

Via email mmoriarty@spca.bc.ca

February 5, 2026

Marcie Moriarty
Chief Prevention and Enforcement Officer
British Columbia SPCA
1245 East 7th Ave.
Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1

Dear Ms. Moriarty:

Re: Request to Investigate *Fear Factor* for Causing and Permitting Animals to be in Distress

I am writing on behalf of PETA to request that the British Columbia SPCA (BC SPCA) investigate the television show *Fear Factor: House of Fear*, its host Johnny Knoxville, and its animal handlers, which was filmed in or around the Metro Vancouver Regional District, for violation of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*, RSBC 1996, c. 372 ("the Act"), specifically, the following provisions with respect to distress.

Duties of persons responsible for animals

9.1 (1) *A person responsible for an animal must care for the animal, including protecting the animal from circumstances that are likely to cause the animal to be in distress.*

(2) *A person responsible for an animal must not cause or permit the animal to be, or to continue to be, in distress.*

...

23.2 (1) *A person must not cause an animal to be in distress.*

...

(2) *For the purposes of this Act, an animal is in distress if it is*

- (a) deprived of adequate food, water, shelter, ventilation, light, space, exercise, care or veterinary treatment,*
 - (a.1) kept in conditions that are unsanitary,*
 - (a.2) not protected from excessive heat or cold,*
- (b) injured, sick, in pain or suffering, or*
- (c) abused or neglected.*

Names of Animal Handlers, for Episode 1, set below out in Exhibit A

Animal Wrangler

Brad MacDonald

Animal Handlers

Bruce Carr

Ava Franklin

Tracy Cardhouse

Mike Hopcraft

Piers LeRoux

Jerome Lieberth

Hope Parish

Drew Pergura

Raymond Roberts

Dylan Woodley

Names of Animal Handlers, for Episode 3, set below out in Exhibit B

Animal Wrangler

Brad MacDonald

Animal Handlers

Bruce Carr

Tracy Gardhouse

Mike Hopcraft

Piers Leroux

Jerome Lieberth

Hope Parish

Raymond Roberts

Greg Stengel

Episode 1

On January 11, 2026, *Fear Factor* premiered Episode 1 which appeared to depict multiple instances of animals in distress. You can view excepts from the episode [here](#).

As seen below in Exhibit C, During the *Hall of Fame* challenge, contestants were locked individually inside a booth with a platform surrounding their abdomen.

As seen below in Exhibit D, each contestant had a different group of animals (rats, pigeons, geckos, and snakes) dropped on top of them from a compartment in the ceiling of the booth above their heads three times.

As seen below in Exhibit E, the episode depicted a race among the contestants to find three codes mixed in with the animals and objects dropped on top of them.

Once the contestants entered a code, the next group of animals mixed in with objects dropped down on top of them, resulting in a cramped, claustrophobic space. After locating and entering the three codes, the contestants were able to exit the bottom of the booth through a narrow passageway, resulting in them pressing some of the animals against the exit, as shown below in Exhibit F.

We provided footage from the *Fear Factor* scene to Dr. Mason Payne, a wildlife veterinarian, from Episode 1 (the first scene), who prepared a report based on his observations, attached as Exhibit G.

Dr. Payne identified the following concerns with the scene.

- 1) **Likely to Cause Physical Injury** - According to Dr. Payne “[t]he first scene is likely to cause injury given the small and fragile nature of rat, gecko, and pigeon appendages. Injuries could include fractures, joint dislocations, internal trauma, tendon or ligament damage, and other physical trauma.”. *Fear Factor* risked injuring these animals every time it performed a drop, which was multiple times for each contestant. Dr. Payne further indicated that “[f]alling from heights or being crushed by humans is likely to cause pain or suffering, especially considering that the humans involved are fearful, frantic, and focused on another task rather than the well-being of the animals around them.”
- 2) **Likely to Cause Stress** – According to Dr. Payne “[t]he inadequate space and prolonged confinement of these animals, in addition to loud noises like airhorns and screaming humans, and the sudden transition from darkness to the extreme brightness of a filming set, are likely to cause distress in all species involved.”

