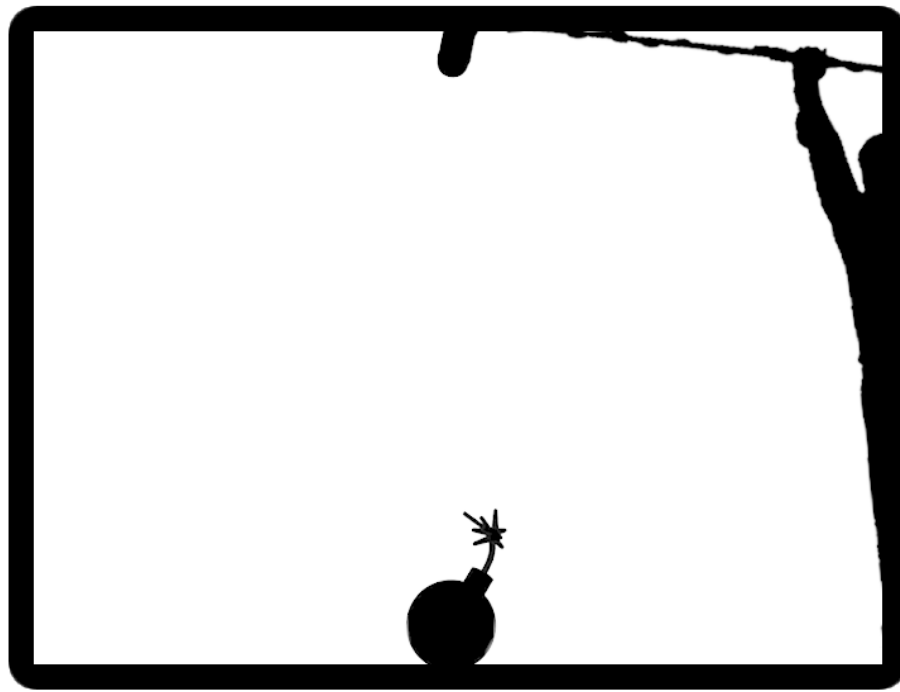


INSIDE
THE
MIND
OF
HOMO
SAPIENS
COGNATUS

PROF. DR. J.R.R. TRAILER III ESQ.

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Imagine, if you will, that you are a deer.

Now, as a deer, you were born knowing where you are in the food chain. And so, you use your cunning agility and keen hearing to avoid the predators which you know, instinctively, are hunting you down, so that they might rip out your throat with their teeth.

In the fields, forests, and swamps between and beyond our unique homo sapiens experience, this is indeed how life still works, and has worked on this planet for many hundreds of millions of years. Deer must remain hidden from their predators - constantly fighting for survival, just as our own ancestors once did. The stakes are high for the deer; it must run and hide, or die in extreme pain.

Consequently, deer are not commonly seen, except for those who venture unusually close to their natural habitat: hikers, hunters, and the occasional camping family, to name a few. Just imagine how strange it must be for a deer to observe humans. First, the deer might come across a camping family as they frolic about down by the river. Then, that same deer may see some hunters dragging off a dead friend or family member. "Those walking, hairless monkey-types are unpredictable and dangerous," the deer is probably thinking, "best to play it safe and avoid them completely." And so, deer tend to do just that, and indeed, you might not even see a deer on a casual camping trip, despite being practically surrounded on all sides by wild deer.

In fact, you might not ever see a deer in the wild, ever - unless, of course, you get lucky, or you spray your clothes down with horny-female-deer urine and trick some lucky buck into coming over to ask you out on a date. Truth be told, the outcome in either case here could be considered "getting lucky." Essentially, the challenge of deer-gazing is a very straightforward one: for every step you take towards a deer in the woods, the deer simply takes one hundred steps in the opposite direction. You take another step forward, and the process repeats. This is due to the fact that the deer heard and smelled you coming from about a mile away, and thus, quietly and quickly made its exit, long before you would even be able to see it, and often, before you can even hear it escape. If deer were even better at hiding than they are now, then we might be inclined to believe that deer do not exist.

