

# Sometimes It's Just Easier To Care About Dead Lions Than Dead People

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I started noticing “[Cecil the Lion](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/3d1e5100d73b41608f661071093f0fdc/man-accused-african-lion-death-convicted-08-bear-hunt)” (<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/3d1e5100d73b41608f661071093f0fdc/man-accused-african-lion-death-convicted-08-bear-hunt>) trending on Facebook and Twitter at some point yesterday afternoon. By the evening, it was the most popular topic on social media, and stories about the lion were popping up on all of the national news sites.

Before I took the time to investigate, I tried to imagine if there could be any valid reason for a wild cat to become the biggest news item in the world. On a day when [another undercover video](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/07/28/new-planned-parenthood-video-focuses-on-payment-for-fetal-tissue/) (<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/07/28/new-planned-parenthood-video-focuses-on-payment-for-fetal-tissue/>) revealed Planned Parenthood dismembering murdered children for profit, I strained to think if there might be some justification for ignoring the harvesting of human beings in favor of obsessing over a large feline in Africa.

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I thought maybe the lion had cured cancer, or sprouted wings and flown into space, or stood on its hind legs and recited the Gettysburg Address. Surely, these developments would vindicate the disproportionate amount of attention it was receiving. But I quickly found out that the lion, from Zimbabwe, had done no such thing. Apparently, all it did was die.

[mattwalsh-social-instory]

Of course, lots of *people* died yesterday too, [especially in Zimbabwe](http://www.mohcc.gov.zw/country-health-profile/14-sample-data-articles/105-coming-soon-3) (<http://www.mohcc.gov.zw/country-health-profile/14-sample-data-articles/105-coming-soon-3>). Across the planet, human travesties continued to unfold — Christians were slaughtered in the Middle East, political prisoners were tortured and executed in North Korea and Iran, Americans fell prey to crime and violence spilling over our southern border, and about [3,000 human children](http://www.numberofabortions.com/) (<http://www.numberofabortions.com/>) were butchered in abortion clinics, some of which were then dissected and sold on the black market — but this one unfortunate beast in a forest 9,000 miles away trumped all of these. Human victims would have to wait yet another day to be noticed by our culture. Their plight just couldn't compete with a cute, fuzzy mammal.

Poor Cecil, as I'm sure you heard, was “murdered” by an American dentist named Walter Palmer. The dentist traveled there and paid some \$55,000 for the privilege to hunt and kill the king of the jungle. It turns out that the hunt might not have been legal. (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3177303/PICTURED-American-dentist-passion-hunting-killed-Cecil-Lion-bow-arrow->

[Zimbabwe.html](#)) He says (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33695872>) he thought he was acting within the law, and that he didn't know Cecil was a beloved animal celebrity in Africa. His pleas of ignorance may or may not be true, but they are called into question by the fact that he's been convicted of poaching before (<http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-23972-Lion%20killer%20a%20convicted%20poacher%20in%20the%20US/news.aspx>).



([http://www.theblaze.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/shutterstock\\_123414550.jpg](http://www.theblaze.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/shutterstock_123414550.jpg))  
Photo Credit: Shutterstock

This was all enough to earn him the wrath of progressive America, but none of these crimes compare to the fact that he is, evidently, a Republican (<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/249615-cecil-the-lion-killer-donated-to-romney>).

We know these details about his life, and about the sexual harassment claim made against him in 2009 (<http://heavy.com/news/2015/07/walter-palmer-minnesota-dentist-killed-cecil-the-lion-killer-hunter-sexual-harassment-claim-case-documents-dental-board-complaint/>), because the media has feverishly poured through his record and heaped more scrutiny upon him than they have on every Democrat politician in the last 40 years combined. Meanwhile, the internet lynch mob predictably leaped into action. Palmer's personal address (<http://www.rt.com/usa/311002-dentist-lion-internet-hunt/>) was released, death threats were issued, his business was attacked (<http://heavy.com/news/2015/07/walter-palmer-yelp-dds-minnesota-dentist-cecil-lion-killer-river-bluff-dental-page-posts-outrage-deleted-policy-photos/>) and shutdown (<http://atlantadailyworld.com/2015/07/28/walter-palmer-is-the-most-hated-man-on-social-media-after-killing-zimbabwes-prized-cecil-the-lion/>), he was forced into hiding (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3177303/PICTURED-American-dentist-passion-hunting-killed-Cecil-Lion-bow-arrow-Zimbabwe.html>), and scores of drooling trolls flocked to Twitter to fantasize about all of the creative and violent things they'd love to do to him:

I want to shoot a particular American dentist with a crossbow [#CecilTheLion](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash>)

