

**Oral History Interview of
Clyde Jones**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
February 27, 2012
Lubbock, Texas**

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*Natural History Project***

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The Natural History oral history collection includes interviews with individuals involved in biological field research, especially in mammalogy and ornithology. Most of the interviewees are faculty members in biological sciences at research universities. The collection focuses on academic studies in botanical and zoological taxonomy, ecology, conservation, and animal behavior.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Clyde Jones, who talks about his time as a scholar in Equatorial Guinea and the people he met there.

Length of Interview: 01:46:15

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David Marshall (DM):

The date is February 27th of 2012; this is David Marshall interviewing Clyde Jones, at his home in Lubbock, Texas. And let's just talk a little bit about Rio Muni today. Can you tell me the circumstances that took you to do that research in West Africa?

Clyde Jones (CJ):

Yeah, I was a young professor at Tulane, and I had finished my graduate work from New Mexico working on mammals of the southwestern desert, and I became acquainted with Arthur Riopelle. He was the director of the former Delta Primate Research Center, and he was a young man who was a psychologist, of all things. And he said, "Let's do an African study," and he had made a contact with a person at the Barcelona Zoo and he said, "Yeah, we could get a Spanish contact and work in the Spanish colony in West Africa."

DM:

Who was that contact?

CJ:

It was Jordi Sabater Pi, and, well, I knew a lot about Africa. I knew where it was, geographically, and I had read "Tarzan," and that's about it. And a great surprise to me, we obtained funding. We applied to the National Geographic Society and to the National Institutes of Health, and both of them were approved. And of course being the younger member of the team, it was me that had to go to Africa. So, I went to Rio Muni, in the summer of 1966.

DM:

By the way, did Riopelle, was he doing this for his work in psychology? Was he thinking that studying primates would shed information?

CJ:

He had also made a contact with Louis Leakey, who was a mentor of Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey, and he brought Jane Goodall to the primate center to give a talk, and then to give me some good advice on how to deal with the native people in Africa. For example, I had used a Coleman stove all of the time in the southwest desert and she said, "No, you must let them use wood for a fire, you can't trust them with fuel. They'll just pour it all out, and you know"—

DM:

Too dangerous.

CJ:

She had learned that. And the primate center had a colony of captive chimps which Arthur Riopelle had studied, but he was interested in Lowland gorillas and chimps, and the ecological

separation between the two. And so, I went to Rio Muni with the understanding that I could study other mammals as they came available to me. You know, I'd never seen a gorilla before, so, went to Rio Muni, Jordi Sabater Pi was there and he was familiar with the language. He spoke some Fang and we started weeding out. One of the first things I learned was that most of the Fang that lived out in the villages were frightened of the rainforest. Their lives were centered around the village, and the slash-and-burn agriculture. And most of the men, women, and children never ventured into the rainforest. They had all kinds of mythical tales about what would happen to them if they went into the rainforest. Like they would be chased by a gorilla or chimp-like monsters or be killed, raped, or pillaged. You know, all kinds of weird stories.

DM:

Did any of these monsters go by names, by any chance?

CJ:

Yes, they went by names but in most villages there was a hunter, who went into the rainforest, and he captured bush meat, and he captured monkeys and small dik-diks, and all kinds of animals and birds. They ate everything. They ate fruit bats, they ate birds, they ate mammals, they ate everything. And it was usually a hunter, so I eventually learned to find one. It was usually someone who stood around the outside, and he would come around later and say, "I'm your man."

DM:

So he wasn't *in* society as much, he was kind of on the periphery.

CJ:

He was kind of on the outside.

DM:

Why was that?

CJ:

Well, because he went into the rainforest. And he was considered a brave, very brave man, and for some reason, they were armed with crossbows and blowguns and the ever present machete, and then all the hunters smoked a pipe. And I soon realized what it was, it was marijuana, which there was a patch at every village, and that was called an anti-fear device by me. These guys smoked the pipe and then went in to the forest, and I went with them on a hunt a couple of times. And they used the blowgun, and a poison dart, and they shot a monkey up high in the tree, and the monkey came crashing down. And he cut a slot in the arms and legs and put them together, and put them on his back, and put one of them on my back, and back we went to the village. And

I was worried about the poison dart that might be somewhere, but what he did was, he felt all over, and found the poison dart, and extracted it.

DM:

Now what about the poison in the system, and then eating that monkey?

CJ:

Now that didn't seem to bother them. But they had a way that they went at it, especially the pygmoids. When they got a monkey, they went at it by opening it up and eating the stomach contents. That was the first thing they did.

DM:

Raw?

CJ:

Yes, just cut it open and eat it, ghastly stuff.

DM:

You tasted this?

CJ:

Yes, it was terrible stuff.

DM:

This is what you said looked like split pea soup?

CJ:

Yes, but it was, it tasted terrible, I can't even describe it. I just wanted to throw up from the minute you put it in your mouth.

DM:

Were you able to keep it down?

CJ:

Oh yeah, they ate it, they kind of danced around, and you know, scooped it up with their hands and ate it, they didn't have—the people that lived in the woods—the “pygmoids,” they were called, or they were called the “Bajeles”—and they didn't have any utensils; they ate everything with their hands, everything.

DM:

Did they eat everything raw or did they cook some?

CJ:

They cooked sometimes; they cooked some meat or some things, but they just ate it with their hands.

DM:

And they ate it with gusto, the contents of the stomach?

CJ:

Yeah, oh yeah, it was a ceremonial kind of thing.

DM:

Now what was the ceremonial part of it? You said they got excited.

CJ:

Yeah they were excited, they danced around you know, and the guy would hand some to somebody, and he'd take it and eat it, and yeah, it was some kind of ceremony. I never did figure out their language, but for some reason that one little woman just sort of adopted me, and she took care of me, and she was quite observant. She observed me sitting on a stump or something writing my field notes, and I went out with the guys and they came back, and there was a little table and a little stool, and she indicated that that was for me.

DM:

And by the way there is a picture of her in your slides.

CJ:

Yes, she's the one with the big flatulent breasts that stood right next to me, she was just like that with me and— (claps hands together)

DM:

Were the pygmoids hospitable generally, or was this an individual characteristic do you think?

CJ:

At first they were very standoffish, and, well, they'd never seen anything like me and they were quite standoffish—but in time, they came around. She quickly adopted me. Well anyway, I sat on this stool, and of course I smashed it flat and my feet came up and broke the table all to pieces and because it was made out of little sticks, made for them, not for me, and they threw

themselves on the ground laughing. They rolled on the ground laughing, all of them laughed, and that was the funniest thing they'd ever seen. And I laughed too, when I laughed they laughed.

DM:

Now, they lived in the forest, they weren't afraid of the forest?

CJ:

They were not afraid of anything. They were mostly, the men were armed with spears, but I never saw a machete in their hands, either, they were armed with spears and they broke the plants apart to build their little huts and stuff; and they were totally forest people, they lived in the forest, they were like the forest animals. They just lived there, they were part of it.

DM:

Did they also use poison and hunt?

CJ:

Yes. And they knew which it was; they knew what was poisonous and what was not. That's evolutionary, that's species selection right there—but they knew, and those several women and the two men were the only ones I ever saw, and I never saw any others. They went from camp to camp. But always within the big rainforest, they never left it, and they never migrated, and they never saw the sea, they never saw anything other than—they were part of a forest—they were amazing people.

DM:

Even though the sea was how far from where they lived?

CJ:

Thirty miles, maybe. Yeah, maybe thirty miles.

DM:

How were they with the botany of the forest, did they know their—did they seem to know their plants, and use them for medicinal purposes as well as for food? Could you pick that up from the time that you had with them?

