

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus

2001 U.S. Highway 301, Palmetto, FL 34221

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has failed to meet minimum federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Since 1990, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Ringling over 150 times for AWA noncompliances, including the following: improper handling of dangerous animals; failing to provide animals—including an elephant with a stiff leg, an elephant with a “large swelling” on her right hind leg, elephants with abrasions, a camel with bloody wounds, and a camel injured on train tracks—with veterinary care; causing trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm, and unnecessary discomfort to two elephants who sustained injuries when they ran amok during a performance; endangering tigers who were nearly baked alive in a boxcar because of poor maintenance of the enclosures; failing to test elephants for tuberculosis (TB); and unsanitary feeding practices. At least 35 elephants, including five babies, have died since 1992.

In 2004, a 2-year-old lion died from apparent heatstroke while the circus train crossed the Mojave Desert, and an 8-month-old elephant calf was euthanized after he fractured his hind legs when he fell from a circus pedestal. In the late 1990s, Ringling paid \$20,000 to settle a USDA case against it for failing to provide a dying baby elephant with veterinary care. The circus also received warnings from the agency for shooting a caged tiger to death and inflicting rope lesions on two baby elephants as they were prematurely pulled from their mothers.

In late 2011, the USDA ordered Feld Entertainment, the parent company of Ringling, to pay \$270,000—the largest civil penalty ever assessed against an exhibitor under the AWA—to settle dozens of noncompliances dating from June 2007 to August 2011.

On January 11, 2016, Ringling announced that it would phase elephants out of its circus performances by May. Citing “shifting consumer preferences” and an increase in prohibitive local

legislation, Ringling plans to keep the elephants at its so-called “Center for Elephant Conservation” (CEC) in Polk City, Florida. The CEC routinely chains elephants—including baby elephants, whom the facility forcibly separates from their mothers—for prolonged periods and abuses them with bullhooks and electric prods. The facility is also a hotbed of TB. The USDA’s elephant specialist has said that the CEC is the “facility with the highest incidence of TB in their elephants.” The facility has been the subject of a series of government-mandated quarantines. Ringling plans to continue to breed elephants at the CEC, even though the company acknowledges that not one of these animals will ever be released into the wild.

Contact PETA for documentation.

**October 28, 2016:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide dogs with enough space in primary enclosures and failing to provide dogs with enclosures of sufficient height.

**January 25, 2016:** Mike, a 2-year-old Asian elephant, died from elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus (EEHV), a deadly disease that affects 24 percent of elephant calves born in captivity and kills 80 percent of the calves who contract it. Mike had been born at the CEC.

**January 11, 2016:** Ringling announced that it would be ending elephant acts in May 2016 and moving all elephants to the CEC. The circus confirmed that it would continue to chain elephants overnight, use bullhooks to handle them, and breed them. It also said that it would be using the animals in cancer experiments.

**November 15, 2015:** A 46-year-old Asian elephant named Tova was euthanized approximately six weeks after Ringling transferred her to the Tulsa Zoo in Oklahoma. Her medical records show that she lost 450 pounds following the transfer and developed colic twice while at the zoo. The second colic episode lasted seven days before Tova was ultimately euthanized. She was found to have a large bladder stone on necropsy.

**October 23, 2015:** Asian elephant Icky II was placed under quarantine for TB along with Alana, who had been exposed to Icky II. At the time, 15 elephants at the CEC were under travel restrictions related to the disease.

**August 26, 2015:** During a USDA inspection of Ringling’s Red Unit, the veterinary medical officer saw that Tonka, a 31-year-old Asian elephant, had a gait

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

that “was clearly abnormal, and suggestive of discomfort.” Ringling appealed this citation, which the USDA later removed from the inspection report.

**July 22, 2015:** During an inspection of Ringling’s Red Unit in Anaheim, California, an Orange County Animal Care inspector noted that a 58-year-old elephant named Assan appeared stiff as she exited the circus’s transport trailer. Ringling’s vet, Dr. Jessie Ziegler, said that the stiffness was caused by Assan’s age and circulatory issues occurring during transport. The inspector also noted that the elephant Angelica was kept out of several performances because of “behavioral issues.”

**May 20, 2015:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have records available for inspection.

**December 5, 2014:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain an adequate program of veterinary care for three elephants. The facility’s veterinarians prescribed daily treatments for these elephants, but the treatment logs showed one- to four-day gaps, during which time treatments were not given. The primary individual administering the medications stated that he could not access the elephants to treat them when they were in transit.

**June 27, 2014:** According to an e-mail from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, nine elephants were on the TB quarantine list at the CEC.

**April 17, 2014:** Asian elephant Banko was tested for TB in Fairfax, Virginia. More than two months later—after she had traveled and performed in Charles Town, West Virginia; Albany, New York; Columbus, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; and New Orleans—the test results came back positive. Banko was removed from the road and returned to the CEC for quarantine.

**September 9, 2013:** A 61-year-old elephant named Jewel was euthanized at the Little Rock Zoo in Arkansas. According to the *Texarkana Gazette*, the zoo said that “[n]ecropsy results showed that tissue from the elephant tested positive for tuberculosis, though the official cause of death will be listed as euthanasia due to arthritis and severe musculoskeletal problems.” Jewel was with Ringling from 1954 to 2011, and records show that she was transferred to the zoo in violation of Florida’s TB quarantine orders.

**April 10, 2013:** According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the elephant

Smokey tested positive for TB. Smokey had previously tested positive in 2006.

**April 9, 2013:** Carol, a 39-year-old Asian elephant traveling with Ringling’s Gold Unit, was hit in the shoulder by a bullet as a result of a drive-by shooting. Carol was in an enclosure outside the BancorpSouth Arena in Tupelo, Mississippi, when the shooting took place.

**April 2013:** Asian elephant Asia was tested for TB. In June—after she had traveled to Youngstown, Ohio; Norfolk and Hampton, Virginia; Louisville, Kentucky; Providence, Rhode Island; Hartford, Connecticut; Trenton, New Jersey; and Hershey, Pennsylvania—the test results came back positive. Asia was removed from the road and returned to the CEC for quarantine.

**March 27, 2013:** PETA filed a complaint with the USDA after an employee of the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, New York, reported in a sworn affidavit that she had witnessed a Ringling handler repeatedly strike an elephant with a bullhook while yelling and cursing at the animal. The whistleblower also reported that the handler put the sharp end of the bullhook inside the elephant’s mouth and yanked on it repeatedly with full force while the elephant wailed and made other distress noises in response to the attack. Local law enforcement initiated an investigation into the reported incident.

**December 2, 2012:** Susan, a 61-year-old Asian elephant, was euthanized “due to quality of life issues.” She had tested positive for TB earlier in the year. Records also show that she tested positive for the disease in 2010.

**October 31, 2012:** Sid, a 45-year-old Asian elephant, was euthanized because of “declining health.” She had been used as part of Ringling’s breeding program.

**July 3, 2012:** PETA filed a complaint with the USDA after a security guard at the World Arena in Colorado Springs, Colorado, who was working through a temporary-employment agency, reported violations that he had observed at the arena while Ringling was performing there. Some of the issues that he had observed included a vicious and unprovoked beating of an elephant by an animal handler, prolonged chaining of elephants and resulting abnormal behavior patterns, inadequate space and insufficient exercise for big cats, and the aggressive, unprovoked hitting of a small dog by a Ringling employee.

**June 27, 2012:** Minyak, an Asian elephant born in the wild around 1966, died after spending the majority of

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

her 46 years performing in the circus. She was removed from performances two years before her death.

