



MARGARET MEAD AND SAMOA

Post-Production Script

51 mins, 9 seconds

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Timings start at 00:03:00 (First frame of picture)

Timecode	Shot Description	Dialogue and Narration
00:03:00	Photograph of Margaret Mead at microphone, holding forked staff	00:03:01 <i>Lola Romanucci-Ross, voice over and on camera:</i>
00:03:06	Photograph of Mead, wearing necklace	Once she and I had a long discussion on what it meant to be famous. And she said to me ‘would you like to be famous’ and she said: ‘you know, it has cost me a lot. All those awful hotels, the travelling and the loneliness, and she said ‘the days are all right, you’re surrounded with all kinds of people, but the nights are so lonely and it is so terrible’. And that was one of the times when I felt very close to her indeed and knew that she really paid a terrible price, but I don’t think that she would have done it differently if she had to do it all over again, I think she enjoyed what she was able to accomplish.
00:03:10	Photograph: CU of Mead	
00:03:12	Lola Romanucci-Ross, on camera	
00:03:29	Photograph: Margaret Mead sitting on bed	
00:03:33	Lola Romanucci-Ross, on camera	
00:03:47	Photo of Mead in 1978	00:03:49 <i>Narrator</i>
00:03:54	Mead and Afro-American woman	In November of 1978, Margaret Mead dies. According to a poll, she’s one of the three best-known women in American history. Internationally celebrated, she had become, in the words of Time Magazine, ‘Mother to the World’
00:04:05	Book: “Coming of Age in Samoa	00:04:05 <i>Narrator</i>
00:04:13	Photograph: Two Samoan girls and bananas	The book that has made her famous is ‘Coming of Age in Samoa’, on which she begins work at the age of 23. In it, she announces her sensational discovery of a Polynesian culture free of the stresses of adolescence, a place of free love and harmony.
00:04:18	Photograph: two Samoan girls wearing grass skirts	

00:04:24 Photograph: three girls

Here, children sail painlessly and effortlessly into adulthood in a lush tropical setting. The book becomes a classic and has a profound effect on future generations of Americans who strive to emulate its findings.

00:04:28 Photograph: 2 girls sitting on rocks

00:04:40 Photo of Derek Freeman taken in 1940

00:04:41 *Narrator:*

In 1940, another 23-year old, Derek Freeman, arrives in Samoa aboard a banana boat out of Wellington, New Zealand. He is a fervent believer in Mead's Samoa, whose account he has read and re-read. He's taking up his new post as a school teacher in Apia. Awaiting him, he is sure, is the island paradise whose description has so captivated him.

00:04:49 Photo of palm trees

00:04:54 Photo of Freeman and young Samoan man

00:05:06 *Narrator:*

00:04:58 Photo CU Freeman

00:05:03 Village, thatched hut

00:05: Photo of Samoan ceremonial virgin

But instead, he finds that Margaret Mead's Samoa is largely make-believe. He encounters a puritanical people, obsessed by rank, among whom aggression is commonplace. After collecting evidence for more than 40 years, he publishes his refutation of Mead's conclusions, an academic bombshell. The result is the greatest controversy in the history of anthropology - the science of humankind - a controversy that will be resolved by startling new evidence presented by this program.

00:05:16 Photo: Two Samoan men with spears

00:05:19 Photo Derek Freeman with his book

00:05:27 Photo Margaret Mead in Samoa with two Samoan girls

00:05:37 Super Main Title: Margaret Mead and Samoa

00:05:44 Super Title: A film by Frank Heimans. Fade to black.

00:05:49 Caption: 'Truth is hard to come by' – Karl Popper

00:05:54 Photograph of Mead as baby

00:06:05 Photo of Mead's father

00:06:11 Photo of Mead's mother

00:06:14 Catherine Bateson on camera

00:06:16 Super Title: Catherine Bateson Professor of Anthropology, George Mason University

00:06:23 Jane Howard, on camera

00:06:24 Super title: Jane Howard, Biographer of Margaret Mead

00:06:38 Photograph of Mead and sister

00:06:41 Photograph of Mead in College performance

00:06:46 Phyllis Grosskurth

00:06:47 Super title: Phyllis Grosskurth, Biographer of Margaret Mead

00:07:02 Photograph of Mead as school student

00:07:10 Phyllis Grosskurth, on camera.

00:05:56 *Catherine Bateson, voice-over and on camera:*

Well, my mother, Margaret Mead, grew up in Pennsylvania in an academic household. Her parents met as graduate students at the University of Chicago and her father was a professor of Economics and her mother was a sociologist, who never quite finished her PhD but went on doing research, even while she had four children.

00:06:23 *Jane Howard:*

From the age of four, she was a very forceful, dominant person. She was told as a little child repeatedly, apparently, that there is no one like Margaret and this was a notion that she accepted and lived by all her life. Indeed, there was no one like Margaret. She was always very sure of herself.

00:06:43 *Voice over and sync: Phyllis Grosskurth*

She interested me the more I looked into her because I think I began to understand the things that drove her, because she was a very driven woman as I see her.

Question:

What do you think drove her then?

00:06:57 *Phyllis Grosskurth, cont.*

I think there were a number of things. The first, I think, the first thing is that she was a very plain girl. And she never forgot that she was a plain girl, so that she had to overcompensate for being plain. Then she never really belonged. Her family kept moving when she was a child, so she was always the odd kid out at

