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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Tuesday, April 05 2022

In Ukrainian street, a corpse with hands bound and a bullet wound to the head

BUCHA, Ukraine, April 4 (Reuters) - A man lay sprawled by the roadside in the Ukrainian city of Bucha on Sunday, his hands tied behind his back and a bullet wound to his head, one of hundreds of local residents that officials say have been found dead in the wake of five weeks of Russian occupation.

Bucha's deputy mayor, Taras Shapravskyi, said 50 of the dead residents, found after Russian forces withdrew from the city late last week, were the victims of extra-judicial killings carried out by Russian troops, and the officials have accused Moscow of war crimes.

Russia's defence ministry said in a statement issued on Sunday that all photographs and videos published by the Ukrainian authorities alleging 'crimes' by Russian troops in Bucha were a "provocation," and no resident of Bucha suffered violence at the hands of Russian troops.

Reuters was not able to independently verify who was responsible for killing the dead residents.

But three bodies seen by Reuters reporters on Sunday -- the corpse with the hands bound and two others which did not have bound hands -- bore bullet shots to the head consistent with what Bucha mayor Anatoliy Fedoruk and his deputy described as executions. In all three cases, there were no signs of any other significant injuries elsewhere in the body. All three people shot in the head were male, and all three were dressed in civilian clothing.

On the body of the person whose hands were bound, there were powder burn marks on his lips and face. Such marks can mean a person was shot at close range.

The cloth used to bind the man's hands appeared to be a white armband. Russian troops, while they were in Bucha, required that local residents wear the armbands to identify themselves, according to one woman who was still wearing hers. Reuters sent questions to the Kremlin and the Russian defence ministry about the corpses that its reporters had witnessed, but received no immediate reply.

Russia's defence ministry, in its statement on Sunday said: "During the time that Russian armed forces were in control of this settlement, not a single local resident suffered from any violent actions." It added that be-



fore Russian troops withdrew on March 30 they delivered 452 tons of humanitarian aid to civilians around the Kyiv region.

Shapravskyi, the deputy mayor, said some 300 people were found dead after the Russian withdrawal. Of these, he said officials so far have logged 50 as executions carried out by Russian forces. Reuters could not independently verify those figures.

The others were either killed in crossfire, or their deaths are so far unexplained.

"Any war has some rules of engagement for civilians. The Russians have demonstrated that they were consciously killing civilians," Fedoruk, the mayor, said as he showed Reuters reporters one of the bodies.

SHALLOW GRAVE

Reuters also spoke to one local resident who described a person being found dead after Russian troops detained them, and another resident who described two people found dead with single gunshot wounds to the head.

Reuters was not able to independently verify the descriptions provided by the residents.

Sobbing as she gestured at her husband's shallow grave, a shot of vodka topped

with a cracker resting on freshly dug earth, Tetyana Volodymyrivna recounted an ordeal at the hands of Russian troops in this city 37 km (23 miles) northwest of Kyiv.

She and her husband, a former Ukrainian marine, were dragged from their apartment when Russian troops set up their command centre in their building. The soldiers held them prisoner in the apartment building where they lived.

She said the Russians, when they arrived in the city, asked people who they were, and demanded to see documents.

She said a fighter with the Russian forces who she believed was from Russia's semi-autonomous Chechnya region warned he would "cut us up." She did not say how she knew he was Chechen.

Reuters sent a request for comment to the office of the leader of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, a Kremlin loyalist, but received no reply.

Tetyana, who identified herself by her first name and patronymic

but did not give her family name, was released after being held for four days. Her husband was nowhere to be seen for several days, until she was told about some bodies in a basement stairwell of the building where she and her husband lived.

"I recognised him by his sneakers, his trousers. He looked mutilated, his body was cold," she said. "My neighbor still has a picture of his face. He had been shot in the head, mutilated, tortured."

Reuters reviewed the photograph, which showed that the face and body were badly mutilated. The news agency could not determine if there was a bullet wound.

