

4K **CHER AND THE LONELIEST ELEPHANT**

1 x 50 min. Written and directed by Jonathan Finnigan

4K, 5.1 and Stereo Executive producers: Phil Fairclough, Mike Kemp, Susanne Lummer, Sabine Holzer



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

An incredible story in which a superstar flies across the world during a pandemic to save a bull elephant from 35 years of incarceration.

Kaavan has been dubbed the world's loneliest elephant. He has spent more than three decades at Marghazar Zoo, Islamabad; many of these years were spent chained and alone since his partner died in 2012. For highly social creatures such as elephants, a partner's death can induce chronic grief and loneliness. It has left the great, proud creature with permanent scars from his chains, obesity and psychosis brought on by isolation and boredom.

Kaavan's ordeal is picked up on social media with videos and pictures of his lonely incarceration spreading, coming to the attention of Rock superstar Cher. Without hesitation, she pulls celebrity strings and connects people and charities to end Kaavan's plight and set him free.

Suddenly there is an extra pressure—the high courts in Pakistan have dictated the zoo's immediate closure. It is now imperative to find Kaavan a new home—quickly!

But Kaavan's journey to freedom is complex and fraught with danger. Cambodia seems like the perfect destination for Kaavan, but flying a four tonne bull elephant 2,500 miles is a logistical nightmare. Kaavan requires a custom-built travel crate and a massive cargo plane. Training must begin immediately to get Kaavan used to his metallic travel crate. Its strange noises and cramped conditions

must become second nature to him. Brilliant behaviour specialists and dedicated veterinarian Dr Amir use noise and food to create an air of familiarity.

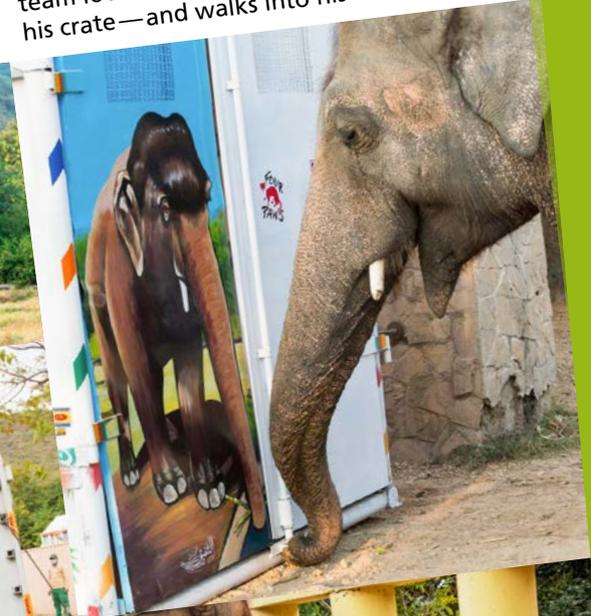
With the world suffering from a pandemic and Islamabad teetering on the edge of civil and political unrest, something unexpected happens—Cher makes it to Islamabad. She meets the great elephant himself and cements their connection. But time is running out; the zoo will close in a matter of days. Kaavan must leave.

The destination airport in Cambodia, Siem Reap, has been closed for six months due to COVID. Amazingly, strings have been pulled and it has reopened to enable Kaavan to land. There to greet his arrival are Cher, Buddhist monks and the world's press.

After eight hours of flight and four more hours of driving, Kaavan arrives at his future home. For such a dramatic moment the mood is surprisingly serene. The crate is carefully lined up against an open entrance to his large, specially-built enclosure. Before he's allowed to fully roam free, Kaavan must acclimatise.

For Dr Amir it is now time to say farewell. It is a tearful goodbye, but he knows the hardest part of love is the letting go. But for Kaavan, the long journey is only just the beginning. Cher, Dr Amir and the team look on as Kaavan tentatively leaves his crate—and walks into his new life.

A Terra Mater Factual Studios / Nutshell TV / Smithsonian Networks co-production in association with Two Wise Monkeys



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