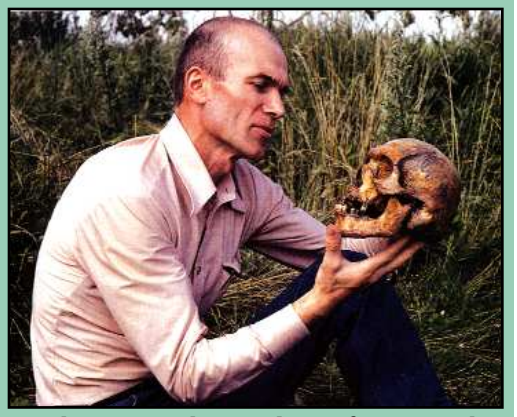
Bits & Pieces – Issue No. 36

Christopher L. Murphy

In the late 1800s it was said that an "ape-woman" lived in Abkhazia, Russia, (858 miles from Moscow). She was called Zana and some elderly people in the 1960s recalled seeing her. She was believed to have died in the 1880s or 1890s. In the 1960s and 1970s expeditions first led by Professor Boris Porshnev and later Igor Burtsev were undertaken to find her grave and examine her skull.

Although her actual grave could not be located (1971), an old grave of an unidentified woman in a grave near where Zana's son, Khwit (seen here) was buried (died 1954) was located. The woman's grave was opened and her skeleton obtained. Local archeologists studied the skeleton and determined that it did not match the description we have of Zana.

Discussions took place as to opening the grave of Khwit. This was approved and the next excavation was planned for 1975 with the support of the academic Ethnology Institute and *Around the World* magazine. This team went forward and in that year opened Khwit's grave along with some seven other old graves looking for Zana. Igor is seen below with Khwit's skull at the grave site.



Khwit was the product of a union between Zana and a local man in the village. She had five children by different men; four of whom survived into adulthood. Khwit was the youngest. All of her surviving children had descendants.

Extensive preliminary morphological examination was undertaken on Khwit's skull; opinions varied. With the advent of DNA, it was determined that Khwit was human.

In recent years Igor explored the relationship between Khwit's skull and that of the woman; he supposed she could indeed be Khwit's mother. The following is a paper he prepared on his research and other aspect of his studies.

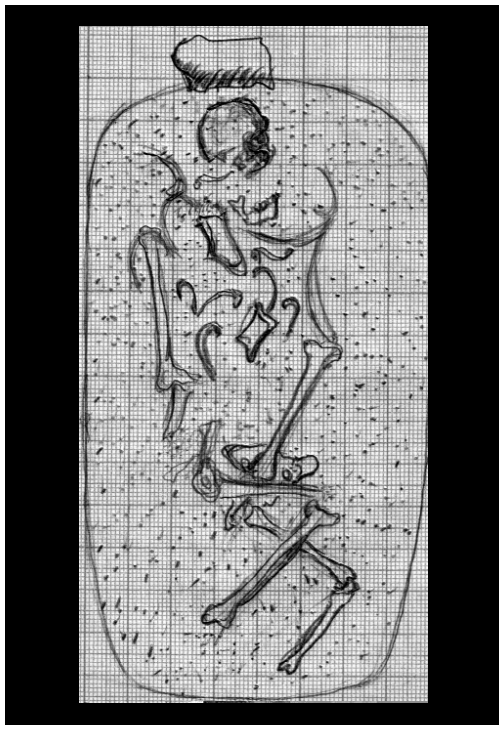
The Zana Case

by Igor Burtsev

The discussion on Bigfoot DNA sparked me to share with you some thoughts on this subject. There are some contradictions in DNA results as to Bigfoot studies by various researchers, caused by the results claimed by Dr. Melba Ketchum—and a lot of criticism of her work, directly or indirectly, from several geneticists and other scientists.

