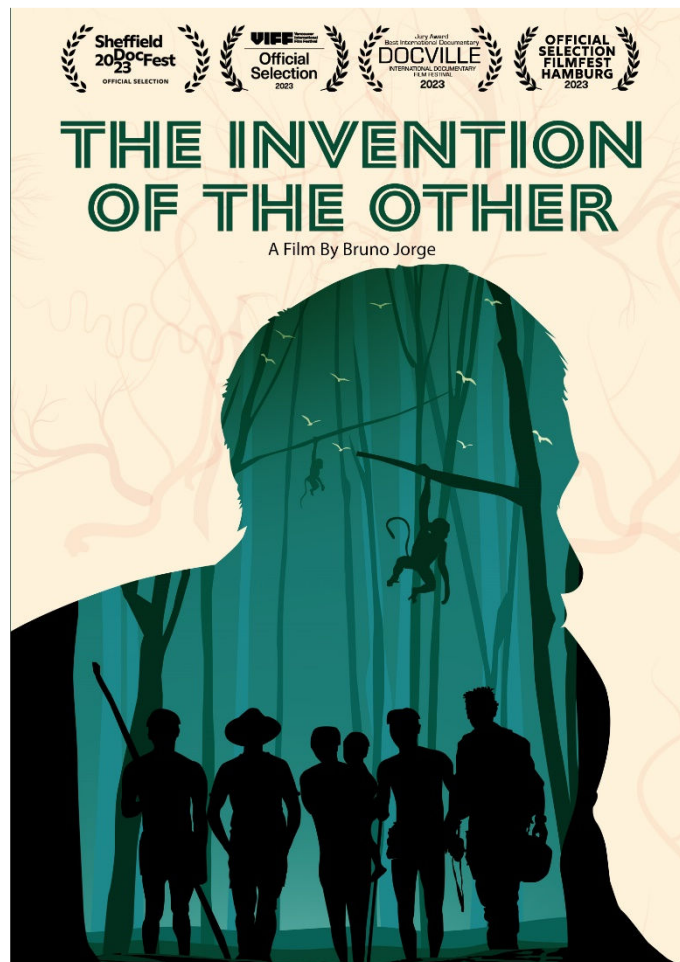




# THE INVENTION OF THE OTHER A INVENÇÃO DO OUTRO / LA INVENCIÓN DEL OTRO



## STUDY GUIDE

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## **The Invention of the Other**

An Amazon expedition led by the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI), and led by Bruno Pereira, seeks to establish contact with the isolated Korubo tribe and reunite them with other family members.

## **The Javari Valley**

The Javari Valley is a remote forested area that is more than 31,000 square miles in area. The valley is in the western part of the state of Amazonas, along the border with Peru. Amazonas is a state located in northwestern Brazil, and is the largest Brazilian state. The Javari Valley is home to the largest concentration of isolated indigenous people living in Brazil. It is accessible by boat or helicopter. The government of Brazil created the Javari Valley Indigenous Territory in 2001. It is the second-largest indigenous reserve in Brazil, after the Yanomami Indigenous territory.

## **The Korubo**

The Korubo live in voluntary isolation in the Javari Valley. In addition to the Korubo, a number of other indigenous groups live in the area. According to various news reports, the area is home to about 6,000 indigenous people. According to Brazilian law, contact with these tribes is only allowed as a last resort option to save their lives. The expedition in this documentary was made under the argument that contact with the Korubo was needed in order to prevent conflict with other indigenous groups that was posing a potential threat to their lives.

According to a government website, data from a 2022 census shows that the total indigenous population in Brazil is 1,693,535 people, which represents 0.83% of the total population. The site also explains that this is significantly larger than in the previous census. It states, “In 2010, when the previous Census was conducted, 896,917 indigenous people were counted in the country. This is equivalent to an increase of 88.82% in 12 years, a period in which this contingent almost doubled.”<sup>1</sup> According to this website, approximately 75 percent of Brazil’s indigenous population lives in the north and northeast of the country.

