

# **Circus Incidents**

## **Attacks, Abuse and Property Damage**

**The Humane Society of the United States**  
revised September 2002

### **August 23, 2002 Virginia – STERLING AND REID CIRCUS**

A handler with Sterling and Reid circus faces animal cruelty charges after being accused of beating an elephant resulting in bloody lacerations on the animal. The chief animal handler with the circus was also arrested. According to authorities the men were argumentative and unwilling to cooperate. *The Virginian-Pilot August 25, 2002*

### **August 10, 2002. Rhinebeck, NY – CARSON AND BARNES CIRCUS**

A truck carrying two 8,000 pound elephants overturned on the highway on route to a performance at a New York fairground. A telephone pole was damaged, causing power outages. Three people were taken to the emergency room after the crash. The elephants were loaded onto another truck and performed in the evening show as scheduled. *The Associated Press, August 9, 2002*

### **July, 2002. Canada – SHRINERS CIRCUS**

Three circus elephants travelling with the Shriners circus were deported from Canada in July after officials learned they may have been carrying a strain of tuberculosis which can be transmitted to humans. The elephants belonged to the Tarzan Zerbini Circus and were in contact with another elephant that was infected with mycobacterium tuberculosis. According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Tarzan Zerbini did not follow USDA treatment protocol regarding tuberculosis. *Ottawa Citizen, August 2, 2002*

### **June 17, 2002. Menomonie, Wisconsin – SHRINERS CIRCUS**

During a shrine circus performance, two circus elephants named Tory and Mary charged from the circus tent. The elephants injured a young boy and damaged park property and a vehicle. Mary wandered two miles away before her capture. *Reuters June 18, 2002*

### **May 27, 2002. Bangladesh**

A 10-year-old boy was killed by an elephant while he and his playmates were petting the elephant which was tied with a chain to a pole at the circus in Dhaka. The elephant scooped the boy up with his trunk and then trampled him to death. The circus owner and trainers were arrested for causing death by negligence. *Ananova, May 28, 2002*

### **August 10, 2001. Penrith, Australia – LENNON'S CIRCUS**

A lion tamer was attacked by three lions during a performance. The man suffered severe lacerations to the buttocks requiring surgery. Many children attended the performance and were hysterical after witnessing the violent attack. *The Age, August 12, 2001*

### **July 10, 2001. Akron Ohio – STERLING and REID CIRCUS**

Sterling and Reid circus was shut down after it was discovered that the circus was in violation of electrical, bleacher and tent safety standards. The circus manager complained stating that the circus was disappointed because they hoped to attract more people and he remarked to a disappointed child that they were shut down because "the city didn't like us". *The Beacon Journal, July 11, 2001*

**May 23, 2001. Michoacan, Mexico – HERMANOS RODRIGUEZ AYALA CIRCUS**

Two lions escaped from the Hermanos Rodriguez Ayala Circus during a severe rain storm. The animals roamed for several hours through a town before being recaptured by police.

*Earthchanges TV, May 24, 2001*

**April 17, 2001. Cascante, Spain –**

During a performance, 3 lions and a tiger escaped their handlers. The escaped animals killed and injured several animals at the circus. Two lions were recaptured while one lion and the tiger were shot by police. *Deutsche Presse-Agentur, April 17, 2001*

**March 25, 2001. Chicago IL. – SHRINE CIRCUS**

A teacher filed a formal complaint against the Shrine Circus for the alleged abuse of one the circus's elephants. According to the teacher and her 8-year-old child, an elephant was removed from the ring for failing to perform up to expectations and then chained by one leg and beaten with a bullhook until the animal began to scream.

*Metro Networks, March 26, 2001*

**March 25, 2001. Allentown, PA. – ROYAL PALACE CIRCUS of SARASOTA**

A snake charmer was bitten on the abdomen by a poisonous cobra he was attempting to 'hypnotize' during a performance. The snake charmer was treated at a nearby hospital.

*Lehigh Valley News, March 26, 2001*

**February 21, 2001. Moscow - DUROV'S LITTLE CORNER**

An elephant trainer was found crushed to death in the elephant's pen following a performance at a Moscow theatre.

*Reuters, February 22, 2001*

**December 29, 2000. Frankfurt, Germany**

An escaped circus tiger, 'Sahib', stopped rush hour traffic and caused a 12 mile traffic jam on Germany's busiest motorway that lasted two hours. Sahib was shot 6 times with an anesthetic dart gun before being recaptured by police.

*Reuters, January 1, 2001*

**December 15, 2000. West Bengal India**

A 20-year-old circus performer was mauled to death by three tigers during a performance in which 9 tigers were made to jump over her and through a ring.

*Reuters, December 16, 2000*

**November 4, 2000. Amberg, Germany**

A liger, a mixture between a lion and tiger that was traveling with a circus critically wounded a 5-year-old girl. The liger grabbed the girl's ankle while entering the ring for a performance.

*AP News Wire, November 5, 2000*

**August 4, 2000. Sao Simao, Brazil**

Six circus lions were shot to death by police after they escaped their cage at a zoo and roamed through a town in southeastern Brazil. The lions were being held at the zoo after local authorities decided that the lion's traveling cages were not secure enough. *AP News, August 8, 2000*

**April 24, 2000. Thailand, SUAN NONGNUCH ANIMAL PARK**

A performing bull elephant gored and killed a 20-year-old nurse and seriously injured her sister and father while they were attending a performance at a private animal park in Thailand. *The Guardian, April 25, 2000*

**April 20, 2000. Yucca Valley, CA. CULPEPPER and MERRIWEATHER CIRCUS**

A circus elephant broke loose after a performance with the Culpepper and Merriweather Circus. A circus ticket taker was stepped on and may have suffered a broken hip. The elephant wandered three blocks away before circus workers captured him. Three circus horses also escaped their pen shortly after the elephant was recaptured. The horses were recaptured without incident. *The Intelligencer, April 21, 2000*

