Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is bound with photographs and illustrative materials and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between The Regents of the University of California and Jane Goodall dated April 4, 2004. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Excerpts up to 1000 words from this interview may be quoted for publication without seeking permission as long as the use is non-commercial and properly cited.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to The Bancroft Library, Head of Public Services, Mail Code 6000, University of California, Berkeley, 94720-6000, and should follow instructions available online at http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/cite.html

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Table of Contents—JANE GOODALL

Interview 1: April 4, 2004

Audio File 1

Memories of first encounters with Louis Leakey — The Coryndon Museum — Nairobi — Mary Leakey — Goodall’s sensitivity to animals — Expedition to Olduvai Gorge — An encounter with a lion — Leighton Wilkie — Gombe — Goodall’s mother arrives — Learning from John Napier in London, and working with the zoo — More about Gombe — The place and the chimps — A breakthrough — David Graybeard — Community and Louis Leakey — Zinjanthropus (“Dear Boy”) — Hugo Von Lawick and National Geographic, chimps and bananas — Naming and gendering chimp — Goodall’s dissertation — Training new assistants — Negotiating romantic awkwardness — Leakey’s family life and his relationships with women — His contributions to the field of primatology — Flaws and complexity of a genius

[End of Interview]
Interview 1: April 14, 2004

[Begin Audio File 1]

01-00:00:00 Morrell: I’ll just say at the beginning of this that this is an interview with Dr. Jane Goodall for the Leakey Oral History Project for the Leakey Foundation and the UC Berkeley Bancroft Library. Thank you very much, Jane, for agreeing to do this. What I’ve done with everyone is to start at the beginning which is how they first heard about the Leakeys and in your case how you came to meet Dr. Louis Leakey.

01-00:00:27 Goodall: Well, I first heard about Louis when I had a job in Nairobi and I was 23 years old, and somebody said, “If you’re interested in animals, you should meet Louis Leakey.” So I called the Natural History Museum, the Coryndon Museum, and a voice answered and said hello and I said, “I would like to meet Dr. Leakey,” and he said, “I’m Leakey, what do you want.” [chuckling] So anyway—

01-00:00:55 Morrell: Were you surprised that he himself answered the phone like that? Did that take you off guard?

01-00:01:02 Goodall: No, I don’t think I really thought about it. I wasn’t really used to high-powered officers and secretaries and stuff.

01-00:01:11 Morrell: So it didn’t make any difference.

01-00:01:12 Goodall: It didn’t really, no.

01-00:01:13 Morrell: It didn’t affect you one way or the other. And you weren’t aware of other than that he was—

01-00:01:17 Goodall: No, I really didn’t know anything much about him except he was director of the Coryndon Museum.

01-00:01:22 Morrell: How interesting.

01-00:01:23 Goodall: So that led to an appointment, and I distinctly remember him taking me around and asking me many, many, many questions and—because I’d been reading a lot and going to the Natural History Museum in London I could answer many of those questions.
Morrell: He was asking you questions—

Goodall: About the animals. Did I know what this was and then he took me around and I knew things like ichthyology and I think that impressed him so I ended up being offered a job because his assistant, it was his secretary really, was leaving.

Morrell: When he asked you to come see him for an interview what did you tell him on the phone? It would seem that—was he that accessible that anyone who called and said, “I’d like to come by and see you,” that, or did you tell him something—

Goodall: I don’t remember.

Morrell: You really don’t.

Goodall: No, I don’t remember.

Morrell: But you did get in to see him and then he hired you as his personal assistant?

Goodall: No as sort of a secretary.

Morrell: I see.

Goodall: Yeah, because his current one was just leaving. It was very fortunate.

Morrell: And was this with the idea that he was going to have you then pursue some sort of a career watching animals?

Goodall: Oh no, not at all. No. Just that it would get me closer to animals if I worked in the Natural History Museum than the boring job I had in Nairobi.

Morrell: I see. And what was your boring job in Nairobi?

Goodall: Working for W.C. French as a temporary secretary. It was just something to bring some money in.
Morrell: Right. And to give you a reason to be in Africa.

Goodall: Well, the reason to be in Africa was to stay with my friend. But you know you don’t overstay your welcome, so we had set up this temporary job before I left England even.

Morrell: I see. And so where did he take you to ask you questions about the animals?

Goodall: Around the museum. Amongst everybody else who was looking at the exhibits. [chuckling]

Morrell: How funny.

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: And what was your impression of him?

Goodall: Well, he was being very genial that day. He was being very charming and so I thought he was wonderful.

Morrell: And did you see him then as someone who could, in addition to giving you this job as an assistant, did you have in your mind that you wanted to do more?

Goodall: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I was always on the lookout for ways of going and being out in the field and looking at animals. Always. So that, yeah, in fact when he offered me the job I remember saying right that first meeting, but if I’m going to take a job, a regular job, that it’s really important for me to go out and see a bit of Africa first before I accept the job, because I had to, you know, I had to go outside Nairobi.

Morrell: And what was his response to that?

Goodall: Well, at some point he said, “Well, I do have an expedition in the summer for three months, but that will depend whether my wife likes you.” [chuckling]

Morrell: And where was Mary Leakey at this point? If she was going to determine your fate.
Goodall: Oh she was out in the house in Langata.

Morrell: Okay.

Goodall: Yeah, I hadn’t met her of course.

Morrell: And did you meet her then before you went on this—

Goodall: Yeah, but what I can’t remember, I’m sure I was working at the museum before I met her, but maybe he said, “Well, I’ll give you some time off if you get the opportunity,” I just don’t know. The details are very vague. I remember meeting Mary Leakey and she wanted me to ride her pony back from a pony club hunt and fortunately I had this feeling—and the pony walked backwards. They didn’t tell me the pony always walked backwards with a stranger on his back. Sherry he was called. And something made me get off and remove the saddle and there were these two huge saddle sores, so of course, I could do no wrong. That was it. I made it in Mary Leakey’s eyes.