00:07:24 Photo of Mead outside Columbia University	<p>school. And she had this terrific need to be accepted, to feel that she belonged somewhere.</p> <p>00:07:28 <i>Narrator:</i></p> <p>All her life, Margaret Mead had been looking for a mentor and at Columbia University she finds Franz Boas, the father of American anthropology, and his assistant, Ruth Benedict.</p>
00:07:34 Photograph of Franz Boas	
00:07:38 Photograph of Ruth Benedict	
00:07:52 Jane Howard on camera	<p>00:07:40 <i>Jane Howard, V/O and on camera:</i></p> <p>Ruth Benedict was an unhappily married woman who had done a number of things, but had never found fulfillment in any professional connection. She had written poetry and tried other avenues, but she had discovered anthropology and loved it and thought that this at last was the discipline she'd been looking for. And she said she wanted to have a companion in harness and in young Margaret Mead, an undergraduate studying the same discipline she found that, and they became very loving friends.</p>
00:08:00 Photo of Margaret Mead, about 20	
00:08:12 Photo of Ruth Benedict	
00:08:21 Catherine Bateson on camera	<p>00:08:13 <i>Catherine Bateson:</i></p> <p>I remember her as very beautiful and very gracious as a person. Now, when I came to write about my mother, after her death, I learnt that she had had an intimate relationship with Ruth for long periods of time. That was somehow enclosed within the friendship and the colleagueship.</p>
00:08:39 Jane Howard, on camera	<p>00:08:39 <i>Jane Howard:</i></p> <p>Her problem then became where should she go to do the work that would lead to her dissertation. Well then an obvious answer would have been an American Indian tribe, but that had already been done, everybody did that, many anthropologists. There were jokes that the average American Indian family</p>

	consisted of a mother, father, child and anthropologist, so she wanted to go where few people had gone before.
00:09:04 Palm-fringed Samoan Island	00:09:13 <i>Narrator:</i>
00:09:09 Second shot of island-camera zooms out	For her first field trip, Margaret Mead's heart is set on some remote and beautiful South Sea island. Boas asks her to investigate a specific question which he phrases:
00:09:24 Samoan dancer	"Are the difficulties of adolescent girls due to the physiological changes which take place at puberty or to the civilization in which they grow up?"
00:09:36 Samoan boys near waterfall	Boas hopes that Margaret Mead's answer will help him in his battle with the eugenicists, those scientists who believe that the human race can be improved by selective breeding. This is the so-called Nature vs. Nurture controversy which rages during the 1920s and in which Mead herself is much involved.
00:09:54 File footage of Margaret Mead interviewed in Samoa	00:09:54 <i>Margaret Mead:</i>
00:10:01 Super Title: Interview with Margaret Mead, American Samoa, 1971	I didn't want to study the adolescent girl, I wanted to study change. My professor wanted me to study adolescence – I wanted to come to Polynesia somewhere; he wanted me to stay in the United States. So we made an exchange: he said I could come to Polynesia if I would study the adolescent girl.
00:10:12 Photograph of Mead in 1920s	00:10:12 <i>Narrator:</i>
00:10:18 Photo of Luther Cressman	In August 1925 Margaret Mead departs for Samoa, leaving a young husband, Luther Cressman, waiting.
00:10:23 Caption: 'Dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good' - T.S. Eliot	
00:10:31 Photo of Pago Pago harbour	00:10:33 <i>Narrator:</i>
00:10:36 Photograph: hotel, 1920s	Nobody pays special attention to Mead at the ramshackle hotel in Pago Pago which Somerset Maugham has made famous, and for the next ten
00:10:44 Photograph: Pago Pago	

harbour with American naval ship	weeks she studies the Samoan language. She finds the main island too 'Americanized' and decides to move to the small and remote island of Ta'u, one of three islands in the Manu'a group, seventy miles to the east. There she lives with an American family, the Holts, at the naval dispensary. And it is from here that her study of 25 adolescent girls begins.
00:10:49 Photograph: Old plane flying over Manu'a islands	
00:10:51 Aerial photograph: Ta'u island	
00:10:57 Photograph: Holt house	
00:11:00 Photo: Mead and Samoan girl	
00:11:04 Photograph: adolescent girl	
00:11:10 Photograph: two Samoan girls	
00:11:13 Photograph: fair-skinned Samoan girl	
00:11:17 Margaret Mead on camera (file footage, 1971 interview).	00:11:08 <i>Margaret Mead:</i> Now I did write in a sense for the Samoans, that is, I concealed every name of anyone about whose private life I said anything, and nobody's ever been able to work it out, thank goodness. Sometimes that makes them accuse me of things, but I concealed people's identity well enough. When Dr Holmes was there, he wrote me and said: 'I can't identify your informants, please send me a list', because I protected people enough, so that I never revealed the personality of anyone - the identity of anyone.
00:11:37 Photo of Mead with arm around Samoan girl	
00:11:41 Cu same photograph	00:11:44 <i>Narrator:</i> One reason that Samoans do not have sexual problems, Mead reports, is that they never get deeply involved with their sexual partners. Sexual fidelity is rated as a matter of days or weeks, at most. In fact, Mead claims, Samoans have no intense feelings about anything. There is no strong bond between parents and children, the society is not competitive and no natural disasters threaten the people.
00:11:52 Photo of smiling girl	
00:11:56 Photograph of Mead and Samoan young man	
00:12:00 Photograph of Samoan mothers and babies	

00:12:03 Photo of Samoan hut
palm trees in BG.

00:12:09 Photo of two Samoan
adolescent girls

00:12:13 Photo of Samoan mother
and child

00:12:22 Flicking through Mead's
field note book

00:12:33 Phyllis Grosskurth, on
camera

00:13:18 Photograph of Boas
smoking cigarette

00:13:34 Photograph of Mead 1920s

Finally, at the end of her book she concludes that the behaviour of the Samoans can be explained only in terms other than biological, thereby claiming the environment, or nurture, to be all-important.

00:12:24 *Narrator:*

She completes her study of Samoan adolescents in less than five months and in May 1926, departs for New York to publish her findings.

00:12:33 *Phyllis Grosskurth:*

I think the fascination of the book was its focus on sex, idealized sex and America was at a stage where it was becoming sex-obsessed, and she catered really to that. Listen to this passage:

“Familiarity with sex and the recognition of a need of a technique to deal with sex as an art have produced a scheme of personal relations in which there are no neurotic pictures, no frigidity, no impotence, except as a temporary result of severe illness and the capacity for intercourse only once in a night is counted as senility”.

I mean, who could possibly have fallen for that stuff?

