



PETA Factsheet

Kelly Miller Circus

USDA License #73-C-0021, P.O. Box 829, Hugo, OK 74743

Kelly Miller Circus has failed to meet minimal federal standards for the care of animals used in exhibition as established in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has cited Kelly Miller Circus for failure to handle animals in a manner that is safe for the animals and the public, failure to provide veterinary records, and failure to provide structurally sound enclosures. Kelly Miller Circus leases animals from its sister circus, Carson & Barnes. Contact PETA for documentation.

July 21, 2011: The USDA cited the tiger exhibitor traveling with the Kelly Miller Circus (Natalie Cainan) for violating the AWA after three tigers escaped from their transport enclosures and one bit a horse. It took approximately 30 minutes to safely contain the tigers. This escape posed a threat to the tigers, the public, and to other animals.

June 16, 2007: The USDA cited Kelly Miller Circus for including a poodle owned by an unlicensed exhibitor in its show.

July 28, 2006: According to the *Evening Tribune*, a Kelly Miller employee was charged with first-degree rape of a 14-year-old girl in Nunda, New York. The victim had attended a circus performance.

October 20, 2005: The USDA cited Kelly Miller for failure to provide veterinary care to an elephant named Libby, who had a painful oozing puncture wound that pierced her ear, and failure to provide foot care to an elephant named Nina, who had a long, deep crack in her toenail and whose toenails had not been trimmed in a while. Captivity-induced foot problems and arthritis are the leading reasons for euthanasia of captive elephants.

March 13, 2002: The USDA cited Kelly Miller for failure to maintain enclosures in a manner that would protect the animals from injury and to contain the animals.

October 4, 2001: Eduardo Steeples, a chimpanzee exhibitor used by Kelly Miller Circus was cited by the USDA for inadequate ventilation, failure to provide minimum space for the chimpanzee stored in a cage that measured only 5'x4'x6', improper social grouping, failure to provide environment enrichment for a chimpanzee kept in solitary confinement, and failure to protect four bears from temperature extremes. The inspector wrote, "The temperature in Billy Joe's [chimpanzee's] enclosure ... was 95 degrees with 65 percent humidity levels. ... [Billy Joe] is singly housed and cannot see or hear another nonhuman primate. ... This is not in accordance with currently accepted professional standards. ... The cage was barren except for a basketball. ... One of the bears was observed panting during the inspection. The temperature in the enclosure ... was recorded at 95 degrees, with humidity levels of 63 percent. Within several minutes of entering the enclosure, I began perspiring and felt discomfort." The inspector noted that foods necessary to provide the bears with a nutritionally complete diet were not available.

August 8, 2001: Three bears used in the Kelly Miller Circus during its 2000 tour were found malnourished by a deputy in a trailer near Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The bears were severely emaciated and dehydrated with bloody paws from pacing across fiberglass flooring. The trainer, Aleksandr Sergeivich Shelkovnikov, was charged with one felony count of cruelty to animals and four misdemeanors. The owner of the animal park where they were transported believes they were trained using electric shock.

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April 13, 2001: A circusgoer filed a complaint with the Mountain Home, Arkansas, police department after seeing the Kelly Miller elephant handler abuse an elephant. According to the police report, an eyewitness gave this account: “I was standing at the elephant’s side at the Shrine Circus, talking to the handler. The animal was obeying all that he was told. It looked to me like the elephant sneezed. The handler turned around and struck the elephant so hard, it drew blood; [the elephant] let out a sad sound and backed up. It shocked me to see the man treat such an animal with such cruelty.”

June 2000: The Baltimore County Fire Department refused to issue a permit to Kelly Miller because its tent failed to meet state and county inflammability requirements. The circus was forced to cancel performances in Reisterstown, Maryland.

January 5, 2000: The USDA cited Kelly Miller for failure to maintain transport trailers in a manner that protects the animals from injury.

April 17, 1998: The USDA cited Kelly Miller for failure to handle animals in a manner that is safe for both the animals and the general public.

October 9, 1997: The USDA cited Kelly Miller for failing to have a plan for veterinary care.

September 1997: In the Chicago area, 470 letters were sent to the Naper Settlement, a sponsor of the Kelly Miller Circus, asking that it discontinue support of the circus because of the mistreatment of its animals. An investigator with Illinois Animal Action witnessed a handler strike an elephant 25 times in a single half-hour while the elephant was giving rides to the public.

January 4, 1997: According to an internal USDA document, an elephant named Libby, who is owned by Carson & Barnes Circus, was exposed to Hawthorn Corporation elephants who died of tuberculosis and others who tested positive for tuberculosis. Kelly Miller Circus leases Libby from its sister circus, Carson & Barnes.

March 1996: The USDA cited Kelly Miller Circus for failure to provide structurally sound enclosures for the animals.

May 1994: According to an article in the *Dayton Daily News*, a woman saw a trainer strike an elephant in the face with a rod.

September 1992: The USDA cited Kelly Miller Circus for not having any records of veterinary care.