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Cecil

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The death of Cecil has provoked a wave of indignation across the world. The news, at first confusing, pointed to a hunter of Spanish origin who turned out to be an American dentist and hunting enthusiast, with a long and predatory history with endangered species (elephants, rhinoceros, buffalo, leopards, bears).

It is not necessary to repeat the circumstances that led to the death of such a beautiful creature as Cecil, the lion of the Zimbabwe national reserve (Hwange National Park), but, for the record, he was taken down with arrows to avoid noise and the alerting of the guards, before being decapitated and skinned. All that was left of the beautiful animal that had once led the pack of the reserve were his remains and entrails, at the mercy of anyone. The hunter and his aides took the hunting trophies, most likely to exhibit them on some wall to remind them of their African adventure; artificial, cruel and obscene.

There remain around 3500 male lion specimens in the world; it is a severely endangered species and its numbers continue to be drained for the price of getting together a team and hunting them, as was done with Cecil. One finds many other great mammals in the same circumstances; if we remain stubborn and recalcitrant toward hunting them and exhibiting their remains, we will be left poorer and more desolate on this earth.

The news of Cecil's hunting has been met with unanimous repulsion, and despite a few days having already passed, this has not subsided, but instead increased in all corners of the world. [The Empire State Building has symbolically been illuminated with the images of Cecil](#) and other animals in danger of extinction in an act of homage by none other than Louie Psihoyos, decorated photographer of National Geographic, creator of the Oscar-winning documentary "The Cove", about the annual slaughter of dolphins in Taiji (Wakayama), which we have already covered in a separate segment.[1]

What exactly sets the death of Cecil apart from that of other lions, elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, buffalos that are mercilessly taken out on a daily basis in many parts of the world? Indeed, Cecil was beautiful, with an outstanding face, expressive eyes of amber, and a vigorous body, in spite of being 13 years old; I believe that all of us who have seen his photos have been captivated by his magnificent appearance, his calm yet dominant expression. That is why. Also, because he had his own name, many of us have internalised the drama of being unable to continue enjoying life in ones own territory. Perhaps there is great ignorance in this nostalgia for the wild life - this I do not deny - but what is certain is that many of our stomachs have turned at the thought that a creature, in the heart of nature, can be a victim of a wealthy, senseless person that practices hunting with no risks as a sport.

Nevertheless, it is worth reading the article published in the [NYT: "In Zimbabwe, we](#)

[don't cry for lions](#)", to understand the reality of life for the inhabitants of one of the countries most devastated by misery, where the daily life of humans and animals is one of difficulty and without palliatives.

Various airlines, including Delta - which stands out for its quick response - have prohibited the transportation of hunting trophies of large endangered species. Two large American companies – United Airlines and American Airlines – have been added to this already large group, which includes Air France, KLM, Iberia, IAG Cargo, Singapore Airlines and Qantas). The ending of the so-called sport of hunting in Africa will not be easy; it is a genuine for-profit industry that shifts millions between hunters across the world that, together, form a very powerful lobby.

Professional hunting organisations such as the [International Professional Hunter's Association](#) show no discretion when offering and merchandising emblems that make it clear what their objectives are: bears, elephants, and tigers.

This propaganda employing terms such as 'integrity', 'conservation', and 'usefulness', is nothing more than the mysticism that disappeared with "[Mogambo](#)" in 1953. For the amount that they preach from their professional forums that their mission is conserving wildlife, the noble intentions of the professionalization and ethical practices of the hunt must be difficult to balance with the reality of satisfying a profitable whim, taking out animals that were born to live, not to die from a bullet.

Governments are now aware that it is unacceptable to look away and continue to allow practices such as sport hunting that elicit overwhelming contempt from the global citizenry. The legal regulations require revision in light of the current needs of our already limited natural heritage that we share with animals.

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[1]See. [GIMENEZ-CANDELA, M., An Oscar without Glamour: "The Cove"](#)