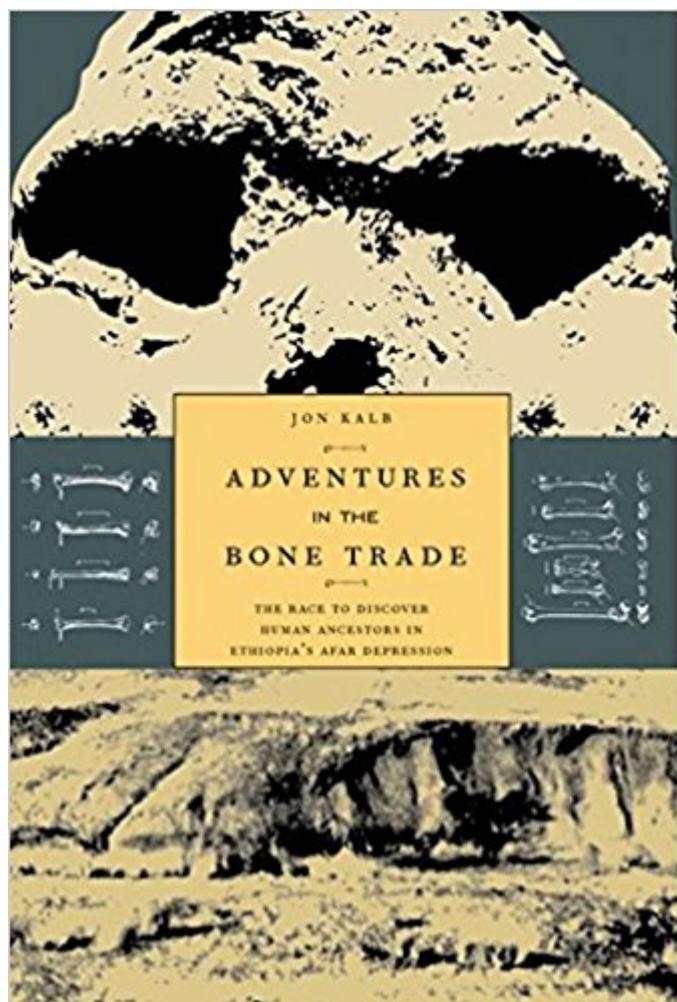


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# Adventures In The Bone Trade: The Race To Discover Human Ancestors In Ethiopia's Afar Depression



## Synopsis

As co-founder of the expedition that discovered Lucy, and leader of most of the first site-surveys in the Afar Depression in Ethiopia, Jon Kalb has years of experience with the region, its politics, and the scientists involved in the excavations. A participant himself in the "bone wars" that accompanied these discoveries, Kalb recounts the cutthroat competition and back stabbing that were often part of the media-highlighted race to find the oldest hominid fossil. He weaves this story in the rich fabric of Ethiopian society and politics, the plight of the regions peoples, and the international maneuverings for control of the fossil finds.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 389 pages

Publisher: Copernicus; 2001 edition (October 27, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0387987428

ISBN-13: 978-0387987422

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.4 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (6 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Wow! If you like science, this book has it all. Kalb gives a serious accounting of plate tectonics, geology, anthropology, paleoanthropology and politics. Both the politics of Ethiopia and of hominid anthropology. This is the second book that I have read where Don Johanson, discoverer of the Lucy fossil, is lambasted. I am beginning to believe that Johanson left a lot of people in his wake, including Kalb, on his way to fame and fortune. Kalb even gives details of Johanson's marijuana smoking exploits. Scandalous! It is Kalb who worked behind the scenes to elucidate the geology of the Afar region of Africa and set the stage for the advancement of many discoveries in the field of paleoanthropology. And he did it while dodging the bullets of a communist revolution! Kalb survives even though he is suspected of being a CIA operative planted in Ethiopia under the guise of his scientific mission. Kalb suspects that it was his falling out with Johanson that caused this little tidbit of doubt to be planted in the minds of the Ethiopian government. Kalb spends a lot of effort over a

few years fighting this charge, but he eventually loses and is expelled from Ethiopia. Kalb's story includes his sometimes angst ridden dealings with the Ethiopian government, who it seems are caught in the middle of a struggle of competing groups to exert dominance over the rich fossil beds of the Afar triangle. The struggle is not just between competing organizations of American science, but also between the Americans and a French team that comes close to stealing the show. The only flaw in the book is the way that Kalb weaves the recent history of Ethiopia into the book. That could have been a book in and of itself. Kalb is best when discussing geology and anthropology.

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