

# Man the Hunted

## *Just Another Item on the Menu*

DONNA HART AND ROBERT W. SUSSMAN

On the second day of January 2001 something occurred that has happened uncountable times before . . . something that has been happening, in fact, for millions of years . . . something that has influenced the way we humans act and the way we evolved.

A woman was cross-country skiing along a popular lake trail near her home in Alberta, Canada. Rangers say a 132-pound cougar lay hidden under an evergreen. It watched her pass, then stealthily zigzagged behind her for nearly 150 feet. The woman was probably totally unaware of the cat until just moments before it killed her.

Man-eater! The word conjures up a latent human nightmare. It shocks us; it scares us badly. It seems to frighten us down to some deep collective subconscious. It's gruesome . . . macabre . . . downright ghoulish when a human being is killed by a predator. Newspapers report the event, books are written, movies are made, eyewitnesses are interviewed for more snippets about such an aberrant deed.

A quick browse of the Internet comes up with over a hundred Web sites connected to the word "man-eater." There is even a book entitled *Maneaters* that "explores the wide world of man-eaters—creatures who regard *Homo sapiens* as just another noon-day snack."

During the relatively short period of written human history—with weapons ever more efficient and living areas secured behind barriers to the natural world—we have come to think we should be exempt from attacks by carnivores, birds of prey, and reptiles. Those of us living within the rarified atmosphere of Western civilization presume that our superior position in the hierarchy of the animal kingdom is unquestionable. And, truth be told, modern humans in the industrial world have suffered relatively little at the claws and teeth of predators.

The human species excels in duality of thought. This comes as no surprise to anyone who has read the work of the famous anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. He theorized that all human cognition was based on dealing with binary contrasts or oppositions—left versus right, low versus high, night versus day, them versus us. We also seem to carry this duality into our feelings about predators. On the one hand, we humans—or at least those of us in Western cultures—have a conception of ourselves as superior entities who exist on a plane above the

rest of the animal inhabitants of our world. And yet—and here is the duality—we worry ceaselessly that inferior beings, such as predators, may harm us.

Modern humans, with the help of technology, are able to ward off predation effectively, and mask our vulnerability as a species. As cited at the beginning of this chapter, there are times when people meet their demise from predators: The solitary jogger or cross-country skier attacked by a cougar . . . a tiger or leopard that preys on villagers in India . . . the two lions, made famous in the film *The Ghost and the Darkness*, that savaged railway workers . . . newspaper reports of crocodiles consuming humans from West Africa to Indonesia.

The bizarre realization that humans get eaten comes hard to the Western mind. However, much current ethnographic evidence points to the fact that large predators are often a major and well-recognized problem in regions of the world where villagers are in near contact with big cats or large reptiles. Perhaps there's more truth than we in the Western world would like to acknowledge that "the ultimate horror of being eaten alive is very real [by] sharks, lions, leopards, tigers, bears, wolves . . . jaguar and puma."

In South Asia—India and Bangladesh, in particular—there is a long history of dealing on a daily basis with predation by tigers and leopards. Before World War II and prior to independence for India, British colonial records listed 1,500 human deaths from tigers *per year*, and these statistics excluded the numerous Princely States. One tigress was responsible for an incredible 436 human predations.

The Sundarbans delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers—a huge area of over 3,800 square miles of mangrove forest and islands that spans both India and Bangladesh—is notorious for its man-eating tigers. John Seidensticker, tiger expert at the Smithsonian Institution, commented in a speech he made at an academic meeting: "Tigers kill people. They don't kill people in every part of their range and that might be interpreted as great restraint on the part of the tiger considering the abundance of this very vulnerable potential prey species. One area where tigers do eat people on a regular basis is the Sundarbans."

During one decade near the end of the twentieth century (between 1975 and 1985) 425 people were killed by tigers on the

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Indian portion of the delta and another 187 on the Bangladesh side. Plastic face masks—constructed to be worn on the *back* of the head—have been distributed by the Indian authorities. Locals wear them as a deterrent to tiger predation while they are boating through the swamps in the Sundarbans delta. These masks help reduce tiger attacks because big cats like to stalk prey that are unaware of impending danger. The wide-eyed, staring mask on the back of a human head is interpreted by the tiger as a fully *aware* prey and, therefore, not a potential meal. Dummy humans set in boats and wired with electric shocks are also used to deter tigers from the enticement of human flesh. The theory is that once a tiger has been literally and figuratively shocked by pouncing on an electrified “human,” that particular item will no longer be so appealing. Some of the other, more traditional Indian and Bangladeshi means to counter tiger attacks include fireworks, special shrines, and priests.

