

# Clintons mingle with beasts on African safaris

By William Douglas=(c) 1998, Newsday

GABORONE, Botswana — President Clinton has been accused of following the Republican road on policy matters. Monday, he happily followed the GOP's symbol down a dusty jungle dirt trail.

Clinton saw the beauty and brutality of nature on two picture-taking safaris in Botswana's Chobe National Park. Clad in a green short-sleeved shirt and green cap, Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton bounced along in a canvas-topped jeep, stopping along the trail to observe hippos, baboons, impala, water buffalo and a lioness and her cubs.

But what caught Clinton's eye was the size and majesty of an elephant with immense tusks. The Clintons' safari vehicle slowly followed the pachyderm from a respectful distance. "It's amazing," Clinton said after a 30-mile ride around the park. "It's been an amazing day."

During an afternoon safari ride, the Clintons found more elephants cooling themselves on the banks of the Chobe (pronounced CHOH-bay) River. About 45,000 elephants roam the park's 4,200-square-mile area. The Democratic president expressed a great admiration and respect for the giant beast that is the symbol of his political rivals.

"Yes, and I like to see them concentrated here," Clinton said to laugh-

ter. "Actually, I was kind of jealous that the Republicans appropriated such a nice animal as their symbol. I think they're fascinating, these elephants are."

Down by the water, the Clintons were treated to a symphony of snorts

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from nine hippos as a 12-foot crocodile lumbered by.

The Clintons also saw nature's somber side. They saw a water buffalo that guides said had been severely slashed by a lion, exposing the animal's bright red stomach.

"He won't survive, will he?" Clinton asked guide Richard Randall. "Probably not," Randall said.

The Clintons began the day in the morning darkness, hearing a cacophony of birds near a safari lodge that had few of the comforts of the White House.

Dark woods dominated the decor of the thatch-roofed lodge. The Clintons' room was like every other,

lodge officials said: a bedroom with a large dressing table, a writing table and a bathroom with separate shower. To keep pesky mosquitoes at bay, a bug net encircled their bed.

The lodge, with a restaurant that overlooks the Chobe River, has no television or radios because "if one comes to experience the bush, you need to experience the bush and tranquility," said Koos-Jerrard Louw, a lodge consultant.

The Clintons ended the day with a sunset river cruise, accompanied by gunboats and frogmen.

Despite the back-to-nature theme, the Clintons could not totally escape official Washington. Secret Service agents followed their safari vehicle in one of their own. Another vehicle contained presidential spokesman Mike McCurry — none the worse for eating a fried worm for reporters on Sunday — national security adviser Sandy Berger and presidential attorney and first friend Bruce Lindsey. Bringing up the rear was a small crew of reporters who monitored the Clintons' every move.

Unfortunately, a radio reporter at another game park near Gaborone was not watching the moves of a cheetah — it jumped him from behind while he was taking a colleague's picture. Shouts drove the animal away and a White House physician gave the reporter a tetanus shot and some antibiotics. He returned to work, more embarrassed than injured.

# Female substance may help fight AIDS

By David Brown=(c) 1998, The Washington Post

A team of scientists is zeroing in on a mysterious AIDS-fighting, cancer-fighting, anemia-fighting substance distilled from a distinctly unlikely source — the urine of pregnant women.

The existence of the substance has been suspected for several years but its precise chemical identity has proved elusive. Now, a group of researchers headed by virologist Robert C. Gallo report they've narrowed the search, and eliminated the leading contender.

In Tuesday's issue of the journal *Nature Medicine*, Gallo and his collaborators say they've gotten crude extracts of the protein, which they name "hCG-associated factor," or HAF.

The substance appears to be a protein that clings tightly to human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), a hormone produced in large quantity in the first trimester of pregnancy, when hCG is extracted from urine.

"When we have it in its pure form and it's chemically identified, we will be able to learn" how it works, said Gallo, who heads the Institute of Human Virology in Baltimore. "It may open up a whole new area of anti-viral research."

The first hint that hCG itself might have unexpected properties came by accident in 1995.

A group of male and female mice, each injected with cells that cause the rare blood vessel tumor called Kaposi's sarcoma, were put in the same cage by mistake. The animals that didn't develop the cancer all had

one thing in common — they were females that had become pregnant soon after the tumor cell injection.

That finding eventually led Gallo's team to try hCG in people with Kaposi's sarcoma, which is relatively common in AIDS patients, especially ones who are gay men. This experiment produced another unexpected result: The hormone not only shrunk some of the tumors, it also reduced the amount of AIDS virus in the bloodstreams of several patients.

Further research revealed the substance had a third effect. It stimulated the body's production of red blood cells and white blood cells, both of which dwindle to unhealthy levels in people with advanced AIDS.

HCG is produced in large quantities during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy, when its main function is to keep a pregnant woman's body from rejecting the newly formed embryo. Pharmaceutical companies extract the hormone from the urine of women in early stages of pregnancy for a variety of medical uses, including the treatment of infertility. Those "clinical grade" extracts, however, actually include small amounts of dozens of other proteins found in the urine.

