



March 13, 2017

Keith Will  
Potentate  
Sesostris Shrine

Dear Mr. Will,

I'm writing again on behalf of PETA regarding the James Cristy Cole Circus, which recently used bears from Castle's Bears and is scheduled to use bears again as part of the Sesostris Shrine Circus. As you know, recent [video footage](#) covered in the [Daily Mail](#) shows one of the animals urinating in distress as they were tethered, muzzled, prodded, and forced to perform cruel and confusing tricks. I urge you to ensure that bears are not a part of next week's circus and to adopt a humane, modern policy that bans wild-animal acts at the Sesostris Shine Circus going forward.

Bears are complex, far-ranging animals who require opportunities to climb, dig, forage, and build nests. Because their instinctual needs are thwarted, the animals used by Castle's Bears endure miserable lives. Dressed in ridiculous costumes, muzzled, and tethered, they're forced to perform confusing and likely painful tricks in crowded arenas day in and day out. According to bear expert Jay Pratte—who has more than 25 years of experience in captive-bear husbandry and viewed footage of a performance last month—these bears are being coerced or forced to participate. He also notes that their training "was very clearly accomplished by aversive means," as evidenced when one bear urinated after her leash was pulled and again when she was forced to stand and walk on her front legs. Pratte went on to state that forcing an animal to exhibit these unnatural types of behavior (e.g., walking bipedally on hind and front legs) causes distress and "potential long term physiological issues as they are counter to [the] animal's natural body and abilities"—and that the noise and crowd are clearly affecting the bears, who are undoubtedly stressed by the audience.

Because you didn't respond to my earlier correspondence, I'm left with no option but to alert our members and supporters that the Sesostris Shrine does not share their concerns regarding animal welfare and is not interested in addressing the cruelty inflicted on bears used and abused for entertainment.

Please prioritize animal welfare by canceling the bear show and committing to hosting only animal-free circuses in the future. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

John Di Leonardo, M.S.  
Senior Campaigner, Animals in Entertainment  
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

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