

**EPISODE 187**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:10.6] AVH:** Alright everybody, welcome to the podcast. I hope that you already ate because today, we are talking about a topic pretty unlike anything we've talked about before on the podcast. I am speaking with Bill Schutt, he is a zoologist and bestselling author who recently wrote a book called *Cannibalism – A Perfectly Natural History* where he talks about cannibalism both in animals across all species as well as humans, across all cultures.

Now, this isn't a sensationalist book about a handful of crazy serial killers because those books already exist. This is a sociological, cultural and anthropological look at the reasons why it occurs in nature, because one thing is for sure, it does occur and relatively frequently and for a whole host of reasons.

I'll warn you, this conversation, it's fascinating at times, a little gross but nothing we can't handle, I promise. I do throw out a lot of cannibalism related puns. That's the real reason I'm warning you about the conversation that's ahead.

In our chat, Bill covers topics like cannibalism among ancestral humans as well as Neanderthals, the types of reasons that it occurs including nocturnal care, overcrowding and stress, but a number of other reasons.

We get into cases like mad cow and other diseases that are in a lot of cases a result of forced cannibalism among animals, which is yet another reason why we want to be so mindful about where we get our protein.

He talks about the term "Culture is King" and how that can explain why some cultures consider eating their dead to be a more practical, reasonable and respectful practice than say burying them and how it's all about the lens through which you look at certain behaviors and what your background is and the culture in which you grew up.

It's really fascinating and that's just the beginning. Alright, put down your fork and have a listen because we're about to have a very interesting talk that will give you lots of great conversation pieces for your next dinner party.

Here is Bill Schutt.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:02:12.4] AVH:** Alright Bill, welcome to the podcast, thanks very much for being here.

**[0:02:14.9] BS:** Well nice to be here.

**[0:02:16.0] AVH:** Awesome, I'm super excited to have you on because I think that you are a different guest, maybe than we've had before, certainly you're talking about a topic that we have never covered on the podcast before.

I really appreciate you taking the time and I'm excited to kind of get into some very different territory than we normally do.

**[0:02:33.4] BS:** My pleasure.

**[0:02:35.0] AVH:** Awesome. Before we kind of get into it, before we get into the meat of it. I have so many puns, it's going to be so bad, I just have so many puns I want to throw out but before we get into the book, tell us a bit about your background and your interest in the work that led you to writing a book about cannibalism.

**[0:02:51.4] BS:** Well, I'm trained as a zoologist, I studied vampire bats at Cornell University and for probably 20 years, that's what I did. I researched, I wrote a lot of scientific papers, I wrote book chapters and working on vampirism. At a certain point, I got the opportunity to write a book and someone wanted me to write it about vampire bats.

I wanted to expand it and write it about blood feeding creatures and I was interested because I'm an educator as well as a researcher at the American Museum of Natural History. I was

interested in presenting the material in a form that demystified what was – you know, knee jerk reaction to vampires and vampire bats and blood feeding.

You know, you have a certain thing in your head. I wanted to show that it was a lot more interesting than that and sort of take the tact of a vertebrate zoologist. My first book, *Dark Banquet* was about blood feeding creatures and so cannibalism seemed like a logical sort of next thing. Once again, I'm really intrigued with the idea of demystifying concepts like cannibalism or vampirism.

Giving them a zoologist's take and I was really lucky because I found a niche between the sensationalized material that was out there. There was plenty of it as you can imagine and there were few bits of academic work that were out there. There was really no place in the middle and I sort of moved into that and I got really lucky.

**[0:04:15.0] AVH:** Yeah, as somebody who has right a lot of that sensational stuff because I have always really been kind of interested in this. I don't have any kind of science or zoology background but I've always been really into it and as you kind of talk about in the book, I'm not –

I may think that I'm a weirdo for that reason but there's actually a lot of people who have a lot of interest in this and it's something that I think humanity in general has a lot of interest in because it can be so taboo or kind of scary to think about. I like that you're demystifying it in a way that isn't so scientific that it's exclusive to a certain set of people but it also isn't just about trying to make this kind of sexy and weird.

It's about kind of trying to talk about the facts a little bit. I like that.