CJ:

They were like in this area right here—

DM:

Which on the map is?

CJ:

--Right there. We went in from Ayamiken and walked in to that area right there, and yeah, they never saw it. They never saw the sea or anything. And all of those women seemed to have a little age on them. I never saw young girls, I saw that one young boy. But I never saw any other young people.

DM:

I wonder why.

CJ:

I don't know.

DM:

A high mortality rate, I imagine, but still—

CJ:

Child mortality was very high but yeah, I never saw any in all the time I spent there.

DM:

Maybe they were afraid of you because, do you think they saw you, but kept their distance where you couldn't see them?

CJ:

I thought they probably had developed—Sabater Pi talked about this, and he said they had them hidden somewhere, but I never saw any of them, other than that one young boy.

DM:

Which shows up in one of your photographs—

CJ:

Which is kind of tucked in behind me, hiding there—

DM:

He has kind of a western shirt on.

CJ:

I got that shirt for him.

DM:

That's why he has a western-style shirt.

CJ:

I got that shirt for him; he didn't have any clothes when I first saw him. He didn't have any. I got those shorts and that shirt for him. I bought them and took them up there and helped him put them on, and I never saw him without them. He never took them off, and I never saw...they were very conscious about below their waist. They were totally opened above their waist but they were totally very conscious—the women were very conscious about the below the waist cover.

DM:

Were they carnivores, or did they eat the plants of the forest also, and did they seem to really know their botany?

CJ:

They knew the plants, especially those that were soft and those that they used for thatch and those that they used to build their huts. They ate very few fruits, they mostly were carnivores.

DM:

Okay, did they have any; did you notice any medicinal use?

CJ:

They had some things; they would get some cuts and scratches; they had some plants where they would rub on themselves, ostensibly for healing purposes. But, yeah, they ate, they had little nets that they spread in the forest and they caught dik-diks—the little antelopes—and they caught the giant flying squirrels would come to the ground. Pangolins were a real treat for some reason. Pangolins were some kind of special treat for them. And then with their spears they took an occasional monkey and they talked about killing an elephant for me, and I wouldn't—they translated it back and forth, which took about half an hour to do anything. I wouldn't let them and they acted put out about that. Most of these feelings were acts. They would act terribly put out about something. They were very fascinated with me writing my field notes. Every evening I would sit down and recap the day and write in my book. I had an audience every evening.

DM:

Did they seem to know what you were doing? Did they think this was some form of communication?

CJ:

Yeah. They were really attentive, but just ringed around me watching this every evening. It was an event.

DM:

Were they concerned about any predators in the forest?

CJ:

They didn't seem to be. They didn't seem to be concerned about the gorillas or the chimps which were almost right with them—

DM:

In size?

CJ:

Yeah.

DM:

Or larger, maybe.

CJ:

Larger, the adult gorilla and the adult chimp, they were larger, but I never saw them attack or try to kill one of those. They always took monkeys, and smaller ones. I never saw them mess with gorillas or chimps. They always—when a group of gorillas or chimps got near their little group of huts, they would yell and wave their hands and shoo them away. But I was very fascinated with that relationship.

DM:

Were there any predators in that area, like large cats of any kind that they should be concerned with, or would be concerned with?

CJ:

Yeah, there were West African lions, bush lions, and the main concerns were the elephants. They were concerned that the elephants would come through the camp and trash everything. We were out looking for gorillas and chimps once, and there were elephants nearby, and they indicated for me to climb into a small tree, so I did. But then I saw the elephants pushing trees over and I thought, "This is not a good idea," and I got the heck out of there. That was their first response, climb a tree. No, no, that is not a good idea. They're fascinating people. I think they were on the decline. Well, among the Fang, infant mortality initially was very high, and towards the end of my stay there, groups of missionaries came in and introduced baby formula. Infant mortality went way down but everything started going to heck because before, the women would nurse children until they were three and four years old. I mean I was sort of taken aback when a woman would be sitting in a chair or a stool and a youngster would walk up and standing there and start nursing, just everyday life. But infant mortality was increased and everything just sort

of broke down at the end. The *Guardia Civil* thought they were very much in charge. But, you know, when they came to a village then everybody pretty much stood up, and they spoke to them and then they left and then they all kind of chatted, "Well, they're gone now, no problem, we'll go back to our old ways."

DM:

It was a momentary disruption.

CJ:

Yeah. It was a strictly—a multicultural situation. Most of the country was occupied by the Fang, who were oriented toward the village and the slash-and-burn fields, with the hunter, who supplied bush meat, and there was a group that lived along the coast called the Bubis, they were fishermen. They never went inland and there's no intermixing between the two groups, and then the pygmoids. There was a *Guardia Civil* Spanish army, and then they had a local army that they were training—these were the young men that were supposed to be in training to be in control.

DM:

This was the unarmed military that you were showing me pictures of?

CJ:

Yes.

DM:

You also said in the back is the navy and there might have been several people back there. Did they have a boat?

CJ:

They had a small navy; all they had were dugout canoes.

DM:

Oh. (laughter)

CJ:

Big dugouts, they didn't have a boat, they didn't have a power—well, some of them had a canoe with a power motor on the back, and they would go putting along. And there was an English man who had a store there. And he had stuff imported from England—that's where I bought my Land Rover, in fact, but he had a few power motors and Johnson horsepower boat motors and stuff like that, he had a few of them.

DM:

It was in Bata?

CJ:

Yeah, well it was cheaper to buy a Land Rover there than it was to import a vehicle from the U.S.—the taxes would be prohibitive. So I ordered the Land Rover, he had it brought down. He sold it to me, and then I sold it back when we left the country.

DM:

Did you call the fisherman along the coast the Bubis?

CJ:

Bubis.

DM:

Did they use boats, did they use dugouts?

CJ:

Dugouts.

DM:

Along the surf, along the coast?

CJ:

Yeah. They went out and put out nets, and then they dried fish, and sold them to people. The Fang would come into Bata for the market, and then a few of the young men came in and had jobs like, we had to hire a houseboy. When I stopped in Spain to see the military, to go there, to get their permit to go to Rio Muni, but they said I had to do several things. I had to hire a house person for the house, and I had to hire somebody to help maintain the yard; I didn't need anybody, but I had to not disrupt the local economy, and I was advised that a good tracker I might pay one U.S. dollar or the equivalent of one U.S. dollar a day, no more. And that seemed to be an amazing fee to pay that, but I would hire somebody in one village, and in another village twenty miles away, when I got ready to hire the guy, he would say, "Well, you paid that guy the equivalent of a dollar, so many pesetas, and that's what I charge." And how they knew—I mean, they knew. I thought it was drums or something. Drums were active at night and I thought it had to be drums, that's how they must have known.

DM:

Were there really drums active at night?

CJ:

Yes, there were really drums active at night.

DM:

You were probably the subject of some conversation in the province.

CJ:

They just knew everything, they just seemed to know everything that happened to me and everywhere I was, they seemed to know. How they knew I have no idea, but they knew. And they would give me guidance: "Okay, now you paid that guy." And also, I would rent a house in the Fang village, I'd rent a house, and the first thing I would do was negotiate the price, which was always equivalent to less than a dollar a day; it was like so many pesetas, like it was twelve to fifteen pesetas per dollar, and twelve pesetas was the order; and I would have to hire a young boy in the village to keep the goats off of me. The damn goats were everywhere. To keep the goats from getting on my bed, in the car, they were everywhere. And I would have to hire—they had a main house, a decent house, and then they had a house out back where the women lived and did the cooking—and that is where you went to eat, the women would heat food, or wash clothes, all for a price, of course, but it seemed to be twelve to fifteen pesetas, that seemed to be the going rate for everything.