Morrell: The sensitivity to animals.

Goodall: Yes, and so—and her beloved pony. So I went back to have lunch at the house and got on fine with everybody. There were little animals running around. There was a duiker or a dik-dik or something like that and the odd hyrax, and so for me it was just magic. Complete magic.

Morrell: How long—do you remember about how long, before you had that, how long you’d worked with Louis at the museum?

Goodall: No, well, that’s what I don’t remember.

Morrell: You don’t remember that.

Goodall: Not at all.

Morrell: But it was prior to going out on this expedition.

Goodall: Yeah, yeah, yes.
Morrell: [interruption to check recording equipment] So—yeah—so once you, then got on well with Mary and Louis, at what point then did he start talking to you about your own interests in pursuing a—

Goodall: Not until we were at Olduvai.

Morrell: And that was this three-month expedition he was talking about.

Goodall: Yeah, yeah, with Gillian Trace and Mary and a few Africans.

Morrell: Gillian Trace was a friend of yours? Or she—

Goodall: She worked at the museum.

Morrell: She was another sort of assistant.

Goodall: She worked at the museum.

Morrell: To Louis?

Goodall: Mmm—to a department anyway. I don’t really remember, but she worked at the museum.

Morrell: And this took place a few months after you were hired by Louis at the museum?

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: You drove down, I’m assuming over land.

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: And what was that like being out in the—

Goodall: It was magic, yeah, setting up tents at night, Gillian and I had to take turns to be squashed in the back with the two Dalmatians.
Morrell: This is the trip down.

Goodall: [chuckling] Yes. And it was a very overloaded car and there was also a big truck which had all their, had the Kenyans and the equipment, such as it was.

Morrell: And did Louis keep up a discussion about the animals and plants along the way, or what you were seeing?

Goodall: Yeah. Yeah every time we saw something interesting we stopped and looked at it.

Morrell: Oh, really, stopping and looking at it too.

Goodall: Well, once we got sort of off the beaten track, which most of it was at that time.

Morrell: Was that your first time then into the African, into the bush, into the African wild?

Goodall: I’d been up in the {Kenninkog?}, which, I’d been in some forest and seen leopard tracks and that was exciting. But it was different from going up to Ngorongoro and the crater and everything. It was just on the way.

Morrell: So you did go through, the route took you over Ngorongoro Crater and then down the flank of the volcano.

Goodall: Yeah, right, right.

Morrell: So from there you could look down onto Olduvai Gorge.

Goodall: Well, you could see bits of it. Not the bit we were going to, but there was no track in those days. There was nothing, nothing, not a mark, not a mark of a tire. And all we saw for three months was the odd Masai, that’s it. Nothing.

Morrell: What a change, eh?

Goodall: Yes. I know. It’s sad.
Morrell: Yeah, it is.

Goodall: It was so different, but you know, it’s half a century ago.

Morrell: Yeah, isn’t that amazing. This is 1956?

Goodall: ‘57.

Morrell: ‘57.

Goodall: It may even have been early ’58. Actually it probably was—somewhere around then.

Morrell: So you started working for Louis in ’57 and then—and so this was probably that January-February they usually made a trip. Talk a little bit about being there at Olduvai with Louis.

Goodall: Well, he was—we were given our little patch and we were given very different tools to what they use today. We had a hunting knife that we took off the heavy stuff. The Kenyans worked with picks to remove the scree if it was a new bed. And the last bit, when you’re getting down to the bone layer, Mary didn’t like them to do it because she thought if they broke a bone it’s better she did it than the Kenyans did. So she would wield a pick and she was very happy because I could wield a pick too. And Gillian wasn’t so strong, so I was the favored one, definitely. And anyway, if we found a bone, we used a smaller knife or a dental pick—lots of dental picks we had, and got them out. In the lunchtime we would have lunch and then we would have a—did we rest? Yes, we had an hour off because it was very hot and it can’t have been January-February because it was totally, totally dry. It was the summer. It was more like September.

Morrell: Okay.

Goodall: July, August, September, I think. I’m pretty sure, when it was very, very dry because there was no water and stuff. Anyway, so—there we all gathered together under the little roof of poles that they had out with poles and poles and mark the bones with the date and the bed.

Morrell: This is sort of a thatched—
Goodall: Yeah, a little thatched banda thing.

Morrell: So you would mark all the bones.

Goodall: Yeah, we’d mark the ones we dug out with the date and the place we found them and then we went back and did some more digging. And Bottom Biter was the dog with Toots that warned everybody of lions. Mary had to have her dogs and then Gillian and I were just allowed to wander out on the plains.

Morrell: And when you wandered out on the plains was that just out looking at the animals? Or—

Goodall: Just walking.

Morrell: Walking.

Goodall: But we had to take the dogs. [chuckling]

Morrell: And this was more what you were looking for in terms of—

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: Some—an African experience if not a job, eh?

Goodall: Yeah, that’s right.

Morrell: And did Louis then start, as he saw that you were very comfortable in this situation and hardworking, did he then begin to see you in a somewhat different light?

Goodall: Well, he certainly began—

Morrell: How did he develop—

Goodall: It developed because we talked about animals all the time and he knew I was really interested and he knew I cared and he realized that I was tough. He realized that I didn’t care about parties and clothes and things like that. And I
think it was after we met the lion, at least after we met our young lion, it was then I remember Louis talking about the group of chimps on a remote lake shore and how he hoped one day to find somebody to study them. Well, I knew that couldn’t be me because I didn’t have a degree or anything. But he kept talking about this group and in the end I remember saying, “Louis, I wish you wouldn’t keep talking about this because that’s just the kind of thing I want to do.” And he said, “Well, why do you think I’m talking about it?” I mean—I really couldn’t believe it, but that’s how it went.

01-00:13:50
Morrell: What was your reaction? It must have been—to have such a thing offered to you.

01-00:13:55
Goodall: Oh I was amazed! I was thrilled. Would I be prepared? Yes. It was still a year before we could get there. All the money had to be found—and the permission had to be sought.

