

Group 3

Tanjung Puting, Borneo. 1971.

Her first rehabilitant infant orangutan was named Sugito. Sugito chose her to be his human surrogate mother. He wanted her care and literally refused to let her go. An orangutan clings to its mother for up to eight years. Their relationship was intense. To each, the other was the most important being. The human mother slept with the orangutan baby glued to her, his strong fingers piercing her skin. The little orangutan would intermittently urinate on her throughout the night. The warm rush on her skin would wake her, the resulting coldness, stinging and stench would keep her awake. This continued for years. In the wild the baby's trickle of urine would have rained down through the branches of the tree they were nesting in without either animal getting wet. If anyone tried to pull Sugito off his mother the little ball of red fuzz became a screaming, biting, randomly urinating and defecating beast. Sugito wanted no one near his mother when they went to bed. The baby orangutan came between husband and wife more effectively than any extra-marital affair. If the opportunity ever arose Sugito would ram his penis in the husband's ear. A human taught Sugito sign language. When the mother left the rainforest to submit her PhD thesis the husband seized the opportunity to get rid of Sugito, expelling the nine-year old ape who knew too much back into the depth of the impenetrable rainforest. The mother never saw her oedipal child again.