

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

February 3, 2020

Dear Mr. McCumber,

I'm writing from PETA's Animals in Film and Television division to urge USA Network to publicly condemn the use of wild animals for entertainment and commit to using only humane technology, such as computer-generated imagery and animatronics, to depict wild animals in any future seasons of *Briarpatch* and other programming on your network.

According to documents that PETA recently obtained from the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, Chelsey and Kip Lewis—trainers who apparently supplied animals, including an alligator and giraffes, for *Briarpatch*—unlawfully imported and held several wild animals, including a capuchin monkey and a 2-month-old mountain lion, at residences in New Mexico. The mountain lion cub and the alligator reportedly died before law-enforcement officials executed a seizure warrant at the Lewis residence in April of 2019.

PETA has also received disturbing bodycam footage from officers' searches for and seizure of the apparently unlawfully held animals from the Lewis compound. These videos reveal animals in woefully inadequate enclosures. Here are some examples:

- The alligator apparently imported for *Briarpatch* was confined to a small outdoor pit and then died. According to Kip Lewis, the animal had pneumonia.
- More than a dozen dogs were kept in kennels stacked on top of one another in a garage.
- A zebra was kept in a cramped trailer.

I hope you'll take a moment to watch [this video](#). Unfortunately, cases of deprivation and neglect are all too common when it comes to using wild animals for film and television. Wild animals' complex needs are compromised when they're used as props, and the Lewises apparently have no more regard for the law than they do for animal welfare.

Captive wild animals deserve to live in reputable sanctuaries—not to be smuggled like cargo for the entertainment industry. Moreover, when a major network works with wild-animal trainers, it effectively endorses animal exploitation and causes a major setback to advocates' work. May we please hear from you right away that

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this season of *Briarpatch* will be the last time that USA Network will allow the use of wild animals in its programming?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Lauren Thomasson
Senior Manager
Animals in Film and Television
PETA