01-00:14:10
Morrell: What was the experience with a young lion? Tell me about that.

01-00:14:14
Goodall: Well, Gillian and I were just having our walk and I remember a tiny mouse ran across the trail and the two dogs chased it under one of these low acacias. And you know how you feel something behind you? And I looked around, there was this young lion about two years old with his tuft of hair, and he was just looking at us, lashing his tail, I suppose the distance of this room, and then Gillian and I had an argument because she wanted to dive into the thick stuff and I said, “Well, that’s silly because he’ll know exactly where we are and we won’t know where he is.”

So we have to walk up in the open onto the rim, out of the gorge onto the rim, which is what we did and she didn’t dare look back. So I had to keep looking back and saying, “Well, he isn’t any closer.” He followed us. [chuckling] And then finally he stopped following. We made it to the top and Gillian had Toots—Toots was the champion of all breeds of Kenya. I remember this so well, and Gillian let Toots go—Toots who had no idea about the lion because the wind was right, went diving back for the mouse. We called and called and I can’t remember. I can remember starting back down because I thought—well, that’s the end of everything if the lion eats Toots. Anyway we got Toots back.

01-00:15:42
Morrell: And how then—did you discuss this with Louis? Or how did that figure into your—

01-00:15:47
Goodall: Yeah, we were always talking about that if you, unless you are really unlucky, if you respect animals and you don’t get between them and their offspring and
you don’t make sudden movements, you’ll be okay. He had tried to teach me stalking when we still in Nairobi, [chuckling] which didn’t—it was not a very successful lesson.

01-00:16:14
Morrell: At the museum?

01-00:16:16
Goodall: Crawling along like this, holding up bushes, ready for my trip to Gombe this is after that.

01-00:16:22
Morrell: Crawling on your forearms with pieces of bushes in front of you?

01-00:16:25
Goodall: Yes, to try and get close to impala or something.

01-00:16:27
Morrell: I see. And he did this at the museum?

01-00:16:30
Goodall: Out in the National Park, yeah.

01-00:16:33
Morrell: Okay—and did you succeed, did he succeed in getting close to animals?

01-00:16:37
Goodall: Well, I’m sure he had at one time but I don’t think he quite physically fit enough at that time. [laughter]

01-00:16:47
Morrell: So how did this then develop if he had neither money nor backing—

01-00:16:54
Goodall: Well, I went back to England. I stayed out—I worked for him for a year at the museum, so probably another several months after he offered me this, this job, I continued working at the museum and Mom came out for a holiday. I’d saved up so that she could come for a holiday and I got a museum flat by then and then—

01-00:17:23
Morrell: This is a museum flat in Kenya.

01-00:17:26
Goodall: Yeah. A Coryndon Museum flat. And then I went back to England and got jobs while he tried to get money and permission. So I wasn’t involved in any of that. I just waited.

01-00:17:43
Morrell: And finally, he found—
Goodall: Leighton Wilkie.

Morrell: Benefactors here in the States, right. Leighton Wilkie.

Goodall: Yes, Leighton Wilkie, yeah.

Morrell: The man who manufactured tools and—

Goodall: The DoAll Tool Company.

Morrell: Yeah—interested in what you might find out about chimpanzees and tool making, wasn’t it?

Goodall: Yes—no, nobody knew that they would make tools, but—

Morrell: That was the idea. And so how long was it then after Louis talked to you at Olduvai and when you actually went out to Gombe?

Goodall: Well, it must have been approximately a year, because I started at Gombe in July.

Morrell: Of ’58? Or—

Goodall: ’60.

Morrell: ’60, OK.

Goodall: So—

Morrell: And was it a national park at that point? Or was just Gombe Stream—

Goodall: It was a reserve, game reserve.

Morrell: Game reserve. Gombe Stream—

Goodall: Which isn’t quite as safe.
Morrell: Right. Gombe Stream Game Reserve.

Goodall: Game reserve.

Morrell: And as I recall there was a warden there who didn’t like the idea of you as a young woman—you were what, twenty-four, twenty-five?

Goodall: Twenty-six when I got to Gombe.

Morrell: Twenty-six—being there alone and so he requested that you have companionship. Maybe you could talk a little bit about—

Goodall: It wasn’t really the warden. It was the old administration. It was the administration in Kigoma—he was so horrified at the thought of a young woman alone, so in the end they said, “Well, as long as she has a companion,” so it was my amazing mother who came and volunteered for the first four out of those six months.

Morrell: Amazing.

Goodall: So, yeah, it was amazing. And we collected up all of the stuff ready for that expedition. Louis helped us. Louis told us what to get, and as far as I remember, Louis must have actually bought all that stuff, because we didn’t have a car or anything. [animal sounds in the background] And then he persuaded one of the museum, the botanist, drove us, didn’t think he’d ever see us again, thought it was crazy.

Morrell: The botanist.

Goodall: Yes, everyone. They all thought Louis was amoral.

Morrell: Oh, really?

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: And they told you this.

Goodall: No, they didn’t tell me, but I heard it from other people.
Morrell: I see.

Goodall: They all thought that sending off two lone unarmed women into the bush was the most ridiculous, stupid thing.

Morrell: Why do you think Louis did it? What did he see in you or in women that would—

Goodall: Well, he always said women made better observers, that they were more patient and more sensitive, which isn’t necessarily correct, but I think that they are female characteristics. And females tend to be quieter and less wanting to dominate and be the better of, you know, so I think he sensed all those characteristics and he just preferred women. He just liked being around women, you know.

Morrell: Right.

Goodall: Which is—

Morrell: It’s perfectly natural.

Goodall: Perfectly natural.

Morrell: Yeah. And when you got to—and you weren’t daunted by what he wanted you to do at all? Did you have any second thoughts? Or you just—

Goodall: No! No! I was just longing to get there. I didn’t know how I’d do it and there was nobody to tell me.

Morrell: Did he arrange for you while you were in London to see anyone in the scientific community?