After recovering her husband's body, she and some neighbours buried it in a garden plot near their building, just deep enough "so dogs wouldn't eat him," she said.

Another corpse still lay in the stairwell where her husband was found, a Reuters reporter saw. Local residents covered the body with a bedsheet as a mark of dignity.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

04/04/2022



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A Model Of Volunteering Tribute To Brother Yang Jiahua



At the memorial service in northwest Houston, almost one thousand of Mr. Yang's friends, classmates, colleagues and community leaders said goodbye to him. From all the words spoken at the farewell ceremony, all the speakers emphasized how much Mr. Yang contributed to our community and praised

his lifelong enthusiasm for the public welfare.

Growing up during the Chinese cultural revolution period, as his wife Professor JK said in her book, the family lived on soy sauce to accompany meals which was so sad to hear, but both of them worked hard and passed their exams and went on to college

and finally came to America where together they created their second spring time. Our newspaper and TV have consistently reported on their touching story.

Over the last several years, Southern News Group has held countless community events including celebrations of the Lunar New Year and

the 70th Anniversary of the End of World II, as well as many cultural performance activities of the many ethnic groups in our community. We always saw Mr. Yang helping to coordinate the show, moving chairs with a smiling face. He was just the greatest volunteer

In his more than seventy

years of life, Brother Yang was very fortunate to spend more

than one-half century with his lovely wife and have a very outstanding son. He is not only just successful in his career, but most importantly, he is a real volunteer for our community.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Jon Batiste poses with their Grammys for Best American Roots Performance for "Cry," Album of the year for "We Are," Best American roots song, Best music video and Best score soundtrack for visual media for "Soul," at the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at...MORE



People tend to a grave ahead of Qingming Festival, or Tomb Sweeping Day at a Chinese cemetery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on April 3, 2022. REUTERS/Hasnoor Hussain



UConn Huskies forward Aaliyah Edwards dribbles the ball as South Carolina Gamecocks center Kamilla Cardoso defends in the Final Four championship game of the women's college basketball NCAA Tournament in Minneapolis. Matt Krohn-USA TODAY Sports



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam pauses during a news conference in Hong Kong, China April 4. Vincent Yu/Pool via REUTERS



Paris St Germain's Neymar celebrates scoring their fifth goal with Lionel Messi in Parc des Princes, Paris, France, April 3. REUTERS/Sarah Meyssonnier



Doja Cat poses on the red carpet at the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 3. REUTERS/Maria Alejandra Cardona

Coffee, Wine, And Wheat Varieties Are
Among The Foods We Could Lose Forever

The Extinction Crisis That
No One Is Talking About



Tractors harvest a monoculture of soybeans in Mato Grosso, Brazil. (Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Key Point

Supply chain challenges and inflation spikes in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic have now been joined by growing and documented concerns for the potential extinction of endangered foods and the lack of food choices along with the diversity of foods as well as the nutritional values they represent that are in serious danger of disappearing from the global marketplace. Scientific observers are now saying it is time to act and make efforts to bring diversity back into the food system while being motivated by the health of society.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Your morning coffee is in a perilous state. There are just two species of coffee plants on which the entire multibillion-dollar industry is based: One of them is considered poor-tasting, and the other, which you're likely familiar with, is threatened by climate change and a deadly fungal disease. Thankfully, there's another kind of coffee out there, known as stenophylla. It has a higher heat tolerance, greater resistance to certain fungal pathogens, and it tastes great. There's just one problem: It's incredibly rare, and until recently, scientists believed it was extinct. Stenophylla is just one of dozens of important foods that are threatened with extinction, according to Dan Saladino, a BBC journalist and author of the new book, "Eating to Extinction: The World's Rarest Foods and Why We Need to Save Them." While grocery stores may seem as abundant as ever, Saladino argues that the diversity of food is actually in decline. Of the hundreds of thousands of wheat varieties that farmers once cultivated, for example, only a handful are now farmed on a large scale, he told Vox. As we grow and harvest fewer varieties of plants

and animals, the foods you can buy in the grocery store may become less nutritious and flavorful, and — as the current state of coffee demonstrates — the global food system could become less resilient. That's why it's so crucial to lift up communities that are protecting foods from disappearing, Saladino told Vox in an interview about his new book. The important conversation that followers was held between author Dan Saladino and Vox.com interviewer Benji Jones and pinpoints the food diversity challenges that face us all.

