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Paul Chadwick
Readers' Editor
The Guardian
Via email: guardian.readers@theguardian.com

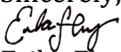
Dear Mr. Chadwick,

Poppy Noor's October 21, 2019 article "[Google released research on what makes a good boss – do you agree?](#)" featured a photograph of a chimpanzee dressed as a human and sitting at an office desk. This imagery has lasting harms, not just for this specific chimpanzee, but for conservation in general. Although performing nonhuman primates may appear cute and harmless, relying on this archaic form of "entertainment" is harmful because it directly promotes the unethical treatment of primates.

The entire lifetime of a primate is negatively affected when they are used in entertainment. As infants, they are removed from their mothers at a very early age – *years* before they would naturally separate. Training and living conditions for animal "actors" can be incredibly stressful and even abusive. A life spent performing denies them virtually all of the experiences they need to be healthy, including social housing, social grooming, and exercise. When they are denied these natural behaviors, primates develop aberrant and harmful behaviors, such as obsessive compulsions, self-mutilation, and aggression. The simple fact that this chimpanzee is not living in a social group with other chimpanzees and was forced to wear clothing and perform on cue in a disorienting environment is reason enough to raise animal welfare concerns. Why would the Guardian choose to promote this? Chimpanzees 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 (NAPSA) is a coalition of eight of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our member sanctuaries, we care for close to 800 nonhuman primates, many of whom were formerly used in entertainment. NAPSA members are contacted constantly by people who – perhaps because they saw cute primates in the media – purchased a infant primate and then lived to regret it. Sanctuaries are overwhelmed with requests to house "pet" primates, so we are dedicated to convincing the media that misleading imagery of primates brings about much more harm than good.

Innovative CGI replacements are proven to gain companies positive media attention in a more animal-friendly way. The top ten advertising agencies in the U.S. have all pledged not to use apes in their campaigns, with some forswearing the usage of nonhuman primates altogether. This is the prevailing culture of large corporations and the media, and in order to remain current, The Guardian should do the same.

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 eight of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our member sanctuaries, we care for close to 800 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:

["The Use of Primate "Actors" in Feature Films 1990–2013."](#) Brooke Catherine Aldrich

["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

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

["Opposition to the Use of Nonhuman Primates in the Media."](#) International Primatological Society

["Atypical Experiences of Captive Chimpanzees \(Pan Troglodytes\) Are Associated with Higher Hair Cortisol Concentrations as Adults."](#) S.L. Jacobson et al.

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