



Jeff Zucker
President

Michael Bass
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Dear Mr. Zucker and Mr. Bass:

Sent via email
January 11, 2018

We understand CNN – U.S. will be airing the documentary Trophy on January 14 preceded by a pre-recorded interview with the CEO of Born Free USA, Prashant Khetan, on January 11 and a live conversation between Mr. Khetan and Philip Glass, a hunter featured in Trophy, on January 12.

We are respectfully asking you to please reconsider airing this “shockumentary” on your esteemed network without offering your millions of viewers an opportunity to see and hear the counterviews to trophy hunting presented with the same degree of prominence and exposure. To this end, we request a meeting with you prior to the airing of Trophy to plead our case as to why airing the film in its current form could do irreparable damage to the cause of responsible wildlife conservation.

Co-directors Shaul Schwarz and Christina Clusiau deliver a film that is almost devoid of facts, a film that articulates assumptions that go unchallenged, and a film that fails to offer the viewer the opportunity to make any kind of informed decision. Instead of exploring the topics of trophy hunting and conservation in a thorough, balanced and objective way, the film does a disservice to the subject by presenting a perspective that is, simply put, inaccurate, misleading and self-serving.

Throughout the film, many subjects and statements are presented as the truth or as a statement of fact when, in truth, they are controversial, contestable and confusing. For example, the annual Safari Club International (SCI) conference in Las Vegas, which features exhibits by hunting outfitters, gun manufacturers and taxidermy services, attracts 20,000 visitors from around the world each year. Hunting clubs and organizations like SCI argue that the fees paid by hunters engaged in legal, recreational trophy hunting make important contributions to African economies and also fund conservation efforts. However, there was no analysis or assessment of their assertion. There is no discussion or even mention of the research undertaken by independent analysts, such as Economists at Large, who conclude that, on average, just 3% of the revenue generated by trophy hunting ends up supporting local communities, or that Kenya alone generates in the order of between 5 and 6 times the total revenue generated by trophy hunting across all of Africa from its non-consumptive approach to wildlife conservation (i.e., eco-tourism).

President Will Travers OBE | **Chief Executive** Howard Jones | **Founder** Virginia McKenna OBE | **Founder Patron** Joanna Lumley OBE

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The film asserts so many falsehoods that it is difficult to know where to begin. But perhaps one of the most confusing and dangerous is the “conservation recipe” put forth by South African John Hume, the most successful private rhino breeder on the planet, with a herd of 1,530 rhino to his name. Confusing because it has nothing to do with trophy hunting, and dangerous because it could hasten the demise of wild rhino the world over.

Mr. Hume’s ill-conceived plan is to breed rhino, cut off their horns and sell them on the world market. Such sales are currently legal in South Africa but prohibited internationally. The film discusses this notion with almost no risk analysis, no alternative vision and no understanding of what would happen to the world’s 30,000 remaining wild rhino if his plan was put into action. His “recipe” would indeed create a legal market for rhino horn to be sold to hundreds of millions of potential customers in the Far East and, based on bitter experience with other wildlife products such as ivory and tiger body parts, without a doubt establish a cover for the illegal trade, create a parallel market into which illegal rhino products could be laundered and cause a wildlife law-enforcement nightmare.

Mr. Hume and the filmmakers seem to ignore or be unaware of the lessons of the past. In 2008, the international community, despite the desperate pleas of Born Free and other non-profits, approved a one-time sale of more than 100 tons of ivory from South Africa and several other countries to Japan and China. Far from “satisfying consumer demand,” as the architects of this deal had hoped, it fueled a dramatic and deadly explosion in poaching and the illegal ivory trade. In fact, between 2009 and 2014, Tanzania, a country that permits trophy hunting of elephants and hitherto an African elephant stronghold, lost an average of 1,000 elephants per month, every month, for five years. That’s 60,000 elephants we shouldn’t have lost!

The poaching epidemic continues to this day with 20,000 elephants poached each year, tons of ivory being seized, and wildlife rangers and wardens – the first line of defense for elephants and rhino – losing their lives on an almost daily basis. More than 1,000 of these conservation guardians have been murdered in the last 10 years.

We could go on and on. In short, there are many problems with this film and, therefore, we urge you not to air the film on CNN on January 14 without considering airing a counter-piece of similar nature (i.e., a documentary that adequately provides the counterpoints and facts of the other side, if you will). To be candid, we are glad that CNN is taking a leading role in giving primetime coverage to important conservation issues like trophy hunting (just as it did with Blackfish and other similar thought-provoking documentaries), with the goal of encouraging viewers to think through the issue and make informed decisions. However, in its present form, your viewers will walk away from this primetime showing with only one side of the story. While we appreciate the opportunity for interviews (indeed, Mr. Khetan is a co-signer of this letter), in the hope of furthering your much-appreciated attempt to stimulate a conversation on trophy hunting, we ask for more

Therefore, we respectfully and most urgently request a meeting with you to discuss this matter further on behalf of our many thousands of members and the many, many millions of concerned citizens (many of whom are devoted CNN followers) who, without a doubt, will share our concerns.



This letter is endorsed by the following organizations and individuals;

Will Travers OBE, President, Born Free Foundation

Prashant Khetan, CEO/General Counsel, Born Free USA

Jill Robinson, CEO/Founder, Animals Asia Foundation

Linda M. B. Paul, International Director, Endangered Species Program, Earthtrust

Rhishja Cota-Larson, Founder and President, Annamiticus

Michael O'Sullivan, Chairman and CEO, Humane Society of Canada

Lucky Mavrandonis & Sue Downie, Black Rhino Monitoring Project, South Africa

Michele Pickover, Director, EMS Foundation, South Africa

Fiona Miles, Country Director, Four Paws South Africa

Sigrid Lueber, President, OceanCare

Rob Laidlaw, Executive Director, Zoo Check Inc.

Karen Botha, CEO David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Dominic Dyer, CEO Badger Trusts & Policy Advisor Born Free Foundation

Elodie G r me-Delgado, Wildlife Worldwide Project Manager, Fondation Brigitte Bardot

Ashley Leiman, Director/Trustee, Orangutan Foundation

Jan Creamer, President Animal Defenders International

Olivia & Carter Ries, Co-Founders One More Generation

Gregg Tully, Executive Director Pan African Sanctuary Alliance

Lesley Suttly, CEO East Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness (ECCEA)

Ed Stewart, President and Co-Founder Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)

Catherine Doyle M.S, Director of Science, Research & Advocacy, Performing Animals Welfare Society

Erika Ceballos, President CATCA Environmental and Wildlife Society (Canada) and President Animal Conservation and Welfare Foundation (Poland)

Ulrich Karlowski, Society for Dolphin Conservation, Germany

Dr. Shirley McGreal OBE, President and Board Chair, International Primate Protection League

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