

1491: The Untold Story of the Americas Before Columbus

EPISODE 108 – Continuance

Intro - Narrator – 00:12

We are the First Peoples of the Americas. We have been here from the beginning. Our ancestors navigated by the wind and stars... crossing vast oceans and mountain ranges, searching for new lands. Over thousands of years, our ancestors became astronomers and architects... philosophers and scientists... artists and inventors. We created distinct societies and built the vast trade systems that covered two continents. In 1492, our world was changed forever, but we did not disappear. Today, the languages and teachings of our ancestors remain, and these are the untold stories of the Americas before Columbus.

In 1491, Indigenous People were living in every part of the Americas, from the High Arctic to the southern tip of South America. There were countless Indigenous nations, each with its own distinct language and ways of life... but this didn't happen overnight. It took close to 20,000 years to build this diverse world from a very small founding population. In 1492, in another world across the Atlantic Ocean, an Italian navigator named Christopher Columbus set out in three Spanish ships in search of a faster trade route to Asia. The ships arrived on October 12th, on an island in the Bahamas inhabited by Indigenous People. Columbus did not know it at the time, but he had reached the Western Hemisphere, a vast territory inhabited by as many as 100 million people. Within 100 years of the arrival of Columbus, it's estimated that 90% of the Indigenous population had died from imported diseases and in battles protecting their territory from the newcomers. From the 16th through the 20th centuries, colonial governments orchestrated a campaign of genocide against Indigenous Peoples. Massacres, forced removal from ancestral lands, residential schools, land allotment, and the outlawing of traditional practices further eroded the social and cultural fabric of Indigenous Nations. Against all odds, there are now close to 70 million Indigenous People living in the Americas. We are the direct descendants of those resilient ancestors who survived the first 100 years of colonization. Today, the legacy of our ancestors continues through the stories, languages, material culture and heritage sites that they left behind.

Indigenous Archaeology – Dr. Rudy Reimer – 03:55

Throughout much of the history of research and archaeology, burials were dug up, artefacts were taken away and placed in museums, sometimes not even analyzed. The way it was investigated by archaeologists was very unethical. However, throughout the 1960s, '70s, all the way up into modern day, archaeologists have become more aware and much more ethical in the way they practice our discipline, and it's really shifted in the last 20 years with the growth and emergence of what we now call Indigenous archaeology. It's archaeology done for, with, and by Indigenous communities. So we're moving away from just doing strictly academic research to building partnerships and full collaborations with Indigenous communities and really giving them the power of what kind of research should be done within their territories and within their sites, and this will only grow the discipline of archaeology and have it be much more ethical than it has been in the past. I think Indigenous archaeologists are much more adept at thinking about the who of the past and the why of the past, rather than just the what of the material culture.

Dr. Joe Watkins - 5:03

I think that's one of the most important things about being an Indigenous person involved in archaeology is knowing the importance of story, the importance of the individual, and knowing how these all fit within who we are today.

Elroy White – 05:30

My name is Elroy White. I am an archaeologist of Heiltsuk descent, and I've been here for about 10 years, and I have a strong cultural background that I use whenever I conduct my own archaeological investigations and surveys or collaborate with others who have their own projects in the territory.

Narrator – 05:52

14,000 years ago, Indigenous people were fishing, harvesting sea mammals, and living year-round on a group of islands off the West Coast of Canada. The discovery of the Triquet Island village site confirms that Indigenous people have had a marine-based diet for thousands of years.

Elroy White - 06:12

Initially, my involvement with the Triquet Island project was to help field direct site inventory around Calvert Island, areas north of Calvert Island.

Dr. Rudy Reimer - 06:25

Archaeologists like time periods. They like putting dates on things. That keeps driving archaeologists to find earlier sites, and indeed, we are

Alisha Gauvreau - 06:37

So this is where we keep some of the stone tools and other lithic material that we've recovered from Triquet Island, and here on this tray are the remnants of the stone tool cache from the lowest layer at the site, and these were associated with the hearth feature that we dated to about 14,000 years ago.

Elroy White - 06:58

What we didn't know is how old it was, because no real excavation project had ever been conducted there. Triquet is a really unique site. It's on a small island located next to the ocean in a protected bay, sandy beach, and has differing elevations that start from the top, and then starts getting lower and terraced, and lower, and as you're getting lower, each layer, level, has a different age of occupation. We didn't understand why there was a continuous occupational site until we understood the sea-level history.

