

Mitchel Kalmanson

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Mitchel Kalmanson has failed to meet minimum federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited him numerous times for failing to provide veterinary care, failing to provide animals with sufficient space to move around, failing to feed animals veterinarian-approved diets, and failing to have proper barriers and attendants present between animals and the public. During performances with UniverSoul Circus in both 2003 and 2004, tigers owned by Kalmanson escaped because of employee errors. In 2006, Kalmanson failed to provide two lion cubs with a diet that was of sufficient nutritive value, resulting in metabolic bone disease, the hospitalization of both cubs, and the death of one cub. Kalmanson has leased the animals for use in circuses, including UniverSoul Circus, George Carden International Circus, Cole Bros. Circus, and Shrine circuses. Contact PETA for documentation.

September 17, 2019: The USDA cited Kalmanson for failing to have a responsible adult available to accompany an inspector during an animal-welfare inspection.

June 8, 2017: The USDA cited Kalmanson for failing to maintain an appropriate plan of veterinary care. The program of veterinary care indicated that euthanasia would be performed by a veterinarian “using barbiturates or gunshot for ‘emergent’ reasons.” Kalmanson euthanized two tigers with a history of kidney disease by apparently shooting them. There was no

evidence that any type of chemical agent had been used. These were not emergencies, and a gun shouldn’t have been used. Kalmanson didn’t have a detailed, written protocol for the use of guns in emergency euthanasia.

June 15, 2016: The USDA cited Kalmanson for purchasing a porcupine from an unlicensed dealer. He was also cited for a sanitation violation after inspectors observed meat for a lion on the ground with ants in and around it. These ants could bite the lion’s face, tongue, and gums, causing pain or discomfort.

March 28, 2016: A Los Angeles County animal control officer observed that a tiger named Shakiera had a laceration “just above the forehead between the eyes,” which an employee of Mitchel Kalmanson’s stated was caused by “continual rubbing of the forehead on the metal cage.” The officer issued Kalmanson, Juan “Johnny” Lam (the tigers’ “caretaker”), and UniverSoul Circus an order to comply with county code by having a veterinarian check on the tiger’s injury.

March 8, 2016: The USDA cited Kalmanson for failing to have a responsible adult available to accompany an inspector during an animal-welfare inspection.

January 26, 2016: The USDA cited Kalmanson for failing to maintain a transport enclosure in good repair, creating a risk of injury to animals. A resting platform was splintered and had protruding nailheads and screwheads.

April 10, 2015: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson while traveling with the Shrine circus in Springfield, Missouri, for failing to have a sufficient barrier between a tiger and members of the public. The tiger was held in an enclosure with a plexiglass panel on the front while members of the public sat in front

of the enclosure and took pictures. An insufficient barrier was present on two sides of the enclosure and could allow members of the public to reach into the enclosure and touch the tiger. In addition, the area housing four tigers and a liger was left unattended with the barrier gate open after the circus performance, and the inspector saw multiple people reach their arms and hands close to the enclosures during this time. Kalmanson was also cited for keeping tigers in transport enclosures all day long and denying them daily exercise, improperly storing meat, and failing to keep the transport vehicle for the tigers clean and in good repair. Inside the vehicle, the inspector observed a foul odor, maggots, a buildup of food and excreta, and exposed insulation.

July 22, 2014: While traveling, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited by the USDA with a facilities violation for leaving a gate in the perimeter fence open and unattended several times near the enclosures holding the tigers, making it possible for an unauthorized person to approach and touch the tigers. In addition, the fence immediately surrounding the transport enclosures holding the tigers was only 4 feet tall.

February 27, 2014: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson with a facilities violation because the paint and plastic coating around the pipes anchoring the fence was chipping off. Some of the plastic pieces had fallen into the enclosures holding the tigers and could contain toxic chemicals that may pose a risk of illness or poisoning if ingested.