Why specific animals become predators on humans is complex. Predators are after the simplest avenue to a meal, and modern humans—even those in the undeveloped world—are usually dwelling *in* villages, *inside* houses, *with* weapons, and seldom make a simple target. We do not in any way want to portray carnivores (or reptiles, or birds of prey) as rapacious fiends that must be eliminated for the good of humankind. All predators are critical and necessary parts of healthy ecosystems. If we are going to save any of the wild places on earth, predators are the keystone species that must be protected.

## Fossil Evidence and Living Primates

Having noted that (outside the West) predation on humans happens—and not all that infrequently—we are confronted with a number of questions: Was this always the case? What about the 99% of human evolution from which we have no written records? Does the occasional unsettling instance of an attack by a predator accentuate the long history of humans as simply one more link in the food chain?

Were early humans bold hunters or were they fearful prey? Has *Homo sapiens*' evolution been molded by hunting ability or by survival techniques developed to avoid being eaten?

We only have two sources to draw on if we want to fill in the millions of years before historical times. These are the *paleontological remains*—a sparse but fascinating fossil record—and the *living primates*—who are our closest relatives.

There are caves in South Africa where bones of early hominids (humans and their ancestors) lie in piles. Researchers study how bones came to be buried in the earth and preserved as fossils, thus shedding light on how these ancient humans lived. Early hominids, using rocks and branches as weapons the way many living primate species do, had (presumably) the same ability as other primates to ward off predation—that is, not much except a slightly larger brain-body ratio than other mammals and the ability to communicate between group members when danger was sighted. These were not superb weapons if the predator managed a surprise ambush or just outran or outclimbed its hominid prey.

Paleontological evidence supports the conclusion that both hominids and other primates, such as baboons, were frequent meals for ancient predators. Both australopithecines (one of the groups of early hominids) and baboons are found together in the prey-remain assemblages of true saber-toothed cats, false saber-toothed cats, hunting hyenas, spotted hyenas, and leopards. Fossil evidence from South Africa supports theories of extensive predation by leopards on both early hominids and baboons between 1 and 2 million years ago.

One skull of a fossil hominid found in a South African cave has a set of puncture marks. Two round holes about the size of dimes are spaced several inches apart on the skull. If a leopard caught one of the australo-pithecines and dragged the prize up a tree for eating, the cat's upper canines would have drilled deep into the frontal part of the brain directly above the eyes, and the lower canines would have grasped the prey on the back of the skull. When paleontologists reunited a fossil of this ancient cat with the fossil hominid skull, there was a perfect matchup between the two puncture holes in the skull and the two huge lower fangs of the cat.

The famous “Taung child,” a two-million-year-old *Australopithecus africanus* skull, was discovered in 1924 by Raymond Dart, an early and influential paleontologist. Dart had an arrangement with a limestone quarry in South Africa; all intriguing fossils were extracted intact and shipped to him. One of these boxes of limestone rubble contained a veritable jewel of paleontology—the skull and mineralized brain of a very young child, a child that died 2 million years ago. Were violent circumstances involved in the child's death? Unlike the other skull from a different site in South Africa, the Taung child did not bear the marks of carnivore teeth but instead exhibited deep rakings. More oddly, the mandible, or lower jaw, of the Taung child was still attached. (The remains of carnivore meals most often have detached mandibles. Big-cat fangs tearing away at small hominid skulls would rarely result in a still-attached jaw.)

What was going on? If not ancient cats, then what might have caused the death of the Taung child? It took another 70 years for an answer to this mystery. In 1995 paleontologists Lee Berger and Ron Clarke published their detailed findings about the predator who killed the Taung child. Birds of prey, technically called raptors, include living species of eagles with enormously robust feet and talons. These adaptations enable the eagles to kill antelopes and monkeys many times the birds' own weight. Berger and Clarke found that marks on the Taung child were identical to the marks that modern African eagles leave on the bones of *their* prey. The Taung child was no doubt the prey of a very large and very strong extinct eagle.