Dr. Rudy Reimer - 07:33

Because we have to remember, this part of the continent was covered by glaciers that were, in some parts of the landscape, two kilometres thick. A lot of the water that is required to form all that ice would've come out of the ocean, so we have this dynamic going on of fluctuating sea levels.

Elroy White - 07:51

The glaciers advance over all of B.C., and the only exposed areas were the outer island. Triquet was revealed as a 14,000-year-old continuous occupational site, suggesting they were living there spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Narrator – 08:36

The discovery of a village site on Triquet Island supports the theory that people arrived by boat a few thousand years before the melting glaciers allowed people to walk south into the Americas from Beringia. The discovery and excavation of this site was done through a collaboration of the Heiltsuk First Nation, the University of Victoria, and the Hakai Institute.

Alisha Gauvreau – 09:07

Not only are there stone tools that date to about 14,000 years ago, but there are many, many other stone tools that have been recovered from the upper layers that show that this site was not only important back then, but that it remained important for millennia, which is actually kind of rare on the coast. There are often sites that are occupied for a thousand years, or 2,000 years, or maybe just a couple hundred years, but to have 14,000 years of continuous human occupation is pretty significant. One of the really incredible components of the site at Triquet Island is that there are peat deposits. Here we have preserved wooden artefacts, which are really, really cool, because, typically, these decay pretty quickly, but here, wooden tools have been preserved for up to 7,000 years. So this is an atlatl throwing board. It's to extend the length of your arm, and you hold it back like this, and you attach your spear to that, and it gives you just incredible range and precision. So this would've been very likely used for sea mammal hunting as well.

Elroy White - 10:12

When a project is being conducted from one perspective, usually an outsider's perspective, it has its own bias, and they will take something like oral history as, like, a secondary source to help fill in some gaps. First Nation People, they feel like they should take those stories and another approach and put them together and use that collaboratively. It's based on respect, you know? The people who know more about their history are the people who live there.

Narrator - 10:48

In the Pacific Northwest, stories often tell of the great flood, of the time of creation, and even of the time when the islands had ocean on one side and glaciers on the other. The Heiltsuk have a story about the first human to live in their territory at a time when the glaciers still covered the landscape. This story has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years.

Elroy White - 11:15

There's a chief named Himasbat from the Qvuqva'aitxv, who had a very... told a very lengthier story. I think he summarized it when he told it. The first thing he saw was nothing but ice, rock, and sea, and because he was all alone, he went to sleep... and then he woke up, and then there was forest, rivers. All the landscape started to appear. Still alone, so he went to sleep, woke up, and there was people, seafood, wild... everything that we have today. What I've learned from my research is that the passing on of all this knowledge, from one generation to the other, they're finally saying that oral history just as valid as science. Our territory, the Heiltsuk territory, was the site of a refugia that's of the last ice age, and specifically, it's the Wuyalitxv people of the outside of the Heiltsuk, one of the Heiltsuk tribes.

Dr. Joe Watkins - 12:24

Now it's extremely important that Indigenous groups have the authenticity, the authority, and the right to present the history as they know it, because the more stories we can tell about the past, the easier it is for people to understand how all those stories interconnect to create a past, 'cause there is no single past. There are so many multiple pasts.

Dr. Rudy Reimer – 12:53

But we can also look at our place names and our traditions, because we do have evidence from multiple communities across the continent that our peoples, our communities, did experience dramatic changes, and if we see this in the archaeological, the physical anthropological record, bringing those lines of evidence together only gives us a better understanding of the past. Everyone has to be in line and work together to make that happen.

Alisha Gauvreau - 13:22

I think it's not only an ethical necessity, but it's also just... the people that we work with have such a wealth of information and deep connection to this landscape. They are very knowledgeable about the material types, the resources in this area. They have deep, deep knowledge of what their grandparents did, and their grandparents' grandparents did, that can help really bring these artefacts to life and help us weave together the stories, the narratives of what people were doing on this landscape for millennia, and also to better understand why people would keep going out to this very remote location. Why was it so important?

Dr. Joe Watkins - 14:04

We have all these sites that occur all across North America, and each one gives us information about what that extremely complex history of people moving into North America, and each one tells us just a different part of the story.

