler and AHA representative should be consulted.



Michael Nichols, Aperture

When a production is completed, the AHA will award it one of five ratings based on the production's adherence to the guidelines: acceptable, believed acceptable, questionable, unknown and unacceptable. Most films released by major studios are deemed to meet AHA standards and receive the familiar "No animals were harmed" credit alongside the AHA seal in the end credits. In fact, the authors of this report were unable to obtain documentation of any formal complaint filed against a movie studio or production house by the AHA.

The relative ineffectiveness of AHA monitors on sets is also largely attributable to the fact that the association seldom monitors the training of great apes used in films. This allows apparently harmless actions on the set to mask abuse that has already transpired. For example, if a chimpanzee is beaten during training with a rubber hose filled with rocks and sand - as was alleged to have occurred with one of the trainers on "Project X" - the chimpanzee would only need to see a regular hose on the set to behave. The AHA monitor, quite naturally, would have no idea that the empty hose he sees represents something much more menacing.

(It is also worth noting that the AHA lacks jurisdiction outside the United States, preventing it from acting on abuses in training or productions beyond our borders.)

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Lack of Independence

While the AHA's Film and TV Unit has been the official monitor for animal welfare since 1980—when the Screen Actors Guild and the Motion Picture Association voted to extend the AHA a formal contract—many believe the association is ineffective for reasons beyond its ambiguous guidelines and lack of authority off the set. A *Los Angeles Times* article entitled, "Questions Raised About Group That Watches Out for Animals in Movies," included this stunning statement:

"Since the '80s, the major studios have directly paid for the AHA film unit's budget. Concerned about the appearance of improper influence, film companies changed the arrangement in 1993 by depositing money into a fund jointly overseen by producers and the Screen Actors Guild. This fund now doles out about \$1.5 million a year to the AHA."

Los Angeles Times, February 9, 2001

Ultimately, the article concludes that, "The unit...lacks any meaningful enforcement power under the SAG contract, depends on major studios to pay for its operations and is rife with conflicts of interest." After chimpanzees were severely abused during the filming of "Project X" in 1985 and 1986, the AHA issued a press release claiming to have conducted an in-depth investigation that turned up no hard evidence of abuse. According to an internal memorandum dated October 30, 1987 and issued by Kenneth Williams of the Los Angeles district attorney's office, however, "There was **no in-depth investigation** conducted by AHA" and "There is information which is sufficient to substantiate some of the allegations of abuse to the chimpanzees."

Given both the toothless language of its guidelines and the AHA's relationship with the companies it is supposed to oversee, it is little wonder that abuses continue. And a reasonable observer would be hard-pressed to look to the trainers to police themselves more vigorously. One substantial movie assignment can pay a trainer's bills for the whole year. With so much on the line, a trainer can't afford to have anything go wrong on the set. The trainer's focus is on getting the chimpanzee to behave, and he may use any means necessary. For all intents and purposes, no one is watching him.

Waiting for Something Bad to Happen

"The few chimpanzees I've met in entertainment are very different from the chimpanzees I know, and also free living chimpanzees. They seem inhibited and cowed. Also, if there's a sudden movement they react to it. This means that they're constantly in a defensive state, in preparation for something bad to happen, which is not good. And you can see the trainer just has to look at them and they straighten up."

Dr. Roger Fouts

The Long, Sad Goodbye

Retired at an age when an independent life in the wild would just be beginning, captive chimpanzees can survive until age sixty, spending decade after decade in deplorable conditions.

Most great apes are judged "unmanageable" by their trainers when they reach eight years of age. Given that chimpanzees can live as many as sixty years in captivity, this presents a problem for their owners. Providing for their long-term care is expensive: an adult chimpanzee, orangutan or gorilla can cost as much as \$10,000 per year to keep in captivity. Few animal trainers are willing to earmark such funds for apes who no longer generate revenue. As a result, many apes whose acting careers have ended are either sold or traded to breeding centers, roadside zoos, or private collectors. (Laboratories, a buyer at one time, are less interested in acquisition these days given both a lack of funds and the glut of captive-bred chimpanzees available within the biomedical industry.)