**April 3, 2000. Sao Paulo, Brazil**

A 6-year-old boy was killed and devoured by five circus lions in Sao Paulo while he and his father toured the animal cages after a performance. The boy was dragged from his father by a caged lion into a cage with four other lions in front of hundreds of spectators. Two people were injured during the incident from machine gunfire used by police to scare the lions off the boy's body. A circus worker reported that the lions had not been fed in 5 days. All but one of the lions was shot to death following the incident. *ABC Daily News, April 11, 2000*

**April 2, 2000. Baton Rouge, Louisiana; STERLING and REID**

A circus bear fell out of a truck while traveling on the highway. The bear was taken to the Audubon Zoo for the night and then taken back on the road with the circus. *The Advocate, April 4, 2000*

**March 7, 2000. Warsaw, Poland**

A veterinarian was accidentally shot and killed by police while trying to tranquilize an escaped circus tiger. The tiger was also shot and killed by police. The tiger was one of three circus tigers that escaped from their cages and were chased for two hours through a busy Warsaw suburb. Two of the tigers were recaptured. *AP, March 14, 2000*

**February 4, 2000. Tampa, FL - RAMOS FAMILY**

Kenya, a performing elephant who killed one of her trainers on January 23, 2000, was found dead at the Ramos family compound two weeks later. Necropsy results reported a month after her death that Kenya had died of natural causes due to intestinal difficulties. *St. Petersburg Times, February 6, 2000 ;8, 2000; Naples Daily News, March 12, 2000*

**February 3, 2000. Deland, FL - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

An inspector with the USDA's Animal and Plant Inspection Service found serious health problems with two elephants owned by Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus. The inspection report states that 55 -year-old Bessie bleeds when she urinates, and that 46-year-old Helen's tail is partly paralyzed, preventing her from cleanly defecating. In addition, numerous scars were found on both animals. Concerning both elephants, the inspector wrote, "Handling shall be done in a manner that prevents trauma or physical harm." *Daytona Beach News Journal, February 12, 2000*

**January 23, 2000. Tampa, FL - RAMOS FAMILY**

Kenya, an elephant owned by the Ramos circus family, trampled one of her owners to death after breaking free from the tree she was tied to. *St. Petersburg Times, January 27, 2000*

**January 8, 2000. Thodupuzha, Kerala, India**

One man was killed and several spectators were injured when baby elephants escaped their trainers during a "jumbo show" parade of 75 elephants. In the melee, the elephants smashed cars and damaged other property. According to reports, 250 trainers and 234 elephants have been killed in Kerala state over the past twenty years. *January 10, 2000*

**October 26, 1999. Valledupar, Columbia - MODELO CIRCUS**

An elephant trainer with the Mexico-based Modelo Circus was killed by Maggy, one of three elephants performing during a circus in Valledupar, Columbia. At the close of her performance, Maggy threw her trainer Elias Mitrobich Garcia into the air and impaled him with her tusks. She then trampled him repeatedly, crushing him to death in front of the circus audience. Circus workers shot Maggy six times in efforts to end the attack. Luis Alberto Bustos, a Modelo Circus spokesman, stated that Maggy will be used in future performances. *Orlando Sentinel, October 27, 1999.*

**July 26, 1999. Texas - RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**

A young elephant drowned in a pool during a travel stop in Texas. The elephant was the fifth Ringling Circus animal to die in the last 18 months. *San Francisco Chronicle, August 19, 1999; San Jose Mercury News, September 6, 1999.*

**May 15, 1999. Toronto, ON - CIRCUS LEONARDO**

A circus worker died after he was kicked in the head by an elephant backstage before a performance. *Toronto Star, May 17, 1999.*

**April 24, 1999. Duluth, MN - TARZAN ZERBINI INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS**

A trainer was severely injured when an elephant broke free of his shackles. According to an ambulance worker, the man smelled of alcohol. Another trainer with the circus said the elephants were "originally trained by drunks and were badly beaten in the past, and now the elephants don't like the smell of alcohol on people." A University of Minnesota veterinarian said this reaction was quite possible. *Duluth News-Tribune, April 29, 1999.*

**February 22, 1999. Norfolk, VA - RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**

A 15 year-old Polish Arabian horse named Sabre collapsed and died during a procession of the animals to a civic center where a performance was scheduled a few days later. Polish Arabian horses may live to the age of 30 years. *Virginian Pilot, February 24, 1999.*

**February 21, 1999. Poughkeepsie, NY - ROYAL HANNEFORD CIRCUS**

A 4,500 pound elephant named Luna, apparently disoriented after performing a trick, stepped out of the ring and walked into a crowd of 1,000 people. A few people suffered minor injuries while scrambling out of the animal's path. The show was abruptly halted. Afterwards, dozens of audience members gathered outside the civic center, some furious at circus officials and others upset and crying. *Poughkeepsie Journal, February 23, 1999.*

**June, 1998 - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

During two separate inspections of the circus, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service found several elephants with wounds evidently inflicted by abusive use of an ankus (elephant hook). Inspectors noted two elephants with ankus wounds on June 3, 1998, and four elephants with ankus wounds on June 12, 1998. In a press release issued by the agency, Michael V. Dunn, undersecretary for USDA's marketing and regulatory programs stated, "We believe that Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Circus abusively used an elephant hook on several animals." *USDA APHIS Press Release, April 20, 1999.*

**April 15, 1998. Honington, England**

A 13-year-old elephant named Kenya died soon after she collapsed inside her pen at a circus wintering depot in Honington, near Grantham, Lincs, England. Kenya's owner, Philip Hanson, attributed Kenya's collapse to a "friendly tussle" with one of three other elephants kept inside the same enclosure. An investigation of the incident was initiated by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). *The Electronic Telegraph, April 16, 1998.*