Dr. Payne further opined that: "Multiple animals also show visible signs indicative of stress during the episodes. In the first scene, one snake is curled up tightly on the floor, which could be either a defensive posture or an effort to retain heat in an improperly cold environment. Multiple pigeons are seen fluttering and flapping their wings erratically. This could have been caused by their nails getting stuck in the netting material behind the contestants, which would be distressing and likely to result in injury, or by environmental stress. A snake also apparently hisses at a contestant, a defensive mechanism indicative of distress and a sense of threat."

- 3) **Exposure to Cold Temperatures** - Dr. Payne indicated that: "The reptiles featured in the scenes require being kept within precise temperature gradients to maintain proper welfare. Considering that these scenes were filmed outside at night, with no visible heating lamps or other heating methods, and that they were waiting for an unknown period of time in the space above the contestants or in the water, it is likely that these reptiles were not protected from excessive cold, which constitutes neglect and is likely to cause sickness."
- 4) **Confining Animals in Inadequate Space** - Dr. Payne indicated that "[t]hese animals appear to have been confined in small, overcrowded spaces before and during filming, and then had to share that space with scared and frantic humans who had no regard for their safety. Rats are seen frantically climbing over each other, pigeons fluttering erratically, and snakes and iguanas attempting to climb upwards and moving along the clear barriers or out of open areas, which are escape-seeking behaviors indicative of distress and of the animals not fitting comfortably within the space."
- 5) He further opined that keeping these animals in overcrowded spaces is likely to cause distress in all species involved and to create unsanitary conditions increasing the risk of illness.

The confinement of animals depicted in this episode was similar to the case of [R. v. Zhou](#), where the court found that placing animals in a lightless, inadequately vented, dirty attic even for 10-15 minutes caused distress due to the temperature, lack of space, light and ventilation. However, in this case, the confinement was combined with being dropped from heights and being trapped in the space with scared people racing to find codes – other problematic factors, which we believe exacerbated the impact.

Episode 3

On January 28, 2026, *Fear Factor* premiered Episode 3 which also appeared to depict multiple instances of animals in distress. You can view excepts from the episode [here](#).

As seen in the footage and Exhibit H, in this episode contestants raced back and forth through a tank filled with water and snakes to collect dead rats and drop them into a container.

We provided footage from the *Fear Factor* scene to Dr. Mason Payne, a wildlife veterinarian, from Episode 3 (the second scene), who prepared a report based on his observations, attached as Exhibit G.

Dr. Payne identified the following concerns with the scene:

- 1) **Likely to Cause Injury** – According to Dr. Payne, “[t]he second scene is likely to cause injury to the snakes, as contestants frantically crawl over them with no regard for preventing crushing injuries. At one point, a contestant is seen kneeling directly on a snake's body” which is set out below in Exhibit I.

He indicated “[t]his is likely to result in fractures or internal trauma, which would be painful and could lead to paralysis or death. In terms of the extent of the pressure, he indicated that “[a] contestant could crush a snake's head, which would easily result in life-threatening injuries, pain, and suffering.”

Additionally, he indicated that: “[t]he placement of the snakes in water and the humans rushing through it make it difficult for the snakes to move quickly to avoid being crushed, and it also affects the humans' ability to tell if they are about to injure an animal.”

- 2) **Likely to Cause Suffering** – According to Dr. Payne “[t]he confined space, sloshing water, and the need for humans to crawl directly over the snakes make this environment highly likely to result in injury, pain, and suffering for the snakes.”
- 3) **Exposure to Cold Temperatures** – The snakes involved in the scene were waiting for an unknown period of time in the water and according to Dr. Payne “it is likely that these reptiles were not protected from excessive cold, which constitutes neglect and is likely to cause sickness. Water transfers heat much more effectively than air, so snakes submerged in water during the second scene could quickly suffer from hypothermia. Multiple snakes in the water are seen climbing to the top edges closest to the lights illuminating the space. This indicates that the snakes

were already hypothermic at the beginning of the scene and were seeking a source of heat to raise their body temperatures.” Images of the snakes climbing to the top edges are seen below in Exhibit J.

We are of the view that this is an excellent opportunity for the BC SPCA to stand by its position statement on animals in the film and television industry and use its powers to enforce the *Act*. As we are of the view that over and above failing to comply with the *Act*, they also failed to meet the five freedoms, used animals in a scene where risk of injury was not low and portrayed these animals in a demeaning way.

