

## The Apache Dreamer

Lester Sandoval looked across his table at the Senators Restaurant in Washington D.C., and made small talk with me, a stranger, as I sat two tables away. He asked me about the tennis match playing silently on the TV screen above us but soon the talk became personal when he asked me what I did and I told him I was a consultant for the Seminoles – but without saying that I was an archaeologist. “I am Jicarilla Apache,” he said, “and I am the director of education, research, and development for the Reservation”. Without knowing my profession he surprised me with his next question: How did the Seminoles dispose of their dead? I answered in scholarly detail, and then I told him that I was an archaeologist, and that I had a great respect for Native religions.

He seized the large hamburger that had been brought to him then looked up at me, “You know I am a Mormon, but I believe in our Indian ways too. I once had a dream that I was looking at a house from above, a house that I had never seen. There was a black car parked next to it, and I knew for some reason that I had to remember that house, so I paid attention to the car since it was a marker for the house. I studied the car in detail. I ran my hand across the grill. It was real. The next day while I was walking through a neighborhood I found that house and there was the black car! It was just like my dream. I asked my psychology friend what was the meaning of that dream, and my friend said that he had studied dreams all over the world, and he understood the symbols of dreams, but that Indian dreams were different. He didn’t know those.

When I was a boy on the reservation we were very poor. We had no gas, no plumbing, no TV, only a radio, and I would dream all the time. Vivid dreams. I had little else but my dreams. The dreams would stay with me through the day. My mother believed in her children, and I went to college. I got a Bachelors Degree, then a Masters, and then a PhD in education, and now live in the everyday world. I think everyday thoughts. Those dreams are far away.”

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