**April 3, 1999. San Bernardino, CA - STERLING & REID BROTHERS CIRCUS**

Eight horses were turned over to the San Bernardino Humane Society after they were found to be malnourished. The circus was charged with cruelty to animals. *San Jose Mercury News, April 5, 1998.*

**February 15, 1998. Mentor, OH - [BRET BRONSON ELEPHANTS]**

Tonya, An elephant who was to perform at the annual Mentor high school circus, knocked down her trainer during an act, opened a door with her trunk, and fled the building. She was caught a quarter mile away from the circus. *Ledger Enquirer (AP), February 17, 1998*

**February 9, 1998. Lincolton, NC - ROYAL PALACE CIRCUS**

During a performance an 18-month old, 150-pound leopard named Lexus bit her trainer on the head and arms after she jerked Lexus' chain to keep him from lunging at the audience. As the crowd watched in horror, employees grabbed Lexus's chain and pulled him off of the trainer. Medical authorities said the trainer would need reconstructive surgery to repair her wounds. Lexus and another Royal Palace leopard were quarantined at the Charlotte Metro Zoo for 10 days. *Charlotte Observer, February 11, 1998.*

**January 24, 1998. Jacksonville, FL - RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**

According to charges leveled by the USDA, a 3 1/2 year old baby elephant named Kenny died after being forced to perform two shows in one day while ill. The case was settled by agreement and Ringling brothers paid \$20,000 to close a USDA investigation into whether it broke animal welfare laws. Circus officials said that Kenny died of a gastrointestinal infection. He was one of nine elephants born into captivity at Ringling's breeding facility in Florida. In the wild, baby elephants are close to their families and travel in herds. At Ringling, Kenny was put on tour while his mother was kept within the confines of the circus's breeding compound. *Entertainment Wire, February 14, 1998; Jacksonville Times, January 31, 1998.*

**January 7, 1998. St. Petersburg, FL - RINGLING BROS. BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS**

During a publicity photo shoot with tigers, Richard Chipperfield, of the famed British circus family, was attacked by a four-year-old Bengal tiger named Arnold. His brother, Graham Chipperfield, and another trainer, used fire extinguishers to control Arnold. The group of tigers was returned to their cages, and, as paramedics struggled to stabilize Richard Chipperfield, his brother shot and killed Arnold inside his cage. Chipperfield was hospitalized in serious condition with significant brain tissue loss. Graham Chipperfield, who'd been badly mauled by a lion in 1993, announced his decision to retire from the circus several days later. (See the incident on February 24, 1993.) *Reuters, January 7, 1998; The Electronic Telegraph, January 12, 1998.*

**1997-98. Aldershot, England - CHIPPERFIELD CIRCUS**

Mary Chipperfield, of the famed Chipperfield Circus family was convicted of animal cruelty and fine \$12,000, for beating a chimpanzee with a riding crop. Animal Defenders, a U.K. group, videotaped Chipperfield abusing the chimpanzee during a 1997-98 investigation.

Chipperfield's husband, Roger Cawley, was also fined for whipping a sick elephant. *AP, April 9, 1999.*

**1997-98. Aldershot, England - CHIPPERFIELD CIRCUS**

Investigators from Animal Defenders documented Richard Cawley, the husband of Mary Chipperfield, whipping a sick elephant. Cawley was fined \$1,600. He and Chipperfield were also ordered to pay \$19,580 in court costs. *AP, April 9, 1999.*

**August 6, 1997. Albuquerque, NM - KING ROYAL BROS. CIRCUS**

An elephant named Heather was found dead inside a trailer carrying two other elephants and eight llamas. Police, who spotted the vehicle swaying in a parking lot, estimated the temperature inside the vehicle to be 120 degrees. Necropsy results gave the cause of death as salmonella poisoning complicated by malnutrition and stress. Heather had been taken as a baby from her African homeland shortly before the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) banned the trade in Asian and African elephants in 1990. *Albuquerque Journal, August 14, 1997.*

**August 1, 1997. Beaverdam, Ohio - ALLEN BROTHERS CIRCUS**

An employee of Allen Brothers Circus was charged with four counts of animal cruelty for leaving two Bengal tigers and two lions for over eight hours in a disabled trailer along a road near Lima, Ohio. A marketing coordinator for the Toledo Zoo said, "the animals were in a metal trailer in the hot sun without access to water." Authorities impounded the vehicle and took the animals to the Toledo Zoo. *Columbus Dispatch, August 11, 1997.*

**May 18, 1997. Tiangua, Brazil - DALLAS CIRCUS**

A lion cub tied on top of a car for display broke free of his rope leash, fled into a video rental store, and cornered and mauled a 4-year-old boy. *AP Wire, May 19, 1997.*

**May 7, 1997. Carrollton, PA - FRANZEN BROS. CIRCUS**

During a performance a 400-pound Bengal tiger called Lucca killed his trainer, Wayne Franzen, by pouncing on him and dragging him around the ring by his neck. The attack occurred when Franzen turned his back on the tiger just minutes after the performance began. An audience of 200 children witnessed the killing. *Philadelphia Inquirer, May 9, 1997.*

**May, 1997. Guangzhou, China - ORIENTAL GREAT CIRCUS**

Twenty circus animals, including lions, tigers, horses, and monkeys, faced starvation in temporary quarters after a motor accident killed three circus workers and injured several others. Personnel from the Guangzhou Zoo, called in to assist the stranded animals, said they could not afford to feed them forever. The circus was en route to Hunan Province after performances at Shenzhen Safari Park. *South China Morning Post, May 3, 1997.*

**March 17, 1997. Muskegon, MI - SHRINE CIRCUS**

A 2-year-old girl lost part of her pinky finger when she reached into a bear cage at the annual Shrine Circus in Stadium Arena. *Chronicle (Muskegon, MI), March 18, 1997.*

