



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

Guide to *Lords of the Garden*, 1991

Human Studies Film Archives  
Museum Support Center  
4210 Silver Hill Road  
Suitland 20746  
hsfa@si.edu  
<http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Local Numbers.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	1
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	

---

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Human Studies Film Archives
<b>Title:</b>	<i>Lords of the Garden</i>
<b>Date:</b>	1991
<b>Identifier:</b>	HSFA.2021.02
<b>Creator:</b>	Smithsonian Institution
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Video recording (53 minutes; color sound)
<b>Language:</b>	English .

---

## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

*Lords of the Garden*, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

---

## Scope and Contents

Edited film produced by the Smithsonian Institution documents anthropologist Paul Taylor's expedition into previously unexplored and undocumented rainforest on the island of New Guinea. Featured are the Korowai, a people who live above ground in tree house clusters in the midst of dense rainforest. Footage depicts the process of building a tree house, including site selection, erection, and roof and floor formation; forehead bands worn by women; geometric scars burned into girls' skin for aesthetic purposes; paddling upriver in dugout canoes; and trekking through rainforest. Animal footage includes shots of grasshoppers, bats, boa constrictors, beetles, arthropods and insects. Second part of the expedition documents the journey upriver beyond the pacification land into an area of tribal warfare where cannibalism is said to be practiced. Taylor explores the myth of cannibalism and theorizes it functioned not only as a means of intertribal warfare, but as a highly effective criminal justice system as well. The structural contrast between the placid domesticity of treehouse life and the darker side of cannibalism is a theme explored throughout. Various rituals examined are preparing the sago flour from the sago palm tree, post funeral practices where distant relatives come to claim material possessions of the deceased to compensate for their emotional losses, and moving in process upon completion of a new treehouse.

Legacy keywords: Funerary New Guinea ; Adornment headbands New Guinea ; Cannibalism New Guinea ; Headhunting New Guinea ; Carving New Guinea ; Dwellings treehouse New Guinea ; Sorcery New Guinea ; Warfare intertribal New Guinea ; Law New Guinea ; Canoes New Guinea ; Body marking Oceania ;

Indonesia ; New Guinea ; Korowai ; Rueben Aaronson, Co-director, Cinematographer ; Richard Kane, Sound Recordist ; Sam Green, Editor ; Paul Taylor, Anthropologist

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

---

## Local Numbers

HSFA 2021.2.1

---

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

Korowai (Indonesian people)

### Types of Materials:

Video recordings

### Names:

Taylor, Paul Michael, 1953-

### Places:

Indonesia  
Oceania