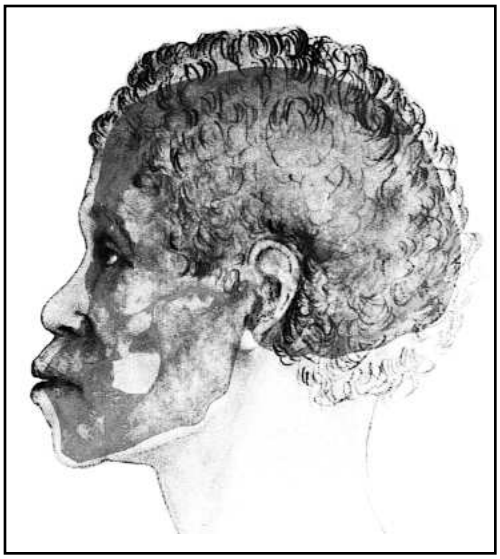
In this regard I would like to discuss just one case in which I am a personally involved—the study of two skulls connected with the Zana case as follows:

One skull (left) is of Khwit, Zana's son; and the other that of a woman from a neighboring grave—a very old and special one in comparison with other graves. The woman was laid on her side with legs bent as seen here:



A profile view of her skull is provided here:

As to the skulls' morphology, that of Khwit's was determined by anthropologists to be of Australoid kind; the woman's that of an African type. The following is a reconstruction of the latter made by a Russian anthropologist:



Two questions arose: 1) Do both skulls belong to close relatives? (If yes, the woman's skull could be that of Zana herself, Khwit's mother). 2) Were there any differences in the DNA of Khwit's skull at least to those of the local inhabitants and even of humans in general.

If the first question was answered as "yes," it would be easy to notice differences with the woman's skull, and then determine to which species she belonged.

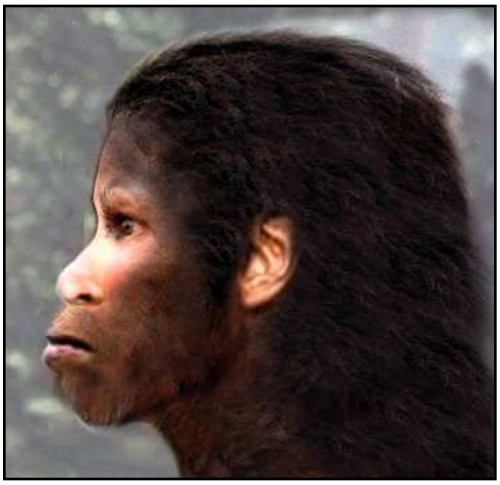
We couldn't answer these questions in the 20th Century; but due to on-going developments in genetic studies and other factors there was hope for the current century.

In the year of 2006 both of the skulls were studied by a geneticist, Dr. Todd

Disotell, and anthropologist Dr. Shara Bailey at New York University. After their study I visited them in New York. We are seen in the following photo; I am on the right.

Todd's answer to the first question was: definitely YES! Shara, however, was doubtful from the morphological view point. To the second question they both answered NO. I need to note, that Todd was studying just the mtDNA, not the nuDNA. As we now understand we need the full genome to determine the species, including the nuDNA.

In the time period between 2010 and 2012 another geneticist, Vladimir Yamshchikov, at the Southern Research Institute, Birmingham, Alabama, (seen here) examined the DNA from both skulls (I visited him there too in 2011). At least his conclusion on the first question was YES as well—the skulls belonged to close relatives. If so, I definitely believe that the woman's skull belonged to Zana herself. In this case her face could have the appearance shown here; although I don't insist on this; it's just a speculation.



In 2012 Dr. Bryan Sykes (Oxford University, England) due to financial assistance of a National Geographic TV program, studied samples from both of the skulls. His results are known to Bigfoot researchers, so I'll mention only a few points.

The samples from both of the skulls were handed to Dr. Sykes personally by the Russian researcher Dmitry Pirkulov who visited London, England.

In August 2013 Dr. Sykes visited Moscow; we (Dmitri Bayanov, Dmitry Pirkulov, Michael Tractengerts and I) met with him at the Darwin Museum. I handed to him personally another tooth from the woman's skull and some hairs from Siberia that I believe were definitely left by a Russian snowman (bigfoot) on its tracks. **At that time he rejected a close relationship between the two skulls; he stressed that several times.** Dr. Sykes ensured me that he would study the samples and inform us the results. He also promised to send us his book, which was under preparation at that time.

Dr. Sykes (right) and I are seen in the following photo discussing Khwit's skull.

