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November 13, 2006

The Honorable Richard M. Daley  
Mayor of Chicago  
121 N. LaSalle Street, 5th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mayor Daley:

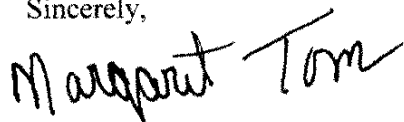
I worked for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus along with my husband Bob. Bob cared for horses and other hoof stock while I worked backstage in props. We worked for the circus for almost two years. I would see the elephants backstage as they were prepared for the show and entered and exited the arena.

It was common for the elephants to be hit, whacked, and prodded with bullhooks just before going into the arena. Trainers carry, but do not really use the bullhook during the show so striking the elephants ahead of time was supposed to remind them to obey. If the elephants messed up a trick, trainers would again strike them with bullhooks as soon as they were out of the arena.

I recall one particularly bad episode that happened this year. An elephant named Asia performs an act where she carefully walks over six dancers who lie down on the floor. The idea is that the audience thinks that this trick is dangerous because a mis-step by the elephant would crush them. One time Asia defecated on one of the dancers during the routine. I witnessed two guys beat Asia the minute she left the stage, hitting her at least 10 times with bullhooks, making her scream.

I encourage the Chicago City Council to pass the elephant protection ordinance. I grew very fond of the elephants while working for the circus and it was very distressing to see them treated with such cruelty. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Margaret Tom

cc: Chicago City Council