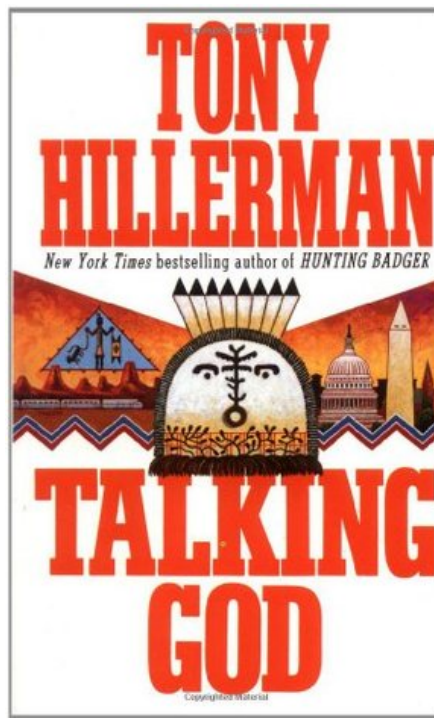




Talking God

Tony Hillerman

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A grave robber and a corpse reunite Navajo Tribal Police Lt. Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee. As Leaphorn seeks the identify of a murder victim, Chee is arresting Smithsonian conservator Henry Highhawk for ransacking the sacred bones of his ancestors. As the layers of each case are peeled away, it becomes shockingly clear that they are connected, that there are mysterious others pursuing Highhawk, and that Leaphorn and Chee have entered into the dangerous arena of superstition, ancient ceremony, and living gods.

Talking God Details

Date : Published December 1st 1990 by HarperTorch (first published 1989)

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Author : Tony Hillerman

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime

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From Reader Review Talking God for online ebook

Hana says

Three and a half stars, rounded up because it had dioramas and the Smithsonian in it. My favorite museum growing up in New York was the Metropolitan Museum of Natural History with its amazing dioramas.

Here a MMNH curator touches up the all-time best hunting wolf diorama.

Until reading Tony Hillerman's Talking God I did not realize that the Smithsonian once had dioramas of Native American life. These Victorian installations came to be frowned on as disrespectful and have been removed but they must have been quite something to see and one such diorama figures in a dramatic scene with Tribal Police Officer Jim Chee and Lt. Joe Leaphorn.

Museum politics and controversies surrounding Native American studies was part of the twisty plot. So was Yeibachai, the great Talking God of the Navajo night chant. These are photographs of the Night ceremony taken by Edward Curtis in 1904. I think the figure on the far right is wearing the Talking God mask.

Another part of the Yeibachai ceremony (it goes on all night).

It is all fascinating and I'm growing quite fond of both Chee and Leaphorn.

Content rating G: A clean read.

Meredith says

[She's suffered a stroke and has t

astaliegurec says

I was surprised by how good Tony Hillerman's "Talking God" is (9th in his "Leaphorn & Chee" novels). Once he moved the venue to Washington D.C., I figured the book would lose a lot of its luster (just as "The Ghostway" did with Los Angeles). Surprisingly, it did not. I suppose it's because Hillerman focuses on just a few areas of D.C. instead of wandering through it as he did in L.A.. And, of course, having both Leaphorn and Chee pulling on their own ends of the elephant until they meet in the middle is highly interesting. A

really well done book. I rate it at an Excellent 5 stars out of 5.

Hillerman's "Leaphorn & Chee" novels are:

1. The Blessing Way
 2. Dance Hall of the Dead
 3. Listening Woman
 4. People of Darkness
 5. The Dark Wind
 6. The Ghostway (Jim Chee Novels)
 7. Skinwalkers
 8. A Thief of Time
 9. Talking God
 10. Coyote Waits
 11. Sacred Clowns: Novel, A
 12. The Fallen Man
 13. The First Eagle
 14. Hunting Badger
 15. The Wailing Wind
 16. The Sinister Pig
 17. Skeleton Man
 18. The Shape Shifter
-

Russ says

It's been awhile since I have read anything by Tony Hillerman, so it took me awhile to become familiar with his main characters. If you want to know anything about Native American tradition and culture, I highly recommend this series.

Chris says

This is not one of my favorites of the series. Other than Leaphorn & Chee, I didn't really care about the others characters. The mystery didn't grab me and I felt it drag in many places. I found myself more worried about the appropriate care of Fleck's mother than anything else!

Ευθυμ?α Δεσποτ?κη says

Εξ?σου καλ? με το Ο κλ?φτης του χρ?νου, ο Ομιλ?ν Θε?ς μπλ?κει στα π?δια του Πινοσ?τ, κ?νοντας ανατριχιαστικ? χρ?ση μιας ανατριχιαστικ?ς χουντικ?ς -ου μην αλλ? και ?λων των υπολο?πων απολυταρχικ?ν καθεστ?των- συν?θειας: των βασανιστηρ?ων.

