Film Review: Monkey Business

August 1, 2004 By Josh Sparber

Did the race for an oral polio vaccine lead to the AIDS pandemic? *The Origins of AIDS*, a curious new documentary by Peter Chappell and Catherine Peix, traces a shocking theoretical path. The filmmakers astutely accuse researchers who cultivated monkey tissue for the polio vax of having used chimpanzees, which have for centuries been known to harbor a simian version of AIDS. (Chappell and Peix argue that the vax pioneers should have used macaques.) A possible chimp consequence, first suggested in Edward Hooper's 1999 book, *The River* (see "The River Runs Through It," *POZ*, March 2000), was HIV's jump to humans. The documentarians visit Hooper and his archenemy Hilary Koprowski, who pioneered the oral vax in the Congo (formerly Zaire). They also track down Congolese eyewitnesses, who admit to having abetted the polio pioneers in chopping up chimps. By the end, you'll go ape pondering a scientific cover-up.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Film-Review-Monkey-Business-385-7664