Goodall: Yeah, he had me at a temporary job working with John Napier—I don’t know if it was a job, I think I was almost like a student of John Napier.

Morrell: And he was the specialist on primate hands.
Goodall: Right. John Napier didn’t know anything about wild chimps but he helped me find books and I had to learn about primate evolution and all that kind of stuff [chuckling].

Morrell: That must have been a little useful or at least it got you into the beginning of the scientific framework or background or something—

Goodall: Yeah, well, the other job I had was in the zoo so I saw these two poor, pathetic chimps every day. To walk past them, it was pretty sad, but—and Louis must have written at that time and told me what was going on, but I don’t remember it. I don’t remember getting letters from him then. I just remember waiting and thinking, well, one day, I suppose, it will work you know.

Morrell: And what was your feeling when he did get it all set up? Were you surprised, or just—

Goodall: No, I was [sigh] I remember just feeling almost like there’s something sure to go wrong. It can’t really be happening. Not wanting to get too excited in case it went wrong again.

Morrell: Right.

Goodall: So just quietly getting on and getting everything ready and not thinking too much. [chuckling]

Morrell: Yeah, well, that was probably a good attitude to take going into an African situation where you never know.

Goodall: Yeah, certainly I felt that way going along the lake shore for the first time to Gombe. Definitely felt that.

Morrell: That at any point it could stop and—

Goodall: That it couldn’t really be happening. It was too good to be true. [chuckling]

Morrell: And this was by boat? Is that how you got to Gombe the first time? From—
Yeah, Louis had got a little boat. A thirteen-foot, I think it was, an aluminum Canadian flat bottom. It wasn’t a Boston Whaler, it was a very simple little aluminum boat. A very good one, actually. Super for the lake.

With a motor?

With a tiny—I think it was five horsepower. I think it was five, I don’t think it was one. It was five. And you could row it. It was a rowing boat as well and it had oars. But the game warden was there at the time.

At Kigoma? Or in Gombe.

He was in Kigoma.

He was in Kigoma. This is on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. I just have to say this for the record.

Yes, right, it was on the shores of the lake. And Mom and I arrived and we arrived just as the Belgian Congo was collapsing and all these refugees poured over the lake and we couldn’t go to Gombe for at least two weeks. We were stuck in Kigoma on our meager budget and our meager rations, and we set up—well, we first were in a hotel and then all the refugees came so we—and it was cheaper for us to camp, and the place they put us to camp was in the gardens of the prison. [chuckling]

Oh my goodness!

So every morning we woke up to gangs of men in chains. [laughter] But anyway, they grew lots of vegetables in those days so we had lots of very, very cheap vegetables.

They were probably very kind to you too, I would think.

I don’t remember actually, having anything to do with them. We had our little place, and finally got permission to go, and the warden who was there to see us established, he was actually quite irritable about everything. He thought it was stupid. He didn’t think that we’d stay more than two weeks. That’s what he told everyone. But anyway, he went—
Morrell: He was a—

Goodall: British.

Morrell: British colonial.

Goodall: Yeah, yeah.

Morrell: Yeah, okay. He was not impressed.

Goodall: No, he thought it was mad. But you know, we got on fine with him once we’d met him. He melted, and so he put us and our boat on their little government launch, the Kibisi, which is still there.

Morrell: Amazing.

Goodall: Yes. And took us along and landed us where his two game scouts were and helped us put up the tent. He must have stayed that night although I don’t remember him doing so. Maybe he didn’t.

Morrell: You camped right on the shores at the lake.

Goodall: Just—

Morrell: Just in—

Goodall: Just a tiny bit in, yeah. And he’s the one who found, no, the regional commissioner found us a cook, which we had to have, and the game ranger organized meetings telling everybody locally who we were and what we were doing and they all thought we’d be spies, that the government wanted to get more land into the park, so—

Morrell: Oh.

Goodall: We had to be watched to start with. [laughter] Anyway—

Morrell: To see if you were spying, interesting.
Because we were, you know, they thought that if I saw one chimp, I’d write down four. In other words, more chimps needed more land. That’s what they were convinced—

I see, I see.

About that.

I see, how sad.

Yes. Well, it didn’t last long.

How long did it take before you convinced them otherwise?

A month.

A month, eh.

A few weeks. Hmmph. Yeah.

And tell me two things, your reaction—I’ve been to Gombe, I’ve had the pleasure of being there actually once with you, and anyway—just a tremendously beautiful jewel of a site. What was your reaction when you saw where you were going to be in studying those chimpanzees.

Well, my reaction was how am I going to find the chimps, because I looked into those valleys and it somehow seemed much bigger then, because of course the forest was all the way to Kigoma, so it seemed a much bigger wilderness area.

Yes, than what it’s become.

Well, it was much bigger, yeah. And it was totally unknown and I knew that in that place that somewhere there were chimps. But how would I find them? It just seemed like a needle in a haystack.

This is by climbing up from your camp up onto the ridges.
Goodall: No, this is going along in the boat.

Morrell: Oh, I—oh, yeah.

Goodall: Looking at it.

Morrell: Right, right.

Goodall: And then to start with I had to have these two people always with me and so we’d go clumping up a valley. And the chimps came to a tree, but they were too far away to see them. It was all quite—you know, it was exciting, but at the same time I knew that I needed to see something exciting to get more money, so it was very worrying too.

Morrell: And were you corresponding with Louis—

[interuption]

Goodall: So—what was I saying? I wrote to Louis.

Morrell: And did you tell Louis about this.

Goodall: Yeah it was quite funny because I would write and say, “You know, I can’t do it, because I just—he had put all that money and trust in me and I was getting more and more worried. And every time I wrote back and said, “I can’t do it.” He’d write back and his writing got bigger and bigger saying, “I KNOW YOU CAN.” And of course, the more he said, I know you can, the more pressure I felt, because I didn’t know what else to do than what I was doing.

Morrell: And what was the breakthrough? I mean, besides being able to get rid of your two attendants.