Indigenous Repatriation - Narrator – 14:46

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, museums and universities sent archaeologists out to excavate ancient caves, burial mounds, villages, and cities in every part of the Americas. Over the past hundred years, archeologists have uncovered thousands of ancestral remains, often without the permission of Indigenous peoples.

Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn - 15:10

Death and burial are fundamental to the human condition, and there is no place on Earth where people don't bury their dead, you know. There's no place where people, you know, somebody dies, and they just walk away from that person. They've put a great deal of ritual, they put a great deal of reverence into that final act, that final rite of passage for people.

Dr. Rudy Reimer - 15:36

Human remains in archaeology have been historically a contentious issue. Mostly, this goes back to the history of research in archaeology, where many of the excavations and discoveries of these remains, these burials, sometimes multiple individuals, was done without the consent of local First Nations communities.

Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn 0 16:00

The discussion on ethics has become very prominent in research communities. It's no longer the case where Native people were just considered a deep well of information that researchers could just dip into at their convenience. Now, Native People want some benefit from that research. They also want to know that the research is not going to create harms, and sometimes, they want to be the researchers. They want to be the ones who are collecting the data and interpreting it.

Narrator – 16:34

As the field of archaeology expanded, so did the need to store and study the ancestral remains and artefacts found in excavations. The proliferation of museums in the 19th and 20th centuries was partly the result of countless archaeological projects and the growing practice of collecting art made by Indigenous Peoples around the world.

Lucy Bell - 16:57

When museums started collecting our treasures, it was at a time of duress when cultures were changing. Christianity was really taking over, and people being sent to residential school and learning English. It was a big, big change... and museums were right there to, you know, be scooping up whatever they could. At the time, collectors, missionaries, whoever, they probably were thinking, "Oh, we should capture a bit of that before it is all gone," and there was quite a trade of human remains, museums wanting to have a bit of everything from the whole world, so there was a lot of trade of human remains, and that's how they ended up in museums all over the world.

Dr. Rudy Reimer – 17:52

This has changed in recent decades, where many of these remains have been returned back to their ancestral homelands. One of the most interesting innovations, of course, that goes along with this is the study of ancient DNA, and what's really compelling is that the DNA that's found in those ancient skeletons is matching very closely to the local communities in those territories in which they were found. This really illustrates the deep history that these different groups across the continents have those ties to their ancient territories, and really, it's indisputable. The evidence doesn't lie.

Narrator - 18:35

The Haida were one of the first Indigenous Nations to pursue the repatriation of their ancestors. Since the early 1990s, Lucy Bell and others from her Nation have succeeded in bringing home more than 500 Haida ancestors from museums around the world.

Lucy Bell - 18:55

I was an intern 21 years ago at the Royal B.C. Museum. I think that's where my passion for repatriation, for museum work started. When I was an intern, I learned about the ancestors that are in this museum and in museums all over the world, so that's the first time I'd heard about Aboriginal ancestors being stored in museums, and it just really hurt me. I just felt like I couldn't go home without doing something about it.

Narrator – 19:27

In 1992, the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association released a report that encouraged museums to return ancestors and sacred objects to Indigenous communities on a case by case basis.

Lucy Bell – 19:44

We went to the museums in B.C. that had our ancestors, and then we started to go further, further out, so Canadian museums, private institutions, universities. I think we were strategic in starting in B.C. and then going out.

Narrator - 20:03

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act is a federal law in the United States that was passed in 1990. NAGPRA provided a mechanism to repatriate ancestral remains, funerary and sacred objects to Indigenous communities.

Lucy Bell – 20:21

In the States, we brought home, I think, about 150 ancestors from the Chicago Field Museum, around 40 to 50 from the American Museum of Natural History, and then some smaller institutions throughout. NAGPRA was a whole other world for us. As Canadians, the American museums were not obligated to repatriate to us. The museum people were worried. They were already feeling the pressure. It was a tough time for them, but we were persistent, and because the law didn't affect us, nobody was obligated, but it really called on museums to be collaborative, to be working with us in friendship, and to be working with us with a mutual respect.

Narrator – 21:20

Since it was enacted, more than 30,000 individuals and hundreds of thousands of sacred objects have been repatriated to Indigenous communities.