Now, instead of a deer, imagine that you are an elk, officially trading in your speed and agility for raw strength. Ravenous wrestling bowhunters aside, you now seemingly have less to worry about when these strange, walking, hairless monkey-types come traipsing around. In general, your increased size and strength makes you less skittish than your smaller cousin, the deer. Perhaps we think of elk as "majestic" because their large stature inspires awe, while their deliberate steps seem to suggest a kind of primitive confidence; elk are essentially giants, and they seem to be keenly aware of this fact. That being said, even the most judicious elk might rush you, stomping you into oblivion, if they

feel threatened, or if they are defending their territory or their young, making fatal elk attacks slightly more common than fatal deer attacks.

Finally, and, most relevantly, imagine that you are a large chimpanzee. Biologically speaking, we are the most similar to chimpanzees, so it seems to follow logically that our hypothetical thought experiment here should be easiest when considering the chimpanzee, as opposed to a large elk or deer. Right? Well, maybe not - thanks to the uncanny mental abilities of the primate brain. It turns out that certain species of primates are wildly more successful at hiding than other species, especially considering the list of recently discovered species; about one new primate species is discovered every few years or so, give or take, as humans venture farther into the darkest corners of our continents. In other words, the last remaining pristine, and mostly untouched, mountains, valleys, fields, caves, and rivers, each of which, on foot, seem to stretch on forever, in all directions.

In fact, chimpanzees were so good at hiding, we were not really aware of their lifestyle, and subsequent primitive culture, until about 1965, when a brave, young primatologist by the name of Dr. Jane Goodall spent several rugged years alone with a group of chimpanzees deep in their natural habitat. It was there, in the remote jungles of Tanzania, where she famously observed chimps engaged in tool construction and usage, in addition to other advanced emotional and social behaviors once thought to be exclusive to us humans. Her discovery was incredible at the time, and it changed the way we think about our unknown primate cousins and ancestors. However, it should be noted: if chimpanzees had been a more elusive species - a relentlessly elusive species - then there is a good chance that Dr. Goodall might not have been able to make her discovery in the first place. After all, chimpanzees have been around for about four million years, give or take, so why did we only learn about their behavior in the unsettlingly recent year of 1965? What took us so long?

Sure, chimpanzees were pretty good at hiding, but certainly not world-record hide-and-go-seek championship material, like *cognatus*. If one were so inclined, many improvements and optimizations could be made to the standard evasion and survival plan of almost every wild non-human animal, chimpanzees notwithstanding. As good as deer, elk, and chimpanzees are at hiding from predators and surviving in the wild, they certainly aren't farming their own crops or building structures larger or more complex than a mud-stick hut. Only *homo sapiens* is currently capable of these feats, and more, so the other species out there find their own way, evading and surviving, some nearing extinction, and they can only survive in proportion to their abilities and remaining natural habitat. Imagine how lucky you would need to be in order to observe such a fascinating unknown creature in the wild, just as Dr. Goodall studied the chimpanzee. This begs the question: are there any other more advanced primate species that have been around for millions of years but have largely avoided general observation by humans?

The unceremonious answer to the previous hypothetical question is a simple and boring “yes.” We will likely continue to discover more primate species every few years (as we have done in the recent decades prior to this publication), as we stumble into these species’ remote natural habitats, recording their existence and, possibly, their behavior and “culture” as well. How do these magnificent creatures behave? What do they think about when they aren’t looking for food or trying to reproduce? Many species are considered to be endangered upon discovery, so how do these particular species manage to persist without going extinct completely? How long can a species limp along the razor’s edge of extinction, without ever actually going extinct?

Those hoping to answer any of these questions, as well as those simply hoping to study the fossils of “missing link” primate species, are forced to deal with a painful fact: many of the primates in question existed in a hot, wet jungle environment - a terrible environment for the preservation of remains, from which a fossil record is built in the first place - and thus, a terrible environment for future archeologists to explore. And thus, our understanding of what is possible in the unexplored corners of the planet remains limited, and proportional to the success of our dedicated researchers in the field, like Dr. Goodall, and many others. If one were so inclined to venture out and discover a new primate species, what would be needed - other than excellent wilderness survival skills and gear?