About 5 years has now passed. We learned about Dr. Sykes' book from the media; some discussions resulted with him as to his conclusions. Other than that, I personally have not received anything from him—no messages, no book, no report—since our meeting in Moscow. I even don't know if he studied the samples I handed to him.

As to Dr. Sykes DNA results for the skulls covered in his book, he emphasized definitely that the skulls DID NOT BELONG TO CLOSE RELATIVES!

I am bringing this to your attention to show that there are absolute contradictions in conclusions on the not very complicated question as to whether or not the skulls were related (i.e., family relatives).

In this regard how can we trust the conclusions regarding more complicated questions, such as a definition of the species or the differences between possible Bigfoot DNA and human DNA? I also have concerns with the impartiality of the scientists whom we have to trust.

MY OWN CONCLUSIONS is that scientific analysis at this time is HIGHLY subjective; depending on the attitude of the person performing the analysis.

All I can suggest is that we wait until the science of genetics advances and becomes more transparent. At that time it is hoped that geneticists will be more capable to repeat the study of samples and be impartial while checking the results of each other to say exactly what DNA shows.

——END OF PAPER——

Igor provides a highly detailed account of Zana in Dmitri Bayanov's book *In the Footsteps of the Russian Snowman* (1996). It is a very intriguing story and if what witnesses state is correct, then Zana was indeed a very different human.

Recent inroads in DNA analysis state that facial features of an individual can be reasonably determined from his or her DNA. We have DNA in the Zana case, if the woman's skull was that of Zana, and also DNA from what we believe is sasquatch hair (submitted by Dr. Henner Fahrenbach). If our assumptions are correct then facial features would be very revealing and definitely give a boost to the new science of hominology.

Unfortunately, research of this nature is expensive and we have no funds for this sort of thing. We have to wait until National Geographic or another research organization decides to take things to the next step. Perhaps this paper will find its way to someone who can help.

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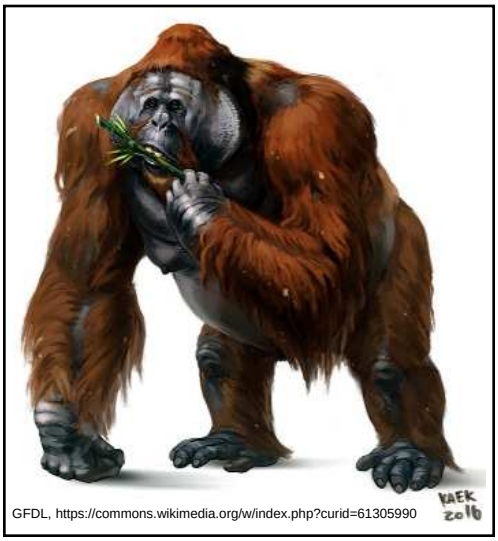
The introduction of *Gigantopithecus blacki* into the sasquatch arena was started by John Green. I don't know how he discovered the creature and made the connection; however he read a lot about the great apes and obviously "twigged." Dr. Grover Krantz was told (they were good friends) and he ran with the idea; even creating a model of a Giganto blacki skull.

Although considered highly plausible

to begin with, as we learned more about the sasquatch the connection faded. It's still there, so I wish to explore it a little.

The following image shows Bill Munns with the Giganto blacki model he created.

The Giganto blacki certainly has all the physical qualifications for a sasquatch, but I doubt it stood erect very often. Most of the time it was likely on all fours "knuckle walking" as we see in the following illustration from Wikipedia.



Wikipedia provides the following summary of the creature.

> *Gigantopithecus blacki* are believed to have stood about 3 m (9.8 ft) tall and weighed as much as 540–600 kg (1,190–1,320 lb), making the species three to four times as heavy as modern gorillas and seven to eight times as heavy as the orangutan, its closest living relative. Large males may have had an armspan of over 3.6 m (11.8 ft). The species was highly sexually dimorphic, with adult females roughly half the weight of males. Because of wide interspecies differences in the relationship between tooth and body size, some argue that it is more likely that adult male *Gigantopithecus blacki* were much smaller, at roughly 1.8–2 m (5.9–6.6 ft) in height and 180–300 kg (400–660 lb) in weight.