DM:

Well, was there not much stratification of society? Were there not the rich and the poor too much among the Fang, for example.

CJ:

The goats were animals of wealth.

DM:

Oh yeah.

CJ:

Yeah, the guy who had fifty goats was better off than the guy that had twenty and—

DM:

There was some social distinction that went with that.

CJ:

And when it came time to butcher a goat, or eat a goat, usually the guy that only had twenty had to furnish the goat. But the damn goats were just, they were everywhere—

DM:

An invasive species.

CJ:

Just everywhere.

DM:

They did real well in that rainforest.

CJ:

They certainly did. And they milked them, they milked the female goats and had goat milk, which is good for you.

DM:

Was goat meat a frequent dish or was it more of a ceremonial dish?

CJ:

Not frequent.

DM:

Did they have sacrifices?

CJ:

They had—

DM:

Religious sacrifices.

CJ:

Yes, I think they did, and they had the chiefs, the head of the village had multiple wives—of course. The other thing I had to do was meet the chief, and meet all the wives. He would have them lined up. I met all of them you know: “*Umbulo, Umbulo, Umbulo, Umbulo,*” and that was the group that would wash my clothes for me, for some reason—one of them would volunteer, one of them somewhere in the rank, they had some kind of rank in the way they were lined up, and one of them would volunteer to wash my clothes for me.

DM:

Did they live in one of these houses? We were looking at the residential part [in the photographs].

CJ:

The women always lived in the house behind the house. The head house is where the men lived and they had a house out back where the women lived.

DM:

That was standard throughout, then.

CJ:

Yes, everywhere.

DM:

Wow.

CJ:

And the women had their mats and their beds in this cook house, and they had a constant fire going there, and they cooked there and they ate there. They did everything there and that's where the women and kids lived. The men lived in the men's house—interesting cultural thing.

DM:

There are similar ties with ancient cultures, too.

CJ:

I think they would be classed—then—as a “primitive people,” I think.

DM:

Well what were the racial relations among the— you said there was not much interaction between the Bubi and the Fang, but what about the pygmoids, how did they all interrelate? Was there interrelation?

CJ:

I never saw, other than the guy the befriended me, I never saw any of the Fang interact with the pygmoids. I never saw—it may have happened, but I never saw, it was certainly kept from me. I never saw any of it. I never saw any of the Fang—there was no interbreeding or any interaction with the Bubis other than the sale of fish. That's all I ever saw. And the market was a wonderful experience. I was interested in the bush meat and it was everywhere: chimp arms and legs, gorilla arms and legs and young gorillas and monkeys and stuff like that.

DM:

When you say arms and legs, was it the arm with the hair and everything?

CJ:

Yeah. They just cut it off and there was an arm. When I was first there before I got my Land Rover, I was riding the bus, and that was a *trip*, and that was an interesting thing, first of all, early on they wouldn't let me on. Well, most of them had never seen anything like me. And this bus went on into the interior. And I'd ride the bus and it occurred to me what was happening—a bus would pull up to a bus stop, and there would be a structure there with an arm and monkeys, with the tail looped up around their necks. [They] made a slit around the tail and [they'd] bring it up and put it around the neck like a suitcase. And the monkeys would be on this structure, and the women would lean out of the bus and pull the hair on the bellies to see if it was fresh or not, because there was a difference in price.

DM:

If it came right out, then it had been there too long.

CJ:

Yeah, but there was a definite difference in price between the old ones and the new ones. Well, then they would bring these stinking damn monkeys into the bus. And sometimes they'd just put the tail of the monkey over their head, or they'd put the monkey on their back and get off the bus. That's also where I learned about the relationships of distance with people. I would be sitting on a log, waiting for the bus, and a hunter would come over the hill and the bus would stop everywhere, but he would come up and sit right next to me.

DM:

We've talked about this herd mentality before.

CJ:

Yeah, that was an interesting kind of thing, it was as if we'd known each other all of our lives you know, he would come up and put down and stick his cross bow in the ground and lay his machete down, and lay his blow gun across his lap and he'd sit right *there*.

DM:

Now, we've talked also about how that happens here, in our society, where people like to sit in the same corner of a restaurant together and things like that. Was it more pronounced there?

CJ:

Yes.

DM:

People crowded up against you?

CJ:

I always had an audience; everywhere I went, I had an audience right *there*.

DM:

Did they touch, or were they just close, were they huggers?

CJ:

No.

DM:

They didn't touch?

CJ:

No they were close, they never touched.

DM:

Did they shake hands?

CJ:

After some work and, oh, when they got paid they would shake hands—and they had this other damnable habit—when you give them something and they have to give you something and so I would—well, the money transaction was a very interesting thing. The grant money was sent to Tulane, Arthur Riopelle was there to handle communications and handle fiscal operations, which was very important. Money went from Tulane to the Chase Manhattan Bank, was transferred from the Chase Manhattan Bank to the Bank of Spain in Madrid, and it was transferred from the bank in Madrid to the branch bank in Bata, and they had the attitude in Bata that these people could never handle anything bigger than a hundred peseta note. So I would get my money in kind of a loaf of bread-type structure, and I just put it in the seat of the Land Rover, and drive out, and then I would pay these guys who had worked for me for four or five or seven days; well, I'd pay them and they'd have to give me something. Early on, they'd give me a big stalk of bananas, and I would drive home and the kids would go "Oh boy oh boy, bananas!" Well, several months later it was, "Oh god, bananas." But that was a damnable custom they had. You couldn't give anybody anything, but they'd have to give you something, whether you wanted it or not.

DM:

Was it always food?

CJ:

It was always—no, sometimes I would get a little wand carving, or a cane, or wooden spear, or a little figurine or something. That's how I got most of the stuff that I got.

DM:

When you had your loaf of money, or anytime, really, did children beg, did they come to you for little handouts?

CJ:

No they didn't beg.

DM:

That was not part of the culture.

CJ:

No, I never had a—in Bata I had a couple of beggars it seems but out in the villages, I never felt begged upon, never—they used *everything*. They stockpiled *everything* in the woman's house, and over in the corner, there was a little fence-like thing, and it was stuffed with rags, cans, bottles, a piece of paper, everything. I mean, if I threw something out, it hardly hit the ground. It was gone, it was put in this. They would use it, eventually.

DM:

You pointed out in the photographs that there was no litter along the roads because of this.

CJ:

It was terribly clean, the whole country was terribly clean. And you noticed there were very few cars and fuel, the Land Rover was a diesel. And the guy that imported it and sold it to me explained that the diesel was the thing, that was the thing.

DM:

That's what buses ran on also?

CJ:

The buses ran on diesel. This is 1967 and '68. I was paying the equivalent of five dollars a gallon for diesel and I was very happy to get it. The first priority went to the buses, and what was left over was what I got. All the cars were diesel. What cars there were, they were diesels.

DM:

How far into the bush could you drive the Land Rover? It seems like your limitations would be pretty great.

CJ:

Well, it was a four wheel drive, which I hardly ever used because other than the main road, there was no side road that went anywhere; you walked.

DM:

You had to chop a trail if you walked.

CJ:

Yeah. To go someplace away from the main road you had to hire a man to lead you, and you had to hire a woman to carry your stuff. And I learned that this was usually a woman who was infertile, couldn't bear children. And she was a—I have one of their carry baskets in that room. I don't know if you've seen it or not. It's a big tall one with—they'd load that thing up, and they'd put a band around it and put it on her forehead and put it on her back.