**January 23, 2012:** Banana, a 55-year-old Asian elephant, was euthanized because of her declining health. She had performed for Ringling for 41 years, from 1969 to 2010.

**January 11, 2012:** Sabu, a 29-year-old Asian bull elephant who had been removed from performances 14 months earlier, died from complications of severe arthritis. He collapsed in his sleeping stall, and veterinarians euthanized him after determining that he would be unable to stand again because of weakness and pain in his joints. Sabu had been born at the Portland Zoo in Oregon and began performing two years later. A necropsy found that his arthritis was exceptionally severe for an animal his age. Records show that he had tested positive for TB in 2000, and the disease was also found on necropsy.

**January 6, 2012:** Ringling animal trainer Tabayara Maluenda told *The Miami Herald*, "I've had more than 250 stitches around my body, and for this new season, I had 44 new ones from one tiger, trying to do something more energetic for 'Fully Charged.'"

**December 4, 2011:** Dr. Mel Richardson, a veterinarian who specializes in large exotic animals, observed the animals in Ringling's Red Unit while they were performing in Indianapolis. In a statement of professional opinion dated December 7, 2011, Dr. Richardson noted, "The tigers were, for the most part, overweight, as one expects from athletic animals given little opportunity to exercise, spending most of their days in the small cages of the traveling wagon. ... I was able to observe that all of the tricks performed were based on maximum aggressive posturing, and by that I mean the trainer, Tabayara Maluenda, was confronting the cats with whips and prods to illicit growling, hissing, & roaring, all for the most dramatic effect."

**November 23, 2011:** Ringling's parent company, Feld Entertainment, was ordered to pay \$270,000—the largest civil penalty ever assessed against an exhibitor under the AWA—to settle violations dating from June 2007 to August 2011. Ringling was also ordered to provide all employees who handle animals with AWA compliance training and to hire a staff member dedicated to AWA compliance. The circus hired former USDA attorney Kenneth Vail to fill this role.

**September 26, 2011:** According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,

the elephant Mala tested positive for TB. She had previously tested positive for the disease in 1998.

**August 25, 2011:** After a tiger named Kimba had her tail caught in the gate of a transfer cage, the USDA cited Ringling for failing to handle animals in a manner that prevents physical harm. Kimba sustained a laceration on her tail that was "about 1½ inches long and ½ [inch] wide." A Ringling veterinary technician told the USDA that a handler had closed the tiger's tail in a gate, but she was uncertain about the details. When the USDA asked to interview the employee involved, access to this person was denied. Ringling was also cited for requiring Banko, a 35-year-old Asian elephant, to perform even though she was "experiencing pain and distress" while suffering from diarrhea and abdominal discomfort that required pain medication.

**August 8, 2011:** Ringling euthanized a 46-year-old elephant named Louie because of "quality of life issues."

**August 7, 2011:** Sarah the elephant collapsed while being loaded into a boxcar in Anaheim, California. She stayed down for period of time following her fall before attempting to stand back up. Ringling had prior knowledge of Sarah's health problems, including possible necrotic tumors on her reproductive organs, an elevated white blood cell count indicative of infection, and a chronic fistula. (See June 10, 2011.) Ringling continued to force the 54-year-old elephant to perform after this incident.

**July 30, 2011:** An official with the Animal Care Department in Orange County, California, noticed a crack on one of Tonka the elephant's right rear toenails during preparation for a show.

**July 2, 2011:** Putzi, a 50-year-old female Asian elephant who had been captured from the wild and shipped to the circus at approximately 2 years of age in 1964, was euthanized.

**June 16, 2011:** Siam I, a 60-year-old Asian elephant who had been captured from the wild and shipped to the circus as an infant in 1954, was euthanized because of "quality of life issues." She had tested positive for TB in 2000 and 2010 and was undergoing treatment for it when she died. TB was also found on necropsy.

**June 10, 2011:** The USDA issued Ringling a repeat citation for failing to give adequate veterinary care to an Asian elephant named Sarah, whom circus veterinarians reported as having possible necrotic tumors on her reproductive organs or a condition known as pyometra, a bacterial infection of the uterus

## Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

that causes the uterus to become filled with pus. Sarah reportedly had an elevated white blood cell count indicative of infection, and Ringling also acknowledged that she had a chronic fistula (an abnormal connection) between her rectum and her vagina. The inspector wrote that there were discrepancies among what was written in Sarah's medical records, what the circus's on-site veterinarian said, and the treatment that she was receiving from handlers. In addition, Ringling was issued a repeat citation for failing to maintain primary-transport enclosures in a manner that prevents injury to the animals.

**May 7, 2011:** The *Times Union* of New York reported on a Ringling show, writing, "The two-hour performance, full of mile-wide smiles and surface sheen hiding an almost frantic desperation to be 'the greatest show on Earth,' seems pale and hokey in 2011, following a quarter-century of the genuine polish, showmanship, artistry and human achievement of Cirque du Soleil and its ilk. ... The rotteness is most apparent in just about everything involving animals. Ponies, donkeys and llamas trot in clockwise and counterclockwise circles. Some jump over things. ... [T]he sad fact is that tigers and elephants and their wild brethren simply aren't entertaining. ... And the elephants? Those big, sad lumberers are as placid as a pond and about as interesting to watch. The nine tigers are much less fun than even the laziest house cat you've ever met; they sit on trapezoidal platforms, snarling and swatting at the trainer's stick before rolling over on their backs or putting paws the size of snowshoes onto a pylon. One of them defecated in the middle of the act. That was my verdict, too."

**April 22, 2011:** Ringling euthanized Lutzi, a 61-year-old Asian elephant who had spent 56 years of her life with the circus. In a sworn deposition taken during Ringling's 2009 trial to answer claims that its elephant-handling practices violated the federal Endangered Species Act, the general manager of Ringling's CEC admitted that Lutzi and other elephants had been chained by two legs on a concrete floor for 15 hours a day. Records from that trial also show that Lutzi underwent TB treatment in 2000.

**March 22–27, 2011:** The Washington, D.C., Department of Health conducted an animal exhibit inspection of Ringling. When the elephants were being unloaded, it was noted that the train door openings were barely large enough to allow them to disembark. It was also noted that no water was present for them. Per Ringling's elephant staff, the elephants were chained each night and could not turn around. The tigers were divided into several

compartments with no bedding present, and there wasn't an exercise enclosure for them. The district's Department of Health suggested that Ringling put 6 to 12 inches of sawdust on the floor for the elephants to simulate natural substrate better and that something be done to find a way to provide the tigers with exercise other than performing.

**March 1, 2011:** *The Brooklyn Paper* reported that after just two summers at New York's Coney Island, Ringling would not be returning—partially because of financial issues.

**February 8, 2011:** Ringling's parent company, Feld Entertainment, released a media statement announcing that a 2-year-old elephant named Barack had been taken off the road because he tested positive for deadly EEHV after veterinarians noticed early symptoms. This was the second time that the virus has been found in Barack's blood—he recovered from an initial diagnosis in 2010. One of the leading threats to young, captive elephants, this virus is strongly associated with stress and, according to the media statement, "usually has a fatal outcome within a week of the onset of symptoms."

**January 17, 2011:** *The Times-Tribune* of Corbin, Kentucky, reported that Ringling canceled one of its performances in the town because of low ticket sales.

**2011:** According to documents received from the USDA, 29 elephants with Ringling tested reactive on blood tests for TB.