Fear Factor’s actions risked physical injury and inflicted psychological distress on multiple animals for the sake of a television show. We write to urge the BC SPCA to fully evaluate the evidence cited above for cruelty to animals. PETA stands ready to assist the BC SPCA in its investigation. Should you require any additional information or cooperation on our end, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am accessible by telephone at 647-660-3166 or by email at miranda@desalaw.com.

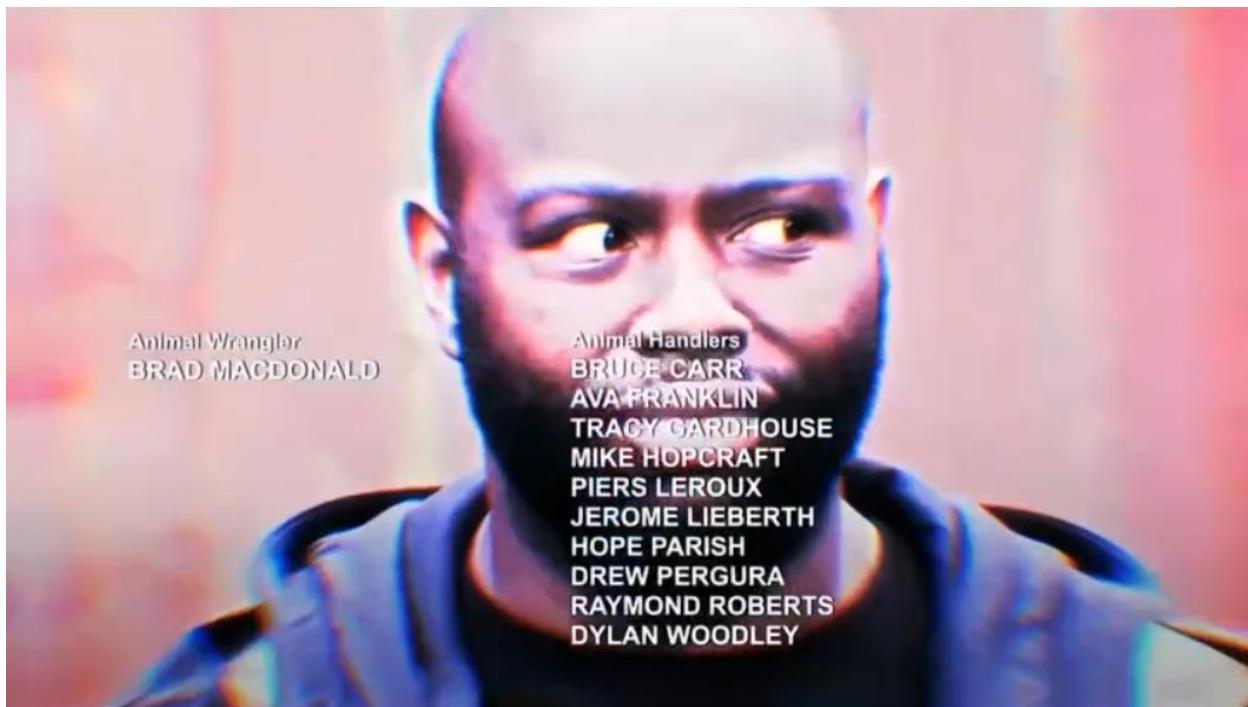
Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M Desa".

