



May 16, 2023

Robert Hampton
Potentate
Yaarab Shrine

Dear Mr. Hampton:

I'm writing on behalf of PETA with an urgent request to leave animals out of this week's Yaarab Shrine Circus shows, in which elephant abuse is set to take center stage. The Yaarab Shrine must recognize that times have changed and finally choose to end this shameful chapter of its history by hosting only animal-free fundraisers now and in the future.

Although Shriners claim to be dedicated to compassion and service, animals forced to perform in [circuses](#) like yours live under the constant threat of being hit with bullhooks—a sharp steel-tipped weapon that resembles a fireplace poker—whips, and other weapons to force them to perform confusing and painful tricks. [Video footage](#) shows the head trainer for Carson & Barnes Circus—which frequently provides the cruel elephant acts for the Yaarab Shrine Circus—instructing trainers to sink bullhooks into elephants' flesh and twist them until the animals scream. [Carson & Barnes](#)' appallingly long history of animal abuse also includes more than 100 citations for violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Animal acts are a cruel relic of the past, and there's no better proof than the reinvention of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, which is coming back this year *without* animals. The CEO of Ringling's parent company even [said](#), "Logically, in order to be successful for 146 years, you constantly have to change." Now, hundreds of venues and dozens of communities across the country prohibit or restrict animal acts and several Shrine clubs have nixed their animal circuses entirely.

Shrine circuses should be fun for everyone, but they're not fun for suffering elephants or other abused animals. We have tried to discuss this important matter privately with you many times, but these animals just can't wait any longer. It's high time that Yaarab Shrine moved into the modern era and left animals out of its circuses.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tracy Reiman
Executive Vice President

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