

MAN WITHOUT PIGS

CREDITS

Produced and Directed	CHRIS OWEN
Cinematography	CHRIS OWEN
Sound Recording	ANDREW PIKE
Editing	CHRIS OWEN
Editing Assistant	URGEI AKON
Post-Production Consultant	LES McLAREN
Production Assistants	NORIKO SEKIGUCHI
	ANNIE MCLAREN
	LAHUI GETTA
Location Manager	JOHN WAIKO
Translations	JOHN WAIKO
	COL. BOB DADAMO
Associate Producers	JOHN WAIKO
	ANDREW PIKE
	HANK NELSON
	GAVAN DAWS

Produced for The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in association with
The Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.

59 minutes

16mm

Colour

RELEASED IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND BY:

RONIN FILMS

Canberra: PO Box 1005,
Civic Square,
ACT 2608
Phone: 06-248 0851
Fax: 06-249 1640

Sydney: PO Box 295
Broadway,
NSW 2007
Phone: 02-281 2455
Fax: 02-281 7989

MAN WITHOUT PIGS

Produced and Directed by Chris Owen
for the Institute of Papua New Guinea
Studies and the Research School of
Pacific Studies, Australian National
University.

The 4,000 people of the Binandere clan in Papua New Guinea live in a series of isolated villages scattered along the swirling rivers of a vast flood plain on the north-eastern coast.

John Waiko, a member of the Binandere clan, graduated as Doctor of Philosophy from the Australian National University, Canberra, in a ceremony of speeches and processions of gowned academics.

John then left Canberra for a position at the University of Papua New Guinea, and to another ceremony at his home village of Tabara. **MAN WITHOUT PIGS** is the story of the preparations for this village ceremony and the sometimes violent tensions which lay behind it.

In a society where wealth is measured in pigs, John lacked traditional forms of wealth. In addition, his knowledge of ritual, etiquette, clan and personal histories did not match those of the Tabara men who had spent their lives in the village. John's disadvantages from a village viewpoint were great. The film follows the complex politics of his attempts to overcome these disadvantages in staging his ceremony.

Three outsiders witnessed the ceremony on the river banks of Tabara: Hank Nelson had supervised John's thesis in Canberra; and film-makers Chris Owen and Andrew Pike had worked with John on other projects. They had extraordinary access to both the intimate and the spectacular events that took place in Tabara.

MAN WITHOUT PIGS captures the exotic spectacle, and at the same time the intense and subtle dynamics of village life where conflict occurs between traditional custom and Western values.

MAN WITHOUT PIGS

BACKGROUND

John Waiko grew up in Tabara village in north-east Papua New Guinea. Unconnected by road to the outside world, the people of Tabara see their first wheel when aircraft land at little-used grass airstrips. John walked to a small mission school, and won a place in high school in nearby Orokaiva country. He was well into his twenties before he went to University in Port Moresby. After graduation he completed a master's degree in London, then enrolled at the Australian National University. Only the second person from Papua New Guinea to earn a doctorate, John has travelled widely as an academic and a representative of the Papua New Guinea government.

When writing his academic dissertation on the history of his own people, the Binandere, John was conscious that he was taking knowledge from the Binandere and expressing it within western traditions of learning. He was doing nothing that would directly benefit the Binandere. He therefore wrote a Binandere version of his thesis, to return the knowledge back to his community, and presented it to senior Binandere men to assess. He chose to be a scholar in two cultures.

Unlike many educated Papua New Guineans, John had a long schooling in village culture, and he retained close relations with his parents who stayed in Tabara. But his knowledge of ritual, etiquette and clan and personal histories did not match that of the Tabara men who stayed in the village. Most of all, he did not have customary wealth - pigs and a long list of favours given, and alliances forged, to call upon for wealth, workers and knowledge.

Numbering about 4000, the Binandere occupy a series of villages on the broad rivers of the Oro Province. With their strong warrior tradition, the Binandere fought colonial government officers and miners with more open violence than other Papua New Guineans. From about 1900 they made peace with the Australian field officers and Anglican missionaries. Binandere men transposed their warrior spirit to serve in the police and the army. The edge of the Pacific War reverberated through the area in 1942, but most Binandere villages have been lightly touched by the outside world.

The Binandere live in a world of competitive individuals, families and clans. Relationships between people are known to be difficult, and ambitious men must monitor and nurture their alliances. A gift given today is a debt to be collected tomorrow - with the finest calculation placed on its value and its timing. The Binandere expect life to be rich in ironies, pretentious men stumble and the devious are caught in their own traps, but nothing is a matter of chance. Even the floods that sweep down the rivers are thought to be caused by men.