**[0:04:54.6] BS:** I mean, you got to keep it entertaining as well. There are parts of the book that just don't lend themselves to big yuck. You have to be sensitive about it but I also think that you know, the best way to have an audience entertained is by not presenting your material in a dry fashion and that's what I try to do whether I'm teaching or whether I'm writing.

Try not to use a lot of terminology and jargon. That's something that I enjoy doing.

**[0:05:23.7] AVH:** Yeah, I think you did a great job of it because like I said, if I was interested, I learned a lot, I didn't feel like it was over my head but I didn't feel like you were kind of trying to turn it into a *Twilight* kind of book for people to be interested in. I think it was the perfect mix.

There is a lot of information to unpack in this book both from an animal and a human perspective and it seems like – you can correct me and weigh in on this for sure. That's why you're here but it seems like a lot of the human related cases of cannibalism are often fraught with either second hand or unreliable accounts, some of it's outright lying. It's hard to tell really how common it was in a lot of situations.

But it does seem that overall, the sort of final high level word on cannibalism from anything, from mammals to insects is that it usually occurs in cases of high stress, unnatural settings and overcrowding and the absolute lack of any other form of nourishment. Is that accurate to say?

**[0:06:23.2] BS:** Well I mean, that's what you would think and that was the party line up 'till probably 20, 30 years ago when scientists started to find that cannibalism in the animal kingdom, I'll start with that, took place for reasons that really had nothing to do with stress or lack of food and had to do with things like maternal care or as a hedge against unpredictable environmental conditions.

Or as a reproductive strategy and those were things that were really surprising to me and they made up some of the – they were the big shocks when I started to look at this book and do the research rather. Was just how common it was in the animal kingdom for reasons that didn't have to do with not enough food or cramped captive conditions.

**[0:07:05.5] AVH:** Okay, so it's not what I said isn't accurate. I mean, those cases are things that occur but it occurs for a lot of other reasons. So can you get into some of the reasons maybe and specific cases that were surprising to you?

**[0:07:18.6] BS:** Yeah, sure. I mean, cannibalism as maternal care, I thought was really interesting. You have – there were all sorts of great examples of that. There are these really interesting and not very well-known amphibians called Sicilians. I always have to sort of tell people, no, these are not Italians, nothing wrong with them.

**[0:07:40.5] AVH:** Right.

**[0:07:41.2] BS:** The small legless amphibians that are subterranean, they're burrowers and they were egg layers and they were – and some of them give birth to live young. There had been reports in the literature that the ones that hatch from eggs, for the first couple of days, they squirm around their mother and they stay in the nest and they just kind of like ride around her.

When someone looked at that a bit closer, they realized that the babies weren't just riving around their moms, they were taking pieces of her skin and peeling her like a grape and consuming the skin.

They took a look at this and they realized that unlike normal epidermis, it wasn't this dried out, dead layer, it was richly laden with fat and nutrients. This was not some type of strange abnormal behavior. This was an evolved method to feed these babies.

That blew me way you know? I thought that was one of the coolest things that I had ever run in to. Right across the board from insects that laid trophic eggs, that are never going to hatch, they're dilled out like kids meals by insects and spiders and other types of arachnids on through mammals. That it's something that you don't expect but it is quite widespread.

**[0:09:01.7] AVH:** Right, aren't there, are there cases of mothers eating their young too and is that in a lot of cases, that's a survival mechanism for the mothers?

**[0:09:11.0] BS:** Yeah, you know, a lot of times we think in terms of humans and recognition of individuals, like our children. When you're talking about a cod fish for example that lays a million eggs, that is a food source, you know, they're not looking at them anymore as individuals, we would look at raisins as individuals. These are handy and nutritious.

When they turn into larvae, they don't look anything like the parents and it's just, they're opportunistic. There's no sort of thought about what – that you're eating your own young.

**[0:09:46.7] AVH:** Right.

**[0:09:47.6] BS:** That happens quite often. A lot of times babies get eaten and those are instances where vast numbers of young are produced and there's really no thought given to the individual recognition.

**[0:09:59.5] AVH:** Right, it's like we sometimes want to apply sort of human morality to these things but that's not really applicable in this case. There was a really cool example I'd like you to talk more about. I think they were like some form of tadpole or something and some of them grew big and they grew teeth. Talk about that?

