



THE TIGER NEXT DOOR

86 minutes, color, 2009

www.thetigernextdoor.com



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Short Synopsis

Experts estimate that there are more tigers in private captivity in the USA than there are roaming wild in the world. 24 of them live in Dennis H's backyard.

Synopsis

The Tiger Next Door is a documentary film that tells the story of a man named Dennis Hill who has been breeding, and selling tigers from his backyard in Flat Rock, Indiana for over fifteen years.

Tigers, and other big cats, are simultaneously an occupation and an obsession for Hill. When the film begins, Hill has 24 tigers, 3 bears, 6 leopards and one cougar. He claims to know exactly what his animals are thinking by the look in their eyes. He is especially consumed with the prospect of breeding a stripeless white tiger. But now, after a surprise government inspection, he's lost the license that allowed him to keep exotic animals, and the state of Indiana is threatening to shut him down. He has just five days to find alternate homes for all but three of his brood and to bring his facilities up to code – or else lose what he considers to be his life's work.

As Hill fights to hold on to his tigers over the days and months that follow, *The Tiger Next Door* follows him – exploring his motives, his past, and the curious, ethically-murky world he's created in his backyard. At the same time, the film ranges far beyond Dennis' animal compound, illuminating the connection between breeders like Hill, and the near-epidemic of wild animal keeping in the United States.

Excerpts from reviews of THE TIGER NEXT DOOR:

“Beautifully made... A seamless narrative that challenges thinking adults.”

– S. Nusbaumer, The Huffington Post

“... fascinating, infuriating. A great story, told with intelligence and compassion and some amazing footage.”

–Norman Wilner, NOW Magazine

“...an affectionate profile, a damning exposé, and an urgent missive about the dire status of the magnificent animals stalking the edges of the frame.”

– Adam Nayman, Eye WEEKLY

“This movie was just downright disturbing... a must-see for animal rights' activists and anyone else who is interested in the conservation of our planet and its inhabitants.”

– A. Breen, FLARE magazine

“**TOP PICK.** It’s a must-see, as a detailed character study and piece of vigilant reportage.”
– Scott Shoger, NUVO Newsweekly

“**Four stars** — It’s one thing to have a ferret, but quite another to have upwards of 60 exotic animals, including several tigers, black bears, and cougars confined in cages in your backyard. In Camilla Calamandrei’s unsettling film, we get a front-row glimpse into the life of Dennis H., a former meth addict, felon, and biker, whose apparent ‘dedication’ to the animals clouds people’s judgement. Not for the animal lover, this film questions the fine line between compassion and obsession.”
– Chris Jancelewicz, AOL

“The Tiger Next Door” is a **gripping moral tale**, in which some of the 'good guys' emerge thoroughly unlikable, and some of the 'bad guys' sometimes invite a spark of sympathy. Beneath the debris of human hubris and failure, human irresponsibility and jealousy, are bears, tigers, cougars and other large wild animals kept in private captivity --prisoners in a diminished world that systematically denies what it is for them to be who they are. The film deserves the largest possible viewer-ship, because of what it teaches us about being a tiger, and what it teaches us about being a human being.”
– Tom Regan, Author

Photos are available: <http://thetigernextdoor.com/press-kit/>

Background

Below is a list of some of the captive tiger, bear, and cougar attacks that have occurred in the US since 2000. This list does not include instances of tiger escapes, tiger bodies or incidence of animal cruelty towards tigers.

Saylorsburg, PENNSYLVANIA **October 5, 2009**
A woman is attacked and killed by a black bear she had kept as a pet for nine years. Kelly Ann Walz was cleaning the cage where she kept 350-pound Teddy on Sunday night when the bear turned on her and attacked.

East Liverpool, PENNSYLVANIA **May 25, 2009**
An 11 year old girl in Columbiana County is flown by helicopter ambulance to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh after being mauled by a pet mountain lion.

Calhan, COLORADO **April 24, 2009**
A volunteer was bitten by a tiger at “Big Cats of Serenity Springs.”

Frederick, MARYLAND **January 18, 2009**
A 32-year-old woman named Deborah Gregory was attacked by a jaguar at Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo.

Luray, VIRGINIA**November 16, 2008**

A 15 year old lost her finger to a 5 year old tiger named Star at the Luray Zoo.