DM:

A tumpline.

CJ:

And sometimes it would weigh a hundred pounds. And we'd have to help her to her feet, and she would just go, and never stop.

DM:

So she was infertile, so they found a niche for her.

CJ:

She had a place in the system, but she never left the trail and the trails were—sometimes you'd cross logs and stuff like that—sometimes they were primitive. And that village I showed you and I said "Those were the tracks from my Land Rover," I think that was probably the first vehicle that village had ever seen. And they came out and they just touched the Land Rover. They just petted it, you know. But early on I was advised; I mean, it just had a canvas top, and you couldn't lock it, and I had my camera and binoculars, a loaf of bread of money, everything in there. And they told me to find a woman who would put a little spirit on the Land Rover, and she gave me a little leaf-ball about the size of a golf ball, and it was on a little cord, a little vine cord, and I hung that on the rear view mirror. I never, ever lost a thing out of the Land Rover, and I would leave the Land Rover, and we'd be out in the woods for a week.

DM:

This was protection by the spirits.

CJ:

Yes. This was a voodoo-type thing.

DM:

Do you know what kind of leaf it was by any chance?

CJ:

I have no idea what was in the—I was told don't ever open it. You hang it there and leave it there and it will protect the Land Rover. And it did. I never lost—I would leave a loaf of bread of money, I would leave everything, and be out in the woods for a week, and I never lost anything. It was total protection.

DM:

That's amazing.

CJ:

Very strange.

DM:

Did children wear amulets around their necks and things like that?

CJ:

Sometimes, yes.

DM:

Similar kind of thing, leaves and—

CJ:

Yeah. Very interesting people, good people, I learned high regard for them.

DM:

You mentioned that, coming into this village, I think you were talking about the same village where you left the tracks, that they told you to drive your Land Rover across a couple of logs to get it over a creek or a river.

CJ:

Get it over a small ravine, and I wasn't going to do it. And the logs had moss and stuff on them, and they took a machete and roughed up the top and said, "Okay, now drive across." And I did. If it had fallen down, I never would have gotten it out. But yeah, they did, they went "buk, buk, buk, buk," and roughed up the top so I could drive it and have traction. Clever.

DM:

Were there—there wouldn't be much need for bridges out in the remote areas. Did people ford, or did they use logs for foot paths usually?

CJ:

Oh yes, every trail I was on had a log crossing a small ravine or something, or small creek or something, every one. I learned to just – well, you saw a photograph of me and Sabater Pi—I learned to just cross them.

DM:

Without thinking about it, just go on across?

CJ:

Yeah just go. And I always had my pack, and my camera, and my binoculars, and my stuff, you know.

DM:

You were talking about the market earlier—and you were talking about that level of interaction between the Bubi and the Fang, just the trade. Was it mostly barter, or was it money exchange?

CJ:

No, it was barter, they had very little money.

DM:

When the Fang made an exchange with the bush hunter, the bush meat hunters—

CJ:

Bush meat for fish.

DM:

That's what it was, bush meat for fish. How did they acquire the bush meat from the hunters? What would they have exchanged?

CJ:

I never really figured that out. The hunter seemed to have some special role in the society of the village. It was always kind of aside, kind of different, because he went into the forest; that was one difference. He was a brave man, who went into the forest, and he always had his crossbow and his blow gun and his machete within reach, always within reach, and that's how I would locate him. He'd be standing over there, kind of on the fringe—the whole village would come and listen to me, or be around to watch me, and he'd be over on the side, a little bit. But I never

saw them give him any exchange, or any gifts or anything. That was just his role, was to go out and capture something; a dik-dik, or monkey, or something.

DM:

Did the villages have their own little exchanges? There was a market in the main towns, but was there any kind of little exchange going on in the small villages that you saw?

CJ:

A very special event would be butchering a goat. And they would hang the damn goat up by its hind legs, and cut its throat, and they'd scoop out a little dish in the sand, and the blood would flow into this place in the sand, and it would congeal, and then they would slice it, and eat it. And that was really tough for me. I think it was the texture of the sand that was really tough, which—I had to do it. That was the ceremony of butchering a goat—well, you see this in Mexico sometimes too, the congealed blood. They call it blood pudding or whatever they call it.

DM:

Which makes you wonder about the universality of something like that, when you hear about it in the Americas and Africa. Did you get the indication that this sacrifice of a goat was in any way connected to a spirit or deity, or was it just an event in itself as far as you could tell?

CJ:

As far as I could tell it was just, yeah, they just selected a goat and butchered it. It was sort of a ceremonial thing, collecting of the blood, eating of the blood, and then they would divide up the meat, you know. They would take the damn machete and divvy up the goat in some sort of hierarchal structure in the village.

DM:

It was a community thing at least.

CJ:

It was. Everybody watched.

DM:

Did everybody regardless of age and gender eat?

CJ:

When they divvied up the meat it was a free for all—women, kids, men, everybody feasted and they also would trade bush meat for the little clothing they had. The Fang were the same way; they were conscious about below the waist coverage, but very unconscious about the top.

DM:

Did you see any indication of prostitution?

CJ:

There were, no, but I saw a couple of cases, usually one of the wives would have sex with somebody else, and they would cut off her breasts. I saw several cases of that. I had a tracker once that was missing these two fingers. They were just gone.

DM:

The index and the middle finger.

CJ:

And I just thought it was a machete accident or something, and one time I asked him about it, and he got real embarrassed, and he walked away, and he came back and said "Okay," he said, "I'm an ex-thief." That is what he explained and that was the deal, and the drill in the village, if a woman committed adultery they'd cut off one or more of her breasts. How they all kept from bleeding to death, well they—they cauterized them. They'd take a stick out of the fire and the guy would just be there and not show any emotion or anything. I never saw them cut off the breast of a woman, but it looked like it'd been cauterized. Again, they were totally unconscious about the top. Here's a woman with one breast and just a big scar and advertising who she was.

DM:

Did you ever see any indication of a judicial procedure where they had a council within the village that sat for a judgment?

CJ:

The chief—the village chief, they went to him, and he made these decisions.

DM:

So they would just go to his home?

CJ:

Yeah, he had a place where he would sit and his wives would be there, and they would make the pitch, and he made the decision.

DM:

Was he chief for life or was this a—?

CJ:

I think it was once a chief, always a chief, all the time I was there. I got one of the little wands he had. He wanted to loan me one of his wives, and finally it hit on me—the explanation I could use was that it was against my religion. And when we were getting ready to leave, one of the guys was rather insistent on giving us a damn pig. And I wouldn't eat, if I knew about it I wouldn't eat their pork, because of infestations, but finally I had to explain that it was against my religion. Finally, I hit on that explanation, and they accepted that.

DM:

Was that a normal means of hospitality—to offer a wife?

CJ:

Yeah, well again, if I paid him [he would want to repay], then I'd just say no—but I had a very interesting experience. I can tell you a very interesting experience. We used to go to the soccer games and we would be, well, my former wife would not only be the only white woman, she'd be the only woman in the stands—then again, we were, sort of—me and my wife and two kids, a little girl, and a little boy—had a place where they would put us. And we would go to the soccer games because there wasn't anything else. And one time, one of my trackers came to my house and said, "You don't want to go to the soccer game tomorrow." And I thought, "Oh, he wants my tickets or something," and he was very insistent: "No, you don't want to go tomorrow. Or, if *you* go, don't take the woman or the children"—so I took him. And so at intermission they brought out some bad guys, and killed them. And he knew that was going to happen, but he wouldn't tell me what it was. He just said, "If you insist on going, don't take the woman and children," but that's what they did.