**August 6, 1996. Colorado - CIRCUS VARGAS**

Hattie, an Asian elephant on loan with Circus Vargas, died in Colorado while in transit back to her owners - the Hawthorn Corporation - in Grayslake, Illinois. Hattie was last made to perform on August 3, 1996. The next day her hind legs gave way beneath her as she was being unloaded off of a truck. She died August 6, 1996, inside a transport trailer. *San Jose Mercury News, August 10, 1996.*

**August 3, 1996. Los Angeles, CA - CIRCUS VARGAS**

A 47-year-old Asian elephant named Joyce died soon after a dental procedure involving anesthesia. Her autopsy revealed an advanced case of tuberculosis. Joyce's owner, the Hawthorn Corporation, said Joyce had dropped from about 8,000 to 7,000 pounds over the past 10 months. Joyce was used in performances until the evening before she died. Another elephant traveling with Circus Vargas died three days later. *Reuters, March 11, 1997.*

**July, 1996. Sao Paulo, Brazil - VOSTOK CIRCUS**

A Siberian bear named Katia escaped from the traveling Vostock Circus and caused two cars to collide when a driver swerved to avoid hitting her. *Reuters, July 31, 1996.*

**June 14, 1996. Casper, WY - JORDAN WORLD CIRCUS**

An elephant called Sue knocked down and repeatedly kicked her trainer at the Central Wyoming Fairgrounds. The trainer was treated at a nearby medical center for minor injuries. The elephant, who was giving rides at the time was reportedly frightened by a horse. *Casper Star Tribune, June 15, 1996.*

**June 1, 1996. Iquique, Chile**

An elephant named Frida attacked a 10-year-old boy who wandered up to the animal's cage at a circus in the northern Chilean city of Iquique. The curious youngster was knocked to the ground when the elephant slapped him with her trunk. He died of multiple skull traumas. *Reuters, June 5, 1996.*

**August 28, 1996. Vienna, Austria - GOLDEN GLOBE CIRCUS**

An 8-year-old bear broke free during unloading at the Golden Globe Circus and ran through the streets of Vienna for an hour before being cornered and sedated. The bear bit three people, including an animal trainer. Authorities ordered the bear be held in quarantine to determine whether he was diseased. *Newswire, August 29, 1996.*

**December 19, 1995. Moscow, Russia - MOSCOW CIRCUS**

A bear named Baby fatally mauled an attendant after the bear's trainer opened the cage door. *Philadelphia Daily News, December 21, 1995.*

**November, 1995. Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia**

A crocodile on tour with a Ukrainian circus froze to death after becoming stranded by an avalanche that closed a mountain road. *Dayton Daily News, November 24, 1995.*

**October 20, 1995. Philippines - RUSSIAN ALL-STAR CIRCUS**

A 14-year-old puma named Nice was found dead in his cage. The suspected cause was poisoning. *Chicago Tribune, October 23, 1995.*

**July 10, 1995. Queens, NY - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

Several spectators were injured fleeing a matinee performance when two elephants, named Freda and Debbie, began to fight. The elephants broke out of the big top and moved into a parking lot, where they smashed an empty car. Freda and Debbie also caused damages in Hanover, Pennsylvania on May 20, 1995. Freda was blamed for the July 6, 1985, death of a woman in New London, Connecticut, and may also have been the elephant who injured a man on May 25, 1983. *New York Post, July 11, 1995.*

**July 4, 1995. Fort Wayne, IN - TARZAN ZERBINI INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS**

While loading circus equipment onto trailers, a circus employee was stomped by an elephant named Roxie. In a lawsuit against the circus, the man claimed that immediately before he was attacked, another employee started a forklift which made a high-pitched, screeching noise. Just then, Roxie, apparently startled by the noise, knocked down the plaintiff with her trunk and stomped him twice with her left foot. The man suffered severe abdominal injuries. *News-Sentinel (Fort Wayne, IN), July 4, 1995.*

**May 18, 1995. Hanover, PA - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

Two elephants, Freda and Debbie, smashed through the window of a Sears Auto Center and crushed six cars while on tour at a mall in Hanover, Pennsylvania. Damages were estimated at \$15,000. A spectator said the trainer "was yelling and screaming at the elephants. They would turn around and then he would beat on them and they rebelled again." A circus employee said a bull hook was used by the trainer to gain control of the animals. One of the elephants suffered a six inch gash under her right eye and cuts and bruises to other parts of her body. *Gettysburg Times, May 19, 1995.*

**February, 1995. Illagan City, Philippines - RUSSIAN ALL-STAR CIRCUS**

Three ponies and two donkeys housed in steel cages were electrocuted during a performance when rain caused an electrical cord to short circuit. *The Columbian (Vancouver, WA), February 13, 1995.*

**February, 1995. Hugo, Oklahoma - CARSON AND BARNES**

A 200-pound tiger named Shawana escaped from a circus and spent 10 days at liberty before being captured. *Chicago Tribune, February 12, 1995.*

**October, 1994. Junction City, KS - KING ROYAL CIRCUS**

A 3-year-old girl received scrapes and scratches from an elephant called Mickey. A month earlier Mickey had been violently beaten by trainer Bela Tabak. (See the incident on September 17, 1994.) *Oregonian, December 24, 1994.*

**September 17, 1994. Lebanon, OR - KING ROYAL CIRCUS**

Mickey, a young Asian elephant, was forced to the ground screaming when his trainer, Bela Tabak, beat him for refusing to do a trick and attempting to flee the arena. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) penalized Tabak by suspending his right to handle elephants for five years. *Oregonian, September 20, 1994; Oregonian, December 24, 1994.*

**September 2, 1994. Chakradhapur, India**

A tiger jumped out of the ring during a circus show and fatally mauled a 6-year-old boy sitting in the front row alongside his father. The boy died after he was rushed to a local hospital. His father was seriously injured. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 4, 1994.*