**[0:10:19.5] BS:** This I would characterize this as a hedge against unpredictable environmental conditions. I went out to New Mexico, up into the Chericawa mountains and what I found were researchers who were working on these spade foot toads and these are pretty standard looking toad but the region that I went into was really arid and any type of body of water –

You know, they said that toads lay their eggs in the ponds. I was expecting to see something that you could jet ski and in reality, these ponds were sometimes no larger than something that might be made by a Jeep peeling out and the rain entering into it.

The toads lay their eggs in these little transient ponds and if the toads go through metamorphosis so they hatch into tadpoles and then the tadpoles turn into little toadlets with legs and then finally they can crawl out and hop off and everybody's happy.

But if that water dries up before the toads develop into you know, come out into land, then everybody's dead. What the researchers have found is that once the eggs are laid and hatch, about half of them, about three days after the eggs hatch, around half of them develop just explode in size overnight. They get these huge jaws and these Jack 'O lantern type teeth and their bodies change.

What they do is they're consuming their brood mates. They are getting a – what's really taking place here is that they're putting down a lot of protein, they're eating a lot of protein and they're growing really quickly and in a sense, they're getting out of the pool quicker.

If that pond were to dry up, you're still going to have some of your broods survive. If it doesn't dry up, then the ones who are slower to develop were eating only algae well then some of them are going to live as well. I thought that was incredibly fascinating.

Something very similar happens in tiger salamanders. North America's largest terrestrial salamander.

**[0:12:26.2] AVH:** Is this like a chicken and the egg thing where half of them get big just because and because they're big and they have this different development, they can eat each other or is it that some of them start to eat each other and because of that, they develop bigger?

**[0:12:41.5] BS:** That's a great question because they're still trying to find out what the stimulus is that causes them to become cannibals and they probably has something to do with conditions where they're bumping into each other. Where that's the trigger that this is basically written in their genetic blueprint but only occurs in certain instances.

We don't really know exactly what triggers them to become cannibals, which ones for example. There's still sort of working on that question. But the salamanders, I know that they figured it out that it's pretty much the crowded conditions, when these larvae are bumping into each other.

That tactile signal is translated into some of them just becoming larger and cannibalistic.

**[0:13:28.6] AVH:** Got it, okay. We got to talk about the human perspective because I know that's what people are going to find the most interesting. I know this is a big question and I'm not talking about as we said, this sort of sensationalized, the random psychotic killers that you read about that are books written about them.

But situations like that infamous Donner party, the story that you talk about in the book and in some certain tribal ceremonial situations. Can you kind of just give us some high level overview like is this a real part of human history or not?

Was it ritualized or was it done very rarely and only under the most extreme circumstances, like what can you tell us about this? Because it seemed like even within specific circumstances in

the book, some of it, like I mentioned earlier, some of it was maybe unreliable information or we weren't really sure exactly how accurate or how far along. Just kind of try to explain it to us.

**[0:14:20.2] BS:** Sure, alright. I'll just sort of, I'll give this the shotgun approach. I guess ultimately I think that anthropologist and researchers now believe that there was less cannibalism that took place in human groups, than we might have thought 50 years ago.

This cannibalism taboo that we have, when we went and found other people, we were able to – explorers for example, were able to use that as a – if you label the group as cannibals, then you didn't have to treat them like humans. It was more or less pest control and you can flay them, you could take their land and this happened extensively for example when Columbus came over into the Caribbean.

Initially, he reported that well, these folks are pretty nice, they look like they were going to make good Christians and we're looking for gold and when they couldn't find gold, they looked for another resource.

Queen Isabella had told Columbus that as long as they're normal nice people, you got to treat them well but if they're cannibals, you could really do anything you want. When Columbus heard that, all bets are off and all of these groups that he had described earlier as these gentle people, were suddenly cannibals.

They could really do anything they wanted to them. There was this perception that grew from there that the groups that you would run into were cannibals and then some instances, undoubtedly, they were.

This sort of ties into one of the major themes of the book which was that listen, culture is king. For 2,000 years, western culture, we've been taught that cannibalism is perhaps the worst taboo that you can have.