The most exciting fossils of early *true* humans—individuals who can be classified in our own genus, *Homo*—were uncovered beneath a medieval town called Dmanisi in the Republic of Georgia within the past few years. Besides astounding the world of science with the age of *Homo* specimens found *outside* of Africa—a whopping 1.75 million years old!—the remains of six individuals include another verification of hominids as prey. Again, telltale round holes were found in one of the skulls. This time saber-toothed cat fangs fit neatly and perfectly into the two punctures.

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David Lordkipanidze is the Georgian scientist who worked the Dmanisi site. He has speculated that simple chopping and scraping tools unearthed with the fossils may indicate that these ancient humans sometimes scavenged off kills of the big cats. The idea of early hominids as scavengers, rather than the more traditional vignette of humans as biggame hunters, also has been advanced by Pat Shipman at Johns Hopkins University. Shipman suggests that Man the Scavenger is not nearly as attractive an image as Man the Hunter, but hominid-made cut marks that overlay carnivore-made tooth marks occur on the same fossil bones.

We propose that a choice lies not between *hunting* man and *scavenging* man at all—the reality is more likely that *hunted* man took advantage of predator kills. Recent research by John Cavallo suggests that early hominids (adults, at least) were able to protect themselves from predators fairly capably during the daylight hours. But when nightfall came, it was a different story altogether. Leopards, especially, ruled the night. Early hominids may have been in competition with leopards to scavenge tree-stored kills during the day, while they themselves became leopard prey at night.

If we look at the behavior of other primates today, such as baboons, we see the same phenomenon of day-night shifts in primate-predator clashes. Male savanna baboons bare their teeth and rush at predators during the day. Actually, there are even quite a few cases in which male baboons have killed predators. Out of eleven aggressive retaliations against leopards by baboons that are written up in scientific papers, the leopard was killed in four instances. One scientist even observed a single dominant male baboon maim or kill four large dogs when they attacked his troop.

But baboons retreat to trees and cliffs at night where they are virtually helpless after dark to protect themselves and their young when lions or leopards are on the prowl. After primatologist Curt Busse switched to nocturnal observations in his study of baboon populations at Moremi, Botswana, he saw an entirely different picture of primate defensive skills. Based on night observation hours during which Busse followed the screams of his terrified baboon subjects, he calculated that at least 8% of the baboon population was killed annually due to predation by lions and leopards.

## Predation and Primate Studies

Busse feels strongly that primatologists may get a skewed and misinformed representation of predation by studying primate behavior and ecology only during daylight hours. To accomplish an accurate appraisal of predation, Busse has challenged his fellow researchers to make significant changes in field methods, such as including night observations, as well as studies of the predators of primates (along with the primates themselves).

Predation is acknowledged to be an issue of fundamental importance in the study of primates. However, while predation has been discussed in broad theoretical terms, little quantified data have existed on the subject. There has been little attempt to recruit research carried out on various predators as an aid to understanding the impact of predation on primates. In this book

we have combined the research of primatologists with the findings of their colleagues who study large and small predatory mammals, raptors, and reptiles to assemble both empirical and anecdotal overviews of primate deaths due to predation. Perhaps combining these data may sound like a natural, very standard process. However, the multidisciplinary approach had not been extended previously to merge the world of primatology with the world of predator research. When we did combine data from both primatologists and predator researchers, we found that a clear picture emerged of primates as prey.

Current examples of predation on primates can be used to infer the rates of predation on our hominid ancestors. Because paleoanthropologists have been unaware of the extent of predation on living primates, they have tended to analyze hominid fossils and construct theories without integrating predation as an important factor in human adaptations. Some of the past analyses of fossil assemblages require reinterpretation using this approach.

## An Accurate Appraisal of Predation

A continuing academic debate concerns whether primates, in general, are important as prey species. Furthermore, the debate has now entered into the scientific literature on hominid evolution. Our premise is that primates, including early humans, have been the prey of many carnivores, reptiles, and even birds of prey and that being *hunted* is integral to our hominid lineage. In this book we propose that much of human evolution has to do with the fact that we—along with other primates—are prey species.

This aspect of human evolution and its implications for modern humans is a controversial departure from more traditional theories. We are not the first nor the only ones to arrive at this theory. Well-known paleoanthropologists have drawn the same conclusions as we have about early humans and predation, for example C. K. Brain, Lewis Binford, and Matt Cartmill. (Brain, in fact, coined the phrase “Man the Hunted.”) But combining the fossil evidence regarding levels of predation on early hominids with comparisons to predation on living primates has not yet been done. By merging the two kinds of evidence, we hope to accomplish a long-overdue synthesis of the theory we call Man the Hunted.