**August 20, 1994. Honolulu, HI - CIRCUS INTERNATIONAL**

During a performance, Tyke, a 21-year-old female African elephant crushed to death her trainer and badly injured another circus employee. After the attack, Tyke bolted from the arena into the street and was chased by police for several blocks. She was shot more than 80 times before finally collapsing. Tyke was then euthanized by a lethal injection administered by workers from the Honolulu Zoo. Tyke was the property of the Hawthorn Corporation, which was fined \$12,500 for the incident. (See the incident in July 1993.) *Sacramento Bee, August 22, 1994.*

**August 15, 1994. Honolulu, HI - CIRCUS INTERNATIONAL**

Jack, an African elephant, rammed a fence around the circus ring, knocking one spectator into the next row and pinning nine others under a fence. The spectator told a reporter that just before the attack he heard someone in the ring yelling in an angry voice, very mean. . . . Right after that wham! I turned around and was face to face with this elephant. We were eye to eye. I have never felt a force like that in my life." Days later another elephant performing with Circus International went berserk, killing his trainer and injuring another circus worker. (See the incident on August 20, 1994.) *Sacramento Bee, August 22, 1994; Boston Globe, August 22, 1994.*

**July 17, 1994. Milwaukee, WI**

Four of eight Clydesdale horses pulling a wagon at the Great Circus Parade broke free and ran off when a metal ring holding the hitch broke. One of the Clydesdales stepped on a man's chest. Other spectators were treated for minor injuries. *Wisconsin State Journal, July 18, 1994.*

**April 6, 1994. Salt Lake City, UT - JORDAN CIRCUS**

While giving rides to two children, a 6,000 pound Asian elephant called Sue tossed her trainer to the ground and stepped on him, breaking four ribs and his arm. Another trainer who sought to intervene had her finger broken when she was kicked by the elephant. Sue was also involved in another attack in Casper, WY on June 14, 1996. *AP, April, 1994.*

**January, 1994. Maloyaroslavets, Russia - BINGO-BONGO CIRCUS**

A lion escaped from his cage in the traveling Bingo-Bongo Circus. A policeman shot and killed the animal with a submachine gun. *Washington Times, January 25, 1994.*

**1994. Kuwait City, Iraq**

A circus lion named Shiraz killed his Romanian trainer after locking his jaws around the woman's neck during a performance. *al-Qabas (daily news), in: Oregonian, August 15, 1995.*

**September 12, 1993. Joplin, MO - TARZAN ZERBINI**

A circus employee was mauled when trying to pet an 850-pound tiger and had to have part of her arm amputated. According to reports, the tiger may have been attracted by a bandaged cut on the woman's hand. *Boston Globe, September 15, 1993.*

**July, 1993. Minot, ND**

Tyke, a 9,000-pound African elephant injured her caretaker after rehearsing for a show at the state fair in Minot, ND. The man said he was walking behind Tyke when the elephant suddenly turned and charged him. "She knocked me down, kicked me and tried to stomp on me," he said. He was hospitalized with a separated clavicle, nerve damage, three broken ribs and a punctured lung. Tyke was shot to death one year later in Honolulu, Hawaii after killing her trainer during a performance. (See the incident on August 20, 1994.) *St. Louis Dispatch, August 25, 1994.*

**June 6, 1993. Fishkill, NY - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

A man was crushed to death after he walked into a group of elephants at the Clyde Beatty Cole Bros. Circus in Fishkill, New York. *New York Times, June 7, 1993.*

**May 5, 1993. Williston, FL - RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**

While visiting Ringling's elephant breeding compound in Williston, Florida, world famous elephant trainer Axel Gautier was stomped to death by an elephant. *Los Angeles Times, October 11, 1994.*

**April 21, 1993. Altoona, PA - CIRCUS AMERICA**

While performing before about 3,000 children, an elephant named Tyke charged through an entryway, tearing down a wall and causing about \$10,000 in property damage. Tyke was loaned to Circus America by the Illinois-based Hawthorn Corporation. (In 1994, Tyke was shot to death in Honolulu, Hawaii after killing her trainer during a performance.) (See the incidents on August 20, 1994, and July 1993.) *Philadelphia Inquirer, August 25, 1994.*

**February 24, 1993. Norfolk, VA - RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**

Trainer Graham Thomas Chipperfield was badly mauled by a lioness called Sheba during a training session. Chipperfield was practicing his lion-attack act when he was attacked for real. Two 3-inch puncture wounds in his shoulder and back were repaired with 80 stitches. In 1998, at age 29, Chipperfield retired from the circus after shooting a Bengal tiger who attacked and critically wounded his brother. (See the incident on January 7, 1998.) *Virginian-Pilot, February 25 and 27, 1993; San Francisco Chronicle, August 22, 1993.*

**1993. New York, NY - MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS**

An interpreter for the Moscow State Circus was attacked by an elephant minutes before a planned appearance on the *Live With Regis and Kathie Lee* television show. The interpreter suffered a fractured skull, broken ribs, and a punctured lung. *Los Angeles Times, October 11, 1994.*

**November 30, 1992. Moscow, Russia**

A circus bear broke out of his cage and severely mauled two women before being shot to death by police. *Orlando Sentinel, December 2, 1992.*

**September 19, 1992. Iwaki, Japan - BOLSHOI CIRCUS**

A lion on tour with the Bolshoi Circus of Moscow escaped his cage and roamed the area of Iwaki for five hours before being shot to death. Police recruited 30 hunters from a local club to hunt down the lion. Television news showed the hunters shooting the lion with high-powered rifles. *Orlando Sentinel, September 20, 1992.*

**July, 1992. Curitiba, Brazil**

An escaped circus tiger was shot to death by police in Curitiba, which is 525 miles southwest of Rio de Janeiro. Police were ordered to recapture the animal alive but instead shot the tiger 20 times. *Atlanta Constitution, July 30, 1992.*