These other cultures that did not start out listening to the ancient Greeks and the Romans Sigmund Froyd and Brothers Grim and William Shakespeare about how cannibalism was this awful thing.

They never got that memo and so they developed their own rituals concerning cannibalism. Funeral rites for example. When anthropologists met some of the groups in south America in Brazil. The native people were just as freaked out that anthropologist said yeah, well we bury our dead.

They were just as freaked out about that as the anthropologists were to learn that this group, the Wari', ate their dead. As I said, culture is king and it's what you're taught. One of the major groups of folks whose cultures –

One of the major cultures where cannibalism was more prevalent than we seen in the west, are the Chinese. They were not listening to Palmer and the Roman poets and Shakespeare and so they developed their own culture.

The thing about them is they had great – they kept great records. You see this documented very well whereas a lot of these other groups, it's tough to make the call because their history is now dust and a lot of their – if they had records, a lot of them were destroyed by the so called explorers.

**[0:17:17.6] AVH:** Right.

**[0:17:18.0] BS:** I do think it certainly takes place where at least it took place for – there was culinary cannibalism in some groups and ritual cannibalism was probably much more common than culinary cannibalism.

Certainly, a lot of it was taught into medicine and right up into Europe, how wide spread cannibalism was in Animals was the big surprise in the animal kingdom. What was the big surprise to me with humans was just how prevalent it was throughout Europe, from the middle ages through the renaissance and then right up into the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the last vestiges of it.

Just about every type of body part that you can name from ground up bone, to blood, to organs was used in all sorts of different preparations and consumed to treat all these different types of illnesses. That blew me away, considering how the western taboo was so prevalent.

I was really surprised to see that medicinal cannibalism was as widespread as it was for as long as it was.

**[0:18:19.2] AVH:** Right, it's interesting you know, that you say culture is king because it really didn't get back to other types of meat eating that we do, you know. Where we live in the world, it's culturally accepted to eat chicken and beef and we, many people here think eating, for example, insects or maybe horse.

Certain things are unacceptable, when there are millions of people around eat insects and think that eating beef is gross. It's really accurate, it's like what you kind of grow up with and what you think is normal.

Okay, one part of the book that you cover a lot that I think would be of interest to paleo people because we eat meat. Is the diseases that –really devastating diseases like mad cow, you talk about scrape, I'd like you to get into these a little bit more.

Some of these were caused by feeding animals the remains of sick animals I believe. Essentially forced cannibalism, right? Which caused a lot of problems and then there was one you mentioned kuru, just taking place in certain tribes that were consuming dead family members as a part of a mortuary tradition.

I believe folks were getting like a brain disease as a result. Can you talk us through some of these issues?

**[0:19:27.8] BS:** They're all really linked and they're sort of characterized as a sponge cephalates. In a sense, what that means is that, whatever's causing it, it turns the nervous system into – in a sense, it looks like a sponge.

You're losing large amounts of neural material, all these cells are dying and ultimately it just devastates either the animal or the person. It's progressive, these diseases like scrapie or mad cow disease or kuru are progressive and they are – there's no cure.

They are 100% fatal. They're really scary. Yeah, scientists in the 1940's and early 50's started to wonder why all of these native people that they were meeting are running across rather, or meeting I guess, in New Guinea were dying of this horrible disease.

At first I thought – one guy thought it was contact with the west and someone else thought it was poisoned wells and metals and their drinking water. But in reality, a number of scientists after years of work, figured out that it was from consuming dead loved ones and they would do this during funeral rites, instead of burying them, everything was consumed. If these people had this disease, if they were infected, then they would pass it on to whoever did the consumption.

It's a very slow disease to take hold, sometimes it takes 30, 40 years. That scared a lot of people when a tie was sort of forged between kuru and mad cow disease. Some people actually came down in Britain with a very similar type of disease from eating cows that had been fed diseased parts of other cows.

That the scary thing was that whatever this pathogen was, it jumped species really quickly. You could get it from eating an infected cow and that led to for example, a boycott of beef from the UK coming to the United states.