At this point, the speculation is that the creature migrated into North America from Asia over the Bering Strait landbridge. Those in Asia became extinct, about 100,000 years ago, but those in North America carried on and possibly evolved into what we now know as the sasquatch. This of course means that those individuals who came to North America did so prior to about 100,000 years ago.

Humans came to North America **at least** 10,000 years ago; there is proof for that date. In the last 20,000 years they had to come by boat because the Bering Strait landbridge had disappeared. There are two little island in about the middle of the Strait, which would have been used as "stepping stones."

The distance across the Strait (nearest points) is 51 miles, so not a big feat for primitive water craft, especially with convenient stop offs.

As the last Giganto blacki set foot in North America about 100,000 years ago it is unlikely any of them made the trip alongside humans when the landbridge was there.

Whatever the case, at least 500 Giganto blackies had to make it to North America in order to have a breeding population. Now, given this creature became the sasquatch, then any memory of it in Asia by humans would have been totally erased. We did not even know about its existence until 1935. As a result, when early Native people first saw it in North America they would have considered it something totally new, subsequently giving it some sort of special significance.

For certain, all of the Giganto blackies in North America up to 20,000 years ago were now totally trapped. If any attempted to return to Asia they would have needed to swim the Bering Strait—likely a tough call for a Giganto blacki or a sasquatch if you wish.

It cannot be denied that Native folklore as to sasquatch-like beings goes back a very long way; we don't even know exactly how long. As a result the Giganto blacki provides a basis for such folklore. In other words, it provides a sort of "audit trail." We don't have anything else that gives us an indication of where the sasquatch came from; it definitely had to come from somewhere unless it simply came about in North America—exclusive species sort of thing. We have not found any remnants of it in North America to date, but that does not mean such are not here.

Most scientists do not accept that the sasquatch is a type of human, although some Native people believe that it is an aboriginal human; somewhat related to Natives.

Really, all we can do with the Giganto blacki is agree to disagree, but a case can be made, albeit highly speculative.

I do have to wonder about the Australian yowie, which appears to be identical to the sasquatch. Did Giganto blacki wander to Australia as well? It appears there was reasonable passage 100,000 plus years ago.

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A major controversy erupted in 1996 over the analysis of a prehistoric skeleton found near Kennewick, Washington State, in that same year. Determined to be about 9,300 years old, scientists concluded that the skull (model seen here) was not that of a Native aboriginal; in other words it was different. This sparked speculation that people other than current aboriginals had come to North America in prehistoric times.

Native people in Washington were up-in-arms over scientific analysis of the skeleton, claiming all along that it was the remains of one of their people; they demanded that the remains be given to them for burial. This is required by law if the remains are of Native origin. A court case followed.

Dr. Grover Krantz was involved in the whole affair, and I recall reading about his frustration. Fortunately the court ruled that the Natives' claim may not be correct so analysis was allowed to continue.

DNA eventually came to the rescue (improved processes) and established that the skeleton was definitely related to Native North Americans. Just because the skull was different, did not mean anything.

Some (many/most?) Native North Americans, by the way, are of the opinion that they did not migrate to North America; they were simply "created" in this land. This is why they had no patience with scientists trying to discover where the skeleton might have genetically come from.

In my mind it is a foregone conclusion that if a sasquatch skeleton is found exactly the same thing will happen. The skull will definitely look different, but if the DNA says human and it is genetically connected to Native North Americans, scientific analysis will not be allowed. The remains will be ordered given to Native Americans for burial. The full Kennewick skeleton is shown here.

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SCIENCE

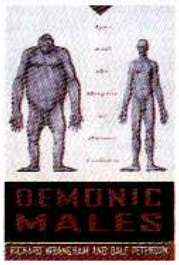
Females In Charge

The sex lives of apes raise provocative questions for humans

By JEFFREY KLUGER

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A CRIMINAL class in the animal kingdom, look no further than the higher male primate. Gorilla males coolly murder infants fathered by other males to free up nursing mothers for breeding; orangutans will resort to rape if their mating overtures are rebuffed; rival gangs of chimpanzees may wage bloody border wars to protect their turf or enlarge their harems. And the evolutionary big brother of all these creatures, the human male, has a rap sheet that's too long to contemplate.