DM:

How did they kill them?

CJ:

The *Guardia Civil* lined them up and just shot them. And I never knew what their crimes were, but, they just brought them out, and lined them up, and mowed them down, and dragged them off. It was just the thing to do.

DM:

As long as they had everybody together, there was a public execution.

CJ:

There was a lesson there, some kind of lesson.

DM:

These teams that would compete in soccer games, were they all within one village, and divided into a team?

CJ:

Some came in—some teams came in from Cameroon and some teams came in from Gabon. Cameroon to the north, and Gabon to the south, they had some come in from across the borders, as they call them.

DM:

So they had little provincial or national teams that moved about.

CJ:

Oh yeah they were very strong, they had a very strong fan following.

DM:

Were they professional you think, or were they semiprofessional?

CJ:

I think they were semiprofessional, they were pretty good.

DM:

Another thing I wanted to ask you about the marketplace—we're talking about the Fang and the Bubi. Did the pygmoids ever come to the market?

CJ:

No.

DM:

Did they have any transactions at all outside of their group?

CJ:

Not that I ever saw.

DM:

Did they have any transactions within their group that you ever saw?

CJ:

Not that I ever saw; and they seemed to be—well, I described them as territorial; they seemed to just have a home range in which they worked, and that was theirs, and other groups were over there. I never saw any interactions with anybody.

DM:

They were completely self-sufficient, seems like.

CJ:

Totally. And where they got their clothes, I know they got them somewhere and that's all they had, and they obviously never took them off.

DM:

They had cloth, didn't they; some of these were made from bolts of cloth, it looks like.

CJ:

Well, the woman that adopted me just had one. She tied it around her waist, and that was all she had, and obviously they never took them off.

DM:

So they had a limited range and they lived completely off the land; do you think they practiced infanticide, or did they even have to practice infanticide?

CJ:

That could have been one of the explanations of why I never saw young people other than this one. Maybe it was infanticide, maybe it was a limitation on what they could provide, because they knew within their area, they knew where all the animals were, they just *knew*. I mean, how they knew, I don't know; it's like they would have this conversation, and the two guys would have this conversation with the women, they'd have this group blab, a group conversation, and then a guy would explain, finally explain to me, that they were going to go get a monkey and they did, they knew where it was and they would go get it. Uncanny little animals, but really nice, after the initial standoffish bit with me, yeah, we became friends, and it was like they sort of took care of me.

DM:

Did they have *any* agriculture on any level?

CJ:

No.

DM:

Not even incipient?

CJ:

None. The pygmoids had no agriculture at all.

DM:

Did they have any animal domestication?

CJ:

No. None. I never saw any.

DM:

Wow, the opportunity to see a culture like that.

CJ:

I would really like to know today, what's happened to them. But I can't go there; no white man can go to Equatorial Guinea. You chance your life if you go. First of all, you couldn't get passage there; you'd have to walk in from Cameroon or Gabon, and you'd probably be killed. The word is out from the dictator. I know there was one Spanish guy that went in. When I was still teaching at Tech, Robert Owen was still there and there was a Spanish guy that worked on bats, and he came to spend some time with Owen, and he and I immediately became friends, because he had been back to Rio Muni, and that's when he told me that there was no municipal power in Bata or any of the headquarter villages, there was no municipal power. The dictator had all this control, and it all went up to him; and being in the rainforest they had discovered oil, of course, and the oil companies were pouring—the figure is four million a year into it, and it all went to the dictator. The cultural salary and everything was still the same, according to him. They would say, “Yeah there was this guy here years ago, and he paid us twelve pesetas a day, and that's what you pay us.” They knew and they remembered me, these various hunters remembered me.

DM:

So Robert Owen conveyed that information that they still remembered your time there.

CJ:

And he introduced me to this guy and we became good friends, and he sat right here and explained modern day Rio Muni to me. I would like to go back, but on the other hand, I wouldn't want to go back. My experience and my career are to go in and have your time, and you don't go back, and that's even becoming one of my thoughts about working in Big Bend and areas like

that. For example, I wouldn't go stay in Lajitas anymore—and that used to be a place where we *always* went and stayed, but I wouldn't go there anymore.

DM:

You had your time.

CJ:

It's different.

DM:

Right, a little bit heartbreaking sometimes?

CJ:

Yes. It's very expensive, very different, and they closed the border, you know, the border patrol closed the border.

DM:

You can't just wander across the border to Mexico

CJ:

We used to just either walk across the border or drive over. I had a really wonderful experience, [when] we were walking across. I mean, the water hardly went above our ankles in the river, the Rio Grande, and we walked across, and we were walking up the sandy road and I found a marble just lying in the dirt, I found a marble. And there were a couple little kids playing marbles, and I got down and took a couple of shots and of course gave it to them, in a subsequent visit they came running up to me and saying "*Tengo canicas. Quiero jugar?*" "We have marbles, do you want to play?" They remembered; they knew.

DM:

Did you ever see anything in Mexico—you did a lot of work in Mexico—and did you ever see anything there that reminded you of Rio Muni?

CJ:

That behavior did, they knew, and in Mexico too it was the same thing, from one village to another, they knew we were coming, they knew what we were after. They knew we were after the rats and the bats, but they *knew*. And how in the hell they knew, I don't know—yeah, they *knew*. That was the most interesting thing to me, was the communication that somehow preceded us. Didn't you find that in the Tarahumara too? That they knew you were coming and they knew what you wanted to do? How the hell did they know?

DM:

It's big news, I guess.

CJ:

Yeah, I don't know how.

DM:

How it spreads, I'm not sure. Well, let me see if I can pick up a little bit more—

CJ:

Well, the one other thing about Mexico was they were always very sensitive, they would always say, "You can't drink the water." That was the first piece of advice we always—"You can't drink the water; here you have to drink beer." And their women and kids, little kids, they were drinking beer for breakfast, you know. But yeah, "You guys can't drink the water; don't drink the water." Mike Brogan and I were working in Baja California Sur, and we stopped at a little truck stop. There were a couple of trucks parked there, so we stopped and the lady had a pot, and she was serving coffee to the truck drivers and we said, "Well, we'll have a cup of coffee," and she went to take the cup and dip it and the truck driver said "No," and he explained to her, "*They* can't drink it like that," so she took her apron and wiped out the cup, and gave it to us, cleaned it.

DM:

What were the water conditions in Rio Muni? You had a picture of drinking from a vine, sap, I think--

CJ:

Drinking the sap from a vine.

DM:

It must have been watery in that rainforest.

CJ:

Yeah, they would cut a piece of vine; they never carried water, they would always just cut a vine and drink it and discard the vine, or lay it by the trail, because it might be used later, the vine might be made into a blow gun even though it was crooked. It might be made into a blow gun and they would compensate for that, you know.

DM:

By aiming a little to one side or the other. (laughter)

CJ:

Yes, they would aim over here and they would shoot over there. They were uncanny in doing that. But yeah, the waters in the streams that were fast-moving cataract-type streams, that was, for them, that was safe water. They caught on very quickly that I wasn't supposed to drink the water. I had to carry my own, which was bottled water from Bata. They had a remarkable little plant about the size of this room in Bata, and it was a Coca-Cola plant and they had bottled water, which I had.

DM:

So you can drink that and you could drink from the vines, do the vines affect you?

CJ:

No, but you know—

DM:

It was filtered enough.

CJ:

It was clean for some reason.

DM:

But they couldn't just dip into a river; they had to get it also from a running water source. I mean a cascade.

CJ:

Yeah. They had a—but they knew what was safe water, and what wasn't safe water, they knew.