00:13:19 *Narrator:*

Mead's conclusion that adolescent behaviour is culturally determined is big news for anthropology and very much what Boas wants to hear. The book becomes a triumph for his ideas and the American belief in human perfectibility.

00:13:34 *Narrator:*

The enormous success of the book immediately thrusts Mead into prominence in American intellectual life, a position she will occupy for the next half-century. Although she never again studies Samoa, or revises

her work, the die is cast.

00:13:52 Caption: 'It is a good morning exercise for a research scientist to discard a pet hypothesis every day before breakfast' - Konrad Lorenz

00:14:01 Photograph of Derek Freeman, 1940s

00:14:02 *Narrator:*

Before arriving in Samoa in 1940, Derek Freeman has already established a reputation as a radical among his fellow university students.

00:14:14 Derek Freeman on camera

00:14:12 *Derek Freeman:*

00:14:16 Super title:
Derek Freeman, Emeritus Prof. of Anthropology, Australian National University

When I was a student at Victoria University College in Wellington, New Zealand, I worked in the seminar of Ernst Beaglehole who was a personal friend of Margaret Mead and he introduced me to anthropology and to Margaret Mead's work, and in particular taught us that this book, which was then already well known was of great anthropological significance.

00:14:45 Photograph of Samoan beach and palm trees

00:14:53 Photo: Samoans and canoe

Samoa was then an isolated place – it took thirteen days by ship from New Zealand to get there and very few Samoans had been out of the islands.

00:14:58 Freeman on horse

I had a horse and I used to ride over the mountains in the island to this remote village, where I worked. And every available moment was spent studying the Samoans.

00:15:02 Photo of huts

00:15:11 *Derek Freeman:*

00:15:07 Men building canoe

During my first two years in Samoa, while I was learning the language, my base was in a village called Sa'anapu and I stayed there with the family of the Senior Talking Chief in this village.

00:15:10 Girls singing

00:15:15 Village main house

00:15:21 CU village hut

00:15:26 Freeman on camera

00:15:26 *Derek Freeman*

One morning, quite unexpectedly, all of the chiefs of the village assembled and said that they were going to give me a title, an important title of the village. This title is Logona Faga, which literally means 'Heard at the tree felling' and it is the title of the heir-apparent of the High Chief of the village. At that time I was quite young, too, I was only 24. They bestowed that title – it took up all of my supplies, which I had to give to them, supplies for a three months' stay. But from that time on, because I held this title, I was given recognition throughout the village and I was... I had the right to sit in the Council of Chiefs, which I promptly did, and to attend all of their courts. And it was then that the information that was being brought unmistakably before me that I began to realize that many of the things that Margaret Mead had reported in 'Coming of Age in Samoa' certainly did not accord with what I was witnessing in Sa'anapu.

00:16:39 Freeman in Navy uniform

00:16:39 *Narrator:*

00:16:45 Canoe on river

00:16:48 Iban skulls

00:16:51 Freeman in Borneo

In 1943, Derek Freeman leaves Samoa to join the Navy. Later, in the 1940s, he studies the Iban, a headhunting people of central Borneo. He then becomes a Professorial Fellow at the Australian National University and it is not until 1965 that he returns to Samoa for two years to continue his research.

00:16:55 Freeman with two Samoan men in 1967

00:17:01 Caption:

'All that man can do for humanity is to further the truth, whether it be sweet or bitter...' - Franz Boas

00:17:13 *Narrator:*

00:17:11 Photo: Mead giving lecture at Temple University

During the 1930s, and over the next forty years, Margaret Mead's reputation continues to grow. She becomes the recipient of numerous honorary degrees and awards.

00:17:23 Photo Margaret Mead receives ribbon around neck

00:17:26 Photo: CU smiling Margaret Mead

00:17:29 Photo: Margaret in doctoral clothing

00:17:32 Photo: Margaret and Rabbi

00:17:35 Photo: Zoom out from forked stick to a smiling Mead

00:17:45 Photo: CU Margaret

00:17:48 Photo: Margaret, at microphone, profile

00:17:50 Photo: Margaret with Papuan man and statues

00:18:00 Lola Romanucci- Ross on camera

00:18:01 Super Title: Lola Romanucci-Ross, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego

00:18:07 Photo: Margaret with Lola and Papuan man

00:18:12 Lolo Romanucci-Ross on camera

00:18:17 Photo: Margaret looking directly into camera

00:18:33 Photo Large auditorium

00:18:39 Lola Romanucci-Ross

00:17:24 *Narrator:*

At some point in the 1960s, the world thrusts on Mead's shoulders what is described as a 'mantle of omniscience', which she accepts as her due and wears with a flourish. It goes well with her forked staff and cape and adds to her mystique as a superwoman who knows everything, and who also, knowledge being power, can do anything.

00:17:44 *Narrator:*

She becomes indisputably the most publicly celebrated scientist in America and one of the most revered women of all time

00:17:54 *Lola Romanucci-Ross:*

I knew Margaret very well - for, I think, a period of 23 years. I, of course did field work with her for several years in Manus, in New Guinea, and I was also part of her small group that she referred to as her 'family'

00:18:11 *Lola Romanucci-Ross:*

Now, one thing Margaret was - she was an excellent lecturer, a fantastic entertainer and speaker. She really was an enchantress and she could really cast a spell. She never failed to mesmerize me - even after many years I knew her, I'd sit in the audience and I would watch her absolutely spellbound and wondered how do you become like that, absolutely, incredibly gifted in this way. And I think that's what....I mean, after a while it didn't matter what Margaret said. She said a lot of interesting things; she said a lot of very foolish things. And sometimes she gave the position of being avant-garde when she wasn't really avant-

garde.

00:18:53 Derek Freeman on camera

00:18:53 *Derek Freeman:*

Margaret Mead visited the Australian National University in 1964 and in November of that year we had a long, private meeting in my study in the Research School of Pacific Studies. I laid before her all the evidence that I had, that indicated that her conclusion was not empirically justified. She was very much taken aback by this and subsequently reported that she felt that she felt that her results were now under threat, but when I wrote to her, saying that although our conclusions differed, I hoped that there would be no bad feeling between us and that I would strive to see that there was not, she wrote back to me from New York in December 1964 saying "Anyway, what matters is the work" and I thought that was an exemplary reply.