Goodall: Yeah, well, the breakthrough was David Graybeard, first of all losing his fear, and secondly demonstrating tool using.

Morrell: And how did he lose his fear of you?

Goodall: I don’t know. He just was always—he often started feeding over where the little African camp was, where Dominic was and the game scouts.
Morrell: Dominic is the cook?

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: Okay.

Goodall: And David would be seen feeding and the women would come and tell their husbands because they were getting firewood and they were always seeing this one chimp with his gray beard. It was David. [chuckling]

Morrell: And so he became tolerant of you.

Goodall: Yeah, so why he lost his fear before the others, who knows. It’s just that they’re all different.

Morrell: Yeah, right, right.

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: And then he—because of his lack of fear then that—the other chimps saw that and they responded.

Goodall: Yeah, so he helped me to habituate early. He really did.

Morrell: And did you explain this to Louis? That you’d had this—

Goodall: Oh I wrote him detailed letters about everything.

Morrell: Yeah, right, I remember.

Goodall: Everything that could—could be, even a little bit exciting.

Morrell: And how long after you’d been out there did you see the first tool use, and I assume by this you mean the use of the sticks with the termites.

Goodall: Yeah, termite fishing. Four months? Just after Mom had gone back, so I had nobody to share the excitement with. I had by that time, Mom didn’t want to
go and leave me isolated like that, so Louis sent his very, very trusted boat man from the Miocene Lady on [Lalawe Hasani?], so Hassan [Salimu] came and he and Dominic were the two people I had. He got letters once a week, I think, Hassan went in. So anyway, Mom left after four months and it must have been early November I saw the tool using.

01-00:31:38
Morrell:  My goodness. Do you remember, I mean obviously you were thoroughly excited to send Louis a letter like that and do you remember what you said to him and his response?

01-00:31:50
Goodall:  Well, I remember that George Schaller had visited just before Mom left and said two things—“If you see tool using, if you see hunting, the whole thing will have been worthwhile even if you see nothing else.”

01-00:32:01
Morrell:  Really good man, very good advice.

01-00:32:04
Goodall:  And so the tool using—as I had not been to university, I don’t know that I even, well, I guess I knew it was fascinating. I don’t think I realized how fascinating it was. But I do remember thinking, well, I know I’ve seen David, and I know he picked grasses and put them in the nest, but I couldn’t really see properly, so I didn’t dare believe it.

01-00:32:29
Morrell:  In the termite nest.

01-00:32:30
Goodall:  Yeah. I could only see his back view. So I didn’t dare tell Louis until I had seen it twice more. I wanted to be sure. I wanted to know it wasn’t just an aberrant thing or—so as it was the termite season by then I saw it twice more and then wrote this telegram, it was a telegram.

01-00:32:51
Morrell:  Oh my.

01-00:32:52
Goodall:  And his reply was now we must redefine man, redefine tool, or accept chimpanzees as humans.

01-00:33:01
Morrell:  [chuckling] That made it possible then, for him to get you additional funding?

01-00:33:08
Goodall:  Yeah, he went to [National] Geographic. Yeah, that got the funding.

01-00:33:12
Morrell:  And how much longer then did you stay in the field before you actually saw Louis again?
Goodall: He never came. I think he thought he physically wouldn’t make it up the hills. He never came.

Morrell: He had bad hips at that point, I think.

Goodall: He had bad everything. He was overweight, and puffed even just walking a short distance. He just was very, very unfit.

Morrell: Poor guy.

Goodall: Yeah. So no, he never came. I saw him—well, the next thing that happened was that Judy came out, my sister and we went back at Christmas.

Morrell: To Nairobi?

Goodall: No, I must have seen him in between. I must have seen him. I took some time off the first Christmas after six months, that’s right. I saw him then. I had two weeks.

Morrell: In Nairobi to see him.

Goodall: I went to Mombasa, yeah.

Morrell: Okay, Mombasa.

Goodall: I think that timing’s right. And then I went back and then I was there for a year.

Morrell: And when you saw him again, did he spend any time with you? Or was he just congratulatory and gave you more pep talks?

Goodall: Do you know, I tried to remember that the other day. I don’t—I honestly don’t remember, but of course, we must have sat down and he was obviously really interested in everything. I’d send him copies of all my notes and he was excited.

Morrell: He must have been just elated. He tried a couple of other young—well, one other young woman in particular.
Goodall: Rosalie Osborn.

Morrell: Rosalie Osborn.

Goodall: And there was another, wasn’t there. Jill—

Morrell: Jill Donisthorpe.

Goodall: Jill Donisthorpe.

Morrell: Yes, but you were the first true success, someone who he could actually say she’s done something.

Goodall: Yeah, yeah. That’s right.

Morrell: And he must have been just pleased as he could be, I should think. Did he—

Goodall: Yeah, he used to go around talking about me. I heard that from lots of other people.

Morrell: Talking about—can you remember what they said he was telling them?

Goodall: No, that he was just very proud of me and what I’d done and, “You see, I told you so,” and I wasn’t so stupid after all. [chuckling]

Morrell: [chuckling] Especially after people kept saying that this was an—

Goodall: That it was amoral.

Morrell: Yeah that it was an amoral thing to do or that it was mad, et cetera.

Goodall: But he didn’t really ever care what people thought about him. I know when I worked for him as his secretary, he would receive a letter and tear it open, and if he didn’t like it or he didn’t like the person, his pen would scratch through and his margins would be full of Bosh! Rubbish! And then he’d say, “Get me so and so on the phone,” and I learned not to. I learned to pretend the person
wasn’t there because if you left him for two hours, he’d calm down and was rational. So I think I saved a lot of friendships. [chuckling]

Morrell: Otherwise he would call them up and—

Goodall: Just be really rude.

Morrell: Oh really?

Goodall: Really rude, I mean he just—

Morrell: Insulting.

Goodall: Totally insulting. And he was always upsetting the staff at the museum because he would see them in the morning and he would walk straight past them. He wasn’t really meaning to be rude, he was just thinking about something else. But they found it very, very rude.