July 25, 2013: While traveling with UniverSoul Circus, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited by the USDA with a repeat noncompliance for failing to maintain enclosures with sufficient space for three tigers and a cougar to make normal postural adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. The animals are kept in

transport cages constantly while traveling for periods up to four to seven weeks. These animals leave the transport cages only during performances, when they are transferred to much smaller cages for a magic act. The inspector noted that the lack of opportunity for the animals to have adequate freedom of movement could be detrimental to their health and well-being and cause unnecessary discomfort. Kalmanson was also cited for leaving the public barrier gate open surrounding the big cats in transport cages, allowing more than enough room for a human or an animal to enter or exit the area that holds the big cats.

April 10, 2013: While traveling with UniverSoul Circus, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited by the USDA for failing to provide Isis, an 11-year-old tiger who was favoring her left front leg, with adequate veterinary care. Three days after the limp was noticed, the tiger was examined by a local veterinarian who didn't observe any lameness but admitted to having no experience with big cats. The limp was left undiagnosed for two more days before a big-cat specialist examined Isis and observed the limp. Kalmanson was also cited for keeping Isis in an enclosure with a chain fastened around her neck, presenting a serious risk of catching on the enclosure, resulting in injury or strangulation. In addition, the USDA cited Kalmanson for failing to maintain enclosures with sufficient space for two tigers to make normal postural adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. These animals leave the transport cages only during performances, when they're transferred to much smaller cages for a magic act. The inspector noted that this lack of opportunity for the animals to have adequate freedom of movement could be detrimental to their health and well-being and cause unnecessary discomfort.

January 29, 2013: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to have a program of

veterinary care for several foxes and a mink.

August 14, 2012: While traveling, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited by the USDA for failing to feed tigers the diet outlined by the facility's veterinarian. In addition, the meat for the tigers was thawed in standing water, increasing the risk of contamination and spoilage.

July 5, 2012: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson with a repeat violation for refusing to allow an Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) inspector to conduct an animal-welfare inspection.

April 18, 2012: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to have a responsible adult available to accompany an APHIS inspector during an animal-welfare inspection.

September 15, 2011: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for a sanitation violation for failing to maintain a safe, effective program of pest control. Several wasps or hornets were observed at the corner of one of the enclosures.

July 14, 2011: While traveling, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited by the USDA for a tiger that was observed to have had the toes of her right rear foot caught in the bottom edge of an enclosure. A video shows the tiger responding to the entrapped toes in a manner consistent with behavioral stress and unnecessary discomfort. The inspector noted that the facilities must be repaired to prevent injury in the future.

February 22, 2011: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to follow the veterinarian's approved feeding plan. The big cats receive vitamin-mineral supplements under the direction of the veterinarian but didn't receive any supplements for three months. In addition,

the inspector found meat being thawed in lukewarm standing water, increasing the risk of contamination and spoilage.

August 17, 2010: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for inadequately storing food supplies while traveling with Cole Bros. Circus. The inspector noted that at least the top two layers of chicken parts were thawing in the freezer because the freezer was unplugged overnight and in the morning.

January 25, 2010: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to drain excess water properly in an enclosure holding a cat.

February 24, 2009: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to maintain accurate records that correctly identified the animals, failing to send in travel itineraries for 13 tigers traveling in Mexico, and failing to grant the inspector full access to all areas so that a complete and thorough inspection could be performed.

March 20, 2008: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to maintain accurate records on three zebras acquired in April 2007.

February 1, 2008: The USDA issued a Decision and Order formally finding that Mitchel Kalmanson had committed multiple violations of the AWA between February 2003 and June 2004, including failing to have sufficient barriers between tigers and the public, failing to provide personnel with adequate guidance on proper methods for capturing an escaped tiger, and having an insufficient number of employees present to prevent a tiger from escaping on June 2, 2004. The USDA ordered Kalmanson to pay a fine of \$6,000.

November 7, 2007: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for refusing to allow an APHIS inspector to conduct an animal-welfare inspection.

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September 25, 2006: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to maintain an accurate written program of veterinary care that provides diet plans for all large felids. Two lion cubs weren't provided with a diet that was of sufficient nutritive value to maintain good health, resulting in the hospitalization of both cubs and the death of one cub. This inadequate diet caused metabolic bone disease in both animals. In addition, Kalmanson was cited for having inexperienced, inadequately trained staff responsible for the care of the lion cubs. The inspector noted that adequate knowledge and training would have prevented the medical problems and death.