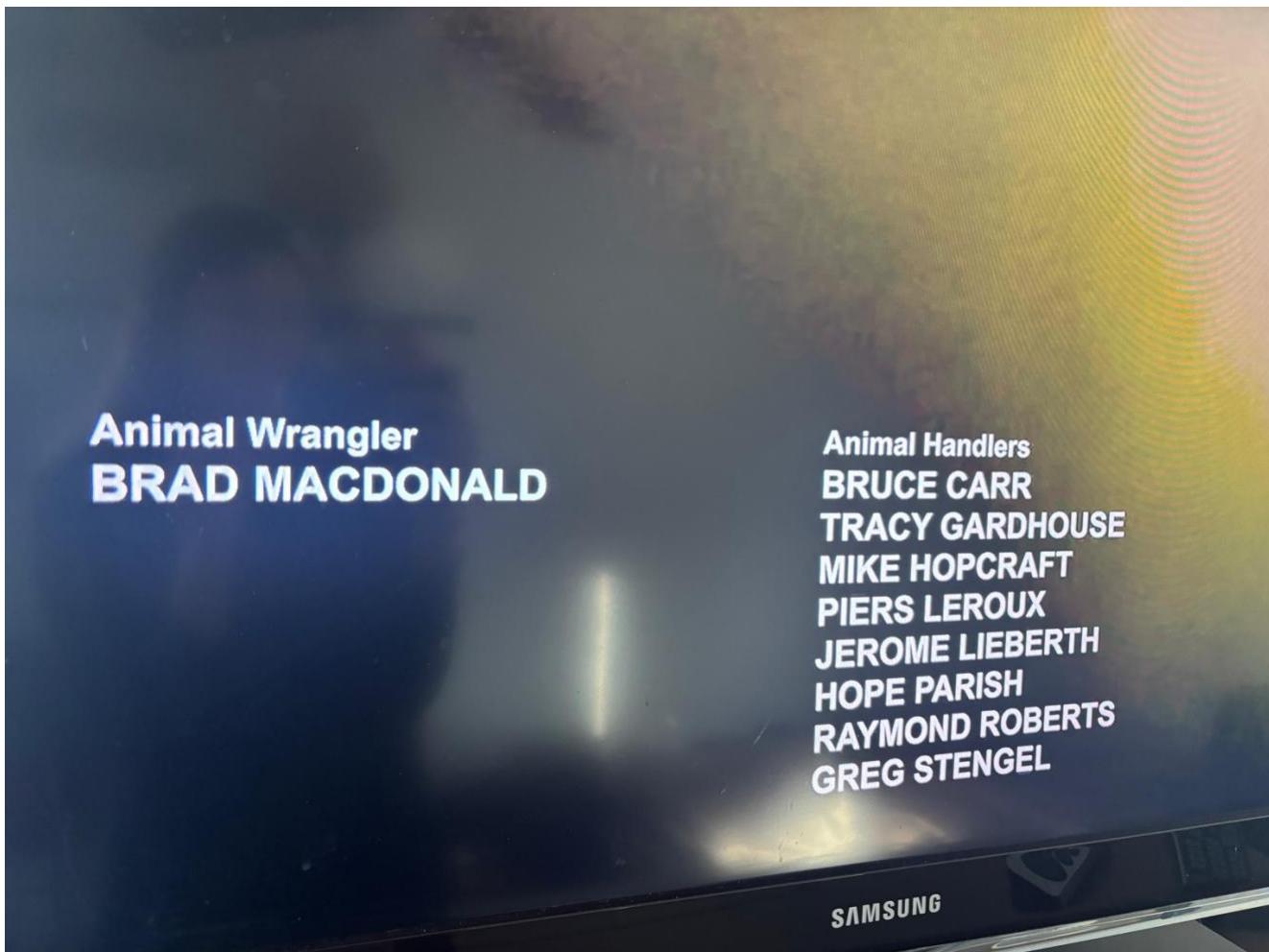
Miranda Desa
Desa Law

Ex. A



Still frame from credits of Episode 1

Ex. B



Still frame from credits of Episode 3

