

**Presentation treatment
Of the feature film
THE LAST HUNT OF JIM
CORBETT**

**By Joseph Jordania
University of Melbourne**

Logline:

An aging legendary hunter-turned conservationist Jim Corbett is asked to go after a very cunning man-eating tiger that is terrorizing mountain villages and thousands of woodchoppers at the Indian-Nepalese border. The hunter finds himself trapped between the governmental intrigues and the man-eating tiger who is hunting Corbett.

Genre: environmental drama-suspense

INTRODUCTION

This text is the result of detailed investigation of the author of the story the last hunt of the legendary hunter, conservationist and author Jim Corbett. This hunt took place in Kumaon, North India, between the small villages Chuka and Thak, next to Nepal, in October-November 1938. This is the last story of Corbett's book "Man-Eaters of Kumaon" (1944. Oxford University Press). The book became an instant classic and bestseller.

From the early 1970s, when I read this story for the first time, I was profoundly moved by its sheer dramatic, thriller-like atmosphere, where the hunter and the man-eating tiger stalk each other in the jungles and the streets of the deserted Indian village. Every bit of the story, starting with the heart-melting accidental meeting of Corbett with the future man-eating tigress with small cubs (during Corbett's previous hunt), followed by the tragic change of the life of the tigress, caused by the poacher-inflicted wounds, attacks on humans, and then hair-rising duel of the hunter and the clever tigress, culminating in the dramatic encounter of the hunter and the tigress on the dying seconds of the daylight, was the most dramatic story I have ever read.

Surprised and somehow upset that a movie based on this exhilarating story has never been made, I decided to write the motion picture script myself. This idea was particularly strengthened in January 2011, when after a long research and search, I found in Kumaon a historical rock where the story found its dramatic end. So here is the script, or more precisely, the presentation treatment.

As a dedicated Corbett fan, I tried to be truthful to the original Corbett story, but following the requirements of the movie, I extended the original story using the sidelines, which are present, but are not elaborated in Corbett's story.

One of the important sidelines is the story of wounding the man-eating tigress by a poacher. Corbett mentions this only in the end of the whole story, when, during skinning the tigress, he found the traces of two gunshot wounds that turned the tigress into a man-eater. Similar wounds he found on the body of the previous man-eater – the mate of the last man-eater, killed a few months before Corbett's last hunt (in the opening sequence of the film).

Another important sideline was the story of destruction of the pristine forests by British colonial authorities. We know from Corbett story that a huge deforestation was going on in the region in 1938, with five thousand men hired to fell the trees, and the presence of the man-eater was unacceptable for the workforce hired by timber contractors. There was also a power struggle going on in Forest Department officials between the more environmentally conscious people and more profit-oriented people, who were looking at the natural resources primarily as the source of income. So I added a few scenes at the forest department.

Also, the identity of the poacher from the Corbett story is not clear, as well as the identity of the first human victim of the tigress, a twelve-year old girl, and in this script these participants of the story obtained identities.

There are certain parallels of Corbett's story and the Hollywood blockbuster movie "Ghost and the Darkness" where the plot also revolves around the protagonist who hunts man-eating lions that halts the construction working process. But there are important differences between these two movies as well: Ghost and the Darkness is a typical monster movie, where man-eaters are seen as the dark force of nature, and destruction of these lions is the central aim of the protagonist. In Corbett's story the man-eater is shown in a more sympathetic light, as a result of human greed and human-

inflicted wounds. Although hunting the tigress is Corbett's aim, at the same time he deeply sympathizes with the fate of the tigress, her cubs, and the environment that thousands of workers are destroying.

If there is an interested in making such a film, I suggest a director (or a movie company) to appeal to world leading actors to support this film and participate in the film as a support for the tiger conservation effort. We might be surprised to see how many leading actors will suggest their support and participation in this film to support the efforts to save tigers. For example, Leonardo DiCaprio is one of such actors who is actively involved in the bid to save tigers, and most likely he will be personally interested in making such a film. I suggest that for his outstanding attempts to save tigers, and for his outstanding talent to play very different characters, Leonardo DiCaprio himself might be most appropriate for the lead character, the legendary conservationist and hunter Jim Corbett.

I am sure this film will have big public support as well, do not forget, in a huge poll organized by "Animal Planet", the tiger was voted as the "favorite animal" (beating even the dog).

Also, if this film is ever made, I strongly believe that at least some part of the income should go for Tiger Conservation Fund. I am ready to give big part of my payment for my text to the tiger preservation fund. Some other participants of the film (actors, for example), also might agree to give a part of their income from this film to the tiger preservation funds. Let us remember that Jim Corbett was always refusing governmental rewards for killing man eating tigers, and that it was for his conservation efforts that the first tiger reserve is named "Corbett National Park".

Presentation treatment of the feature film

The Last Hunt of Jim Corbett

Opening sequence: Panoramic view of the beautiful Indian landscape of the Indian-Nepalese border. We see a mountainous forest, a flowing river. We see snippets of wildlife: birds, spotted deer, a leopard climbing a tree. Everyone is going about their business. The soundtrack music is relaxing and majestic; the camera gradually comes on a man following a track slowly and very carefully. He has a rifle in both hands. Narrator's text (Corbett's voice-over) tells us that in April of 1938 he was asked to hunt the man-eating tiger in the Ladhya river valley in Kumaon, North India, next to Nepal. At the moment he is searching for the buffalo killed possibly by the man-eating tiger. Music becomes suspenseful and rhythmic. The situation is tense. The man-eater can be anywhere. Corbett slowly crosses the Ladhya river and enters a deep ravine. After some searching, he finds the half-eaten buffalo carcass. Corbett conceals himself in the nearby tree branches and waits. After some time, he hears very quiet sounds, he raises his gun and is prepared to shoot, but instead of a male man-eater, a female tiger appears with two young cubs. Corbett watches in admiration as the tigress teaches her cubs how to walk in the forest, how to keep their movements silent, and how to listen to every sound of the forest. When they approach the concealed carcass, the tigress lies down and allows the cubs to search for the carcass themselves. The tigress watches over them, and when they find the carcass, she goes to sleep. After finishing their dinner, the cubs come back to the tigress, she clears them from the remaining blood licking them clean, and they all leave. This scene will be very relaxing, gentle, accompanied by playful music, with the cubs playing with their mother and with each other.

At the end of the sequence the music becomes more poignant, the vision of the tigress and her cubs gradually becomes slower, and the footage quality becomes like from the very old footage, and we hear Corbett's words "I did not know, and it would have made no difference if I did, that the tigress I watched with such interest that day would later, owing to gunshot wounds, become a man-eater and a terror to all who lived or worked in the Ladhya valley and the surrounding villages"¹ As we hear Corbett's words, the motion stops in a still black-and-white image of the tigress and the cubs, and the title of the film appears on the screen "The Last Hunt of Jim Corbett".

Sequence 2: In a governmental office there is an official planning meeting in progress. They are discussing a project to clear a big massif of the forest in the mountainous region of Eastern Kumaon near the Nepalese border. The timber project would be quite profitable, and one of the officials, (a fictional character, James) is particularly eloquent about the profits they will have from this project. A timber contractor, Bob (main antagonist in the film), speaks about the profits the forest department will have from this project. An Indian official, Mr Balabh Pant (historic character, he was the only native member of the Forest Department, and staunch opposition to deforestation), tries to argue against this suggestion. He says that he himself is from this region, and he knows that the rich wildlife will be severely disturbed if the deforestation project goes ahead. Timber contractor Bob reminds him that the government established a tiger reserve two years ago to protect tigers and other

wildlife, and that the region they are talking about is not the protected area. Mr Pant responds that opening the protected territory is great news by itself, but he is afraid that by establishing the special protected area all other areas with rich wildlife will be ruthlessly exploited. “I am afraid that the opening up of this park will be a swansong for all the Kumaon forests” says Mr Pant.ⁱⁱ William Ibbotson, also a historic figure (and Corbett’s closest friend), supports Mr Pant’s caution. James, arguing against Mr Pant, responds that this faraway region is in the most remote part of the country, and that the place is so obscure that they cannot even organize hunting trips there, because of the difficult mountainous terrain. He also says that India has many rich resources of natural life, so they do not need to be too concerned about all the faraway pockets of wildlife. Mr Pant, trying to argue against the project, mentions that a man-eating tiger is operating in this region at that very time, and that sending workers there would be very dangerous. Another British member of the meeting also supports the point of view that they should protect the forests in this undisturbed region. Bob responds that Jim Corbett himself is after the man-eating tiger and that soon the reign of the man-eater will be finished. Bob’s friend, James, supports his words. The issue is not resolved to the visual frustration of the timber contractor Bob and his friend James.

Sequence 3: Corbett is again on a hunt after the male man-eater. He is sitting at the tiger kill on a low tree branch. It is evening. Then, when it gets very dark, Corbett hears a tiger approaching his tree from behind, most likely to pull him down, as he is not sitting very high. Corbett points his rifle down so that the tiger would come in contact with the gun if he tried to stretch up and pull him down. After this the tiger growls and moves away. Soon Corbett hears he is feeding on the nearby kill. It is too dark to shoot so he must wait. The night passes in waiting for a chance to have a shot at the man-eater. Then, at the beginning of dawn Corbett sees the tiger about 100 metres away on the slope of a mountain. The tiger is leaving. Corbett takes a shot. The tiger comes roaring towards the tree, where Corbett is sitting, and Corbett manages to kill the tiger at close range. The tiger's body hits the tree where Corbett is sitting and falls deep into a ravine.ⁱⁱⁱ

Sequence 4: Another short scene of meeting at government house. Timber contractors Bob and James have important news to support their project – Corbett killed the Chuka man-eater, so the project can go ahead. Mr. Pant, Ibbotson and couple of other British officers still try to convince the others that the pristine environment will suffer gravely from the project. Some voice concerns that there are still more tigers in the region, but the project still receives support after the voting procedure. It is decided that the forest department will soon start marking the trees to be cut down, and in November five thousand workers will start working to cut down the forest. James and Bob congratulate each other.

