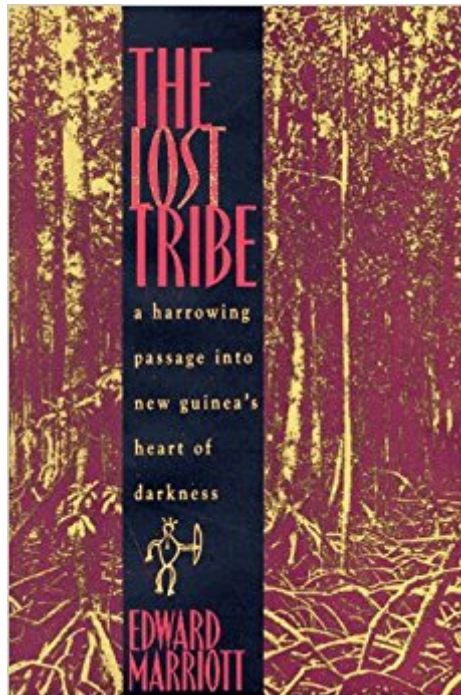




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The Lost Tribe: A Harrowing Passage Into New Guinea's Heart Of Darkness



Synopsis

Part travel-book, part adventure story, this is an account of Edward Marriott's trip to Papua New Guinea to discover the "lost" Liawep tribe. When a natural tragedy affects the village, the tribe hold Marriott responsible for the death of a woman and her children. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In an account redolent of early colonial adventure epics, reeking of tangible fear and foreboding, a Briton ventures into the jungle of Papua New Guinea; armed with naive curiosity, he encounters more trouble than he could have imagined. Until 1993, when a young tribesman emerged from the jungle seeking medical help, the Liawep were virtually unknown to any but unfortunate neighboring tribes who felt the brunt of their savagery. A year later, the author, circumventing official restrictions, slithers through remote rainforests, traversing swollen rivers over rickety bridges built of vines and logs. It's an arduous trek for which he finds himself physically unprepared but which he undertakes in order to be among the first to encounter this "lost tribe." Accompanied by native guides, Marriott eventually reaches the Liawep's village. At first, he receives a chilly reception from the only other outsider, a raging Christian missionary named Herod, and is generally avoided by the suspicious Liawep. But over a period of weeks, he penetrates this society to a minimal extent, and what he finds is atavistically scary. He meets an older warrior who admits to cannibalism, and the tribesmen affirm that their fearful reputation is well-earned: Prior to contact with the outside, they killed off the surrounding peoples, and they are often overtly threatening to Marriott. Even the butchering of pigs

is performed with gruesome savagery, a process described in chilling, graphic detail. With the advent of the rainy season, Marriott and his companions worry about crossing the rivers on their return journey. Before they can start out, a fearsome lightning storm inundates the village, bringing death to five of the Liawep. Fearing that they will be blamed for the tragedy by the superstitious warriors--a fear soon borne out--Marriott and his guides barely escape with their lives after a forced jungle march. Honest and without self-aggrandizement, and even witty in the early going, Marriott's debut is one of the best books of its kind in recent memory. -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

"A stunning cast of characters, as beautifully observed as the jungle scenery in Marriott's spellbinding account... Travel writing raised to the level of high adventure."-John Bert
"A gripping account ... reads like a suspense novel; it is also a sobering indictment of colonialism and its lingering legacy of cultural annihilation."-Outside Magazine --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Marriott was one of the most interesting travel writers of the late 20th century, early 21st century. He is now doing psychodynamic counseling (?) because of all the bad reviews, I suppose? Maybe he has not learned to create artificial reviews to boost the average? I understand the ethical concerns of contacting a "Lost Tribe" but this is done on TV often. Not that it makes it right. The tribe was going to be contacted one way or another by someone. Marriott did very interesting work, very smart. I miss his writing. Hopefully he gets back to it, but it seems this is all that's left (The Lost Tribe, Savage Shore).

I grew up in PNG and am familiar with the history of Papua New Guinea. I paid \$3 for this book at a second hand charity book sale. I paid too much. The book is about the author's determination to find a so-called lost tribe in Papua New Guinea. Despite never having travelled to PNG before, having no relevant qualifications, limited local language ability and only a rudimentary understanding of the complex history of first contact the author proceeds to ignore local advice in his stumbling quest for a lost tribe to write about and therefore presumably make money out of. The author is British and throughout the book makes inaccurate and disparaging remarks about Australian development assistance up to independence in 1975. He disregards facts and historical accuracy where not consistent with his own world view. Typical of those with leftist leanings he seeks to reinterpret history to find evidence of white man's guilt and exploitation of the locals. He cannot comprehend

that goodwill was the chief motivation guiding the need to gradually and sensitively open up isolated warlike, suspicious and often fearful peoples to the twentieth century. His constant disparaging of the Australian explorers Mick Leahy and Jack Hides, who made first contact with numerous highland tribes in the 1930s, becomes tedious. The author acknowledges the contempt with which PNG nationals, aid workers and even the Liaweps hold him. It is unfortunate that the tribe he stays with is visited by such a poor representative of the outside European world. No one respects an opportunist, even less so a self-doubting opportunist. Most second-hand books I donate back to charity on completion, but this one will be going to the garbage bin as not even worth giving away.

From the very start of the book, this author has gone out of his way to slam the missionaries working in Papua New Guinea. In doing so, he has thrown out some "facts", startling mostly in their complete inaccuracy. For the record, the Summer Institute of Linguistics does NOT forbid all books but the Bible; there are no books. The whole point is that they are working to create a written language where one did not previously exist. There ARE no written texts in the languages with which SIL work. Given that I spent 8 years in Papua New Guinea growing up, reading this book is painful. The author's interpretations of cultural mores are naive at best, intolerably patronising at worst. When one of his contacts balks at the prospect of getting into a PMV (not a "minivan", Mr Marriott) on payday Friday, the tone of the narrative is ever-so-slightly scathing, as if he can't believe this person is afraid of a few noble savages. As a former resident, I can assure you that payday Friday was the day each fortnight when violence and drunkenness were endemic, and no Westerner or female of any persuasion would voluntarily put themselves in any sort of vulnerable position on that night. There is a clear overtone of life being viewed and interpreted through a certain ?cultural? ?moral? ?anti-religious? filter; while the events the author describes may well have actually happened, his interpretation of their meaning leaves much to be desired. I am slightly horrified to see that the author has written several other "my true tales of adventure" type of books set in Nicaragua and other places, and I can only imagine what sorts of nonsense those contain.

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