## Man the Hunter?

The question “Why is man man?” has been posed since literal biblical origins gave way to scientific inquiries. “Because man evolved as a meat eater” is one answer to the question. Robert Ardrey stated in one of his series of immensely popular books of the 1970s, *The Hunting Hypothesis*:

If among all the members of our primate family the human being is unique, even in our noblest aspirations, it is because we alone through untold millions of years were continuously dependent on killing to survive.

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There are several misconceptions included in this proposal of human hunting singularity. First, we are not the only primate that hunts for living prey. Hunting is a common feeding strategy throughout the primate order. Baboons are adept at capturing infant antelope; chimpanzees, especially, excel in hunting and eating monkeys. Even different methods and approaches toward hunting have been observed in different chimpanzee populations. At Jane Goodall's field site, Gombe Reserve in Tanzania, the male chimps hunt as lions do—the more individuals involved the greater the success rate, but no coordinated team effort is manifested. In the Tai Forest of Côte d'Ivoire the chimps hunt like wolves, each individual playing a key role in a team effort.

Whether hunting could have been the main food-procurement venture for early hominids is also subject to anatomical constraints. We need to look carefully at teeth and digestive systems, the critical parts of human anatomy that lend themselves to answers about early hominid dependence on hunted meat. Intestines do not fossilize, but teeth make up a good portion of the fossil remains of australopithecines and their dentition is not that of a carnivore.

So, where did the Man the Hunter idea come from? When did the certitude that humans were too busy *killing to be killed* arise? Who were the proponents of the myth of fierce and dangerous hominids? When you consider the reality, what a public-relations coup!—a fangless, clawless, smallish bipedal primate gets a reputation for being Godzilla wielding an antelope jawbone!

In some sense the Taung child is the key to the Man the Hunter theme. Taung child was the first fossil in a series of australopithecine finds. It is somewhat ironic that Raymond Dart's painstaking reclamation of this fossil—probably the young victim of a predator—was so instrumental in creating a trend toward “killer-ape” status for human ancestors.

To view the inception of Man the Hunter's forceful accession and acceptance, we need to go back and fill in the people who inhabited the rather small and esoteric world of paleoanthropology in the 1920s. As emphasized earlier, Africa was not then the important arena for fossil humans. The English had their Piltdown Man, reassuring the white European experts that large brains came before flat faces. The Neanderthal finds in Europe were augmented by Java Man and Peking Man from the Far East. What did it matter if an obscure anatomy professor in South Africa had found a skull and fossilized brain that didn't look like a chimp but whose brain was way, way too small to be considered human?

In the atmosphere of the day it is no wonder that the Piltdown Man, with its ape-like jaw and large cranium, was immediately accepted as the earliest hominid ancestor, while the small-skulled, ape-like australopithecine discovered by Raymond Dart was considered a pathological specimen or a mere ape. While Piltdown supporters were busy explaining the intellectual endowments of our large-brained ancestors, Dart was convinced his small-brained creature was the first ape-man, and he developed a theoretical picture of the behavior of this transitional form. At first Dart believed that australopithecines were scavengers barely eking out an existence in the harsh savanna

environment; a primate that did not live to kill large animals but scavenged small animals in order to live.

Few cared what Dart believed, however, because few took his ape-man seriously. In fact it was not until a quarter of a century later, with the unearthing of many more australopithecines and the discovery in 1953 that Piltdown was a fraud, that students of human evolution realized our earliest ancestors were more ape-like than they were modern-human-like. This led to a great interest in using primates to understand human evolution and the evolutionary basis of human nature. With these discoveries began a long list of theories attempting to re-create the behavior and often the basic morality of the earliest hominids.

By 1950 Dart had developed a wholly new and different view from his former scavenger model. His ponderings about strange depressions in the crania of fossil australopithecines eventually flowered into a full-blown theory about killers who murdered their own kind. Given the game animals with which australopithecine fossils were associated and the dents and holes in the skulls of the australopithecines themselves, Dart became convinced that the mammals had been killed, butchered, and eaten by the ape-men, and that these early hominids had even been killing one another.