Lucy Bell – 21:31

All of our treasures are just such an important part of who we are and who our ancestors were. I think all our treasures have that sacred aspect to them. A bentwood box, you might... that doesn't have human remains in it, but has food that you're storing to feed your family, that's sacred. So many times, we've been called up to help other Nations, and we've travelled all over Canada talking about Haida repatriation... and they took our advice and ran with it, and did their own... did it in their own way, so just sharing our stories and holding each other up. I did that for 20 years of my life and repatriated my ancestors to the best of my ability. It took over 20 years... but we did it.

Dr. Dorothy Lippert – 22:31

Repatriations can be the most rewarding thing that I do as an archaeologist, because as a Native American, it's the sense of making things right and having a connection back to those ancestors and, you know, being able to say, "I can take care of you. I can look after you, and I can see that your journey continues in the way that you wanted it to."

Indigenous Cultural Centres - Narrator – 23:29

As Indigenous Nations continue to repatriate their ancestors and sacred objects from museums, there's a growing need to build facilities to house the materials and train community members to operate them.

Lucy Bell - 23:44

When I first started the job, we held a symposium and brought 200 Aboriginal People from B.C. together and asked what their vision was for repatriation and for museums... not just our museum, but museums in the world. What... how could we better serve the Aboriginal communities?

Narrator – 24:06

U'Mista is an internationally-known cultural centre and education facility and research, art and language programs.

William Wasdan Jr. - 24:24

A lot of people come here to research and look at these masks, and from the masks, you can tell it may be just a crest, but it could tell you a whole story about a whole clan, like, just from one single mask, if you know... if you know the history and the origin stories of it.

Narrator – 24:38

One of the first successful repatriations in Canada led to the creation of two cultural centres in British Columbia to house a large collection of masks and regalia.

William Wasdan Jr - 24:49

There was a time where our culture and things were starting to be less valued, for sure, and that was a lot to do with the potlatch prohibition and a lot to do with the residential school, Christianity...

Narrator - 25:03

Between 1884 and 1951, the Indian Act in Canada made it illegal for Indigenous people to hold traditional ceremonies such as potlatches and sun dances. The penalties for breaking this law included arrest, jail, and confiscation of regalia and masks.

William Wasdan Jr. – 25:22

A lot of our people were very, very resistant against this prohibition that came down on our people.

Narrator - 25:30

In 1921, the government of Canada sent an Indian agent to shut down a potlatch on Village Island. He confiscated dozens of masks being used as part of the ceremony. 20 community members were jailed for dancing, giving speeches, and receiving gifts.

William Wasdan Jr. – 25:48

And some people were so severely punished, like, some of the people that went to Oakalla, they came home, and some people never continued after that.

Narrator – 25:59

The masks and regalia were sent to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the British Museum, and to other institutions. When the masks were repatriated in the 1970s, the Government of Canada provided funding to two Indigenous communities to build cultural centres to house the materials. The Kwagwulth Museum and the U'Mista Cultural Centre are two of the first in Canada.

William Wasdan Jr. – 26:25

When the artefacts all came back, at the time, Gloria Cranmer Webster was the big driving force of that, and I know there was a lot of the chiefs and elected chief and council here that helped move

that forward, and I think when the pieces came home, what it symbolized was that there was hope again, you know, that, you know, our people could win battles and victories in the modern world.

Lucy Bell - 26:49

We need more people in museums that are there to work on repatriation, there to work on making access easier.

Elroy White - 27:02

Museums and culture centres are important to archive the history of the First Nation People, and I would prefer to see a trained, qualified First Nations staff running one from their perspective.

Indigenous Languages - Narrator – 27:39

In 1491, there were thousands of distinct Indigenous languages. Today, there are less than 1,000 languages still spoken in North and South America. Some languages, like Quechua and Mayan, have millions of speakers. Other languages, like Tahltan and Seneca, are considered critically endangered, with less than 100 fluent speakers each.

James Crippen - 28:06

We've lost a large number of languages in a very short time. Just in a couple hundred years, there's precipitous declines in language all across the continent... less so in Central America, but even there, quite a huge number of languages have disappeared, and, in fact, the number of language deaths, as it's called, is accelerating even now, so we're just beginning to turn things around in some communities.

Tracey Herbert - 28:36

There's been a number of things that have interrupted our languages, but residential schools, and the policy around taking the Indian out of the Indian child, I think, did the most damage to our languages.

Narrator – 28:52

Residential schools operated in Canada from the late 1800s until 1996. During that time, close to 150,000 Indigenous children were taken from their families and communities and forced to attend distant boarding schools operated by churches. Children were not allowed to speak their Indigenous languages.

Tracey Herbert - 29:16

They'd be punished for speaking the language, so, you know, they could come home, and their parents would try to speak to them, and they wouldn't want to respond because there was all this shame around speaking their language. They basically took children that were speakers away from their families and separated them for a really long time and taught them that their languages were bad and they shouldn't be speaking them. There are some languages that have more speakers, but they're not being transmitted in the home, and so, I would say all Canada's languages are endangered.

Narrator – 29:57

Language programs have been developed in every province and territory in Canada to revitalize Endangered languages and teach community members how to regain fluency. Language nests and school programs, immersion camps and adult learning classes are some ways that languages are taught in Indigenous communities. The Tahltan First Nation in Northern British Columbia has created a multi-generation campaign to teach their endangered language.

[speaks Tahltan language]

Patricia Louie - 30:43

It's so awesome because the kids really started to pick up a lot of things that we were doing. They say the earlier learning years are from zero to eight, and that's why it's so important to work with them when they're young.

Angela Dennis - 30:59

If you want to take that step where you're going to have that available to babies and their families, or even toddlers and their families, it's... it paves the way to language learning.

[speaking Tahltan language]

[speaks Tahltan language]

Odelia Dennis - 31:26

Uh, my role in the classroom is to teach language, first of all, teach the beginner's level language to the students, and this is based on my experience as a second-language learner and all of the very first things I wanted to know as a second-language learner because I didn't grow up speaking the language.

Angela Dennis - 31:51

My belief is that our language is the language of the heart. This is where you speak it from, and it's a gift that's given to us from the Creator through our ancestors, and I believe it's something that we should cherish because it's part of our identity. I feel that it's a giant step that we made when we decided to make that, create the language authority, because with that in place, there's a lot of things that we can do now to revitalize our language.

Judy Thompson - 32:29

So the Tahltan language is a member of the Dene language family, and in North America, that's, like, the second biggest language family. There's approximately, say, 4,000 Tahltans all over, but in terms of speakers, we probably have, at the most, 30 fluent speakers. So right now, we have young children, you know, toddlers, babies, starting to learn the language. They're immersed in it with fluent speakers, so I'm thinking maybe we'll eventually move out of that endangered status because of that, so I feel very hopeful.

[speaking Tahltan language]

[students repeat]

Odelia Dennis – 33:09

We can hear all the sad stories about our languages becoming extinct and all of the stories of having the evening sessions, and no one will show up, and all of that, but when you're here in the classroom, it's really inspiring, and I can see that the elder fluent speakers are also really happy that this is happening. They're happy when they meet into someone at the store, and then they speak language to them, because that hasn't happened before. This is something that's really creating a new path for adult-language learners and adult-language teaching, because some of these students who are going to come out of this course are actually... it's my hope that they're going to teach adult language as well, or teach children.

[speaks Tahltan language] Isgaline esdaga ehtes. My husband cooked for me.

Lynda Edzerza - 32:22

Because this has come about, I think in, you know, probably five years, we'll have probably quite a few people that will be fluent in the language. That was my mom's dream, was young people to learn the language, and she used to say, "The only way they're going to learn is to take them and put them in a camp somewhere where that's all they have to learn, is to speak the language," and she's right, you know? She was right, because it's better to just keep hearing it over and over and over again.

Odelia Dennis - 34:53

This is something that's becoming really fulfilling for me, and my job is that we have speakers that are up-and-coming speakers of Tahltan language, and that's really inspiring to me.

Pat Edzerza - 35:09

I hear other Nations speaking their language, and that's very important. They know who they are. Like, we have our own government. We have our own language. We have our own history. I think it's very important that we revitalize our language. You know, we must know who we are.

Jodi Payne - 35:40

I think this Tahltan language revitalization is really going to bring our people together, and our youth, and it's going to grow, and once it grows and gets stronger, we get stronger as people.

Patricia Louie - 35:57

I think our language and our culture is what makes us unique. It's what makes each Nation strong.

Rocky Jackson – 36:03

It's given us hope, eh? It's given us hope of who we are as a people, you know, when you see we're trying to retain our language, retain our culture, and every day of our lives, you know, we're on the land, eh, and it's coming back, and it's a good feeling. I love it.