— Mark Lewis (@MarkLewisLawyer) [July 28, 2015](https://twitter.com/MarkLewisLawyer/status/626163472896819200)  
(<https://twitter.com/MarkLewisLawyer/status/626163472896819200>)

What's trending today? [#WalterPalmer](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WalterPalmer?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/WalterPalmer?src=hash>) – can we let him loose in the wild in Africa so the lions can hunt him down now? [#lionkiller](https://twitter.com/hashtag/lionkiller?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/lionkiller?src=hash>)

— Shuja Rabbani (@ShujaRabbani) [July 29, 2015](https://twitter.com/ShujaRabbani/status/626209438815289344)  
(<https://twitter.com/ShujaRabbani/status/626209438815289344>)

I hope somebody reams [#CecilTheLion](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash>)'s killer [#WalterJamesPalmer](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WalterJamesPalmer?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/WalterJamesPalmer?src=hash>) a new orifice with his dental drill!

— MizQue (@MizQue) [July 28, 2015](https://twitter.com/MizQue/status/626099118373367808) (<https://twitter.com/MizQue/status/626099118373367808>)

Let's drill the dentists teeth without pain killers. [#CecilTheLion](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash>), [#AnimalRights](https://twitter.com/hashtag/AnimalRights?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/AnimalRights?src=hash>)

— Bill Lehman (@LehmanBill) [July 29, 2015](https://twitter.com/LehmanBill/status/626236307417608193)  
(<https://twitter.com/LehmanBill/status/626236307417608193>)

Can somebody lure the [#dentist](https://twitter.com/hashtag/dentist?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/dentist?src=hash>) wanker from his chair and kill him with his own drill? What a total waste of oxygen! [#CecilTheLion](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/CecilTheLion?src=hash>)

— Tessy (@TTessy) [July 28, 2015](https://twitter.com/TTessy/status/626080753206587392) (<https://twitter.com/TTessy/status/626080753206587392>)

Some even began non-ironically using [#LionLivesMatter](#)

Absolutely disgusted that in 2015 a so called educated man would kill for fun. Let's hope Karma gets him pretty quick! [#LionLivesMatter](https://twitter.com/hashtag/LionLivesMatter?src=hash) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/LionLivesMatter?src=hash>)

— Laura Featonby (@LaurasTravel) July 29, 2015  
(<https://twitter.com/LaurasTravel/status/626282353242079232>)

Refusing to be upstaged in this contest for the title of Most Exorbitant Reaction, PETA proclaimed (<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/07/28/peta-says-minnesota-dentist-accused-of-hunting-protected-african-lion-should-be-preferably-hanged/>) that Palmer ought to be “extradited and hung.” A bunch of famous people joined the dog pile, utilizing their platforms to declare Palmer (<http://perezhilton.com/2015-07-28-celebs-twitter-react-cecil-the-lion/?from=post>) “disgusting,” a “murderer,” and “Satan.” Other celebrities have asked that his citizenship be permanently revoked (<http://twitchy.com/2015/07/28/actress-debra-messing-take-american-dentists-citizenship-away-for-killing-cecilthelion/>). Sharon Osbourne labeled Palmer a “killer” (<http://www.thewrap.com/ricky-gervais-olivia-wilde-sharon-osbourne-attack-american-accused-of-killing-cecil-the-lion/>) and said she hopes he loses his house and his business. According to Sharon, even his wife and children deserve to be homeless. Jimmy Kimmel, late night host on ABC, took time out of his comedy show to deliver a tearful rant (<http://time.com/3976423/jimmy-kimmel-cecil-lion-hunt/>), calling the hunter an “a-hole” and a “jackal.”

All of this, over a lion.

It bears repeating that this happened on the same day that a video was released showing lab technicians dissecting the body parts of murdered humans (<http://www.lifenews.com/2015/07/28/3rd-shock-shock-video-catches-planned-parenthood-vice-president-selling-body-parts-of-aborted-babies/>) while discussing how much money they could get for each “item.” This footage was completely ignored. Our culture let out a massive, collective yawn, instead choosing to wail over the fate of some random hairy beast in southern Africa.



(<http://www.theblaze.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Screen-Shot-2015-07-28-at-9.25.01-AM.jpg>)

Screenshot

The whole thing transcends mere absurdity. It is beyond ridiculous. Far past anything that could be called simply exaggerated or irrational. The swarms of petty nitwits in our culture have finally outdone themselves. What we are witnessing is something worse than an Idiocracy; it is total moral chaos.