DM:

Another interesting thing in those photographs was the huts that the pygmoids lived in. Can you describe them, and how they were constructed, what they used to cover them? It looked like maybe palm fronds or something.

CJ:

All the roofs were thatched with palm fronds; there were some low-growing plants that had—a cascade of fronds would come out from a central place, and most of those were just cut bare within walking distance of the village. Then when they saved everything, most everything, from the slash-and-burn, it was soft wood, they cut it handy, so they wouldn't have to bend over, and cut it about that high and they saved all that. Except what they didn't save, they burned, but they constructed—in some cases, the walls were made of a series of small sticks and then packed with

mud.

DM:

And were these the Fang or the pygmoids?

CJ:

The Fang. The pygmoids, they just had sticks, they had fronds and sticks and poles, small poles, and they would cut it up the center and off to the side, and they could make one of those huts while you watched. They could just make one, but they knew which plants to get, and they knew what poles to get, they knew everything.

DM:

Did you go inside these huts? Did they have any kind of baskets inside or storage of any kind?

CJ:

They'd have maybe a basket or two, or maybe, yeah, no pots; they would have a couple of baskets or two.

DM:

Did they have any kind of matting for a bed?

CJ:

They would have a mat for a bed; they were really taken with my cot. I had a cot where you put the legs in and you would set it up about that high. They were really fascinated with that, and toward the end of my stay there, I gave my cot to one of my hunter friends Pancrasio Sima, I gave him my cot. Well, and the next place I went, they wanted to know why I didn't give them my cot.

DM:

You disrupted the economy. (laughter)

CJ:

Yeah. There I went.

DM:

Hard not to do. So, okay—

CJ:

I gave a pair of pants, long pants and long sleeve shirts which were a necessity, because of the insects. And I would have a ring, just a raw ring around where the biting flies were on my wrist.

When I was taking pictures or doing something, they would just have a ring around the end of my cuff.

DM:

You've given a good description about this before: it's 100 percent humidity and I don't know what the temperature is—

CJ:

Two hundred inches of rain a year. Very high humidity, the temperatures were, when it got in the mid-seventies I was cold, and I think—because of the humidity I was cold and I needed a blanket.

DM:

How warm was it when you went into the jungle?

CJ:

The high [was] 79, 80.

DM:

And you were buttoned up at the neck and the wrist, long sleeved—

CJ:

Long pants, long sleeves—

DM:

Because of the flies mostly—

CJ:

Insects, biting flies and sometimes ants, soldier ants. I'd get into a pile of ants—well, then you'd just take your clothes off and get them off of you, put your clothes back on, you know, no problem.

DM:

But you mentioned the ring of bites around your wrist, where the sweat was coming out.

CJ:

Yeah, the biting flies were going for moisture. And when it rained—well, my son wanted a rain gauge, so I had a rain gauge. Well, there came a shower, and the rain gauge overflowed, well it would come up a shower and it would rain maybe seven inches, you know, it would just *pour*

and they would just cut a leaf, and hold it over their head, and go on about their business, you know that was just the way it was: it rained—so it rained? No problem.

DM:

You said you got a touch of malaria.

CJ:

Yes, we all had malaria, my former wife and the kids had malaria. They remember being sick, they just, yesterday, I was talking with my daughter and I mentioned what I was doing, and what you and I were doing, and she said she remembered having malaria. And then I had dengue fever, and I was out in the village and I got, I started to get “not myself.” I got sick. And my tracker insisted on riding back to Bata with me, but, well, he couldn’t drive, and we hit a road stop by the *Guardia Civil*, and they were mostly interested that I would let him in the Land Rover with me. That was the big issue, it was an issue—why was he in the Land Rover with me? Because, “No. no; they walk. They don’t ride, they walk.” And then I finally got it across that I was very sick and we got to Bata and I was really, really sick, and we went to see a Spanish doctor and he said “Well, I don’t know, come by tomorrow, maybe we can make a diagnosis.” I got up the next morning and I just had a red rash all over me, and he said “Oh we have a diagnosis, you have Dengue fever, now you probably won’t die of it” because I was a white man, yeah, probably won’t die of it. The Spanish doctors, I don’t know how they selected them, or how they chose to go to the colony, but if you ever needed a supply of gin you would find a Spanish doctor. He always had a supply.

DM:

For medicinal purposes?

CJ:

Of course, it scares off malaria.

DM:

Can you talk a little bit about your work there, tracking the lowland gorilla groups for example and especially relate the incident where you had a close call with a silverback, as I recall.

CJ:

Well we would find a—my hunter-tracker and I, I had to pay him, because it took him from his job of collecting bush meat—I didn’t have to pay him for doing a service to me. I had to pay him for that distraction, so we would find a troupe of gorillas, and we would follow them, and I would make observations and do whatever I did. And late in the study when the gorillas bedded down at night, I would bed down also. The tracker would make a little bed of vegetation for me,

and I would stay awake and observe all night long, and that's when I discovered that they did that (pats stomach rhythmically) all night long, lying on their back—

DM:

Patted their stomachs?

CJ:

Yes

DM:

And you could hear this?

CJ:

Yeah, and then finally, I figured it out, it was a form of communication. It was like "I'm okay, I'm over here and I'm okay, are you okay?" That's what it was, yeah. Jane Goodall agreed with me, that's what it was.

DM:

It makes you wonder if it has something to do with the drums you hear at night.

CJ:

I think it was. They had little fat bellies and they're lying on their back, (pats stomach) a little drum thing, like that would go on all night long, and I could hear that, "What the hell is that?" And that's what it was. Well, then the next morning the tracker would—well he would leave at night—he wouldn't stay in the woods. He would leave, and the next morning his job was to come and find me, and he always did. He never ever left me alone, he never left me, or I wouldn't be here. But he always came. And we were following a group of gorillas one time, and one of the showers had started, pouring down rain, and there was a big log that was down, and so we got under the log and we were sitting under the log, and I was writing notes. (phone rings) So we were under this log and we were whispering of course, which is what we always did, we whispered or communicated with hand signals. It stopped raining and I stood up and put my hands on this log and there was like, from you to me, there was a silverback gorilla—

DM:

This is three feet away?

CJ:

And just like that, the other side of the log, like the distance from you to me. And he went, "Rawr!" and he spit seeds and stuff all over me, and he defecated all over my boots, and I'm not sure he was the only one but that's the closest I've ever been and then he left, he didn't attack, he

left, he went, he screamed at me and then he left, he thundered off. And his females were following him. That was the closest I ever came and it was like a distance from you to me.

DM:

He was as startled as you?

CJ:

I guess he knew I was there, but he was just like me, just like that, he screamed and spewed seeds—Aframomum seeds—all over me.

DM:

How long did it take you to recover from that?

CJ:

I sat back down and the tracker was lying on the ground going, "*Pobre nosotros, pobre nosotros*"—"poor us, poor us, poor us."

DM:

You said that sometimes, as I recall, sometimes they would get a little frustrated with your presence, and break branches or trunks, small trunks.

CJ:

They would break branches, chest-beating, defecate, urinate, and go around and break stuff and throw branches, and throw defecate, and the gorillas would do that, and the real behaviorists were the chimps and there's a—Arthur Riopelle studied chimp distance. There's a distance that you can get to a chimp and if you invade that distance, look out. And we did that once. We were following a group of chimps, and again it was raining, and we got too close and this big adult male chimp, about twice as big as me, came just thundering toward us. Just thundering, you know, breaking branches, just thundering toward us and grabbed a hold of a sapling about that big and just spun around it.

DM:

About four inches?