Gallo's research team used those impure extracts in their initial studies, and concluded that hCG was causing the observed effects. In the new paper, however, they report that extremely pure extracts of the hormone don't do what the cruder samples did, nor does hCG manufactured through recombinant DNA technology.

The scientists found, however, that when they filtered the crude hCG and isolated the impurities by the weight of the molecules they contained, two

of the "fractions" had the activity they were looking for. Specifically, when those fractions were injected into mice, both the activity of AIDS virus genes and the growth of Kaposi's sarcoma tumors were reduced by about 80 percent, compared to untreated animals. In cell culture experiments, the fractions stimulated the growth of blood cells 1.5- to three-fold.

Isolating and testing the substance "are high priorities," the authors wrote.

Gallo's collaborators included Yanto Lunardi-Iskandar and Joseph L. Bryant, both of the Institute of Human Virology, and Steven Birken of Columbia University in New York.

In a second, unrelated paper, Gallo and another group of collaborators report that people whose immune systems produce unusually large quantities of biochemicals called chemokines are resistant to HIV infection, in some cases even after massive exposure to the virus.

Gallo, Daniel Zagury of the Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris, and 12 other collaborators, studied 128 hemophiliacs from Milan, Italy. The patients had been repeatedly exposed to HIV in blood products between 1980 and 1985, before a test was available to detect viral contamination. Despite massive doses of virus, 14 of the hemophiliacs never got infected. Those patients lymphocytes produced about 2.5 times the normal level of chemokines, which are hormone-like substances that help direct the body's immune response.

Their report appears in the current *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

# Witnesses silent as beaten man dies

By Tom Kenworthy=(c) 1998, The Washington Post

DENVER — Residents of a Denver apartment house watched four men beat a taxi driver early Sunday morning and dump him in the trunk of his cab without notifying authorities, Denver police said. The man died.

Only after police, responding to a 911 call placed by a friend of the victim, knocked on doors at random were

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they informed that the man had been beaten and placed in the taxi's trunk, said Denver police Detective Virginia Lopez.

Nearly 50 minutes elapsed between the time police arrived and when they discovered the body, and Lopez said the delay might have cost the man his life.

"Forty to 50 minutes is a crucial amount of time," said Lopez. "Maybe if we had been able to get there sooner, we might have been able to start some sort of resuscitation. Numerous people were looking out, and nobody even came down, nobody notified the police until they went door to door."

Mostapha Maarouf, 27, was driving a cab in Denver to send money back to his family in Youssofia, Morocco, where he planned to return in July to get married, his friends told the Associated Press.

Police responded to the area after Maarouf's friend called 911 from a nearby store and reported he and his friend were being beaten and robbed by four men. Officers detained one person as a possible suspect and were looking for two or three others.

"I find it very disturbing and very disappointing" that witnesses did not immediately help police locate the victim, said Lopez.

# TV series enrages some Israelis for unique perspective

By Marjorie Miller=(c) 1998, Los Angeles Times

JERUSALEM — History is written by the victors, it is often said, but in Israel even the winners do not agree on how to portray their past.

State-run Israel Television is airing a 22-part documentary series for the 50th anniversary of the Jewish state that has enraged many Israelis and apparently enlightened others by telling the story of their country's founding from the perspective of the vanquished as well as the victors.

Side by side with the country's heroes, the series gives voice for the first time on national television to marginalized immigrants, Arab citizens who lost their land and identity to the Jews, and Palestinians who engaged in terrorism to fight for the return of their land.

To some viewers, the series is a watershed event that exposes Israelis to a different, more critical view of their history. To others, it is simply blasphemy.

"Does Zionism really have to sit on the defendant's bench in a series run by public broadcasting in Israel?" Communications Minister Limor Livnat asked. "Do we have to produce films that ... internalize the views of the Arabs, who for 100 years have been claiming that we are imperialists, colonialists and occupiers?"

Livnat, who has called for the series to be canceled, was so furious about the Sunday night shows that she announced she has stopped allowing her son to watch them.

Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, a key figure for most of Israel's 50 years, wrote a letter to Education Minister Yitzhak Levy complaining that the series "distorts the history of our redemption, abandoning every moral basis for the establishment and existence of the state of Israel" and urging him not to use the programs in Israeli schools.

And the host of the series, Yehoram Gaon, quit halfway through the program rather than appear on a segment that presents the views of Palestinians who carried out terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians.

"I felt good with the first episodes, which discussed the past and reminded me of my childhood," Gaon wrote in his resignation letter, "but I find it hard to forget my feelings when presenting the episode dealing with

the present."

Supporters of the series say its virtue is precisely that: It does not make Israelis feel good with the official line but raises painful questions and provokes debate.

"There is no objective history," said Yoel Rappel, a historian and radio

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commentator. "The series is a trigger so that young people will go to the books and movies to learn about Israeli history. Whether or not you agree with the programs, they are raising the right questions. The only way to find a solution between Israelis and Arabs on the land is to raise the right questions. That is the first step on a long journey."

