



September 10, 2012

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Dear Mr. Bruner and AHA Board Members:

I am writing to express deep concern about alleged problems with oversight on the sets of film and television productions that use animals. As it is the American Humane Association's (AHA) role to monitor the use of animals on set, for which AHA is funded by the Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund and private donors, we urge you to initiate a thorough and independent investigation of these allegations. If they prove to be valid, we ask that you take immediate steps to correct any problems and circumstances that allowed them to occur.

PETA has for years received whistleblower reports alleging animal abuse on sets, but following our release of leaked information about the mistreatment and deaths of horses on HBO's *Luck* and the subsequent cancellation of the program, we received an unprecedented number of reports concerning more than a dozen film and television projects, four of which are in production right now. All these allegations suggest that problems could have been avoided with adequate oversight by the AHA. In some cases, it is alleged that AHA management looked the other way or was even complicit in arranging for the filming of sequences that were potentially dangerous for animals. Each film and the specific allegations surrounding it is listed below. I have noted where additional evidence was provided, and I have attached that evidence.

Many, though not all, of the allegations involve the AHA's Karen Rosa, who has been overseeing the AHA's film unit. According to the reports we have received, some people on the sets of some films believe that AHA representatives have not received the support needed from Ms. Rosa to ensure the safety of animals. Specific allegations are below, but in general, Ms. Rosa has allegedly refused to back the recommendations of the AHA representatives on set and has thus allowed situations that put animals in jeopardy. Others allege that AHA representatives inexperienced with the species of animals being used have been assigned to productions *because* they are inexperienced and won't make filming difficult while more experienced representatives have been removed.

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We understand that Ms. Rosa will soon be removed from her position, but based on what we have been told, it does not appear that this will mean an end to the oversight problems. Whistleblowers allege that Ms. Rosa is a reflection of a pervasive culture at AHA in which "relationship building" with producers and directors has become more important than effective oversight.

At least one of the allegations involves AHA President Robin Ganzert, and some whistleblowers have reported that orders from Ms. Ganzert direct AHA staff, including Ms. Rosa, not to "make waves" or cause tension between the AHA and certain directors and production companies. This is particularly problematic as we are told that trainers and wranglers hired by production companies rely on AHA representatives to prohibit dangerous conditions. Some trainers don't wish to raise objections to producers in this competitive business—even if they are invited to do so by producers—so they voice their concerns to AHA reps who, we are told, have in the past made these concerns known and have thus protected animals. It has been alleged that some directors and producers have been entirely unaware of the potential danger of some scenes because AHA reps were allegedly instructed by their supervisors not to discuss the trainers' concerns. Similarly, it is alleged that production companies have not been made aware that animal suppliers hired for their films have a history of animal welfare violations.

Whistleblowers allege that the AHA film ratings are not reliable. We have been told that the ratings of some films do not reflect what occurred on set, that acceptable ratings have been given when not all animal action was monitored, and that ratings were changed when the AHA feared that information about problems on the set would be leaked.

Not all the alleged incidents resulted in death or injury, though some apparently did. What all the allegations do convey is that animals, as well as actors, have apparently been put at risk and that these risks could have been prevented.

Here are specific allegations:

***The Killing Season*** (in production; projected release date 2013; Millennium Films and Corsan Pictures; directed by Mark Steven Johnson; starring Robert De Niro and John Travolta): The production company did not want an AHA rep on the set for the filming of scenes in which elk are supposed to fight. Karen Rosa informed the AHA rep on set that she wanted to contact producers and the Screen Actors Guild to lodge a complaint but was overruled by Robin Ganzert. One reason given was that if animals were injured with an AHA rep present, doing nothing, it would be "not a good position to be in." The AHA rep was also concerned that the supplier of the animals, a wildlife facility registered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has a record of violations for inadequate housing and veterinary care, thus making the AHA's presence on the set during the elk fight scene particularly important. *Five screen shots of what appear to be e-mails from AHA staff seem to support these allegations (the screen shots are attached).*