Οι χαρακτ?ρες εξακολουθο?ν να ε?ναι ενδιαφ?ροντες και καλογραμμ?νοι και τα διλ?μματ? τους αληθιν?. ?να ξεκο?ραστο, αν και ?χι και τ?σο ελαφρ? αν?γνωσμα.

Betty says

Joe Leaphorn is called out to look at corpse found near railroad. The question who he is and how it place aroused he curiosity. The answer takes him to Washington, DC. Jim Chee has an arrest warrant Henry Nighthawk. He learns that Nighthawk will be at an Yeibichai (Talking God). Jim arrest Henry who is immediately bailed out. Jim Chee has vacation coming and goes the nation capitol. He meets Joe Leaphorn there and cases are brought together skillfully. The ending is unusual. The data on the Navajo culture is informative.

Alonzo Church says

This is a good one — Hillerman writes a novel that takes his two Navajo detectives out of their typical surroundings and, in so doing, is seemingly writing his mystery without one of his greatest tools — his knowledge and love of the four corners region. It doesn't matter. He's got a good plot in this one and the way his detectives get tangled in it shows a subtle writer at work. (He seems to be making a political point in this one — but he does it very quietly, and I'm not sure many readers will especially notice it.) Detective Chee's poor romantic decisions are not featured here, and that is a definite plus

Holly says

Set in Washington DC, New Mexico and Arizona, "Talking God" opens with several plot lines - a dead man found near the railroad tracks outside Gallup, NM, conflict at the Museum of Natural History regarding Navajo skeletons, and the Yeibichai, the Night Chant ceremonial. Navajo Tribal Police Lt Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee work separately on these events, eventually finding connections and overlap.

Hillerman clearly had great respect for the Navajo. It was fascinating to learn about this culture although somewhat unsettling to read from a white man's perspective.

Why are we drawn to books set where we live?

Sara Tuschnet says

Hillerman's books are getting better. Sometimes he loses me in the story, but I think a lot of that is because I am listening to them on audiobooks. The narrator changes from book to book. Hillerman even reads a few of them himself.

Carmen says

"What brings you off the reservation on such an inclement Saturday evening?"

What, indeed? Old friend, I am running from Emma's ghost, Leaphorn thought. I am running from my own loneliness. I am running away from craziness.

Another solid entry in Hillerman's Navajo Mystery series.

Leaphorn and Chee go to Washington (separately) only to find out - once again - that they are working the same case from two different angles.

This book involves terrorists, Augusto Pinochet, a man who is 1/4 Navajo and 3/4 white who is angry at white people, and an interesting hired killer.

...

Leaphorn and Chee are still not what I would call friends. They never talk to each other. They never communicate. Hillerman always is putting them in these situations where they are working on the same case but never find out until about 2/3 into the book.

I don't know. Starting this "Leaphorn and Chee" series, I thought it was going to be like Spenser and Hawk. Two friends, old friends, taking down evil, being mensches on a daily basis, etc. etc. With this series, it's book NINE and these two still aren't close. I'm rather disappointed. I love strong friendships.

...

Let's talk about someone else who is taking a long time... MARY LANDON. She and Chee have been "breaking up" for about three or four books now. JUST GO AWAY! Go away, Mary Landon! Nobody wants to see or talk to you or hear from you EVER AGAIN. Stop hurting Jim, and leave him the fuck alone.

"Dearest Jim," it began. From that excellent beginning, it went downhill fast.

STOP writing him letters! How is he ever going to get over you if you keep forcing these wounds open all the time!?

"I wish I hadn't told you in a letter. That's all. That was cruel. I just didn't think. Or, I did think. I thought it would hurt you too much to see you like that, and I would be all confused about it again. But I should have told you in person."

UGH. SHUT UP AND GO AWAY. It's as if she enjoys ripping his heart out again and again.

Meanwhile, what is going on with Chee and Janet?

"I think something's going on," Chee said. "And I think we should go somewhere quiet, and eat dinner and talk it over." He glanced at her. "Maybe even hold hands. I could use a little handholding."

Chee is being adorable and Janet is still dating her asshole professor. He's completely using her and I hate him. He's got this daddy/mentor/professor/lover vibe going that creeps me the hell out. EW.

Chee is being SO respectful and patient. He's just like, "You know I'm here for you whenever you need me, Janet." And he's zero pressure, and he's so good. Extra points. He jokes about it a little to his friend:

"She's not my girlfriend," Chee said.

Dashee put on his skeptical expression.

"I'm her confidant," Chee said. "The shoulder upon which she weeps."

LOL But seriously, I love how respectful he is of Janet. Even though it's obvious to me that she should dump that piece of shit and start dating Chee IMMEDIATELY.

...

Leaphorn is his usually grumpy self. He's like an old man. (I'm kind of joking, he's not really old, but definitely older than 50.)

Leaphorn glanced at his watch. Time for the news. He walked into the living room, turned on the television, flicked it to channel seven, turned off the sound to avoid the hysterical screaming of the Frontier Ford commercial, then turned it up to hear the newscast.

This is the cuteness. Just like a cute older man. Those darn Ford commercials! So loud! Get off my lawn! LOL He's so grumpy. :D

...

