

EXHIBIT O

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THEY TREAT **ELEPHANTS** FAR WORSE IN INDIA ..

CHRISTIAN FRASER in Warsaw, Poland and JEREMY ARMSTRONG

Cornered circus boss' claim

CIRCUS boss Dickie Chipperfield was yesterday faced with the truth about the cruelty his animals suffer, then spoke of his shock and sorrow.

The big-top impresario at first tried to dismiss Mirror revelations about the brutality meted out to his **elephants** and tigers.

He suggested: "There are **elephants** treated worse in India, you know."

But shown pictures of Indian **elephants** Leila, Mina and Camilla shackled together on wooden boards without bedding, clean hay or fresh water, Chipperfield's tone became more apologetic.

Tracked down to a hotel on the outskirts of Polish capital Warsaw, he shook his head and said: "You are having a go at me and I can see you are entitled to it.

"Obviously, I need to go and remedy the situation.

"You see you've put me on the spot here."

"I want to know a lot of answers to a lot of questions."

Chipperfield, 57, suggested he was ready to give the three **elephants** a "happy retirement". They have been with Germany's Barelli circus, which has a contract with Chipperfield earning him pounds 4,000 a month.

Yesterday morning, we told how the **elephants** and 13 tigers were kept in primitive conditions on a four-month trek across Europe from the US.

Handler **Tom Rider** told how they were ferried through Spain, Holland, France and Germany in tiny, stinking cages.

He also accused Chipperfield of using bull hooks and electric prongs to control the animals at rehearsals, leaving bloody marks on their legs.

Dickie - cousin of Mary Chipperfield, fined last year for beating a chimp - is in Poland after one of his tigers escaped there. A vet was accidentally killed in the drama.

Yesterday he saw pictures of the conditions Leila, Mina and Camilla endured for a Barelli show at Aschaffenburg, near Frankfurt.

The miserable trio were kept in a dark, cold tent - bound to a post by front and back leg irons.

Movement was restricted to to a half-turn on their wooden boards.

Leila, who has arthritis, was chained to the same post for three days. All three drank only rain-water.

At first Chipperfield, owner of Oxfordshire-based Chipperfield Enterprises, said: "What is wrong with an animal being tethered anyway? And what is wrong with puddle water? You see dogs drinking out of muddy puddles all the time."

Then he backed down. Looking at our pictures, he said: "I am shocked Leila was tied up. I will not condone that.

"They are on boards. There is no sawdust in there - there should be."

"They should have good light, hay, straw, sawdust, water, heat, carrots and apples."

Chipperfield admitted he might retire the **elephants** to a zoo or wildlife park.

He said: "I want to find a way for them to be happy and to finally bow out of circus life. But I feel that by just giving them away, I'm depriving my son of his inheritance and a chance for a better life."

Richard Chipperfield was badly mauled by a tiger two years ago.

Dickie added: "The Barelli circus in Germany knows The Mirror have seen conditions there.

"I will be seeking an urgent meeting with them to enable me to be released from my contract."

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Caption: ON SPOT: Mirror with Dickie; ORDEAL: The **elephants** in irons in Germany. Picture: IAN VOGLER. Right, Dickie Chipperfield

---- INDEX REFERENCES ---

INDUSTRY: (Environmental (1EN24); Nature & Wildlife (1NA75))

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