

Dear Mr. Bloys:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals U.S.—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, and PETA U.S. is the largest animal rights organization in the world—about an alleged death of a horse on the set of the HBO series *The Gilded Age*.

PETA has heard from multiple whistleblowers alleging that a horse died last week during the filming of yet another HBO production. Reportedly, the horse was 23 years old, had possible preexisting health conditions, and the death was due to head trauma.

We're calling on HBO to confirm the death, to conduct an immediate internal investigation into the incident, and to hold the party or parties who allowed it to occur responsible. Finally, we're asking you to take measures so that something similar never happens again.

Horses have died during filming by HBO in the past. In 2012, the network canceled the series *Luck* following the deaths of at least three horses. These animals were unfit, arthritic, drugged, and pushed beyond their capabilities. Many weren't accustomed to film sets and had received no training but were retired racehorses. We had hoped HBO might have learned something from that experience: namely, that horses aren't props. They're sensitive animals who can be startled easily, and they must be gradually accustomed to the changing conditions on a set. They should not be used in film or television productions at all. If they are, an equine behaviorist should be on set at all times, and this person must be given the authority to stop filming if horses begin to show what are often subtle signs of agitation.

May we please hear from you that HBO will launch an internal investigation and pledge never again to force horses to be exploited, suffer, or die for one of its productions? Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Courtney Penley
Coordinator | *Animals in Film & Television*
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)