The public controversy over "Tekuma" ("Rebirth"), as the series is called, mirrors a debate that has been going on in Israeli academic journals for more than a decade. At issue is the story of the revival of the Jewish nation in the Holy Land.

For traditional Israeli historians — and critics of the series — the narrative of Israel's founding is this: Idealistic Jewish pioneers settled a wide-open land called Palestine that was sparsely populated with Arab natives. The Jews came to live peacefully with the Arabs and to enhance the quality of life for all. They believed in compromise but were confronted with Arab aggression and were forced to fight back.

During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, local Arabs left their villages in Palestine at the urging of the region's Arab leaders, who promised they would be able to return after Israel was destroyed. But the Jews won the war for their homeland against the Arab armies, just as David beat Goliath.

That is the version taught in Israeli schools and the one most Israelis believe.

But a group of "new historians" has taken a skeptical look at that traditional Zionist view and begun shattering what it calls "the myths" of the founding of the Jewish state. The new

thinkers say they portray Israeli heroes such as Prime Ministers David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir as human beings who made mistakes as well as history.

The new historians accuse the founders of having failed to do enough to save European Jews during the Holocaust. They argue that Israel passed up opportunities for negotiations with Arab states and evicted hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their villages during the 1948 war. Israel implemented a tough policy of no return and retaliated "in

ians who remained in Israel after the war surrendering their weapons to Jewish soldiers, and of Arab schoolchildren dancing in the formation of a Star of David, waving Israeli flags on Independence Day.

It talks about the fact that Arab citizens of Israel lived under military rule for 19 years, unable to leave their villages without permits. The program points out that about 60,000 Arabs signed up for army service after an Arab draft was announced in 1954 but then were rejected when the government feared they would not fight against their Arab brothers.

The Arabs' lack of army service has often been used as a justification for denying them equal rights.

Arab citizens also are heard protesting the confiscation of their lands, an issue they raise each March 30 on the anniversary of the day in 1976 that Israeli troops opened fire on a land demonstration, killing six Arabs. Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled said he regretted that many schools had bought the series.

"I am afraid that in a year or two or 10, the students won't even understand what happened here," Peled said. "This is not a program about the resurrection and foundation of the state of Israel. Everything we have been through in the 50 years of the state is presented as though we are the murderers and the Palestinians are the victims."

Many of the segments still to be broadcast are likely to prove at least as controversial as the Arab-Israeli segment. On Sunday, a show on the construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank aired, and soon to follow are segments on Israel's 1982 war in Lebanon and the Palestinian uprising, or "intifada," that ended earlier this decade.

The segment on Palestine Liberation Organization attacks, scheduled to run next Sunday, is called "Biladi, Biladi" ("My Country, My Country"), the name of the Palestinian anthem that was banned in Israel until Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo, Norway, peace accords in 1993.

The title raised such a red flag for Israelis that many officials urged that the piece be eliminated. In response, the Israel Broadcasting Authority altered the name to "In the Road of Terror: Biladi, Biladi" and decided that the broadcast would be followed by a televised debate.

Host Gaon, who turned over the segment, said that it gives "the heroic story of the terror organizations." But the director, Ronit Weiss-Berkowitz, said she feels the piece is balanced.

# Changing diet, lifestyle linked to increase in allergies

By Sonni Ehrlich=(c) 1998, Los Angeles Times

TOKYO — The sharp increase in Japan in adult and child allergies, which is common to most industrial countries, is believed to be the result of a combination of factors. Those include particulate air pollution from diesel exhaust and other sources; an increase in the amount of pollen as more and more cedar trees reach maturity; the advent of Western-style housing that traps pollen, dust and mold; and the changing Japanese diet and lifestyle.

Traditionally, Japanese babies were never fed red meat or eggs, because such foods were rare and expensive. But there is growing evidence that the kind of protein an infant is first exposed to produces a kind of immunological "imprinting," said Dr. Sakae Inouye, one of Japan's leading experts on the cedar problem. He said that ingesting meat and eggs before the age of 1 may make children more vulnerable to allergies later on. The Japanese diet became richer in meat and eggs after the 1960s, and the majority of Japanese allergy sufferers are under age 44, according to a Tokyo metropolitan government survey.

There is also growing evidence that people who are exposed to germs and viruses in early childhood are less susceptible to allergies later in life. The rates of allergies in developing nations are considerably lower than in industrial societies. Moreover, a recent study in England found that eldest children, who tend to spend their early years at home and are not exposed to a torrent of infections, are more than twice as likely to develop allergies as third-born children in the same families, who are bombarded in early childhood with the rich soup of viruses their older siblings bring home from school, Inouye said.

Another study, conducted in the former East and West Germany, found that East German children, who were typically in day care by the age of 1, had far lower allergy rates than their stay-at-home West German counterparts, even though the East German children were exposed to more pollution. Because Japanese families typically have one or two children, who are kept at home until kindergarten, this finding has prompted researchers to explore whether a "dirty" immunological environment may actually be beneficial, said Inouye.