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[Animal Planet's "Growing Up Lion" – Was There a Happy End?](#)

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by [REXANO](#) in [All News](#)

REXANO, [www.REXANO.org](http://www.REXANO.org) Editorial by Anonymous

Animal Planet recently released its five DVD gift, which includes "Growing Up Wildcats". One of the episode features lions at the Wild Animal Orphanage (WAO) in Texas.

The [film critics](#) make you believe that:

*"Carol and Ron Asvestas own the Wild Animal Orphanage near San Antonio, Texas, and spent a year raising four lion cubs. Beautiful animals facing their share of joys and challenges, including being sick. But this pride survives."*

And [another synopsis](#) claims:

***"Growing Up Lion"***

*Experience a pivotal and emotional year with Carol and Ron Asvestas, owners of Wild Animal Orphanage near San Antonio, Texas, as they raise four lion cubs. There's Amy, a tiny newborn and three cubs - Rex, Sheba and Leo - babies quickly growing in size, strength and curiosity. Every day brings new joys, adventures and discoveries. The lion cubs also face their share of challenges - from serious illness to natural disasters. But with abundant, tender-loving care from their human family, the cubs embark on a remarkable journey toward the formation of lion cub pride."*



Baby Lion – Rex (photo taken in 2002)

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.

The [WAO is under investigation](#) by the USDA/APHIS and the Texas Office of the Attorney General for alleged violations of the Animal Welfare Act and misappropriation of funds for the last 2 ½ years.

**Unfortunately, the “Growing Up Lions” remarkable journey ended when the film crew left the property.**