

## What do you know about Brigitte Bardot Syndrome?

It is a terrible wasting disease, whose victims are all TV personalities, movie actors or pop stars. The disease is believed to create an imbalance in the brain, making its victims associate their fame with omniscience, which in turn encourages them to become spokespersons and activists for public campaigns and causes in which they have little or no expertise.

Actors with plenty of free time seem to be particularly at risk. It is usual for the victims to rely on their instincts and feelings when supporting causes and to take little account of actual facts. Often the victims are deluded into believing that their advocacy is a means to “give something back to society” and in some cases it can add lifestyle glamour to declining acting careers.

The syndrome draws its name from the first celebrity known to have contracted the disease, French actress, Brigitte Bardot. She was infected in the late 1970s and spent many years fighting to save seals from local hunters on the eastern coast of Canada.

As with Bardot, the disease usually manifests itself as support for extreme animal rights positions. Recent research has shown that actors’ portrayal of different characters makes them particularly vulnerable to anthropomorphic tendencies, which some believe may indicate the onset of the affliction.

Unfortunately, one of the unique characteristics of the condition is that it cannot be detected by its victims, who can continue to campaign on issues for many years. Ironically, this also means that public awareness of Brigitte Bardot Syndrome is extremely low, because no celebrities have campaigned to publicize its existence.

Victims are often preyed upon by fundraising businesses known as NGOs. Fundamentalist groups such as PETA, WildAid and IFAW have traditionally recruited celebrities to promote their campaigns because their arguments do not stand up to critical public scrutiny. By appealing to vague ethical notions of right and wrong articulated by stars, young adults in particular can often be persuaded to make donations to “save” various species that do not actually require saving.

Actors and pop stars do not typically display great discernment in the field of morals and ethics and are regularly criticised for providing poor role models for young people. In a further irony, while the celebrities become mouthpieces promoting the saving of various species, it is they themselves that really need to be saved.

There are several recent examples. JAWS author, Peter Benchley, came out of the closet to save the sharks for WildAid. Traci Bingham of Baywatch fame, charged a French restaurant and the Berlin streets, under the umbrella of PETA to promote vegetarianism

and save farm animals. Even the present James Bond actor, Pierce Brosnan, was declared "positive" after he started saving the whales on behalf of IFAW.