

## A Sermon on Zombies

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for October 23rd, 2022 (and beyond)

I believe even the most fantastical and imaginative stories are inspired by actual events even if evidently or arguably exaggerated when compared. Here are a few of the actual events I believe inspire all stories about zombies regardless of medium (film, literature, etc) to some degree:

Lazarus: Was he really dead or was medical science so rudimentary or faith-based at the time that he was just unconscious and when he regained consciousness everyone thought it a miracle? Do you count this as a real life event or believe it may have been based on one? The same questions apply to Jesus.

Drug Abuse, Intoxication, and/or Fever In The Headlines (Sources Cited):

“Zombie drugs? Florida man stabs couple, eats dead man's face in 'random' attack”  
Source: [https://www.syracuse.com/us-news/2016/08/florida\\_zombie\\_attack\\_austin\\_harrouff\\_flakka.html](https://www.syracuse.com/us-news/2016/08/florida_zombie_attack_austin_harrouff_flakka.html)

“Oklahoma man admits to killing neighbor, eating her heart: report... Anderson, who has a history of drug addiction and violence crime, told a judge in 2017 he took bipolar medication.” Source: <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/ny-20210224-3kn3s437icfcavf7hcqcozliexm-story.html> Would you consider that more akin to something a werewolf would do than a zombie?

“Suspect Charged With Killing and Eating Neighbor to 'Cure His Brain'” Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/suspect-charged-killing-eating-neighbor-cure-his-brain-1661396>

“Maryland man charged with killing, eating man's brain, heart...” Source: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/harford/bs-md-ha-dismemberment-follow-20120531-story.html> Was he on drugs or just in a cult? Read the article and find out. Did he have a fever?

“When James Jameson Bought A Girl Just To Watch Her Be Eaten By Cannibals... Varying accounts exist of the incident, from Jameson’s diary, his wife, and a translator on the trip, but what they all agree on is that by June 1888, Jameson was in command of the rear column of the expedition at Ribakiba, a trading post deep in the Congo known for its cannibal population....In James Jameson’s own diary he then wrote, “Three men then ran forward, and began to cut up the body of the girl; finally her head was cut off, and not a particle remained, each man taking his piece away down the river to wash it... Likely, the account of his crime is true, but James Jameson never faced justice. He died shortly after the accusations of his misconduct made their way to Stanley in 1888 from a fever he had contracted.” Source: <https://allthatsinteresting.com/james-jameson-cannibal>

“Thousands of People Mistakenly Declared Dead Every Year... But the News4 I-Team obtained a 2019 Social Security Advisory report that said while the number of erroneous deaths corrected by the agency has decreased, 7,000 to 12,000 people are still mistakenly declared dead each year.” Source: <https://www.nbcwashington.com/investigations/thousands-of-people-mistakenly-declared-dead-every-year/3009132/>

“Lawsuit over man wrongly pronounced dead gets national attention... The lawsuit brought by a Rochester-area woman, claiming her husband was wrongly declared dead at a Buffalo-region hospital, is garnering national media attention.” Source: <https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2018/02/16/michael-cleveland-tammy-cleveland-wrongly-pronounced-dead-degraff-hospital-rochester-buffalo-c/336915002/>

“Alice Blunden was buried alive....As the story goes, she was so knocked out after having imbibed a large quantity of poppy tea that a doctor holding a mirror to her nose and mouth pronounced her dead. (Tea made from dried, unwashed seed pods would have contained morphine and codeine, which are sedatives.) Her family quickly made arrangements for her burial, but two days after she was laid in the ground, children playing near her grave heard noises. Their schoolmaster went to check the gravesite for himself. He found that Blunden was still alive, but it took another day to exhume her. She was so close to death that she was returned to her grave, where a guard stood by before deserting his post. The next morning, she was found dead, but only after struggling to free herself once more.” <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/sponsored/people-feared-being-buried-alive-so-much-they-invented-these-special-safety-coffins-180970627/#:~:text=Alice%20Blunden%20was%20buried%20alive> .

All of the above is evidently true and reportedly true. If creative at all, could you write a screenplay or novel about zombies just with the above snippets and headlines? Would said story be scary because it is familiar and discomfoting at the same time? Would you relate the scary to those headlines and demonize everyone that was ever intoxicated on any substance even once and/or anyone with a fever becoming prejudiced against both seeking some form of containment like hospitals, prisons, or in the least quarantined?

How much does fear play a role in how you treat others and do you think threatening those who scare you will exacerbate, perpetuate, or alleviate fear? Did you know humor is the best way to alleviate fear and deescalate? Sources: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456> and <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11506052/>

Technically, this sermon is more appropriate for next week and I know that. But, there is no reason not to prepare for it early. And, COPE holidays are optionally perpetual, including Halloween. Happy Halloween!

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>