Grocery stores may be stocked, but the variety of food is in decline



Benji Jones

BUSINESS

You write that a lot of foods, such as varieties of coffee and wheat, are going extinct. Yet when I walk into the grocery store it seems like there's more variety than ever.

Dan Saladino
Whether it's cotton candy grapes or certain varieties of avocado, there's a degree of uniformity. And while you'll see this abundance — consider bread, and the wheat it's made of — it's extremely narrow in terms of its genetics. In this amazing place in the Arctic called Svalbard, there's a seed vault buried deep under the ice, down a tunnel, in which there are more than 200,000 different unique samples of wheat. That's the kind of diversity that's hidden from us. A farmer today in the UK might get a recommended list of wheat varieties to grow — dictated largely by the food industry and millers and bakers — of fewer than 10 kinds. You can take all of the world's staple crops, including maize [also known as corn] and rice, and you'll see the same thing. In seed banks around the world, there are tens to hundreds of thousands of varieties, yet in the food system that we experience, it's an extremely small number.

Benji Jones
Why should the average grocery shopper care about losing these rare varieties of food?

Dan Saladino
Endangered foods give us options in a future with many challenges — feeding a growing population, reducing emissions, and finding fresh water, for example.

Take a type of maize tucked away in a mountain village in southern Mexico, very close to where maize was first domesticated thousands of years ago. Botanists arrived in the late 1970s and saw this 16-foot-tall stock of maize. It shouldn't have been growing there because the soil was so poor. Not only was it so tall, but it also has these aerial roots that were dripping with mucus, like something out of a science fiction film. Just three years ago, a scientist figured out that the mucus is an interplay between sugars and microbes that's actually feeding the plant from the air. That hadn't been seen before in cereal crops.



A type of maize that grows in the Sierra Mixe region of Oaxaca, Mexico. It has aerial roots coated in mucus that help the plant

pull nutrients out of the air. (Photo/Allen Van Deyn et. al./PLOS Biology)

Why should we care? If we understand how this plant works, could we potentially use it to reduce our use of fertilizer globally? We know there is a way in which some plants are feeding themselves. We need to give thanks to the Indigenous people who have looked after this maize for centuries, if not thousands of years.

Benji Jones
A wider variety of crops also makes our food system more resilient to threats like disease and climate change, right?

Dan Saladino
That's another really important lesson. I traveled to eastern Turkey to get as close as I could to the Fertile Crescent, where wheat was first domesticated. I found farmers who had saved a type of emmer wheat that had been growing for 8,000 to 9,000 years. It's been growing in high altitudes where it's damp. If you put a modern wheat variety in that environment, fungal diseases would ruin the crop. And so what they have in Turkey is a precious genetic resource that has forms of resistance, such as to fungal pathogens.



A field of kavilca, or emmer, wheat. (Dan Saladino)

You can also find those principles of disease resilience among ancient varieties of rice and maize — really, in all of the crops. Over thousands of years, our ancestors created these adaptations through farming under different conditions.

What we've done since is create these incredibly high-performance plants that need specific conditions to grow, and a lot of inputs, like fertilizer. Each wheat or maize plant is almost a clone, whereas in traditional farming, there's a huge amount of genetic diversity in the field. If you get a bad summer or too much or too little rain, some of those traditional varieties are still going to bear grains because there is diversity within the crops.

You can breed out bitterness, but you might lose deliciousness

Benji Jones
Is there a flavor extinction happening as well?