I'm not defending Walter Palmer, by the way. I don't have any problem with hunters — and in most cases, African big game hunters help (<http://clashdaily.com/2014/06/defense-trophy-hunting-stupidityemotion-hunting-greatest-threat-african-game/>) both the local economies in these areas, and the ongoing effort to preserve endangered species — but it seems that Palmer broke the law and killed a lion that was financially valuable to the locals. That was bad. He shouldn't have done that. If the story we're hearing is accurate (*and there's always a significant chance that it isn't accurate, or at least isn't complete*) then Palmer was in the wrong.

Still, the reaction is so inordinate and overwrought that I have to laugh. I have nothing against Cecil, I'm sure he was a swell chap, but no dead animal could ever justify this excessive and callous backlash from such a frantic mob of vindictive, retaliatory buffoons. Even ancient pagan tribes that literally worshiped animals probably exercised more restraint when a heretic killed one of their animal deities.

It's fine if you are opposed to what Palmer did, but that doesn't excuse you from the duty to be sane and rational. It's a lion, after all. An animal. If you want to be really agitated by a doctor who kills living things, you should probably be less focused on this dentist and a little more focused on abortionists like LeRoy Carhart, who murder actual people. Carhart has killed both unborn and born h (<http://liveaction.org/inhuman/leroy-carhart-the-facts/>) humans, and likes to do the former by ripping the child apart while it's still alive (<http://liveactionnews.org/the-troubled-past-of-embattled-abortion-doctor-leroy-carhart/>). Maybe the media should be camping out in front of his house instead of Palmer's (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/trending/walter-palmer-cecil-the-lion-1.3170768>). Maybe we should be asking why doctors are allowed to execute babies, not why dentists are allowed to hunt African game.

This dichotomy has become, perhaps, the most bewildering and confusing thing about our culture. Progressives actively celebrate the most depraved evils, and then make super villains out of folks who hunt, or fly Confederate flags, or refuse to bake gay wedding cakes. It's like they're standing on a street corner simultaneously applauding a thug as he murders a man for his wallet, and calling for a summary execution of a pedestrian who forgot to use the crosswalk. This isn't just a matter of misplaced priorities; this is unadulterated lunacy.

Yes, I realize that liberal hypocrites aren't the only ones upset about the lion. Some people are animal lovers, but they put that love for animals in perspective. They might cry for the cat, but they cry more for humans who are murdered, persecuted, or exploited. Compassionate souls love animals deeply because they possess a profound respect for all life. In the mode of St. Francis of Assisi, their mercy for animals stems from their love of God. I take no issue at all with the people in this category, obviously. I love animals myself.

But the fact remains that many in our society are descending like a pack of frenzied hyenas upon a man who shot a lion, yet feel no anger when confronted with the murder of children. And abortion isn't the only evil accepted or celebrated by progressivism. We are living in a culture of death where cruelty and brutality reign supreme. The reaction to this "scandal" only further reveals and illuminates that cruelty. We think nothing of trying to destroy a man, ruin his life, and wish for his painful demise, without knowing anything else about him. We are so numb, so indifferent, that we will rip a stranger to pieces, cannibalize him publicly, tear him down until there is nothing left, and then sleep like babies at night.

Yet, the lion.

Kill the children if you want. Destroy the dentist just for fun. Demean and degrade anyone who acts or thinks differently, if for no other reason than there's not much else to do. But a dead lion — now there's a victim we should mourn.

It seems baffling. It would all make sense if our culture showed no concern for the plight of human beings, and *also* displayed a similar wanton disregard for animals and trees. Then we would just be nihilists and Darwinists. Human life has no objective value, we would reason, therefore no life has any objective value. We would be naked and honest barbarians.

But our barbarism is clothed and hidden beneath this thin veneer of an arbitrary concern for random animals and plant life. And not even every animal. That's why most of the people panicking over "Cecil" will still order the hamburger when they go to Applebee's, still use insecticide to ruthlessly poison innocent roaches and ants, and still drink milk extracted from enslaved cows.

They give lions and elephants a certain elevated status, but can't explain why. They might insist that these creatures are special because they're "endangered," but they can't tell you why it matters that they're endangered. If the world didn't need the baby who's now being dissected in a petri dish in some research facility, why did it need Cecil the lion? What was he doing that was so special? How was he contributing to the advancement of civilization? He was peeing in the grass, licking his butt, and eating zebras. Big deal. That baby could have grown up and become an inventor, a philanthropist, an artist, a lover, a thinker, a father, a mother, a pioneer. If that potential wasn't enough to let the child off the hook, why do we make an exception for the beast? Are we grading on a curve here?

These questions are rhetorical. I already know the answer. I know why progressives cry for dead lions and not dead babies: it's called Natural Law.

