August 22, 2024

Casey Bloys, Chairman and CEO, HBO and Max Content
230 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Bloys,

We are disappointed to see that HBO Max's "House of the Dragon" Season 2 finale features a macaque monkey and respectfully ask that you cut this scene and commit to only use computer generated imagery for scenes with primates in the future. We are especially disheartened to see that the macaque monkey was featured only minutes after an advertisement for the series "Chimp Crazy," which explores the seamy underworld of the primate pet trade and entertainment industry. **Filming with primate "actors" is harmful because it directly promotes the unethical treatment of primates.**

The use of primates in entertainment causes lasting trauma to the individuals involved. **The entire lifetime of a monkey or ape is negatively affected when they are used in entertainment.** As infants, they are deprived of maternal contact at a very early age, when they are heavily dependent upon their mothers. Training and living conditions for animal "actors" can be incredibly stressful and even abusive. A life spent performing denies them virtually all 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 the monkey was forced to perform on cue in a disorienting and unnatural environment is reason enough to raise animal welfare concerns.

Primates in entertainment are trained using methods that intimidate and inhibit their innate behaviors. **Primates can and will bite, and even small species can cause severe injuries to humans.** Primates who are deemed no longer useful to the entertainment industry are often sold into situations that range from uncomfortable to harmful. Only a lucky few are able to spend the remaining years of their life in a primate sanctuary.

Misleading representations of primates in the media have lasting negative repercussions. This promotes future use of primates in entertainment and the exotic pet trade and has a negative impact on conservation. The public now turns away from this type of footage due to heightened awareness of the sadness and cruelty behind the camera. Hollywood is no longer filming with chimpanzees because such imagery of endangered animals is archaic and inflammatory. There are many filmmakers who also won't film with other primates, including monkeys. In contrast, films like Jordan Peele's "Nope" serve as a great example of how impactful (and still ethical) CGI scenes of primates can be. **This should come as no surprise given the successful use of CGI for the dragons in the show.**

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. Daily, we see the lifelong repercussions of primate exploitation for human entertainment.

Using footage of primate "actors" is irresponsible and widely considered to be outdated in television and film. Instead, please remove the scene featuring a macaque monkey and use more modern and compassionate CGI renderings in the future.

Sincerely,

Amanda Gray
Director, North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance