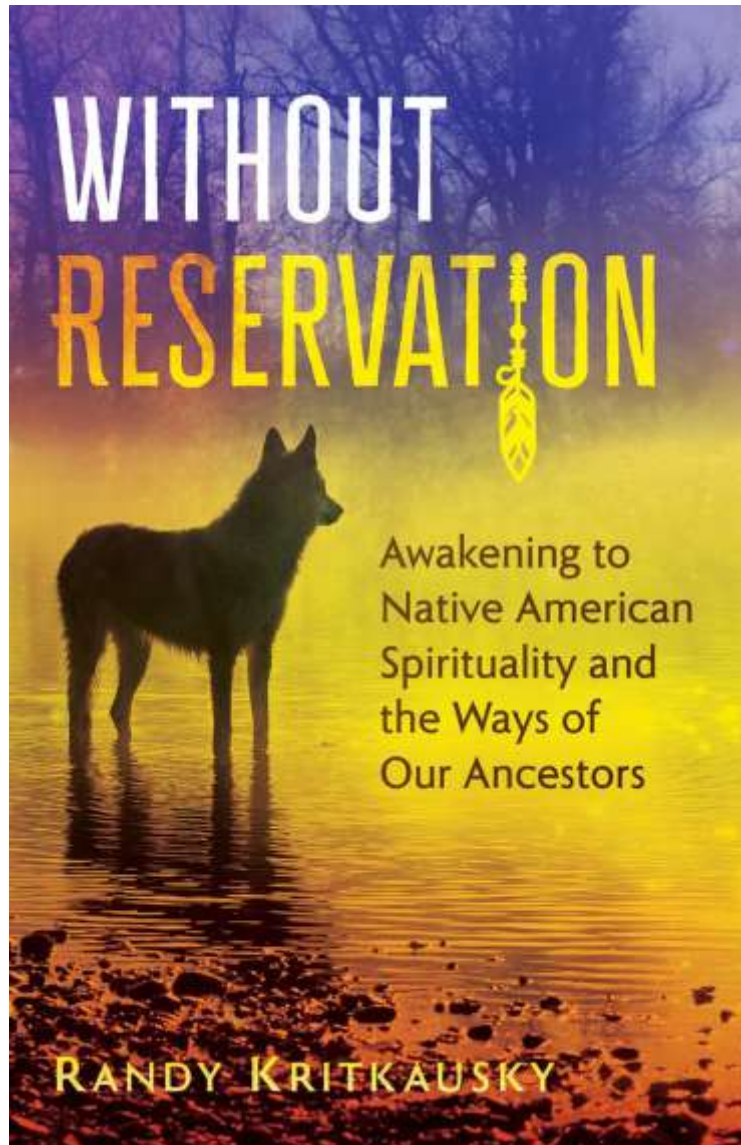


Without Reservation: Discussion with the Book's Author
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Randy Kritkausky: Greetings, or may I say Bozho in Potawatomi to those joining us for today's Indigenous Perspectives show. I'm Randy Kritkausky, an enrolled Potawatomi tribal member and the co-host of Indigenous Perspectives.

Carolyn Schmidt: And I'm Carolyn Schmidt, the other co-host. For our land acknowledgement, we recognize Vermont, where we are, as part of N'dakinna, the

unceded traditional territory of the Abenaki people who for centuries have lived on the lands now included in present day northern New England and southeastern Canada.

Randy: We also acknowledge that this is the unceded land of our other-than-human kin, the winged ones, the rooted ones, the four legged ones and the mountains and rivers who have been present on Turtle Island and have been partners and caretakers for countless millennia. They were here before any of the two-legged arrived - before the Indigenous peoples who came over the Beringian Land bridge from Asia more than 15,000 years ago, and before the European two-legged arrived more recently.

Carolyn: And now moving to more recent times than that: Randy, it's been over three years since the publication of your book, *Without Reservation: Awakening to Native American Spirituality and the Ways of our Ancestors*.¹ So listeners, in today's show we'll be exploring what Randy has learned from his readers and how the experiences he discusses in his book are of even greater relevance today. So welcome, Randy.

Randy: Thank you. Glad to be here and be talking about my book.

Carolyn: So Randy, I know you've been surprised and moved by reader's responses to your book. Can you tell us about some of them?

Randy: Yes. It's been a very slow but continual process of discovery, going from being a relatively obscure publication to something that just seems to be resonating now, not only here in Vermont, but across the nation. And in the recent months, across the face of the globe. I get email messages, letters from people in Europe who have found the book in a bookstore, found something on the cover or thumbing through the pages that resonates with them. And they write me lengthy, absolutely incredibly, deeply moving personal accounts of how they find some of the experiences and messages in the book.

And what I find most satisfying is that I wrote the book in order to give other people permission to have the kinds of experiences that I had. And I understood when I was going through the process of discovery and awakening that it can be perplexing and

¹ Randy Kritkauskay: *Without Reservation: Awakening to Native American Spirituality and the Ways of Our Ancestors*. Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company, a division of Inner Traditions International, 2020.



États de choc (States of shock)²

can leave one doubting one's own senses, or doubting the consciousness that emerges between struggling with a cognitive process that says, Is it real? Is it really happening? And a spiritual experience that is so vibrant as to be undeniable. So I'm just deeply, deeply moved and encouraged by people writing and saying they're on the same path; their journey is not complete, but they find encouragement in reading about my journey.

Carolyn: So moving on this topic some more: for you, connecting with your Native American roots has helped you to make sense of some confusing and disorienting experiences, and I think this is one thing that's resonating with other people also. So in particular, I'm thinking of your encounters with the bonsai and the butterflies in the Montreal Botanical Garden. Can you comment on those connections, and how you worked through them?

Randy: Yes. Well, we live part-time in Montreal and it is the homeland of my French Canadian ancestor. It's the other half of my hybrid Indigenous- European ancestry.

² Sculpture by André Fournelle, 1985. On the shore of Lac-Saint-Louis, Lachine, Montréal. Photo by Carolyn Schmidt.. 2019.

And we take great delight in being there and you and I often bicycle to the Botanical Garden and for years found it to be a place of great comfort, in the summer and in the winter because it's a green space. It's alive with plants when there's snow on the ground outside. So I remember when we went to the Bonsai exhibit at the museum, but we had been drawn there by the "Butterflies Go Free" exhibition, which was quite famous as a springtime event at the Garden. And we walked through the Bonsai exhibition in order to get to the Butterfly exhibition. And I remember stopping with you and looking at the Bonsai plants on the way to the Butterfly exhibition, which was just a few meters ahead of us, and suddenly being struck by the fact that here were these beautiful little miniaturized trees growing in beautiful pots of Chinese celadon.

And it suddenly struck me that these plants are on pedestals and that these plants have not touched and will never touch Mother Earth. And suddenly their beauty was flipped and it became quite a, I'd have to say horrifying experience to understand that they were literally "rootless in the botanical garden", which became a chapter title in my book. And I began to speculate on what the experience of the plants might be like. And as you and I know, in the summer when they were moved outside where they could be seen under daylight and real sunlight, not in the greenhouse environment, I once asked one of the gardeners, I said, so what do you think it's like for the plants to have their roots trimmed every year or two and their branches trimmed and reshaped by wire? Do you think it's stressful for them? And the gardener unhesitatingly said, "I don't know what it's like for the plants, but it's really stressful for us."

And that's when I realized that people who work with these plants are picking up something - kind of like what we pick up here in the forest in Vermont - some message, some feeling; it's hard to even define the vocabulary because we don't have it - but there was some connection between those plants. And then I remember pointing out to you, one of the plants had actually cracked its vessel, its beautiful celadon vessel. And I saw this as an enormous sign of hope, maybe a frustrated hope, but it was a dream of this plant to break out of its container and find a way of reconnecting with Mother Earth. So I felt like that was a lesson, not a deep spiritual revelation, but just a lesson that could be learned by mere observation of what plants were trying to do, which is their nature and what they were showing us.

Carolyn: Yes, and for me, I must say, when I learned that the Bonsai were made into their forms, which are aesthetically very beautiful, not just by trimming their limbs, but by actually digging them up and cutting back their roots - to me, actually I'm wincing as I say this, to me, it seems so incredibly wrong and invasive to the plant to cut its roots back and so to enfeeble it in this way. So the whole metaphor of - even with the roots damaged, the Bonsai reaching out, trying to claim some space and desperately trying, even if it couldn't obviously - to reach the earth and really connect, it's very moving. But it's right there. It's not anything particularly arcane or mysterious or complicated. This whole drama is right there in front of us if we see it.

Randy: And I think that was one of our more powerful and early experiences empathizing with what we think might be the consciousness of plants. In my book I actually quote a poem that a Chinese friend of ours brought to our attention, a poem that was a favorite of Chairman Mao of all people. And the poem is about a Buddhist who many, many centuries ago saw Bonsai plants and set them free, literally took them out of their containers, broke the containers because he empathized with them and felt that kind of unnatural constraint.

So here we are, to get back to my book, walking through this gateway to the exhibition where there are just hundreds of school children bussed in during their spring break to see a pavilion, inside of the Botanic Garden with a double airlock door, full of butterflies, all kinds of gorgeous, beautiful butterflies flitting about landing on their snow suits and sometimes landing on their hands. They were absolutely mystified, as were we the first times we saw this exhibition. It is truly glorious and beautiful.

But then again, on one of our subsequent visits, I happened to ask one of the guides or curators of the exhibition, "So what happens to the butterflies after this exhibition?" And very matter of factly, the person told me, "Oh, they're incinerated." I was shocked and horrified. And the reason was that these are not indigenous species. They couldn't risk having them released into the environment. They couldn't even risk having them released into the greenhouse where they might be able to reproduce. Hence the double doors airlock to get into the exhibition. So in my book I wrote a chapter - or a section, it's a bit fanciful - about a butterfly that hitches a ride on one of the children's snowsuits, lays eggs and manages to escape. And that was my imaginary understanding of what "Butterflies Go Free", the name of the exhibition, could actually mean.

And then I began to investigate the use of butterflies in such exhibitions around the world, and I found out it's really quite controversial because in a sense, these short-lived beings, creatures, our other than human kin are being used for our own aesthetic pleasure and then incinerated. It just seemed absolutely grotesque. I'm pleased to report that years later - now - the exhibition is no longer offered. I can't say why; I haven't asked the people at the Botanic Garden. I don't think it's because I wrote a chapter in my book questioning it!

I think because the chapter in my book and your reaction and my reaction represents a kind of emerging consciousness that we're seeing amongst my readers and people we talk to whereby we no longer look at nature as object there to please and serve us. We're beginning to ask, so what is the object - the other - the "it" - actually thinking? Because they are our animate kin. Once you start asking that question, it's a journey of awakening. And I think that's what my readers, and I think that's what the people we talk to, are experiencing and now reaching out to us saying, so where does this head, how do I go down this path?

Carolyn: Okay, now let's shift to discuss how this journey started for you. I'm going to ask you to read a brief quotation from the chapter titled "Before the Awakening." It's on page 35 of your book.

Randy: Okay. So this was my attempt to portray the underlying reality, not the literal physical reality as you'll listen in a moment and hear, but the subjective experience, if you wish the shock of the awakening that has transformed my life and I dare say yours as well. So here's how I tried to describe it as honestly as I could.

"Thus, when the ancestral visitors and the cousins of forest and meadow appeared, they probably knew that they needed to come not as gentle visitors, but with the gusto of intruders determined to occupy my secular rational, agnostic consciousness. They did not tap on the door dressed in nice suits and in pairs like young Mormon missionaries or Jehovah's Witnesses with their publications. No, they came with flashing lights up the driveway like a SWAT team and entered uninvited after breaking down the entrance gate, battering in the double bolted doorway, and leaving it swinging on broken hinges."

Carolyn: Certainly makes the point that you felt grabbed by forces larger than yourself. So your encounters with your non-human kin - the owls, the Coy-Wolves, the shooting star, the rainbows - these are all rooted in your experiences living in rural Vermont, including sleeping on our screened in porch, which many first time

visitors to our house have been delighted to see. To what extent can people have similar awakening experiences if they don't live in a forest?

Randy: Well, to back up to the quote that I just read, I think that many of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are presented with these opportunities and in some cases are shaken by these messages from Mother Earth or this thing called Gaia. And I think the problem isn't whether or not people can have that. It's whether or not they will allow themselves to experience, see and feel those kinds of experiences.

So to give you an example, several academics have read my book and commented to me, and they always, always approach me in the same voice tone. They whisper and they say, "Randy, I've had an experience like that, but if I ever wrote about that, I'm done for in my profession, because we're not supposed to put any credulity in that kind of spiritual experience. If we can't measure it and monitor it, then it's not considered real by our colleagues, and I don't want to be viewed as someone having hallucinations." So my response always to these people is "Have the courage to go with it." And more and more I'm finding readers writing back to me- academics - and saying, "I'm going there and it's making my life richer. And I'm beginning to re-understand in a new way my very limited rational, positivistic scientific perspective on what I thought was how nature works."

Carolyn: So people talk about a holistic understanding and it's easy to use the word glibly. I think you're talking about something that goes quite deep, trying to unify the different ways of knowing. So Randy, you frequently mentioned your image of being Alice pulled through the looking glass. You feel you're passing back and forth between different realities and the pull of different identities. I think you feel this even more frequently and powerfully now than you did three years ago. Why do you think this is?

Randy: Well, so let's back up to the image, first of all. It's literally in my book. It's a sculpture from a British garden, and it's a piece of plexiglass with a bronze statue of Alice. And she's literally halfway through the plexiglass mirror on one side, one reality, and on the other side the other reality. And as you rightfully point out, I have many times alluded to feeling on a daily basis and sometimes moment by moment basis that part of my brain is experiencing, seeing, and observing and processing through this university trained intellect of, "Gee, if it can't be measured and



The Statue of Alice Through the Looking Glass in the ground of Guildford Castle³

someone else doesn't see it, it isn't real. Am I?" And you've been very patient with me, although sometimes you've sighed and said, "Oh, Randy, not again!" when I'll say, "I just had this incredible experience and I'm asking myself, is it real?" That's the rational side of my brain.

That's the one side of the mirror that Alice is trapped in and I'm trapped in. But the other side is saying, no, no, what I just had, what I just heard, what I just saw is more real than the intellectual response I've had to what I just saw.

I'll give you an example. You and I have both now experienced this multiple times, and fortunately we've had multiple witnesses, or *[else]* incredible *[Randy mis-spoke here; he meant to say "incredulous"]* readers, listeners, might doubt it. We have this

³ Guildford Castle is in Guildford, Surrey, England. The statue is the work of Jeanne Argent 1990. Photo Taken on 9 Nov 2016; Own work by original uploader; Author: Jack1956 Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication

place in our front yard where rainbows have touched the ground five times. Once was shocking and beautiful enough. But when it happened over and over and over, and it happened in a place where we planted a garden commemorating the anniversary of my mother's death, we began to realize that Mother Earth was telling us some thing: that this place where we live is an opportunity to connect what philosophers and religious historians would call the sacred and the profane.

And at that juncture, that connection point, our rational intellects begin to ask. So is this real? Have you really - have you looked at this and scrutinized it? But the spiritual side in our souls, if you wish, is saying, oh, this is real. And in the case of the rainbows in our front yard, this is something we've had witnesses. So it's not just Randy and Carolyn hallucinating together. This is a reality that very often is not susceptible to independent verification.

Carolyn: Well, and also I'll add the rainbows only show up when something significant is going on in our lives too. So there's definitely a connection. I can vouch to that.

Carolyn: So we'll take a quick break. Be back in a minute.

Segment Two

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives, talking with Randy about his book *Without Reservation*. So Randy, picking up on what we were just discussing, a theme that runs throughout your book is the concept of living with ambiguity - whether physical hybrids Coy-Wolf or multiple heritages such as your Potawatomi, French Canadian and American suburban backgrounds. Can you explain some of your struggles with these ambiguities?

Randy: Yes. We live in a culture that likes clear and concise binary categories. I mean, it is the very quintessential fundamental assumption of Western culture. It goes back to Aristotle, and I discussed this in my book. So we try to be rational or we try to be spiritual, but we rarely try successfully to combine the two. And the most important lesson, if you wish, that I received - and again I received it with you here in Vermont, in our house - has to do with my own hybrid ambiguous status as a Native American enrolled tribal member who is also of French Canadian ancestry.

And as anyone who's seen me knows, I look more like my European ancestors than my Native American ancestors. So the opening sentence of my book is, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, Am I really an Indian after all?" And this keeps bringing me back

to the questioning that plagued me early on in my book, no longer plagues me, but wondering how I can be both without compromising either my Indigenous heritage or my university training.

And Coy-Wolf brought us the solution to that message. Because Coy-Wolf was the first neighbor, when we moved onto this piece of land, who welcomed us. It was not the two-legged, it was Coy Wolf, when we built a small cabin.

Carolyn: And more than one Coy-Wolf; they travel in groups and they sing and howl in groups....

Randy: ...packs of them at night, serenaded us before we built this house. And I remember we were watching a couple of years ago a video on Native Americans and how they managed to hold on to and revive parts of their culture.

And I remember turning to you and saying, "I'm not convinced; I'm afraid sometimes that we've lost all of it and I don't know how we can hold onto two traditions without one destroying the other." And then as if to respond to those musings and concerns, we heard - this was in winter - the Coy-Wolves around the house -

Carolyn: - really close!

Randy: Yes, I mean literally circling the house. They don't usually come that close to the house. We hear them when we sleep on the porch all year long, but they're usually a quarter of a mile away. This time they were circling around the house and I went out and verified that in the morning I could see their tracks and their scat around the house. And I felt that they were either bringing a message or maybe just showing us something about their nature.

Let me explain. Coy-Wolf is a hybrid, partly coyote, partly wolf. And this new species evolved at the beginning of the 20th century in Canada, migrated across Canada into the northeast United States, and is now omnipresent up and down the East Coast.

Carolyn: You identify with the wolves, the Coy-Wolves, migrating and wandering and reconnecting.

Randy: For sure. Absolutely. Because they migrated along the reverse path that my people - my ancestors, the Potawatomi - were forced to traverse from the upper Midwest to the Southwest - coyote country. So what I felt is that Coy-Wolf was

saying, “Randy, I, Coy-Wolf, am a hybrid. And I, Coy-Wolf am adaptable. In fact, biologists say one of the most adaptive mammals they've ever studied. I am a survivor because I am a hybrid. I did not give up and lose my coyote nature or my wolf nature. I combined the two.” And that was an important lesson for me that our-other-than-human kin literally delivered to our door.

That kind of experience is what I write about and document in my book, and it's what I think other humans, Indigenous and non, can grasp, enjoy and appreciate if they are willing to look, listen, observe, and feel comfortable enough in their own skins that they can believe that something more than just a physical event is happening before their eyes.

Carolyn: So on this question of the hybrid identity, is it fair to say that when you acknowledge your sense of multiple identities, you know you're different from the ancestors, just like the Coy-Wolf is different from the wolves or the coyotes, but you just need to be who you are?

Randy: Exactly. Exactly. I mean, there's a simultaneous sense of I'm disconnected and a simultaneous sense of I'm reconnected, but through a new 21st century pathway that still preserves some of my ancestral and Indigenous traditions and some of my European university trained traditions. And I think I've now grown comfortable in that skin. It's taken several years since the writing of the book to climb through the mirror that's in the beginning of the book and step occasionally for great lengths of time on the Indigenous side of the mirror and to inhabit that space for days or weeks at a time. And then I no longer find it perplexing or troubling to step back through the mirror and look at that Indigenous experience through the lens of university trained intellect. I can reconcile those two now, and I find it enriching.

And as I say in my book, I find it inviting to think of the infinite possibilities of one consciousness, the Indigenous consciousness, interrogating, challenging the intellectual scientific part of my consciousness. Because in the 21st century, I think it's obvious that we're not going to get out of the situation we're in the ecological crises, the social crises, if we can't allow one perspective to respectfully ask hard questions of the other and form something new that is neither a pure Indigenous perspective nor a pure Western European philosophical perspective.

Carolyn: I know you've gotten increasingly interested in the whole spirituality aspect of these different identities. We'll pick up that theme in our next segment. Stay tuned.

Segment Three

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives. And Randy, your chapter on Kateri Tekakwitha and how this Mohawk woman became a Catholic saint is some readers' favorite chapter, but for others it's their least favorite. And some have even told you they skipped that one altogether! Why do you think that this particular chapter has prompted such varying and strong reactions?

Randy: Well, you and I have had our own discussions and arguments about this person and this chapter and the lessons that it, and Kateri, offers us. I view her as another visitor, if you wish, like Coy-Wolf who brought experience before us and in a sense challenged me and then you and my readers to ask, so what is going on here? So again, for those who haven't read my book, Kateri Tekakwitha was a 17th century young Mohawk woman born in Central New York state. She ended up migrating north into Canada and lived in what was called a "praying town." It was basically established by the Catholic Church –

Carolyn: - French Jesuits –

Randy: French Jesuits as a refuge for Indigenous people who had converted to Christianity. That was an incredibly controversial thing at the time.

Carolyn: It still is.

Randy: It still is because then as now there were concerns in Indigenous communities that the Christians were taking away and subverting their traditional faith.

Well, Kateri lived smack dab in the middle of this because she ended up converting, or I would say adopting and incorporating Christian teachings into her traditional worldview. And I think she models - as does Black Elk, whom I mentioned in my book frequently - she models the kind of bold intellect and spiritual adventure that enables one to live with two feet in two different worlds and not focus on the conflict between those two worlds, but to find the common threads.

So Kateri, whose life was very, very short, ended up viewing nature as her church, if you wish. She became quite famous when she settled in what was to become

Canada. She became quite famous for going off in the woods and worshipping as a Christian by hanging small wooden crosses in the forest. It was her church. So Kateri in a sense for me, opened the doors to understanding that it is possible to embrace the two sides of the great cultural conflict that we now refer to as colonialism and forced assimilation.

And to see a resolution of this conflict and these tensions as producing something that is more than the sum of the parts. And again, this is threatening to some who would want to cling to notions of demonizing Christianity or for that matter demonizing pagan Indigenous belief. I have found it very comforting to see people like Kateri and Black Elk have the courage to explore their own personal journeys and then use those personal journeys to map a path forward for their people to resolve conflicts - cultural and spiritual - that were just swirling around them. To me, it's the epitome of what the human intellect and spirit is all about.

Carolyn: So in the process of achieving this common ground, this resolution just in their own heads of these two different very powerful spiritual traditions, what do you think they lose, if anything?

Randy: They?

Carolyn: The people like Kateri or Black Elk, because you can't have it all?

Randy: Well, actually I think they would argue quite the opposite and say that you can have it all because as one of our friends who visited here reminded us, if we go back far enough in the spiritual traditions that we find abounding on this earth, we find that they all end up tracing back to the Creator for whom we have many different words. And that if we go back that far, the teachings of the Creator, whether it's an Indigenous creation story or a Judeo-Christian creation story, the teachings are essentially the same: that the earth was put here not to serve us as an object, but was put here to allow us to thrive. But it asks of us that we live in respectful, reciprocal harmony.

And that I think is what Black Elk, Kateri, and Indigenous people have learned and are trying to convey to the mainstream: that it's not about whether your tradition is Christian or Jewish or Buddhist. It's about what we as humans are obliged to show with respect to Mother Earth. And in the end, it's about those teachings and that connection with the planet, with the creation, that brings us all together. That's not to say that there are no tensions and no conflicts in the details of theological

teachings or spiritual teachings of these different traditions. It's to say that if we want - and if we want to survive in the 21st century, but more importantly to thrive - we need to find ways of building bridges rather than putting up walls between these different traditions.

Carolyn: I think also an important point is that everyone does some picking and choosing of what aspects of their tradition or traditions they're going to foreground and going to act on most deeply. So I know one of the -actually the only chapter that your publishers just rejected for your book - was your very playful, imaginative story of Kateri Tekakwitha coming back to earth and entering a fundraising event, being run by the established church orders, by the shrine, by her birthplace. So I guess that's a story for another time, but it showed a very playful way you were able to take this image and run with it.

So we'll come back in just a minute for the final segment of Indigenous Perspectives.

Segment Four

Carolyn: Welcome back to the last segment of this show of Indigenous Perspectives, talking with Randy Kritkauskay about his book *Without Reservation*. So Randy, a key theme you developed in the book you worked on and worked through and did a diagram of for your book is the concept of living in spiral time. Can you define it, explain it, give some examples?

Randy: Yes. Modern philosophy and physics point to a kind of linear time: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And modern physics has challenged or found challenged by quantum physics, that notion of linearity to be - without getting into the details of quantum physics -

Carolyn: - thank you! -

Randy: -to be [*challenged by the fact that*] specific things that shouldn't be connected in time and place because of great distances we now know are entangled. As the physicists say, it literally blew Einstein's mind. He couldn't get his head around it for a very, very long time. So it has been and is a critical and essential component, I think, of much Indigenous consciousness that time doesn't unfold in a linear way.

And we see this in rock carvings across the face of the earth where very often petroglyphs are spirals. And modern archeologists working with astrophysicists have come to understand that those spirals actually are oriented in a fashion that they incorporate a vast amount of information about cosmological events, the eclipses and spring solstice, et cetera. So I have experienced that kind of non-linear time, apropos of earlier statements about credulity being stretched in my own life, because sitting here on the windowsill, we have my grandfather's watch.

Carolyn: This is your grandfather who was a Potawatomi, who went through the residential schools, just to clarify.

Randy: Right. And he was given this gold watch by a mysterious colleague of his as he headed off to World War I. And there's an engraving and a date inside of the watch. So it's always intrigued me, what's the story behind the dedication in the watch? So we had an elder, Potawatomi elder, visiting us once, and I was trying to explain the significance of this watch, and I was doing it in the context of listening to a Johnny Cash song about Ira Hayes who went off to World War II and became a hero. He's one of the people portrayed in this famous Rosenberg photograph of Iwo Jima and planting the *[American]* flag. Well, one of them is a Native American. And while we were talking about that and listening to the music, my grandfather's watch of its own volition began to pulse inside of this little glass dome. Now, this is not Randy's hallucination,

Carolyn: I can attest, I was there, this totally happened.

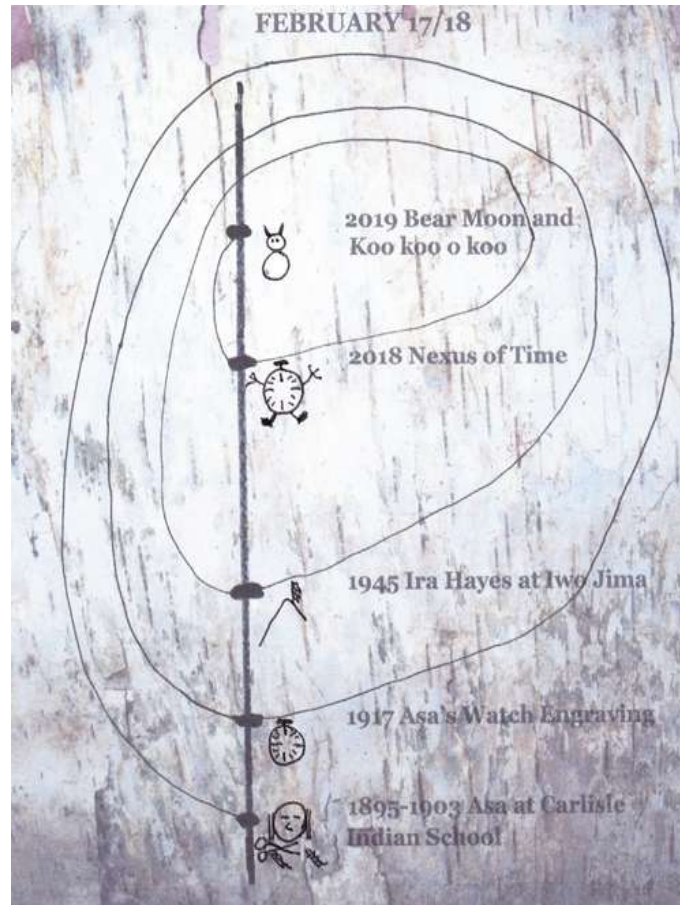
Randy: So this is an inanimate object, an unwound watch that suddenly begins to pulse.

Carolyn: And "The Ballad of Ira Hayes," the Johnny Cash song, is incredibly moving. I mean, we were all moved. The Potawatomi elder had not heard it before; she was moved. So there was a lot of emotion running around, and the watch picked it up.

Randy: So the conversation turned to the parallels between Ira Hayes's life and my grandfather's life in World War I and how Native Americans go off to wars and come back and then are basically forgotten. So the watch really went wild, and again, I'm glad there were three of us seeing it, because this is a case where you really do need verification of independent eyes.

Carolyn: And the Potawatomi elder, we were all really moved. So she started spontaneously singing to the watch in Potawatomi, and the watch got even more agitated. It was just spell binding.

Randy: So after the event and after I kind of recovered my equanimity, I opened up the watch and once again, after the elder had left, I read the inscription and I looked at the date and it just hit me up the side of the head because the date was the day of the month, not the year, that Ira Hayes and the Marines would've landed on Iwo Jima.



Spiral of Synchronicity⁴

Carolyn: Only like 30 some years later, whatever.

Randy: Correct. That would've been enough of a startling coincidence or as we were discussing here, spiral time, the past, the present, the future, all suddenly converging in a nonlinear fashion. But what was most remarkable is that the event we're

⁴ Drawn by Randy Kritkausky, 2019.

describing of an inanimate watch becoming animate happened on the same day as the date of the month in the watch.

Carolyn: Same date and month. And we had had no idea.

Randy: So this kind of circularity or spiraling connecting past, present, and future, like visitations of our other-than-human kin happens more and more frequently in our lives. Some day, I think it may be the topic of an essay or maybe even another book because it has become so dominant in my life. The takeaway from this, again, is for readers, listeners, I think we need to be open to possibilities that are way way beyond our conventional understanding of science and time.

Carolyn: So Randy, you've got about a minute for any final comments you want to make to anyone listening to this particular program.

Randy: I just want to encourage listeners, readers of the transcript, to have the courage and the self-confidence, if in only the privacy of their own personal lives, to allow themselves to have the kinds of experiences that I'm describing in my book. And if and when they're ready, to share those experiences with family members and friends and loved ones. And then if they're really courageous enough to share them with skeptical colleagues who have their own secret hidden, suppressed, latent longings to have that kind of reconnection with Mother Earth because that is the only way we are going to reconnect with the world in a fashion that is nurturing and respectful of Mother Nature.

Carolyn: And moving us forward to what we hope is a more sustainable future. So over to you, Randy.

Randy: Well, I just want to say I hope that this broadcast has given you time and space to reconnect with your roots and Mother Earth and possibly with your ancestral roots. Before your busy day distracts you from this moment, we encourage you to reach out and feel the presence of living flora and fauna, our animate kin, and perhaps even that of your ancestors and others who have walked on. Allow yourself to touch their presence, capture that moment and hold onto it.

Carolyn: And if you wish, write to Randy - he really does read what people send him, and he writes back, too! - to let him know about your experiences. Or also write with any questions or suggestions you have for these shows. Randy can be reached with his email address, randykritkausky@hushmail.com or through his author website, which is www.randykritkausky.com

Migwetch.

Randy: Migwetch –that’s thank you in Potawatomi.

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