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English 181.000

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**Outline**

**Introduction**: Albert Einstein once quoted that “in the face of adversity lies opportunity,” a notable statement which applies to both one’s personal and professional life. Timothy Barrus, a twentieth century American writer, is the epitome of someone taking advantage of unfortunate circumstances. Barrus is most notorious for using his experience as a struggling author to impersonate different characters in hopes of gaining fame and recognition. His most prominent work, “The Blood Runs Like a River Through My Dreams” is a memoir describing the hardships of a Navajo Indian with an adopted son who has fetal alcohol syndrome. Although Timothy was greatly criticized for his misleading persona, Barrus makes valid points relating to the insufficient attention given to the Native American healthcare system. Through eloquent and emotional diction, Barrus utilizes his writing to not only support himself but also to convey the social, environmental, economical, and logistical shortcomings of Native American healthcare, specifically the Indian Health Services.

**Paragraph 1: General Information about Indian Health Services (Johnston and Guyon)**

1. Early federal health care for Native Americans was provided by physicians employed by the U.S. War Department; the government provided services to Indians who underwent forced removal from eastern states to Indian Territory, and treaties signed with a number of Indian nations in the mid- to late- 1800s negotiated a federal government responsibility to provide medical care in partial payment for lands ceded during the creation of reservations (Johnston)

2. IHS Program is carried out in 84 strategically located service units, using a facilities system of 51 hospitals, each with an ambulatory care department, 87 health centers, and more than 300 health stations and satellite clinics. Professional personnel assigned to the program include 500 physicians, 180 dentists, and 1,100 registered nurses. Some 435,000 American Indians, belonging to more than 250 tribes, and 53,000 Alaska Natives are eligible to participate in the Program; Indian Health Service itself employs 7,400 full-time health workers, more than half of whom are Indians and Alaska Natives (Guyon)

**Paragraph 2 Social: Modern v. Traditional Medicine (Sources: Johnston)**

**Topic Sentence:** The decision to allow Tommy to die peacefully within his community rather than in a hospital undoubtedly conveys the stark contrast between traditional Native American medicine and modern healthcare.

**Quotes**

1. “My wife was a modern Indian. She wanted Tommy Nothing Fancy to die surrounded by his family and by a medical community with its own agenda. It was the normal, modern thing to do”

2. “Hospitals were analogous to torture”

3. “We had Navajo hataalii come to the Hogan for sings. Tommy was surrounded and nurtured by his culture”

**Research (direct quotations)**

1. Framing cultural identity; intense identification with an existing, vibrant, traditional healing system in their community

2. Native American traditional medicine has become transformed into alternative practice in comparison with the dominant, federally sponsored health care system

3. When the home remedies do not suffice, people next seek a traditional healer and/or, in the case of the Navajo and others, the Native American Church or a Christian healer

4. Traditional Native American ideas of health, illness, and healing are inseparable from religion and concerns with spiritual issues; Healers also are generally regarded as spiritual or religious leaders; ideas of illness causation…may include concepts that nonnatives might categorize as either natural or supernatural

5. The healers had about an 80 percent success rate in bringing comatose patients to consciousness-a greater rate of success than would be expected under biomedical management alone

6. Potential psychological benefits for patients, the importance of placebo effect, and expected enhanced compliance with biomedical recommendations if patients do not feel their traditional beliefs are threatened

**Paragraph 3 Social Environment (Sources: Teret and Walls)**

**Topic Sentence:** Another distinct shortcoming in Native American healthcare is caused by the social environment. Native American’s attitudes and beliefs about alcohol, strongly influenced by Europeans, provide an explanation for the careless actions of the community both in reality and in Nasdijj’s hometown.

**Quotes**

1. “When you drive through Gallup, New Mexico, there's a big sign downtown that encourages Navajo to drink wine”

2. “Indians are only doing it to themselves”

3. “When I talk to my Navajo friends about how such drinking is inappropriate…they sincerely, honestly look at me as if they have no idea what I’m talking about”

**Research (Teret and Walls)**

1. Alcohol was introduced to the Native American population by European settlers, and was used to help those settlers get land and goods from the Indian population. Alcohol beverage makers and distributors continue to supply and market their products to Native American populations in amounts and manners that contribute to continuing health and safety problems.