The Binandere have a fine tradition of drama. They stage impromptu farces in the village, or direct the complex choreography, dressing and staging of dance-dramas that enact clan myths. This rich artistic tradition of song, dance and decoration is rarely seen by outsiders. No tourists voyage the rivers of the Binandere.

When John and his family decided to stage a dance-drama to celebrate John's graduation, they were doing much more than putting on a feast to welcome the return of the successful son. To host a dance-drama is to assert accomplishment and ambition within the traditional culture. Rival clans and leaders, while they publicly give a careful measure of support, may secretly hope for signs of scrimping, errors in ritual, and poorly rehearsed dancing.

continued ...

BACKGROUND

... continued

The difficulties and dangers for John were great. He did not have the pigs needed to pay those who worked for him, and for a public distribution of wealth at the end of the ceremonies. He did not have time for his family to expand their gardens and pig herds so that they could feed generously the guests from neighbouring villages. Expectations on him were high. The Binandere want the benefits of the outside world, but not at the cost of the destruction of their own way of life. Their one asset coveted by the rest of the world is a vast rainforest. They look to John to guide them through the complexities of relations with avaricious, cunning foreigners.

In **MAN WITHOUT PIGS**, John negotiates with rivals and allies to win the cooperation of those who will prepare the carving of the spirit that is the focus of the dance, rehearse the dancers, build the stage, provide ritual knowledge and feed guests. All the time his family has to keep a careful account of debts accumulated and gifts made, and to measure these against the family's long history of accumulated obligations. Mother, father, sisters and brothers all have a keen sense of what is just. The soft-spoken family conferences are in contrast to the public oratory that is sharp with challenge, the flamboyance of village groups arriving in decorated canoes, and the creative turbulence of the dance-drama and John's village graduation.

MAN WITHOUT PIGS captures the exotic spectacle, and at the same time reveals the beliefs, ambitions and intense, subtle relationships of those engaged in a rainforest drama.

- HANK NELSON

MAN WITHOUT PIGS

THE FILM-MAKER

CHRIS OWEN

Chris Owen has collaborated on most of the major films from and about Papua New Guinea, since the mid 70s. He has achieved an unparalleled international reputation as a location cinematographer and as an ethnographic film-maker.

Born in 1944, Chris was educated in England, including a Diploma course in Visual Communication at the Birmingham College of Art and Design.

In 1972, after travelling extensively in South-East Asia, Chris joined the Papua New Guinea Tourist Board as photographer and cinematographer.

Then in 1976, he took a position as film-maker with the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in Port Moresby, with a brief to implement, from scratch, a cultural film-making programme, together with a training scheme for Papua New Guinean film-makers.

FILMOGRAPHY

FILMS AS PRODUCER/DIRECTOR:

TIGHTEN THE DRUMS - Self Decoration Among the Enga
THE RED BOWMEN
GOGODALA - A Cultural Revival?
BARNABAS - Portrait of a Niuginian Artist
MALANGAN LABADAMA - A Tribute to Buk Buk
PAINTING IS MAGIC - Ilawelia Hului
TUKANA - Husat I Asau (two-hour feature film on Tok Pisin)
MAN WITHOUT PIGS

IN PROGRESS:

AMBKOR - Cult Ritual in the Western Highlands
YONKI DAM - A Social Impact Study (filmed over four years)

continued ...

CHRIS OWEN ... continued

In addition to his own films, Chris Owen has contributed to many other productions, usually as a cinematographer. These films include:

NEUELA PAWA (Alternative energy sources for P.N.G. - for the ABC)
THE COMMANDERS - Admiral Yamamoto (for the BBC)
YUMI YET (directed by Dennis O'Rourke)
ANGELS OF WAR (with Hank Nelson, Gavan Daws and Andrew Pike)
THE SHARKCALLERS OF KONTU (directed by Dennis O'Rourke)
FIRST CONTACT (directed by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson)
A QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE (directed by Dennis O'Rourke)
OPENING THE NEW NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (P.N.G. Prime Minister's Dept.)
A LONG NIGHT WITH LETHAL GUESTS (on malaria - for Film Australia)
ANTHROPOLOGY ON TRIAL (for WGBH, Boston)
LONG TAUN (directed by Les McLaren)
HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (for the BBC)
SENSO DAUGHTERS (For Tenchijin Productions, Tokyo)
"CANNIBAL TOURS" (for Dennis O'Rourke)
JOE LEAHY'S NEIGHBOURS (for Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson)
Various current affairs features for the ABC including **FOUR CORNERS**.

Chris Owen's documentaries, and his feature film **TUKANA**, have been screened internationally at film festivals and on television, including a presentation of **TUKANA** at the prestigious New Directors Festival in New York. The films are also distributed extensively in Europe, Japan, the USA, Australia and the Pacific.