00:19:54 Catherine Bateson on camera

00:19:54 *Catherine Bateson:*

My mother knew about Freeman, the particular kind of personality he has, the fact that he has sometimes been somewhat unpredictable, and she was worried about it. She was worried that he might behave in a way that would be damaging to anthropology and damaging to the people of Samoa.

00:20:12 Small pond in Freeman's
backyard

00:20:16 Indian artifact: bird-woman

00:20:19 Parrot in tree

00:20:25 Pan from garden across
verandah to Freeman working in his
office

00:20:59 Rubber frog on desk

00:21:09 CU Freeman working

00:20:31 *Derek Freeman*

You see, when you are dealing with a matter like this, Margaret Mead's conclusions in 'Coming of Age in Samoa' had become established doctrine in universities throughout America. Now, I well realised that attempting to undo that was a very formidable task indeed. And I had to go about it most thoroughly. And it was only when I had assembled the evidence that I felt, by March 1978, that I was in a position to do it. But very soon after, Margaret Mead unfortunately died and I then realised that I had - there must be a pause, there must be a decent pause

between her death and the publication of the refutation, and I still, at any rate, had to seek certain evidence in Samoa and Honolulu

00:21:18 Bishop Museum building, Honolulu

00:21:22 Freeman working in Bishop Museum Library

00:21:30 CU Margaret Mead's field note books

00:21:34 Book: Margaret Mead and Samoa

00:21:43 Freeman on camera

00:21:22 *Narrator:*

In 1981, at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Freeman completes the evidence for his refutation and in 1982 he accepts an offer of publication by Harvard University Press. But before the book is released, Edwin McDowall, a journalist from the New York Times, picks up the story

00:21:42 *Derek Freeman:*

The next thing I knew was that one morning, while I was having a bath here, the telephone rang and I got up and went to the telephone unclad, quite naked, and there was Edwin McDowall on the telephone. I'd never heard of him before but I talked to him for about 40 minutes and on the 31st of January it was on the front page of the New York Times. And then the furore began.

00:22:05 Front page, New York Times- tilt down to article on Freeman's book

00:22:16 Hiram Caton on camera

00:22:17 Super Title: Hiram Caton, Professor, School of Humanities, Griffith University, Brisbane

00:22:21 Article: Culture Shock: was Mead wrong?

00:22:26 Article: Did top anthropologist miss the boat on Samoa?

00:22:30 Article: Have the South Sea Natives fooled us all?

00:22:34 Cover: Time Magazine

00:22:09 *Hiram Caton:*

The anthropologists were stunned by the New York Times article and stunned again by the immediate press attention to it. We're talking about dispatches that were printed in literally hundreds of newspapers throughout the United States, not on one day, but for day after day. It had the kind of attention that presidential candidates, or presidents or custodians get, altogether unusual for an academic, and they didn't have the book, they had no indication that such a book was in progress, nor when it was announced had anybody heard of Derek Freeman. Who is Derek Freeman? And it looked like a case in which the most honoured anthropologist in history, indeed one of the most honoured Americans and academics in history, was to be slain by an obscure David somewhere out in the Antipodes. "Coming of Age in Samoa" was a classic textbook for undergraduate teaching: millions, who knows, five, ten million Americans may have

00:22:42 Hiram Caton on camera	read that as undergraduates in the universities. And of course, it was taught to them as being true. And then along comes Derek Freeman and says 'It's all false'.
00:22:50 Photo: Margaret Mead receives citation	
00:23:00 Photo Smiling Derek Freeman	
00:23:06 Hiram Caton on camera	
00:23:23 Robin Fox on camera	00:23:23 <i>Robin Fox:</i>
00:23:24 Super Title: Robin Fox Professor of Anthropology Rutgers University, N.J.	What Derek did, you see, was a double whammy. He didn't just attack it in the theoretical way, he attacked it in the person of the Goddess, of the super-celebrity who had made anthropology, who was anthropology, who was the symbol of anthropology to the world and who was the prime promulgator of this doctrine to the world on behalf of anthropology. So he did a thing that was doubly bad. He didn't just say 'You know, this religion is theologically problematical', he said 'God is wrong', or rather in this case 'the Goddess is wrong'.
00:23:54 Photo: Margaret Mead in Samoa, 1971 visit, arms crossed	
00:24:10 Robin Fox on camera	She couldn't be, you see, she couldn't be, because if she was wrong, then the doctrine was wrong, then the whole liberal humanitarian scheme was wrong, and I think this is a wrong connection. I think the liberal wing here made a wrong connection. You don't need that position in order to defend the goodness of man, but they do, and they did.
00:24;17 Marc Swartz, on camera	00:24:17 <i>Marc Swartz:</i>
00:24:18 Super Title: Marc Swartz, Professor of Anthropology, University of California. San Diego	One of the leading anthropologists came out immediately after the first word of Derek's book was out and said: 'I haven't read the book, but I know he's wrong'. That's a bit depressing in a field that thinks it's a science.
00:24:32 Laura Nader on camera	00:24:32 <i>Laura Nader:</i>
00:24:33 Super Title: Laura Nader, Professor of Anthropology University of California, Berkeley	The controversy of nature/ nurture was an important one which should have been dealt with in his book, but wasn't dealt with because he was so interested in ruining the reputation that Margaret Mead had built on

her Samoa work.

00:24:46 Catherine Bateson
on camera

00:24:46 *Catherine Bateson:*

I think there was a kind of spirit of 'Oh boy, let's do some debunking, that'll be fun', that ended when people realised that this wasn't just Margaret Mead bashing, that this was an attack on the fundamental ideas of the discipline.

