

SCIENCE NEWS

The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

A Science Service Publication
Volume 124, No. 1, July 2, 1983

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Subscription Department
231 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302

Subscription rate: 1 yr., \$27.50; 2 yrs., \$47.50; 3
yrs., \$67.00. (Foreign postage \$5.00 additional per
year.) Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice
is required. Please state exactly how magazine is to
be addressed. Include zip code. For new
subscriptions only call (1) 800-247-2160. Printed in
U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington,
D. C. Title registered as trademark U. S. and Canadian
Patent Offices. Published every Saturday by
SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc. 1719 N St., N.W.,
Washington, D. C. 20036. (202-785-2255)
ISSN 0036-8423

Letters

Ribs II

Dr. Noel Boaz suggests in his June 4 letter that SCIENCE NEWS and I have been unfair in our treatment of his work on the Sahabi dolphin rib. Boaz is correct in introducing his letter with the comment "Tim White has not demonstrated that the Sahabi clavicle is a dolphin rib." Our paper demonstrating the cetacean affinities of his fossil has not yet been published in the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY but is post-proof.

Dr. Boaz presented a poster session that misrepresented the analysis of that paper (coauthored by myself and Suwa, Watters, Richards and Barnes) at the annual national meetings of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists last April. This presentation prompted Wray Herbert's SCIENCE NEWS report (SN: 4/16/83, p. 246).

Dr. Boaz's presentation and misrepresentation of our research at this meeting, months before we had even had a chance to publish, was not only surprising. It was, in fact, unethical because Boaz had reviewed our paper for the AJPA in 1982!

But Boaz claims that I was unfair and engaged

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Cover: These two adult males both lived approximately 3 million years ago, but anthropologists cannot agree on their relationship: Are they representatives of the same early hominid species, or was *A. afarensis* (right) from East Africa ancestral to the South African *A. africanus*? Did these animals ultimately evolve into modern humans, or were they already on the road to extinction? (Photos courtesy of South African Journal of Science)



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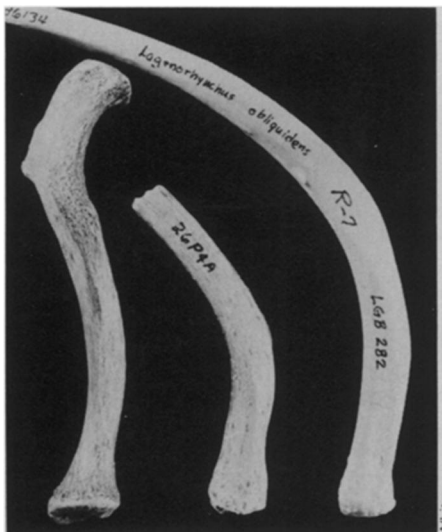
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in what he terms "ad hominem" sophistry in my interview with SCIENCE NEWS. I actually argued with *ad delphinem* actuality. It is time to set the record straight. Boaz's description of his dolphin rib fossil states that it has a sigmoid [S-



shaped] curvature characteristic of primate clavicles. As is apparent from the accompanying photograph of the fossil (center), dolphin rib (right) and chimp clavicle (left), there is no such sigmoid curvature in the fossil. In medicine Boaz's description might have been called malpractice. In biochemistry his portrayal would have been termed fraud. I [was] more than kind in [my] remarks about Dr. Boaz's identifications and behavior, as was SCIENCE NEWS.

Tim D. White
Univ. of Calif.
Berkeley, Calif.

Bluebird fans

Three years ago, at my college graduating class's 15th reunion, we were all asked to identify the most moving experience we had had within the past few years. Most of my classmates spoke of births and deaths or career accomplishments, not surprisingly.

In my case, after thinking the question over carefully, I had to conclude that the single event that stood out most glowingly in my recent life was the appearance of a nesting pair of bluebirds at my home in Leominster, Mass. I had

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