*Palm Beach Post*

Pro-Con: Should the Cincinnati Zoo have killed Harambe the gorilla?

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**PRO: Howard Goodman, Editorial Writer**

No one could have wanted to keep that Silverback gorilla alive more than the zookeepers. No one could have known the gorilla better. No one would have had a better ability to communicate with him.

If the people closest to Harambe judged that he had to be shot because the little boy’s life was in danger, then you have to think that their reasons were extremely compelling.

Yes, we have seen gorillas acting kindly and protective to human children in other zoos at other times. And maybe Harambe, too, intended nothing but loving kindness toward that 4-year-old.

But a 450-pound gorilla is many times stronger than a human, and when you see the video of him dragging the tiny boy through the water, the speed and violence of it is shocking. It looks like the kid can be snapped in two in an instant. You hear onlookers say: “Oh, my god!”

As the zoo’s director, Thane Maynard, said Monday: “It was a life-threatening situation and the silverback gorilla is a very dangerous animal.”

“We stand by our decision and we’d make the same call today.”

It is a terrible thing that a beautiful animal is dead. But animal rights activists are off base in criticizing the zoo for their handling of this wrenching situation. When a human life is in danger, it is the human life that must be saved.

 **CON: Kristyn Wellesley, Digital Editor**

CNN’s Laura Coates [doesn’t understand Cincinnati’s reaction](http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/01/opinions/harambe-gorilla-shooting-coates/index.html) to Harambe’s death on Saturday. I will try to explain it.

Cincinnatians — and being born and raised there, I am proudly in that group — have a storied history with our gorillas, and it’s important to understand that to really understand the reaction to Harambe’s death.

It began with Penelope, a western lowland gorilla like Harambe, who came to the Cincinnati Zoo in 1957. Born in Africa, Penelope was a gift to a group of Cincinnatians who had travelled to Africa to give famed humanitarian [Dr. Albert Schweitzer a herd of Nubian goats](https://books.google.com/books?id=R-q4fJB2iNsC&pg=PA86&lpg=PA86&dq=penelope+schweitzer+nubian+goats&source=bl&ots=ULTxedVy6G&sig=8PPCyWtXQ4eo_VNaoe_U4_k6xkM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjOh7i7nofNAhXFez4KHROKDokQ6AEIMDAD#v=onepage&q=penelope%20schweitzer%20nubian%20goats&f=false) so he could help his patients who were dying of calcium deficiency. Schweitzer had adopted the then-3-year-old Penelope when she was orphaned and gave her to the group in gratitude for their help.

In Cincinnati, Penelope was introduced to [King Tut, a 475-pound silverback gorilla](https://books.google.com/books?id=R-q4fJB2iNsC&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=king+tut+gorilla+la+natural+history+museum&source=bl&ots=ULTxedTE3C&sig=2gAKnkXEhhltuiYEQnUQqBf5PyI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiksNePmYfNAhXHQD4KHUDZBZ8Q6AEIQjAF#v=onepage&q=king%20tut%20gorilla%20la%20natural%20history%20museum&f=false) who had also been born in Africa and was enamored with her, faithful to her his entire life. The pair had four children together and that family became the foundation for opening the $4 million [Gorilla World at the Cincinnati Zoo](http://cincinnatizoo.org/gorilla-world/) in 1978, so our families could share with their family.

When King Tut died in 1987 from complications with dental surgery, the entire community mourned and were outraged when [his body was sent to a Los Angeles museum](http://articles.latimes.com/1987-10-26/news/vw-11049_1_cincinnati-zoo) for display. Instead, there is a bronze plaque in memory of this gorilla patriarch in Gorilla World. Penelope passed two years later in 1989. Their daughter[Samantha is 46 and still lives in Gorilla World](http://blog.cincinnatizoo.org/2015/01/31/samantha-the-grand-old-lady-of-the-cincinnati-zoo/).

Cincinnatians hold a very special place in their hearts for these gorillas.

So for Zoo officials to have to kill one is especially devastating to the community.

Thane Maynard, the Zoo’s Director, said tranquilizing Harambe, as the [Palm Beach Zoo did recently when one of their male Malayan tigers attacked zookeeper Stacey Konwiser](http://www.mypalmbeachpost.com/s/tiger-attack/), would have taken too long. But were there no other alternatives?

The Cincinnati Zoo is known for its enrichment programs with the gorillas. There is a relationship between the gorillas and their trainers, and these are very intelligent creatures. Was Harambe given the opportunity to turn the child over to rescuers before he was killed? Did the rescuers make the call too quickly?

Looking at the video, Harambe seemed afraid of the screaming crowd — who were understandably screaming — and dragged the child away from the noise. When the other two gorillas followed the trainer’s command to return to the habitat, Harambe went into the moat to get the child. Was he protecting it? Did he see it as a threat? We can never know those answers.

This is a child whose life could have been in danger, there is no question. How the child was able to access the enclosure or why he wasn’t being supervised closer by his parents are questions that need to be answered, but even those aren’t necessarily points of blame. No zoo can prevent every scenario that might occur. Every parent has turned away distracted for that split second.