Sequence 5: Corbett arrives home, telling his sister Maggie that he killed the male man-eater, and that after examining the tiger's body, he found that the tiger became a man-eater because of gunshot wounds. He shows Maggie the skin of the man-eater, showing several wounds on the tiger’s body that made him a man-eater. In a conversation he explains to Maggie about the dangers of leaving a wounded tiger in the wild. He also tells her about seeing the most beautiful scene of a mother tiger, teaching her young cubs proper behavior in the wild. He regrets he did not have his cine-camera to document the mother tiger's behavior. Corbett tells Maggie he is concerned that when the forest department starts felling the forest, the mother tiger and her cubs will be in

trouble. He also tells his sister that as soon as he has finished his hunting career of the man-eaters, he wants to start seriously filming the tigers living in the wild.^{iv}

Sequence 6: The pristine mountain forests of the India-Nepalese border. We can see wildlife activity: birds, spotted deer, possibly also the tigress we already know, with her cubs. Then we hear loud human speech and we see people from the forest department walking in the forest and marking the trees that will be cut down in a couple of months. Marking goes on and on and on. Birds and other wildlife look at the walking and shouting humans with fear and suspicion. We now see birds sitting next to the marks, and a spotted deer with a fawn is feeding beside a marked tree.

Sequence 7: A tigress with her two cubs we already know. A relaxed family scene. Then the tigress goes hunting and, after stalking attacks and kills a sambhar. The cubs and the tigress feed on the kill. As the tigress is lying next to a tree and as the cubs start to play, the camera climbs up the tree and we see that this tree had also been marked by forest department workers. The camera slowly moves to other trees and we see all of them are also marked.

Sequence 8: scene in the colonial house of Bob. The British timber contractor, Bob and his friend James are talking to a local poacher. From their conversation it becomes clear the male man-eater, killed by Corbett, was wounded by this poacher after he received an order, gun and money from Bob to kill the resident tiger. The poacher is now asked to kill a resident female tiger, but he is warned, “this time without any mistakes!” After receiving part of the payment, the poacher leaves. James expresses his doubts about the poacher’s hunting skills. Bob responds that he knew him before and that he knows this poacher can keep secrets. They agree that it is a pity that they cannot hire such a proficient hunter as Jim Corbett, but they know Corbett would have never agreed to kill tigers in order to help to clear the forest. “Sometimes it seems to me Corbett is crazy” says Bob, “It is difficult to understand on whose side he is on, human’s or tiger’s. He does not go after a tiger even if the tiger killed a human. He says it must be proved that it was a true man-eater, not an accidental tragic encounter. And he always declines the governmental reward even for killing the man-eaters!” James asks if they can find someone else, a more qualified hunter than the local poacher they have had contact with. “Would you like to go yourself to the forest to hunt the man-eating tiger? It is a bit different from shooting a tiger from the back of an elephant, isn’t it,” suggests Bob. They both laugh at this wild suggestion.

Then James asks Bob, why he gave an old gun to the poacher instead of a good new gun. Bob answers that the poacher sold his own gun sometime ago because of his family’s health problems, and he gave him the old gun, the same type he used before. “Besides” says Bob, “better guns cost more money, and if something happens, I do not want to lose too much money.” “What if the wounded tiger becomes a man-eater?” asks James. “If the tiger becomes a man-eater,” answers Bob after a few seconds of silence, with a wry smile “well, this might make securing our contract more difficult, but at the same time, this might help me to negotiate a better price from the government, because cutting forest in the region where a man-eater is operating costs more. So the presence of man-eater might make our contract more profitable...” There is a long silence after these words. We can see eyes of both men as they look at each other silently. “You bastard...” says finally James expressing a full admiration in his voice and face.

Sequence 9: The tigress sleeping with her cubs. It is early morning, still quite dark. The tigress wakes up and leaves the den for food. After some search she hears the sounds of a goat in the middle of the forest. She slowly approaches and sees the goat, tethered to a tree. On seeing the tigress, the goat tries to run away, but it cannot run as it is tied. The tigress is suspicious, looks at the rope, then looks around. We see the close up of the rope that the goat is tethered with. Now we can see that the gun muzzle is aiming at the tigress' chest from the nearby tree branches. The tigress is shot in the chest and she jumps wildly.

Sequence 10: Night at Corbett's house. Corbett suddenly wakes up in his bed. It is early morning and he dreamed a bad dream. He goes stumbling to the kitchen and drinks water. Maggie also wakes up and asks her brother in a very concerned voice what has happened. Corbett replies he dreamed that the tigress and her cubs that he saw some time ago were shot at. Maggie replies with a smile that if it was up to him, he would organize the tiger reserves at every place where tigers live, like the one that was organized two years ago around the village of Dhikala. Corbett replies that tigers and other wildlife deserve some designated decent territories where people would not settle, and where they can continue their natural and undisturbed life. He is concerned that humans are taking over all the resources of the planet and soon there will be no space left for any other species to live. "Look, how many humans are already on our planet: already two billion!" says Corbett. He says he hopes people of future generations will pay much more attention to nature conservation.

Sequence 11: We can see the tigress is badly wounded after the shooting. She is with her cubs, heavily panting, and leaking her wound on a chest. The cubs are restless. They are hungry. They try to stalk some small animal, but they have no skills to catch any prey. The tigress is badly limping when she tries to walk. It is evident that she cannot hunt. We can see there are marked trees around where she and the cubs are.

Sequence 12: At Bob's (British timber contractor) mansion. The local poacher arrives and tells him that the second tiger is dead. He says he believes there are no more tigers left in the region. Bob gives the poacher the second part of the fee for killing the tigress. Later during the conversation, it is revealed that the tigress actually was not killed, but was badly wounded and went away. Bob is furious, or at least he acts like he is. The poacher assures him that the tigress must have already died from the deep wounds to her chest. Bob is still very angry at the poacher and takes the poacher's fee from him. The poacher tells him he badly needs money as his wife is sick and needs medical treatment, but Bob refuses, and orders him to leave. The Poacher leaves visibly distressed. Bob puts money back into his pocket.

Sequence 13: The tigress is still in a bad shape. One of the cubs is dead. Another one is also at the point of total exhaustion. Still injured, the tigress goes for a hunt. She stalks a spotted deer but when she makes an attempt to catch the deer, she fails. Then she approaches the village, and from the end of the forest, concealed in the grass, she carefully watches the people of the village going about their everyday business. Now we go into one of the houses, where a teenage girl is feeding her younger sister. We see her mother in a bed, sick. Mother asks her to go out and pick up some windfall mangoes for her siblings. She goes out from a house and starts picking up mangoes fallen from a big mango tree. There are other people nearby as well, sitting at the village spring, and paying no attention to the young girl at the nearby mango tree. We see her

picking up the mangoes from the view of concealed tigress. Every time she bends down, we see the tigress approaches closer, using natural cover. We never see the tigress, we only see the girl from the tiger's point of vision, behind vegetation. Tigress is now very close.

Sequence 14: A meeting at a Forest Department house. They receive bad news that in the region where they decided to clear the forest, a tiger carried away a 12 years old girl who was collecting mangoes close to the village spring. There is anxiety about this fact among governmental officials, as it is already September and in November five thousand workers should start working on clearing the forest, and suddenly they have a second man-eating tiger in the region in the same year. Some suggest they should postpone the forest clearing. Mr. Pant and his supporters suggest again that clearing this region of forest was a bad idea from the very beginning, and that they should stop this project before it is too late. Bob, the British timber contractor responds that it is already too late to change plans. He argues any change of plan will be connected with catastrophic financial losses. He names the losses. "Even if we pay more to contractors, this project is still lucrative for the Forest Department" adds Bob. There is a silence among the department members. They decide to contact Jim Corbett and ask him once again to kill the man-eater. As the meeting finishes, James suggests to Bob in a private conversation to ask the villagers to write a letter to Corbett as well, because he is known sometimes to refuse governmental requests, but he is less likely to refuse if he receives the request from the villagers. Bob suggests using the help of their local poacher to organize the urgent plea of help from the Thak villagers.

Sequence 15: The villagers have a meeting. They are agitated. They are frightened and are lively discussing what to do. They speak all together. Some suggest to leave the village and to go to another place. They do not believe that the government will help them as their village is so remote. Then they all go quiet and listen to the father of the killed girl, Beena. Heartbroken father suggests they should write a letter directly to Jim Corbett (they call Corbett "Carpet Sahib"), who helped them to get rid of another a man-eater a few months before. We cannot see his face at the beginning of his speech, but after some time, while he is speaking, the camera comes on his face and we recognize that this is the local poacher who received instructions from Bob to kill the tigress. After some arguments, they ask the local man who can write, to write a letter, and start composing a letter to Corbett "Dear Carpet Sahib, we are desperate and want to ask for your assistance..."^v

Sequence 16: The poacher goes from the village meeting to his family. We see a poor and desperate situation. His wife is in bad health in bed, three children are eating very poor food. The poacher's wife starts crying when talking about their oldest girl, Beena, who was killed by a man-eater when she was collecting mangoes for her brothers and sisters. We can see the poacher is extremely distressed, but he cannot tell his wife the terrible truth that it was him who made the tigress into a man-eater. He goes to the small kitchen and starts crying and praying silently.

