

Jane.



A biographical essay | Gombe 60

Jane Goodall was twenty-six when she ventured into the wilds of Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania in 1960. With no formal education and the backing of National Geographic and Dr. Louis Leakey, Goodall began her groundbreaking study of primates. Goodall's work has continued and become recognized as the longest-running wild primate study¹.

Dr. Leakey, an archaeologist and paleoanthropologist, was dedicated to understanding human evolution. Leakey believed studying primates in their natural habitats would reveal key components to the development of humankind. Three women – *The Trimates* – were sent to study great apes: Dian Fossey traveled to Rwanda to study Gorillas in the Virunga Mountains, Biruté Galdikas ventured to Borneo for Orangutans, and Jane Goodall immersed herself in Tanzania with Chimpanzees.

Within two years, Jane Goodall made scientific impact with over 1,000 hours of observation. Papers around the world described the “willowy blonde with more time for monkeys than men,”² noted to be “alone and without a Tarzan.”²

The Arizona Republic wrote, “Lady Tarzan says apes make tools.”³ Indeed, some of Goodall's first and most significant observations were: (1) Chimpanzees made primitive tools from dried stalks or twigs they stripped of their leaves, which they used to fish termite mounds. (2) Chimpanzees crumbled leaves to make “drinking sponges.” (3) Chimpanzees have an omnivorous diet, which had never been established but included blue duikers, hares, bush pigs, and other primates.

[Goodall's work was met with some criticism, chiefly that she had anthropomorphized chimpanzees by naming (not numbering) and suggesting personalities and stages of development using human terms. Her detractors were overly critical of Goodall's “Banana Club,” a banana feeding station to lure chimpanzees for closer observation at camp. Many, including Goodall herself later, suggested the banana club may have altered behaviors, particularly aggression. The banana club proved essential during the polio outbreak, which left several chimpanzees partially paralyzed, immobile, or dead. Goodall and her team used the banana feeding station to administer a vaccine.]

HEADLINES

APRIL 17, 1962

“Me Jane, Me Like Apes Better Than Men; Me Go Back Jungle”
- *The Los Angeles Times*

“A Tarzan-less Jane Studies Jungle Apes”
- *The Des Moines Register*

“Over Men Modern-Day Jungle Jane Digs Chimps”
- *Lubbock Avalanche Journal*

“Jane Eyes Apes, Spurns Tarzans”
- *Daily News*

“Tarzan-less Jane Goes Ape Watching”
- *The Morning Call*

¹ Guinness Book of World Records

² *The Des Moines Register*, April 17, 1962 (p. 1)

³ *The Arizona Republic*, April 17, 1962 (p. 2)

Hugo van Lawick, a photographer for the National Geographic Society, was sent to Gombe in 1963 to photograph Jane in the field. The story, "My Life with the Wild Chimpanzees" became a *National Geographic* cover story and detailed her discoveries. Jane married Hugo a year later.



In December 1965, National Geographic aired a televised special titled *Jane Goodall and the Chimpanzees* (1965), narrated by

Orson Welles. Many of her discoveries were detailed, with primary focus dedicated to the use of tools. That same year, "Miss Goodall has a remarkable picture of social relationships of chimpanzees."⁴ Her observations included mothers nursing and nesting offspring for up to three years and playing with their young. Coincidentally, Goodall became a mother herself in 1967 (to a son, Hugo Eric Louis). She stated motherhood added perspective to her work and by 1973, Goodall reported "The chimp is a child longer than other wild animals,"⁵ noting males stay with their mothers for up to nine years, females longer. Mothers, at her suggestion, could be good or bad depending on temperaments. The same mean or mild-mannered natures applied to males as well.

Goodall suggested close family relationships and social bonds lasted for life, despite her divorce from Hugo in 1974. She recounted stories of a mother rushing to her 18-year old son when she heard his screams, never leaving until he was healed; or how siblings, especially males, reinforced each other in social situations. She had many stories, including the one of "Flint," an unweaned adolescent who died three weeks after his mother.

May 19, 1975, following a day of tracking, collecting data, and sending detailed reports, a noise far removed from the peace of Africa woke the camp. Screams. More than thirty guerrillas stormed the Gombe reserve, determined to capture "Europeans." Dr. Goodall, like many others, escaped into the jungle. Emilie Bergman, a research assistant, was dragged from her hut, beaten, and bound. Three doctoral candidates from Stanford University - Barbara Smuts, Stephen Smith, and Carrie Hunter - were also beaten, bound, and held at gunpoint.

