

Authors' Response

Sir:

We would like to thank Drs. Kubiczek and Mellen for their interest in our article and greatly appreciate their contribution to the topic of the trade of human remains on the Internet. They expand on our discussions of Internet trade (including examples from the U.S. and abroad) as well as initiate discussions of remains obtained from ritualistic practices, including rituals by satanists and religious terrorists (1).

Shortly after the article appeared, Dr. Huxley received direct communication from Mr. Peter Brazaitis, M.S., currently a forensic herpetologist who retired as Curator of the Central Park Zoo in NY, U.S. In his e-mail he states, that he recently had the chance to visit a shop called, "Evolution . . . a mail order business as well as a retail business that was open to the general public. What we found was astounding. Openly for sale were human remains: jars of human teeth, boxes of ribs; bones from fingers, arms and legs, many skulls; entire skeletons of adults, children and fetal skeletons, preserved fetus. The result of the investigation was even more astounding. Under NYS law, it was legal to sell human remains, provided the price involved only handling, shipping, and storage costs (not for profit), and the seller had a NYS permit that could be acquired for a \$25 (I think that was the price, if I recall) fee, and could be issued for scientific, medical, research purposes."(2) Dr. Huxley encouraged Mr. Peter Brazaitis to submit a letter to the editor of *J.F.S.*, to which he declined.

Moreover, the alleged sale of human remains by a dealer at a leading educational institution in California has recently brought the public's and the state's attention to this issue, with the promise of

state involvement in the restructuring of the Willed Body Program within that state (3). Again, we would like to thank Drs. Kubiczek and Mellon for their correspondence, which will create an added awareness of the ethical, medical, and legal issues that underlie trade in human remains in the U.S. and abroad as well as stimulate further discussion on the regulation of human remains in the U.S.

References

1. Perlmutter D. Skandalon 2001: the religious practices of modern satanists and terrorists. *Anthropoetics* 7:2 (Fall 2001/Winter 2002), <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0702/skandalon.htm>.
2. Direct Communication by Email, Cited with permission, Peter Brazaitis, M.S., specialist in forensic herpetology, 155 Woodchuck Lane, Harwinton, CT.
3. N.A. UCLA apologizes for apparent sale of body parts, Donor families sue school. *CNN.com*, Monday, March 8, 2004 Posted: 11:00 PM EST (0400 GMT).

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