00:25:14 Lola Romanucci-Ross
on camera

00:25:14 *Lola Romanucci-Ross*

I've had some anthropologists say to me that it wasn't good for the discipline as a whole and I said 'Why not? If we can't stand scrutiny, then what are we worried about? I'm not worried about being scrutinized, saying, 'yeah, so, well, that was wrong. So look at everything we've done right'.

00:25:30 Laura Nader on camera

00:25:30 *Laura Nader:*

This came at a time when there was a backlash on cultural determinism or explaining things in terms of environment in this country. It was a political backlash - out comes this book which supports a right-wing political backlash and gives reasons why, in fact, we should be following biologically-based national policies. So that's extremely threatening. I'm not sure he was aware of that. That he was used, or could have been used, if his book had sold.

00:26:04 Phyllis Grosskurth
on camera

00:26:04 *Phyllis Grosskurth:*

Well, I'm a little concerned, as a university professor, because my... some of my students tell me that in their anthropology classes they are almost actively discouraged from reading Freeman's book, which I find absolutely extraordinary. Because I have heard anthropology colleagues speak critically of Margaret Mead, but it's although they are frightened that their discipline will come under discredit by this book, and let's face it, I think they're a little nervous about getting grants.

00:26:40 Derek Freeman on camera

00:26:40 *Derek Freeman:*

Well, it so happened that in November 1983 in Science '83, which is a publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, my book was rated as the most important book of the year in the social sciences and recommended for holiday reading. Now at this very time, the American Anthropological Association was meeting in Chicago, its annual meeting. And there, the opposition to my refutation was so intense that a motion was passed condemning the book as 'unscientific' and as possessing all other kinds of defects. And then they voted on it. This is a quite extraordinary event, because the scientific truth is something that cannot be settled politically – it's something that depends on the evidence, and I realised, when this news reached me that my refutation in fact had been a great success because it had prompted these people into this quite extraordinary reaction.

00:27:46 Robin Fox on camera

00:27:46 *Robin Fox:*

American anthropologists knew very little about Derek Freeman as a person and didn't realise what they were taking on. I think they felt a few dismissive reviews and he would curl up and die and go away and retire back to Pogo Pogo, or Bongo Bongo, or wherever it was he'd come from. They didn't realise that they were taking on a very tough character. I mean, anyone who knows Derek knows that when he has got his teeth into something, he does not let go – he's going to get it right though heavens fall. So American anthropology suddenly found itself with this one-man tornado, taking it on, and for every twenty indignant letters or articles in the 'American Anthropologist', or speeches, Derek came back with twenty more, equally powerful, and I think this has rather shaken them. I think they weren't prepared for something of this magnitude, they just thought he'd go away. Well, Derek doesn't just go away.

00:28:40 Caption:

'No one's observations can be trusted until repeated' - Charles Darwin

00:28:45 Row boat on river at Oakland, California

00:28:50 Tilt up to Richard Goodman and friend, jogging

00:29:02 Goodman and friend pass

00:29:07 Richard Goodman on camera

00:29:10 Super Title;
Richard Goodman, Oakland Ca.

00:00:29:28 Tim O'Meara on camera

00:29:29 Super Title: Tim O'Meara,
Assistant Professor of Anthropology,
University of North Carolina

00:29:39 Bowler throws cricket ball

00:29:47 Crowd watching

00:29:49 Referee

00:30:00 O'Meara on camera

00:30:17 Caption:
'The less one knows, the longer it takes
to explain what little one knows'.
- Niko Tinbergen

00:28:53 *Narrator:*

In 1973, Richard Goodman, a student of Samoa for many years, writes his own independent refutation of Mead's book. He arrives at many of the same conclusions that Freeman reaches.

00:29:06 *Richard Goodman:*

Well, what I uncovered was that Samoans have a huge amount of aggression in them, due to the way they're brought up as children and treated as children, punished as children; that they repress this aggression and anger, that they displace it. It comes out in very interesting and peculiar ways. They simply aren't that happy, they have a mask of happiness.

00:29:28 *Tim O'Meara:*

In the area of Samoa that I lived there was one occasion of extraordinary violence, which happened in the National Cricket Tournament in Apia, in the capital city. Our team went to the cricket tournament and were not doing very well in the cricket tournament and they thought they would, should be doing better and one game they became enraged by the referee's calls. They thought they were biased and the crowd began yelling 'Kill the Ref', and they did. They beat him to death with their cricket bats.

00:30:00 *Tim O'Meara:*

One occurrence that I have read about and I believe it was in 1928 – a very similar occurrence happened in Apia in the National Cricket Tournament when a referee was beaten to death by the players with their cricket bats for bad calls. Exactly the same thing that happened in 1982.

00:30:23 Derek Freeman on camera

00:31:07 Letter from Lowell Holmes to Derek Freeman, August 1, 1967

00:31:25 Second page of letter

00:31:37 Signature by Holmes

00:31:41 Freeman on camera

00:30:23 *Derek Freeman:*

When I was in Samoa in 1967 I was astonished to find that an American anthropologist, Lowell Holmes, had claimed that Mead's conclusions about Samoa were remarkably reliable. I had a copy of his PhD thesis, in fact, he had sent me a copy of it. I then wrote to him and pointed out that the information contained in this thesis on rape and various other things directly contradicted Margaret Mead and I asked him how this possibly could be, that, when his own evidence contradicted her, he could claim that her conclusions were remarkably reliable. And he wrote back to me in 1967 saying that he agreed that Margaret found pretty much what she wanted to find, and that he disagreed with various of her conclusions, but was forced by his faculty adviser to soften his criticisms. And in the same letter Holmes added: "The only tragedy about Mead is that she still refused to admit that she might have been wrong on her first field trip". Now it was this extraordinary confession of Holmes that was, among other things, as far as I was concerned, a quite important reason why I should proceed with my refutation.