**July 15, 1992. Lafayette, IN - TARZAN ZERBINI INTERNATIONAL**

While a group of elephants were being led around a ring during a show, several collided when one elephant stopped unexpectedly. One of the elephants bumped into a barricade, which toppled towards a crowd of spectators. According to reports, most injuries were only cuts and bruises that had been caused by people scrambling for safety, but one woman was hospitalized for a panic attack. *Chicago Tribune, July 17, 1992.*

**June 10, 1992. St. Mary's, Australia - ROBINSON'S CIRCUS**

A Bengal tiger named Genghis escaped from his cage, bit a circus worker, and fled the circus area. Genghis was shot and killed as he approached a busy shopping center. *Atlanta Journal, June 11, 1992.*

**February 1, 1992. Palm Bay, FL - GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS [defunct]**

Circus trainers lost control of an elephant named Janet while six people were riding on her back. A police officer who tried to rescue the passengers, was attacked by the elephant. During her 45-minute rampage, Janet rammed circus vehicles and tried to climb into bleachers. Several people were hospitalized with injuries. Police officers, prompted by the circus staff, opened fire on Janet with handguns, but 15 minutes later she was still alive. Larger bullet casings were brought in to finish the job. "The kids were crying because the elephant was shot and you could see blood everywhere," said one 8-year-old interviewed by the *Orlando Sentinel*. A month earlier the circus had been fined for violations, including the 1991 escape of a leopard who attacked a girl. (See the incidents in 1983 and April 18, 1991.) *Orlando Sentinel, February 2, 1992; Orlando Sentinel, February 5, 1992.*

**November, 1991. India**

A bear escaped from a circus cage and injured four children. Police finally trapped the bear in a house and beat the animal to death. *Los Angeles Times, November 6, 1991.*

**October 8, 1991. Pittsburgh, PA -RINGLING BROS. BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS**

A circus worker received a broken leg, a broken hand, and a cut on his face that required 15 stitches when he tried to control several Clydesdales and other horses who were startled by a loud noise during a parade. *Pittsburgh Press, October 9, 1991.*

**September 19, 1991. Charlotte, VT - GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS [defunct]**

Several witnesses reported a man beating a baby elephant with a shovel after he pulled his truck into a restaurant parking lot. The elephant and the man were in town with the Great American Circus. One witness said she could hear the elephant shrieking from inside the restaurant. Another said the man hit the elephant 15 or 20 times with a shovel, then left when he noticed people staring at him. *Burlington Free Press, September 19, 1991.*

**September 2, 1991. Tarragona, Spain**

A circus worker was killed when an elephant used his tusk to spear him. The worker had been loading the elephant onto a truck when the attack occurred. *Chicago Tribune, September 2, 1991.*

**August 17, 1991. Fresno, CA - RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY**

A man was bitten on the finger after he reportedly climbed over a plastic barricade and put his hand into the cage of a 350-pound lion called Pasha. According to the man's friend, he had been drinking. *Fresno Bee, August 18, 1991.*

**April 18, 1991. Wilkesboro, NC - GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS**

A 3-year old girl required stitches after a black leopard jumped out of the ring and bit her on the neck during a performance at Wilkes Mall. The leopard had been loaned to the circus by a family in Ruskin, Florida. *Charlotte Observer, December 1, 1991; Sun Sentinel, February 5, 1992.*

**March 7, 1991. Grimsby, England**

Four lions escaped their cage at a circus in Grimsby. One lion attacked a resident, causing cuts and bruises. All four lions were rounded up within an hour of escaping. *Oregonian, March 7, 1991.*

**February 23, 1991. Ararat, Australia**

A man who used bolt cutters to remove chains on a cage containing four circus lions suffered severe gashes to his neck and back from a lion attack. The injured man apparently tried to wrestle one of the lions. He was definitely drunk, said a spokesman. An officer was also slashed by one of the lions as he and others herded the lions back into their cell. *Chicago Tribune, February 24, 1991.*

**February, 1991. Chelyabinsk, Russia**

A circus tiger attacked his trainer. *The Record (Northern New Jersey), February 10, 1991.*

**1991**

Masha, a 14-year-old bear working in an East Coast-based circus was to be put to death after she bit her trainer. Her life was spared after the ASPCA found her a new home at a sanctuary in southern California. *Los Angeles Times, September 16, 1991.*

**December 12, 1990. Toulouse, France**

A tiger attacked and seriously injured a 4-year-old girl at a performance near Toulouse. The 400-pound tiger leaped into the audience as its cage was opened, slashed the child across her face, and clamped his jaws around her head before being dragged off by circus workers. *Houston Post, December 14, 1990.*

**October 26, 1990. Candelaria, Columbia**

A Bengal tiger escaped from a circus handler during a parade and killed a 1-year-old boy. The circus troupe was parading through the town of Candelaria, about 190 miles southwest of Bogota, to publicize their show. *Los Angeles Times, October 28, 1990.*

**July 7, 1990. Portland, OR - AMERICAN CONTINENTAL CIRCUS**

A 12-year-old girl suffered minor injuries when a chimpanzee attacked her at a circus show sponsored by the Portland Police Association. The chimpanzee was performing on a motorcycle when he abruptly rushed into the crowd and bit and scratched the girl, who was seated in the front row of the Memorial Coliseum. *Seattle Times, July 9, 1990; Oregonian, July 19, 1990.*

**June 22, 1990. San Pedro, Argentina - ACARI CIRCUS**

A man was killed and three other people were seriously wounded when they were mauled by two escaped lions from the traveling Acari Circus. The lions were later shot to death by police. *San Francisco Examiner, June 23, 1990.*

