

***Letter to Oprah Winfrey regarding the segment on Charla Nash and chimpanzee Travis***

**November 13, 2009**

**Dear Sir/Madam:**

**I am writing in response to “The Will to Live” article regarding the unfortunate incident with Charla Nash and Travis the chimpanzee. Let me state that I am extremely horrified and saddened regarding the state that Ms. Nash now has to live in. However, in reading articles and looking at photographs of Ms. Nash and Travis, one could ascertain that Ms. Nash had a long association with both Sandra Herold, Travis’s owner and Travis the chimp. Ms. Nash should have accepted the risks involved in handling exotic animals as there is a risk with every activity one engages in as a human being. Unfortunately, the media sensationalizes incidents such as this, never stating the entire truth of what happened that fateful day that Travis reacted so violently to. Ms. Nash stated in your article that “exotics are dangerous and should not be around.” Why didn’t she feel this way about Travis several years ago or at the beginning of her association with this chimp?**

**Statistically, the odds of dying in a commercial aircraft are very low considering the number of commercial jets that traverse our skies. Comparatively, you could research and see that your chances of being attacked by someone’s exotic pet are just as rare. Considering there are chimps of Travis’s age that are kept as pets without incident as well as other exotic animals that fall under an incorrect assumed label of dangerous. There have been incidents of dogs and horses that have maimed and killed humans for as long as we have kept these animals captive. Why are they not labeled as dangerous? Where do you draw the line?**

**In closing, I am concerned of the backlash this segment will have on those of us who choose to live and/or choose a career that involves the ownership of exotic animals. I have had the privilege to know and work with some of these outstanding owners and trainers of exotic animals during the past decade or so. Respectfully, I ask Harpo Productions to air a segment on individuals of this nature as a testament to the wonderful bond that exists between humans and exotic animals.**

**Sincerely,**

**Cynthia Kosco**

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