



November 15, 2017

Buzzfeed Motion Pictures  
Jordan Imbrey and Ben Coleman  
*Via BuzzFeed website and social media*

Dear Mr. Imbrey and Mr. Coleman,

I write to you regarding the video [“A Father Transformed His Daughter’s Stuff Monkey Into a Real Monkey.”](#) posted on Buzzfeed on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Although the leashed capuchin monkey used in the video may appear cute and harmless, there are severe public safety and animal welfare concerns involved in this type of archaic “entertainment,” all of which Buzzfeed is inadvertently promoting. NAPSA would like to work with you to resolve this so you may teach people the responsible way to love a monkey.

Forcing monkeys to perform and interact with humans gives the world a very inaccurate message about these complex and intelligent animals – and it has harmful repercussions. Primates can never be domesticated. Trained primates are torn from their mothers *years* before they would naturally separate, and their life of training and handling denies them opportunities to lead a healthy species-typical life, and instead leads to social disorders, self-injurious behavior, depression, and aggression. Primate bites are not a question of “if”, but of “when,” and permitting an infant to pet a clearly agitated monkey (as I saw on your video) is a disaster waiting to happen.

Monkeys belong in the wild, and if that’s not possible, in the care of trained experts at a nonprofit primate sanctuary. The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance is a coalition of ten of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our sanctuaries, we care for over 700 primates, many of whom were formerly used in entertainment. NAPSA members are contacted constantly by people who – perhaps because they saw cute monkeys in the media – purchased a baby monkey and then lived to regret it. Sanctuaries are overwhelmed with requests to house “pet” primates, so we are dedicated to convincing the media that videos such as yours bring about much more harm than good. So that you may learn more about performing primates, our advocacy position statement on this topic is attached.

**Now you have the ability to do the right thing:** I invite you to film a video about sanctuary monkeys. They are even cuter when not leashed and diapered, I promise! Write an article that you have reconsidered the use of performing monkeys in Buzzfeed Video productions. I would be happy to work with you on this, or I could write a guest post. NAPSA would be thrilled to partner with you so that Buzzfeed’s voice may promote a better message.

Sincerely,

Erika Fleury  
Program Director



## **Advocacy Position Statement Performing Primates**

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is opposed to the use of trained primates for entertainment. As experts in the field of primate care, we respectfully ask the public not to support public events featuring trained monkeys and apes.

While such performances may seem amusing on the surface, the primates used in these spectacles are poorly treated. Although the records of many animal rental operators are generally less than stellar, and training and housing conditions can be incredibly stressful (and often abusive), the simple fact that primates are forced to dress up and perform on cue in a terribly unnatural situation is reason enough to avoid such events.

The entire lifetime of a primate is negatively affected when they are exploited for entertainment. As infants, they are removed from their mothers at a very early age – years before they would naturally separate. They are trained using methods that intimidate and inhibit their innate behaviors. Even then, the intelligence and unpredictable nature of these wild animals means that they often can only be used for a short time as actors before they become too independent, unmanageable, and dangerous. Primates are then deemed useless to the entertainment industry, and sold into situations that range from uncomfortable to downright harmful. The lucky ones are able to spend the remaining years of their life in a primate sanctuary.

NAPSA is a coalition of ten of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our member sanctuaries, we care for over 700 primates, many of whom were formerly used in entertainment. We see how primates are forever damaged by the work forced upon them, and we look forward to the day when such archaic practices are no longer permitted.

For more information:

["Apes in Media and Commercial Performances," Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#)

["Bengals Shocking Half-Time 'Cowboy Monkey' Has a Cruel History," The Dodo](#)

["Chimpanzees in Entertainment," ChimpCARE](#)

["Great Apes in Entertainment," Jane Goodall Institute Australia](#)

["Impact of Visual Context on Public Perceptions of Non-Human Primate Performers," K. A. Leighty et al.](#)