Morrell: Of course. He was so preoccupied with what was on—

Goodall: Yeah, yeah.

Morrell: Yeah, interesting.

Goodall: So I was always telling him. I tried. [chuckling]

Morrell: And when he would insult these people or berate them, was it because of things that they had written, scientific papers? Or something that they’d written him in a letter—

Goodall: No, it was mostly a scientific conclusion he didn’t agree with or they were questioning his scientific evidence or—

Morrell: Aha! [chuckling]

Goodall: —assumed evidence, anything like that.
Morrell: And of course he was just—well, at that time, they’d just found—I guess you must have been there, actually, when Zinjanzthropus was, Dear Boy, was found.

Goodall: No, I had just left.

Morrell: Just left, okay. So you missed—

Goodall: Yeah, that’s why Olduvai was so exciting because there weren’t any, there was no fossil of humans, so there were no people. It wasn’t known. And I didn’t really care about the fossils that much. I cared about the animals.

Morrell: Yes, of course.

Goodall: So I was really lucky. I went at exactly the right time. [chuckling]

Morrell: Yeah. No, you did. And when it changed for the Leakeys, when they began to get all this attention because of their fossil discoveries, did that seem to change him in any way? Or did you notice—

Goodall: I didn’t notice, because I mean, you know, they’d had discoveries in other places. Mary had gone battling on about her bola stones convinced that these Oldowan pebbles were tools, and nobody believed her. So she was probably pretty chuffed when they actually found the maker of these tools.

And Louis would, he did it all wrong, he didn’t share out his finds with the wider scientific community before publishing. He kept it all secret with just a few handmaidens or handmen and then published it with huge press conferences, which wasn’t considered to be the right way to do it. He was a great showman. A great showman.

Morrell: Do you have other than that, do you have examples of him being a great showman? Just the way that he would explain things to you?

Goodall: No, it was mostly when I say that, it was mostly that when he was talking to outside people, and there was, particularly the press conferences that I remember, but also if he had a group of three or four scientists, he was a showman, with his lectures, the kids, and stuff. He was a showman. And a genius. Now almost all the things that he announced, which upset all his
colleagues, to their fury, usually turned out to be right. That really upset them! [chuckling]

Morrell: [chuckling] Even now! I think people—they’ve suddenly discovered that the family tree is bushy and it was something that Louis said from the very beginning, that it would be.

Goodall: Let’s not talk about bushes right now. That’s not a good word.

Morrell: There was a—this is not for this tape, but there was someone demonstrating at our 4th of July parade that said, “Save the Forests, Cut down the Bush.”

Goodall: Yes, that’s right. Yeah, I’ve seen that.

Morrell: That’s a good one. So—as your work progressed then, there at Gombe, Louis must have taken a great deal of pride in what you did and how it added another element to what he was able to say.

Goodall: Yeah, he took huge pride until the banana feeding began and then he hated it. Of course, Louis got Hugo there, and Hugo really was the one who needed the banana feeding for his film.

Morrell: This is Hugo van Lawick.

Goodall: Yeah, yeah.

Morrell: And he came to take pictures for National Geographic Magazine.

Goodall: Yes, right, correct. And to make a film and thank goodness, because those scientists didn’t want to believe what I’d seen, but with a film they had to. They couldn’t disbelieve tool using when they saw the chimps actually fishing for termites.

Morrell: And they felt, or did they—[technical aside] Hugo couldn’t do his filming unless he got more chimps around through the bananas?

Goodall: Well, he could have, but it was a little easier if they came to camp. It certainly helped the habituation. It taught us a lot very quickly about what was going on.
Morrell: And you yourself didn’t see the banana feeding as influencing their behavior, or causing—

Goodall: Yeah, I knew it influenced their behavior to some extent, but I was interested in individuals, so this was all the individuals behaving within the same context. And at that time, there was no thought of the study continuing. That’s the point. A year was going to be it. So you were desperate to get information and chimps are pretty difficult.

Morrell: I actually remember reading a letter where you were going to do the chimps, and then go on and do the gorillas, and then do the orangutans.

Goodall: Yeah, that’s what he wanted me to do.

Morrell: That’s right.

Goodall: Yeah. So, it wasn’t like thinking, well, now I’m going to be studying here for forty years, so let’s mess up the whole system as much as I possibly can and then take it from there. It wasn’t like that at all. It was just breaking new territory and getting the chimpanzees so that we could actually learn what they were about.

Morrell: And two of the things, that I think, that were really important were one, that you, as you mentioned, you recognized them as individuals.

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: And the first scientific paper that you wrote, you used their genders, or their sex—

Goodall: Yes, and their names and their genders.

Morrell: And tell me what happened. The editor changed it, I believe.

Goodall: Yeah, that was Nature, and he changed the hes and the shes to it. And the who to which. And he left the names.

Morrell: Astonishing. Astonishing.
Goodall: But people still do it. You read in most newspaper articles, about say, a dog that’s rescued a child, and it’ll start off, it’ll give the dog’s name and then say, “It did this.” And then very often, by the end, it’s changed to she or he, but it’s very bizarre.

Morrell: How strange.

Goodall: Yeah. Still, we haven’t won that battle yet.

Morrell: Interesting. And I think you told the editor to at least give them the dignity of their sex.

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: And did you discuss this at all with Louis?

Goodall: No, by then I was in England. I remember the thing that absolutely totally, totally made him—two things made him really angry. One was that after the tool using, I also wrote to John Napier about it, and he published an article in the newspaper. I didn’t mind, Louis—because I didn’t know about scientific this that and the other, but Louis was absolutely furious.

Morrell: That John had taken what you’d—

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: And sort of stole it in a way.

Goodall: Yes. Because it was nothing to do with John Napier.

Morrell: Of course not.