It was really scary. The thing about it that I found was that you know, after all of these years, we are still not sure what causes kuru. The party line and two Nobel prized winners will tell you that it's prions, there are these self-replicating proteins, the body's own proteins which is the reason why – their explanation for why the body doesn't mount an immune response against this pathogen, is that it's the body's own proteins gone awry.

And it's just multiplying and in a sense, causing these horrible degenerative neural diseases and then there is another side of the scientific community. Really bright people believe that it's caused by a virus. I honestly think that the jury is still out as far as what the causes are although the one that gets the most air play is this prion explanation. I'm not really ready to accept that.

**[0:22:30.1] AVH:** Are these still things that are coming, are we still seeing mad cow anywhere greatly through? Is that still happening?

**[0:22:39.2] BS:** Yeah, I think we're probably more aware of it than we were 20, 30 years ago when they changed the types of practices that slaughter houses that allowed this to take place. So yeah, I believe now they're scared into it because a lot of people died and there is still the fear that some people could come with this down the road. But I think, or you would hope, that the cattle industry especially is being more careful about what they do with sick animals and that they are not ground up into a protein supplement for healthy animals. That was the real problem.

**[0:23:18.8] AVH:** Yeah, I mean just another reason for people to be very mindful and educated about where their protein sources are coming from right?

**[0:23:25.9] BS:** No doubt.

**[0:23:26.8] AVH:** So you have a chapter on Neanderthals which we cannot-not talk about as a Paleo podcast and you interviewed an authority on ancient Hominids who says and again, correct me if I'm wrong here but he doesn't think as some believe that Homosapien and Neanderthals interbred because there were too different or it was so different, it was like two different species. I did a DNA testing thing like this 23 and me, and it told me that I am like 4% Neanderthal. So is that complete BS or what?

**[0:23:56.5] BS:** No, I think that according to some authorities like Ian Tattersall, there was some exchange of material. So the way he termed it there, "There was some hanky-panky going on" but it wasn't the type of interaction that would lead to hybrid, a lot of hybrids. So I guess his take on the matter is that there was probably less interaction between Neanderthals and humans on that level than we might believe.

**[0:24:29.0] AVH:** Okay and I think you said there is evidence too that Neanderthals may have practice cannibalism based on bones that were found that showed signs of certain processing,

cutting and gnawing and the fact that some of these Neanderthal bones were found processed alongside animal bones, is that right?

**[0:24:48.7] BS:** The last is the key because I mean you don't really know what there rituals were. So it might, in theory this kind of processing of bones, of human bones might have been something that had nothing to do with cannibalism. But now when you find those types of processed bones in the same place that you find the game that lived in that area then that is now is taken as evidence that cannibalism occurred. This is clearly one of the reasons why I'd mentioned earlier that overall I think we think that there was less cannibalism taking place than we might have claimed 50 years ago.

When that very important consideration was just not – we hadn't thought of that one yet. So if you saw processed bones, some smashed bones, the knee-jerk reaction was, "Well it was other humans. They were trying to get at the marrow inside it or..." Now it takes things like pot polishing. Indications that the bones were cooked and they take on a certain form after they are stirred around.

That can be detected by anthropologists, not to say that they found that for Neanderthals but the indication is that Neanderthals were probably from time to time cannibals and it would be a surprise to me if they weren't. There was not a tremendous amount of food I would think and that would have been wasteful if they either had a battle with someone and someone wound up dead and they didn't consume them afterwards. So that to me wouldn't be too bright.

**[0:26:27.9] AVH:** Right.

**[0:26:28.3] BS:** And they didn't have all the taboos that we have. When symbolic man came along then cannibalism sort of became a taboo in many cultures.

**[0:26:36.7] AVH:** Why do you think that this topic is something that we are so endlessly interested in? We mentioned earlier like it's something that humanity is both repulsed but also obsessed with and we turn it into something that is more I guess "palatable", again with the puns, but sexier. Like we love these vampire books and movies and we love monsters that eat people and we love hearing about these random psychotic people who have done these horrible

things and killed and eaten people. Why do you think it's a topic that we're just so endlessly interested in?