The four hostages were taken on a seven-hour trip into Zaire, where they faced abuse and hunger. "On the third day as prisoners, the students were brought before a panel of officers -- members of the Marxist Parti de la Révolution Populaire, PRP. They told the students their commander was Laurent Kabila."⁶ In captivity, the students were ordered to write ransom letters to the Tanzanian government demanding the release of PRP rebels, weapons, and \$500,000. Demands were to be met within sixty days, or the students would be killed. Barbara Smuts was selected to deliver the ransom demands and released.

⁴ "East African Chimpanzees Develop Close Family Ties" *St. Joseph Gazette*, August 20, 1965 (p. 10)

⁵ "On the Coast, People; in Tanzania, Chimps" *The News Journal* by Betty Buroughs, October 29, 1973 (p. 19)

⁶ "Out of Africa" *Stanford Magazine*, by Brian C. Aronstam (with Emilie Bergman) July/August 1998

The government of Tanzania rejected within three days, leaving Smith, Hunter, and Bergman in captivity for another six weeks, until the students' families paid \$460,000. Carrie Hunter and Emilie Bergman were released immediately; Stephen Smith was held a month longer.

In the wake of the kidnapping, Jane Goodall, and her second husband Derek Bryson (Tanzania Director of National Parks), decided against hosting students. They trained fifteen Tanzanian nationals (the Gombe Field Staff) to assist with the work. Goodall's time on-site became limited due to the increased security risk. Without the constant presence of its famed primatologist, coupled with the lacking educational credentials of its staff and no students, grant money became increasingly difficult to secure.

To raise funding, Jane Goodall developed a lecture circuit. With her conservation message mobile in 1977, she established the Jane Goodall Institute – an organization designed to continue the study of chimpanzees, while expanding the efforts of protection, conservation, and education. Goodall's message was urgent. Chimpanzee populations declined across Africa, the result of deforestation, poaching, and the illegal wildlife trade. In this way, Goodall redefined traditional conservation by educating and involving local communities to ensure the well-being of animals and their habitats.

Meanwhile in Rwanda, Dian Fossey was engaged in *Active Conservation*. The mountain gorillas in Fossey's study were impacted with a poaching crisis, habitat destruction, and government corruption. This form of conservation stood in contrast to Goodall's, and included: funding an army of anti-poaching scouts, kidnapping the children - and burning the possessions of - suspected poachers, torture (ex. stinging nettles), and capitalizing on the fear of witchcraft in African culture (she presented herself as a witch on occasion to frighten intruders). Following the death of "Digit," Fossey's favorite, and other familiar gorillas in 1977, Fossey's anti-poaching war became increasingly personal. She criticized the Rwandan government's ability to protect gorillas and refused to wait for diplomatic resolutions. Fossey's activism created a network of enemies – in poaching, funding, and in the government. On December 27, 1985, at the age of 53, Dian Fossey was murdered in the Karisoke Research Center in the Virunga Mountains of Rwanda. Her death remains unsolved.

Jane Goodall said: "I tried so hard to persuade Dian to involve the local people in her project and she wouldn't...that's why she died, I'm sure. She felt that if the Africans got close to the gorillas the way she was, the gorillas would then be more vulnerable to poachers. And I would say to her, 'Our chimps know the difference between my field staff and strangers. I'm sure your gorillas would.' Anyway, the poachers at the time were poaching for money. So, if she gave them jobs and they got to know what gorillas were like, they'd love them, just like the Gombe field staff do with the chimps."⁷

JANE IN 1980

"There is still so much to be learned. I expect to go on with my work until I am a tottering old woman. And I must, of course, raise funds to enable my work to continue."

JANE ON DIAN

"If Dian hadn't done what she did, there would be no gorillas left in Rwanda to study."

⁷ "A Conversation with Jane Goodall." By Douglas Cruickshank for *Salon*, October 27, 1999.

In 1991, employing her message of community involvement, Jane Goodall launched the Roots & Shoots program. She met with a group of Tanzanian students to discuss ways in which young people shape the future, by preserving local environments. Today, Roots & Shoots, empowers children in more than 100 countries with practical solutions rooted in compassion that follows a 4-step program. Children are urged to: (1) *Get Engaged* by understanding local issues and needs, (2) *Observe* to discover which issue they care about most, (3) *Take Action* by mapping out their communities and developing projects to complete locally, and (4) *Celebrate* the completion of their effort and impact.

