

Ashleigh Johnson

Participant Observation Assignment

Minutes of observation: 8:00-13:54

1. **Place:** river bank of a forest in Papua, New Guinea, Australia

2. **Position:** cameraman

3. **Actors:**

Researcher- wearing shorts, a tank vest, green visor, brown sandals, brown hair, white, has a camera beside him

Tribe- red and orange feathers in hair held by a headband, shell strap around torso, bone through septum, no shirt, grass/hay skirt, short natural hair, dark complexion, muscular build, bracelet of twine on right wrists, handmade tools in both hands, spears in left, bag of supplies on left shoulder.

The leader (#1) looks around 40-50 years old and doesn't have any red accents on face/accessories

(#2) looks a bit younger, differentiated by a red feather on the right side of the bone through his nose

(#3) looks the youngest of the members, has a red accent on his forehead and is more standoff-ish than the other two actors

4. **Time of day:** late morning or mid-day

5. **Environment:** muddy river bank, many trees, quick moving water in the river, overcast

6. **Actions:**

#2 is close to me and the camera, looking into the lens and around it, trying to get a good look at me. He looks confused but reaches his hand out, and then draws it back when I reach out to touch him. He takes a minute, still looking confused and threatened, before reaching his hand out to me again. We barely touch fingertips and he draws back again. He steps away, looking around at the researcher and the rest of his tribe. He ducks down to see me better behind the camera, glancing back and forth between me and the researcher a few times. Keeping an eye on me, #2 reaches his hand out to me again, we barely touch, he draws back again, he looks scared. He continues staring at me, seeming confused and on-guard. Meanwhile, the researcher is trying to share something with #1, #1 touches the object in the researcher's hand and then quickly and aggressively shakes his hand away, and then turns away from the researcher. The researcher tries to offer the gift to #3, the youngest, which makes #2 come in quickly to the researcher to check it out. Without touching it, all three men surround the researcher, looking skeptical, trying to decide what it is that he is trying to offer them. #2 finally touches it and turns away quickly, shaking off his hand because the flame of the match burned him. #2 slowly inches closer to the researcher again. #1 takes an unlit match from the researcher and immediately puts the end in his mouth to taste it. After biting on the end, #1 looks

disgusted, and stares at the researcher for multiple seconds. Now, the researcher tries offering the whole box of matches to #1 and #2. #2 accepts the box skeptically, while #1 makes hand signals and mumbles to him. #2 offers his right hand, his weapon hand, to the researcher and they hold each other's fingers for a few seconds. The researcher, sitting down, helps #2 step up the bank to get closer to him while still holding his hand at the bottom. #2 reaches out to touch the researcher's forearm. The researcher also grasps #2's forearm. The researcher is still interacting with #2, while #1 quickly touches both of the researcher's legs and his arm. They spend a few minutes touching each other's skin, both warriors seem to be getting more comfortable with the researcher. #1 and #2 continue grabbing and touching the researcher's arms and shoulders with looks of amazement and confusion. The researcher and #3 are smiling. #1 runs his hand across the researcher's visor so the researcher takes it off. #1 and #2 take a few seconds to run their fingers and hands through the researcher's hair and touch his head. Both warriors look shocked and amazed. #2 takes his hand off the researcher and touches his own hair, he seems to be comparing the two and mumbling to #1. #1 lets the researcher touch his hair but only for a second. The researcher shakes the hand of #2 again. Still in awe, the warriors continue touching the skin of the researcher, it becomes evident they have never seen pale skin before. They continue touching each other, their body language and facial expressions are more relaxed than at the beginning of the interaction. #1 says something to the other tribe members, he seems to be talking about the researcher because he keeps looking at him. As they get more familiar and accepting of the researcher, a woman appears in the back and she still seems skeptical. The woman is nude, with handmade jewelry on her neck and wrist, hair protection that flows down the back of her body, and she is holding a baby. The warriors continue interacting with the researcher and then try to urge him to the other side of the river. #1 grabs both of his arms, trying to get him to stand up.