Ex. C

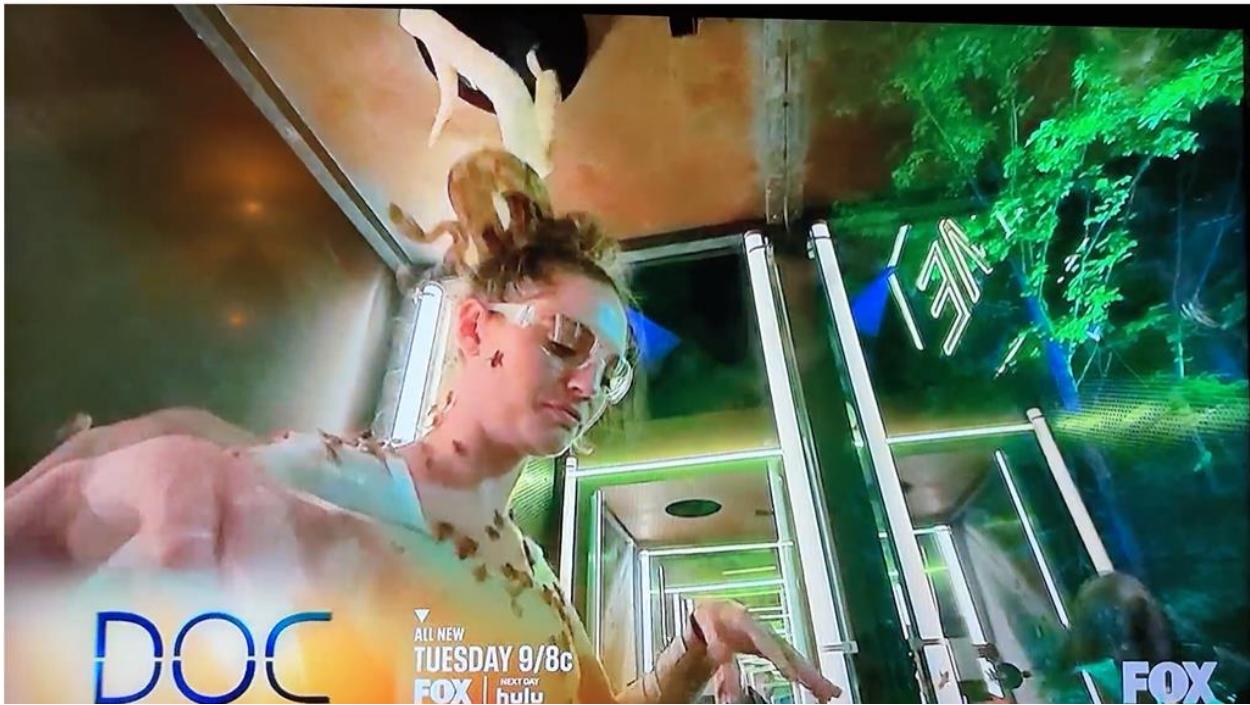


Image of the booths.

Ex. D



Rats falling on top of the contestant.



Snakes falling on top of the contestant.