Dart once believed that the australopithecines had been forced to scratch out a meager existence on the savanna once they abandoned the trees of the African forest. But Dart now saw that hunting, and a carnivorous lust for blood, actively drew man-apes out of the forest and were together a main force in human evolution. He stated more than once that “the ancestors of *Australopithecus* left their fellows in the trees of Central Africa through a spirit of adventure and the more attractive fleshy food that lay in the vast savannas of the southern plains.” Dart was himself influenced by a University of London professor, Carveth Read, who suggested in 1925 that human ancestors were similar to wolves; they hunted in packs and lived off the meat of large game. Read suggested that the name *Lycopithecus* (literally, “wolf-ape”) would be descriptive of early hominids.

The discovery of baboon skulls mysteriously bashed in on the left side of the skull inspired Dart to conclude that only the australopithecine ancestor of humans could have killed with such precision. Since no stone weapons or tools were found in the South African sites, Dart postulated that the unusually high frequency of thigh bones and jawbones from antelopes must have been the weapons of choice. His “osteodontokeratic” culture—that early man had used the bones, teeth, and horns of his prey to kill even more prey—provided the means by which these killer apes accomplished their bloody work.

In 1953 Dart published a paper entitled “The Predatory Transition from Ape to Man.” In it he hypothesized that the dentition and geography of australopithecines precluded any type of diet other than heavy reliance on meat. And not only did they eat meat but they armed themselves with weapons to hunt large prey. None of the well-known journals would accept the article, so readership within the scientific community was sparse. Robert Ardrey, a successful playwright, visited Dart in South Africa and was convinced that this theory would revolutionize the science of anthropology. Ardrey spent 5 years between 1955 and 1960 researching and writing *African Genesis*—a popular

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account of our beginnings as killer apes. The book was a best-seller and had tremendous influence both on the general public and the scientific community.

By the mid-1970s Dart's claim that a hominid with a brain no larger than our ape cousins expertly fashioned weapons and went on the hunt because it was easier than scavenging was fully accepted. But, Dart's *evidence* for Man the Hunter was not good, and his particular vision of the human hunter/killer hypothesis did not stand up to rigorous scrutiny. C. K. Brain, a South African specialist in how fossils are formed by natural forces, was skeptical of the baboon-killing theory from the first. Upon examination of the evidence, Brain noted that the bones associated with the man-apes were exactly like fragments left by leopards and hyenas. He saw the holes in the baboon skulls and the similar indentations in *A. africanus* as oddly similar to the tooth patterns of living African carnivores. He set about measuring the distance between the lower canines of African big cats and found that the space between the lower fangs of leopards fit precisely into the fossil skull holes.

Round holes that match perfectly with fangs of leopards. It seems that the australopithecines were likely the hunted and not the hunters. Fossil bones of early hominid origin were found with baboon remains in South African cave excavations at Swartkrans, Kromdraai, and Sterkfontein, places that have become famous for their australopithecine remains. Brain hypothesized that baboons and early hominids slept in caves, providing an excellent opportunity for leopards to kill them and drag the carcasses farther into the caves for feeding. The Mt. Suswa lava caves in Kenya provide a current analogy to the paleontological record in South Africa and lend significant credibility to the hypotheses. Mt. Suswa is a favorite sleeping site for baboons, and leopards in the area subsist almost entirely on these primates.

### Man the Dancer!

The next widely accepted version of the recurring Man the Hunter theme was presented in the late 1960s by Sherwood Washburn (the father of American field primatology) and his colleagues. They claimed that many of the features that define *men* as hunters (more about why the other 50% of the species was not defined will be discussed later in this book) again separated the earliest humans from their primate relatives.

To assert the biological unity of mankind is to affirm the importance of the hunting way of life. It is to claim that, however much conditions and customs may have varied locally, the main selection pressures that forged the species were the same. The biology, psychology, and customs that separate us from the apes—these we owe to the hunters of time past. And, for those who would understand the origin and nature of human behavior there is no choice but to try to understand "Man the Hunter."

Like Dart, Washburn related human hunting to human morality, both of which had their biological basis in our evolutionary past. What he termed the "carnivorous psychology" of the aus-

tralopithecines resulted in a human species that takes pleasure not just in the chasing, hunting, and killing of other animals, but in dark depredations on fellow humans. The public spectacles of torture and suffering in "most" cultures are for the *enjoyment* of all humans. This interpretation led him to the conclusion that only careful *untraining* of our natural drives can lay a veneer of compassion for others on top of naturally human "carnivorous curiosity and aggression."

