From The Roswell Daily Record in Roswell, New Mexico, June 28, 1979

Elephant goes crazy and kills its trainer

Woodland, Wash. (UPI) — A sex-crazed, six-ton bull elephant toyed with the battered body of his trainer Wednesday, keeping animal handlers at bay for eight hours while it repeatedly slammed the body to the ground.

It was not known if the trainer, H. Morgan Berry, 68, was killed by the elephant, named Tonga, or died of a heart attack and fell near the animal.

A second bull elephant named Tai broke out of Berry's 80-acre exotic animal farm at the same time and was at-large in the sparsely populated countryside for about half a day. He finally was sedated with tranquilizer darts and led groggily back to the compound, officials said.

"We are told this is the mating season for the bulls and they have sexual problems because of that," Cowlitz County Undersheriff Bill Stuart said, "so it is fairly dangerous" to handle the animals at the moment.

Berry was found beneath the chained Tonga about 5 a.m., but the elephant would not let anyone near the body. Repeatedly the huge animal would pick up Berry's body in his trunk and slam it to the ground, Stuart said.

It wasn't until about 1 p.m. that handlers finally were able to distract Tonga long enough to retrieve the body.

"He plays with it," Stuart said of the elephant during the incident. "We could see that he had been trampled by the bull but we don't know if that is the cause of death."

Berry died 13 months after his partner, Eloise Berchtold, 52, slipped during a performance in Rock Forest, Quebec, and was crushed by another full-grown bull elephant.

A police sharpshooter finally killed that elephant, but spectators' cries panicked a second elephant who fled into a nearby forest.

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