**[0:27:10.2] BS:** Well I think one part, one of the reasons – well first of all, I think we love to be scared and this is a culture that sort of the gorier the better. I think that started with some movies in the 1960's like Bonnie and Clyde and the Wild Bunch and then we started to see the really graphic footage coming back from Vietnam and it really became – gore became much more acceptable than it had been say in the 1950's. But you tie that to our obsession with food.

And now, you've got something that everyone is interested in. I think that those are real keys there. This whole idea that these are scary and then you tie that to food and the Christian believe that the body needs to be whole, to be resurrected and if you're being cannibalized that's not possible.

**[0:28:04.2] AVH:** But then there's the cannibal aspect of Catholicism right? Which you touched on too which I thought was even more interesting. People don't even consider that part of it.

**[0:28:12.4] BS:** No, they don't like it when you call that cannibals.

**[0:28:14.5] AVH:** You're right but I mean how much more on the nose can you get? That's as cannibalistic as it gets.

**[0:28:19.2] BS:** Yeah that's what I tried to tell people.

**[0:28:21.0] AVH:** So funny.

**[0:28:21.7] BS:** It is. To me it was endlessly interesting and for someone who started out as – you know I'm a zoologist and then to get into all of these kind of these rituals and medicinal cannibalism and the different cultures and how they dealt with their dead. It was a wild ride and then winding up going down and meeting this woman who prepared placentas for her clients, that was the topper on the whole thing.

**[0:28:50.3] AVH:** Well again that goes back to the culturist is king thing because most of us in the west think of cannibalism, we're horrified. But there are lots of people in North America that practice placenta eating because that's like a kind of cannibalism that they can accept, for whatever reason.

**[0:29:07.1] BS:** Yeah and to me, I look at it as sort of alternative medicine and I'm not sure that there are that many people who do it. I don't believe it's always –

**[0:29:14.4] AVH:** Well at least everyone has heard about it, right? Like even if people aren't doing it, everyone knows about this practice and they kind of – aren't terrified about it the way you would be with other kinds of cannibalism.

**[0:29:24.8] BS:** A lot of people are grossed out by it but I don't think people are terrified by it. It is something that is very personal for the people who believe that it does them some good and it's generally done in a way that is in my book, pretty classy. It is what it is. I've spoken to several people and really when you get down to it, there's not much chance that it does any good. If you think that you're replenishing hormones and then you cook this material, then you're denaturing those hormones which are proteins.

So I think what you're looking at here is really a placebo effect, which was very real and if it makes you feel better and you are not hurting anybody or you're not hurting yourself, then I don't really see that there is anything wrong in it.

**[0:30:08.8] AVH:** Right, I mean at the very least it is a harmless placebo effect because generally when prepared properly not considered to be a dangerous thing, right?

**[0:30:16.6] BS:** I would say.

**[0:30:17.3] AVH:** And you tried it didn't you? You thought it was pretty good?

**[0:30:19.8] BS:** Yeah, it was a pretty interesting story because I was finishing the book up. I had travelled all over and I teach so my semester had started. I wanted to talk to somebody who did this for a living and one of the researchers up at University of Buffalo gave me this woman's

name and I gave her a call and we're talking. I thought oh this is going to maybe we'll Skype or the interview will be a phone call or it's going to be an email, I'll ask her some questions.

And she said, "Well that's too bad Bill because if you come down here..." She lived in Plain O Texas, "You can eat my placenta. I just gave birth, it's in the freezer." I went – and I'm thinking to myself, "What?" and she said, "Yeah, my husband is a chef. We can prepare it anyway you want. We can make it Mexican, Tex-Mex, we can make it Italian style for you. You're half Italian." I just thought to myself, if it's 10 years from now and I have written a book about cannibalism.

And I actually had the opportunity to go down there and do this and I didn't do it that I know I'd be kicking myself in the behind. I think probably 10 minutes after the phone call I bought tickets and went down to Dallas and the rest of it just unfolded as something that you couldn't write if you were writing it in a novel.

**[0:31:26.8] AVH:** Yeah, people are going to have to buy the book to read that chapter which was really entertaining. But can you talk a little bit about some of the other medicinal practices that I guess have been used in different cultures?