Goodall: But they published an interview with him and Louis was livid. And the other thing that made him angry is that my PhD was published in that Cambridge monograph series and Louis wanted a nice big hard-covered splendid book, and this is a rather cheaply, shoddily produced paperback thing. And he was really—I was so proud of it and he was totally disappointed with it.
Morrell: And your advisor was—

Goodall: Robert Hinde.

Morrell: Robert Hind. And that’s [spells] H-I-N-D?

Goodall: [spells] D-E.

Morrell: D-E, okay. And he—that was standard, wasn’t it? That it should be like that.

Goodall: Yeah, yeah.

Morrell: Louis was upset that you hadn’t been singled out for special treatment? Or was it—

Goodall: Well, he just thought the study was so unique, which it was—

Morrell: True.

Goodall: —that it should do more than go on the shelves of dusty university libraries.

Morrell: That must be a very rare document. Is it still at Cambridge University?

Goodall: That monograph?

Morrell: Yeah.

Goodall: Well, I must have a copy of it somewhere. Even in Bournemouth, I should think.

Morrell: Bournemouth is your home in England.

Goodall: Yeah.
Morrell: Amazing, eh? And what happened when he voiced such disapproval of the banana feeding? I think he was worried that it affected what you were seeing about those strong bonds between the mother and child, right?

Goodall: Yes, he thought it might interfere with everything and you know, he was right, it might have. Luckily it didn’t, but it could have. And so this was a big, it was a big—he really hated it.

Morrell: Did it affect your personal relationship with him? Did he—

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: Or did he just—

Goodall: No, it did.

Morrell: So that it became more awkward to see him, or he was just gruff with you, or how did—

Goodall: He was just gruff, but you know, I was married to Hugo by then, and I didn’t actually see him that often, just on the way through.

Morrell: A pity.

Goodall: He was okay, I mean, he wasn’t sort of really nasty. I saw him often in London when he was in the flat, and then he was okay.

Morrell: And then he was friendlier to you.

Goodall: Yeah. He managed to put that in a compartment, so we tried to talk around it. [chuckling]

Morrell: But did it reach a point where he never wanted to hear about your chimpanzee work?

Goodall: More or less.
Morrell: Really?

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: Oh what a pity.

Goodall: Yes, it was a pity. It was a pity.

Morrell: Did he ask your advice when he was seeking other people such as someone to study the orangutans?

Goodall: No, he sent them all to Gombe.

Morrell: Okay.

Goodall: They had to start there.

Morrell: While you were there?

Goodall: Much to their resentment. Yes. [chuckling] They didn’t like that much.

Morrell: Just because it made you—in a way—the expert.

Goodall: That’s right. [chuckling]

Morrell: Hmm. And did he then ask you for your opinion about, say Dian Fossey or Biruté [Galdikas]?

Goodall: No. Because he’d already chosen them.

Morrell: I see. So it was just your job to train them.

Goodall: Sort of give them some introduction into the primate world, the ape world.

Morrell: Must have been awkward a bit.
Goodall: Hmm, well—they didn’t stay very long and there were plenty of students around by then to take them around so it wasn’t too bad.

Morrell: And you were, it sounds like you played the role of good sport. Did it feel like you had to separate yourself from Louis at some point? Or did you always feel that he was somewhat there attached to your study, to your project.

Goodall: Well, at the beginning, I thought, you know, he was, he was the money. I had to keep on the good side of him otherwise the study couldn’t have worked. So it wasn’t a totally academic thing. It was very much tied up with what he thought about my abilities and that sort of thing.

Morrell: Um, this is—the way this is all being done, these tapes can be—you can put a time limit on them when you want someone to release the information, so we’re asking people to be very frank, and I know in a previous interview that I did with you for the biography I wrote about Louis, we just touched briefly on Louis’s attraction to you.

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: And I just think in the interest of the record, it would be worthwhile for you to talk a little bit about that, however much you’re comfortable, and then you can, when you see the transcript, you can ask for this not to be released, whatever.

Goodall: Well, Louis was attracted to young women, attractive young women, which I suppose I was.

Morrell: You were. [chuckling]

Goodall: [chuckling] Well, thank you.

Morrell: I think anyone would say that.

Goodall: Plenty of men seemed to think so, anyway. And so it was a difficult situation because I didn’t want to make him angry, so that I couldn’t have this amazing opportunity. So it was pretty difficult.

Morrell: And when did he make known his interest in you?
Goodall: Well, I suppose it came gradually. I think everybody saw it coming but me. I was so enthralled with going stalking animals in Nairobi National Park and everybody else was giggling as we both appeared with raw arms, you know. [chuckling] And the part of him that really cared desperately about Africa and the animals and understood so much and was at home in nature, I loved that part of him. So there was a huge attraction for who he was and what he could teach me and what he could do for me. So it was just the physical thing which wasn’t appealing. And—

Morrell: He was much older. He was twice your age, I think.

Goodall: Yes, and he was so unfit. So I just had to somehow hope that by being nice to him and just saying, “No,” for the certain moments that we could hobble along and we did.

Morrell: Did he overtly tell you that he liked you or loved you?

Goodall: Oh yes, oh yes, he loved me, and he would write long passionate letters.

Morrell: Oh he did.

Goodall: Oh yes.

Morrell: Oh dear. That’s so sad.

Goodall: Yes, he did. Yes, he did. But you know—

Morrell: How did you respond to those? Did you—

Goodall: Well, I wrote back, just not passionate letters [chuckling].

Morrell: You sort of ignored it?

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: Interesting.
Goodall: I just sort of ignored it, yes.

Morrell: So you didn’t come right out and say, “I don’t return your feelings,” but just—

Goodall: Well, I think it was because of this that I flung myself into a silly love affair, and I think that was my way of, because that made him angry, but at least that—I didn’t have to say, “It’s not you.” I could say, “Well, you know, I’m sorry, but I’m in love with someone else.”

Morrell: I see.

Morrell: Right, right. So it’s not a full out rejection.

Goodall: No, exactly.

Morrell: It’s I’ve been swept away off in this—

Goodall: Exactly.