Assuming fossils are a long shot (considering aforementioned environmental factors) for learning about the psychology of undiscovered primate species, our next best method for studying an unknown primate in the wild, would be a good old-fashioned hike into the wilderness. As far as the scientific community is concerned, any whole (or part) of the specimen’s body should suffice to acknowledge the creature’s existence, and thus, the beginning of a new frontier in evolutionary research. Video (or audio) evidence of this undiscovered species would be nice to look at, but, the fact remains that these kinds of evidence can be doctored or manufactured - especially with more recent modern technology - and so, seeing is not necessarily believing anymore. At the very least, it should be possible to study at least one recently deceased specimen in the wild. Right?

In order to have any chance at finding such a recently deceased specimen, we would need to manage to survive within (or around) the creature’s natural habitat long enough to also get lucky enough to stumble across a body, before any predator or scavengers pick the carcass clean, potentially spreading or consuming the bones as well, making our search futile. Even worse, some primate species are known to engage in cannibalism, so if this undiscovered species has any kind of cannibalistic tendency, the odds of discovering an intact, lifeless specimen in the wild only get worse. Realistically, only those individuals with the fortitude to exist on the fringes of our civilization stand a real chance of getting this lucky. So, can we learn anything about (currently) undiscovered primate species from the small populations of humans who dare to thrive in these remote mountain and jungle habitats?

Many indigenous tribes over the past thousands of years, some living in the most remote areas of their respective continents, have described a co-existence with large beast-men of varying hairiness; a creature somewhere between a “chimpanzee” and “neanderthal,” and possessing surprising intelligence. These tribes’ oral traditions seem to indicate a highly developed and healthy respect for, and in some cases, a kind of armistice with, these beast-men living on the fringes of their world, going so far as to voluntarily forfeit certain lands from the tribe to the beast-men, in the hopes that future generations on either side of the agreement will continue to respect the other’s natural habitat, allowing for both species to prosper independently. However, if any such coalition existed (or still exists) between us, then that fact remains unproven in current day. In fact, virtually all of these oral traditions are considered to be nothing more than mythological stories or parables, despite similarities in the beast-man narratives from tribes who supposedly had no possible way of contacting one another.

Assuming these oral traditions are more mythological than historical, it might help to start looking into past events and eyewitness accounts for any evidence supporting the oral traditions. Logically speaking, modern-day hunters are in a great position to contribute meaningfully here, as they tend to have lots of experience identifying and distinguishing between different animals, and happen to venture frequently, albeit temporarily, into the kind of environments where we would expect to discover a new primate species. Most importantly, modern-day hunters are alive and able to speak about their own experiences, and thus, able to reliably convey their observations using modern terminology, which leaves little information to be lost in translation or mistaken as mere myth.

Unfortunately, even if a hunter does get lucky enough to actually observe a currently unknown primate species, we cannot simply accept, at face value, their eye-witness testimony, or drawings, or photographs, or video recordings, or audio recordings, or any other kind of physical evidence (except bodily remains), due to the aforementioned authenticity issues with such evidence. And so, it appears as if our search for a new primate species has come to a disappointing dead end. Or, has it? What if we continued our search, in the name of science? As Aristotle once remarked, “it is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it,” and so, in the course of this essay, I intend to do just that: diving inside the mind of *homo sapiens cognatus*.

Our *cognatus* research, as difficult as it was already, is actually made several times more difficult than needed, thanks to various sensationalist headlines from the previous century, all pertaining to sightings, or video, or audio recordings, or casted footprint molds of a large, unknown primate species. These tabloids sparked a strange new cultural phenomenon, subsequently tainting any possible application of the scientific method, and officially ending any serious scientific discussion about a new, highly intelligent primate species still capable of surviving on the fringes of our modern civilized world. What should

have been a rather pedestrian scientific investigation, instead contorted into a circus side-show attraction. Consequently, there is a large incentive for the circus to continue selling tickets for the side-show, thus giving rise to a perverse incentive for hoaxers to confound our search by introducing manufactured evidence into the equation.