Some primate training facilities will continue to house chimpanzees who are no longer working. These chimpanzees are often ignored and given minimal care by their trainers since they have ceased to be useful or lucrative. Females can be housed with single males and used for breeding more chimpanzees into the industry, beginning the entire vicious cycle once again. The males, who become harder to handle as they grow larger and stronger, are usually removed after a female becomes pregnant.

Having likely spent tens of thousands of dollars to purchase a chimpanzee and invested thousands more caring for her, trainers are reluctant to donate their apes to a sanctuary without something in return. Most ethically managed sanctuaries will not buy (or even take) chimpanzees since accepting older animals into their care effectively opens another space back at the trainer's compound, and this space will be filled with another young chimpanzee, perpetuating a destructive cycle.

Consequently trainers turn to the kinds of places that *will* do business with them: shabby roadside attractions such as the JungleLand Zoo in Kissimmee, Florida; Suncoast Primate Sanctuary (formerly Noell's Ark Chimp Farm) in Palm Harbor, Florida; and the Amarillo Wildlife Refuge in Texas where "Chubbs," who starred in Tim Burton's "Planet of the Apes," now resides. Poorly maintained menageries like these may call

Life on the Farm

"Cheetah and Otto are some of the menagerie of animals at the Suncoast Primate Sanctuary, which is the new and improved version of the storied Noell's Ark Chimp Farm. The decades-old roadside attraction was closed to the public about four years ago after state and federal officials found that it kept animals in under-sized and outdated cages. Federal officials charged the Chimp Farm with using cages that were rusty, small, dirty and had jagged edges; keeping incomplete records about the animals; improperly storing food and bedding; and housing animals in uncomfortable conditions."

The St. Petersburg Times, December 9, 2002

themselves "sanctuaries," but they are little more than substandard zoos that often actively breed their chimpanzees for fundraising purposes (i.e., baby chimpanzees attract the viewing public), the entertainment industry, other substandard zoos, or the exotic pet trade. (Currently, there are no government regulations that would compel such businesses to function more responsibly.)

While there are some legitimate sanctuaries in the U.S. that can offer adequate long-term care for captive apes, there remain large hurdles for entertainment chimpanzees seeking a safe haven. Most of these sanctuaries are full, understaffed and under-funded, and taking even a single chimpanzee or orangutan can pose tremendous hardships. In addition, chimpanzees recently retired from the entertainment industry bring with them a host of psychological traumas. Many have been housed alone or with a small number of other chimpanzees. With all their training and learning to imitate humans, they never really learn how to be chimpanzees. They cannot be easily introduced into larger groups of other, less damaged chimpanzees because they often do not know how to behave in this type of community.

Their experiences have taught them how to behave only with dominating humans. Due to this history, some chimpanzees live out their lives alone in small cages, deprived of human or chimpanzee interaction of any kind. Others may be group-caged in small, overcrowded enclosures that do not allow for normal movement and social interaction. The sad fact remains that there is currently no effective system for the retirement of apes who formerly worked in entertainment.

Federal standards allow chimpanzees to be kept alone in 5' x 5' x 7' cages for their entire lives.



For the average male, it would be like living in a 7' x 7' x 11' cage.



No Help Here

In mid-2002, the Animal Actors Guild (AAG) was launched to address some of the long-term welfare issues of apes formerly used in entertainment. The non-profit organization is headed by Gini Barrett, the former director of the American Humane Association's Film & Television Unit, and Nerissa Politzer, an animal trainer. The AAG is seeking to raise funds through a 20% "withholding tax" on each ape performer's salary, as well as through public appearances by "retired" apes. With most working chimpanzee "actors" earning less than \$1,000 per day—and few work more than a day or two on any particular project—the funds are unlikely to provide permanent care. In addition, the AAG has stated it will not run its own retirement facility; rather, it will endeavor to place ex-actors in designated sanctuaries, an outcome that is also unlikely due to overcrowding and cost constraints. In all likelihood, many of these apes will end up in substandard facilities where they will be bred to produce fresh fodder for the industry. Most galling of all, the AAG solicits as a charity to send chimpanzees and other apes to true sanctuaries when it is essentially a group that uses animals, pockets the profits, and then asks the concerned public to use its limited charitable funds to care for the industry's cast-offs.