CJ:

Yeah, just spun around it just like a kid, spun around a pole, and we dove into the buttress of a tree. We were in there and my tracker was fooling around over there with something, cutting a pole, whacking something and it turned out to be a Gabon viper, and it just didn't, it could have bitten both of us but it just didn't. It's one of those deals—it just didn't. And I was watching this chimp, the chimp was just really creating a ruckus and the tracker was killing that viper. Yeah, it

was one of those remarkable events, it just didn't bite us. Because that's the way they hunt. They just lay and they wait until something comes by, and that's why they are colored the way they are. But that was a close call.

DM:

From two sides.

CJ:

I was more frightened of the chimp, I didn't even see the damn snake but it was laying there in the leaves.

DM:

That's as close as the chimp came, though—around the tree, and then [it] took off?

CJ:

Well, that was about from here to that wall.

DM:

That's about ten feet.

CJ:

Yeah, and it looked—it spun around that tree, smashing everything, and hooting and hollering to beat hell, and throwing everything, throwing defecate, throwing everything.

DM:

So the beating of the chest was a warning, the beating of the tummy softly at night was maybe a sign of contentment.

CJ:

I'm convinced that was some kind of communication—and I've discussed that with Jane Goodall, and she agrees with me. She doesn't know much about gorillas, but she knows a hell of a lot about chimps and she thinks it was a kind of communication. These little soft things like that.

DM:

What can you tell me about Jane Goodall's personality? What is she like? What is her real contribution, can you talk about her for a little bit? What was maybe your first impression?

CJ:

This was a young schoolgirl that Louis Leakey chose for some reason to go to Africa to study chimps. And she went to the Gombe Forest, and she took her mother with her the first trip, so she wouldn't die out there alone in the forest. But she learned how to work within the system and work with the native people in her area, and she spent twenty-five years studying chimps in the Gombe Stream area and the Gombe Stream Reserve—now it's called. She's written numerous papers on chimp behavior. She wrote a book summarizing her twenty-five years of studying chimps and she's a delightful person, quiet schoolgirl-type person. She was married once and had a child, reared the child in the Gombe Stream Reserve along with the chimps and she and that husband divorced, and she has another husband that she lives with. He has a home in Mombasa, and she travels the world three hundred days a year giving talks in various places. She's one of my favorite people, she's a delightful person, very thoughtful, gave me a lot of good advice on how to deal with the local culture. Louis Leakey is now, of course, dead, but he had Jane Goodall, he had Dian Fossey, and there was another one, that was studying highland gorillas and she [Dian Fossey] was also a schoolgirl that he chose and supported her until she was murdered, and she was a delightful person also. She came to the National Geographic, and came to the Smithsonian to visit with me several times, and we had lunch together several times. Louis Leakey had Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and I met him on my way to Rio Muni the first time. I stopped in Washington, D.C., and was at National Geographic. And Louis Leakey was there and we talked and had a really intense conversation for a couple of days. And then finally he said that "I like young people who don't know anything." And he liked me and he liked Jane Goodall, and he liked Dian Fossey. He liked young people who don't know anything.

DM:

Was that distinction made at that point with you working on lowland gorillas, Dian Fossey working on highland gorillas and Jane Goodall working with chimps—Pan troglodytes, right?

CJ:

Yes, and I was the only one that was working with both gorillas and chimps. Dian Fossey was working with highland gorillas singularly, and Jane was working with chimps. I was the only one that had both of them in close sympatric and wrote a report on them, and wrote that report on the ecology of gorillas and chimps. Both Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey congratulated me on that piece of work. And you have Jane Goodall's book on twenty-five years of chimp study and it has—inside the front cover is a small note from Jane. I reviewed that book and she wrote a thank you note to me. And yeah, we were a far apart team, young people who don't know anything. Jordi Sabater Pi came out of the research lab at the Barcelona Zoo, and for some reason Art Riopelle made contact with the director of the Barcelona Zoo, which was Señor Jonch, and he recommended that Sabater Pi would be our—we had to have a Spanish collaborator to go into a Spanish colony. Sabater Pi packed up his wife and two boys and moved to Bata, and he went out

in the field with me on numerous occasions. He spoke some Fang and he was helpful, and later in time, he stayed in Bata, and he sort of did administrative stuff. He talked to the *Guardia Civil*. He was a Catalan, he was from Barcelona; he was a Catalan and he talked to people about me and what I was doing, and for them to leave me alone and he was very helpful in renewing—each of us had to have a passport. Two kids, and my wife, and me, each had to have a passport; and we could only have it for sixty days, and he was very helpful in renewing the passports in Rio Muni which was a problem every time. I got a guy, a Spanish guy yelling at me and complaining about me, and so I decided I'd just yell back, and so I said, "I'll just take our passports and I'll just leave." And the guy just says, "Well," and he just snatched one of the passports and he said, "We'll just deport this one," and it was my son's passport and so I sat back down and we negotiated. And bribes were the order of the day; but late the next day—they had an immigration office manned by the *Guardia Civil*, and a couple of them standing around armed, and then they had an autonomous government immigration desk. And I would go there and say, "Well, I've dealt with the *Guardia Civil*," and they would say, "Well, we don't care about that." So bribes were the order of the day. I would have a loaf of bread and give them some money, both of them, the Spaniards and the Fang. But the civil governor of Rio Muni, for some reason he befriended, he liked me, for some reason and he and his wife, and me and my family, we would meet, they had a restaurant and a bar down on the beach, the beach bar, and we would meet there and have some drinks and some snacks, and that made us sort of standoffish too, because he was obviously befriending me. And the other thing that happened was, my God, the ambassador, the U.S. ambassador to Spain, came to the colony and came to see me, and, oh man, that did it. That set off the gossip that obviously I was a CIA officer, or some kind of spy, or something. They were really taken, that that guy would come to see me, and I was really taken by that too. I mean, here came his car with the flags on the fender and up my driveway and parked in front of my house, and I didn't know he was coming. And he introduced himself as Angier Biddle Duke, the U.S. ambassador to Spain. And he had his wife with him and his daughter, and they were interested in what I was doing. They came in the house. After we recovered and we told them what we were doing.

DM:

This was unannounced.

CJ:

Yes, just like that. I had some cages with some animals in them, and he wanted to see them and they were really taken with the hairy frog and with the giant frog, and he was a very nice man, and she was, his wife was very nice. They were very common-type people, they came to see us, they came in our house; and, you know, we had, not lavish livings, just bare necessities, but those events really touched off both the Spaniards and the Fang. They were all both really taken by that and the Spaniards became very watchful of me after that.

DM:

And what about the Fang?

CJ:

Oh, they were just—they were kind of laughing about it. This high-powered person came to see me.

DM:

Now Sabater Pi was there on behalf of the Barcelona Zoo?

CJ:

He was my coworker from Barcelona, Spain, from the Barcelona Zoo; and as it turned out later he—when he was stationed in Bata to do administrative things while I was out tromping around, he became an animal collector, to collect animals and ship to the Barcelona Zoo, including the white gorilla. He got the famous white gorilla.

DM:

Named "Snowflake."

CJ:

Yes.

DM:

The white gorilla.

CJ:

Copito de Nieve, Snowflake.

DM:

Would you say—you visited years later in the Barcelona Zoo right?

CJ:

Yeah, it was a magnificent animal, huge, huge, male gorilla, who sired numerous offspring. All of those were normal, all of those were black.

DM:

I've heard it said that this is the—not only a rare thing, an albino gorilla, but that Snowflake is the only known albino gorilla. Have you heard—

CJ:

He's the only one ever known, yeah, only one ever known.

