
Press Release: The Hopi Tribe

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Career "Bone Man" Feeds Controversy

Kykotsmovi, Arizona-- Leigh Jenkins Kuwanwisiwma wants Dr. Christy Turner over for dinner and he;s not saying why.

The University of Utah Press is releasing Dr. Turner's opus on his unusual academic focus, the consumption of human flesh.

Dr. Turner, a white male anthropologist, is considered an expert on cannibals. That is, if the cannibals are indians who live around Turner's area of study--i.e. the southwestern tribes and the civilizations of pre-conquest Mexico.

Cannibalism is not a new subject. Dr. Turner has been developing his unpopular, and to some unfamiliar, theory for 25 years.

Turner's hypothesis, since it has not been proven, goes along these lines: In the wild west, before Wyatt Earp or Bill Cody, or U.S. Grant--i.e. before "civilized, sensible white lawmen," there existed a gang of psycho-sociopathic "Mexican Bandits," alleged as "Toltec" by Turner, that ran around the present-day, four corners area, defacating in fireplaces, killing indiscriminately, roasting human heads on open flames, devouring the flesh of women and children, and then settling down to a quiet evening of human soup, where the culprits would break femurs, tibias, and fibulas to suck out bone juice while they picked their teeth.

Can this be Hollywood or history?

Kuwanwisiwma and Kurt Dongoske from the Hopi Tribe's Cultural Preservation Office see it as more outrageous sensationalism for the public's voracious appetite for scandal and controversy. An article appeared in the December 13, 1998 *Arizona Daily Sun* that proudly trumpeted "evidence of cannibalism."

Dongoske called "self-serving" in the November 30th *New Yorker Magazine*, and sighs when he says, "Christy Turner has been bashing us around for twenty years."

Kuwanwisiwma agrees and would like to see some evidence. CPO has dealt with white authors and businesses trying to make a buck off of the Hopi Tribe for years. He says, " We want turner to come up to Hopi people to explain to us his evidence for this theory, that consumption of human flesh was a cultural phenomenon during the demise of Awatovi.

Turner is using his theory to explain Awatovi, a pre-historic hopi village located on ancient trade

routes to Zuni, which points south. Awatovi was encountered in 1540 by the wanderers, Pedro de Tovar and Garcia Lopez de Cardenas. Over the next 160 years, the village was ripped apart by civil war due to the intent and influence of the Roman Catholic Franciscan missionaries. The men of Awatovi who had assisted the Spanish were killed, along with the missionaries. The women were spared and were allowed to live in other villages.

Dr. Turner can allow his brain to project anything on a bunch of old bones. That is his right; his profession tolerates it. But if it is to be science, it needs concrete evidence.

For Hopi people, Awatovi is a bad memory. It is a fact of the past. It is a sad moment in an epic history. Kuwanwisiwma suggests that, "unless you are a student of Hopi history, it would be hard to deal with what happened at Awatovi."

What Turner has done with the help of a travel writer, not an academic researcher, Douglas Preston, is implicate the Awatovi chief and his allies from other villages, with the crimes of cannibalism in an international magazine.

The New Yorker article reads "...[cannibalism] was the product of a few socially pathological individuals who whipped up the emotions of their followers, like the chief at Awatovi who plotted the grim extinction of his own village. Turner compares such men as the Awatovi chief to Adolf Hitler, Genghis Kahn, and Joseph Stalin."

Grim extinction or a grim analysis. Turner's theory of cannibalistic behavior was a useful political tool for ancient pueblo leaders "terrorizing, manipulating, and murdering might be evolutionary useful behaviors...reduce victims to the subhuman level of cooked meat." So he introduces method into the madness.

Turner told an Associated Press (AP) writer, safely a thousand miles away, "Let's open our eyes and look at the darker side of ourselves"

Let us take Turner's advice and look at some historical facts. In 1488, when Pope Innocent VIII was the religious leader of western white forces, there was a rift raging in the Catholic church. It concerned the ritual of transubstantiation.

The physical and symbolic act of eating Christ's body and drinking his blood during the Eucharist was defiantly being questioned. The scholars at that time were afraid they were suffering from what today we call oral cannibalistic desires--in short, they needed a scapegoat to alleviate their perceived fears.

In the Old World, they found a scapegoat in the form of women. Persons who were described as witches under law were accused of mocking the church's rituals by actually eating flesh and drinking real blood. Subsequently, thousands of women were burned at the stake.

In the New World, after 1492, while the Inquisition butchered women, Jews, and Muslims over their religious beliefs, the southwestern villages and pueblos would suffer from the same Spanish Catholic Missionary/soldiers who would cut off hands, legs and arms, butcher infants, burn humans alive, and every form of sadistic torture employed by the medieval mind "in the name of God." All of this was intended to convert the pueblos to Christianity.

Dan Simplicio, from Zuni CPO, explains, "we have been telling people about this historical mayhem

that we have suffered for a long time. Turner objects to our stories and oral traditions and keeps them out of his scientific research. We are simply not the audience he is writing for."

It was Columbus, after all, who had heard the seafaring stories of flesh-eating caribs or cannibals, and he introduced the word cannibal into his diary and the English language.

The Hopi people had rebelled at the inhuman European atrocities. Since Spanish times the Hopi have maintained minimal contact with white people.

All of the publicized cannibalistic events of this century have been perpetrated by white men, i.e. Jeffrey Dahmer who ate young black men, and the infamous Russian cannibal, a white male of the 1940's-50's who ate men, women, and children. Should we say white society is cannibalistic?

Most people have stories of ogres, not necessarily human ones, that devour misbehaving children. Kuwanwisiwma says the Hopis are no different.

Hopi folk tales speak of ogres, fierce creatures that snatch up women and children from villages and eat them. These same tales tell us that the two war twins had to defeat these fearsome beasts.

"Today, kids are still disciplined with these stories. Throughout all of these stories, there is no traditional story, not one, amongst the ancient 60 Hopi clans and the 34 living clans today, which describe Hopis as guilty of consuming human flesh."

The Hopi have a long history of being a peaceful and disciplined people.

Turner admits that cannibalism wasn't normal, but he hypothesizes that it was quite prevalent. This aberrant behavior would have been seriously looked down upon by Hopis. How does Turner figure that pueblos were eating other pueblos, and Hopis were doing it, too?

Kuwanwisiwma says, "I can't speak for other tribes. I can only speak for Hopi. Our philosophy goes way back. It is about humility and cooperation, universal human-hood. It is about respect for the environment and reciprocity."

Simplicio concurs from Zuni, "We have a long track record of the sustainability of life, praying for ourselves and the rest of the world."

In 1884, Indian Agent John H. Bowman described the Hopi people in his annual report. "The lives of these people are as a rule uneventful; they are determined to live in peace and harmony with everybody; no one ever heard of their committing a crime or a depredation of any kind, they have no combativeness."

Hopi Agent Charles E. Burton partially agreed in his Annual Report of 1900, "When the Hostiles are let strictly alone to carry on their ancient and heathenish customs, they give no trouble."

BIA Agent, E.K. Miller, qualified "Hostile Hopis" in 1925 as individuals with "bolshevik tendencies... and a pagan persistence in putting ceremony before prosperity."

These last statements should seem racist to the modern reader. The language used is a form of institutional racism that filled every form of department of science, war, history, and government. This

racist point of view/language was shared by anthropologists, Indian agents, and historians. It was accepted.

Dr. Turner, without using abrasive racist language of the professions of yester-year, determines that if the pueblo religion wasn't heathen, then the pueblo behavior was. This form of old school historical conditioning justifies prejudices within the status quo, but is not written for an audience of Native Americans.

Simplicio complains, "These are just stories conjured and written up about us. They write about our lives and culture but it is not meant to be read by us. Who really knows what cannibalism is. No one has ever seen it."

What to do with Turner's pile of bones? Anthropologist Tim White, a colleague and proponent of Turner's cannibal idea, has come up with a forensic anthropological phenomenon he calls "pot polish."

White, a male doctor of anthropology, imagines that the bones he is looking at, received their peculiar shaping, not like glass in the ocean, but as bones, were bubbled and stirred in human flesh and greased. Thus, caused round smooth edges against the clay pots.

So "pot polish" occurred while primitive indians sat around their fire stirring their human soup, most likely, discussing the days events. If this sounds like Shakespeare, perhaps we might find motive for Turner's course of study somewhere in *Macbeth*.

Dongoske finds it outrageous that there is a lack of ideas to counter Turner and White's claims. "There are many ways that people can have their bones broken and burned in pre-history. One burial I was at around Phoenix, a little girl had been trapped under a ramada when it collapsed ablaze on top of her. You could see differential burns against her head. It is easier for the head to show burn marks than the rest of the body. By no means does it mean this meant her head was roasted."

He continues with the story about cannibals. "It seems to me if a cannibal would kill and eat, there is enough meat without having to make soup. What motivates a group of people to eat each other instead of moving away? Look at other cannibal events. The Brazilian soccer team cannibalized itself after two weeks of starvation and confinement. The Donner party after being trapped. Confinement seems to be an issue. When a point of desperation is reached, they cannibalize each other. It seems during excessive drought people would move to greener pastures far away, before they eat each other."

Hopi CPO has stated before, "Violence against Hopi is nothing new. Apachean raiders, including Navajo, Apache, Ute, Mojave, and others would terrorize whole villages, sometimes decapitating their victims."

Zuni CPO continues, "We have had historic safeguards against marauding bandits. If they behaved this outrageously, surely they would have been killed."

Hopi farmer/warriors would have to meet in defensive positions to counter attack the invaders. Sometimes, the Hopi farmers could drive off the invaders with the formidable phalanx fighting formation.

Turner also breaks from the classic anthropological explanation of warfare in the southwest. The explanation is that Northern Athabaskan raiders were historical bandits. Turner instead implicates the

cities of ancient Mexico as the roots of this savagery.

Kuwanwisiwma asserts, "As a whole, Hopi culture is not a war culture. we do not commemorate in public the glories of war. This has been instilled for a long time."

Passive resistance can describe the Hopi way. This goes with dealing with witches and sorcerers.

Anthropologists are concerned with the far-out and strange. They search for head hunters, cannibals, and other exotics. In the 1940's, there was research written on Navajo sorcery and witchcraft. Preston draws from this research by constantly grounding his story in the Navajo phrase, "place of ghosts."

The interpretation of these stories and data gathered fifty years ago is now used by modern anthropologists. The *New Yorker* refers to a 'sorcerer' who makes 'corpse powder' to commit his evil acts. These stories are popular amongst Navajos who explain the vacancy at Chaco Canyon.

CPO has never heard of any "corpse powder" used by Hopis or for Hopis. Kuwanwisiwma says that if there was a trial of an evil person, "If they were determined a witch, they were told to leave the village. Exile--expulsion was used, not mutilation and destruction of the body, as described by in *The New Yorker* and Hollywood. We deal with these things ceremonially--homes were purified in our way. I have no comment on other tribal or pueblo traditions."

Turner's research led writer Preston to unimaginatively claim "the long-sought elusive enemy of the Anasazi was, in fact, themselves."

The proof is in the pudding and there is still no human flesh to be found in human waste remains.

Simplicio questions Turner and *The New Yorker's* intent, "If these publications are talking about the pueblos, why can't they use pueblo sources? Why are they asking the Navajos about us? How can the Navajos talk for anyone but themselves?"

Kuwanwisiwma says, "The University of Utah Press has an ethical responsibility to native people before publishing a book. Turner may sell books but he is trivializing our history. *The New Yorker* has preyed on the sensationalistic emotions and mischaracterized the Hopi people. Preston talked to me for a few hours and used a few sentences I told him. I think ASU also has to held accountable for this public misrepresentation of research."

The New Yorker describes turner as "having a marvelous time... a skinny man with a potbelly and stick-like arms and legs... his skin is rough an leathery from years of outdoor work in the sun."

Kuwanwisiwma thinks about this a moment. "I like white meat, but tanned won't do. It has to be well-done."



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