**December 17, 2010:** An e-mail to a Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency officer from Dr. Dennis Schmitt, Ringling's chair of veterinary care and director of research and conservation, revealed that an elephant named Karen, who was on the road with the circus, had tested reactive on a blood test for TB. She was subsequently denied entry into Tennessee.

**November 18, 2010:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain an adequate program of veterinary care for a 9-year-old elephant named Sara, who had chronic lameness. The inspector wrote that "the licensee has not conducted adequate diagnostics, developed an adequate treatment plan, or ensured that the elephant received prescribed treatments." The USDA also cited Ringling for failing to maintain primary transport enclosures in a manner that prevents injury to the animals and for interfering with the inspection for more than an hour, during which time it refused the USDA personnel access to the areas where the animals could be inspected.

**November 14, 2010:** According to an internal memo by an elephant field specialist with the USDA, "The

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

facility with the highest incidence of TB in their elephants at this time is the Ringling CEC.”

**November 4, 2010:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain an adequate program of veterinary care, because it had kept expired drugs in stock and other pharmaceutical drugs had no expiration date listed.

**October 13, 2010:** The City of St. Louis brought in an independent expert to assist with the Department of Animal Care and Control’s circus inspections and provided the expert with express written authorization to act on the city’s behalf. Ringling’s general manager refused to allow the expert to inspect, and Ringling employees physically impeded the inspection team’s ability to move forward and see the animals.

**August 17, 2010:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food in a manner that protects against deterioration and contamination after ripped fiberglass insulation panels installed in the hay barn at Ringling’s Polk City, Florida, training center were found to be “hanging down in the direction of the hay underneath.” The report continued, “The hay could become contaminated with fiberglass and compromise the well-being of the animals.”

**February 19, 2010:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to keep an elephant under the direct control of a handler. The incident occurred while the animal was being walked into an arena for a pre-show in Greenville, South Carolina. (See February 7, 2010.) The USDA citation stated, “This noncompliance presents a safety risk to the animal, individual handlers, and the public.” Ringling was also cited for failing to have an adequate outer perimeter fence for the hoofstock after a zebra “bolted away from a caretaker” on February 18, 2010, in Atlanta.

**February 18, 2010:** According to the Associated Press, Lima, a zebra traveling with Ringling in Atlanta, “broke away from his trainers and bumped up against a fence, then wriggled through an opening.” The animal then “galloped along a busy section of interstate.” Lima led police and trainers on a 40-minute chase through downtown before being captured. A man who was startled by the fleeing zebra told *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “All of a sudden a freaking zebra comes running down the street like a car.” He continued, “Five or six police cars were in hot pursuit. And a bunch of officers on foot.” The zebra was euthanized several weeks later as a result of injuries sustained during the chase.

**February 7, 2010:** According to *The State* of Columbia, South Carolina, “A startled elephant took a wrong turn backstage and broke through the main

prop door leading into the Colonial Life Arena during the afternoon pre-show for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus . . . About 100 spectators on the floor watching the pre-show saw the elephant break through the door toward them and rumble around the performance area, just a few feet away.” The pre-show ended early as a result of the incident.

**February 3, 2010:** The *Daily Times* of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, reported that the Neumann University Alumni Association would halt its promotion of discounted tickets to Ringling, partly in response to a letter from PETA describing how Ringling separates baby elephants from their mothers and beats and jabs elephants with bullhooks.

**February 3, 2010:** Ringling announced that an elephant named Barack had tested positive for EEHV.

**January 26, 2010:** Ringling announced that elephant Barack was being taken off the road after appearing in circus shows in Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida. Barack was under 1 year old when Ringling transported him from its Polk City, Florida, training center to the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa.

**January 8, 2010:** Ringling euthanized Josky, a 43-year-old female Asian elephant who had been captured from the wild in 1967.

**August 28, 2009:** According to a sworn statement from a former Ringling trainer, Samuel Haddock, “Babies are typically pulled from their mothers around 18-24 months of age. Once they’re pulled from their mothers, they’ve tasted their last bit of freedom and the relationship with their mother ends. . . . When pulling 18-24 month-old babies, the mother is chained against the wall by all four legs. Usually there’s 6 or 7 staff that go in to pull the baby rodeo-style. We put ropes around the legs, one leg at a time. No specific leg first. The ropes are tied off to the pipes. We bring in an anchor elephant and put a rope collar around the anchor elephant and put the other end around the baby’s neck. The anchor elephant leads the baby to the North end of the barn. It can take between 30 minutes to an hour to capture and restrain the baby. The baby tries to run away and fights having the ropes put on. Some mothers scream more than others while watching their babies being roped. If the screaming matches continue after the baby has been moved, we might take the mothers outdoors to quiet them down.” Mr. Haddock shared photos that can be found at <http://headlines.peta.org/ringling-bound-babies/>.

Mr. Haddock also stated that all the elephants at the CEC had been treated for TB because they had either tested positive for it or been exposed to TB-infected

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

elephants and that the veterinarian ordered TB medication in bulk.

**July 22, 2009:** PETA released the findings of its months-long investigation into Ringling and documented dozens of incidents in which numerous Ringling employees, including an animal superintendent and a head elephant trainer, hit elephants on the head, trunk, and ears with bullhooks and a tiger trainer whipped tigers. PETA filed complaints with the USDA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and law-enforcement agencies in Alabama, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia. Video footage from the investigation is available at [RinglingBeatsAnimals.com](http://RinglingBeatsAnimals.com) and shows trainers hitting elephants backstage just before they were forced to perform for the audience and whipping tigers during practice sessions.

**March 12, 2009:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain the primary enclosures for the elephants and big cats at its Williston, Florida, facility in a manner that would prevent injury to the animals. The USDA also cited Ringling for an unsanitary food-storage area that was contaminated with rodent droppings and for failing to maintain a perimeter fence behind an enclosure housing a tiger.

**March 11, 2009:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to repair damaged perimeter fencing around enclosures housing elephants at its breeding compound. The inspector wrote that the perimeter fence “had evidence of small mammal tracks and paths and several areas where gaps were ... large enough for a person to crawl under the fence.”

**Early 2009:** Evidence was presented during a federal lawsuit alleging that Ringling’s routine abuse of Asian elephants violates the Endangered Species Act. The evidence revealed that when traveling, elephants are chained for an average of more than 25 hours at a time, sometimes for as long as 100 hours straight; that the CEO of Feld Entertainment witnessed handlers hitting elephants with bullhooks; that Ringling’s own animal behaviorist saw an elephant who had been struck with a bullhook dripping blood on the arena floor during a show; and that an internal report documented that Troy Metzler, a longtime Ringling elephant trainer, struck Angelica, an Asian elephant, three to five times while she was held in stocks before unloading her and then shocking her with an electric prod. The evidence also revealed that in an e-mail, a Ringling veterinary assistant reported, “After this morning’s baths, at least 4 of the elephants came in with multiple abrasions and lacerations from the [bull]hooks. ... The [lacerations] were very visible .... [A handler] applied ... wonder dust just before the

show.” (Wonder Dust is a powder that is used to conceal bullhook wounds.)

**November 13, 2008:** Michigan-based home-repair company Hansons Windows agreed to end its Ringling ticket giveaway.

**August 1, 2008:** In a report about Ringling’s Anaheim, California, performance, the *Highland Community News* wrote, “Surprisingly, the amazing acts with ... elephants and Bengal tigers did not receive as large a response from the audience as the seven motorcycle riders zooming around at the same time inside the ‘Globe of Steel.’”

**July 18, 2008:** Ringling euthanized Calcutta II, a 62-year-old Asian elephant who had been captured from the wild in India and shipped to U.S. circuses as an infant.