Morrell: Right, right.

Goodall: Yes. And you know, Brian was my own age and in a way very romantic, so I think Louis could understand that.

Morrell: And what was the name?

Goodall: I don’t think I’m going to tell you the name. It was Brian. That’ll do. [chuckling]

Morrell: Right, okay. I thought you said, O’Brien, I’m sorry.

Goodall: There was a Micky O’Brien at the same time. Well, it’s not important

Morrell: It doesn’t matter. I was just—because when I heard it, I just misheard what you’d said. So, did that then extend itself into your study at all? Or when did
Louis seem to back off and just say all right, this is isn’t going to be mixed up—

01-00:52:25
Goodall: No, once we started the study, it was all over. That was it, and he’d abandoned all thought.

01-00:52:35
Morrell: That’s amazing. And he never used that against you in any—

01-00:52:39
Goodall: Well, he may have done, but it didn’t stop the study. No, he can’t have done, can he? I don’t know what was going on in his mind.

01-00:52:49
Morrell: Did he strike you as a very lonely person? Or just a romantic.

01-00:52:54
Goodall: [sigh] Well, he struck me as having a very sad family life. It was very, very sad.

01-00:53:05
Morrell: His home life.

01-00:53:06
Goodall: His home life. Really sad, I mean, that, I guess that was something which made lots of women feel sorry for him. They couldn’t help it.

01-00:53:17
Morrell: The lack of understanding between he and Mary?

01-00:53:21
Goodall: Yeah and the way that he had sort of abandoned his children to Mary because she wanted to bring them up and he didn’t want to interfere and make things worse. Then seeing that she actually did badly by them, really. I mean poor little Phillip was just abandoned in that house. And Jonny was left when he was, I think he was just two weeks old, because Mary wanted to go and dig up some burial mounds. He didn’t have a very happy time with his first wife either.

01-00:53:58
Morrell: Right. Did he talk to you about that at all?

01-00:54:01
Goodall: Yes.

01-00:54:02
Morrell: And what was unhappy about that? Because I only heard from her side and never—
Goodall: Well, she told him after a bit that she’d only married him because she thought he’d be a good sire for her children.

Morrell: [pause] That’s cold.

Goodall: Yes. And that she’d gone off to become deflowered before their first intimacy. I don’t know what that means. I have no idea what that, but that’s what he told me.

Morrell: Yeah, interesting. Medically? Did she mean?

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: Yeah.

Goodall: The sort of woman who had an induced menopause age 35 because she didn’t want to mess with children or anything like that. I mean, that’s so bizarre.

Morrell: Yeah, it is.

Goodall: What people do to their bodies is extraordinary.

Morrell: Well, he certainly seemed to be, just from my discussions with various people, he seemed to always be looking for a soul mate, or someone—

Goodall: Yes, I think he was. I think he was.

Morrell: And felt that he found it at various times, but I understand that he was very close also with your mother.

Goodall: He was very close with her, and I think she came very close to being what he wanted, because she always listened and she understood. Unfortunately, he’s the one who taught her to drive and as he couldn’t drive either, we had that legacy right to the end. [laughter] You heard how he, when he, how he taught himself to drive, because he got a girlfriend when he was in England and she said would he teach her to drive, so he said, “Of course,” and went and bought a car and proceeded to teach her. He never had a driving lesson in his life.
Morrell: No, I’d never heard this story. It’s brilliant though. It sounds just like Louis.

Goodall: So going uphill with Louis, it was always like this. [demonstrating Louis shifting] He never really understood the gear! [laughter] [a knock at the door]

Morrell: I’d hear how—

Goodall: Whoops.

Morrell: Do we have to stop?

Goodall: Yes, I think we do.

Morrell: Oh dear. Can you just very quickly tell me—

Goodall: [calling out to person who knocked] We’re coming.

Morrell: Tell me how you would see Louis’s contributions to the field of primatology. If you just talk there and discuss what you see.

Goodall: I think, well, first of all, he was a giant. He was really way ahead of his time. I think that his getting Dian, Birute and me out with the great apes was a fantastic thing to do. And the way he persisted and went on and on, back to Olduvai, and back to Olduvai, and back to Olduvai, and finally showed the things were there. He was interested in Rudolph, long before Richard was, Lake Rudolph, so he had these flairs and I think that he made a huge contribution for learning about our own ancestors in Africa.

Morrell: And in terms of the primate studies, the way that he chose women, what did that do for the field?

Goodall: Well, it certainly opened the way for careers for hundreds of young women and he made good choices and he got the first long-term studies, so he did fantastically.

Morrell: He was a brilliant man in so many ways.
Goodall: He was a genius and geniuses always have their flaws. His relationships with people, all his relationships with people, really, his staff, and they loved him. And he had the guts to go and choose people for the museum who didn’t have degrees because he said you didn’t need them to do good work, and he was right. So, yeah, and of course, he was half Kikuyu, too. He grew up Kikuyu and that, yeah.

Morrell: It colored the way—

Goodall: It colored everything. If you’re sixteen, or whatever it is, and you have to sit in a circle with other young men with your knees apart and a pebble on each knee and if a pebble drops when they circumcise you, you’re a coward for life, and that makes you in the afterworld, it wasn’t a Kikuyu. So, and I think he was really colored by that early Kikuyu upbringing.

Morrell: Was he circumcised in that ceremony?

Goodall: Yes.

Morrell: He was.

Goodall: Yeah.

Morrell: That’s the first I’ve—I was never clear that he was.

Goodall: He was. Well, I mean, he said he was.

Morrell: Right, right.

Goodall: Yeah. And he believed in evolution, he believed in God. I mean, he was a mixture of different worlds, the European world and African world and he never quite fitted in anywhere. But he was a brilliant man and a genius and he’s left a major legacy.

Morrell: Indeed he has. Thank you so much, Jane.

Goodall: [chuckling] Okay.
01-00:59:30
Morrell: It was delightful. I have to just push these buttons to write this thing.

[End of Interview]