Broken Arrow, OKLAHOMA**October 29, 2008**

A man was mauled to death by tiger at Safari's Interactive Animal when he walked into the cage while feeding the cat a deer carcass. The mauling happened in the presence of more than 40 pre-schoolers who were ushered away from the scene.

Richmond Township, ILLINOIS**August 5, 2008**

Man bitten by tiger while training for circus act. Larry Dean said he was practicing a circus act at the Hawthorn Corporation farm near Richmond when the tiger suddenly became aggressive and grabbed him with its mouth. "I would say that was a mauling... he was pretty bloody." Fire Chief Rick Gallas said. Gallas said workers told paramedics they had to beat the tiger with baseball bats to get it to release Dean.

Branson West, MISSOURI**August 5, 2008**

A 16-year-old was mauled by three tigers at a Branson Interactive Zoo and Aquarium (formerly called PREDATOR WORLD). The employee was apparently in the tiger pen taking a picture for a zoo patron when the attack happened.

Warrenton, MISSOURI**August 3, 2008**

A tiger jumped a fence at the Wesa-A-Geh-Ya Animal Park and attacked volunteer Jason Barr. Part of Barr's leg had to be amputated. The tiger was shot.

West Palm Beach, FLORIDA**May, 2008**

A man named Marc McCarthy was rushed to the hospital after being bitten on the leg by one of his tigers, Sabi, on the set of a rap video being filmed in Miami. Marc McCarthy houses 22 big cats on what appears in aerial maps to be about 8 lots in a subdivision.

Big Bear Lake, CALIFORNIA**April 22, 2008**

A 39 yr old animal trainer was killed while training a bear. Miller was working at his cousin Randy Miller's Predators in Action facility, which trains animals for films, when the bear lunged at him for no apparent reason.

San Francisco, CALIFORNIA**December 25, 2007**

A Siberian tiger named Tatiana escaped her enclosure at the San Francisco Zoo mauled two teenagers and killed a third. Police shot the tiger. One year earlier the same tiger attacked her keeper, chewing off her arm.

Acton, CALIFORNIA**December 3, 2007**

A 4 year old tiger belonging to the Shambala reserve of Tippi Hedren attacked and injured worker Chris Orr. The worker is in critical but stable condition with multiple bites.

San Antonio, TEXAS**July 14, 2007**

A tiger at the San Antonio Zoo mauled zoo keeper Jeff Tierney, leaving him in critical condition. The 244-pound tiger, named Berani, knocked the zookeeper down, bit him several times and dragged him by the head into a service hallway, but for some reason released the injured zookeeper for an instant — long enough for him to retrieve a vial of pepper spray from his belt and repel the creature.

Altamont, KANSAS**Aug. 18, 2005**

A local teenager was killed while having her picture taken with a Siberian tiger. Haley Hilderbrand, 17, was visiting the Lost Creek Animal Sanctuary, where, for years, area high school seniors have gone to have their class photos taken alongside the sanctuary's exotic fauna. While the 7-year-old tiger was being restrained by the sanctuary's owner, Doug Billingsly, it turned and severely bit Hilderbrand, who later died of her wounds.

Minneapolis, MINNESOTA**June 25, 2005**

A 10-year-old boy was attacked by a lion and tiger. The child suffered a brain injury and severed spinal cord -- injuries that have left the child a quadriplegic and dependent on a respirator. The child and his father were visiting body shop owner Chuck Mock, who owns 11 exotic cats and one bear. When Mock opened the cage, the tiger jumped out and attacked the boy.

Minneapolis, MINNESOTA**April 27, 2005**

A woman was seriously injured after being attacked by four tigers while cleaning their pen at a private property near Frontenac.

St Augustine, FLORIDA**November 21, 2004**

Two Sheriff's deputies saved a 14-year-old boy from being attacked by a tiger late Saturday at the St. Johns County Fair.

Lowgap, NORTH CAROLINA**January 25, 2004**

A 14-year-old Surry County girl was mauled by a tiger kept in a cage behind the family's trailer.

Millers Creek, NORTH CAROLINA**December 14, 2003**

A woman's 400-pound Bengal tiger fatally mauled her 10-year-old nephew after pulling him under a fence and into his cage, authorities said. "Cat" was kept behind the family's home in a cage that allowed the family dog to run in and out of the cage.