**April 9, 2008:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain the transport cages for the tigers, failing to clean and repair the transport vehicle for the tigers, improperly storing food and bedding, and failing to clean the cutting board and chainsaw used to cut and prepare food for the tigers. Both had dried food residue on them.

**March 21, 2008:** According to the Associated Press, three zebras—Mali, Giza, and Lima—escaped from the 1st Mariner Arena located in downtown Baltimore and dashed into traffic. They had also escaped in June 2007 during the circus’s visit to Colorado.

**March 20, 2008:** A former Ringling employee came forward to report on the living conditions of the tigers with the Blue Unit. In a signed declaration, he stated that tigers weren’t provided with any exercise and were kept in transport cages while not performing. The wooden floors of the cages had never been sanitized or washed out during the four months that he had been with the circus. The tigers were sometimes fed rancid meat, and the meat-preparation area and the implements used in it were only cleaned after the last show at a venue. (Ringling typically spends several days at each venue.) The whistleblower also noted that the tiger handler regularly hit the tigers on the head with a stick and that another handler screamed at them, hit them frequently with a “poking stick,” broom handle, or long metal rod, and intentionally slammed their tails in the doors of the transport cages. In addition to other items mentioned in his statement, he witnessed a fight between three tigers when all three were in the same 6-foot-by-5-foot transfer cage. The fight left one of the tigers severely injured.

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**March 15, 2008:** The president of Harris Teeter, a Southeastern supermarket chain, confirmed in an e-mail to PETA, "Going forward we will not be supporting Circus promotions. ... [W]e already have turned one sponsorship down." The food giant had been promoting Ringling in some of its 200 stores.

**February 20, 2008:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have adequate perimeter fencing around two tigers.

**January 15, 2008:** The *Miami New Times* reported that Ringling had issued a statement claiming that elephant trainer Joe Frisco Jr. "received minor injuries after falling while walking with a juvenile elephant in the elephant barn in Miami." During trial testimony on March 9, 2009, Ringling trainer Gary Jacobson confirmed that Frisco had been knocked down by an elephant named P.T. Frisco is the brother of elephant trainer Tim Frisco, who was caught on tape viciously beating elephants with bullhooks for the Carson & Barnes Circus.

**January 11, 2008:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide six dogs with adequate housing.

**January 9, 2008:** Denny's confirmed that it had ended its partnership with Ringling in December 2007, less than six months after announcing the joint promotions. The move came after months of PETA protests and consumer complaints.

**December 11, 2007:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain records of acquisition and disposition for tigers.

**June 16, 2007:** According to the Associated Press, four zebras and three horses who were being walked into an arena in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for practice for a Ringling performance became spooked. They reportedly ran loose along a road near an interstate for 30 minutes.

**April 16, 2007:** A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission captive-wildlife inspection report noted that Ringling's breeding compound in Polk City, which housed 30 elephants, was still under a TB watch.

**February 8, 2007:** According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the elephant Shirley tested positive for TB.

**February 27, 2007:** The state of Florida ordered quarantine for five elephants at Ringling's Williston location. They had been exposed to two elephants with TB—including one named India, who was found

to have TB on necropsy. One of the five, Tillie, had also tested positive for the disease on a trunk wash.

**January 18, 2007:** According to documents obtained from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Ringling veterinarian Dr. Ellen Wiedner called an official with the Florida Bureau of Animal Disease Control in an attempt to persuade the agency not to issue a state quarantine, in order to avoid negative publicity after laboratory tests confirmed the growth of TB on a lung sample from Asian elephant India, who had died in September and had been housed at Ringling's Williston, Florida, facility.

**December 8, 2006:** Lucky Brand Jeans pulled T-shirts emblazoned with the Ringling logo off store shelves and the company's website after learning from PETA about the animal abuse associated with the circus.

**November 3, 2006:** Former Ringling employees Bob Tom and Archele Hundley provided PETA with signed statements that described routine animal abuse. The following are among their allegations: An elephant was left covered with blood after a violent beating that lasted for 30 minutes, a horse was whipped with the metal snap on a lead for 10 minutes and was later found to have a broken tooth, a miniature horse was knocked senseless after he was repeatedly slugged in the face with such force that the sound of the handler's fist hitting the horse's face could be heard 20 feet away, and the elephants were forced to stand in foul-smelling feces and urine during transport. When the waste was disposed of, it would fill up to one and a half dumpsters.

**November 2, 2006:** According to a news report on WJLA-TV, the D.C. Armory, which had hosted Ringling in Washington, D.C., for 33 years, announced that the circus would no longer be performing at the venue. The district's Sports and Entertainment Commission, which operates the armory, said that it had been losing money on the show.

**September 19, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have an 8-foot perimeter fence around dangerous animals at its Williston, Florida, facility.

**September 15, 2006:** The circus euthanized India, a 55-year-old Asian elephant who had been captured from the wild and shipped to the circus as an infant in 1954. She was later found to be positive for TB on necropsy.

**September 5, 2006:** Two male elephants at Ringling's Polk City, Florida, breeding facility tested

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

positive for TB. Other elephants at the facility who had been housed near the TB-positive males were also placed under quarantine. Three female elephants were pulled out of the traveling units because they had been exposed to one of the infected elephants.

**July 11, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for improper handling of elephants by failing to ensure that appropriate security was provided when the train containing the animals was stopped on the railroad tracks. The inspector wrote, “[T]hree [USDA] personnel ... were able to approach and walk unchallenged directly to the open doors of the elephant cars.” The inspector stressed that under “these circumstances a member of the public would have been able to enter the cars and approach the animals, thus jeopardizing their own safety, or place items inside the cars that could adversely affect the well-being of the animals.”

**June 23, 2006:** According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the elephant Smokey tested positive for TB.

**May 24, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide an elephant named Jewel, who had an abnormal gait and a stiff front left leg, with adequate veterinary care. The inspector found that Jewel’s stiffness didn’t disappear within a few minutes of walking, as Ringling’s veterinarian had claimed.

**May 18, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to dispose of expired medication.

**May 3, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to give adequate veterinary care to and maintain medical records for an elephant named Zina, who had “a large swelling” on her right hind leg. Ringling didn’t have the prescribed medication on hand, and the staff was unaware that the medication needed to be administered.

**April 18, 2006:** PETA supplied the USDA with videotape showing elephant trainer Troy Metzler abusively hooking elephants, elephants kept on the road in spite of crippling arthritis, and elephants who were suffering from painful pressure wounds. Two elephant experts confirmed that Metzler’s acts of hooking were clear abuse and that the lame elephants should not be traveling or performing.

**March 31, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain an enclosure housing zebras.

**February 15, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide a camel named Spike, who had two actively bleeding wounds, with veterinary care. Also,

according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the elephant Osgood tested positive for TB.

**January 6 and 17, 2006:** The USDA cited Ringling for causing trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm, and unnecessary discomfort to two elephants, Rudy and Angelica, who had sustained cuts and scrapes from arena seats after becoming startled by a barking dog while performing in Puerto Rico. Ringling was also cited for failing to have a safety barrier between the elephants and the public.

**November 16, 2005:** The *East Valley Tribune* in Arizona wrote the following about elephants Reba and Sheena: “Reba and Sheena came [to the Phoenix Zoo] from Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation after years of circus performing, zoo officials said. Negative reinforcement, such as hits and pokes, along with years of doing unnatural tricks, caused the elephants to become aggressive and dangerous. . . . Reba [who once killed a circus trainer] pulled on her own nipples and Sheena was angry and withdrawn. All were threatening to zookeepers and dangerous to one another. . . . ‘When you think about these animals, they had traumatic lives,’ [said Geoff Hall, Phoenix Zoo vice president of living collections].”