What are the Alternatives?

1.6° of Separation

Chimpanzees are our closest living relatives, sharing at least 98.4 % of our DNA. Chimpanzees are more closely related to humans than they are to gorillas or orangutans.

With rapid developments in the sophistication of animatronics, costumes, and computer generated images (CGI), there are many viable alternatives to using live chimpanzees and other great apes in film and television. "Greystoke: Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes," "Gorillas in the Mist," "Instinct," and "Mighty Joe Young" are just a few of the film and television productions that have taken advantage of such alternatives.

Production executives will argue, however, that these alternatives are far too costly to be considered in most cases, and on a dollar-for-dollar basis there is no question that live animals are cheaper. When the costs for alternatives are considered against a production's entire budget, however, they do not appear to be unreasonable.

According to executives at some of Hollywood's leading makeup, special effects, and computer animation companies, the cost for hiring two or three live chimpanzees (plus trainers) can be as little as \$2,000 per day. If a production company wants to rent a realistic animatronic gorilla or chimpanzee, on the other hand, producers will spend approximately \$11,000 per day. If the company chooses to build its own version, the capital cost alone escalates to \$200,000, and then there are still the daily rates for the suit performers and puppeteers who bring the animatronic creature to life. Computer animation is even more expensive. The cost of simply "building" a character in a computer ranges from \$100,000 to \$250,000, and the per-shot costs (for each new angle on the character) can run as high as \$80,000.

When the average budget for a studio movie is nearly \$60 million, though, the differential in using animatronics or CGI can represent a small addition in the film's total cost – as little as 1-2%. Producers may still maintain that "the real thing" looks better on screen than any of the alternatives, but advances in computer technology and robotics are steadily blurring these distinctions. And the essential ethical question remains the same: can the decision to use live animals be justified in light of the cruel practices that make their exploitation possible?

A Writer's First Step

"I think it would be responsible for each person who's even thinking about writing a chimpanzee into a script... to just do a little investigation before you say yes to that. I think that would be a huge first step."

Callie Khouri,
Director/Screenwriter,
"Divine Secrets of the
Ya-Ya Sisterhood"

Wanted: A New Way of Thinking

For generations, we have looked to define and affirm our humanity through qualities that separate us from the animals who share our world. When it comes to distinguishing humankind from other great apes, however, such definitions become blurry.

Experts said that humans were singular because we use tools. And then Jane Goodall observed chimpanzees in Africa "termite fishing" with slender stalks from which they had carefully removed leaves. Tool using, in other words.

Experts said that humans were singular because we use a complex language that allows us to communicate a depth of knowledge and feeling unique to our species. And then a chimpanzee named Washoe learned American Sign Language, and her companion, Dr. Roger Fouts, discovered depths of thought and feeling that he could only compare to his own.

Experts said that humans were singular because we have culture, consciously transmitting knowledge to generations who will succeed us as stewards of this planet. And then several scientists (most recently an international team publishing an article in the journal *Nature*) observed communities of chimpanzees and orangutans that displayed all the earmarks of culture.

