



October 12, 2021

John Sterling, Editor in Chief
Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News
Via online form at genengnews.com/contact

Dear Mr. Sterling,

Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News (GEN)'s [Daily update from October 12th](#) featured a photograph of a young chimpanzee dressed as a human, sitting next to a child at a table. This imagery has lasting harms, not just for this specific chimpanzee, but for conservation in general. Chimpanzees used in entertainment are trained "actors" forced into very unnatural lives. 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 North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) respectfully asks that you remove the photo from your article and commit to no longer using photos that promote primate exploitation.

The entire lifetime of a primate is negatively affected when they are used in entertainment (more at <https://bit.ly/notanactor>). As infants, they are removed from their mothers years before they would naturally separate. Training and living conditions for animal "actors" can be incredibly stressful, even abusive. A life spent performing denies them virtually all of the experiences they need to be healthy, and when they are denied these natural behaviors, primates develop 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. Surely GEN would not want to promote this.

NAPSA is a coalition of ten of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent. In our member sanctuaries, we care for over 800 nonhuman primates including 700 chimpanzees, many of whom were formerly used in entertainment. NAPSA members are contacted constantly by people who – often because they saw cute primates in the media – purchased an 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, and [most stock art services no longer accept such submissions](#) into their portfolios – including Getty Images, from where your photo was sourced. This is the prevailing culture of large corporations and the media, and in order to remain current, Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News must do the same. Please commit to longer use such imagery in your publications.

Sincerely,
Erika Fleury
Program Director