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THE VANISHING ANIMALS

Jambo Died Under Odd Circumstances

Tour Guide Says Hepatitis

Claimed Movie Star Lion

Animal Orphanage Denies; New
Mysteries Surface; Suit Vowed

SAL Political Snitch

(Editor's Note: Many of the sources for this story have asked for anonymity, some citing fear of retaliation and current employment fears as a reason.)

An employee at an area animal sanctuary has said publicly that hepatitis claimed at least one lion; operators of the sanctuary deny that.

But first...

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Following a series of reports in the Lightning, new information has been forthcoming on "irregularities" at Wild Animal Orphanage (WAO).

Besides State and Federal Investigations now underway, complaints from numerous donors about accountability of animals and donations, new worries have been created by a an employees' claim that a male lion, died from hepatitis.

The big cat named Jambo starred in Animal channel's "Growing Up Lion" as the father of the two cubs born at the WAO.

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The following are from eye-witness accounts and a taped video, obtained by the Lightning, of comments made during a tour of the Leslie road facility -- one of two habitats operated by WAO President Carol Asvestas. The other is on Talley road and is unlicensed.

Terry Minchew is listed on the WAO's web page as an "animal care technician..."

On November 4, 2007, a ... team of private citizens took a tour of the Leslie Road facility due to serious concerns of a large number of animals gone missing from the WAO within the last two years.

Sunday, November 4, 2007, after 3:30pm, on a warm day...

According to Ms Minchew, Jambo recently died from hepatitis. Ms Minchew described in detail Jambo's condition before death ...video was taken on the tour..."

While living at the Talley Road property, he (Jambo) looked great... in 2005. Shortly after moving to Leslie Road, it became apparent ...his health was declining.

Jinx (a second lion) and Jambo always lived together at the WAO. Now Jinx is living alone. I am concerned for her well-being because the WAO is bent on "integrating" animals, else they will be euthanized.

* * *

Asvestas and her husband Ron deny that the statement was ever made. They also refused to account for Jambo's fate, or the whereabouts of hundreds of other animals.

Asvestas and her operation are currently under official scrutiny by State and Federal agencies. (See stories below.)

Both Asvestas and her husband have vowed to sue the Lightning. Ron Asvestas did comment that the Lightning "is a rag!"

More to follow.

- Developing -