

Elephant Encounter

P.O. Box 913
Gibsonton, FL 33534
USDA License #58-C-0123

William Morris has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited William Morris for repeated failure to provide adequate veterinary care and for failure to provide a nutritional diet to two undersized elephants, shelter from the elements, and adequate ventilation. William Morris leases his elephant act to circuses and fairs. Contact PETA for documentation.

Animals used in recent shows: two African elephants named Linda and Shannon and one Asian elephant named Cora.

June 17, 2002: While performing with the Shrine Circus in Menomonie, Wis., Morris' elephant Mary and another elephant bolted out of a circus tent during a show, scattering crowds. Mary hiked two miles through town and was recaptured at the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus when trucks blocked her escape. One child was injured, and the elephants damaged a door at the park and caused \$600 in damage to a city truck. The Shriners had contracted with George Carden Circus for the event.

December 13, 2001: A USDA inspector noted that Morris' elephant Linda was euthanized and that Morris' elephant Mary was residing with the George Carden Circus and being handled by the owner's son, Billy Morris Jr.

May 15, 2001: The USDA cited Morris for failure to have a primary facility for an African elephant named Mary. Morris contracted with the city of Branson, Mo., to exhibit Mary for 30 weeks.

According to news reports, Mary was being kept in solitary confinement and used in a magic act at Branson's Majestic Theatre.

March 8, 2001: Morris was cited by the USDA for failure to supply the required itinerary. A USDA inspector was unable to conduct an animal welfare inspection because Morris had taken the elephants on the road.

November 14, 2000: The USDA cited Morris for failure to provide adequate veterinary care. An elephant named Linda was found to have angular limb deformities in at least three limbs, degenerative joint disease, and periodic lameness.

The inspector wrote, "[T]here is still no regular recording on the daily salve and topical applications on Shannon's temporal gland infection. There is no record of the original recommendations on how to treat this; and there was no record that a veterinarian with appropriate knowledge of elephants had examined this problem. There was also no record of the

attending veterinarian approving the substitution of alternative nutritional supplements, as cited on the last inspection. The attending veterinarian reportedly prescribed that Adequan was to be given; currently, Linda is not receiving this. The concrete floor of the barn may present special problems for Linda; this should also be discussed with the vet."

September 12, 2000: The USDA cited Morris for failure to provide adequate veterinary care. An elephant named Shannon with a 3 1/2-inch open sore on her left cheek needed to be examined and evaluated by a veterinarian. An elephant named Linda was not receiving vitamins prescribed by the attending veterinarian for a deformed right knee. There were no medical records detailing treatments and dates for either elephant.

Morris was cited for failure to have acquisition records for the three elephants.

December 1, 1999: The USDA cited Morris for failure to comply with minimum standards of veterinary care. An elephant handler did not have a current tuberculosis test, and there were no records of dewormings.

Morris was also cited for failure to store food in a manner that prevents contamination.

The inspector noted that two elephants appeared to have overgrown soles and instructed Morris to continue monitoring the elephants' weight.

November 24, 1998: The USDA inspector noted that an African elephant named Shannon continued to suffer from a chronic problem of poor weight gain. There was no current record of veterinary consultations or recommendations to treat chronic hyperkeratosis in the two African elephants.

April 21, 1998: The USDA cited Morris for failure to maintain the structural strength of the elephant enclosure. Morris was also instructed to eliminate potentially hazardous escape routes and to end the practice of leaving trailer doors open and tied with only a strap during transport.

April 9, 1998: Morris was cited by the USDA for improper food storage, inadequate pest control, and failure to maintain the structural strength of the travel trailer.

December 16, 1997: In a letter to the USDA, Morris wrote, "[T]he trailer I transport our elephants in does not have enough ventilation."

December 15, 1997: The USDA cited Morris for failure to provide adequate veterinary care. The elephants were in need of foot and skin care, and the two African elephants were "not of appropriate body size for their age." The inspector wrote, "[T]here was no consistent nutritional plan designed by the vet to provide a balanced diet."

Morris was also cited for failure to maintain the structural strength of the travel trailer and outdoor corral and for failure to provide adequate shelter.

The inspector noted, "The elephants do not have sufficient space to make normal postural and

social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement within the trailer." Morris was also notified of the need to improve ventilation in the travel trailer.

December 18, 1996: The USDA cited Morris for failure to provide the elephants with adequate foot and skin care.

For more information, contact:

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