Sequence 17: While building a wall around the village of Choti Haldwani (the village Corbett organized and gave to local farmers), a government messenger, McDonald arrives and tells Corbett that a new man-eater that appeared in the village of Thak. He says there is a good government reward for killing the man-eater, as thousands

of workers should start felling forest in a few weeks. Visibly enraged Corbett tells McDonald that killing one person is not enough to conclude that the tiger is a habitual man-eater, so he refuses to go after the tiger. He also says he has never been interested in monetary rewards for killing man-eaters.

Sequence 18: Corbett goes back to his house and tells Maggie about the invitation to go after a tiger that killed one person. Maggie tells him he is correct for no going, and besides, he is already too old for such things. After some silence Corbett expresses his suspicion about the appearance of two cases of man-eating tigers in such a short period of time in a region where there had never been man-eaters. Maggie asks to explain what he means. Corbett answers that from his friend Ibbotson he knows that some governmental officials are very keen to sell the rich forests in the region as timber, and they might want to clear the forests of tigers before they bring the workers in the region. Then he expresses his fear that if the new killer is a female tiger, this new killer might be the tigress with cubs that he saw in April. Corbett hesitates and is reluctant to go after the tiger. Next morning a letter from the Thak villagers arrives, and after reading the letter, Corbett tells Maggie he has decided to go and kill the man-eater. Maggie is very worried; she asks him to be careful as he is already 63. He promises to be careful.

Sequence 19: Corbett has a meeting with his friend Ibbotson. Ibbotson tells him of the government debates about clearing the forests. As a head of another North Indian region, Ibbotson must go to the India-Tibet border, but he changed his plans and decided to go with Corbett, together with his wife, Jean, and a big group of servants. They discuss the best way to get to the villages of Chuka, Sem, Thak and Kot-Kindri, and they decide to go from the north, using a longer route, as the direct route goes through the most malaria ridden region and it is unsafe.

Sequence 20: During the preparation for the long walk, the news about the second kill, of an old woman, mother of the headman of the village of Sem comes to Corbett. Now Corbett is sure the tiger must be killed. He contacts Ibbotson and arranges that they start their walk the next morning.

Sequence 21: The next several interrelated scenes we follow Corbett and Ibbotson, as they walk through India on foot. These scenes will show the richness of Indian wildlife at the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains. They traveled for eleven days, through the mountains, camping at night at spectacular places, catching the famous mahseer fish for dinner in the Nandhour river. In the evenings, at the campfire they listen to the sounds of the wildlife, and talk about how to save this beauty for the following generations. These scenes should graphically demonstrate to moviegoers the beauty of the pristine forests of India that teem with wildlife, and the importance of supporting the conservation movements.

Sequence 22: Corbett and Ibbotson with their people arrive at the village of Chuka in the evening. People from all the surrounding villages come to greet him. They discuss when they last saw the tiger. They do not know if the man-eater is a male or female tiger. Corbett gives his condolences to the father of the killed girl, and when he hears that his wife has been badly ill for several months, he gives him money to take his wife to the doctor. The villager (the poacher) is very grateful to Corbett and tells him he was desperate to find money for the visit to a doctor. We can see poacher want

to tell Corbett something else, but cannot decide and leaves.

As the sun goes down, Corbett, Ibbotson, Jane and their men put their tents up on sandy stretches between the rivers Ladhya and Sarda, near the village of Sem. Then they organize a dinner at the campfire. As they are eating dinner, the camera moves further from their camp, and we gradually see that a tigress is watching silently their party from the forest, some distance away. We may not see her, just see the tigress's view from the forest.

Sequence 23: Midnight. Moonlight. Corbett, Ibbotson and their men are sleeping in their tents. Then we see the campsite from a distance, gradually approaching the sleeping camp. We understand it is tigress that is approaching the campsite. Without actually seeing the tigress onscreen (and only hearing occasional low growls) we follow the tigress, as she crosses the river and approaches the newly erected tents. The tigress goes closer to the tents, watches the tents and smells for the scents. Then she tries to look inside. We never see the tigress during the whole sequence. Everyone is sleeping.

Sequence 24: Bright sun. It is a morning at the camping site. Birds chirping on nearby trees. Corbett goes out of his tent and freezes: he sees the tiger pug marks next to the tents. He calls Ibbotson and tells him the tiger visited the camp during the night while they were sleeping. After examining the pug marks, he also says that they belong to a female tiger, and we can see he is concerned about this new information. Then Corbett and Ibbotson discuss if the tigress could have attacked them last night. Corbett tells Ibbotson that for some reason tigers almost never attack people at night. He says he does not know even a single case of a man-eater killing a human at night. Leopards, he says, are the opposite, they attack at night, and as humans mostly are sleeping in their homes at night, man-eating leopards often sneak inside the house through the open window, or, if the windows are closed, break through the door to get inside. But during the daytime, Corbett says, all the leopards, including man-eaters, are afraid of humans, even in the jungles. Corbett also finds the pug marks of the young male tiger and tells Ibbotson this could be one of the cubs he saw with this tigress in April. Corbett says that the second cub either is also around, or died. Ibbotson tells Corbett he should write and publish his writings about his knowledge of tigers and leopards and about his incredible hunting adventures. Corbett is skeptical, as he thinks no one will be interested to read his writings. Ibbotson says he is sure many people will be interested to read his stories, and that one day there might be a movie about his hunting adventures. Corbett laughs at this idea and says he would prefer having a movie about the life of tigers in the wild. They are preparing to go to Thak when a Thak headman brother, Tewari, arrives and tells them that a man from Thak is missing and they are afraid he was killed by a tiger.

Sequence 25: Corbett, Ibbotsons, and Tewari are going up the hills to the village of Thak. As they climb to a flat piece of ground from behind a 10 feet high rock they hear the wailing of the wife of the missing man. They gradually see and approach the group of people where wailing is coming from. They are told that a man has been missing for several hours, and that they can see some white object above the cultivated land but they are afraid to go there. Jane Ibbotson takes people to the village. Corbett and Ibbotson approach the object very carefully. On arrival they find a part of the man's clothing. There is no blood around and Corbett says that the tiger grabbed the man and carried him away alive. He sees traces of the brief fight (short flash back shows dramatic

moment of tiger attack and the struggle). Corbett and Ibbotson follow the tigress who has left very little track as the cattle disturber the area.

After some time stalking they find a place with a big pool of blood. Corbett examines the place and explains that the tiger stopped here and killed the man. There are plenty of cattle traces as well. Corbett explains that according to the traces, the cattle witnessed the killing of the man and together attacked the tiger, driving her away (as he tells this, we can see snippets of this scene: cattle attacking and driving the tiger away from the killed man). Corbett explains that unfortunately the man was already dead by that time, so the cattle just continued grazing and left the dead body. After several hours, the tiger came back and picked up the body. As the blood has left the body, there is no good track again. After more careful stalking in the midday sun they see and approach an over-hanging rock, and Corbett signs Ibbotson to stop, then he very slowly approaches the rock and very slowly climbs the rock.^{vi} Bit by bit Corbett move forward to be able to see what's under the rock. But when he gets to the edge of the rock, the only thing he can see it a stem of a plant that was pressed down is springing erect. The tigress just left.

Sequence 26: Corbett lowers rifle, calls Ibbotson and tells him that the tigress was there, but she saw him in the last moment, and left without allowing him to see her. They cannot do anything now, as she is already aware of their presence. Half eaten human remains are soon found, and the narrator (Corbett's voice) reads the words Corbett says in his story: "I am not going to harrow your feelings by attempting to describe that poor torn and mangled thing; stripped of every stitch of clothing and atom of dignity, which only a few hours previously had been a Man, the father of two children and the breadwinner of the wailing woman who was facing without any illusions the fate of a widow of India. I have seen many similar sights, each more terrible than the one preceding it, in the thirty-two years I have been hunting man-eaters, and on each occasion I have felt that it would have been better to have left the victim to the slayer than recover a mangled mass of flesh to be a nightmare ever after to those who saw it."^{vii}

Sequence 27: Corbett and Ibbotson discuss in a low voice what to do next. Corbett says the tigress would not want to abandon the kill completely, and she might be back at some point. Corbett wants to sit over the kill, so Ibbotson decides to go and bring ropes to make a machan. Corbett stays and watches. Ibbotson walks back to village with his gun at the ready. Without actually seeing the tigress, from the camera showing her vision through the foliage, we can see she is watching as Ibbotson leaves, but she is not following Ibbotson. The tigress starts stealthily coming back to the kill, and sees Corbett at the human remains. Corbett hears some faint sounds, but is unable to see the tigress (for the details see the Corbett story of "Thak Man-Eater". There are plenty of vivid details). As we follow the tigress going around Corbett, unnoticed, we hear Corbett's voice: "If the tiger knows that you are hunting him, you have to accept, that the tiger will be watching you virtually all the time, but you cannot see the tiger. It is like being constantly in the dark. It is maddening knowing that your opponent, who wants to kill you, is watching you all the time, but you cannot see the enemy and even have no idea where to look".