But should Harambe have had to die for others’ mistakes? No.

It isn’t that Cincinnatians, or even the animal rights’ groups who are protesting, aren’t as concerned with human life as an animal’s life, as Coates’ suggests — far from it. It’s that we feel deeply for these animals and want to know that there really was no other alternative that could have preserved and protected both lives.

Zoos need to find ways to change their protocols to better protect their animals so no other animal falls victim to the same fate as Harambe.

***The Independent (UK)***

***However unfortunate the loss may be, it was right to kill Harambe the gorilla***

It was obviously right to take firm, decisive action to save this four-year-old child’s life

Harambe was a 17-year-old silverback western lowland gorilla *Twitter/Cincinnati Zoo*

In the internet age – where *The Independent* now proudly, and solely, resides – it is common for local stories from around the world to achieve something like global fame. It is also common for videos of animals doing remarkable things to go viral. Put the two together and throw in social media, and you have a recipe not only for news that loses its moorings, but views that are frankly unhinged. And so it is with Harambe the gorilla.

In case you missed it (or should that, in Twitter parlance, be “ICYMI”?): on Saturday, a four-year-old boy climbed into a gorilla enclosure at Cincinnati Zoo in the US. He was there for around 10 minutes, during which time he was dragged hither and thither by Harame, a 400-pound, 17-year-old Western lowland gorilla. The boy was dragged violently around a moat. Then, while still between the gorilla’s legs, staff at the zoo shot the animal, killing it to protect the boy.

**[Animal behaviour experts suggests zoo did not have to shoot gorilla](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/cincinnati-zoo-gorilla-harambe-boy-animal-behaviour-experts-question-shooting-silverback-video-a7057371.html)**

The internet nearly melted over the weekend, so widely was video footage of the incident, caught on camera phone, shared. But now there is an even more rapacious online backlash, with hundreds of thousands signing petitions and launching tirades online to denounce the zoo workers. Still photos from the saga, which appear to show Harambe with his hand near the boy’s hand, have been mobilised to argue that he was in fact trying to look after the boy. This conveniently overlooks the fact that, seconds later, the boy was violently thrown across the water. Nevertheless, petitions have been signed, hashtags have been typed, and outrage has been expressed.

This is all getting rather silly. It is a great shame that Harambe was killed, the more so because the four gorilla subspecies living in the rainforests of central Africa and its western lowlands are the most numerous and yet still endangered. But the idea that a tranquiliser dart could have been used is immature: it would have taken several minutes to take effect, during which time the vast ape, already agitated, could have done terrible harm.

It was obviously right to take firm, decisive action to save this four-year-old child’s life. To argue otherwise, other than for want of titillating readers, is to show a shameful and flagrant disregard for the superior worth of human life to that of our nearest relatives.

**Pittsburgh-Post Gazette**

The death of a gorilla: Harambe should have been tranquilized, not slain

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By the Editorial Board

What happened at the Cincinnati Zoo last weekend was stupid and senseless and tragic — and lessons should be learned.

A young boy crawled through the railings surrounding the gorilla enclosure and fell into a moat within the enclosure. Harambe, a majestic 17-year-old silverback gorilla, jumped into the water and went to the child, as the child himself and a horrified crowd screamed. It now seems clear that the gorilla was reacting in a protective way. A video shows Harambe and the child holding hands before Harambe dragged him away from the noisy, what probably seemed a threatening, crowd.

Experts say that the animal would have beaten its breast and approached the child peripherally had he meant him harm. But the zoo decided to shoot and kill the gorilla.

Zoo officials should not have done that. They misjudged the animal’s actions. Zoo and law enforcement officials could have used a tranquilizer dart, which, if employed properly, would have put the animal down quickly. The tranquilizer and someone who knew how to shoot the dart, and in the proper dosage, should have been readily available at the gorilla exhibit. The scenario  is one that zoo officials should have drilled for over and over, so that reasoned, rational measures could be employed in an emergency.

The zoo director, Thane Maynard, says he would do the same thing if he had it to do over again. And for that, above all else, he should be fired.

You cannot be human and not make mistakes. But we have to recognize our mistakes, own up to them, and ask: What can we do differently now? All of us who are parents have had bad parenting days and made poor judgments. Most of us have lost a child, if only for seconds. The mom whose child wandered, crawled, and fell needs to take stock. Harambe would not be dead but for her irresponsibility. The child could have died as well.  What if the bullet had missed Harambe, enraging instead of killing the animal?

There was a design flaw at the Cincinnati Zoo that made the enclosure permeable. That has to be fixed immediately. For future safety, perhaps zoos also should limit the number of children admitted with each adult.

Mr. Maynard must go, first, because the wrong thing was done and the buck stops with him. Harambe wasn’t going to hurt the boy; he should have known that. The proper tranquilizer, quickly applied, would have saved both lives.

But Mr. Maynard also refuses to consider how he could have done things differently. The very least we can ask of someone who exacts such a toll from a bad decision is that he be willing to learn.