Natural Law holds that all people possess a conscience, therefore all people innately recognize the distinction between good and evil. We are naturally repulsed by evil and attracted to goodness. This is why every civilization has outlawed sins like murder and theft, and hailed virtues like charity and mercy. Of course, many civilizations have redefined murder so as to permit a convenient form of it, but still no society has ever come out and defended murder *in principle*.

No society can ever be explicitly nihilist. As in, no society can outwardly live by the philosophy that everything is meaningless and nothing matters. Individuals can try it, but like Nietzsche they'll end up in a mental institution, babbling to themselves while eating their own excrement. Societies, though, have to at least pretend they believe in doing the right thing. A society must convince itself it hates evil and loves goodness. Even the Nazis rationalized that they were serving the greater good of mankind.

So when our culture decides to sit back and tolerate, or even revere and commend, perverse evils like abortion, pornography, the breakdown of the family, the persecution of Christians, etc., it begins to accumulate a kind of Outrage Reservoir. Deep down, we must *feel* like we oppose evil. We can't laud the most insidious atrocities of our time, and then look in the mirror and face ourselves honestly. The righteous anger that should be poured out in response to these true horrors is bottled and contained, clogging up our souls like constipated bowels.

We search desperately for an acceptable target for our surplus of withheld scorn, and when we locate it, we unload like we just chugged a gallon of laxative. Suddenly, some guy who killed a lion in Zimbabwe receives all of the compiled disdain that should have been discharged on the abortionists and the pornographers and the persecutors. Our pent up rage and anger mixes with guilt and self-loathing, and together it creates this concentrated bile that drowns and destroys whatever tragic chump they throw before us to be devoured. It's nothing personal against him, really. Walter Palmer is a sacrificial lamb. A punching bag, strung up and dangled in front of progressive America as a way for them to release their moral frustrations. He's an object. A receptacle for their misdirected vengeance. It's like self-flagellation, only minus the self. And next week they'll be flagellating some other patsy, and nobody will even remember or care about poor old Walter Palmer.

A year from now, someone will do a follow up story about that villainous dentist from long ago, and we'll all think, "Oh yeah, whatever happened to that guy?" Then we'll see that he lost his business, his family, and his dignity, and now lives as a sad shell of a forgotten man. "Serves him right for doing whatever he did," we'll say proudly, as we get back to feasting upon the newest Scoundrel Du Jour. It's a never ending pattern, played out over and over again by a progressive culture filled with craven wimps, always compensating for their moral failings by tearing down false Satans, too afraid to do battle with the real one.

You might wonder how progressives choose their new devils and new gods. Why Walter Palmer? Why Cecil the Lion? Well, there's a randomness to it, of course. And there are always the superfluous reasons, like the fact that most of the members of the lynch mob probably have fond memories of "The Lion King." But I think, more fundamentally, progressives choose to care about lions because lions are an abstraction. They care about the *idea* of lions.

Real lions are all the way in Africa, or else contained in zoos. You can go and see them, or watch them on TV, or read about them, but crucially, lions will never ask anything from us. Our affection for them presents no challenges. We don't have to accommodate them. I can say I love lions, but this love will never require me to *do* anything. Lions will never inconvenience me. They'll never get in my way. I can defend the lives of lions by angrily Tweeting about hunters, and then I can go on my way, live however I want, and never be asked to change my lifestyle for their sake.

*People*, on the other hand, are real. They are here. They impose themselves on our lives. They burden us. They surround us. To care about people is hard. It requires us to live, act, think, and speak differently. We have to accommodate people. We have to tolerate people. We have to do things for people, especially the most vulnerable and helpless people. It's no coincidence that progressivism advocates abortion to deal with children, and euthanasia to handle the old and the infirm. If it is going to pretend to love human beings at all, it must first get rid of the most burdensome types.

It can be hard to love people. And if you say you love people, life is going to constantly demand that you prove it. If you say you love people, you certainly can't kill your own child, and you can't support the killing of children, and even if you don't have kids, you have to be patient and kind with other people's kids, and other people generally. This is very different from loving lions. You can love lions passively, in the abstract; people must be loved actively, in reality.

If ever some deranged terrorist transported thousand of lions into our neighborhoods, forcing us to actually love lions in some real and present sense, I can guarantee the progressive affection for the species would vanish rapidly.

This is the progressive *modus operandi*. Progressivism loves everything that can be loved lazily or indulgently, and nothing that must be loved sacrificially and earnestly. It loves nothing that requires any action on its part.

Put more simply, it loves nothing.

But it will keep pretending anyway.

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