Sequence 28: Ibbotson comes back with a villager. Ibbotson makes a machan for Corbett, while a villager is sent some distance away to climb a tree and make loud noises in order to distract the tigress. When the machan is ready, Ibbotson and the

villager set off on their way back to village. Corbett stays at the kill on the machan. Now we see (again without actually seen the tigress on screen) that the tigress has seen Corbett in the tree, and she decides to follow Ibbotson and the villager. The tigress starts stalking Ibbotson and the villager. Ibbotson hears a kakar calling and feels the tiger is following them. “Tiger is following us” he whispers to the villager. They look around. All bushes and rocks look suspicious. Then they start moving slowly, taking all precautions to be safe. They all the time face the side where the wind is blowing, and avoiding every place where they can be suddenly ambushed (from bushes or from behind the rock).

Sequence 29: Corbett on the machan at night. Some movement – is this a tiger? No. Porcupines come to the human body remains and leave. Then a bear comes attracted by the smell of blood. As the bear comes close and smells the human remains, Corbett aligns his rifle on the bear’s shoulder. Corbett’s voice: “Most animals avoid eating human flesh. Omnivorous bears do not usually eat humans, so if this bear oversteps the line and starts eating, I am going to shoot it”. After some time, the bear decides against an easy meal as he is wary of human smell. The bear does not know how close he was to death.

Sequence 30: Morning. Corbett is still sitting on the machan. Ibbotson and about 10 villagers arrive. They help Corbett to descend, and massage his legs after the whole night sitting in an awkward position. They wrap the remains of the half-eaten man and carry him, singing a ritual song.^{viii}

Sequence 31: Corbett at the camp. A villager comes to him and says one of the buffaloes has been killed and carried away by the tiger. Corbett and Ibbotson follow the villager and examine pug marks. It is the tigress they are after. They follow the tracks. They carefully enter a ravine and Corbett tells Ibbotson it was in this ravine he saw this tigress with two young cubs six months ago in April. They find the kill. They both wait for a few hours for the tigress near the kill, but we can see that (again, without seen the tigress onscreen) the tigress on returning is watching them. When it gets dark, they go back to their tents.

Sequence 31: It is almost completely dark. Corbett and Ibbotson are on their way back to the camp. We see (without seeing the actual tiger) that she is following them. Corbett and Ibbotson share their feeling that they are being followed by the tigress, although they hear or see nothing. As they continue to walk carefully in the darkness, we hear Corbett’s voice, “If a tiger is following you, you will usually hear and see nothing, and only find out about this for sure when the tiger’s teeth are in your throat”. So, they are walking in the dark forest, virtually defenseless against a tiger that follows them and can see them very well. Corbett tries to calm down Ibbotson, tells him that according to his experience, man-eating tigers do not attack humans at night. Ibbotson tries to joke back to him: “Jim, do you want to tell me that this man-eater is following us now in order to protect us in the dark from other animals?” They both laugh, then Corbett starts singing a traditional Irish song, Ibbotson joins him. Finally, seeing on distance the campfires feels life-saving.

Sequence 32: Corbett and Ibbotson are sitting at the fire, both with closed eyes, breathing heavily. Jane Ibbotson watches their tired faces and asks Ibbotson what happened to them. Ibbotson responds without opening his eyes that the man-eater

followed them as they were returning in the dark. “Oh my God” whispers Jane. After some time, Ibbotson says to Jim it was the last day for him, Jane and his men, and that they need to leave next morning to get to the Tibetan border in time.

Sequence 33: Ibbotson, his wife Jean, and their men are leaving. Ibbotson asks Corbett not to stay long and not to endanger his life. He says they now know very well that the tigress is extremely clever, and that she sees them earlier than they can see her, and she follows them. “She is possibly watching as now as I am leaving” says Ibbotson, and we can see he is right, the tigress watches this scene from a distance (again, without seeing her on the screen). Ibbotson says they were not able to outwit her during all these two weeks, although they are both excellent hunters. Corbett agrees and says for the first time he has a feeling that he might lose the duel against this man-eater. “Probably it is time for you to quit?” asks Ibbotson, “You have already done hunting of your share of man-eaters”. Corbett is silent, then he says that the tigress is so careful that he has a feeling that she had been already shot at, or as hunters say, has been “educated”.

The Ibbotsons are leaving. Music is unsettling and tense.

Sequence 34: After Ibbotson’s disappear from the view, Corbett searches for the tiger pug marks on the Ladhya river bank. There are no signs of the tigress crossing the river and Corbett’s voice says he is sure the tiger is still on their side. Corbett comes back to the campsite and starts a campfire. It is dark and they hear a kakar (barking deer) barking. Corbett explains to his companions (the cook and the porters, explains in Hindi) that a kakar barks like this when it sees a tiger. We can see Corbett companions are scared. They look around in the direction of the dark forest and bushes around the camp. The Kakar barks several times with a few minute intervals, every time closer and closer to their tents. Corbett and his servants add branches to the campfire, make a big bonfire, and watch the forest around. Corbett hold his rifle next to him. Then they go carefully into their tents. Later, again without seen the tigress on screen, we see that she comes close to their tents, listening to their snoring and trying to look inside. One of the porters changes side while sleeping, wakes up and sees the tiger shadow on the tent wall next to his own head. He closes his eyes in terror and opens them in a few seconds. The shadow is gone.

Sequence 35: Morning at the campsite. Corbett examines the pug marks left by the tigress, then crosses the Ladhya River, searching for more, and suddenly sees wet pug marks on the stones drying in front of his eyes. He prepares his rifle and follows the track. We hear Corbett’s voice (as he follows the track): “You hunt the tiger the same way the tiger hunts its prey. You have long periods, hours and sometimes days of waiting and stalking. And then, suddenly, only if you are lucky, you will have a split-second chance to shoot the tiger. If you fail to use this chance you lose. Losing such a duel against the tiger may mean two different things: you either lose your chance to kill a tiger, or the tiger kills you. After this missed opportunity I tried every trick I knew to get a chance to shoot her, but she was superb, and escaped all my efforts. After two days I had to leave, as it was getting too difficult to withstand the sleep deprivation and the nervous tension of following the man-eating tiger for two weeks, which in reality was that the tigress was following me. She saw me hundreds of times, but I was not able to see her even once during these two weeks.”

Sequence 36: With these words sounding off the screen, we can see Corbett and his men breaking camp, and a group of villagers asking him not to leave them at the

mercy of the man-eater. With villagers begging Corbett not to see, we hear Corbett's voice-over: "I gave them my promise that I will be back as soon as I can. I had to confess that the clever tigress won the first battle. I had some doubts in my heart. I knew for sure that this was my last hunt for the man-eating tiger, but I was by no means sure I would be the winner if this battle."

Sequence 37: Scene at Corbett's family house in Kaladhungi. Maggie sits and plays on a family piano the melody of "Fur Elise". Corbett is sleeping in his room; we see his sleeping face. He is dreaming again of the scene when he saw the tigress for the first time, with two young cubs. Then the dream turns to the scene of his recent stalking of the tigress. Then we are transported to village Thak, we see how scared the villagers are now, while they are left alone against the man-eater. They walk together, and children do not play outside the houses. We also see the distressed faces of the British timber contractor and his friend James, arguing with each other. Bob smashes a glass on the wall in a rage. We do not hear what they are arguing about, as all these scenes go under the accompaniment of music. With the change of scenes, the music changes to more ominous music, but finally the music comes back to the relaxing sounds of Fur Elise and Corbett's sleeping face. Corbett's dog, Robin, is sleeping in his room, at the foot of Corbett's bed.

Sequence 38: Corbett and Maggie are having breakfast. Corbett asks if there was any news, and Maggie silently shakes her head, avoiding her brother's eyes. Corbett says she does not make a good liar. Maggie says he had been back only for three days and that he must have more rest. Corbett asks what were the news. Maggie brings a telegram. Corbett reads. "The tiger killed another villager in Thak on November 12." After a minute of silence, Corbett tells Maggie, "I should be going soon". "Promise me, Jim", says Maggie passionately, "that you will be back by the first of December". "I promise. After all, I have never had such a clever opponent, as this tigress, and I must concede defeat if I cannot kill her by the end of November." "Also promise this will be your last man-eater, For God's sake, Jim, you are sixty-three!" After some silence, Corbett promises: "I promise that this will be my last man-eater." "Good." says Maggie, relieved, "I know you have never broken a promise in your life".

Sequence 39: Dynamic, tense music. Corbett is very slowly approaching the village of Thak. He is very careful, gun at the ready. Background music is very tense and suspenseful. He sees plenty of tiger pug marks around the village and on the village streets. Then he sees that the door of one of the houses is open, and there are tiger pug marks at the opened door. He very carefully enters the house. No one is there. He goes out of the empty house as carefully as he came in, and now he sees that almost all the other house doors are also open, and there are tiger pug-marks everywhere. He carefully walks in the streets with his gun ready. At the village spring he drinks some water and we can see his shoe marks are left on the soft damp earth at the spring. He continues his way through the village. Most of the doors are open.

Sequence 40: There is some obvious movement and sound behind one of the open doors. Corbett aims at the open door and after several tense seconds suddenly a house cat springs out from behind the door to give him a warm welcome. Corbett relaxes, smiles, he bends down and scratches the back of the cat. At this moment we can feel the tigress is watching Corbett from inside one of the houses (we do not see the tigress, only her point of vision). Cat hisses and Corbett stand up and looks around

carefully. Nothing. After going through the village Corbett comes back to the spring to drink more water, and as he drinks water, he freezes, as he suddenly sees that the shoe mark that he left a short time ago is over-imposed by the tigress pug mark.

