

## **'Jane' a glowing tribute to Goodall's remarkable life**

Whatever you know about Jane Goodall, there's more to learn from "Jane," a gorgeous documentary devoted to the life of the famed primatologist and her life's work with chimpanzees.

Culled from extensive footage shot by Goodall's husband, Hugo van Lawick, during her time in Gombe National Park in Tanzania, "Jane" is actually several films in one -- a biography, an inspiring and at times heartbreaking story about Goodall's chimpanzees, a look at how working women were treated in the era, and through the romance between Goodall and her photographer, a love story.

The movie is clearly a labor of love for writer-director Brett Morgen, whose interviews with the 83-year-old Goodall nicely augment and flesh out the story that's told through the archival material.

Goodall was a 23-year-old secretary with no formal training when she first journeyed to Africa, being recruited in 1957 by paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey to study chimpanzees in order to uncover clues about human evolution. Her mission: To "get close" to them. "To live among them. To be accepted."

For five fruitless months, the chimps ran away from her, until Goodall came close to despair. Eventually, though, they lost their fear, and as she muses with the sort of poetry that characterized her famous TV specials, "The trees came alive."

Breakthroughs followed, including Goodall's famous discovery that the chimps made tools -- at the time something it was thought only man did -- using twigs to help them catch termites to eat.

"Jane" then detours into both the public reaction to Goodall -- with casually sexist headlines, one describing her as a "comely miss," others indulging in Tarzan-Jane puns -- and the complications and strains associated with the birth of her son, what with mom and dad's globetrotting ways. (A vintage news clip shows the media's predictable eagerness to paint him as some sort of exotic jungle boy -- the aforementioned Lord Greystoke, only if his parents had survived.)

Featuring a customarily beautiful, lyrical score by Philip Glass, "Jane" grew out of a happenstance opportunity (van Lawick's "lost" footage was found in a storage unit), but Morgen ("The Kid Stays in the Picture") has turned it into a wonderful and stirring film.

Beyond being a testament to Goodall's remarkable life, it's also a thoughtful look at the sacrifices such a mission-driven existence requires. Yet it can also be enjoyed more simply as a beautiful nature film, demonstrating that even in this golden age for such fare, a la "Planet Earth," Goodall's pioneering work from a half-century ago still stands, proudly upright, alongside the best of them.