These hoaxers believe, most foolheartedly, that their “discovery” will bring them some mixture of notoriety and fortune. However, this is rarely the case, and instead the hoaxers are showered with a wave of hateful derision. Despite this stigma of being a “hoaxer-by-default”, individuals - who seem to have no desire for a life of tabloid-fueled fame - continue to step forward, candidly admitting to their friends and family about what they “know they saw” while out in the wilderness. If every single one of these people, over the course of the last two centuries, and indigenous people before them, over the course of the last thousand years, all consciously decided to fabricate similar details and events, all corroborating one another and pointing to the existence of the same creature, then it is an extremely impressive coincidence that the physical evidence we have managed to collect in more recent decades - modern video, audio recordings, and casted footprint molds - continues to corroborate past eye-witness evidence.

I feel like we already understand the hoaxer’s motivations quite well. However, more elusive is the motivation of the seasoned hunter, who, at great risk of being labelled a conspiracy-crazy-idiot-hoaxer by friends and family, confesses, sometimes under great emotional duress, that they “know what bears look like,” and they “know how bears walk,” and they know, for certain, that they “saw something else.” Are some of these thespian hunters hoping to break out into a successful acting career with such a vividly emotional confession? Or, are these hunters merely recalling what they saw, either accurately or inaccurately? If the latter is true, does that mean every single “honest hunter confessional” is merely a case of mistaken identity?

Before we write off every single “honest” hunter, hiker, camper, and anyone else with a seemingly credible eye-witness account or recording, we should at least hear them out and try to confirm which category their evidence falls under: hoax, mistaken identity, or observation of unknown species. This is the humane - and indeed, scientific - thing to do, and surely, their evidence must fall under one of these three categories, as there does not seem to be any other possible alternative explanation for the encounter. Necessarily, this brings us to what could be the best video recording of *homo sapiens cognatus* to date: the infamous, 16 millimeter Patterson-Gimlin Film, recorded in (or slightly before) 1967, alongside Bluff Creek, California (a tributary of the Klamath River, roughly 38 miles south of Oregon and 18 miles east of the Pacific Ocean.)

If Roger Patterson or Bob Gimlin did manage to acquire (or construct) an anatomically correct, female monkey suit for the sole purpose of filming a hoax in 1967, then the monkey suit they used has proven to be, over the course of several decades, the

most advanced prosthetic suit ever made by human hands. Apparently, this female monkey suit is (allegedly) an incredibly realistic combination of leg and arm musculature prosthesis, prosthetic breasts, and synthetic hair. Truly, an incredibly difficult feat, even for present-day practical effects experts, and likewise, an almost inconceivably difficult feat for practical effects experts living in the (relatively) primitive special effects era of the 1960's. The realistic breast movement alone, if accomplished via prosthesis during this timeframe, makes the "female" version of this monkey suit exponentially more difficult to build than any "male" version would have been - a puzzling choice for supposed get-rich-quick hoaxers, especially considering a cheaper and less complex "male" suit would have been just as effective for the hoax, and thus, cheaper and easier to accomplish. However, most impressive is the (alleged) suit's bodily proportions, and thus, it's infamous gait: not quite how a human locomotes, but similar enough to seem like "just another silly walk" - easily reproducible by any sufficiently large human actor in a sufficiently complex female monkey suit. Or, so the experts thought.

In the decades since 1967, teams of zoologists, physical anthropologists, related experts in animal kinesiology, and other researchers, have analyzed high-definition digital transfers of the original 16 millimeter Patterson-Gimlin Film footage, and their conclusions range from "inconclusive" to "incredulous." Most notable, however, are the experts who set out to reproduce the film in its entirety - confidently assuming the film was a hoax, and thus, easily reproducible given the right camera angle, human actor, gait choreography, and full-body prosthetics. After attempting to reproduce the gait with various human actors of various bodily proportions, utilizing various arm and leg extension prosthetics, these researchers concluded that they couldn't quite conclude how even the most masterful practical effects experts might have constructed "Patty," or her infamous gait - let alone the synthetic hair and musculature, which in high-definition, can be seen flexing and rippling, exactly as real muscle tissue would move during locomotion. Even worse, these researchers were using updated prosthetic build materials and methodologies - none of which were available during the 1960's - and they still couldn't accomplish anything resembling the original film.

Is it possible that Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin simply accomplished their goal of observing an unknown primate species, in an area where it had been recently reported? After all, these reports are exactly what motivated their excursion to Bluff Creek in the first place - or so their story goes. Unfortunately, we are currently unable to accept Patty as an authentic specimen of *homo sapiens cognatus*, but we can keep her in mind. However, it is interesting to note that some of the more recent (alleged) video recordings of *cognatus*, when analyzed frame by frame, do depict a gait almost identical to Patty's, which tells us at least one of the following is true: international hoaxers who have mastered Patty's gait since before 1976, or extremely elusive primate creatures naturally exhibiting this gait, are alive and well, being spotted on the secluded fringes of the American Northwest, Northern

Canada, Australian Southeast, and Asian rainforests and jungles - popular places for (alleged) recordings and sightings of cognatus.

Beyond Patty's infamous gait, there remains the casted footprint molds collected over the past century or so, almost all of which include anatomically correct primate musculature indentations (albeit not matching exactly any primate on record) indicative of the same peculiar gait. Furthermore, some footprint molds casted in a sequence (i.e. from the same long line of footprints in one location) clearly show deviations in musculature contortion from step to step, meaning dozens (or more, in some cases) of footprint templates would be required in order to attempt hoaxing such casted molds. However, even with multiple footprint templates, the hoaxer would also need to ensure each template is sufficiently flexible, like a real foot, in order to successfully recreate the properly shaped facsimile of each casted mold on record. Fortunately, this has made footprint hoaxers much easier to identify, as their molds are static, blocky, and do not show any signs of anatomically correct flexing, nor the correct musculature indentations that we clearly see in other casted molds.

But, why care about this so-called "physical evidence" anyway? Ultimately, I aim to postulate what cognatus might be thinking about, regardless of existential proof. Assuming at least some of the reports and video recordings collected over the past century are authentic, we see a species which appears to be largely benevolent, consciously choosing to remain as elusive as possible. Nature dictates that such a large animal would require a substantial caloric intake in order to survive - especially considering the fact that more intelligent brains require more energy to operate. So, what is the cognatus diet? Almost assuredly, cognatus does not seem to be capable of utilizing fire as a tool, except perhaps in rare occurrences where embers from naturally occurring local fires (e.g. from lightning strikes or brush and wildfires) are captured and relocated to a cave, or similar sheltered location, where the embers can then be stoked into a fire, and thus, utilized as kind of tool for heating and cooking - similar to how our ancestors probably utilized fire, before they grew advanced enough to create fire on demand.

As it turns out, the flora and fauna in these environments should be sufficient to feed smaller tribes of large primates - irrespective of any need for fire on demand. Fortunately for cognatus, this raw diet eliminates the need for seasonal migrations, and thus, limits exposure to any humans who might also be in the area. Unfortunately for cognatus, however, there is no such thing as a perfect evasion plan - and some would argue all (non-hoaxed) evidence gathered over the past hundred years is a clear testament to that fact. What if cognatus did sometimes need to venture out closer to humans in order to survive? Could every member of cognatus be a maximally judicious giant, respecting an age-old armistice with humans, avoiding us - even when desperate for calories? Recall that cannibalism in great apes is relatively common - with chimpanzees leading in that particular popularity contest. Assuming members of the tribe are off-limits (for sentimental

reasons), then the lonely hunter or hiker might make for an easy and fulfilling snack. But, is there any evidence at all pointing to this kind of predation?

A former police detective by the name of David Paulides has researched thousands of missing persons cases in an attempt to answer this question. To date, he has classified over a thousand missing persons cases which fit a very specific, and unusual, “Missing411” profile: no clear signs of animal predation, or mental health issues, suicidal intent, crime, drowning, and with the disappearance taking place in a national park or other wilderness area. Of course, these aforementioned elements are impossible to rule out completely, but the fact remains that a peculiar, common thread runs through these Missing411 cases. Fortunately, cases of animal predation are the easiest to identify and rule out, as animals tend to be very messy eaters, leaving behind many pieces of clear evidence. However, the absence of this evidence does not automatically rule out animal predation completely, as it is reasonable to suspect that a stronger, more intelligent, and (most relevantly here) extremely elusive species would tend to avoid leaving behind any such bloody mess of evidence.