Sequence 41: With the tigress's point of view on the screen, we see that the tigress is watching him again. She continues watching from the inside of one of the houses with an open door. Corbett very carefully continues walking in order to go out of the village safely. As he walks, we can see what is behind him, and we see a few times a glimpse of the tigress, who is carefully stalking him. As he continues his walk very carefully, his voice says: "I was very lucky I came back alive from the village of Thak on that first day when I arrived at the empty village. The whole population of the village left in total panic because of the fear of the man-eater, and the tiger and myself were left alone for the relentless duel in the streets of the deserted village Thak. Humans do not have much chance when they are confronted with such an opponent as a tiger, who can see better, hear better, smell better, can hide better, moves faster and is much stronger. The only advantage for humans is the gun. But the problem is that you may not get a chance to use your gun in a split second when the tiger attacks, particularly if you are on your feet, not on the elephant back, or on the tree." During all his long speech we see how Corbett was under a permanent danger from the unseen tiger.

Sequence 42: This sequence starts as a big audio contrast to all the previous sounds with its tense and mostly silent scenes. The scene starts with a cacophony of sounds where tree cutters are shouting to one another, large trees are falling, crushing smaller trees, fallen trees are getting bulldozed surrounded by hundreds of workers. Elephants could be also used although there is no mention of elephants in Corbett story. This is tree cutting site in Kumaya Chak. We hear Corbett's voice: "Tree felling started in mid-November despite the presence of a man-eater, as contractors could not wait longer." We see signs of the destruction of nature are all around. We see lots of workers, and all the trees around are marked to be cut. We see some of the workers with fear on their faces as they look at the shadows in the deep forest. They are shouting on the top of their voices. Suddenly one of the workers raises the alarm "Tiger! Tiger!" and point towards some bushes nearby. The panic ensues. The work stops. People start climbing trees, some climb half cut trees that starts to bend and break. Some workers are falling off trees. Others are climbing over fallen workers. This scene will be more like a comic relief with appropriate musical background. Somebody runs to Corbett and tells him the tiger came to the place where the workers are cutting the trees, and possibly already killed many workers. Corbett says it is very unlikely that a tiger would go to such a noisy place, but follows the messenger with a rifle. On arriving he examines the spot where the tiger "was seen" and finds the porcupine marks and a quill. Workers get down from the trees, relieved and a bit ashamed. Everyone is laughing at the guy who raised the alarm. He feels ashamed. Then suddenly, as they laugh, there is another sudden noise (a three branch falls down) and some workers instinctively move towards the trees once again, and then they all start laughing again.

Sequence 43. Night in the forest. We see one of Corbett's buffaloes is sleeping in the forest where he is tied to a tree. Then the buffalo wakes up, as he feels danger is in the nearby bushes. Now we see the tiger, she is standing motionless and is watching the buffalo. They are looking at each other. We see that the tigress is watching the rope that the buffalo is tied to, and with a flash-back to the scene when the tigress was wounded at the tethered goat we understand the tiger remembers the situation how she

was wounded. The tiger looks around and growls. The buffalo is watching the tigress. Then the tigress disappears into the bushes.^{ix}

Sequence 44: Corbett is searching for the tigress in the forest. Suddenly he hears faint sounds of an approaching animal and takes cover. The sound is approaching. We see the tiger paws going through the fallen leaves. Corbett can see the stripes of a tiger through the thicket, and when he is ready to shoot, suddenly a young male tiger raises its head from the bushes. It is clear for the audience that this is not a tigress, but a young cub (music must help in this identification). Corbett sees the cub, smiles, lowers the rifle, then raise the rifle again, takes aim and shoots. The bullet hits the tree near the head of the cub. The cub runs away in panic. “Run! Run! Run away from this hell!” Shouts Corbett to the young tiger.^x

Sequence 45. After scaring away the tiger cub, Corbett continues walking. He goes through the region that has just been logged, becoming visibly upset by the destruction. He re-enters the pristine native forest and sees a spotted deer with a doe, so he stops and watches them. Then we hear Corbett’s voice. “Watching the animals in the doomed forest made me suddenly realize that the tiger was the only real defender against the relentless human demand for more natural resources. And here am I, someone who loves the forests and animals more than anything, forced to hunt down the last defender of the natural home for countless species of animals.”

Sequence 46: Eerie musical background. Sounds are a bit distorted. We see hands of Bob, the British timber contractor. Bob is counting a large stash of cash. As camera moves away from his hands and face, we see that he is somewhere in the middle of a forest, possibly coming from Kumaya Chak. Tree stumps are all around him. After some time, Bob suddenly stops counting, raises his head, looks around in fear, and then continues counting. After a few seconds he stops again, we see his eyes close up and it is obvious he is dead scared. He freezes, and as the camera moves slowly around, we can see the tigress is sitting on a tree stump and watching him from behind from a few metres distance. Bob slowly turns around and looks in tigress’s eyes. We see their eyes on the screen. The tigress yawns and Bob watches in horror her huge canines. The tigress growls at Bob. Bob tries to moisture his lips with tongue, but the tongue is dry. The tigress roars at Bob and then makes a long jump at him. Bob screams, raises his hands in desperate bid to defend himself from the tigress, and his cash starts floating around in the air.

Sequence 46: At this moment, Bob screams and wakes up in his bed. He is in shock. Then he gradually realizes that it was a bad dream. He gets up, drinks water, pants heavily, comes back and sits on his bed, then gets up again, goes to his metal safe, opens it and looks at large stashes of cash. He looks at them, then puts them back to the safe, and for several seconds closes his eyes in relief.

Sequence 47: Night, lit by a bright moonlight. Corbett is sitting up in the tree, waiting for a chance to shoot the man-eater. He hears kakar sounds, indicating that the tigress is close. Corbett prepares his rifle. He can also see a sambhar with a kid, they are feeding nearby. Suddenly the night silence is pierced by human screams in agony. There are three loud screams one after another, two short and one long scream “Ah-ah-aaaah!” The kakar and sambhar run at hearing the screams. There are no other sounds

or sightings. Corbett's voice: "I never found out how on earth these agonizing screams could come from the totally deserted village".

Sequence 48: In the morning his men come, massage his feet and make tea for him. As they sit there, Corbett looks around at the bushes, and we hear his voice: "When a tiger is after you, you never know where it is now. The tiger can be miles away, or can be lurking in the bushes just a few meters away" ...

Sequence 49: As Corbett comes back to his tent exhausted after all-night vigil, villagers from Thak are waiting for him, They came to Corbett to ask him to accompany them to the deserted Thak village. Corbett follows the scared villagers, who are coming back to their open-door houses and hastily collect their food and other belongings. One villager also takes the cat that we already know with him. Corbett goes into every open-door house first to make sure the tiger is not there. As tiger pug marks are all over the place, the situation is very tense. He looks around to see if there are any traces of a killed human around the village as he remembers the screaming from last night. Then he asks the headman if somebody could have been in the deserted village during the night. The headman replies this is absolutely impossible as everyone is so afraid of the man-eater that no one would come to the village even during the day. Then Corbett asks the headman if he saw the attack on the last victim of the tigress. The headman says he did not see the attack, but he heard the scream. "Did the man scream once?" asked Corbett. "No, three times." Corbett asks to repeat the scream. Headman tries to repeat, and we can hear this is the same scream that Corbett heard from the deserted village last night. Corbett's voice: "Several times during my hunts in the Indian mountains I had some strange and unexplained experiences, and although some might think I am exaggerating or had some hallucinations I want to assert that I did hear this scream of agony from the deserted village, although I have no explanation where this sound came from. And I can say that this was not my imagination only, as I remember very well that the kakar and sambhar heard the same scream as well." ^{xi}

Sequence 50: Night. Corbett is sitting in the tree, waiting for the tigress. We see the buffalo is tied nearby. A tropical thunderstorm erupts, totally drenching him, but he doggedly remains waiting for an opportunity to strike. Water is trickling down from his face and the rifle.

Sequence 51: Now we can see the tiger, as the storm is stopping. She is at a different place. She is calling for a mate, and wanders through the forest. She comes to the place where all the trees are cut. Then she sees the lights of the worker's station. She calls again. Now we are inside the worker's station where they sleep. Thousands of workers are sleeping together. Then one of them awakes another worker whispering "did you hear a tiger roar?" They listen together and they hear the roar again. Some others are also awake. The roar comes closer and closer. We see the scared faces. Some say the tiger will break down their door and attack them. People look with terror through the dark windows of their hut. Some starts screaming, then somebody says they must all shout together to drive the tiger away. So they shout as loud as they can, and also make drumming and stomping sounds with their feet and hands. But we see that the tigress is more infuriated by their shouting. She comes closer and aggressively roars at the closed doors. The people also shout more. More roaring. Noise is unbearable. Some workers are covering their ears. Then the workers stop shouting. The tiger roars a few more times and also goes silent. The workers in tense silence watch their flimsy doors

and dark windows. It is completely dark outside. No more roaring is heard. Possibly the tiger left, asks one of the workers whispering, but they do not know if the tiger is still there. Somebody suggests (still whispering) that they need to look outside the door, but no one is brave enough to open the door and check if the tiger is still there. "Do you want to check?" he is asked. He shakes his head negatively. Somebody else silently approaches the door and tries to listen to the sounds outside. At this moment the tiger roars from behind the door. They all start screaming again from fear. Then silence falls again. After some time one of the workers say, "How can we go to sleep after all this? Or how can we work after such a night? We must say to the bosses that if the tiger is not killed we will be leaving!" "Correct," another worker replies, "if they wanted to cut the trees, they should have killed all the tigers first of all! We came here to work and to make money for our families, not to become man-eating tiger's food!" One of the workers says "I am leaving tomorrow". Some others also say they will be leaving too. They decide to send a delegation to Corbett.