**[0:31:38.3] BS:** Yeah, well my favorite it Mumiah. The fact that it was a mistranslation. There was a mistranslation of an Arabian word and when the Europeans went over and discovered mummies, the Arabs were talking about this tarry bitumen type material that they use to bind wounds. They actually used it in mummy preparation but the Europeans thought that they were talking about the medicinal benefits of mummies.

So they started to bring mummies home and grind them up and put them into preparations and make salves out of them. When in reality, the whole thing was just a mistranslation. That to me was hysterical and you can just envision that there had to be some snickering as these people, Westerners made off of these mummies and not only stole them but consumed them, yeah. So blood was used too. People would line up at executions to treat epilepsy, epileptic seizures were treated by consuming blood.

Fat was used for burns, yeah just about everything that you can think off. The Chinese for example, one of the things that they would do as a last resort when a loved one, especially an

elderly loved one, was really sick was that they would cut off a piece of their own body. Usually from their thigh or underneath their arm and they would feed it to their elders.

**[0:33:00.3] AVH:** This really happened?

**[0:33:01.5] BS:** Absolutely.

**[0:33:02.3] AVH:** And how were they removing it?

**[0:33:03.6] BS:** Probably with a knife.

**[0:33:04.7] AVH:** And no anesthetic? Like they were just cutting pieces of their body parts off.

**[0:33:09.1] BS:** I would think not. I mean they had to had Idex that you couldn't pluck out an eyeball to feed it to your relatives or actually take out a piece of your own organs to give to your sick loved one. Once again, these are people who did not get the memo that cannibalism was this taboo. This was part of their culture, so to them it was what they did. You know, Filial Piety. This idea that you respect your elders and you take care of them and if this was the party line with regard to what they believed have medicinal benefit then this is what they did.

**[0:33:41.5] AVH:** I mean that's extreme piety though. I mean even if you don't look into the morality of it, the pain and the danger that goes into it. I mean I'll just bring my grandparents some groceries, that's intense.

**[0:33:52.5] BS:** Yeah, if only.

**[0:33:53.8] AVH:** Yeah, so what has been the response been to this book so far and I'd like to know who is reading it? Like perhaps besides other researchers, scientists, weirdoes like myself who is personally interested, what's been the talk around the book?

**[0:34:07.6] BS:** You know the talk around the book has been amazing. The book came out in February and I am still doing interviews like this which says it all and the book has now sold a lot of copies and it's not geared towards scientists. So some of my scientist friends have definitely

read it but it's geared towards a general audience who has an interest in learning about science but not necessarily wading through all sorts of jargon and deep, deep scientific material boring stuff.

So it's gotten well reviewed by everybody like The New York Times – so journalistically it has gotten great reviews and then from the science fields, places like Nature and Scientific American, Discover Magazine had me write a big article on it and it just goes on and on. I've probably been interviewed a hundred times from everybody from Pamela Paul, the editor of the New York Times book review to Alice Cooper.

**[0:35:06.9] AVH:** Alice Cooper? Of course that makes sense.

**[0:35:09.6] BS:** Yeah, he's a friend of mine. He's actually a really nice guy.

**[0:35:12.4] AVH:** That's awesome, okay I want to hear that interview. Where can I find that?

**[0:35:15.8] BS:** Nights with Alice Cooper is the name of his syndicated radio show.

**[0:35:19.6] AVH:** How cool, I am totally putting that in the shownotes too.

**[0:35:22.6] BS:** He's been really a supporter, a great supporter of both of my books. That's when we first met, he read parts of *Dark Banquet* on two successive Halloween shows. Then when the Cannibal book came out of course, we sent it to him and I just saw him a couple of weeks ago and he loved it.

He said he was finishing it up and so what started out that his producer told me it was probably going to be about a 10 to 15 minute interview turned into 25, 30 minutes and we're going back and forth. Talking about our favorite horror movies and a song about cannibals that he wrote with Bernie Taupin and it was a trip.

**[0:35:57.8] AVH:** That's amazing, okay. Alright so we are getting near the end here and my last pun, I got it from one here, what's next on your plate? What are you working on right now?

