

**Murray Gleeson:  
The Smiler**  
Michael Pelly



**M**urray Gleeson, a former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, was nicknamed the Smiler because he rarely did. He was there, he said, to represent

clients, not entertain them. Roddy Meagher, a brother judge, was overheard to say that Murray takes no interest in music or art. He does, however, like flowers; he glares at them until they wilt.

Gleeson's complex ancestry confused me at first; once I'd drawn up a family tree, however, it was fine. The marriage of Gleeson's mum

and dad in the 1930s was a revelation: one was a Presbyterian and the other a Roman Catholic.

In 1977, Gleeson agreed to represent Australian actress Kate Fitzpatrick in her defamation case against Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd. The jury returned a verdict in Fitzpatrick's favour. The judge then took the rare step of directing them to award aggravated damages. Kate was delighted. She said she found brains sexy and Murray Gleeson was the sexiest man she'd ever met. Gleeson's response was given with a rare smile: 'Ms Fitzpatrick is a woman of discerning taste'.

This is an engaging biography. Some of the court cases I skimmed over, but the dramas and behind-the-scenes details I lapped up.

★★★★ The Federation Press \$59.95

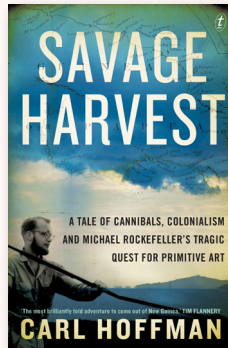
*Reviewed by Clive Hodges*

**Savage Harvest: A tale of cannibals, colonialism and Michael Rockefeller's tragic quest for primitive art**  
Carl Hoffman

**D**ecades after the mysterious disappearance of Michael Rockefeller – heir to one of America's wealthiest families – American journalist Carl Hoffman shines a light on this largely forgotten story and readdresses unanswered questions.

In 1961, the adventurous 23-year-old Rockefeller travelled to New Guinea to explore and collect tribal artefacts to be exhibited in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Becoming obsessed with his mission, and using his political contacts and finance, Rockefeller quickly accumulated an impressive array of items to be coveted by any art dealer.

In November 1961 he decided to delve deeper into uncharted tribal terrain to barter for more exotic items. The American was travelling along a river in the western Asmat tribal area with a local tribesman when their boat capsized. Rockefeller started to swim to



shore, leaving the tribesman behind. But the American was never seen again. It was officially stated that Rockefeller had drowned.

But could Rockefeller have been the victim of a croc attack? Or could he have fallen prey to a cannibalistic tribe? Hoffman spent two years researching Dutch colonial politics and the Rockefeller family, and he travelled repeatedly to the

Asmat tribal area, even living among a tribe for a month. At times **Savage Harvest** is a little long-winded, but Hoffman counters the occasional periods of tedium by describing how his own experiences affected him on a profound level.

★★★★ Text \$32.99

*Reviewed by Fotini Dangiris*



**About Carl Hoffman**

**Carl Hoffman** is a contributing editor at *National Geographic Traveler*. He has travelled on assignment to more than 70 countries.