Sequence 52: After the rainy night vigil, a drenched and sleepless Corbett arrives to his tent to find out that there is a delegation of tree cutters waiting for him. They tell Corbett about the previous night's tiger visit to their station and say that they are afraid to work in the forest, and even to sleep at night. Corbett answers in a depressed voice that he had never seen such a clever tiger. He says he had not seen her even once during all this time, so he did not have any chance to shoot the man-eater. Corbett promises that he will use all his energy and skills to kill the man-eater, but warns them that if he cannot kill the tigress in the remaining two days, he will concede defeat and will leave. The workers are stunned, but seeing in what condition Corbett is, they leave without arguing. Corbett's servant asks him if he will be sleeping, but Corbett says, he only wants to change clothes and go and wait again for his chance to shoot the man-eater.

Sequence 53: The next scene is a combination of several scenes. These scenes follow each other under the same musical theme, so we do not hear the sounds from these actions on the screen. We see Corbett sitting in the tree, and him following the tiger pug marks with ready rifle on the path between Thak and Chuka, we see the tiger following him unseen, then we see Corbett dressed in female sari and cutting leaves from a tree, with a rifle under sari and watching around carefully, we see tiger stalking him, we see the work place without action, and see some workers are leaving. With all these scenes in the background Corbett's depressed voice tells that he had used all the experience he had for hunting man-eating tigers and leopards for 32 years, but the tigress was winning every time, that tigress always knew where he was, and he was unable to see her even once. We can see Corbett is very tired, his fingers sometimes tremble.

Sequence 54: The last day of hunt. Corbett says that on the very last day, November 30th, he took his four Indian servants to help him to tie two goats close to the village of Thak, and sat in a tall mango tree for several hours. As they all walk towards Thak, we hear Corbett's voice: "This was my last day, and although I was badly in need of sleep, I decided to use the several hours on my last day. This was the last day of November, and I had time only until the sun goes down. I put my four men on a balcony of one of the houses in deserted Thak village, and told them to wait for me without moving from there. I was sitting on the tree machan with the feeling that I was losing my duel against the clever tigress." Then we see how the sun gradually disappears behind the mountain, and we see Corbett climb down from the tree and go

to the village to call his men.

Sequence 53: His men tell him that they heard the tigress calling from a distance while they were sitting on the balcony. They untie the goats and start walking towards Chuka. Corbett is very distressed. As they walk together followed by two goats, we hear Corbett's voice: "There are few people, I imagine, who have not experienced that feeling of depression that follows failure to accomplish anything they have set out to do. Excluding the time spent on the journeys from and to home, I had been on the heels of the man-eater from 23rd October to 7th November, and again from 24th to 30th November, and it is only those of you who have walked in fear of having the teeth of a tiger meet in your throat who will have any idea of the effect on one's nerves of days and weeks of such anticipation. I have told you of some of the attempts I made during this period of seven days and seven nights to get a shot at the tigress, but these were by no means the only attempts I made. I knew that I was being watched and followed, and every time I went through the two miles of jungle between my camp and Thak I tried every trick I have learnt in a lifetime spent in the jungles to outwit the tigress. Bitter though my disappointment was, I felt that my failure was not in any way due to anything I had done or left undone."

Sequence 54. While walking Corbett hears the distant call of the tigress. Corbett stops his men and listens carefully. We see Corbett's eyes close up on the screen and we hear his reasoning. Corbett's voice explains that the calling tigress reminded him of the very last chance he had – to call up the tigress by calling himself as a male tiger. But there are problems. First of all, the tigress might not come at all, as she is very clever to be tricked with such a bluff. Secondly, the tigress is quite far, the terrain is very rugged, and according to the position of the Sun, there will be no light in about 30 minutes. And he knows there will be no Moon for sometimes after Sun disappears. So even if the tigress is deceived and starts coming, she might come to them when it is already dark, and as Corbett does not have any artificial light, they will be defenseless against the enraged tigress in the dark forest. Considering all pros for and against, Corbett decides to use this last chance of his last hunt.

Sequence 55: Corbett gives his rifle to one of his men, cups his hands at his mouth and calls. They hear the tigress calling back. Corbett calls again and the tigress answers again. "She is coming!" whispers Corbett to his men who already are visibly afraid. Corbett start running down the path, frantically followed by his four men and two goats. As they are running we hear Corbett's voice: "The tigress was coming directly to us. The most cunning and clever tigress was tricked by her instinct for the continuation of her genes into the future. We all suddenly turn blind when we are in love". Somebody falls down but quickly gets up and continues running. Everyone is silent. The tigress calls are more clearly heard as she is gradually approaching. As they run, we hear Corbett's voice again. "It was crucial for me to find a good place to meet the tigress, a good place to hide from her eyes. As I knew this place very well, I decided to meet the tigress at the four feet high rock which had a space behind to hide my men and the goats". While they all run, Corbett stops and calls a couple more times to let the tigress know they are changing position. The tigress is answering and Corbett can hear she is getting closer. The Sun had already disappeared behind the mountain and it is getting darker. As they reach the four feet high rock, Corbett leads them behind and under the rock and orders them to crouch. Then he looks at his two rifles, one is lighter for long distance accuracy, and the other is a heavy, deadly one for close encounters.

Sequence 56: Corbett takes the heavy rifle and checks that both barrels have good cartridges. He replaces both cartridges. Then he takes the lighter rifle, takes the bullets out of it and gives the empty rifle to one of his four men. "A loaded gun in the hands of a nervous person can be as deadly as an attacking tiger" we hear Corbett's voice say as he does this. He then signs his men to stay as low and silent as they can be under the rock, keeping goats with them. They are sitting close to each other, the goats in the middle. They hear the tigress roar as she comes closer and closer. After positioning his men behind the rock, Corbett climbs up and looks around to find a good position for himself for shooting. We hear his voice, saying that he needed a position which would be relatively concealed from the tigress, but at the same time would allow him to see the scene, as he did not know from where exactly the tigress would be approaching him. First he lies down next to the rock, but realizes that he will see the tiger very late, and that the tigress could approach from the right or left side without him seeing her at all until very late. As he seeks the best position, the tigress voice is coming closer and closer. Only a few seconds are left. Corbett checks the rock itself and finds there a narrow ledge behind. He positions himself on the ledge, sitting sideways, stretching his right foot to reach the ground to hold himself, he also stretches his left hand and puts it on the top of the rock. He puts the rifle on a rounded top of the rock, and aims to the place where he thinks the tigress head will appear, about three meters from him. He is ready.

Sequence 57: The tigress calling is coming very close. Suddenly Corbett's rifle slides off from the rounded top of the rock. He quickly takes out from his pocket a handkerchief and puts it on the rounded top. Then he puts the rifle on the handkerchief. It is getting darker and darker with every second and the sound of the tigress' call is increasing. The tigress reaches the flat piece of ground, now she is only about 20-25 meters from Corbett, who is behind the low rock ridge. The tigress looks around but cannot see the male tiger she is looking for. She starts freaking out, gets enraged, attacks bushes roaring, and starts biting them. We see the frightened faces of the four men sitting behind the rock. All four of them are praying silently, holding hands in a praying position. The goats are also trembling. No one is making any sound. It is almost completely dark. Corbett calls again, at the same time as the tigress. The tigress realizing the male tiger must be behind the low rock ridge, goes there, stops for a second, roars one more time, then makes several steps to the right, and when she steps out of the bushes she suddenly sees Corbett's face looking at her from behind the rock, with a double-barrel heavy rifle aimed at her face.

Sequence 58: We see a close up of the tigress' eyes on the whole screen, then we see a close up of Corbett's eyes, and at this frozen moment, before he pulls the trigger, Corbett relives the serene scene of the two cubs playing with their mother in their former idyllic natural world. At this moment the dramatic music stops and there are a few second of tense silence. Then Corbett pulls the trigger. The tigress roars and jumps towards Corbett, he fires another barrel, and tigress falls down touching the rock with her nose. Corbett is knocked out of the narrow ledge and falls on top of his men, who catch him and his gun.

Sequence 59. Corbett frees himself from the human and goat feet, stands up, takes out the light rifle from the man holding it, puts cartridges in the magazine and shoots five times in the air, the sound ricocheting between the Nepalese and Indian Himalayan

mountains. As he shoots we can see the faces of workers, then villagers, who hear these shots and understand with joy that the man-eater is dead. His men are watching him in complete silence. "The man-eater is dead. You can go up and have a look at the tiger" says Corbett. They do not move, unable to comprehend his words. He repeats his words. Corbett's men climb up, but seeing the tigress' body is touching the rock with her nose, they stop and do not dare to go further. Corbett sits down and lights a cigarette with trembling fingers. Then we see torches start appearing from below the mountain, these are villagers running towards them.