**October 5, 2005:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain medical-care records “for all the elephants, and Günther in particular.” There was no treatment plan for Günther, who had been suffering from a foot lesion for at least five months.

**September 22, 2005:** The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission issued a verbal warning to Ringling for having enclosure fences for the elephants of insufficient height and not having shelter in a paddock at its Williston facility. The report also noted that four out of eight elephants (Siam, India, Tilly, and Prince) housed at Ringling’s Williston facility had tested positive for TB in 2001.

**September 7, 2005:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to dispose of expired and undated TB drugs and failing to have the necessary documentation to note that Asian elephant Siam had been transported from the Williston, Florida, facility to the CEC.

**September 6, 2005:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to supply shade to an elephant named Doc, who was in an outdoor pen “that does not provide any shade or shelter” at the CEC.

**August 10, 2005:** According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, an 11-day-old elephant named Bertha died.



# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**April 26, 2005:** During an examination, the USDA confirmed that a 3-year-old elephant named Günther, who toured with Ringling's Home Edition (Gold Unit), suffered from lameness.

**April 13, 2005:** Elephant handler David Mannes was airlifted to a medical center to treat a fractured pelvis and soft tissue wound to his arm after being knocked down and kicked by an elephant named Tova while feeding the elephants at Ringling's breeding compound in Polk City, Florida.

**March 29, 2005:** *The New York Times* reported, "[Men] are still the ones cracking whips as Bengal tigers (beautiful but a little fat) walk in circles, occasionally roar and run in and out of cages that look too small for them. Their trainer, Taba, did not seem worthy of them. But our consciousness has changed. We worry about how the animals are trained and treated."

**March 3, 2005:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain the cages used to transport tigers. The flooring was peeling up, creating a risk that the animals might eat it.

**February 17, 2005:** The *Star-Telegram* of Fort Worth, Texas, reported, "[I]n less than two decades, the Canadian entertainment phenomenon [Cirque du Soleil] has reached levels of revenues that it took Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey more than 100 years to attain."

**January 26, 2005:** A USDA inspector noted in an inspection report that elephants Günther (age 3) and Angelica (age 7) had nail lesions.

**November 20, 2004:** *The Hamilton Spectator* in Ontario, Canada, reported, "[Ringling production manager Brian Newman] said the circus has lost some of its appeal, which may account for fair ticket sales at each of this weekend's five shows at Copps Coliseum. Organizers say none of the shows at the modified 4,000-seat venue are sold out. . . . [B]ehind the scenes, allegations of animal cruelty involving its elephants [have] plagued Ringling Bros. . . . A Spectator reporter's request to view the elephants was declined."

**November 5, 2004:** The Chicago-area *Daily Herald* reported, "Less enthralling, at least to those of us who go to the circus every year, are those acts that seem to appear in every edition of the circus: the high-wire acts, the marching elephants, the motorcyclists that zoom around the inside of a metal sphere."

**October 9, 2004:** A 44-year-old Asian elephant named Roma was euthanized because of osteoarthritis. A necropsy revealed that Roma had TB.

**September 8, 2004:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to dispose of a number of outdated drugs and failing to maintain the transport enclosure used to hold tigers.

**August 25, 2004:** According to the *Alameda Times-Star* in California, Oakland Zoo elephant manager Colleen Kinzley described a video showing a Ringling handler hitting and jabbing an elephant as clear abuse. Kinzley also commented on video footage showing a chained elephant swaying neurotically, saying, "For such a young animal to be exhibiting that amount of abnormal behavior is just tragic."

**August 5, 2004:** An 8-month-old elephant named Riccardo was euthanized after sustaining severe and irreparable fractures to both hind legs when he fell off a circus pedestal during a training exercise involving a bullhook and ropes. Riccardo was born to 8-year-old Shirley, although in the wild Asian elephants do not usually have their first calves until they are 18 to 20 years old. After birth, Riccardo was taken away from his mother to be raised by humans. According to the necropsy report, it was suspected that he may have suffered from metabolic bone disease—this disorder has been linked to hand-rearing and being fed an imbalanced diet.

**July 13, 2004:** The USDA launched a formal investigation into the death of a 2-year-old lion named Clyde. According to former Ringling lion handler Frank Hagan, Clyde died while traveling through the intense heat of the Mojave Desert in a poorly ventilated boxcar without being checked on or given water. He is believed to have died from heatstroke and dehydration. Hagan stated in an affidavit dated July 31, 2004, that employees who had knowledge of how Clyde died were instructed not to speak to USDA inspectors who were investigating the death. Before USDA officials arrived, Ringling quickly had misters installed in the boxcar holding the lions. Hagan also said that Ringling elephant trainer Troy Metzler, nicknamed "Captain Hook" by circus staff, was frequently observed abusively hooking elephants, including babies, with a bullhook.

**July 1, 2004:** An Asian elephant died from an aortic aneurysm.

**May 11, 2004:** Two horses with Ringling were struck by a freight train as they were being unloaded from the circus train near Dayton, Ohio. One horse died instantly, and the other was euthanized at the scene.

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**April 8, 2004:** A Bengal tiger was euthanized for thoracic neoplasia.

**March 5, 2004:** MasterCard International dropped its controversial sponsorship of Ringling. It joined Visa and Sears, Roebuck & Co. to become the third national sponsor to end its Ringling promotions amid a flood of complaints.

**December 21, 2003:** A Bengal tiger was euthanized because of aortic thrombosis.

**December 5, 2003:** An 8-year-old elephant named Shirley, who was bred by Ringling when she was only 7 years old, gave birth to Riccardo while she was chained on three legs ([video](#)). Elephants in the wild begin mating at age 18. Studies show that captive elephants who breed before age 12 have a shorter life span.

**October 26, 2003:** *The Topeka Capital-Journal* in Kansas reported, “[T]he Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, which hadn’t been to Topeka in 12 years, had ‘dismal numbers.’”

**July 19, 2003:** A Bengal tiger was euthanized because of gastritis.

**May 2, 2003:** According to a report on the CBS program *60 Minutes*, freelance journalist Jan Pottker filed a lawsuit against Ringling for fraud and conspiracy. Pottker charged that Ringling spent an estimated \$3 million over an eight-year period in an attempt to sabotage her writing career after she wrote an unflattering article about the circus.

**February 20, 2003:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have a complete perimeter fence around dangerous animals at its Williston, Florida, facility.

**January 24, 2003:** An Asian elephant was euthanized because of osteoarthritis.

**December 21, 2002:** A 57-year-old Asian elephant named King Tusk was euthanized because of osteoarthritis.

**December 16, 2002:** The USDA cited Ringling for keeping alpacas and goats in areas with an accumulation of debris that included wood with sharp pointed nails sticking up.

**December 5, 2002:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have an appropriate perimeter fence around dangerous animals at its winter quarters.

**November 7, 2002:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have four elephants tested for TB and failing to store food in a manner that protects it from contamination.

**October 7, 2002:** According to a review of Ringling’s veterinary records, there have been 10 cases of elephant TB at Ringling.

**October 6, 2002:** As reported in *The Macomb Daily*, Ringling hired veterinarian Gretchen Steininger to provide medical care and defend its use of animals while the circus was in Michigan. She had previously been fined \$500 and reprimanded for negligence by the Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services on June 22, 2002.

