

JOIN ISAR'S "ONE-HUNDRED-THOUSAND-SIGNATURES" CAMPAIGN TO END THE SIMULATED ABUSE OF AND CRUELTY TO ANIMALS IN "ENTERTAINMENT" AND SALE OF PRODUCTS

Through the efforts of animal rights and animal welfare organizations, some of the physical abuse of and cruelty to live animals in movies and on television has been ameliorated. Trip wires for horses, for example, have largely been eliminated. However, instead of live animals being abused and cruelly treated, a related phenomenon has surfaced which is at least as bad, if not worse: "fake" animals are being abused and cruelly treated in the name of "entertainment" and to sell products. An alien "dog" confesses after being roughed up (Men In Black). Another "dog" is thrown out a window (There's Something About Mary). Post-copulation, a man falls atop a "cat" (EdTV). Another "cat" is swung on its tail (Idle Hands). An over-the-hill football player punches out a "horse" (Blazing Saddles). A TV ad for an on-line shopping site shows real looking (but plastic) gerbils being shot out of a cannon. For years cartoons-the Saturday morning TV pacifier for countless children-have visited various forms of mayhem on hapless animals of every description.

Why does this happen in movies and television? Why do the producers of "entertainment" and the purveyors of products use animals at all, let alone in this manner? Why do they believe that even simulated animal abuse and cruelty sells tickets and tacos?

One reason is that a staple of "comedy" has always been the "laugh-at-someone-else's-expanse." The distinguished man's toupee lifted from above by a fishing pole, the formally dressed society matron hit in the face with a pie, the stern cop slipping on a banana peel. This kind of slapstick "humor" necessarily has always contained not a small element of sadism. However, it was-and remains-less acceptable to be sadistic toward humans than toward animals, who, even in simulated form, are apparently fair game for virtually any simulated depiction of abuse and cruelty.

Another reason is technological, Today, the advance in robotics and computer imaging allows the simulation of virtually anything, from the depiction of earth's creation to the lives of amoebas. From the slaughter of endangered Siberian tigers, to the torture of butterflies.

The combination of these factors-"humorous sadism" and technological facility, in the service of crass commercialism-has today resulted in abuses and cruelties described above, and many worse.

Apart from the generally desensitizing consequences of these depictions-not only for children, but for adults as well-it is well known that there is a correlation between mistreatment of animals and mistreatment of humans, often reaching the level of murder.

Accordingly, the simulated abuse of and cruelty to animals in motion pictures and on television is at least irresponsible and at worst contributes to a culture of violence and impacts on humans and animals alike.

In an effort to put an end to the simulated abuse of and cruelty to animals in motion pictures and television, ISAR is launching a nation-wide petition campaign aimed at obtaining One-Hundred-Thousand signatures demanding that movie producers, television companies, and advertisers and their agencies, desist from simulating harm to animals in order to sell "entertainment" and other products.

WHEREAS, contemporary motion pictures and television shows are replete with the use of live and animated animals, and

WHEREAS, such use for commercial purposes is because of inherent appeal animals have to children and adults alike, and

WHEREAS, although through the efforts of animal rights and animal welfare organizations the abuse of and cruelty to animals used in entertainment and sale of products has been somewhat ameliorated, increasingly abuse and cruelty to animals is simulated, and

WHEREAS, through the use of modern technology such simulations appears to be real, and

WHEREAS, as a result of that apparent reality an explicit and implicit message is sent that abusing and being cruel to animals is acceptable, even humorous, conduct, and

WHEREAS, such a message is at least irresponsible and at worst contributes to a culture of abuse and cruelty to humans and animals alike, and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of motion picture producers, television companies, advertisers and their agencies, not to foster abuse of and cruelty to animals,

NOW, THEREFORE we the undersigned, hereby demand that those movie producers, television companies, and advertisers and their agencies to whom this petition will be delivered, upon threat of boycott, immediately cease the simulated abuse of and cruelty to animals in the products they sell for public consumption.