

For Immediate Release  
*Video Footage Available*

Date: March 8, 2004  
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## **Press Conference/Protest Today at SF Zoo Zoo's Care and Keeping of Elephants At Issue**

*San Francisco, CA.* . . . In Defense of Animals (IDA) and Citizens for Cruelty-Free Entertainment will hold a press conference and demonstration tomorrow at the San Francisco Zoo where they will charge the zoo with neglect in the care of Calle, the Asian elephant who was euthanized early Sunday morning after suffering from debilitating joint disease, recurrent lameness, and abscesses and infections of her feet and leg bones. They will also demand that the zoo transfer its surviving elephants to sanctuaries where the climate, space, social and other conditions are conducive to the health and well being of these complex individuals.

What: Protest and Press Conference  
When: Monday, March 8, 2004 @ 12:30 p.m.  
Where: SF Zoo (Sloat Avenue) at the front entrance in the parking area.

Available at the press conference will be medical records that document Calle's suffering and indicate negligence in the veterinary care provided to her, along with video of Calle's last hours, providing graphic visual images of her debilitated state.

Calle was 37-years old. Captured from the wild in Asia when she was approximately 1 year old, she spent her early years as a circus elephant before being sent to the Los Angeles Zoo. In 1997, the LA Zoo shipped her to San Francisco after she injured a keeper. In the wild, Calle would have been in the prime of her life. (Elephant life spans closely parallel that of humans.)

"This is one of the worst cases of neglect that I as a veterinarian have ever seen," said Elliot Katz, DVM, president of In Defense of Animals. "It is shocking." Katz attributed the onset of Calle's problems to a captive environment that prevents normal exercise and social development for elephants while forcing them to stand on hard, compacted surfaces that exacerbate the joint and leg problems. He said that San Francisco's cold, foggy weather is also detrimental to elephants, who hail from the warm climates of Asia and Africa.

"To have properly cared for Calle when the chronic lameness and infections set in three years ago, the zoo should have transferred her to a facility with the elephant care expertise, warm weather and naturalistic environment necessary for her to heal," Katz continued. "It is clear that the zoo does not have the resources, environment, space, competence or skill to care for elephants. The other elephants must be moved to sanctuaries immediately before we have a recurrence of this horrible tragedy."

Katz noted that his organization is exploring legal action to hold the zoo accountable for its treatment of Calle. Meanwhile, the groups will continue to press for the release of Tinkerbelle, now the park's lone Asian elephant, as well as Maybelle and Lulu, the two African elephants at the zoo.

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