

A Message From Pat Derby

May 9, 2011

Show Business Is No Business For Elephants!

I have just viewed the disturbing video filmed in 2005 by Animal Defenders International at the Have Trunk Will Travel facility in Southern California.

Have Trunk Will Travel supplies the majority of elephants used in films and television, earning huge sums of money from their elephants. They supplied the elephant for the 20th Century Fox film, *Water For Elephants*. The elephants in this video are clearly fearful of their trainers and the bull hooks and shocking devices that are viciously applied as the elephants scramble to obey the commands.

Have Trunk Will Travel is accredited by the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and is a member of The Elephant Manager's Association (EMA) whose policies regarding the use of bull hooks and other aversive training methods are an embarrassment to the good zoos in this country.

There is a close affiliation between these organizations and circuses, and they complain incessantly about "animal rights extremists who know nothing about elephants." This animal rights extremist crowd includes Ed Stewart and me with more than 35 years each of working with elephants without using bull hooks and weapons, and Dr. Joyce Poole and Dr. Cynthia Moss who have spent their lives studying elephants in Africa, as well as many other distinguished scientists and elephant caregivers from zoos around the world.

Although Have Trunk Will Travel states that their elephants are trained with food reward and positive reinforcement, no treats are visible anywhere in this video, and the bull hooks and electricity are used aggressively and angrily. At one point a bull hook is inserted into the ear of an adult female Asian elephant and later, into the mouth of a juvenile elephant. These practices were banned in 1989 after PAWS introduced a bill that passed into law. The language of that law, Section 596.5 of the California Penal Code, is listed below this article.

Additionally, Section 597(b) of the Code states: ". . . Whoever, having the charge or custody of any animal, either as owner or otherwise, subjects any animal to needless suffering, or inflicts unnecessary cruelty upon the animal, or in any manner abuses any animal. . . is, for every such offense, guilty of a crime punishable as a misdemeanor or as a felony."

The actions I viewed on this video could only be characterized as needless suffering and unnecessary cruelty.

In the early 70s, when I was working with animals on film sets, I wrote in my book *The Lady & Her Tiger*, that "I hated the way elephants were trained. Elephants bring out a fury in many men as no other creature does, a rage to dominate and to hurt." After my book was published in 1976, my partner, Ed Stewart, and I began a crusade to ban the use of elephants and other animals in films, television and other entertainment venues because there were no humane trainers, and it is impossible to monitor the activities of those who are earning huge sums of money based on animal performances.

We formed The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in 1984 and began investigations that led to the enactment of minimal standards of care and the legislation which made the brutality seen on IDA's video illegal in California. We were constantly opposed by the powerful film industry, Hollywood animal trainers and the American Humane Association which never seems to be present during the intense training sessions depicted in the video. Although AHA gave *Water For Elephants* its highest rating, "No Animals Were Harmed", it is doubtful that Have Trunk Will Travel changed their training technique for this particular film. Undoubtedly, they realized that the abusive treatment we observed on the video would be unacceptable, and concealed the training.

The elephant actor in *Water For Elephants*, and the other elephants at Have Trunk Will Travel, have paid a high price for a few mediocre moments of entertainment. If you care about elephants, skip this movie.

The contrast between the stressful training in ADI's video and the work of elephant scientists like Cynthia Moss, Joyce Poole and Daphne Shelrick who have sacrificed their own comfort and dedicated their lives to protecting these magnificent, intelligent animals in the wild, is irrefutable.

A standing ovation to Animal Defenders International for their diligent efforts in exposing this insensitive and brutal training which is an industry standard for training elephants for entertainment.

Voice your concern. You'll find our list of addresses below.

Pat Derby
President

California Law Regarding Elephants

California Penal Code Section 596.5 states:

It shall be a misdemeanor for any owner or manager of an elephant to engage in abusive behavior towards the elephant, which behavior shall include the discipline of the elephant by any of the following methods:

- Deprivation of food, water, or rest.
- Use of electricity.
- Physical punishment resulting in damage, scarring, or breakage of skin.
- Insertion of any instrument into any bodily orifice.
- Use of martingales.
- Use of block and tackle.