00:31:51 Lowell Holmes on camera

00:31:53 Super Title: Lowell D. Holmes, Professor of Anthropology Wichita State University

00:32:51 Photo of Margaret Mead and Samoan girl, 1925/6

00:31:51 *Lowell Holmes:*

I don't believe that Margaret Mead was wrong on her first field trip and the letter that I wrote to Derek Freeman, where he claims that I said "Margaret seems to find whatever she wants to" is what I wrote him, this is true. At the time, however, Margaret had just written a very terrible review about a book of mine and I was pretty upset at her. I wrote this to Derek Freeman, not believing that it would appear again and again and again in print – I thought this was confidential correspondence. And I still stand by it, and I had four field trips to the area and I still stand by my statement that I believe that her description of Samoan culture and Samoan behaviour was very good. I believe that she did a very creditable job and I think that many of the complaints that have been brought against her work by Derek Freeman are unfair.

00:33:07: Lowell Holmes on camera

00:33:12 Derek Freeman on camera

00:33:21 Book: 'Quest for the Real Samoa'

00:33:30 Derek Freeman on camera

00:33:45 Lowell Holmes on camera

00:33:12 *Derek Freeman:*

Since the publication of my refutation, Holmes has become Mead's principal champion and at the beginning of 1987 he published a book called "The Quest for the Real Samoa – beyond the Mead-Freeman Controversy" and in this book he has evasively changed the conclusion that Mead reached.

00:33:46 *Question by interviewer:*

Dr. Holmes, how can you possibly still consider Mead's work to be correct, in view of the so many contradictions between her work and yours and even contradictions within Mead's book itself?

00:33:55 *Lowell Holmes:*

I think that there are contradictions in Mead's book. I think that the society was perhaps a bit more complex than she pictured it. After all, this young woman was 23 years old.

00:34:10 Photo of Mead sitting on canoe in Samoa

I think she probably made some mistakes. I think that she had perhaps a kind of romantic view of the South Seas.

00:34:21 Lowell Holmes on camera

Margaret Mead did distort the situation a little bit, her picture of village life is a kind of romantic one. What she did – she took typical activities that might occur throughout an entire year and sort of jammed them into one day, giving the impression that a Samoan village is a very bustling kind of place. I imagine this is a kind of artists' licence, and I don't know whether artists' licence is permitted in anthropologists. I think that 'Coming of Age in Samoa' was written for a popular audience – I think that the last chapter was added at the request of the publisher. I don't think that that necessarily affected the data that came before it, but I think that it may have affected some of the conclusions that she drew at the end.

00:35:04 Book: 'Coming of Age in Samoa'

00:35:10 Lowell Holmes on camera

00:35:30 Laura Nader on camera

00:35:30 *Laura Nader:*

Well, Margaret Mead went into the field and she talked to adolescent girls and she came back with a view of Samoans as being gentle and living an idyllic life, of having sex before marriage and being able to try different things and not having the stresses and strains of the American adolescent during the same period of life. Derek Freeman went in and he talked to the chiefs and he came back with a view of Samoan life as being aggressive and Samoans having a high rape rate, and being almost the exact opposite of what Margaret Mead had described. And so you could argue that he was doing exactly what she was doing, except that he was 66 years old and she was 23 years old. He was doing what I call “historical tracking” – he was picking data out of different periods over long periods of time, without concern for the changes that had happened during those periods. Not only the changes in terms of the Americans that were coming and going, but this modernization, the technology that was coming in, the schooling and how that was affecting the people. It was all as if it was one period for him.

00:36:36 Tim O’Meara on camera

00:36:36 *Tim O’Meara:*

From what I have seen in Western Samoa and the people that I’ve talked to and what I’ve read about the debate I don’t see any significant difference in the society, in the people’s behaviour in 1928 and between Western Samoa and Ta’u.

00:36:51 Photo of bare-breasted Samoan girl

00:36:52 *Narrator:*

00:37:02 Another Samoan girl reclining on sofa

According to Mead, adolescence in Samoa is a period of promiscuity before marriage. Freedom of sexual experimentation is encouraged and even expected, with a girl distributing her favours among many youths adept in amorous techniques. But all other ethnographers report that both pre-marital and extra-marital sex are strictly prohibited by Samoan custom. They describe the Samoans as a devoutly Christian people with a very severe sexual morality that was even stronger during Mead’s time in Samoa. How then is Mead’s account of free love in Samoa to be explained?

00:37:07 Village road- people on way to church

00:37:11 Villagers walking to church

00:37:18 Samoan women in church, singing hymns

00:37:34 Wide shot interior church

00:037:42 Richard Goodman on camera 00:37:39 *Richard Goodman*

Well, there's a double standard in Samoa. The young men have two objects: one of them is to have sexual relations with the girls, as much as they can. The other one is to make sure their sisters don't have sexual relations with the other guys in the village, and a girl leads a very guarded, protected life.

00:38:01 Tim O'Meara on camera

00:38:01 *Tim O'Meara:*

00:38:19 Photo of two Samoan girls

00:38:28 Tim O'Meara on camera

Aside from just opinions from various people who were there or not, I find it extraordinary that people don't mention what Margaret Mead just passed off in her book, is that there were no pregnancies, which she admits in her book. None of these girls that she claims were engaging in sex ever got pregnant and I find that to be extraordinary. In fact, she doesn't document any premarital pregnancies in any of the villages that she worked in and I can't imagine that young girls who were presumably fertile – that she documents their fertility essentially in her book – that they weren't getting pregnant. And if they don't, I assume that there wasn't sex going on.

00:38:38 Photo of Margaret Mead and Samoan girl

00:38:40 *Narrator:*

Could Margaret Mead have allowed herself to be fooled by the Samoan girls, on whom she relied completely for information?

00:38:51 Ian Jarvie on camera

00:38:48 *Ian Jarvie:*

00:38:52 Super Title: Ian Jarvie, Professor of Philosophy, York University, Toronto

Put yourself in the position of a teenage girl in an American colony which has been heavily Christianised by somewhat puritanical missionaries - and you know what puritanical missionaries are mostly concerned with: once they've got rid of head-hunting they want to get rid of anything like promiscuous sex or extra-marital sex. Put yourself in the position of those teenage girls and you have this rather ambiguous American woman - ambiguous in the political sense in that she's hobnobbing both with government officials and with missionaries - and then she's trying to make

cozy friends with you and then starts asking you about your menarche and about your boyfriends and about how you get engaged and what you do when you go into the bushes. I think you're just setting yourself up in any society, but surely, in a society like that, you're setting yourself up for people telling you what they think you want to hear.