If it sounds like we are talking about human serial killers, that’s because any one of these missing persons cases could indeed be explained by the actions of a sufficiently careful human assailant. However, another peculiar Missing411 profile point seems to confound this conclusion: articles of the person’s clothing or gear are found in areas searched multiple times, typically less than a few days apart, right under the noses of search party personnel still in the area conducting around-the-clock quadrant by quadrant (re)searches. In the cases where the (typically naked) body of the missing is finally located, autopsies generally indicate no foul play and, more interestingly, no clear cause of death, other than (possibly) hypothermia. In one of the more grisly cases, the skull of the missing was found under a tree, split open for what seems to be a crude brain extraction. Could every single one of these Missing411 cases be explained by extremely brazen serial killers and regional copycat killers? Or, is a hungry indigenous species more likely?

It is reasonable to suspect that cognatus possesses a wide range of individual personalities - similar to humans and other intelligent creatures. One of the higher profile Missing411 cases, “Casey and the Bear,” seems to support this conclusion. Casey Hathaway was a three-year-old child who went missing one day while playing in his grandparent’s backyard in Ernul, North Carolina. A search party of 600 personnel, several bloodhound teams, and a helicopter with FLIR (hovering constantly overhead) combed the surrounding woods, but were unable to locate Casey in the surrounding areas until 56 hours later, when Casey was finally found - only one quarter mile from his grandparent’s house, fifty yards from a road. Miraculously, despite 56 hours of freezing temperatures, rain, and wind (getting so bad, at one point, the sheriff had to pull the search party out of the woods), Casey was found “in good condition” and was soon returned to his family. Casey claims that a “bear” took care of him during this period, however, wild bears are not typically known for

kidnapping, sheltering, and then returning young children unscathed. It should be noted that similar “bear” statements have been documented from lost kids in similar Missing411 cases.

Assuming that Casey (and the other missing children with similar stories) are not simply lying or being coached to lie about a bear, then at least one of the following must be true: some wild bears have developed a human babysitting hobby (perhaps from lovesickness), or some very indecisive kidnappers like to wear bear suits. But, are there any other possible explanations? What if a lovesick cognatus just so happened to - either accidentally or purposefully - encounter an unsupervised (and therefore, a lost, alone, cold, and hungry) human child? I think it is more reasonable to imagine a primate species being the culprit behind these cases, rather than some wild bear or indecisive kidnapper wearing a bear suit, especially considering that “babysitting” females are frequently observed in primate species, with a small human likely similar enough to trigger the same response. Eventually, it seems cognatus realizes they are not quite up to the task of raising such a strange, hairless runt of the litter, and thus, the child reappears close to home, unscathed.

Has anyone spent considerable time under the care of cognatus and lived to tell the story? The confession of one lumberjack, Albert Ostman, gives us an idea of what such a life might entail. In 1924, Mr. Ostman was camping near Toba Inlet, British Columbia, when his sleeping bag (with him and his rifle still in it) was scooped up in the middle of the night and carried cross-country for several hours. Luckily, Mr. Ostman had chosen to sleep with his rifle, on account of a very large animal he had heard rummaging through his campsite the night before. Bewildered and petrified, Mr. Ostman decided against trying to fight his way out of the sleeping bag, correctly assuming any individual strong enough to carry him over-the-shoulder, now for quite a long distance, would also be strong enough to quickly quash any such getaway attempt. After his sleeping bag was set down, Mr. Ostman found himself surrounded by what he could only describe as a “family of four” upright man beasts: one small female adolescent, a larger male adult, an even larger female, and the largest of them all - standing around eight feet tall - the tall male who had just carried him - and his camping pack - over-the-shoulder for hours through shallow streams and rolling hills.