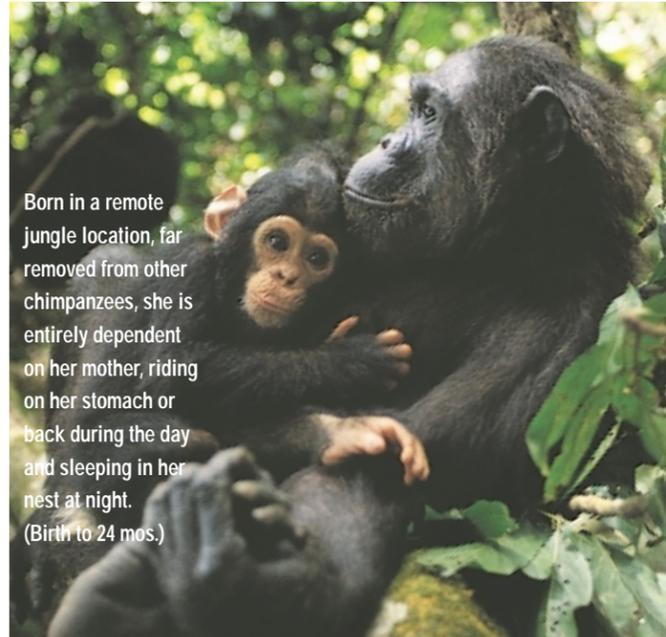
Clearly, a new way of thinking is in order. How much more might we learn about ourselves if we focused instead on what *connects* us to our brethren in the animal kingdom, starting with our fellow primates? At the very least, we could stop thinking of chimpanzees and other great apes as wild animals who must be physically dominated, as property to be bought and sold, as instruments of amusement.

And, as always, Hollywood has the unique opportunity to shape that thinking. It cannot be accomplished, however, with half-measures. No degree of "reform," no amount of "tightening of existing regulations" can adequately protect great apes once they have been placed against their will on the performer's track. Only by completely ceasing the use of great apes in film and television productions can the creative community end a process that is not only destructive and cruel, but demeans us all as well. By sentencing great apes to life in our care, we unwittingly cast ourselves in the role of jailers, consigning both human and ape to life in a prison of our own design.

What You Can Do

You can join our effort to end the cruel and unnecessary use of great apes in film and TV productions right now by signing the statement of support on page 24. Add your name to the growing list of creative community members who have vowed not to act in, cast, direct, produce, write for, or be involved in any way with a film or TV production that uses great apes. You can also visit The Chimpanzee Collaboratory web site (www.chimpcollaboratory.org) for more information on this campaign.

And if you'd like to do even more, please contact Liz Clancy Ross, Chairperson of The Chimpanzee Collaboratory Public Education Committee, 202.546.1761 (or via email, liz@ddal.org).

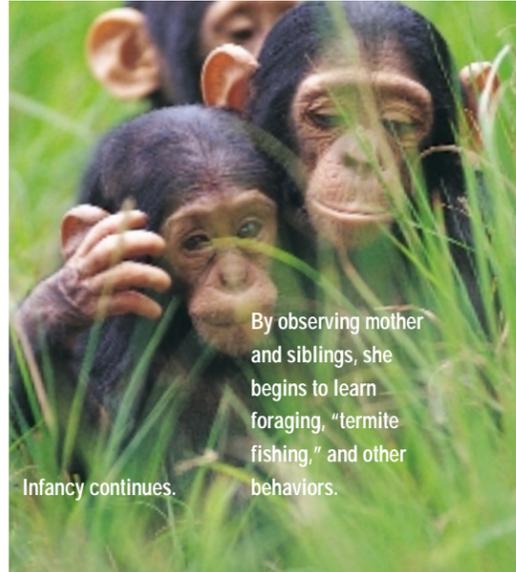


Born in a remote jungle location, far removed from other chimpanzees, she is entirely dependent on her mother, riding on her stomach or back during the day and sleeping in her nest at night. (Birth to 24 mos.)

birth

6 mos.

12 mos.

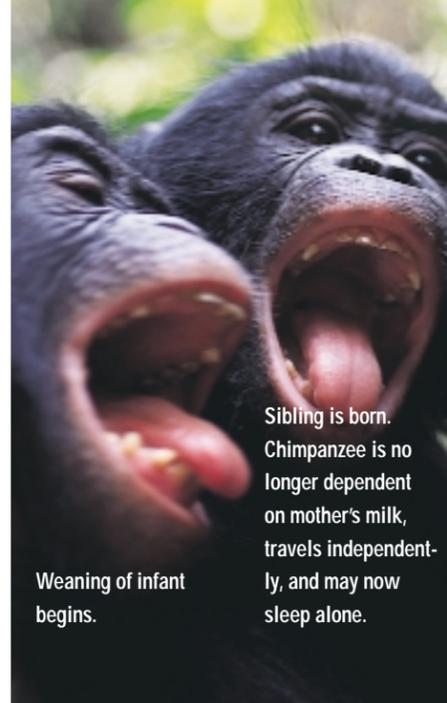


Infancy continues.