Again, much like Dart before him, Washburn did not amass a large amount of evidence to support his theory and seemed to have recognized that evidence to the contrary existed. Rather, he relied upon a nineteenth-century anthropological concept of cultural "survivals." These are behaviors that are no longer useful in society but that persist as leftover survival mechanisms from a time when they *were* adaptive. Washburn saw a connection between the ease with which modern sports (including hunting) are learned and the pleasures they confer, and the survival mechanisms of a bygone age. Because successful ancestral humans were those who hunted best, their genetic legacy is an easy and pleasurable acquisition of hunting-like behaviors.

Using a similar logic, we have developed an alternative (sarcastic, yes—but no less feasible) theory to challenge Man the Hunter. We call our theory "Man the Dancer." After all, men *and* women love to dance, it is a behavior found in all cultures, and it has less obvious function in most cultures than does hunting.

Although it takes two to tango, a variety of social systems could develop from various types of dance: square dancing, line dancing, riverdance, or the funky chicken. The footsteps at Laetoli might not represent two individuals going out for a hunt but the Afarensis shuffle, one of the earliest dances. In the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, it was wrong to depict the first tool as a weapon. It could easily have been a drumstick, and the first battle may not have involved killing at all but a battle of the bands. Other things such as face-to-face sex, cooperation, language and singing, and bipedalism (it's difficult to dance on all fours), even moving out of the trees and onto the ground might all be better explained by our propensity to dance than by our desire to hunt. Although we are being facetious with our Man the Dancer hypothesis, the evidence for dancing is certainly as good and no more preposterous than that for hunting.

### We Were Not "Cat Food"!

Between 1961 and 1976, the playwright Robert Ardrey popularized the then-current version of the Man the Hunter myth with a number of best-sellers. Ardrey believed that it was the competitive spirit, as acted out in warfare, that made humans what they are today: "the mentality of the single Germanic tribe under Hitler differed in no way from that of early man or late baboon." Because of a lack of a competitive territorial instinct, gorillas—Ardrey believed—had lost the will to live and with it the drive for sex. He argued that gorillas defend no territory and copulate rarely. And their story "will end, one day, not with a bang but with a whimper."

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*African Genesis* may well have been the starting point for the public popularity of *Man the Hunter*, but the prominence brought to paleoanthropology by the patriarch of the Leakey family was the strong suit that clinched the public's acceptance. The great Dr. Louis S. B. Leakey, a larger-than-life personality, was the premier paleoanthropologist of the mid-twentieth century and the personification of the fossil-hunting field scientist. His dynamic personality and exciting ideas took the quest for human origins to the heights of media coverage, catching the public's imagination. Inquiring minds finally *did* want to know about our origins! Along with his wife, Mary, who accomplished much of the actual discovery and reconstruction of the fossils, the Leakeys became worldwide celebrities. From their home base at the Kenya Museum of Natural History, they made Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania synonymous with human origins. Leakey also gave the world an eventual look at our closest relatives through his support for Jane Goodall's research on chimpanzees, Dian Fossey's work on mountain gorillas, and Birute Galdikas' study of orangutans. He was particularly thrilled when Goodall identified hunting and meat-eating in chimpanzees.

And Leakey's endorsement of *Man the Hunter* gave it the academic credentials that Ardrey's popular books lacked. In a famous defense of *Man the Hunter* as fearless and bellicose,

Leakey stated that we were *not* "cat food," and the ramifications were a change in perception of human origins for the entire Western world.

The designation of early humans as *Man the Hunter* rapidly attained axiomatic status. Our ancestry as fearless hunters and remorseless killers of our own and other species has been the generally accepted perception now for nearly 50 years. And not just the layperson, but academics as well, fall easily into using this paradigm. Here's a common example from an evolutionary psychologist, Charles Crawford of Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. Crawford lamented in an article about human evolutionary adaptations gone awry in modern times: "I used to hunt saber-toothed tigers all the time, thousands of years ago. Now I sit in front of a computer and don't get exercise."

We think it's time to put this particular myth to rest. Tweaking Charles Crawford's theme, our hominid ancestors probably got plenty of exercise from desperately trying to *avoid* saber-toothed cats, not from blatantly suicidal attempts to hunt them. Instead of *Man the Hunter*, we contend that *Man the Hunted* is a more accurate snapshot. For smallish bipedal primates, we envision a whole host of predators were licking their chops with anticipation.

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