**June 20, 1990. Fort Lauderdale, FL - HANNEFORD FAMILY CIRCUS**

A circus worker was crushed to death by an elephant named Carol as performers prepared for their first show of the day at the now-defunct Thunderbird Swap Shop. The circus's ring mistress said the Hanneford elephants had been with the family since they were three months old. "Asian elephants are like domestic animals," she claimed. "They don't belong in the jungle." *Sun Sentinel, June 21, 1990; Sun Sentinel, June 28, 1990.*

**June 6, 1990. Reading, PA - GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS [defunct]**

During a performance, an elephant attacked her trainer, broke through a wooden barrier, and ran towards a crowd of about 1,000 spectators. One person received minor injuries. According to spectators, just prior to the elephant's rampage, the trainer had stuck a hook in her mouth for refusal to cooperate. The elephant then knocked over the trainer and tried to push him against the side of the ring. As spectators scattered, circus workers drove the elephant out of the tent. One spectator told police he saw the trainer hitting the elephant on the side of the head with a 2-foot metal pole after the incident. *Reading Eagle, June 8, 1998; Orlando Sentinel, February 4, 1992.*

**1990. Berlin, Germany**

A circus trainer was killed by a Kodiak bear named Luna. *Orlando Sentinel, July 12, 1991.*

**February 22, 1989. Moruya, Australia - NATIONAL CIRCUS**

A 5-year-old Bengal tiger called Moscow mauled his handler during a performance. *St. Paul Pioneer Dispatch, February 23, 1989.*

**February 4, 1989. Fort Meyers, FL - GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS [defunct]**

An elephant named Irene bolted from the circus ring while giving rides to the public. Several riders had to be rescued from her back after she dashed toward a lake. (See the incident on July 10, 1987.) *Orlando Sentinel, February 5, 1992.*

**February 2, 1989. Xingtai, China**

A lion escaped his cage during a circus performance and killed a 6 year-old girl in Xingtai, about 235 miles south of Beijing. *Los Angeles Times, February 18, 1989.*

**January, 1989. Japan**

A U.S. sailor was attacked by a tiger when he approached a cage containing circus tigers. *Akron Beacon Journal, January 4, 1989.*

**1989. Georgia, Russia**

A group of tigers in a Georgian circus attacked a Bulgarian trainer. *San Francisco Chronicle, March 28, 1990*

**December 11, 1988. Boca Raton, FL - CIRCUS LARSSON**

A circus worker was mauled by a 400-pound Bengal tiger named Tripoli. The tiger put his head through a trap door in his cage and bit the man. A lawsuit filed by the circus worker charged that the door was defective, and that Tripoli had attacked others. *Palm Beach Post, October 21, 1989.*

**October, 1988. Manama, Bahrain - CIRCUS MONTE CARLO**

A trainer was clawed by Tarzan when he cracked his whip at the lion to stop him from trying to mate with a lioness during a show. *Los Angeles Times, October 7, 1988.*

**September, 1988. Shanxi Province, China**

An escaped circus tiger attacked and seriously injured an 8-year-old boy, and triggered a panic that left 40 people unconscious during a performance. The *Workers Daily* reported that the tiger broke out of his cage after being hit by his trainer for failing to perform a trick. *Chicago Tribune, October 7, 1988.*

**July, 1988. Florida**

Two hippopotami escaped Richard J. Garden's ranch in Florida, causing an accident when they wandered into the path of an oncoming car. The hippos, along with an elephant, were confiscated by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. Garden, who owned Garden's Wonder Zoo, was later charged with violations of the Animal Welfare Act, and his license to keep exotic animals was suspended. *Columbus Dispatch, September 4, 1988.*

**June 4, 1988. Colonel Fabriciano, Brazil - HUNGARO CIRCUS**

During a performance, three lions broke through a fence separating the circus ring from the bleachers. One lion grabbed a 2-year-old girl, while another lion pounced upon and mauled her 5-year-old sister. A third lion was captured by a circus performer. The 2-year-old died instantly, and her sister died upon arrival at a hospital. The girls' aunt and uncle, who had accompanied them to the show, were both injured while trying to save their nieces. *Philadelphia Daily News, June 7, 1988.*

**April, 1988. Gainesville, FL - WONDER ZOO [defunct]**

Susie, a 5-year-old African elephant on tour with Richard J. Garden's Wonder Zoo, was severely ill and undernourished when she arrived in Gainesville, FL. Treated by a University of Florida veterinarian for a salmonella infection, Susie was too sick to travel when the Wonder Zoo left a few days later. She was euthanized. *Columbus Dispatch, September 4, 1988.*

**January 8, 1988. San Diego, CA - CIRCUS VARGAS**

Carbon monoxide fumes from a leaking heater killed two Circus Vargas chimpanzees. A third chimp and the trainer were injured. *Miami Herald, January 9, 1988.*

**December 2, 1987. Burbank, CA - CIRCUS OF THE STARS**

For the second time, a leopard named Sheila, bit Juliet Prowse on the neck during a rehearsal for the *Circus of the Stars* television show. The 80-pound leopard was standing behind Prowse with her front paws on the dancer's shoulders when she suddenly lunged for Prowse. Prowse was treated for minor injuries at a nearby hospital. (See the incident on September 28, 1987.) *Los Angeles Times, December 3, 1987.*

**September 28, 1987. Northridge, CA - CIRCUS OF THE STARS**

During a rehearsal, a leopard called Sheila bit actress/ dancer Juliet Prowse on the neck. Prowse received five stitches to repair her wounds. (See the incident on December 2, 1987.) *Los Angeles Times, September 29, 1987.*

**September 14, 1987. Gunnedah, Australia - ASHTON CIRCUS**

A 5,500-pound elephant called Abu crushed a horse trainer to death after he climbed inside the elephant's pen. Police said the man had been drinking. Reportedly, Abu had killed two other people in 13 years. *San Jose Mercury, September 15, 1987.*