**March 26, 2002:** The *New York Daily News* reported, “I went to see the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at Madison Square Garden. . . . The Garden was half full. . . . The tigers moved with the half-speed of a Municipal Building bureaucrat and were more stoned than the bums you had to step over in Penn Station on the way into the Garden. . . . [M]y little guy’s favorite attraction was the giant industrial dung vacuum.”

**February 21, 2002:** The USDA cited Ringling for improper food storage, failing to dispose of expired medication, and poor sanitation.

**August 30, 2001:** According to an article on Salon.com titled “The Greatest Vendetta on Earth,” a 163-page sworn deposition given by Joel Kaplan, a private investigator who had performed security and wire-tapping services for a Feld Entertainment subsidiary for 20 years, stated, “[Ringling] had some real problems with the elephants. . . . I was told [by the circus veterinarian] . . . that about half of the elephants in each of the shows had tuberculosis and that the tuberculosis was an easily transmitted disease to individuals, to human beings. . . . I was asked by Chuck [Smith], through Kenneth [Feld], to find a physician who would test the people [in] the circus to see if they had tuberculosis but who would destroy the records and not turn them [in to] the Centers for Disease Control [and Prevention].”

**August 25, 2001:** California humane officers charged Mark Oliver Gebel, son of animal trainer Gunther Gebel-Williams, with cruelty to animals for alleged elephant abuse. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Gebel allegedly used a bullhook on an elephant named Asia when she hesitated before entering the performance ring at the Compaq Center in San Jose, California. Asia was found to have a bloody spot on her leg.

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**August 24, 2001:** Ringling was fined \$200 by the city of San Jose, California, for allowing a yak to run at large and cause a public nuisance.

**August 20, 2001:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide access for the inspection of animals, records, and property at its facility in Polk City, Florida.

**August 16, 2001:** According to *The Wichita Eagle*, Ringling failed to secure a date at the Kansas Coliseum because of concerns about its declining circus attendance.

**May 25, 2001:** A 34-year-old Asian elephant named Birka was euthanized at Ringling's breeding compound because of abdominal neoplasia.

**May 5, 2001:** Ringling and exhibitor Josip Marcan subjected a tiger in advanced stages of pregnancy to stressful conditions associated with transport. Four cubs were born while the circus was performing in Columbus, Ohio.

**May 3, 2001:** The USDA cited Ringling for improper food storage.

**May 1, 2001:** A 7-year-old Bengal tiger named Jasmine was euthanized because of chronic renal disease.

**April 30, 2001:** An Asian elephant was euthanized because of chronic osteoarthritis.

**April 16, 2001:** An affidavit from a veterinarian at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories stated that elephants Teetchie, Vance, Sabu, Mala, Dolly, Calcutta I, Calcutta II, and Siam I had tested positive for TB.

**April 12, 2001:** An Asian elephant was euthanized because of chronic osteoarthritis.

**April 8, 2001:** According to *The New York Times*, a Ringling spokesperson admitted that a trainer who had been videotaped tormenting elephants was still on elephant duty.

**March 26, 2001:** An internal USDA memo stated, "This is a request for a subpoena to compel testimony and provide documentation ... under the AWA. ... I have been involved in an investigation into allegations of elephant abuse and exhibiting elephants infected with TB by Ringling Brothers Circus. ... The investigation has been very frustrating in that Feld Entertainment has not been cooperative with allowing the USDA to review medical records on the

elephants, and that key witnesses will not cooperate due to court settlements with Feld Entertainment that prevent them from discussing any circus issues with anyone."

**March 14, 2001:** A Bengal tiger was euthanized because of tumors in her ear canal and sinuses.

**February 20, 2001:** The USDA cited Ringling for improper food storage.

**2001:** Ringling's Red Unit leased five elephants—including a male elephant named Bo—from the George Carden Circus even though two Carden employees reportedly pleaded guilty that year to cruelty-to-animals charges in provincial court in St. John's, Newfoundland, and each had been fined \$200. According to the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., the charges were brought after investigators found bears kept in cages that were dirty and too small—for 23 hours a day. The judge stated that "the maximum sentence needs to be looked at." He added that "the best sentence may be for people to simply stay away the next time this circus comes to town."

**November 3, 2000:** The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported, "Founded in 1871, the 'greatest show on earth' has steep competition these days from artier circuses, such as Cirque du Soleil, that rely more on theatrics than on lions and tigers and bears, oh my. This may explain why the east and west wings of the venue were empty."

**September 19, 2000:** *The Seattle Times* reported, "More than anything, I noticed how many seats were empty, how The Greatest Show on Earth was more of a no-show here in Seattle than anything else."

**September 7, 2000:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care. The inspector wrote, "There is no documentation maintained on elephants that have minor lesions, scars or abrasions. ... Records of medical treatment were not available on the camel that recently had both rear feet caught in a train track." Ringling was also cited for storing the animals' food near toxic substances and failing to maintain transport enclosures that could be properly cleaned and sanitized.

**September 6, 2000:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide an elephant named Tillie, who had been diagnosed with TB and wasn't receiving treatment, with adequate veterinary care. Tillie, who was owned by Patricia Zerbini, was at Ringling's Williston, Florida, facility and commingled with other elephants, which put them at risk for infection or reinfection.

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**August 5, 2000:** An Asian elephant was euthanized because of degenerative osteoarthritis.

**August 1, 2000:** A Bengal tiger was euthanized because of degenerative osteoarthritis.

**July 12, 2000:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide adequate care in transit, failing to provide drinking water, and failing to maintain transport enclosures. The inspector wrote, “[A]nimals must be visually observed at least every four hours. ... Tiger transport vehicle is inaccessible as long as train is in motion. ... [I]t is not clear if the opportunity to water the tigers every 12 hours is available. ... Tiger transport design has allowed excessively high temperatures during routine transport.... Vent failure pushed these temperatures to a point of immediate danger to the animals.”

**July 5, 2000:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain the structural strength of its enclosures housing tigers. Two tigers had injured themselves attempting to escape from cages in which an excessive rise in temperature occurred when faulty vent doors blew shut. One tiger tore at the cage, tearing the track from the door and breaking off a tooth. A tiger in another enclosure was injured above the eye.

**May 22, 2000:** A horse suffering from life-threatening colic as the Ringling train was traveling through Pennsylvania had to wait three hours for treatment while employees searched for a large-animal veterinarian.

**May 21, 2000:** The *Dayton Daily News* in Ohio reported, “But the most amazing thing of all wasn’t even what was going on in the three rings [at Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus]. It was to be seen elsewhere in the arena, up in the seats. In all the empty seats. ... [T]he show we attended was nowhere close to sold out. In fact, the place was nearly empty.”

**April 17, 2000:** In comments submitted to the USDA, Ringling opposed language in the agency’s “Draft Policy on Training and Handling of Potentially Dangerous Animals” that read, “Hot shots, shocking collars, or shocking belts should not be used for training or to handle the animals during exhibition and any such use will be closely scrutinized. An ankus [a bullhook] may not be used in an abusive manner that causes wounds or other injuries.”

**February 22, 2000:** Ringling was cited for failing to maintain a transport-shift cage for the tigers—it had a hole in the floor. The USDA also cited the circus for

failing to provide dogs with minimum space and failing to identify dogs and cats with USDA tags.

**November 19, 1999:** The *Chicago Tribune* reported, “Last Thursday’s performance of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at the 16,000-seat Allstate Arena was so small that two of the three rings were playing to rafts of empty seats. Attendees at several other first-week performances reported similarly small houses.”

