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DOCUMENTARY FILM "KEIKO THE UNTOLD STORY" WEIGHS IN ON MORGAN DEBATE

(PORTLAND, OR) In the wake of the current debate of what to do with Morgan, the orca currently in captivity in The Netherlands, the success or failure of Keiko's (the orca star of the blockbuster film "Free Willy") liberation has become a focal point of discussion. Morgan was captured in June 2010 after a ship spotted her swimming alone and starving in the Wadden Sea. She has been living since in a Dutch marine park known as Dolfinarium, where she has been nursed back to health. The fate of Morgan (whether she is to be released back to nature or transferred to another facility that hosts captive orcas) is currently in front of an Amsterdam court and a decision is expected by November 21, 2011.

All too often, Keiko's release from captivity is cited by the media and the marine park captive industry as a failed project, and given as the reason other captive orcas should not be released. Factual errors regarding Keiko's reintroduction into the wild abound, including media coverage to the effect that Keiko was attacked and killed by wild orcas, that Keiko was constantly supervised and fed and never was self-sufficient in the wild, and that Keiko lived less than a year after being freed. All of these statements are incorrect.

To show what actually happened, the documentary film [Keiko The Untold Story](#) was submitted to the Amsterdam court as evidence to be considered in Morgan's case. Visually and through firsthand accounts of those in charge of Keiko's care, the film documents how Keiko successfully thrived in his post-captivity period for more than five years, and became the second longest lived male captive orca in history.

To help clarify issues that surround the release of Morgan and other captive orcas, we invite the media to watch [Keiko The Untold Story](#) and engage in an open discussion of Keiko's life before and after captivity. Contact filmmaker [Theresa Demarest](#) to arrange for a media screener via ftp or DVD. Contact expert cast members listed below to learn more.

SEAWORLD: "The release of Keiko was a disgraceful act. It was executed in a way that was, by any standard, irresponsible and reckless."
-Jim Atchison, SeaWorld president

HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL: "We've definitely gotten criticism from the captive display industry on the facts because their spin on what happened is not our recollection of what actually happened. And we were there and they weren't, and so it's been very difficult trying to handle that criticism, because it's really based more on politics than on facts."... "The public display industry has asserted for many years that the display of marine mammals serves a necessary educational purpose and that the animals' welfare need not necessarily be compromised to achieve this. Mostly, this assertion has gone unchallenged. But as news gets out about traumatic captures, barren concrete tanks, high mortality rates, and aberrant - even dangerous - animal behavior, people are changing the way they "see" animals in captivity."
-Naomi Rose, Senior Scientist, Humane Society International

EARTH ISLAND INSTITUTE/FREE WILLY-KEIKO FOUNDATION: "We extended not only the length of his life, but the quality of his life. He was swimming tight circles in a small pool with papilloma all over him, and by the time we finished with him, he was out with the big boys, swimming around with wild whales in the ocean."
-David Phillips, Free Willy-Keiko Foundation

ORCALAB: "The ultimate highlight for me was watching, and just being astounded by, that accomplishment as he made his way across the Atlantic. I was so impressed, so totally convinced that he had done what we hoped he would do, and that he'd met the challenge that he was given at the beginning of the project."
-Paul Spong, founder of OrcaLab, from "Keiko The Untold Story"

FIELD TEAM DIRECTOR OF KEIKO PROJECT: "A lot of people thought that he was probably not doing well, not thriving, and in fact the first pictures we took of him off the coast of Norway, he looked healthy, robust. In fact, it was 3 days later after that I finally got in the water to take a girth measurement, and he was, to the centimeter, what he had been before we took him out of the bay pen. So the caloric output, as I say, for that sort of effort to swim across the Atlantic, had he not been feeding for himself, there would have been a dramatic weight decrease, which would have been very obvious, and that just wasn't the case."
-Colin Baird, Field Team Manager, Keiko Project, from "Keiko The Untold Story"

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