

'Circus Campaign', *SAFE Magazine*. © 2000. (pp. 6-7)

Circus Campaign

REPORT

Lola's Autopsy she didn't have to die

SAFE has released the autopsy report of Lola, the chimpanzee, who died in Samoa in November last year after being exported from the Ridgway Circus in New Zealand. The report, commissioned by SAFE and written by Dr Berend Westera, is scathing in its criticisms of those responsible for Lola's death.

The report fully vindicates SAFE's fear of Lola's life because of the appalling animal welfare record of Bruno Loyal, the South Pacific circus tour operator who bought Lola and Buddy. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Cary Ridgway, owner of the Ridgway Circus, were both well aware that Loyal didn't want Lola and both

parties could have prevented Lola leaving New Zealand. SAFE believes MAF and Cary Ridgway must accept blame for Lola's untimely death. The report reveals Lola died a cruel death and that Loyal was ultimately responsible. Lola was forced to remain inside her freight box for up to seven days in the sweltering Samoan 40 degree heat. Loyal knew Lola was sick but refused a veterinarian to attend to her needs, despite the vet visiting almost daily.

SAFE hoped to prosecute Loyal however Samoa has no legislation governing this type of animal cruelty. In the report, Dr Westera is very critical of Loyal: "Despite the owner being fully aware of her poor



The body of Lola
Died in Samoa
17 November 1999

condition he did not get the vet to examine her. It is obvious that Buddy was his only concern and that Lola was surplus to requirements", he said. "... I think Lola died as a result of kidney damage due to dehydration because of lack of fluid."

Lola's nearly three and half decades in captivity was one of suffering and exploitation. The circumstances surrounding her death, tragic. SAFE is determined that Lola's offspring will not have to suffer the same fate as their mother. SAFE is committed to ensuring Sonny (Lola's 11 year old offspring) can be rescued and re-united with Buddy, now 4 years of age, at Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage in Zambia.

SAVING SONNY CAMPAIGN

Introducing Sonny

Sonny is an eleven year old male chimpanzee who has spent his entire life as a performing chimp travelling throughout New Zealand with the Ridgway Circus. Sonny is Lola's oldest offspring. According to existing MAF recommendations, he is not supposed to be performing. Until SAFE intervened he faced either euthanasia or being exported overseas, possibly to a zoo, circus, or even a primate facility. SAFE believes Sonny's best chance of a fulfilling future is to join his brother, Buddy, at Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage in Zambia. Like Buddy, and some 70 other rescued

chimpanzees, Sonny would be able to live out his days in the African jungle — a life without confinement, loneliness or monotony.

SAFE's chimp rescue campaign

SAFE has been campaigning for well over a decade to end the use of chimpanzees in circuses in New Zealand. Great Apes, including chimpanzees, are our closest living relatives and are listed as highly endangered. Their survival is recognised internationally as being of major significance. Even New Zealand's new Animal Welfare Act 1999 has granted Great Apes a special status

of protection against being used for experimental purposes.

It is widely acknowledged that chimpanzees suffer greatly in the confinement of a circus, particularly as they are moved from town to town, forced to perform and deprived of social interaction. Chimpanzees have no place in any circus.

SAFE believes the successful relocation of both Buddy and Sonny is the most effective way to champion the rights of circus chimpanzees. SAFE hopes the performing chimp will soon be just a memory — a precedent that would surely see New Zealand held in high esteem worldwide.

BUDDY happy and free



Buddy, the orphaned circus chimp rescued and relocated by SAFE, from NZ to Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage in Zambia, is happily adjusting to his new life. Buddy now shares his new, 14 acre tropical forest enclosure with Buffy, aged 15 years, and Diana and Masya, both 9 years of age. Recent footage shows Buddy playing with other chimps, lolling about in the grass and munching on fruit. A dramatic contrast to his first traumatic three years as a circus chimp.

Buffy, the female first introduced to Buddy upon his arrival at Chimfunshi primate sanctuary, still shares a strong bond with him. According to sanctuary staff, she may be a little too protective, which has resulted in some difficulty integrating chimps into their enclosure. Staff are confident, however, it won't be long before Buddy has some new, young companions to play with in their secure forest area.

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A SAFE REPORT**MAF fails circus animals**

MAF and the Ridgway Circus: 1989 - 1998
SAFE has released a report which is critical of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (MAF) role in monitoring the chimpanzees held captive at the *Ridgway Circus* over a ten year period. The information compiled in the report and obtained by SAFE under the *Official Information Act*, was previously cited as confidential. The report concludes MAF has failed to act in the interest of these chimps, and comply with their own recommendations.

The report documents MAF's responsibilities under the *Animal Protection Act (1960)* and the *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Circus Animals*. The report demonstrates how MAF has failed to fulfil their responsibilities throughout the ten year period.

SAFE's report makes shocking reading for those who believe that the role of MAF is to protect the welfare of animals.

Examples of MAF's failings include:

- *Ridgway Circus* permitted to operate unregistered for over two and half years over the course of a nine year period.
- The location of the circus and its chimpanzees frequently left unaccounted for by MAF.
- MAF recommends Lola be euthanised when heavily pregnant.
- Inadequate records of documentation required for circus registrations.
- Regulations require MAF to carry out a minimum of 27 inspections over nine years (three annually). In this period only three inspections are documented.
- MAF's own internal audits cite numerous problems and outline recommendations, many of which are not actioned.

What you can do

To make a submission, you will need to register with the Secretary of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC). Contact: Secretary, NAWAC, C/- MAF, PO Box 2526, Wellington. Contact SAFE if you need more information.

Circus animals - help end their abuse

The *Code of Recommendations for Circuses*, (legislation governing circuses under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999*), is scheduled to be rewritten in the coming months. SAFE is already preparing a submission calling for an end to circus animals. SAFE is determined circuses will no longer be permitted to torment and exploit animals for so-called entertainment.

You can help by making a submission. The more people who write opposing circuses with animals and urging consideration be given to the plight of circus animals, the better chance we have to end their suffering.

SAFE has campaigned on your behalf for many years to end animal circuses. With your help, we can make this a reality. Let's make NZ an animal-circus-free zone.



Sonny, still captive and alone.

Sonny's family: the tragic story

SAFE's chimp rescue campaign began in 1999 with the high-profiled rescue of two circus chimpanzees, Lola and Buddy. Sonny's mother, Lola, had spent over two decades as a breeding chimp for the *Ridgway Circus*. She was confined to a barren, small, travelling cage, watching as, one by one, her offspring were taken away to become part of the circus. In November 1999 Lola and Buddy were sold to a South Pacific travelling circus based in Samoa. Lola, sadly, did not survive the mistreatment she suffered in her first few days in Samoa but, due to intensive lobbying and negotiations, Buddy was rescued by SAFE and is now enjoying his freedom in Zambia.

What you can do

- 1) Join SAFE and help support our campaign to end the use of animals in circuses in New Zealand.
- 2) Send SAFE's 'Chimp campaign' postcard to the Jim Sutton, Minister of Agriculture, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. Copies available from SAFE.
- 3) Write a submission objecting to animals being used in circuses.
- 4) Make a donation towards SAFE's chimp rescue campaign to help free Sonny.

Buddy and Buffy playing in their new home in Zambia.



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