## **Threats to Indigenous People in the Javari Valley**

With the creation of the Javari Valley Indigenous Territory, non-indigenous people—even those who live right next to the area—lost the right to fish and hunt there, and this has created tensions, with many locals disagreeing with the restrictions. Some of the locals simply ignore the law and continue to hunt and fish inside the reserve. In addition, the area is constantly invaded by illegal hunters, miners, fishermen, and loggers from other places who want to take advantage of the rich natural resources found there. This area is also a drug trafficking route. There is widespread criticism that the government has not done enough to enforce its rules and protect the area from these various invasions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.br/funai/pt-br/atuacao/povos-indigenas/quem-sao>

In an article that he wrote before his 2022 murder, journalist Dom Phillips talks about how many different groups encroach on the land in the reserve. He says, “Deep inside Javari Valley, fishing teams haul away up to half a tonne of pirarucu fish and 700 turtles – both protected species – in one trip and hunt prey on land, depriving isolated groups of valuable food sources. Illegal gold mining dredgers pollute rivers with mercury in its eastern regions. Cattle farmers are encroaching from the south. Narcotics flow down the Solimões River near its northern borders.”<sup>2</sup>

Because they live in isolation, the indigenous people of the Javari Valley also face a significant threat of becoming sick or even dying from illnesses that they might get from contact with outsiders. Manoel Chorimpa, who works for a local organization that works to protect indigenous groups who live in voluntary isolation says, “The vulnerability of this community is extremely high; any infection can quickly escalate into an epidemic.”<sup>3</sup>

## **FUNAI**

The National Indian Foundation (Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas), or FUNAI, is a Brazilian government agency that was created in 1967. It works to protect and promote the rights of Brazil’s indigenous people and their culture. FUNAI’s website explains its main activities. The website states, “Funai is responsible for promoting studies on the identification and delimitation, demarcation, land regularization and registration of lands traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples, in addition to monitoring and inspecting indigenous lands. Funai also coordinates and implements policies to protect isolated and recently contacted peoples. It is also its role to promote policies aimed at the sustainable development of indigenous populations.”<sup>4</sup> FUNAI has a permanent base in the Javari Valley.

## **Bruno Pereira**

Bruno Pereira was born in 1980 in the state of Pernambuco, in Brazil. He was an expert in Brazilian indigenous communities. A 2022 *Washington Post* article gives some information about the history of his work in the Amazon. It says, “He first went to the Amazon in the early 2000s as an employee of a company doing reforestation work around a hydroelectric plant near Manaus. He joined the government Indigenous agency, FUNAI, in 2010 and rose to general coordinator for isolated communities, working in Brasília.” The article also says, “Until his death, he was working as an adviser for the Javari Valley Indigenous Peoples Union, or Univaja. He had been training Indigenous people who didn’t speak Portuguese to use satellite technology to map invasions in their territory.”<sup>5</sup> In June 2022, Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips were travelling by boat in the Javari Valley when they went missing. Their bodies were later found shot, burned, and buried. Three fishermen were charged with their murders. Pereira was forty-one years old.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/aug/23/tribes-in-deep-water-gold-guns-and-the-amazons-last-frontier>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/09/epidemic-fears-as-80-of-indigenous-amazon-tribe-fall-ill>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.br/funai/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/institucional/Institucional>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/18/bruno-pereira-brazil-dies/>

## Study Questions

1. What reasons are given to explain why the Korubo and other indigenous groups choose to live in isolation in the Javari Valley?
2. As explained by the film, why does the team think that the Korubo might be reluctant to make contact with them?
3. In what ways might contact be beneficial to the previously uncontacted Korubo?
4. In the film, there is some discussion over hunting with a blowgun versus a shotgun. Do you think the Korubo should have access to guns for hunting? Why or why not?
5. What are some of the major differences that you can see between the uncontacted people and the people in Pereira's group? In what ways are these two groups similar?
6. The title of this film is "The Invention of the Other." Why do you think the filmmaker chose this title?

## Additional Resources

- Dan Collyns, "Javari Valley: The Lawless Primal Wilderness Where Dom Phillips Went Missing," *Guardian*, June 9, 2022.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/09/dom-phillips-javari-valley-brazil-amazon-cocaine-smuggling>
- Beto Marubo, Fabrício Amorim, and Helena Palmquist, "Bruno's Exemplary Achievements with Indigenous Communities Must Be Respected," *Sumaúma*, June 2, 2023.  
<https://sumauma.com/en/bruno-e-dom-seguem-sendo-assassinados/>
- National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples, "Uncontacted Peoples," February 12, 2021.  
<https://www.gov.br/funai/pt-br/atuacao/povos-indigenas/povos-indigenas-isolados-e-de-recente-contato-2/povos-isolados-1>
- Gabriela Sá Pessoa and Samantha Schmidt, "Bruno Pereira, Expert on Brazil's Indigenous Communities, Dead at 41," *Washington Post*, June 18, 2022.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/18/bruno-pereira-brazil-dies/>
- Paul Raffaele, "Out of Time," *Smithsonian*, April 2005.  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/out-of-time-78868850/>
- Survival International, "The Uncontacted Indians of Brazil."  
<https://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/uncontacted-brazil>

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