

Because O'Donnell has spent so much time with the chimps, she says, "they recognize my car. They'll scream when they see my car coming."

Before heading outside to get his treat, Herbie looks at the water bottle on top of his cage in the feeding area. "Can I have your trash?" O'Donnell asks. Herbie hands her scraps and peanut shells through the cage. He looks up at the empty water bottle on top of the enclosure, then he pokes at it until the bottle falls off. O'Donnell catches it.

"They love music, they love to watch *SpongeBob* on TV. Topo likes *Seinfeld*. So good of you to clean your own bedroom," O'Donnell says.

At 51, Topo is the sanctuary's alpha male. He and Herbie are kept in separate groups to avoid a battle for status. O'Donnell says Topo would probably die if the two ever faced off because he's too old to fight.

The similarities between Herbie and me are staggering. I watch him choose and open a snack package — an enrichment activity and snack that the staff makes every day — and he separates the shredded newspaper from the dried apples, peanuts and pretzels.

Jane Goodall was the first person to discover that chimpanzees make and use tools; the primatologist has spent 50 years researching and working to protect the closest living relatives to humans, according to the Jane Goodall Institute's website.

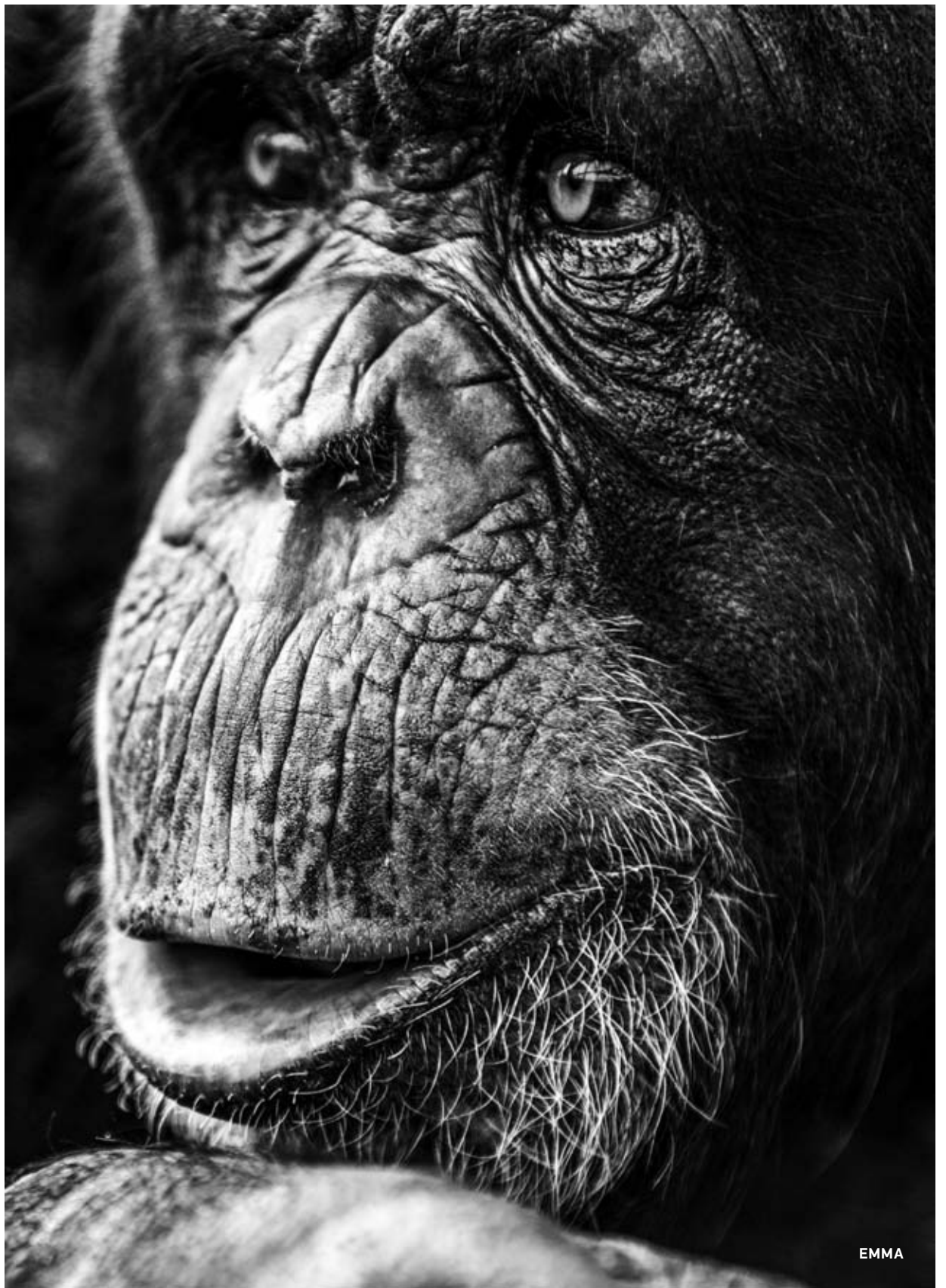
As she immersed herself in the wilds of Tanzania, Goodall witnessed chimpanzees using sticks to remove termites from mounds. Though this discovery was made in 1960, watching a chimp trying to interact with me was surreal.

If chimps are born in captivity, or are taken away from their mothers as babies, they cannot return to the wild. As with other captive wild animals, they don't possess the behaviors that allow them to hunt or to protect themselves. Yet human-caused destruction of their natural habitat, as well as poachers, continues to decimate the chimpanzee population throughout a habitat that spans across 22 African countries, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Chimps Inc. formed and is a member of the American Primate Sanctuary Alliance, created "to develop a standard of care for captive chimps and to try to get the chimps out of research and out of these private sectors," O'Donnell says.

"So we're on the placement team," she adds. "If we know of a chimp that is in need of a home, that somebody is going to release, we'll jump into action to try to find way to get the transport, the medical done and all that, and place them with an accredited sanctuary."

As Herbie finishes his snack, he listens as O'Donnell asks him to back up so she can take his photo. He seems to be right at home in the only chimp sanctuary in Oregon, where he'll spend the rest of his life with familiar caregivers and remain protected from the wild. ■



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