***Killing Lincoln*** (in production for National Geographic Channel, based on the book by Bill O'Reilly; projected release date 2013; Scott Free Productions; directed by Adrian Moat; starring Billy Campbell and Jesse Johnson): A dangerous scene was filmed in which a horse, with an actor in the saddle, was forced to gallop across a narrow bridge with water, rocks, and logs beneath. The bridge had no railings or siding, and the scene was filmed at night. Before the scene was filmed, the AHA rep assigned to the set told Karen Rosa that this was dangerous for both horse and actor and that the trainer had asked the

rep to oppose the filming. Rosa removed this rep from the set and assigned another, less-experienced rep to the set, and the scene was filmed as planned. *An online photograph of the bridge is attached.*

***Lone Ranger*** (in production, projected release date June 28, 2013; Silver Bullet Productions; directed by Gore Verbinski; starring Johnny Depp and Armie Hammer): The AHA rep who reviewed the script was concerned about many risky scenes involving animals. The rep's concerns were not backed by AHA management. One trainer was fired for refusing to cooperate with producers who wanted the scenes to be shot as planned. In one scene, horses with riders were to swim across the Colorado River. The first swim took place without incident, but before the swim back across was filmed, hours later, the river had risen more than a foot because of rainstorms upriver. One horse and rider swam back without incident, but a second horse and rider were swept downriver. Fortunately, a production crew was in a pontoon boat downriver. Two men jumped in to try to grab the horse. Eventually, someone was able to throw a lasso around the horse's head and pull the horse to the shore.

***The Hobbit*** (in post production, projected release date December 13, 2012; New Line Cinema, directed by Peter Jackson; starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Elijah Wood): *According to a New Zealand newspaper article, three horses being used in the production died (the article is attached).* One miniature horse was housed with larger, high-strung horses who trampled him. A second horse was placed in a partially fenced area that bordered a cliff with a sharp drop to a river below; the horse was found dead at the bottom of the cliff. The third horse died from unexplained causes, possibly related to feed. The AHA acknowledged the deaths in a public statement and says that an investigation was conducted. Whistleblowers tell us that the only wrangler on the set—who was interviewed in the article attached—voiced his concerns to production about the housing of the horses and was subsequently fired. Others complained to AHA reps, who did not take action and did not convey all the wranglers' concerns to production.

***Boardwalk Empire*** (HBO TV; created by Terence Winter; starring Steve Buscemi and Kelly Macdonald): A horse died on the set of this program on June 25, 2012. We understand that the horse died of a possible heart attack under extremely stressful conditions, including chaotic activity on the set and an incoming thunderstorm, yet filming was not stopped to allow the horse to calm down.

***Wrath of the Titans*** (2012; Warner Bros.; directed by Jonathan Liebesman; starring Sam Worthington and Liam Neeson): A horse died while being transported during this film. Despite this, the film was giving an "Outstanding" rating by the AHA. *The AHA ratings review is attached as the link appears to have been recently been disabled.* <http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/reviews/wrath-of-the-titans/>

***Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*** (2012; Abraham Productions; directed by Timur Bekmambetov; starring Dominic Cooper, Benjamin Walker, and Rufus Sewell): Horses were drugged with banamine, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory, indicating that they were not considered fit, and some of the horses used were later sold and shipped for slaughter in Mexico. The AHA acknowledged in its first review of the film that not all scenes involving animals were monitored, yet it gave the film an "Outstanding" rating. When PETA heard the allegations of drug use, we immediately wrote to Robin Ganzert, who responded that the allegations were unfounded but that the AHA was nevertheless downgrading the rating of the film to "Acceptable" (*our letter is attached*). *The AHA's current "Acceptable" rating review is attached as the link appears to have been recently been disabled.* <http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/reviews/abraham-lincoln-vampire-hunter/>.

***Magic Mike*** (2012; Iron Horse Entertainment; directed by Steven Soderbergh; starring Channing Tatum and Alex Pettyfer): The AHA acknowledged that not all animal scenes were monitored, but it nevertheless rated the film "Outstanding." *The AHA ratings review is attached as the link appears to have been recently been disabled.* <http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/reviews/movie-review-magic-mike/>

***Moonrise Kingdom*** (2012; Indian Paintbrush; directed by Wes Anderson; starring Jared Gilman, Kara Hayward, and Bruce Willis): An underage kitten was used on the set, in violation of AHA guidelines and possibly state law. *A screenshot of what appear to be AHA computer notes dated January 2012 stating that Karen Rosa approved the use of the kitten and mandating that precautions be taken is attached.* Despite this and following the controversy surrounding the AHA-monitored show *Luck*, the organization rated the film "Unacceptable" (*The AHA ratings review is attached as the link appears to have been recently been disabled.* <http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/reviews/moonrise-kingdom/>) for this very reason, stating:

However, the film has earned a **Monitored-Unacceptable** rating due to the fact that our Certified Animal Safety Representative discovered the kitten they were using was underage, per our *Guidelines For The Safe Use of Animals In Filmed Media*. Since, the production never notified us as to which days they were going to use the kitten. American Humane was not able to enforce our Guidelines for the safe handling of the kitten. This lack of notification, coupled with the unintentional negligence in using a kitten that was under eight weeks of age, led to our decision to rate the film Monitored-Unacceptable.

***The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*** (2011; Columbia Pictures; directed by David Fincher; starring Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara): The scene in which the body of a cat was found after being killed was not monitored as it was filmed in Sweden and the AHA did not want to pay for its rep to travel. In its review, the AHA acknowledges that the scene was not monitored: "In the scene where cat is found dead on front porch, production provided documentation." Yet the AHA rated the film "Outstanding." *The AHA ratings review is attached as the link appears to have been recently been disabled.* <http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/reviews/girl-with-dragon-tattoo/>

***The Immortals*** (2011; Relativity Media; directed by Tarsem Singh; starring Luke Evans and Mickey Rourke): A finch used in the production escaped and was found dead, yet the film was rated "Outstanding." *The AHA ratings review is attached as the link appears to have been recently been disabled.* <http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/reviews/the-immortals/>

***The Conspirator*** (2010; Wildwood Enterprises; directed by Robert Redford; starting Robin Wright and James McAvoy): The horses supplied by a Savannah, Ga., company were underweight, lame, improperly shod, improperly harnessed, and housed in filthy, substandard conditions. *Photos of two of the horses are attached.* AHA reps on set were concerned but were instructed not to inform the production company. The same company was hired to supply horses for the film *Savannah* (2012; not yet released; Unclaimed Freight Productions; directed by Annette Haywood-Carter; starring Jim Caviezel), as the production company did not know of previous problems, and the horses were in similarly poor condition.

***There Will Be Blood*** (2007; Paramount Vantage; directed by Paul Thomas Anderson; starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Paul Dano): Three horses died. Two horses reportedly suffered from colic and died suddenly of unknown causes. While colic can occur for various reasons, whistleblowers state that horses were not given adequate water on very hot days (dehydration can cause colic, and heat is an aggravating factor). Whistleblowers further report that AHA reps discovered discrepancies between the reports of the horses' age, sex, and breed supplied by the trainer and the reports supplied by the veterinarian. None of this was reported in the review of the film, which was rated "Acceptable."  
<http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/archives/movies/mr.php?fid=7881>

***Failure to Launch*** (2006; Paramount; directed by Tom Dey; starring Matthew McConaughey and Sarah Jessica Parker): A chipmunk was killed when a trainer transported him inside his clothing rather than transferring him to a cage for proper transport. Despite this, the film was rated "Acceptable."

***Pirates of the Caribbean*** (2003; Walt Disney Pictures; directed by Gore Verbinski; starring Johnny Depp): *Explosions set by production in Wallilabou Bay resulted in the deaths of 46 fish and 51 squid over a period of four days (a screen shot of what appear to be AHA notes on this is attached).* There is no mention of the deaths in the review and the film was rated "Acceptable."  
<http://www.americanhumanefilmtv.org/movie-review-archives/>

Please understand that while PETA opposes nearly all uses of animals in film and television, we take the position that if animals are going to be used, it is vital that their safety and well-being be of paramount concern and that their use be monitored adequately. As you know, the AHA has the right to be present whenever animals are on set and to preview scripts and comment when problematic scenes are planned. If these rights are waived by the AHA, the animals have not been protected to the greatest extent possible. The result can be injuries and death. Further, production companies that are relying on the AHA to advise them may be unaware that they are risking the safety of animals. As PETA is not equipped to take on this role and has no desire to do so, we urge you to investigate and, where appropriate, take action to correct the situation so that, at the very least, the AHA's ratings truly represent what actually occurred on the set.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,



Kathy Guillermo  
Senior Vice President  
PETA

cc: Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund, 3601 W. Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91505-4662

Dr. Robin Ganzert