Ex. E

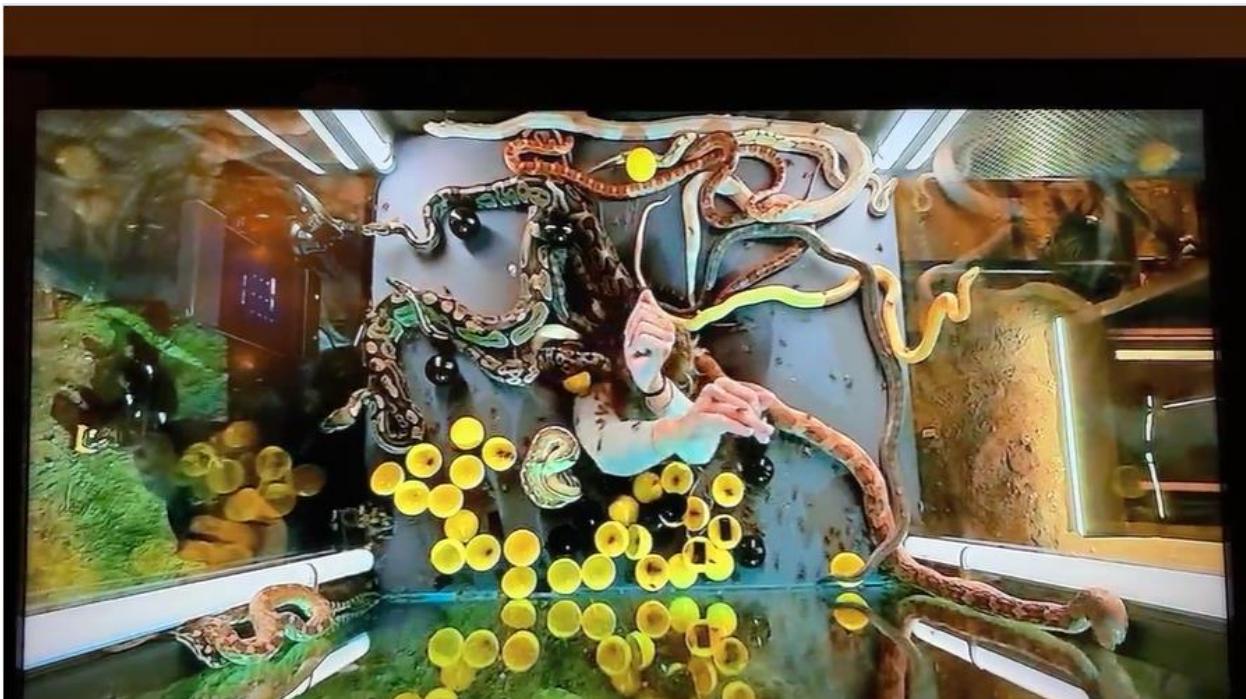


Pigeon contestant moving to enter the code.



Contestant searching for an object under a group of rats.

Ex. F



Contestant leaving the booth with snakes covering the exit.



Contestant exiting with geckos.

Ex. G

2/2/2026

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS
FOUNDATION

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. Mason Payne, and I am a wildlife veterinarian with the PETA Foundation. I am writing regarding scenes in the show “Fear Factor” that pose a significant risk of injury to multiple species of animals and should be considered abuse. During the first scene, rats, pigeons, snakes, and geckos are dropped from about 4 feet into an enclosed space with a human. As the scene continues, more animals are dropped, making the space overcrowded with animals stacked on top of each other. During this time, the humans are twisting around and eventually pull out of the space through the floor. In the second scene, snakes are kept in a small space, submerged in water, and contestants are made to crawl over and around them to collect dead rats.

The first scene is likely to cause injury given the small and fragile nature of rat, gecko, and pigeon appendages. Injuries could include fractures, joint dislocations, internal trauma, tendon or ligament damage, and other physical trauma. These injuries are likely to cause moderate to severe pain and could result in limb amputation or even euthanasia or death. Falling from heights or being crushed by humans is likely to cause pain or suffering, especially considering that the humans involved are fearful, frantic, and focused on another task rather than the well-being of the animals around them. Given the overcrowded space and distressed state of the animals, they are also likely to cause injury to each other through scratching, biting, or pecking. Defecation due to stress or natural behavior during this time is likely and would increase the risk of sickness and infection for any open wounds. Any injury sustained during filming is likely to cause these animals distress, pain, or suffering, especially given that they were deprived of immediate veterinary treatment.

The second scene is likely to cause injury to the snakes, as contestants frantically crawl over them with no regard for preventing crushing injuries. At one point, a contestant is seen kneeling directly on a snake's body. This is likely to result in fractures or internal trauma, which would be painful and could lead to paralysis or death. A contestant could crush a snake's head, which would easily result in life-threatening injuries, pain, and suffering. The placement of the snakes in water and the humans rushing through it make it difficult for the snakes to move quickly to avoid being crushed, and it also affects the humans' ability to tell if they are about to injure an animal. The confined space, sloshing water, and the need for humans to crawl directly over the snakes make this environment highly likely to result in injury, pain, and suffering for the snakes.

Multiple animals also show visible signs indicative of stress during the episodes. In the first scene, one snake is curled up tightly on the floor, which could be either a defensive posture or an effort to retain heat in an improperly cold environment. Multiple pigeons are seen fluttering and flapping their wings erratically. This could have been caused by their nails getting stuck in the netting material behind the contestants, which would be distressing and likely to result in injury, or by environmental stress. A snake also apparently hisses at a contestant, a defensive mechanism indicative of distress and a sense of threat.

Washington
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETALos Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETANorfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETAPETA FOUNDATION IS AN OPERATING
NAME OF THE FOUNDATION TO
SUPPORT ANIMAL PROTECTION.

ENTITIES:

- PETA U.S.
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

The reptiles featured in the scenes require being kept within precise temperature gradients to maintain proper welfare. Considering that these scenes were filmed outside at night, with no visible heating lamps or other heating methods, and that they were waiting for an unknown period of time in the space above the contestants or in the water, it is likely that these reptiles were not protected from excessive cold, which constitutes neglect and is likely to cause sickness. Water transfers heat much more effectively than air, so snakes submerged in water during the second scene could quickly suffer from hypothermia. Multiple snakes in the water are seen climbing to the top edges closest to the lights illuminating the space. This indicates that the snakes were already hypothermic at the beginning of the scene and were seeking a source of heat to raise their body temperatures.

