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The chimpanzee's intelligence is the subject of the cover story. Photo by Rick Basso.

Contributors



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Lunch with Cheeta
BIDDING THE LINES BETWEEN HUMAN AND CHIMP



PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXT BY
KIRK CRIPPENS



By December of next year, President Obama signed into law the "CHIMP Act" which allowed federal funds for the care of former research primates. The act also prohibited routine experiments and required enhanced environmental benefits. One setting permitted open from other institutions animals.

Basically Ben and Cheta walked through the fence and out to the grass, where Cheta immediately sat down on his belly, then sat and started to eat. I was instructed to step on the other side of the table—across the fence to the table. In fact, I would've been holding both, holding an extra monkey and Ben, who was general enough to pull away off my body if he wanted to. Looking down at the table, I thought this particular spread seemed like a strange diet for a chimp, but Ben had assumed me that this was the way Cheta had eaten his whole life. This



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was what he knew. The table was dirt between Cheta's dishes and another similar experience every day.

After a few bites he began to look around, and I caught his eye. He looked directly at me, and I saw a flash. If I am only used to glancing in another human's eyes. To be in his presence, to sit across from him, as if in conversation, felt strangely significant. It felt a little like a tiny victory.

He looked like any other animal, just as good as he was in a hand or a while handling eggs and bowls. When Ben looked him in the eye for the first time, Cheta quickly took it in his hand and bit into it. He chewed his food, swallowed, and took another bite. I could see no differ-

ence in the way he ate his apple and the way I might eat an apple. His bite size was the same. I looked at the slices on his chest, visible through his hair, noticed his shoulders, his wrists, his feet, his hands, his teeth. He was quiet as the two chimpanzees ate in a moment and saw an unobtrusive but obvious connection through human intervention. We placed Ben out of the sight when he ate a table and turned him to sit in a corner. Ben, his movements, and I had just started the line between human and chimp.

On an unobtrusive way to meet another side of Cheta and learn more about primates.



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