**[0:36:07.2] BS:** Well what I'm working on right now is I'm writing a third book in a thriller series called *The RJ McReady Series* and it's fiction and it's basically what's been described as the Indiana Jones of Zoology and how he has these adventures with a friend of his who's a Brazilian woman in the 1940's. The first book takes place in Brazil and that's where he meets her and that's *Hell's Gate*. The second book, *The Himalayan Codex* takes place in the Himalayan Mountains.

And they have encounters with these species of creatures who people call Yetis. I'm writing the third one now which takes place in Greece. But as far as my next non-fiction, I am still working on that. I've got a proposal that I'm going to be meeting and talking about with my editor, [Inaudible 0:36:56.2] and yeah we'll see how that goes from there. But I'm not really ready to let people know what that is yet. I don't want to get scooped.

**[0:37:03.4] AVH:** Got it, okay. Well we'll keep our eyes out and I am definitely going to check out your fiction because I actually read, I generally read more fiction than non-fiction because I like the escape. I am very into anything that's described remotely Indiana Jones style, so very into that.

**[0:37:19.8] BS:** I mean I get to bring science into that as well. So a lot of the things that we talk about we can give them a tweak because it's fiction but we are using historical characters and JFK and all of the in style and all of these cool people and Alfred Hitchcock. You get to incorporate all of these people that you've thought about and sometimes admired and sometimes hated. You get to bring them into your work and that's a lot of fun.

**[0:37:45.5] AVH:** Awesome, very cool.

**[0:37:46.8] BS:** Plus, I love the 1940's.

**[0:37:48.4] AVH:** Yeah, who doesn't? What's not to love? Awesome, where can folks learn more about you and your work and get your book?

**[0:37:56.4] BS:** My book is available everywhere thankfully, so Amazon or wherever books are sold you can find. There are more still in press but if you want to find out more about me really

quickly, you can go to [billschutt.com](http://billschutt.com). I'm also on Twitter @draculea so if you just look up my name that will pop up and I've got a page on Facebook, Bill Schutt Author, so I'm pretty easy to find.

**[0:38:23.8] AVH:** Great, well Bill thank you so much for your time. Thank you for writing this book. It was incredibly entertaining and I like to be entertained and taught something at the same time. I think that this did that and I think that our listeners will find a lot of use in this book. So thank you for that and we'll keep our eyes out for the next one.

**[0:38:42.5] BS:** Well great, it was a real pleasure talking to you. I hope we get to do this again.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:38:50.0] AVH:** Alright everyone, thanks for listening. If you pick up the book and have a read for yourself which I highly recommend you do, let us know what you think. Hit us up on social media at Paleo Magazine or myself personally on Instagram @themusclemaven because you know I'm into weird stuff like this and we'd be happy to chat with you about the book.

So next week, I talk to one of the coolest most genuine people I have ever had the pleasure of chatting with on the podcast. Her name is Diane Capaldi. She is known as the Paleo Boss Lady and she started a career building tech companies. She made a ton of money but in her 20's she was diagnosed with MS and she struggled so much with her health that she became legally disabled.

Eventually, she was unable to even use her hands but she decided to educate herself and learn. She learned about Dr. Terry Walls and how to take care of your mitochondria, how to heal a toxic environment, that ranges from everything to nutrition, to stress, to movement and beyond and now, she travels the country on her Taking it to the Streets Tour.

Where she offers talks, cooking classes and empowerment through her story, her incredible story and through encouraging others to live what she calls a conscious life. So Diane is really one of those people that makes you feel grateful and inspired and makes you want to go out

and be a better person after hearing her. I can't think of a better way to spend an hour than to listen to her tell her story.

So I hope that you join us next week and make sure you're subscribed to the Paleo Magazine Radio Podcast, so you can join us and if you're enjoying the podcast, please do leave a review on iTunes so we can grow our audience and continue to keep doing what we are doing. It takes 30 seconds, you can just go to Paleo Magazine Radio on iTunes just leave a review.

Just a couple of nice words and make a big difference for us. So that's it, I hope to see you here next week. Thanks everybody.

[OUTRO]

**[0:40:36.8] AV:** Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group and is produced by We Edit Podcasts. Our show music features the song *Light It Up*, by Morgan Heritage and Jo Mersa Marley, and on behalf of everyone at Paleo Magazine, thank you for listening.

[END]