These animals appear to have been confined in small, overcrowded spaces before and during filming, and then had to share that space with scared and frantic humans who had no regard for their safety. Rats are seen frantically climbing over each other, pigeons fluttering erratically, and snakes and iguanas attempting to climb upwards and moving along the clear barriers or out of open areas, which are escape-seeking behaviors indicative of distress and of the animals not fitting comfortably within the space. The inadequate space and prolonged confinement of these animals, in addition to loud noises like airhorns and screaming humans, and the sudden transition from darkness to the extreme brightness of a filming set, are likely to cause distress in all species involved. Being kept in overcrowded spaces is also likely to create unsanitary conditions, increasing the risk of illness.

The well-being of these animals was obviously not a consideration when planning and shooting this scene, as the animals were likely to have suffered significant neglect, injury, pain, unsanitary conditions, excessive cold, and deprivation of adequate space and veterinary treatment. Fear Factor should be cited for putting these animals at risk of harm and should ensure that this type of stunt is not performed again.

Sincerely,



Dr. R. Mason Payne, DVM, cVMA
Senior Wildlife Veterinarian
Legal & Corporate Affairs | PETA Foundation
masonp@petaf.org

Ex. H



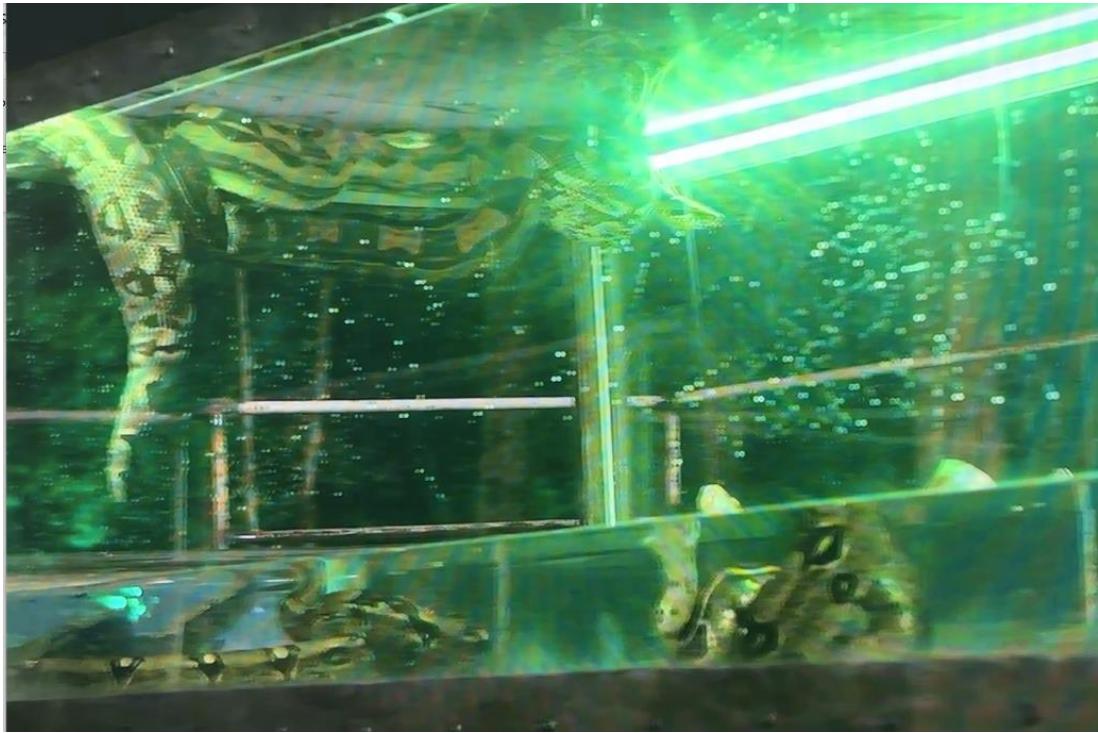
Contestant racing through the tank (IMG_194 at 00:57)

Ex. I



Contestant kneels on snake (IMG_195 at 1:13)

Ex. J



Snakes crawling to the lights (IMG_193 at 0.08)



Snakes crawling upwards toward the lights (IMG_194 at 2:04)