**July 30, 1987. Sterling Heights, MI - TOBY TYLER CIRCUS**

During a show, two circus workers threw water on a chimpanzee named Tyrone the Terrible to make him behave ferociously. The chimp became enraged and beat his hands against the cage until they bled. Cruelty charges were filed against the two circus workers. Tyrone was removed from the circus and given a new home at a primate sanctuary. *Detroit Free Press, September 2, 1987.*

**July 10, 1987. Milwaukee, WI - GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS [defunct]**

Irene, an 18-year old Asian elephant owned by Great American Circus, broke away from handlers while giving rides and rushed towards her feeding area. A 4-year-old girl was treated for minor injuries after falling off her back. Another girl, who was standing on the ground, also received minor injuries when Irene rushed past. (See the incident on February 4, 1989.) *AP, July 10, 1987.*

**July 9, 1987. Milwaukee, WI - MILWAUKEE 'S GREAT CIRCUS PARADE**

A 5-year-old giraffe called Tu-Tall died suddenly while being unloaded from a truck in which he'd been transported from Baraboo to Milwaukee. A necropsy showed the cause of death was a ruptured main coronary artery. *Milwaukee Sentinel, July 11, 1987.*

**July 18, 1986. England**

A trainer was bitten and slashed by a lion while inside the animal's cage at a circus in England. *Rocky Mountain News, July 1, 1990.*

**June 15, 1986. Aurillac, France**

A circus tiger tore off the right arm of a visitor who reached inside the animal's cage. *Arizona Republic, June 16, 1986.*

**March, 1986. Myakka City, FL**

A rhinoceros owned by Richard J. Garden (Garden's Wonder Zoo) was killed by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, after escaping onto a major highway. *Columbus Dispatch, September 4, 1988.*

**August 31, 1985. Bratislava, Czechoslovakia**

An animal trainer on tour with a Soviet circus was attacked by a tiger during a performance and suffered head lacerations, an open fractured hand and collar bone, and deep wounds in her right thigh. *Chicago Tribune, September 6, 1985.*

**July 6, 1985. New London, CT - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

A woman was killed by an elephant known as Freda during non-performance hours. Freda, along with eight other elephants, was chained to stakes in the parking lot of the New London mall when the woman tried to climb her. Freda reportedly used her trunk to throw the woman and may also have trampled her. *July 7, 1985.*

**May, 1985. Soledad Canyon, CA - CIRCUS VARGAS**

Actress Candy Clark was bitten on the leg by a tiger during a rehearsal. *San Jose Mercury, June 7, 1985.*

**September 15, 1984. Haines City, FL - CIRCUS WORLD**

A giraffe called Agnes died of a combination of 90\* heat and sudden exertion while being moved to out of the park to a new handler in Arkansas, who had bought her for \$5,000. The giraffe's veterinarian said that Agnes might have survived if handled under better conditions. *Miami Herald, September 19, 1984.*

**May, 1984. North Carolina**

A 15-year-old elephant known as Twinkles died while on loan from the Atlanta Zoo to a traveling circus. Her body, along with that of a pony, was found dumped on the outskirts of a small North Carolina mill town. *Miami Herald, June 7, 1984; Miami Herald, July 3, 1990.*

**May 25, 1983. Mystic Island, NJ - CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROS.**

A spectator was severely injured by an elephant named Freda who wrapped her trunk around him and flung him to the ground. Circus officials said the man had tried to blow into Freda's trunk before the incident occurred. *Newsday*, July 12, 1995.

**April, 1983. Santa Barbara, CA - CIRCUS VARGAS**

A trainer was attacked at the conclusion of an act using several bears. One of the bears lunged at and bit the trainer on an arm and a leg just as the trainer finished removing the animal's muzzle prior to caging. *Miami Herald*, April 22, 1983.

**1983. Geneva, NY - HOXIE BROS. CIRCUS [defunct]**

Shortly before a performance, an elephant named Janet charged at and stepped on Leonard Tucker, former owner of the Hoxie Brothers Circus. Tucker, who said he spent over 100 days in the hospital with a broken back and hips, sold the elephant shortly afterwards to Great American Circus. Janet was shot to death in 1992. (See the incident on February 1, 1992.) *Sun Sentinel (FL)*, February 5, 1992.

**May 14, 1982. Sallisaw, OK - CARSON AND BARNES CIRCUS**

Five elephants bolted from the circus, ran a short distance, and fell off a 25-foot ledge into a coal pit. One elephant was killed. The elephants ran away while circus employees were preparing to move their equipment for another show. *AP*, May 14, 1982.

**September 21, 1981 CIRCUS OF THE STARS**

Actress Linda Evans was knocked down twice by a 200-pound leopard named Sheba after she cracked a whip at the animal during a rehearsal for the annual *Circus of the Stars* telecast. *Boston Globe*, September 23, 1981.

**April 25, 1980. Wilmington, MA - ALEPPO SHRINERS TEMPLE CIRCUS**

An animal trainer was mauled by three Bengal tigers during a circus performance. According to a Shriners spokesman, it took about 200 stitches to close the slash wounds on his jaw, arm, and back. *Boston Globe*, April 26, 1980.

**June 1979. Washington Township, NJ - ROBERTS BROS. CIRCUS**

A 5-year-old boy was killed by a leopard when the animal leaped off a stool and out of the ring. The animal dragged the boy out of the audience. A neighbor who had accompanied the boy to the performance and attempted to pry him from the leopard, sued for psychological damages. The boy's parents also sued and were awarded damages. *AP*, January 26, 1984.

**May 7, 1978. Rock Forest, Quebec - GATINI CIRCUS**

An elephant trainer was killed during a performance when she fell from and was stepped on by a bull elephant. A sharpshooter was brought in to kill the 6,000-pound animal. Another elephant, meanwhile, tore through the circus tent and ran up the main street of Rock Forest, a small town 100 miles east of Montreal. *New York Times*, May 7, 1978.