Tl;dr - How do terrorists, Augusto Pinochet, and a very interesting hired killer tie together in Washington D.C.? Leaphorn and Chee are on the case!

kostas vamvoukakis says

Άλλο ένα πρωτότυπο αστυνομικό με ινδιάνους.... καλή ιστορία... όχι τόσο δυνατή η πλοκή και η λύση? πώς ήταν στο άλλο που χει μεταφράστε.... αν το βρείτε μην το χέσετε

Jay says

[South American political factions harming each other in the US, with an interesting sidestory regarding Amtrak operations (hide spoiler)]

Elizabeth says

This is a unique mystery in that the voices of the different characters are all brought to life so well. In some mystery books the author is so focused on the mystery that they forget to add that touch of personality to their characters, and voice really is a defining part of a character when you are reading. There are few things more rewarding than reading a good mystery novel and part of being able to do this is keeping characters separate in your mind. The best way to do this if you have a good author is to find something that defines that character to associate with them when reading. In this case the author has given each character such a defined individualized voice that it is easy to distinguish one from another simply from the way that they "speak".

In this book the author pays attention to not only the voice of the main character, but also the supporting characters as well. There are passages that illustrate and remind the reader that the main character is a Navajo and that means that there is a specific manner of talking and vocabulary that goes along with having that ancestry. One of the ways the author does this is through use of Navajo vocabulary. Words such as "bellagaana" which means someone other than Navajo, Hopi, or another Native American group, and "yeibichai" which is a specific ceremony help to reinforce that the character is likely not of the same race as

the reader. There was never any doubt as to the meanings of the Navajo words since the author took the time to either explain it explicitly or to build in the context clues around the word to ensure understanding. Then there are the passages that illustrate how much attention to detail the author has in terms of the supporting characters. To put as much effort into the manner of speech of a supporting character just to ensure that the reader understands that the character is lower class, and uneducated as well as Caucasian shows what lengths the author will go to in order to ensure that each character has a separate voice- a separate identity.

What I could use this book for would be to take passages where the main character is speaking or thinking in Navajo. This would help show my students that when they are writing if they want to include another language in their text they most certainly can, and when they do, it normally creates an individuality that is singular to that character alone. Each student is an individual and so should their writing be. The more ways I can teach them to make it their own the more investment they will have in their writings.

Marti says

We have both Joe Leaphorn, now retired, and Jim Chee in this book which takes them away to Washington, DC. Naturally, there is a murder, and a fair amount about Navaho fetishes of gods--rather fascinating. One bad guy makes a representation of Talking God. He is a white man who wants to become a Navaho--gets killed. Both women in Chee's life show up

Shannon says

Really enjoy these books - this one was one of the best so far. Includes assassination plots and theft plots and expert reproductions at the Smithsonian so most of the book takes place in DC but it's interesting. Leaphorn and Chee work together but not until the end - thought it was great how Hillerman had their paths cross over basically the same problem but from two different angles.

Nancy says

I'm getting a lot better about putting a book down when I am close to the end and know that I don't have time to read to the end right then. The downside to that is that, twice while reading this book - once closer to the start and then at the end - I had to put it down and was not able to get back to it as soon as I would have liked. There were 2 whole days without reading it at the end :(I think that affected the continuity for me.

This is the first story set mostly FAR AWAY from the reservation. And it added an interesting element to see these two Navajos who like quiet and solitude in Washington DC, definitely NOT quiet or a place to find solitude.

Maybe it was because of the breaks in my reading, but parts of the story didn't fit together too well for me. I got it in general. And one piece was just kind of dropped, which annoyed me a little bit.

I still quite like these characters and the culture.

Hillerman obviously decided a couple of books ago that the amount of profanity could be increased. It's still not horrible, but the first couple of books led me to believe the series would be one without much profanity.

Oh well.

On to book 10.

Marlene Chabot says

As always, Tony Hillerman's novels are worth the read no matter how long ago they've been written. So informative and interesting characters, Leaphorn and Chee. Hillerman mixes the world of Indians living on a reservation with the outside world and the challenges thrown at them.

In this novel, The two cops, who don't always see eye to eye, have both decided to take their vacations in Washington, D.C., neither knowing the other has done so and find themselves mixed up in the same murder case somehow and work to solve it.

Patrick says

Somehow Leaphorn and Chee both wind up in Washington DC trying to solve a mysterious murder. If you can imagine to indians taking on DC, then you can believe anything. And they manage to do this on their vacation time, since no one seems much interested in solving it. Anyway this was a fun read. Maybe the indians ought to take on more issues with DC. We might be better off.

Carolyn (in SC) C234D says

I haven't read many books in this series, but I have enjoyed what I've read. (From 2003). Two Navaho Tribal policemen follow different trails to Washington, DC, one to find the identity of a murder victim, the other to find out more about a grave robber who makes Indian masks. More comes to light when they meet up and put their information together. Pretty good story. Rounded up from a 3.5 rating.