New York City, NEW YORK**Oct 4, 2003**

MING, a full grown adult tiger, was found living in apartment in Harlem—after it bit it's owner and a neighbor reported the animal to city officials.

Las Vegas, NEVADA**Oct. 3, 2003**

A 600-pound white tiger dragged Roy Horn, 59, half of the famed duo Siegfried and Roy, offstage by the neck after Horn tapped its nose with a microphone for ignoring a command. He was in critical but stable condition Sunday at a Las Vegas hospital.

San Francisco, CALIFORNIA**September 20, 2002**

A tiger attacked a kindergartner at a school assembly Friday, sending the 6-year-old boy to a hospital. The tiger was being led out of an auditorium at Baymonte Christian School by its trainer when it suddenly lurched over a row of seats and grabbed the boy by the head in its jaws.

Boise, IDAHO**August 12, 2000**

A woman attending a fund-raiser for Zoo Boise was mauled by a tiger that slipped through a cage door, and then wounded by a bullet fired to subdue the animal.

Crew Bios**Director/Producer – Camilla Calamandrei**

Award winning documentary

filmmaker and interactive producer Calamandrei began her journey into the world of American captive bred tigers in 2003--when a long time tiger owner in the New York area was forced to surrender 24 tigers, found to be living in unsafe, inhumane conditions. Following those tigers to their new home in Texas led the filmmaker to a myriad of other captive bred tiger stories around the country. Camilla has previously produced and directed two other independent documentaries about uniquely American stories that were broadcast on PBS and abroad. The historical documentary "Prisoners in Paradise" was voted Best of Festival at the Rhode Island Film Festival in 2001, and the short subject documentary about Ballroom dancing "At Arm's Length" premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1990. In addition to making documentary films, Camilla has worked as live action director/producer for The Jim Henson Company, and as a producer of interactive media for Scholastic and LEGO.

Editor – Bernadine Colish

A talented documentary film editor

with a great sense of story and poetry, Bernadine Colish is known for crafting films that take audiences seamlessly on complicated, subtle and deeply human journeys. Her recent film "Herb and Dorothy" (director/producer Migumi Sasaki) won the Audience Award at Silverdocs, 2008. The Ellen Spiro/ Phil Donahue documentary that Bernadine edited --"BODY OF WAR"-- was runner up for the prestigious Audience Award at Toronto Film Fest 2007.

Cinematographer – Tamara Goldsworthy

A passionate animal lover, and

talented cinematographer--has built her career shooting independent documentaries, including projects for HBO, the BBC, NBC, ABC, Discovery Channel, MSNBC, Burma Border Projects and various independent producers. Her credits include Big Mama, which won the 2000 Academy Award for Documentary Short Subject, "Shut Up and Sing" (2007) and "The Calling" (2008). Goldsworthy got her start in shooting documentaries with the acclaimed verité cinematographer Joan Churchill.

Cinematographer – Dana Kupper

Was co-winner of the 'Excellence in

Cinematography' award for the documentary "Stevie" at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival. And, was the primary cinematographer on "5 Girls" for Kartemquin Films, which aired on POV (PBS).

Complete Credits

Director and Producer

Camilla Calamandrei

Editor

Bernadine Colish

Camera

Tamara Goldsworthy

Dana Kupper

Location Sound

Yuri Raicin

Rich Pooler

Diane Zander

Misho Stawnychy

Andrew Garrison

John Murphy

Original Music

Joel Goodman

Additional Camera

Eddie Marritz

Deborah Lewis

Marie-Joelle Rizk

Creative Advisor

Michelle Ferrari

Consulting Producers

Louise Rosen

Lisa Leeman

Research

Dawn Brown

Judith Calamandrei

Donny Rowles

Business Advisor

David Rudofsky

Title Design

Amit Sethi

For Animal Planet

Marc Etkind	V.P. Development
Erin Wanner	Executive Producer
Betsy LeDonne	Dir. Prod. Management
Vaibhav Bhatt	Assoc. Producer

Splash Studios, New York

Barbara Parks	Sound Editor
Peter Levin	Rerecording Mixer

Framerunner, New York

Keith Shapiro	Online Producer
Jon Fordham	Editor and Colorist

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Women Make Movies