



# PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

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November 26, 2003

Lee Bollinger, President  
Office of the President  
Columbia University  
2960 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027-6902

Dear Mr. Bollinger:

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is the world's largest animal rights charity, with more than 750,000 members and supporters dedicated to alleviating animal suffering. We are writing to ask that you personally tend to the scandal that has hit Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in connection with veterinarian Catherine Dell'Orto's reports of cruel treatment of primates, dogs, and pigs in the laboratories at the college's Institute of Comparative Medicine. We think it very reasonable to ask Columbia to put a permanent end to three of the worst experiments conducted in these laboratories. We believe that your background in law will enable you to look at the intolerable situation in Columbia's laboratories and see it for what it is: an embarrassment to the university that needs to be addressed with much more than defensive posturing and rhetoric. The three projects discussed below are wasteful of tax dollars and animal lives:

1. Please stop **E. Sander Connolly's stroke experiments on baboons**, in which the animals' left eyes are cut out so that major blood vessels can be reached through the empty eye sockets in order to clamp off the blood flow to their brains. Dr. Dell'Orto, a Columbia post-doctoral veterinarian, witnessed these baboons *in extremis*, hunched over in their cages, and unable even to lift their heads from their chests. They did not receive proper post-surgical veterinary care, analgesics, or euthanasia. Furthermore, Dr. Nicholas Dodman, a Tufts University specialist in veterinary anesthesiology, told us that, according to the experimental protocol, the baboons did not receive proper anesthetics. In short, they may simply have been immobilized during the procedure but not rendered insensible to pain. Eye removal is so painful that Daniel Finkelstein, M.D., an eye surgeon at Johns Hopkins' Wilmer Eye Institute, tells us that he gives his patients morphine for three days following enucleation surgery.

2. Please stop **Michel Ferin's experiments on macaque monkeys to study the effects of stress on the menstrual cycle**, which have reduced monkeys to tearing at their heads to remove the heavy metal caps that Ferin screws into their skulls. Dr. Dell'Orto reports that these macaques were given nothing but one aspirin after surgery. Our video footage shows blood running down the face of one of Ferin's victims after implant surgery. Dr. Dell'Orto tells us that many of these monkeys developed bone infections as a result of this ridiculous and unnecessary study. Ferin has been conducting these experiments—which outrage women and are of no benefit to anyone—for 16 years.

AN INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANIZATION DEDICATED  
TO PROTECTING  
THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS

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3. Please stop **Raymond Stark's addiction experiments on pregnant baboons**, in which nicotine is infused into the mothers in order to study its effects on the fetuses. Stark removes the fetuses from the pregnant animals and does implantation surgery before reinserting the fetuses into the mothers' uteruses. The babies are killed when they are born, and some of the mother baboons have already endured five surgeries! Stark has received millions to conduct these experiments in one form or another over the last 23 years. Taxpayers would happily tell Stark and Columbia for free that neither pregnant baboons nor pregnant women should smoke but it seems that Columbia and Stark are addicted to the federal funds that have mindlessly been thrown at this project. It's time to kick the habit.

We are hearing from an ever-increasing number of students, faculty, and alumni. They want action. While we have asked the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to close down Columbia's laboratories until the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the NIH's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare do thorough investigations, we would still like your assurance that if Columbia's laboratories continue to get federal funding and remain in operation, these three experiments on primates will be permanently ended.

Please take a personal interest in this matter, Mr. Bollinger. Reject the notion that it can be handled by influence, money, and form letters. Be courageous about calling your own university on the carpet. We look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at 757-622-7382, extension 1334, or via e-mail at MaryBethS@peta.org. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Beth Sweetland".

Mary Beth Sweetland, Senior Vice President  
Director, Research & Investigations Department