2. Drinking for most Indians was a learning experience; Native Americans are more sensitive to alcohol; stress has been shown to increase levels of harmful drinking. When undergoing the pressure of economic difficulties and the feelings of powerlessness, individuals are likely to turn to alcohol; admiration of its mystical power

3. The age-adjusted alcohol-related death rate for Native American tribes was 5.6 times higher than for the general US population

4. Gallup, New Mexico. Once in Gallup, the wine was bottled under the name of "Garden Deluxe" and sold for about $1.zo to $1.95 per pint, with the bottler referring to his product as a "dessert wine"; "The Indian Capital of the World," and "Drunk Town, USA (I7)." Alcohol-related homicides and suicides were both three times the US rate and the county also topped the list of per capita deaths by chronic alcoholism, at 19 times the U.S. rate; the sight of people frozen dead drunk on Gallup's streets was so commonplace in the winter that weary ambulance crews and police officers dubbed them 'popsicles.'

5. Alcohol advertisements that employ the symbols of marginalized groups tend to be highly successful because ethnic minorities rarely see their own cultures represented in the media and are likely to feel as though the advertisements are a recognition and a validation of their cultures for the entire country to see.

6. On average, native youths show higher rates of drinking and drug use than most other racial or ethnic groups; Alcoholism death rates among young Native Americans (aged15 - 24) has been estimated at 3.4 deaths per 100,000 compared to a rate of only 0.3 for the overall U.S. population (Walls)

**Paragraph 4 Economical (Noren)**

**Topic Sentence:** The lack of funding appropriated to the Indian Health Services is the cause most attributable to the various limitations in Native American healthcare. The lack of funding is a major reason for the inadequate attention given to serious problems, including fetal alcohol syndrome, on reservations.

**Quotes**

1. “The fact that so many of our Indian children have this horrible affliction must be articulated”

**Research (Noren)**

1. Unlike most U.S. residents, IHS beneficiaries do not pay premiums, deductibles, or co-payments for their IHS health coverage regardless of personal or family income level

2. Unlike Medicaid and Medicare programs, the IHS is not an entitlement program; its funds are obtained through an annual appropriation by the U.S. Congress. No additional funds are available for a given year if more money is needed for health services; Expensive diagnostic and treatment services that can be delayed or denied to patients if funds are unavailable

3. Recent appropriations for the IHS have been inadequate, and this problem has been compounded by increasing Native American populations served. Between 1991 and 1995, appropriations increased only 2.5% while during the same period the IHS service population increased 10.7%

**Paragraph 5 Logistical (Noren and Boyum)**

**Topic Sentence:** Finally, administration and management complications of the Indian Health Services hinder the organization of many healthcare programs. Therefore, doctors and workers may become helpless in the face of adversity.

**Quotes**

1. “The doctor at the Indian Health Services said it was nothing”

2. “Tribal social-work agencies are overwhelmed with children who have FAS”

3. “They seemed helpless in the face of the damage that had been done”

4. “Perhaps they didn't know. The diagnosis would come later”

**Research (Noren and Boyum)**

1. Recruitment and retention of professional staff. Clinical staff who remain for any length of time are typically "promoted" to administrative roles, which usually results in reduction or loss of their clinical services and inexperienced administrative leadership. Furthermore, the remote location of most Native American health services increases the recruitment problems.

2. Cultural issues. Concerns about staff morale, poor customer relations, and problems with conflict resolution among staff. Most clinical staff have little interaction with the population they serve outside of their professional capacities; conflicts between Native and non-Native staff,

3.Snyder Act's implied "member of a federally recognized tribe" definition, the IHS will still be excluding approximately a half million Indians who are not federally recognized as "Indian" by the United States government (Boyum)

**Conclusion**

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