00:39:38 Catherine Bateson on camera

00:39:38 *Catherine Bateson:*

00:39:47 Photo of Margaret Mead and two Samoan friends

What comes through for me as I read over the material is the kind of warm, informal, day-after-day relationship that she had with those teenage girls. I think the idea of a systematic, sustained distortion is extremely implausible.

00:39:54 Catherine Bateson on camera

00:40:05 Tim O'Meara on camera

00:40:05 *Tim O'Meara:*

One of the main forms of entertainment in a Samoan village is what I call 'recreational lying', which has several terms: 'to fa'se, to fa'lili' and it's the old pulling people's legs, pimping people. It's a basic sort of locker-room humour from Junior High School. All ages engage in it and people tell you stories to try and get you to believe it, and then they sort of chuckle inside, and it happens continually. My friends used to do this to me all the time, and often it's about sexual matters, because they're very - Samoans appear to me to be very uptight about sex and that's the thing that always brings a laugh. They say things about sex that they don't mean.

00:40:45 Caption:

'The best way to escape from a problem is to solve it.' - Brendan Francis

00:40:50 Main street of Pago Pago, pan to courthouse

00:40:50 *Narrator:*

Perhaps in this controversy the Samoans themselves hold the answer and their evidence is of crucial significance.

00:41:00 A.P. Lutali on camera

00:40:59 *High Chief Lutali:*

00:41:01 Super Title: High Chief

Well, I went to the University of Hawaii in 1948 to take some courses in the University of Hawaii and it

A.P. Lutali, Governor of American Samoa

was during an anthropology class that I realised that something was being taught that was not in accordance with our way of life and culture. And during this anthropology class I got up and objected to Professor Mason, who was the instructor, and I told him “I do not believe” and I did not believe at that time to what Margaret Mead was saying in her book about the sex life of the Samoan young people. And he said to me “How do you know?” and I said “Well, I should know, I grew up in that culture, I am of the age Margaret Mead is writing about and that is not true”.

00:41:48 Man in canoe, mountain peak in background

00:41:55 Talking Chief Muasau’s house.

00:41:55 *Talking Chief Toeaina Muasau:*

00:42:00 Talking Chief Toeaina Muasau on camera

Margaret Mead was here in 1926. She stayed at Missa’s Guest House – that’s one of the Chiefs over here.

00:42:01 Super Title: Talking Chief Toeaina Muasau, Manu’a, Samoa

00:42:08 Closer shot of Talking Chief

I usually help her with carrying her mosquito net, typewriters and some folders for her work.

00:42:19 Photo of Mead and two Samoan girls

I think some girl told her wrong story. The Samoan people, you know, once they wants a laugh to a foreigner, or someone, so they told them the wrong story to influence her to listen to the story, but it’s not a true story.

00:42:24 Photo: CU Samoan girl

00:42:26 Photo: another Samoan girl laughing

00:042:29 Talking Chief on camera

00:42:48 Island of Ofu with sunrise

00:42:52 Beach of Ta’u island

00:42:58 *Narrator:*

00:43:04 Destroyed building

Ta’u Island, the very place where Margaret Mead studied adolescence in Samoa. A terrible hurricane devastated the island in 1987. Remarkably, a search for Mead’s adolescent girls of the 1920s leads to the discovery, more than sixty years later, of Mead’s close

associate and chief informant, 86-year old Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu. Her account will settle, once and for all, the controversy that has long surrounded Margaret Mead's 'Coming of Age in Samoa'.

00:43:06 More devastation

00:43:09 Partially destroyed church

00:43:11 Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu being interviewed by High Chief Galea'I Poumele

00:43:11 *Interview with Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu in Samoan language, English translation, subtitled:*

00:43:31 Wide shot Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu and interviewer

00:43:31 *High Chief Galea'I Poumele:*

What do you remember about Margaret Mead? What kind of young woman was she?

00:43:45 *Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu:*

I remember her very well. We had very good times together, we were like real sisters. But sometimes, when we were out together and gifts had to be given, she would cry, that all her things were being given away, even though she knew that presents had to be given. On formal occasions we made her our leader wherever we went.

00:44:17 Wide shot Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu and interviewer

00:44:18 *High Chief Galea'I Poumele:*

What kind of questions did Margaret Mead ask you? Did she ever ask what you did at nights?

00:44:30 *Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu:*

Yes, she asked what we did after dark. We girls would pinch each other and tell her that we were out with the boys. We were only joking, but she took it seriously. As you know, Samoan girls are terrific liars and love making fun of people, but Margaret thought it was all true.

00:45:00 *High Chief Galea'I Poumele:*

00:44:56 Pan from High Chief Poumele to Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu

So you answered Margaret Mead with lies?

00:45:07 *Fa'a Pu'a'a Fa'amu:*

Yes, we just lied and lied.

00:45:15 Interview with
Fa'anaafi Le Tagaloa

00:45:15 *Question by Interviewer:*

00:45:22 Super Title: Dr Fa'anaafi Le
Tagaloa, Professor of Samoan
Studies

Well, if Margaret Mead was wrong, where do you think she got her ideas from? Do you think she was fooled by her young informants?

00:45:21 *Fa'anaafi Le Tagaloa:*

My view on this may be a bit harsh, but I think Margaret Mead was talking about her own self. I think she brought her own ideas, she was just looking for a frame. But she brought her own ideas and her own problems from the United States of America, and from her own self.

00:45:47 Interview with
High Chief Galea'I Poumele:

00:45:47 *High Chief Galea'I Poumele:*

00:45:48 Super Title:
High Chief Galea'I Poumele
Secretary of Samoan Affairs
American Samoa

I think she'd made up her own mind that she's going to write that theory according to what she believed, but not according to what the people are living here. Because the whole book is just totally opposed in our own custom and culture, the way we live, the way we protect our young girls.