As Roots & Shoots was launching, Goodall was simultaneously working to establish the Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Center, which opened in the Republic of the Congo in 1992. Since its development, nearly 200 chimpanzees found refuge in the sanctuary – having been rescued from illegal wildlife and bushmeat trades. In 2011, the Jane Goodall Institute “successfully negotiated with the government of Congo for expansion to three islands”⁸ – Tchindzoulou, Ngombe, Tchibebe – located in the Kouilou River.

Since then, Goodall has traveled the globe more than 300 days per year to deliver her urgent message of conservation, encouraging everyone to be mindful of the ecological footprints they create every single day. In 2002, the United Nations named her a Messenger of Peace, acknowledging her critical work and groundbreaking study.

When asked about *hope* at an economic forum in 2019, Goodall recognized several reasons for believing in the future. She identified her faith in young people, the resilience of nature, the power of social media and its ability to foster a sense of community, and the power of the human brain and our collective ability to develop solutions at a quickening pace. Finally, she spoke to the “indomitable human spirit” and her idea that you inspire change through stories.

There, she recounted a story of being gifted a plush monkey with a banana in 1991: “He’s called Mr. H. He was given to me twenty-eight years ago by man called Gary Horn. Gary Horn was blinded aged 21 in the US Marines. He decided to become a magician. Everybody said, ‘Gary how can you become a magician if you’re blind.’ He said, ‘Well, I can try.’ He does shows for kids – they don’t know he’s blind. At the end he’ll say, ‘Something might go wrong in your life, you never know. But if it does, don’t give up, there’s a way forward.’ He does scuba diving. He does sky diving. He’s taught himself to paint – blind – never painted before. Anyway, he thought he was giving me a stuffed chimpanzee for my birthday. I made him hold the tail, ‘Chimps don’t have tails Gary.’ He said, ‘Never mind, take him where you go and you know

ROOTS & SHOOTS 9 COMPASSIONATE TRAITS

1. Act with a Purpose
2. Collaborate & Communicate Openly
3. Be Hopeful & Optimistic
4. Think Critically
5. Inspire Peers
6. Be Adaptable & Resilient
7. Be a Team Player
8. Empathy
9. Be Introspective

JANE IN 2019

I can instill the right values of compassion, love, respect in the young people – and they will gradually grow up and move into those positions [of power].

⁸ “Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Centre” at Jane Goodall Institute (www.janegoodall.org.uk)

my spirit's with you. So, he is my symbol for the indomitable human spirit. The people that you hear about – the people I meet – who tackle what seems impossible and won't give up.”⁹

From my own childhood, I distinctly remember feeling connected to animals. I responded to a kindergarten assignment about “What I Want to be When I Grow Up” with “Zoologist.” My childhood was dominated with zoo sets, animal toys, toy trains, and dinosaurs. I would sit out front at my Grandma's house on dry, hot summer days to pretend my animals were confronting a drought. During rain showers, I played by the storm drain. The animals of Africa then had to withstand a flood.

I watched *Wild Discovery* in the early/mid-1990s and was fascinated with the narration, but mostly the hunts, migration, and breeding. Around the time my first research papers were assigned in elementary school, I remember visiting the library to discover my subjects. There I learned of the works of Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey. I rented the 1988 film *Gorillas in the Mist*, starring Sigourney Weaver – and recall the sorrow I felt in the closing moments when the machete was raised in silhouette.

I wanted desperately to be part of a solution. *Captain Planet* was a favorite cartoon (and my favorite hero), and I had heard of Roots & Shoots because my fifth grade class was taken out to plant a line of trees at the edge of a field near the school playground.

While I was never as active in conservation as I had hoped to be as a child – and I didn't turn out to be a zoologist after all – my art and early poetry and writings were environmentally driven. I always carried the messages of “Captain Planet,” Dian Fossey, and Jane Goodall forward with me. Over the years, I have looked to Jane for inspiration and became a donor to the Jane Goodall Institute, The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, National Geographic's Cause an Uproar, Save the Elephants, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and more.

There is still time to do more and to work through ways to make a more positive impact – for nature, for myself, for Jane.



JANE ON OUR PART

“No one is anointed ruler of this kingdom. It's not ours to own. We are simply one of the animal species on our planet, not separate, not superior. We hold in our hands a responsibility to preserve harmony in the natural world – to demonstrate compassion towards all who call this home. So many living creatures have feelings, know loss, suffer pain. We must understand the mutual dependence between humans and animals. Only if we understand can we care. Only if we care can all be saved.”

⁹ “Jane Goodall: I Do Not Believe in Aggressive Activism.” World Economic Forum. June 20, 2019.