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## **Animal Planet performs another half-donkey job with their new propaganda ridden and unbalanced exotic animal series.**



(1/8/2010) -- On January 5, 2010, Animal Planet, AP, announced their new miniseries - FATAL ATTRACTIONS" that premieres Sunday, March 14, 2010.

Their anti exotic animal ownership, animal rights propaganda ridden press release "*Primates and Big Cats and Snakes, Oh My...Animal Planet Explores Cautionary Tales of Love Doomed From the Start. What causes this human fascination with dangerous animals*" continues in their latest trend of tabloid style one sided journalism, instead of a serious and researched programming their paying viewers rightfully expect.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/primates-and-big-cats-and-snakes-oh-my-animal-planet-explores-cautionary-tales-of-love-doomed-from-the-start-80717062.html>

Animal Planet claims that "*A significant number of these pets have the potential to severely injure or kill their owners, neighbors or family*".

However, looking at the US facts and statistics since 1990, on average captive big cat kills one person per year, captive venomous snake 0.8, captive non venomous snake 0.5, non human primates 0 and captive elephant 0.7 people per year. Majority of these fatalities are owners, family members, friends and trainers voluntarily on the property where the animals were kept; meaning, it was voluntarily accepted hobby/occupational hazard, not a public safety issue. Animal Planet totally ignores the majority of responsible exotic animal owners who never get killed or injured, and whose animals are alive and happy.

At the same time in 2005 (year for which detailed governmental statistics are already available), 344 people in the USA died by drowning and submersion while in or falling into bath-tub. Drowning and submersion while in or falling into swimming-pool caused 607 human deaths, while drowning and submersion while in or falling into natural water killed 1,603. Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter killed 16,692 humans. No exotic animals can match that! Should we, by Animal Planet's tabloid standard, call human to human relationship a fatal attraction as well?

Animal Planet's press further claims that one of the series subject, Montana resident Jeanne Rizzotto, owner of two young adult male chimpanzees Connor and Kramer, claims that: "*Having purchased these primates under what she describes as false pretenses -- the previous owner told her one would go to AIDS research and the other would be put down - - Jeanne vowed to give "her boys" the best life possible.*"

According to the breeder of these chimps, Connie Braun Casey, this statement is not correct, and Casey sent the following email to the show's producer Caroline Hawkins:

*"Dear Caroline*

*I was just forwarded info about the upcoming segment of Fatal attractions regarding Jeanne Rizzotto...In the memo it states that she says one chimp was going to AIDS research and the other Put down...and that she knew Travis.....These are all LIES.*

*No Chimps born here would ever go to research and no chimp born here would be put down. That was Never said to her AND she Never knew Travis!!! I am requesting that you eliminate that statement with a retraction and you contact me (which maybe you should have researched these statements before putting it in print or film) If I do not hear from you, I will be contacting my attorney.*

*Thanks Connie Casey"*

Animal Planet's press release further sensationalizes the exotic animal ownership by claiming that *"One man was presumed eaten alive by one of his many monitor lizards"*. However, CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) doesn't list any monitor lizard (or any reptile) related death in Delaware for the year 2002, which is when this incident supposedly happened.

The owner likely died of unrelated causes, and the bite marks were most likely post mortem. Even humans resort to eating anything when self survival instinct kicks in. This incident seems to be exploited by Animal Planet without any consideration for the grieving family of this man. The first face transplant occurred to a French woman who was asleep, while her puppy got hungry and started chewing her face off. This is not an animal attack, just a feeding reaction of a hungry dog, or monitor lizard.

This is not the first time in recent history that Animal Planet picks questionable subjects for their stories, and doesn't research the facts behind the potentially false claims. In their program *"Growing up lion"*, which was part of the series *"Growing up wildcats"*, the Animal Planet didn't follow thru on the sad ending of their lion actors after the filming at the Wild Animal Orphanage, WAO, in TX ended:

[http://www.rexano.org/WAO\\_REX\\_Lion.htm](http://www.rexano.org/WAO_REX_Lion.htm)

*(12/21/2008)"However, the touching story of Rex, Sheba and Leo portrayed in "Growing Up Lion" is just that—a very nice tug-at-your-heart story. Shortly after the film crew left San Antonio, the lion cubs were removed from their large natural enclosure and returned to the property where they were raised. They were placed in a much smaller enclosure where Rex was killed by his cage mates (as documented by the USDA/APHIS on 10-10-06). Jambo, the father of Amy, died under unusual circumstances at the same facility in 2007. Sheba and Leo can be seen on tour at the original site where they were raised along with Sebastian—but the cage they live in now is a far cry from the spacious enclosure shown on "Growing Up Lion." Amy's current health status is currently unknown. ""*

REXANO is happy to report that WAO is now under new management, and hopefully the animal welfare conditions will keep improving.

Unfortunately, special interest animal rights, AR, lobby groups, being happy go lucky media whores, are trying to increase their income by creating a public hysteria that the exotics will invade the USA, and wipe out the human and native wildlife populations.

**Furthermore, comparing exotic animal owners to animal hoarders is a totally uncalled for slanderous accusation, and the Responsible Exotic Animal Community is asking Animal Planet for full apology and retraction of this statement.**

**Unless and until Animal Planet starts producing well balanced non tabloid programs, and retracts their slanderous statements against exotic animal owners, animal owners will boycott the advertisers and products featured on Animal Planet channel and website.**

**For more detailed information, check out REXANO's educational flyers page:**

**<http://www.rexano.org//Education.htm>**

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# Primates and Big Cats and Snakes, Oh My...Animal Planet Explores Cautionary Tales of Love Doomed From the Start

What causes this human fascination with dangerous animals?