00:46:05 Interview with
Fa'anaafi Le Tagaloa

00:46:05 *Fa'anaafi Le Tagaloa:*

Margaret Mead took away our.... perhaps not our humanity so much as our oneness with other human beings. I mean, we are no different from you in Australia, or the United States or any other part of the world. We all go through these phases, and perhaps it's our cultures that make the semblance of difference, but for Margaret Mead to make us behave as if we are non-human because we behave like animals in our promiscuity, I think that is a great disfavour that she has done us.

00:46:59 File footage of Margaret
Mead being interviewed by
Samoan students, 1971

00:46:59 *Off-screen question by television
interviewer*

We have one more question from Sainty.

00:47:00 Super Title: Interview
with Margaret Mead, American
Samoa, 1971

00:47:01 *Sainty (Samoan student)*

00:47:04 CU Sainty

Yes, Dr. Mead. I would like to ask you: Why did you choose to visit Samoa at this time, but not, let's say five or ten years ago, after you wrote the book 46 years ago?

00:47:11 Margaret Mead answers

00:47:11 *Margaret Mead:*

Well, I think the real answer is... you know that.... well, there are two or three answers. One: lots of people came to work in Samoa, younger students and they came to talk to me before they went and I talked to them when they came back. We began having moving pictures, so that I saw pictures every few years, lots of still picture. I knew what was happening, you know, I've seen pictures of what's been going on on Ta'u for years.

00:47:39 Phyllis Grosskurth on camera

00:47:39 *Phyllis Grosskurth:*

I find it very curious that Margaret Mead never really returned to Samoa. Apparently, she once set down there to open a power station, or something, but she went back to other places to re-check what had happened, but never to Samoa, and I think this is very curious. My own hypothesis is that she was frightened, that she was frightened that she might find material that contradicted her first book and, after all, her fame was established by that first book. And I think she was so insecure that she was afraid that if anything in that book was discredited, her whole reputation would fall into shreds.

00:48:26 Lola Romanucci-Ross
on camera

00:48:26 *Lola Romanucci-Ross:*

She told me that she had met with Derek Freeman and that he had told her about his research in Samoa, and what he thought of her work and that he was going to publish this. And I gave her a 'So what?' look and she said: "You don't understand, he has proven me wrong". And she looked very sad and puzzled and I thought it was very odd that I was here feeling sorry for Margaret Mead, and even stranger that I was going to have to tell her that this was not important. But I

did, I said: “What you have done in anthropology and for the world is not Samoa-dependant, it really doesn’t matter whether you were right or wrong about Samoa” and she said: “Oh, what do you think I ought to do about it?” I just said: “Nothing”.

00:49:20 Derek Freeman on camera

00:49:20 *Derek Freeman:*

00:49:33 Two young Samoan men carrying pig

00:49:38 Samoan man talking

00:49:44 Women carrying food to hut, placed before Freeman

00:50:05 Another pig carried

00:50:14 CU Freeman, emotional

00:50:20 Samoan elders speaking

00:50:22 Women carry ceremonial mat and present it to Freeman

00:50:29 Men prepare kava for drinking

00:50:38 Derek Freeman speaks

Well, as a result of this whole controversy, Samoa is a place that has assumed immense anthropological and human significance. I have often said that if only we Westerners could understand the Samoans, then we can understand ourselves and we should be thankful that Samoa was a place where issues of such great scientific importance could be studied and resolved. Samoa is a profoundly important place to me, I mean, that’s where I began to think deeply about these problems and I have an enormous debt of gratitude to the Samoans. I become very emotional when I go to Samoa because my bond with the Samoans is so deep and I have a great love and regard for them, but this does not mean to say that I suppose that they are stainless, or that they are gods or goddesses: they are marvellous human beings.

00:50:40 *Derek Freeman (speaking in Samoan with English subtitles)*

I trust that we shall all stand firm in truth and love forever.

00:50:46 Men listening

00:50:50 Derek Freeman speaks

00:50:57 Samoan men sing

00:51:17 Derek Freeman leaves his house and enters his vehicle

00:51:44 Vehicle travelling along
shores of Lake Burley Griffin in
Canberra

00:52:05 Tilt down from gum
trees to Freeman walking in
forest

00:52:45 Back shot, Freeman's
feet

00:52:49 Freeman walking
towards camera

00:52:52 Reverse Angle
Freeman walking through bush

00:53:00 Wide shot Freeman
approaching from a distance

00: 53:28 Fade to black and CREDITS

00:53:29
Director of Photography:
John Thornton

00:53:32
Sound recordist:
Richard Hill

00:53:35
Editor:
Richard Dale

00:53:39
Narrator:
Margaret Throsby

00:51:48 *Freeman's voice-over:*

My passion in life is that we will develop a genuine science of the human species. Nothing is more important for humans than that we succeed in this task. Now I have said that the question that Boas gave Margaret Mead to answer was a profoundly important anthropological question, and I think that now, in the late 1980s, we have resolved that problem. It is apparent to all knowledgeable behavioural scientists that we must operate within a framework in which we simultaneously take into account our evolutionary history and our cultures. And it is only when these two things are combined within an interactionist paradigm that you have the imperative precondition for a genuine science of our species.

00:52:48 *Freeman's voice-over*

Well, I have always been a heretic. I think being a heretic is the most beautiful thing, because this comes from a Greek root, meaning someone who chooses for himself. In other words, a heretic is someone who thinks for himself and doesn't run with the mob and I have always been a heretic and found great joy in it. But what you've got to be in Science is a heretic who gets it right. It's no use being a heretic who gets it wrong, because then you're a pariah dog in their eyes. But if you are a heretic who gets it right, you can't do better.

00:53:42

The Producers would like to thank:

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00:53:53

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Producer, Director, Writer: Frank Heimans

00:54:05

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00:54:09 Fade to black and end of program.