Sequence 60. With the scenes of people with torches gathering around the tigress and the rock, taking the tigress' body lashed on a young tree trunk, and people thanking Corbett. We see Corbett slowly stroking the dead tigress' head, then he looks at the celebrating villagers, smiles and we hear his voice. "I have come near the end of my man-eater hunting career. I have had a long spell and count myself fortunate in having walked out on my own two feet and not been carried out on a cradle in the manner and condition of the man of Thak. There have been occasions when life has hung by a thread and others when a light purse and disease resulting from exposure and strain have made the going difficult, but for all these occasions I am amply rewarded if my hunting has resulted in saving one human life." ^{xii}

Sequence 61: The final scene of the film. Morning in the forest. We see a young male tiger. He is wandering alone through the forest. As the young tiger walks, the camera gradually raises and follows him from a higher point and we can see all the trees around are marked for cutting. With the young tiger continuing his walk, gradually disappearing in the doomed forest, we see the final lines from the film makers:

"This was Jim Corbett's last hunt for a man-eating tiger."

"Several days after this hunt Corbett started filming tigers near his house in Kaladhungi. The footage that has survived is kept in British National Film Archive in London. Corbett was the first to make video footage of the tigers in wild."

"Five years after his last hunt Corbett wrote his recollections of his several hunts under the title "Man-Eaters of Kumaon". Corbett wrote these stories in order to help the blinded soldiers that were coming back from the Second World War. Corbett gave all the income from his book to help blinded soldiers."

"The book was published in 1944 and become an instant worldwide bestseller. It was also translated into dozens of languages."

"Corbett became a world celebrity, and to date he remains possibly the only writer of world renown who personally answered thousands of the letters from his fans."

"The story of the Thak man-eater, the last hunting story of the legendary conservationist, author, and hunter, is the last hunting story of his best-selling book 'Man-Eaters of Kumaon'."

"In 1956, Corbett's name was given to the first tiger reserve that was originally organized in 1936 with great help from Jim Corbett."

(Then there will be a list to all actors, individuals and organizations that supported this film.)

At the very end:

"Part of the income from this film goes for the tiger preservation funds."

THE END

Central philosophy of the film and the investigation of the Corbett story sidelines

The film story is about a tragic conflict between humans and tigers, leading to the tigers becoming man-eaters. The film addresses two of the core reasons of such conflicts, human greed and human mistakes, and raises issues of tiger conservation.

In the tragic encounters between man-eating tigers and humans we usually see only the human side of the story, and man-eating animals are usually portrayed as blood-thirsty monsters. This is a case, for example, in a popular movie “The Ghost and the Darkness” about the similar situation, when a pair of man-eating lions in East Africa stopped a construction work. This film is not a typical “monster movie”. This film will present both sides of the tragic story: the story of human victims with their problems, fears, hopes and mistakes on one side, and the story of a tigress, a dedicated mother of her young cubs, who suddenly loses her health because of human greed and human inflicted wounds. Corbett’s writings are brilliant in presenting both sides of the story, as he was always sympathetic not only to the human tragedy, but towards a tragedy of wounded tigers as well.

Why use Corbett stories?

Jim Corbett’s stories of the man-eating tigers are true classics. Apart from being brilliantly written, gripping stories, another amazing thing about them is that they are documentary accounts of real events. All the names and places mentioned in his stories are real, and these events took place in North India between 1907 and 1938. All his life, Jim Corbett was revered for his legendary honesty, and there is not a single example of Corbett trying to change or dramatize the real facts in order to impress his readers.

Despite the fact that Corbett is known from his books as a hunter of man-eating tigers, he was primarily a person who truly loved tigers. Even when reading his writings about the man-eaters he was shooting, you can clearly feel his deep love and reverence for these majestic animals. He was one of the first to fight for establishing protected areas for tigers where they would be undisturbed from human expansion. Corbett’s name has long become iconic in preserving the tiger as a species. Corbett was instrumental in establishing the first tiger reserve in India in 1936.

Despite the amazing power of the Corbett stories and his role in preserving tigers, the Corbett stories are virtually neglected by the movie industry (although there are a few TV series about Corbett, and an IMAX film “In the land of Tiger”). The only existing feature film, a Hollywood movie “Man-eater of Kumaon” was made in 1948, after the phenomenal success of the book “Man-eaters of Kumaon”. Unfortunately, instead of using the gripping documental stories from the Corbett books, the authors of the film made up a completely fictional story, which was a far cry from the power of Corbett’s true stories and did not do justice to Corbett's writings and real events. So making films based on his stories I am sure will generate great public interest on one hand, and will raise awareness of the need to save tigers on the other.

With current interest in environmental issues, and with the rising public support for the efforts to save the tiger, I believe it is a good time to think about creating such a film based on Corbett's writings. This should not be a horror film about a man-eating animal, where the man-eater will be portrayed as a bloodthirsty monster. This should be a suspense-drama of the passionate love of Corbett towards tigers, where tigers, even man-eaters, will be seen in a sympathetic light. We will see Corbett facing the problem, as he had to kill the animals he adored, because of the tragic circumstances, and often a result of human greed and mistakes.

Provisionally I suggest the title for the film: "The Last Hunt of Jim Corbett".

Additional materials

1. The documentary element to be used in the plot

There are many documentary elements in this story to make the film a gripping drama-adventure and psychological thriller.

We have the documented account of Corbett seeing the future Thak man-eater before she became a man-eater, while Corbett was hunting the Chuka man-eater in April 1938. Corbett saw the future Thak man-eater, when the tigress was taking her cubs to the kill. Corbett's detailed description is one of the first documented descriptions of a mother tiger teaching her cubs how to move silently in the jungle. Corbett watched for several hours how the tigress allowed her cubs to find the kill (a half eaten buffalo carcass), and while the cubs were feeding, the tigress went to sleep. After feeding she cleaned them and the happy family left the scene. Corbett, as he writes, had no idea that in several months he would have to hunt this tigress as a dreaded man-eater. His words: "I did not know, and it would have made no difference if I had, that the tigress I watched with such interest that day would later, owing to gunshot wounds, become a man-eater and a terror to all who lived or worked in the Ladhya valley and the surrounding villages."

Another documentary element of the story is that Corbett was urgently asked to come and kill the tigress by the Indian government, because the government was clearing a big mass of the forests in this region where the man-eater started operating. The government was afraid that the active man-eater would make the work of thousands of workers dangerous and even impossible. This will naturally bring in this film the important topic of reducing the natural forests by human activities, leaving no habitat for the tigers.

Another fact is that about five thousand workers started arriving to fell the trees when Corbett was still hunting the tigress. Workers were paranoid about the man-eater (although the tigress did not kill any of the workers, unlike the Tsavo man-eating lions who eat dozens of workers). Workers often had fears that the tiger was lurking in the forest waiting to attack them, so there were frequent false-alarms, and Corbett had to

dash to the site where workers were working to find the alarm was a false one. This will also create a dramatic backdrop for the hunting story.

Corbett also describes a dramatic, although non-violent confrontation of the tigress with the workers. The night before she was killed, in a search for the mate, the calling tigress came close to the place where the workers were stationed. Hearing the sound of the approaching tiger call, workers started shouting as loud as they could in order to drive the tigress away. Their shouting, on the contrary, infuriated the tigress, so she started roaring back to the invisible workers and came closer to the worker's camp. After the wild competition in shouting to each other between five thousand men and an enraged tigress, the tigress cowed workers into complete silence. Only after this did the tigress leave. A dramatic shouting competition between the sole desperate tigress against the five thousand scared workers might become a classic movie scene.

Another documented dramatic line is that both Corbett and the tigress were stalking each other during the time he was hunting the tigress. Corbett was finding the tigress' pug marks superimposed on his traces, and knew that the tigress was in return hunting him. During his hunt he knew the tigress could see him and was following his every step, but he was unable to see the tigress even once, except for the famous last confrontation. To add to the dramatic feel of this duel, we also know that the village of Thak was totally deserted due to the fear of the tigress after the second person from the village was killed, just before Corbett arrived on his second expedition. So Corbett and the tigress were the only two subjects remaining around the village on his second expedition, from November 23rd till the November 30th. The hunt during this week became a tense psychological thriller-duel. As the village was hastily deserted, the doors of many houses of the village of Thak were left open and Corbett was seeing tigress pug marks all over the village, indicating that the tigress could have been inside any of the houses with open doors. Corbett going on to the deserted main street of the village, between the houses with ominously opened doors, and the unseen Tigress following him, or the tigress following him several times in the dark when he was going through the jungles from the village of Thak to the village of Chuka where he was stationed – these documented moments can keep the audience on the edges of their seats. All these details are absolutely documental, including the appearance of a house cat in a deserted village. Several times Corbett saw pug marks in the morning next to his tent and he understood that his and his men's tents were approached by the tigress during the night. Corbett also saw the pug marks of a young male tiger, most likely the cub of the man-eater tigress. The other cub, that Corbett saw several months before, must have died (possibly when the mother tiger was incapacitated by the gunshot wound). All these are documentary elements that will help to create a tense suspense-thriller drama. And all these elements are documented in detail in the Corbett stories.

