

Film Review: Memorable, Informative ‘The Elephant in the Living Room’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 13, 2011 - 4:39pm

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CHICAGO – You will not soon forget Lambert the lion. His story is as tragic to this viewer as any seen in documentary filmmaking in recent years for he never should have been in the situation chronicled in the excellent “The Elephant in the Living Room,” opening this Saturday at the Siskel Film Center in Chicago and playing in other major markets already. This fascinating documentary shines a light into an underreported corner of America, the backyards and living rooms that currently house deadly exotic animals that, in this critic’s opinion, should never have found themselves in captivity at all, much less as pets.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

This is only my interpretation, but what I take away from “The Elephant in the Living Room” is a story about two things – one man’s mental illness and how it manifested itself in a tragic story of man controlling nature and the general story of American man’s disturbing desire to keep or own anything it finds beautiful. You’ll hear from several people in “Elephant” about how beautiful cougars or tigers can be or how docile they are under the right circumstances, but no one gives an adequate reason as to WHY they should then be kept as pets other than “because I want to.” There’s a symbiotic relationship between a cat or dog and their owner – comfort and companionship for shelter and food – that simply isn’t there between a Burmese Python and an owner or a Puff Adder or a Crocodile. These animals would be better off in the wild. It’s undeniable.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Elephant in the Living Room” in our reviews section.](#) [8]

And there’s a disturbing disconnect or lack of respect for nature represented by most of these exotic animal owners as detailed in a fascinating conversation with an American doctor who makes regular visits to South Africa to care for people there. He deals with injuries related to wild exotic animals more in the U.S. than he does in Africa because there’s a respect for the power of these animals over there that simply isn’t at play in the States. Can we blame Steve Irwin and Conan O’Brien? There’s a startling bit (that should have been examined for longer) that suggests that one of the reasons that Americans have little respect for these killing machines is because they’ve grown up seeing them on TV in situations that seem anything but deadly. If the Crocodile Hunter and Jimmy Fallon can wrestle with a Python, why should I be scared?



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Elephant in the Living Room” review.](#) [8]

“The Elephant in the Living Room” was directed by Michael Webber. It opens in Chicago at the Siskel Film Center on April 16th, 2011.



The Elephant in the Living Room

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