The latest research, however, shows that in one species of great ape, the bonobo, males engage in none of this barbarism. Bonobo society is one in which behavioral limits are set, the peace is generally kept, and transgressors are quickly punished. The reason for such order is simple: among bonobos it is the females that enforce the laws. The strategies used in the bonobo world might work in our own, according to *Demonic Males* (Houghton Mifflin), a new book by anthropologist Richard Wrangham and science writer Dale Peterson.



For primatologists the bonobo did not exist at all until 1928, when researchers first noticed that the chimpanzee-like animal they had long been calling a pygmy chimp was in fact an entirely separate species. In the decades that followed, the physical differences between the newly recognized bonobo and its larger cousin were thought to be all that distinguished them. Then, in the 1970s, Japanese primatologist Takayoshi Kano began observing bonobos in the wild and noticed a key difference: in the bonobo culture, unlike the chimp or human culture, males were not the dominant gender.

"Among chimpanzees," Wrangham explains, "every female of whatever rank is subordinate to every male of whatever rank. Among bonobos males dominate only the females that rank lower than them, and females just as easily dominate lower-ranking males."

Even more striking is the way female bonobos relate to one another. While female chimps form only casual bonds, female bonobos establish lifelong relationships, spending much of their time socializing with one another and even engaging in recreational sexual activity together.

For males with an aggressive bent, such a powerful simian sisterhood spells trouble. If a sexually mature bonobo male shows a female unwanted attention, she has merely to sound a distress call to bring an avenging group of females quickly to the scene. Males that misbehave in a nonsexual setting—say, at a feeding site, where they may try to hoard a cache of fruit and prevent other troop members from approaching—are similarly intimidated or chased off. Even males that reserve their aggression solely for one another find their behavior utterly unrewarded. The whole purpose of such *mano a mano* combat is to secure breeding rights to females, but since bonobo females are powerful enough to resist even the strongest alpha male, the results of the contest mean nothing.

How such female-policed pacifism evolved is unclear, but the answer appears to lie in the food supply. Chimpanzees eat a rich man's diet of meat and ripe fruit, while gorillas can get by on an austere menu of leaves and stems. Bonobos are adapted to both types of food, and this confers an advantage. "Fruit and meat are not always easy to come by," Wrangham says, "so chimpanzee communities will split up to forage in parties of varying sizes. Leaves and stems, by contrast, are available across the jungle floor, so gorillas and other animals adapted to them can form more or less permanent groups, staying in one place and surviving on whatever's available." Such lifetime homesteading doesn't do much for naturally competitive males, but for females it provides the chance to form the kinds of alliances that bring them out from under the opposable male thumb.

For human beings the cultural lesson from this is obvious. Feminist groups have long argued that many of humanity's most persistent problems, from war to domestic abuse, stem directly from the male tendency to settle questions first by coming to blows and only later coming to terms. Nobody, or at least not many men, would advocate replacing humanity's male monopoly on power with a bonobo-like female monopoly. But the success of this lesser primate does suggest however that power sharing between the sexes may make not just political sense but evolutionary sense as well. ■

MOM KNOWS BEST: A new book describes how bonobo females keep their species' peace

54 TIME, OCTOBER 14, 1996

This article, although over 20 years old, is really quite astounding. We learn that bonobos are far different and more "civilized" that regular chimpanzees and gorillas.

Those of us who have been inclined to consider the sasquatch "human" because of its probable intelligence may have overlooked what is stated here. In other words there is a great ape (the bonobo) that appears to be far more intelligent than all other great apes.

The first use of the word "chimpanzee" was in 1738. About 191 years later (1929) it was seen that the bonobo was not an ordinary chimp; it was a different species. Of course, as the bonobo is only found right in the middle of Africa, can we blame scientists for being a little tardy? Whatever the case, the sasquatch is likely in greatest numbers right in the middle of British Columbia. It appears fewer scientists have been there than Africa. For sure BC is very difficult to access, but at least it's in North America.

Bonobos have anatomical features very close to human (more so than regular chimps), and are now considered the closest relative to humans. If we assumed the sasquatch was at the same intelligence level as the bonobo, would this be enough for it to keep itself so elusive?

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