Mr. Ostman contends that he did not attempt to use his rifle on the creatures, as they had done him “no harm.” Furthermore, his rifle might have been ineffective against such massive creatures, excluding a direct shot to the head. Mr. Ostman recalls he must have been “held captive” by the family for about six days, periodically eating a “sweet tasting grass” which he would observe the creatures wash in water before serving. On the sixth day, while the largest male creature was away from the group, Mr. Ostman was given the opportunity to escape when the adolescent male (the only of the four creatures to be supervising him at that moment) curiously grabbed and ate a handful of Mr. Ostman’s snuff while Albert was taking a pinch from his can. As the adolescent male swallowed the snuff and began choking with revulsion, Mr. Ostman decided that was his chance - quickly

grabbing his gear and running away, using his knowledge of the waterways to get back to civilization. While running, Mr. Ostman heard a loud shriek behind him, just before the larger female appeared and briefly gave chase - retreating as soon as Mr. Ostman turned to fire his rifle in her direction.

Assuming Mr. Ostman's story is not simply a wild fabrication, then we can only imagine the thought process and intentions behind his abduction:

"Family, I have returned from my hunt," the father announces, setting down the sleeping bag containing Mr. Ostman, "I came upon this poor, lost hairless one - he must have been banished from his tribe as well..."

Mr. Ostman wriggles his head out of the sleeping bag, stunned to see the mother, daughter, and son eying him down curiously.

"Dear," the father addresses the mother, "I need to speak with you in private..."

The father and mother leave the others briefly for a private conversation.

"Listen, my dear," the father begins, "I did not bring the hairless one back because he was lost...of course, we see these hairless ones from time to time, and we do not interfere - just as the oath commands! But...we are banished from our tribe, and so now, we must try to start our own tribe...and, our daughter-"

"Darling," the mother interrupts the father, "I do not think your plan will work - a hairless albino dwarf?! Our daughter already loves the one they call Haa`chey, from the Woo-hah clan-"

"Yes, Dear! I know that," the father interrupts the mother with a stern snarl and grunt, "I hate that little runt! Listen, my dear...do you remember the tale of the Kalash`ha tribe? How they joined in love with the hairless ones, long ago? Our tribe will prosper, too - just as the Kalash`ha did....I know it! And...if this does not work, well...then we will just eat the hairless one - deal?"

"Deal," the mother confirms with a snort.

Later, during breakfast, the father gets the ball rolling.

"Little one," the father addresses the daughter, "why don't you prepare some sweet grass for our hairless guest, and show him around the mountain - get to know him?"

"No, Dad! He is pale, hairless, and disgusting! Besides, I am already in love-"

"Well," the father interrupts her with a grunt, "You certainly are not going to be hanging around with that little runt from the Woo-hah clan-"

"His name is Haa`chey, dad!"

"I know his name!" The father snarls loudly, "I told you, it is forbidden to be hanging around with him!"

"Whatever, dad!" The daughter growls, frustrated.

Perhaps father's plan was not as far-fetched as it might seem to us today. After all, recent studies of ancient DNA samples show that members of our species frequently mated with neanderthals. At any rate, this behavior gives us more insight into the "culture" of cognatus, which is more developed than chimpanzees, but less so than modern humans.

But, does cognatus display any other advanced cultural traits which we would not expect from a wild primate species? If cognatus ritualistically buried their dead (or cannibalized them out of respect, or desperation, and then buried them), then it would certainly explain the utter dearth of dead specimens we have been able to stumble across in the wild (the aforementioned well known natural causes for this notwithstanding). Regardless of burial practices, primates are commonly observed to engage in stone throwing, and cognatus seems to be no different - throwing large stones with unsettling accuracy, for the purposes of communication, and perhaps, intimidation.