**November 9, 1999:** The USDA cited Ringling for tiger cages in need of repair. The inspector noted that an elephant with chronic arthritis was continuously housed on concrete instead of a more comfortable surface such as rubber.

**November 8, 1999:** The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported, “As master of ceremonies, baby-faced Johnathan Lee Iverson was a congenial [Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus] ringmaster who didn’t let on if the half-empty venue affected him.”

**October 28, 1999:** A 52-year-old Asian elephant named Teetchie was euthanized because of a TB infection and multiple joints affected by osteoarthritis.

**September 16, 1999:** Ringling’s Williston, Florida, facility was quarantined by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services because elephants had TB.

**September 8, 1999:** According to a review of Ringling’s veterinary records, Alana, Romeo, Juliette, Kelly Ann, and Nicole were undergoing treatment for TB.

**August 1999:** Two frightened zebras who were tethered together escaped from their handler and ran toward a main street while being transferred from the arena between performances in San Jose, California.

**August 23, 1999:** According to an inspection conducted by South Bay Animal Control Services, seven elephants were found to have multiple lacerations. A zoo veterinarian who reviewed photographs of these and other injuries concluded, “The majority of the wounds documented in these photographs are fresh, actively draining puncture wounds caused by an ankus or hook.”

During a subsequent visit, Ringling veterinarian Bill Lindsay and two other circus employees surrounded a humane investigator in a threatening manner and angrily confronted the investigator in an attempt to impede an investigation into a citizen’s complaint regarding Persian cats used in the show.

## Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**July 26, 1999:** Benjamin, a 4-year-old baby elephant, drowned while swimming in a pond when the circus was traveling through Texas. According to an affidavit, the trainer took elephant Shirley back to the truck and returned to get Benjamin out of the pond. He ignored commands to exit the pond and drowned as the trainer entered with a bullhook in hand and began poking him with it. According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, Benjamin was taken from his mother when he was only 1 year old. During an investigation into his death, the USDA was forced to subpoena a necropsy report from Texas A&M University's veterinary laboratory after Ringling ignored AWA requirements and two investigators' requests for the document.

**May 27, 1999:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to keep cages used to hold tigers in good repair, failing to have locking mechanisms on several cages, and failing to dispose of medication that had expired as far back as February 1996.

**May 11, 1999:** In a letter to Ringling, USDA Deputy Administrator Ron DeHaven wrote, "We have completed our review of the lesions observed on two juvenile elephants, Doc and Angelica, during the inspection of the Center for Elephant Conservation in Polk City, Florida, on February 9, 1999 .... [W]e find that the handling of these two elephants was not in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act regulations .... We believe there is sufficient evidence to confirm the handling of these animals caused unnecessary trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm and discomfort to these two elephants."

**February 25, 1999:** According to internal USDA memos written by inspectors detailing injuries found on two baby elephants during a February 9, 1999, inspection, "[Ringling veterinarian] Dr. Lindsay was very upset and asked repeatedly why we could not be more collegial and call him before we came. I explained to him that all our inspections are unannounced. ... All Ringling personnel were very reluctant to let us take pictures [of the elephant calves' rope lesions]." Ringling personnel were described as "badgering," "disgust[ed]," "antagonistic," and "defensive" toward the inspectors.

**February 22, 1999:** Saber, a Polish Arabian horse, collapsed and died during Ringling's animal march to the Scope Convention Center in Norfolk, Virginia. According to the necropsy, Saber died from a pulmonary hemorrhage. He had been treated during performances for chronic asthma for the previous three to four years and was very sensitive to dust in hay. The attending veterinarian, who had not seen Saber since the previous month, did not know if the horse had received hay on the train ride to Norfolk.

**February 9, 1999:** A USDA inspection report indicated that wounds on two baby elephants' legs were from separating them from their mothers. The report stated, "[T]here were large visible lesions on the rear legs of both Doc and Angelica [baby elephants]. When questioned as to the cause of these lesions, it was stated by Mr. Jim Williams & Mr. Gary Jacobson that these scars were caused by rope burns, resulting from the separation process from the mothers on January 6, 1999. Angelica's lesion appeared as a pink linear scar, approximately 6" long x 1" wide on the right rear leg. The left rear leg also had a scar directly below the cloth leg tie. Both lesions appeared to have been treated with an iodine-based ointment .... Angelica also had two linear healing scars on the back of the right hind leg. Doc had a pink scar on the right rear mid-leg area." Both baby elephants were just under 2 years old when taken from their mothers. (In the wild, female elephants remain with their mothers their entire lives and males for up to 15 years.) The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have TB tests for one elephant available for review. It was also noted that no treatment was instituted for another elephant with a positive TB status.

**1999:** Records from the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories indicated that elephants Siam, Vance, Calcutta II, Dolly, and Teetchie had tested positive for TB.

**December 17, 1998:** The state of Florida issued a notice of quarantine for all animals—elephants and tigers—at Ringling's Williston location.

**December 9, 1998:** A USDA inspector noted on an inspection report that an elephant with confirmed TB had been euthanized (likely Dolly). The inspector also noted that Siam, Calcutta II, and India did not have adequate shade and that an elephant named Congo had intermittent lameness and what appeared to be hyperkeratosis, a skin condition.

**November 21, 1998:** The *Calgary Herald* reported that the goat Ringling featured in 1980 as a "unicorn" had been purchased from serial killer Leonard Thomas Lake. The "unicorn" was actually a mutilated goat whose horns had been manipulated to grow in the center of the animal's forehead.

**November 6, 1998:** Records from the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories indicated that elephant Vance had tested positive for TB.

**November 1998:** A tiger escaped from a cage in a Chicago parking lot and attacked a Ringling handler. The handler was hospitalized in serious condition with bite wounds to his neck and side.

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**October 7, 1998:** A USDA inspection found three elephants—Lechamee, Sophie, and Minnie—with lameness and one, Susan, with lacerations on her forehead.

**October 1, 1998:** The USDA cited Ringling for having a damaged transport enclosure for the hippopotamus.

**September 11, 1998:** A USDA inspector noted in an inspection report that three elephants (32-year-old Lechamee, 28-year-old Sophie, and 42-year-old Minnie) had suffered from arthritis for at least 12 years.

**September 3, 1998:** According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, a 40-year-old elephant named Dolly died. Dolly was euthanized because of a chronic foot problem. She was found later to have TB.

**August 31, 1998:** A 12-year-old sea lion named Gypsy was found dead in a transport container in Moline, Illinois.

**July 15, 1998:** The USDA entered a settlement with Ringling following the death of Kenny, a baby Asian elephant who was forced to perform in Jacksonville, Florida, despite being sick. The circus agreed to institute annual education requirements for all animal handlers on husbandry and AWA compliance. It also agreed to donate a total of \$20,000 to an animal sanctuary and to an organization that studies animal diseases.

**June, 1998:** Maya, an elephant being leased by Ringling and was kept at the Polk City facility, tested positive for tuberculosis.

**June 9, 1998:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain records of veterinary care for an elephant named Seetna, who was euthanized because of prolonged dystocia (difficult labor).

**March 11, 1998:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have USDA identification tags on eight poodles.

**January 24, 1998:** A 3-year-old baby elephant named Kenny was forced to perform in two shows while the circus was in Jacksonville, Florida, despite obvious signs of illness. According to affidavits, Kenny was suffering from diarrhea and passing blood. He was led to the ring for the third performance and was a "little unsteady" on the return to the barn. He was dead a couple of hours later.