And of course, there is the famous final confrontation scene between Corbett and the tigress that took place in the dying seconds of daylight on November 30th, 1938. After two expeditions in October-November, and November of 1938, mentally and physically drained, Corbett gave up, untied his goats that were tied to the tree to attract the tigress, collected his men and started walking from the village of Thak to the village Chuka. Feeling extremely depressed that he had failed the mission and could not rid the villagers of the man-eater, he hears the call of the man-eater, who is still searching for a mate. Corbett decides to call her up, and starts calling, imitating the tiger mating call. Corbett was a great master of making animal sounds. It is evening, the Sun is setting,

and only about 30 minutes of daylight is left. The tigress is a couple of kilometers away, the terrain consists of very rugged mountainous, and if she decides to come, it is crucial that there is enough time for her to arrive while there is still light left. Corbett did not have any artificial light, so he totally depended on the dying sunlight. He decides to call her up, then searches for a place to meet the tigress. Corbett decides to position himself behind a four feet high the rock, sitting uncomfortably on the narrow ledge, with his gun positioned on the rounded top of the rock. He placed his horrified four men and two goats behind the rock, directly under himself. The final minutes are horrific, the roaring tigress gets infuriated as she cannot see the male tiger meeting her at the place she was expecting to meet him, and Corbett calls again to draw her closer to the rock where he is ambushing her. The tigress makes several steps and suddenly, seeing Corbett's face on top of the rock less than 3 meters from her, stops shocked. After Corbett fired the first bullet and she is shot by a heavy bullet under her eye, both Corbett and tigress behave instinctively: the tigress makes a desperate jump towards Corbett. We know from Corbett writings that on receiving a bullet, big cats make an instinctive jump forward. Also, in a split second after making the first shot Corbett felt his body was dislodged (by the recoil) from the narrow ledge where he was sitting, and most likely he instinctively clinched his fingers, and as a result shot another bullet. So called "Moro reflex" that all humans have from their birth can explain this instinctive movement (see for example, Laura Berk, Child Development. Pearson plc, 2009). Corbett mentions that the second shot was fired by accident. This shot hit the jumping tigress in the neck and most likely shortened the trajectory of her jump. The tigress almost reached Corbett, and fell dead touching the rock behind which Corbett was sitting. The recoil of the second shot hit violently Corbett in the jaw. Corbett fell head over heels on the heads of his horrified men.

I suggest that the famous final scene of the direct confrontation of Corbett and the tigress should be filmed in India, at the real place, at the rock, behind which Corbett was sitting on a narrow ledge on November 30th. The rock is still there, 10 minutes walk from the village of Thak. Photos of this rock are attached to this script.

2. A new added lines to the story

The author of this plot added a new line to the story. This line is not openly present in Corbett story, although there are clear indications that the added line must have been a hidden part of the real story of the Thak man-eating tiger. This new line involves government officials, as they decide to fell the trees to sell them for profit. Some of the governmental officials are against this plan as they know that wildlife is active in this region and that tigers also live there. Others are against this plan as they think it is not safe to have thousands of workers working in the forests where tigers live. In order to bring alive this line of the story, the author introduced a new fictional character, a British timber contractor, named "Bob", who wants by all means to get everyone behind this profitable (for him primarily) plan, so he decides to clear the region of tigers. He contacts a local poacher and asks him to kill the two resident tigers that live near the villages of Thak and Chuka. This poacher becomes the reason that both male and female tigers are badly wounded, and both eventually become man-eaters.

Although this is an added line, and there is no indication of any government intrigues or the covert agreements to kill the resident tigers in Corbett's story, there is some documented material to propose that this could have been the case:

(1) It is a fact, that both resident tigers of the Ladhya Valley, male and female, were badly wounded by an unidentified hunter from a muzzle-loader rifle, both during a relatively short period of time, and these wounds became the reason of making both tigers man-eaters. Corbett killed both these tigers in 1938, April and November.

(2) There were no other recorded cases of man-eating tigers in these villages before or after these two cases for many years;

(3) Government officials (at least in some circles of the government) were interested to fell and to sell the trees. This was obviously a big project, as it involved five thousand workers, building housing for them, and obviously big finances were involved.

(4) There is a strong possibility that such a project, involving clearing the forests in a region with pristine wildlife would have some resistance from some officials, mostly based on environmental considerations; For example, the legendary Indian politician and conservationist, Govind Ballabh Pant, who was the only Indian in the Forest Department of the region at the time, was a vocal defender of all pristine forests of the region. Mr. Pant is in the script as well. By the way, it was Mr. Pant's suggestion to rename the first tiger reserve into "Corbett National Park" in 1956.

(5) Corbett was urgently contacted after the very first kill by the Thak man-eater. For Corbett it was unusual to go after the tiger after only one case of an attack on humans. In regions where there is coexistence between tigers and humans such things occasionally happen but these are usually cases where the tiger was surprised, so a tiger cannot be qualified as a man-eater after just one kill. Corbett was asked to kill the man-eater so as not to hamper the works of five thousand workers. Corbett actually agreed to go after the man-eater to help the villagers whom he knew from his previous visit to this region when hunting the previous, male man-eater. I also added a scene of villagers writing a letter to Corbett (in reality Corbett did not receive a letter from villagers). And of course, dreams of Corbett and the timber contractor (Bob) were added by the author of the movie plot to portray the fears and aspirations of the main protagonist and antagonist characters.

So I suggest that this new story line (about the intrigue between the profit-oriented and more environmentally oriented officials) can explain the coincidence why there were suddenly two cases of gunshot-wounded man-eating tigers exactly in the region where the government had decided to fell the trees in the pristine wooded hills.

As this all happened in 1938, during the time of British Raj, the actors on both sides of governmental politics and intrigues are mostly British (some are fictional and some are real characters). The central negative character is a fictional character. It is a timber contractor, "Bob", who tries to achieve the clearing of the forests. He is British. So is his friend and supporter from the Forest Department, "James" (another fictional character). There is also a local poacher, desperately in need for money for his family health reasons, who "Bob" hires to clear the region from resident tigers. There is also a group of positive governmental officials, who try to stop this project from going ahead. Corbett's good friend William Ibbotson (a real person) is among them. The central

person of this group of conservationists is an Indian politician, Mr. Pant, also a real person we already discussed. He sees the forests of this region not only as a source of income, but as a natural habitat for native wildlife and as a national treasure. He is opposed to the plans to clear forests and tries to convince the rest of the forest officials not to destroy the pristine forests on the India-Nepal border.

I believe that the addition of this line of conflict between the profit-oriented and the environmentally concerned governmental officials will enrich the plot of the film and will give the story the very important and very contemporary issue of the struggle between two approaches towards nature: the mostly profit oriented use of natural resources, and the concerns for the future of the environment and wildlife.

3. Possible added details to the story to dramatize the events

I do not think that Corbett's story needs new additional events to dramatize the story, but if there is a need to go down this way, there are few possible developments, already partly present in this text. For example, after receiving help from Corbett to care for his wife, the poacher tells Corbett that he was the one who wounded both male and female tigers. He also tell Corbett about the involvement of Bob and James in the bid to clear the forest from tigers. Corbett threatens Bob to expose his actions and orders Bob to give the workers the real salary he receives for the contracts. Bob tries to kill Corbett while he is hunting the tigress. And finally, my great wish (realized at the moments only as a dream) the tigress might also attack and kill bob.

All these details, to my mind, are unnecessary for the story, but are available if the movie producers decide they need more action on a screen.

Most importantly, in the true nature of Corbett story, the man-eating tiger should not be portrayed in this film as a bloodthirsty monster. Of course, spectators should watch in fear the real threat coming from the enraged and clever man-eating tiger, but at the same time they should be sympathetic towards the tigress side of the story.

Joseph Jordania

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ⁱ This scene of Corbett meeting for the first time with the future Thak man-eater, and Corbett's words, used here, is from the Corbett story "Chuka Man-Eater", from the 1953 book "The Temple Tiger, and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon".

ⁱⁱ These are historic words Mr Pant said in the fight against the deforestation of Northern India.

ⁱⁱⁱ This dramatic scene of killing a man-eater is a documentary scene, but from another hunt: this is how Corbett killed the Kanda man-eater. The Chuka man-eater was actually killed when the tiger came and fell asleep in the midday heat under the ficus tree where Corbett was concealed. Corbett deeply regretted that he had to shoot a sleeping tiger.

^{iv} This is also a fact: a few days after finishing the hunt of the Thak tigress Corbett started a long tiger filming project that gave him many hours of footage of tigers living in the wild. A surviving part of this footage is still stored in the British National Film Archive in London. Corbett footage is

considered the earliest footage of the tigers in the wild.

^v The first victim of the tigress was a 12 years old girl, Beena, the village Kot Kindri. She was killed while collecting mangoes close to the village spring. According to the Pere Byrne's book *Shikari Sahib*, her younger sister witnessed the attack. We found out her name after visiting the village Kot Kindri in 2014.

^{vi} This overhanging rock is still there, on a ridge between the villages Thak and Kot Kindri. You can see the rock in the book "*Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*", 2016

^{vii} I propose that no actual body parts (and other horror details) should be shown on the screen. All the violence in the film should be off screen. This is not a horror film about a man-eater; this is a suspense-thriller-drama about the tragedy when a balance between humans and nature is disturbed.

^{viii} In his story Corbett even provides the words of the Hindu hymn of praise and the refrain they were singing while carrying the body of their fellow villager.

^{ix} As we know from Corbett story, tigress did not kill any of the buffaloes Corbett provided for her, although she did pass on several occasions only a few feet from the tethered buffaloes.

^x This scene is from another Corbett story, "*Pipal-Pani Tiger*", where Corbett deliberately fired a shot close to the male tiger cub, to frighten and teach him to be more careful when walking through the jungle.

^{xi} a special study is dedicated to the research of the possible source of the mysterious scream Corbett heard from the deserted Thak village in the book "*Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*".

^{xii} These are Corbett's last words of the story.