June 16, 2006: While traveling with UniverSoul Circus, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited for failing to maintain veterinary documentation for a lion with moderately red skin and hair missing from her tail.

February 13, 2006: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to have a responsible adult available to accompany an APHIS inspector during an animal-welfare inspection.

December 15, 2004: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson with a repeat noncompliance for failing to maintain accurate inventory records of the tigers. In addition, he was cited for failing to ensure that a suitable barrier was maintained around the animal areas while traveling.

October 25, 2004: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson with a repeat noncompliance for failing to maintain accurate inventory records of the tigers. He was also cited for failing to supply adequate veterinary care to a leopard with an active lesion on her hind limb pad and a tiger with a lesion on his left shoulder.

June 3, 2004: While traveling with UniverSoul Circus, Mitchel Kalmanson was

cited by the USDA for failing to establish written handling and capture and restraint protocols for the tigers. In addition, he was cited for not having a barrier fence around the tigers and for having only one handler to shift tigers from cage to cage. Acceptable handling practices require at least two handlers.

June 2, 2004: While traveling with UniverSoul Circus, a trainer left the gate to a holding cage open and a tiger belonging to Kalmanson escaped, running loose and attacking an elephant on the hip.

November 20, 2003: While traveling, Mitchel Kalmanson was cited by the USDA for failing to present any animal acquisition records during an inspection.

October 30, 2003: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to provide a tiger, who had an open wound on his forehead, with proper veterinary care and failing to thaw frozen chicken in a way that prevents contamination.

March 31, 2003: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson with a veterinary noncompliance for dogs in need of veterinary exams. They had varying degrees of dental tartar and calculus buildup. He was also cited for failing to provide acquisition information for a giraffe, failing to provide a dog with the minimum required amount of space, failing to document the implementation of an enrichment plan for chimpanzees, failing to erect an adequate perimeter fence around the exercise area and ring, and failing to keep water receptacles for the tigers clean and sanitary. These watering pools had accumulations of stagnant, green, slimy algae growth.

February 4, 2003: While traveling with UniverSoul Circus in Jacksonville, Florida, a tiger escaped because a new employee had not been properly trained. The tiger was

caught, and there were no injuries to the public.

August 22, 2002: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to provide four large adult tigers with sufficient space while traveling. The tigers were confined together to one pen measuring approximately 8 feet 4 inches by 10 inches, and no exercise cage was set up.

August 7, 2002: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to provide the large felids with a veterinarian-approved diet. The tigers were being fed turkey sausage and chicken with no nutritional supplements.

March 7, 2002: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to provide a poodle, who had severe periodontal disease, with adequate veterinary care and failing to provide the big cats with an adequate diet.

February 28, 2002: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for repeat noncompliances for failing to develop an exercise plan for the dogs, failing to have proper identification for one of the dogs, and failing to provide the big cats, who were only being fed chicken, with a nutritionally complete diet. In addition, Kalmanson was cited for failing to store food for the giraffe in a closed container.

February 7, 2002: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for repeat noncompliances for failing to provide the dogs with sufficient exercise space, failing to provide a singly housed chimpanzee with adequate enrichment, and failing to have proper identification for the dogs. In addition, Kalmanson was cited for failing to provide the big cats with a nutritionally complete diet.

March 8, 2001: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for storing food near cans of paint and paint thinner, failing to maintain a

complete veterinary-care plan, failing to have acquisition records for four tigers and a dog, and failing to have an exercise plan and proper identification for the dog.

February 16, 2001: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to have sufficient lighting in the cages in the travel vehicle that house chimpanzees and failing to provide three singly housed chimpanzees with proper environmental enhancement. The owner of the chimpanzees said that they're housed separately so that they'll be more motivated to socialize during performances.

June 6, 2000: The USDA cited Mitchel Kalmanson for failing to maintain written inventory records of the animals, failing to maintain a written enhancement plan for two lemurs, and failing to provide a written diet plan for the lion.