- FATAL ATTRACTIONS miniseries premieres Sunday, March 14 -

SILVER SPRING, Md., Jan. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- "I don't regret any of it," says Julie Burros, former owner of a full-grown black leopard that nearly killed her. "The only thing I regret is that I lost my JoJo."

Julie has loved animals all her life, so when she came across a black leopard for sale in an exotic pet magazine, she jumped at the opportunity and brought home Jovani, who she affectionately called JoJo. One ordinary February afternoon, Julie suffered the shock of her life. In his backyard enclosure, Jovani unexpectedly jumped on Julie and nearly ripped off her ear. Jovani's wild instincts set in -- once he caught scent of the blood, he pinned down Julie and tore off a good portion of her scalp with his teeth. From then, a sequence of events put the cops in Julie's back yard and four bullets -- two in Jovani's belly, one in his hip and one to his head. Julie lived but Jovani didn't.

Exotic pet ownership is not as rare as one might think -- or as wildlife experts would wish. Millions of exotic animals are brought to the United States in any given year. A significant number of these pets have the potential to severely injure or kill their owners, neighbors or family. In **FATAL ATTRACTIONS, ANIMAL PLANET'S** three-part miniseries premiering **Sunday, March 14, at 10 PM ET/PT**, get inside the minds of people who own venomous reptiles, deadly big cats and chimpanzees as we try to understand what drives their obsessions and offer a cautionary tale. While their love, admiration and intrigue is genuine, these exotic pet owners often ignore the fact that their choice of a pet could cost them, innocent bystanders or their beloved pets their lives. Why is it that some people are comfortable with domestic pets like cats and dogs but others find companionship and love from animals that have the strong potential to kill them?

"Many of the characteristics of animal hoarding appear to be present in many of the cases of dangerous, exotic

animal ownership," says Josephine Martell, program director of the Captive Wild Animal Protection Campaign. Martell's background is in animal welfare policy, and she has first hand knowledge of exotic pet ownership through investigative work and animal rescues. "In particular, many owners of dangerous animals, such as big cats, are in complete denial about the needs or safety concerns of large, free-ranging carnivores. Many of these owners, like animal hoarders, also profess to love their animals regardless of the conditions they may be keeping them in and seem to believe that the animals truly love them in return.

"It's common for exotic animal owners to believe they have a special kinship with their animals," says Martel, "often to a degree that becomes extreme when they compromise their own and others safety as well as the welfare of the animals."

Montana resident Jeanne Rizzotto, owner of two young adult male chimpanzees Connor and Kramer, is fully aware of the risk of parenting two primates; however, her love for these chimps seems to outweigh her concern for her own life. Having purchased these primates under what she describes as false pretenses -- the previous owner told her one would go to AIDS research and the other would be put down -- Jeanne vowed to give "her boys" the best life possible. And even though Jeanne personally knew the infamous Travis the Chimp, who brutally disfigured Charla Nash last February in Connecticut -- Travis is Kramer and Connor's half brother -- Jeanne remains faithful to her conviction that she's doing the right thing, "her thing." Both Jeanne's story and the tragic tale of Travis and Charla Nash are told in the third episode of **FATAL ATTRACTIONS**.

Not everyone has been as fortunate as Jeanne or even Julie; both of the people featured in **FATAL ATTRACTIONS'** reptile episode are deceased. One man was presumed eaten alive by one of his many monitor lizards, and one woman didn't survive the bite of her pet viper.

"I discourage venomous reptile ownership of any kind," says Winston Card, expert herpetologist who has several decades experience with reptiles and anti-venom research. "I consider this type of 'pet' ownership as extreme because not only does it put the owner at risk and everyone who comes in contact with the venomous reptile, but the risk also reverberates outward to the zoo community."

In each hour-long episode, several exotic pet ownership cases are carefully reenacted, scrutinized and questioned. Human behavior experts and animal authorities bring forth their educated opinions and analysis. Owners unhesitatingly share their experiences with exotic pets and offer explanations as to why their love for these deadly animals are worth the risk for something horrible -- even death -- to happen.

**FATAL ATTRACTIONS** kicks off with the reptile episode **March 14, at 10 PM ET/PT** followed by the **March 21** premiere of big cats and the **March 28** premiere of chimpanzees.

**FATAL ATTRACTIONS** is produced for Animal Planet by Oxford Scientific Films. Executive producer for Oxford Scientific Films is Caroline Hawkins; Clare Birks is CEO for Oxford Scientific Films. Erin Wanner is executive producer for Animal Planet. Vice President of Development for Animal Planet is Charlie Foley.

Animal Planet Media (APM), a multi-media business unit of Discovery Communications, is the world's only entertainment brand that immerses viewers in the full range of life in the animal kingdom with rich, deep content via multiple platforms and offers animal lovers and pet owners access to a centralized online, television and mobile community for immersive, engaging, high-quality entertainment, information and enrichment. APM consists of the Animal Planet television network, available in more than 96 million homes in the US; online assets [www.animalplanet.com](http://www.animalplanet.com), the ultimate online destination for all things animal; the 24/7 broadband channel, Animal Planet Beyond; Petfinder.com, the #1 pet-related Web property globally that

facilitates pet adoption; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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