During the Vietnam Conflict circa 1969, several U.S. troops had reported incidents with “rock apes” while on patrol in the Kontum Province of Vietnam (near the borders of Laos and Cambodia), the most notable incident being a “stone throwing attack” launched by a group of seemingly frustrated upright ape creatures (apparently called “the people of the forest” by the local population in their native tongue). During this “attack,” the creatures hurled many roughly basketball-sized stones with alarming accuracy, from a considerable distance away, and yet, no troop injuries were reported, with every stone hit being a “near miss” - which seems to indicate a judicious use of incredible strength, and thus, an increased level of consciousness and intelligence. If anyone were in a position to invoke the wrath of an ancient primate culture, noisy soldiers combing through the remote, pristine jungles of Vietnam would certainly be among the first in line.

Over the past decades, hunters and campers have reported similar incidents of “near miss” stone throwing from incredible distances, suggesting this behavior is a trademark of cognatus, and a testament to their incredible strength and emotional intelligence. Another event highlighting this conclusion readily comes to mind: the “siege” of Ape Canyon (the event for which Ape Canyon is named). So the story goes, in 1924, a group of five miners were seeking their fortunes along the southeast slopes of Mount St. Helens when they were confronted by an “apeman” which, unfortunately, they saw fit to shoot at with rifles. Incredibly, the creature was able to scurry away over the ledge of a nearby cliff, but, later that night, a group of apemen seemingly sought retribution, first peppering their log cabin with stones of varying size, then rocking the cabin back and forth violently - at one point a hairy, muscular arm reaching in through a gap in the wall, at which one of the men shot with a rifle, barely missing the arm as it retreated. As daylight approached, the siege subsided, and, eventually the men were able to escape the cabin, swearing to abandon the campsite forever.

Assuming their story is not some elaborate hoax, it is incredible to see cognatus exercising such restraint with the miners, despite their own member(s) being wounded (or possibly killed) at the hands of these trigger-happy miners earlier in the day. Even though a group of cognatus would have likely had the upper hand in a fight to the death against five men with a couple of rifles, no such murder attempt was made, and so, we can reasonably conclude the goal of this “siege” was merely intimidation, and not extermination. In either

case, a clear intention to avoid extreme physical harm on either side indicates a higher level of intelligence. We might expect an equally strong, but much less intelligent, “wild beast” to fight to the death, if originally intending to do so, regardless of the odds of winning the fight. As Arthur C. Clarke once said, “any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic,” and so, cognatus may consider rifles and other projectile weapons to be a kind of “evil magic” - certainly an excellent reason to avoid confrontation with humans at all costs, whenever possible.

And so, cognatus tends to do just that, unfortunately leaving their lifestyle, culture - and, ultimately, their mind - inaccessible to us modern humans, for now. Until more direct or concrete evidence is gathered, our journey to the bottom would merely become a descent into similar (albeit much less detailed or noteworthy) encounters, relayed to us from people of varying trustworthiness, still living on the (surprisingly ample) unexplored fringes of our modern civilization. I would say the evidence is clear that cognatus is choosing to avoid us humans at all costs - for the terrifying, evil, magic, hairless, dwarf, mutant-monkeys that we humans truly are - and the remnants of their tribes are using thousands of years of evolutionary advantage in order to successfully (for the most part) evade and survive on last remaining, extremely remote, and barely habitable corners of our planet. However, other researchers on this topic may not be so sure, and so, around and around we go, never seriously considering any of the past evidence - at least, not until a live (or recently deceased) specimen is studied in some way.

Unfortunately, this is the macabre final frontier of our journey: capturing or killing a specimen of cognatus in order to study it in detail. Until that happens, all of the past evidence - much of which I have highlighted in this essay - will simply be ignored by the overwhelming majority of people. Some adventurous cognatus enthusiasts have already made it their mission to retrieve a specimen, at any cost, using high-powered rifles or tranquilizers. Despite leveraging some of the most advanced modern technology, like night vision, thermal optics, and remote controlled drones, none of these excursions have thus far been successful, and cognatus remains a mystery. However, after a specimen is studied, it will be interesting to see any past evidence re-examined, and finally vindicated. Until then, however, if we wish to know the mind of cognatus, then we are presently stuck - limited to staring at our own reflection in the mirror, and wondering wild, cave-dwelling thoughts. Perhaps cognatus is not so different from us humans...after all, that is exactly where the species derives its name.