Narrator – 36:20

Of the more than 70 Indigenous languages in Canada, only three are considered thriving... Inuktitut, Cree, and Ojibwe.

Tracey Herbert - 36:31

Professionals will say, "Well, the other languages are, you know, going to be extinct," and what we say in response to that is that First Nations themselves will determine whether or not their languages are passed on to the next generation, and it's not for outsiders to determine whose language is valuable and whose language should be invested in. Every single language in Canada is sacred and is beautiful and needs to continue to exist.

Narrator – 37:06

In Kahnawa-ke in Eastern Canada, a group of parents wanted their children to learn about their Mohawk language, culture, and philosophy. They set up their own private Mohawk immersion school.

Wentahawi - 37:20

I was one of the first students that came to school here, so my heart and my soul is here, so it's almost like my second home. That's how we feel. It's like a big family home. My future dreams, what I'd love to see is to even have a high school, you know, that's Mohawk immersion, making our language become a first language, and I think, you know, this... that's why I feel so strong and supportive of this school.

Narrator - 37:51

The school operates with parent involvement and is not funded by the government because it does not teach the history of Canada from an English or French perspective.

Wentahawi - 38:01

It's because the way we put that out, we're not following their criteria, so we haven't been able to fit in right. We don't have English programming, we don't have French programming, we don't have Canadian history... it's completely in Kanien'keha, so we have to work on that, too.

Dale Dion - 38:16

In order to keep our language alive and... we need to develop as far as we can go. We have a whole generation of people, like, my age who don't speak the language at all, and I think that they, the government, needs to take responsibility and to make sure that we have the means and, you know, the teachers and the tools to be able to get our language back.

[speaks Mohawk language]

Dale Dion – 39:00

I really believe in our language, that it's most important, and we cannot lose it.

Tracey Herbert - 39:05

Our languages are really unifying, and they bring us together, and I think a lot of the issues that we're facing as Indigenous People in our communities are related to the fact that we've lost our languages. We need more opportunities to learn that and to fulfill our responsibilities as Indigenous people, because the languages tell us how to be on the land and how to take the land and take

care of each other, and our histories as well, so we know who we are and where we come from, and that's all really important, and we deserve to know that.

Lucy Bell - 40:02

For me, I think I wanted to do this so that my daughter and her generation wouldn't have to do this. This is difficult work, so to me, it's a freeing, freeing up for the rest of the generations to come, to do even more amazing things and not have to worry about that, that heavy burden.

Dr. Rudy Reimer - 40:26

I hope that it inspires younger people from Indigenous communities to think about archaeology, anthropology as a potential career, because there are many things that you can do, and for people like myself, I'm now getting a little older. I'd like to see some younger and emerging Indigenous archaeologists come out of various communities, not only here in British Columbia, but all across Turtle Island.

Elroy White - 40:55

It's gratifying to see the youth being very enthusiastic about embracing their culture, so the first thing I tell them is that, don't be... don't be ashamed that you're First Nation. Strengthen yourself by knowing that who you are, your Heiltsuk identity, and that we need to... for you to take on this new role, 'cause I can't be an archaeologist forever. At one point, I'd love for one of you to become an archaeologist or some kind of researcher with a strong identity of who you are.

Beau Dick – 41:36

We don't find the real history, the stories of what our people went through in history books. You won't find it there. You won't find it on the Internet, you know, but today, maybe in this new age of consciousness, I think things are coming to the surface. We're lucky in the sense that there were those who maintained this oral tradition, maintained our history, maintained our medicines, and maintained our identity. So I'm grateful myself that I have that, and it's something that I can share now.

Narrator – 42:32

The journey of Indigenous People in the Americas is preserved in the languages, stories, innovation, technology, architecture, and material culture that they left behind. We are discovering the story of our ancestors through oral histories and scientific research. As Indigenous People, we are committed to preserving the languages, traditions, and systems of governance that our a

Credits

Gerardo Guterriez

My name is Gerardo Guterriez. I am a professor of archaeology at the University of Colorado in Boulder, and I specialize in Mesoamerican archaeology. In the future, what we need to advocate is for better quality of life for the Native Americans and acknowledge everything great that they have done, because for some reason, even the European scholars tend to erase all the achievements of the Indigenous People and silence them in the narratives and the histories, and I think that needs to stop. We need to respect and return the pride to the Indigenous People.