By observing mother and siblings, she begins to learn foraging, "termite fishing," and other behaviors.

2 yrs.

3 yrs.



Weaning of infant begins.

Sibling is born. Chimpanzee is no longer dependent on mother's milk, travels independently, and may now sleep alone.

5 yrs.

7 yrs.



Early adolescence: males start to exhibit aggressive behavior, females remain close to their mothers.

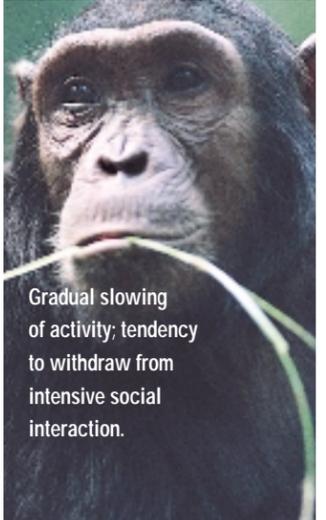
Late adolescence: males spend time with other males while females remain close to their mothers but start to show some interest in males.

Females begin to raise own offspring; males focus on raising social status within their group.

8-12 yrs.

12-15 yrs.

15-33 yrs.



Gradual slowing of activity; tendency to withdraw from intensive social interaction.

33 yrs.- death

Born in a breeding facility, she is taken from her mother within days of birth and placed in an incubator where she will be handled 2 or 3 times a day by humans.



Moved to a small cage, the infant continues to remain in isolation with bottle-feeding and occasional handling by human caregivers.



The chimpanzee can now be moved to a larger cage where she will join other infant chimpanzees. No adult chimpanzees, however, will be in this group.



Chimpanzee is separated from her peers and transferred to the care of an animal trainer.



Training—and regular beatings—begin. Chimpanzee now lives in small enclosure with a group of other chimps. Performing may begin at this age.



PETA

As chimpanzee grows stronger, severity of beatings increases. Chimpanzee may be moved to solitary housing to help trainer maintain control.



End of performing years as chimpanzee becomes too strong for trainer to control. May be sold to roadside zoo or other substandard facility.



Michael Nichols, NSG

Abandonment continues. Male chimpanzees likely to be kept in isolation, females used for breeding.



Females may be sold to breeder or used as breeder by current trainer. Infants will most likely be removed from the mother, and the cycle of "a life sentence" will begin for another generation of captive chimpanzees.



Life in substandard conditions, frequently in isolation, continues until approximately age 60.



Michael Nichols, Aperture

Statement of Support

I understand that the use of great apes in film and television productions perpetuates cruel treatment and is irreparably harmful, and I believe it should be ended immediately.

I am also aware that the entertainment industry is unlikely to voluntarily end practices that permit such abuses, and that no degree of "reform" to existing protective measures can alter one indisputable fact: removing great apes from their mothers during infancy and training them to perform "on cue" causes psychological and emotional damage so severe that these individuals will never know how to act like true chimpanzees, or how to bond naturally with others of their own species.

Given these conditions, I pledge never to act with, cast, direct, produce, write for, or in any way participate in a production for film or television that uses great apes as performers.

Signed: _____

Please print name: _____

Contact information (direct or through a representative) to help us verify your participation in this campaign. All information will be kept confidential by The Chimpanzee Collaboratory.

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Representative Name: _____

(if applicable)

Please detach and mail this Statement of Support to:

Liz Clancy Ross
Chair, Public Education Committee
The Chimpanzee Collaboratory
227 Massachusetts Avenue, NE (Ste. 100)
Washington, DC 20002