**January 7, 1998:** Ringling trainer Graham Chipperfield shot a Bengal tiger named Arnie five times with a 12-gauge shotgun while he was locked in

a cage, killing him after Arnie attacked Graham's brother, Richard, during a photo shoot. On March 26, 1998, the USDA issued a warning for Arnie's killing.

**September 5, 1997:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store supplies properly.

**July 24, 1997:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to clean bags used to hold meat for cats.

**February 3, 1997:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to correct a previously identified violation of failing to clean the food-storage truck.

**January 21, 1997:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to clean and sanitize the food-storage truck.

**December 20, 1996:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide primates with environmental enrichment. The inspector stated, "There is no enhancement plan developed. The primates show signs of stereotypic behaviors (rocking, weaving, shaking, cage-bar chewing & licking). All primates are housed singly. Cages have no enrichment." Ringling was also cited for not providing a baboon with adequate space and a hippo with adequate shelter. The inspector noted, "The length of the hippo is greater than the width of the hippo pool."

**August 14, 1996:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to give the elephants tetanus vaccinations, deworming treatment, and fecal exams.

**May 22, 1996:** An elephant named Seetna was euthanized because of prolonged dystocia (difficult labor). According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, she was nearly 30 years old when she died.

**1995:** According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, the following Ringling elephants died: 53-year-old Cita, 53-year-old Ranni, 45-year-old Rhani, and 34-year-old Karnaudi.

**December 7, 1995:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain tiger cages, failing to provide records of disposition for 10 elephants no longer on the premises, and improper food storage.

**December 5, 1995:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to allow access to its property for an inspection.

**September 30, 1995:** A lion bit off the index finger of a 31-year-old woman after she stuck her hand in a cage holding the animal at a staging area in downtown Indianapolis.

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

**September 20, 1995:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have a program of veterinary care, failing to dispose of expired drugs, and failing to have a record of tetanus vaccinations.

**June 8, 1995:** The USDA cited Ringling for improper food storage.

**February 14, 1995:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have an exercise program for dogs and using enclosures that were in need of repair to contain dogs.

**December 28, 1994:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to keep primary transport enclosures in good repair.

**November 10, 1994:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food properly.

**October 18, 1994:** During a routine USDA inspection, an elephant was being beaten by a Ringling trainer. The USDA inspector stated, "Upon entering facility, I heard yelling and the sound of someone hitting something. I observed an elephant handler hitting an elephant with the wooden end of the handling tool to get it up." The inspector cited Ringling for failing to handle animals in such a way that there is minimal risk of harm to the animal and the public. In addition, after noting that three elephants who didn't get along were confined together, the inspector wrote, "Animals shall not be housed near animals [who] interfere with their health or cause them discomfort." The USDA also cited Ringling for failing to keep facilities in good repair, failing to store food properly, failing to have sufficient barriers around enclosures holding tigers, and failing to have someone available to accompany the inspector during the inspection.

**August 8, 1994:** According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, a 41-year-old elephant named Jenny died.

**April 26, 1994:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have shade cloth over a pen holding elephants.

**February 4, 1994:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food properly.

**January 21, 1994:** The USDA cited Ringling for electrical wires hanging loose inside a cage holding a lion, causing the potential for injury.

**December 29, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide dogs with minimum space and having inadequate lighting in the enclosure holding dogs. The boxes were too small "for most dogs to stand, sit, lie, & turn about freely." Ringling was also

cited for improper food storage, failing to repair the cages housing lions, and failing to correct previously identified violations of not providing bears with minimum space, including one bear with rub marks.

**December 14, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide bears with the minimum space required by the federal AWA, failing to keep two cages used to hold tigers in good repair, failing to store food and bedding properly, failing to practice safe watering (water for tigers was kept in unlabeled red gasoline cans), failing to have identification for new dogs, failing to have an exercise plan for the dogs, and failing to have acquisition records for new bears and dogs.

**December 14, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have a sufficient perimeter fence around the compound housing tigers at the breeding facility.

**October 21, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to keep five transfer cages used for tigers in good repair; failing to store food properly; failing to dispose of waste properly; failing to have the exercise plan for dogs available for review; failing to maintain good housekeeping (conditions included clutter around cages, paint that was peeling in an enclosure used for elephants, and cans of fuel between cages holding tigers); failing to practice safe watering (water for tigers was kept in unlabeled red gasoline cans); and failing to maintain medical and treatment records.

**June 19, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have records available for review.

**May 6, 1993:** An elephant named Reba killed trainer Axel Gautier in Gainesville, Florida. The elephant knocked the 51-year-old trainer down and stepped on his chest.

**April 15, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to allow access to the pharmacy trailer for inspection.

**March 22, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food and bedding properly.

**March 18, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have official USDA identification for two sheepdogs.

**January 7, 1993:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to clean the pharmacy trailer, failing to have disposition records, and failing to dispose of expired drugs.

**1992:** According to the *Asian Elephant Studbook*, the following elephants at Ringling died: a 26-year-old

# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Factsheet

male named Petely, 50-year-old Nelly, and 50-year-old Mia.

**1992:** Ringling gave away five tigers to New Jersey resident Joan Byron-Marasek, who owned a poorly maintained private menagerie. One of the tigers killed four other tigers at the facility. Byron-Marasek had been charged by the USDA with failing to provide her tigers with adequate veterinary care and failing to maintain programs of disease control and prevention for them, and state officials found conditions at the compound to be dangerous, severely crowded, and unhealthy.

**September 3, 1992:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have sufficient documentation of standards and procedures of veterinary care.

**August 3, 1992:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have animal-care records available for review.

**July 22, 1992:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to dispose of outdated drugs and failing to maintain animal-care records.

**July 7, 1992:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide shelter cover in the outdoor exercise area used for dogs and failing to have complete records on three new dogs.

**February 27, 1992:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide dogs with enclosures of sufficient room, failing to have an exercise plan for the dogs, failing to maintain the railcars used to transport elephants, and failing to provide a tiger, who had an open wound on her forehead, with adequate veterinary care.

**February 19, 1992:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food properly; failing to keep primary enclosures used to hold tigers, cougars, and lions in good repair; and failing to maintain water receptacles. The receptacles in the enclosures holding lions and tigers were rusty, and those in the enclosure holding pigs were dirty. The circus was also cited for failing to clean the transport cage used to hold a tiger cub and a railcar used to hold an elephant, failing to have a barrier around two young cougar cubs, and failing to dispose of expired drugs.

**December 30, 1991:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food properly, failing to keep the barns holding llamas and goats in good repair, failing to maintain the transport enclosures and railcars for elephants and camels, and failing to have effective pest control. There were many flies on camels' legs as well as rodent droppings in the trailer holding

hoofstock feed. Ringling was also cited for failing to provide three dogs with sufficient cage space, failing to maintain the cages and the ceiling of the mobile facility used to transport dogs, and failing to have IDs and records of acquisition for the dogs.

**July 3, 1991:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to keep the flooring of a large enclosure used to hold tigers and lions in good repair.

**March 1, 1991:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to maintain transfer carts used by the Blue Unit—they had scratched and splintered surfaces. At the breeding compound, Ringling was cited for failing to dispose of expired drugs and failing to have records available for review.

**January 31, 1991:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food properly and failing to provide animals with adequate veterinary care. An elephant named Congo had excessively cracked, dry, and irritated skin, and a lion named Nero had an open wound.

**September 28, 1990:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to have a program of veterinary care for emergencies.

**August 27, 1990:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to provide eight elephants with shade from direct sunlight and failing to have records available for review.

**August 1, 1990:** The USDA cited Ringling for failing to store food properly.