DM:

I mention here for the recording: in the collection of photographs from Sabater Pi, there are some of Snowflake when he was a young gorilla when he was first obtained, so that's interesting as well. Well, what was his, Sabater Pi's personality like? What kind of person was he?

CJ:

Well he was a Catalan. And one of our friends—one of the few other Spanish couples was a Basque, and he was the only other Spaniard there, and he was a fisherman, but he was the only other Spaniard so naturally he and Sabater got together frequently and there were always these political discussions about the Bascos separating from Spain and the Catalans separating from Spain; and there was always this, every time, this political discussion. But Sabater Pi, he was a nice man, very set in his ways, and very stubborn. The typical Catalan, I think. He and his wife, and two sons, were friends of ours. They were good to us. He coauthored numerous papers with me including the gorilla-chimp one that you have ["Comparative Ecology of *Gorilla gorilla* and *Pan troglodytes* in Rio Muni"] but he was a little stubborn.

DM:

He was not an academically trained scientist, was he?

CJ:

No, he was just a person that rose up, like some in the U.S that I got to know when I was at the Smithsonian who just, you know, started out as a squeegee person and later rose up to be a curator. He floated up due to his enthusiasm. He worked hard—he was a hard worker.

DM:

It wasn't family connections or anything like that?

CJ:

No

DM:

Did he coauthor with you the article on chimpanzee use of tools ["Sticks Used by Chimpanzees in Rio Muni"]?

CJ:

Yes, which you have, I believe.

DM:

Can you tell me how that research came about, and that discovery?

CJ:

Well we just discovered chimps hovered around a termite mound, and lots of hooting and hollering, lots of, you know, jumping around. And then we saw these sticks laying there. We just looked at the termite mound and there were these sticks, and holy cow.

DM:

Were they lying there or were they stuck into the mound?

CJ:

They were both stuck in and others just thrown down, and so I just collected a bunch of these sticks and we got to observing this. This is obviously a learned behavior trait, using these sticks to stick in the termite mound and pull out— there would be a termite attached to it, a *Macrotermes muelleri*, and they're about that long, big ones—

DM:

About a quarter-inch, half-inch long.

CJ:

About a half-inch long, and about half of that was jaws. And the hooting and hollering was— they would bite the chimps on the lips. But they were eating them, because they were a good source of protein, but, yeah—

DM:

And by the way there are photographs of these termite mounds and sticks also in your collection.

CJ:

I had a couple, you saw a couple that I had.

DM:

And there's a sketch, also on the front, I believe, of the article, and I don't know if that was a Sabater Pi sketch—

CJ:

No, that was a sketch made by Wilma Martin of the Delta Primate Center. I had funds from National Geographic to come back and be at the Primate Center for a year because I didn't—

I was chosen not to get tenure at Tulane, and for good reason. I was not unhappy with that, but Leonard Carmichael paid for me to be at the Primate Center for a year to write, to write the results of my work, and look for a job.

DM:

At about the same time, Jane Goodall, was doing similar work, I don't know if she was specifying the use of sticks in termite mounds—

CJ:

She got on to it.

DM:

Okay, was this independent of each other?

CJ:

No, we communicated that, and she got on to it, she found it and it was an interesting find, I thought.

DM:

Did y'all's [discovery] precede hers, do you think? Or was the research kind of—did she hear about your research in that?

CJ:

Yes, we talked about it, and I recall talking to her about it, but she got on to it too about the same time, and I collected—those sticks are at Tulane.

DM:

That was my next question, and they are hopefully tagged and described.

CJ:

They are labeled as if they were specimens in the mammal collection at Tulane. The interesting thing is that [my] longtime friend and curator at Tulane is dead and they don't have a mammalogist. Al Gardner, who is at the National Museum at the Smithsonian, he was hired to replace me at Tulane and then I hired him, I hired him to come to D.C., and Tulane has never replaced him and they've never had a mammalogist since then. But my friend [Royal] Sutkas [a professor at Tulane], who was a collector of everything, he took care of the mammals.

DM:

I know one of his big things was fish.

CJ:

Yeah, oh, yes, like several million fish, and that is the biggest collection of freshwater fishes in the world. Well anyway, so Al Gardner goes down to Tulane, his daughter is a student at Tulane, Al Gardner goes to New Orleans, and he packs up the mammals that I got from Rio Muni and took them to the National Museum; he just packed them up, and took them to D.C.

DM:

Yet, the sticks are still there—?

CJ:

Yeah.

DM:

—at Tulane?

CJ:

I was impressed, he just packed them up.

DM:

So to see this work, a lot of the work you did, you go to the National Museum.

CJ:

So all the flying squirrels, the pangolins, that stuff, that's all now at the National Museum, where it should be, because they have an African initiative, and Tulane doesn't have. The rest of the collection will eventually go to LSU. I mean he did this in cooperation with Hafner who manages the collection at LSU and who will become the curator of all of Tulane's vertebrate collections *other* than the fish. The fish are too big for anybody to take. We had a committee when I was at the Smithsonian, had a committee, NSF [National Science Foundation] had a committee including me to go down there and analyze the fish collection and had people from the Smithsonian, and it was too big, they couldn't take it. They couldn't handle it. Bruce Collette from the National Marine Fisheries Service was on the committee and he said that "We'd have to build a whole new museum for this, it's too damn big." It's something like ten million fish; it's the largest collection of freshwater fishes on Earth.

DM:

I have one last question for you—and you might not want to cover this today, I think you're going to cover it in your talk in April. But I wanted to hear about your take on the problems of slash-and-burn in the rainforests of Equatorial Africa and especially Equatorial Guinea. Do you want to launch into that at a time when we have more—

CJ:

Briefly. The slash-and-burn is destructive of the forest, but the level of destruction there is relatively minor, compared to the logging industry, which has equipment and employees, and has done extensive logging in that areas as well as other areas in Africa. And I was told a few years ago that Nigeria was importing two-by-fours, and they had all been logged. Rio Muni, when I first went there, I met with some of the heads of some of the logging companies because I had to use their roads and work on their leased property and they said they had a plan to be there for over twenty years. When the country became independent, they clear cut a third of it, just like I showed you, and just left mud and—

DM:

Was this all under the dictator who is receiving the proceeds?

CJ:

I don't have a picture of it, that logging camp that I had a picture of, they built rafts of logs and floated them down the Rio Muni, and there was a lumber processing ship anchored off shore, and they would pull the logs in and make sawdust out of them. They ruined the beach, there were piles of sawdust on the beach and there was a sign on the ship that said "Weyerhaeuser." These were fine hardwoods, lots of mahogany, fine furniture type woods. Yeah that's the destructive part in the Amazon Basin also, the logging, they say it's being cleared for agriculture; well it has to be logged first.

DM:

And then you also mentioned petroleum as another encroachment.

CJ:

Yes, under every rainforest that has been explored, there are deposits of petroleum, of course, if you think about the breakdown process that forms oil, yeah, it makes sense. And so that's an issue in Africa, you hear about problems in Nigeria over the royalties and all kinds of things. Oil has been discovered in Equatorial Guinea; but all the money goes to the dictator, it's a small amount, four million a year is the figure I have. Sabater Pi and—his wife was especially helpful to me; kept sending me information about Rio Muni when they moved back to Barcelona and I came back to the U.S. And she kept me informed about the dictators, and she's dead, Sabater Pi's dead. I had an online communication with him briefly, and with Riopelle, who moved to LSU, but he's now dead also. Dian Fossey's dead, Jane Goodall is still giving speeches, and I'm still limping around.

DM:

Anything else you want to add before I turn it off? Anything else you want to add?

CJ:

No, not right now.

DM:

Okay.

End of interview



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