Dan Saladino
Absolutely. I tell the story of a type of wild citrus from northern India called memang narang. It has a cultural, culinary, and medicinal function, but the striking thing is how bitter these fruits are. The people who live here place huge value

on bitterness, a flavor that's disappearing from most of our palates. Fruit breeders, over centuries, have been ingenious at giving us something that we love: sweetness. They have bred out the bitterness.

When you realize that the bitter taste comes from compounds that help plants protect themselves from pests, then you understand why it might be beneficial to retain that flavor. We've taken the beneficial bitter compounds out, and we've cloaked plants in pesticides and other chemicals to protect them.



A type of rare coffee, Coffea stenophylla. (Getty Images)

Another example comes from coffee. We live in a world where we can enjoy a lot of different types of arabica coffee. There's robusta as well. But these are just two of more than a hundred different types of coffee around the world. Historically, there were cultures in parts of Africa that had more distinctive types of coffee, including one called stenophylla that was prized in parts of East Africa up until the 1960s, when it pretty much went extinct because farming systems changed. It has greater disease resistance than arabica. And arabica is under pressure now because of climate change — it's an extremely delicate plant. Stenophylla offers the benefit of disease resistance, and it's an amazing-tasting coffee.

Coffee as we know it is in danger. Can we breed a better cup?

Benji Jones
Another example that helps explain the decline of flavor comes from a region of France, home to the Salers cow. It really shows the connection between biodiversity and flavor, right?

Dan Saladino
"Salers" is a place, a breed of cow, and a cheese. Farmers would take their cattle in the spring and summer to [mountain] places where the pasture is richest, often ending up in remote places. It was a monastic experience; they were up there living a solitary life. At the end of the summer, the cheese would end up back down in the village. It's this mind-blowing process that highlights the power of cheese: The pasture captures the energy of the sun, the animals convert the pasture into milk and cheese, and the villagers then eat the cheese during the winter when other foods are running out.

(Article Continues Below)

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(Article Continues From Above)

Coffee, Wine, And Wheat Varieties Are
Among The Foods We Could Lose Forever

The Extinction Crisis That
No One Is Talking About

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Dan Saladino

The remarkable thing is that the pasture is so rich in microbes that these farmers don't even need a starter culture to coagulate the milk and turn it into cheese. As soon as the milk hits these wooden barrels, it's inoculated with microbes. For a modern health inspector, it would be a nightmare to watch.

We've been talking about the endangered genetics of crops and endangered tastes. Here, we're talking about endangered microbes that are not only missing from the cheese making process, but also from our gut microbiomes.



A breed of cattle called Salers in the Cantal region of France. (Photo/Andia/Universal Images Group via Getty Images)

Benji Jones
You also explain that when these cows have access to a wide diversity of plants in the pasture, their milk and cheese end up tasting richer. That's because different grasses have different types of defense chemicals called terpenes, which can translate to flavor in the milk.

Dan Saladino
Terpenes can be found in milk from rich pastures, but not in cheese made from cattle that have been fed on grains. We're only beginning to understand the connections between biodiversity and our food and our health and our flavors.

Benji Jones
You traveled the world sampling all of these foods with unique flavors. What were some that stood out?



Dan Saladino
Skerpikjöt is this food from the Faroe Islands. There's not enough sunlight or firewood there to produce salt to preserve food. People instead built these huts that have gaps that allow the sea air in. They raise sheep and hang the meat in these huts, which gets bathed by the salty air and slowly fermented and preserved. It doesn't look like food. It's covered in mold. It needs to be washed. It's almost as if this sheep meat is gently rotting away in these huts, but actually, the conditions are exactly right so it doesn't rot or become too funky. It becomes this wonderful preserved meat.

Benji Jones
You also have an incredible chapter about a type of wine in the country Georgia, which you explain is where some of the world's first — or the first — winemakers were practicing their craft.

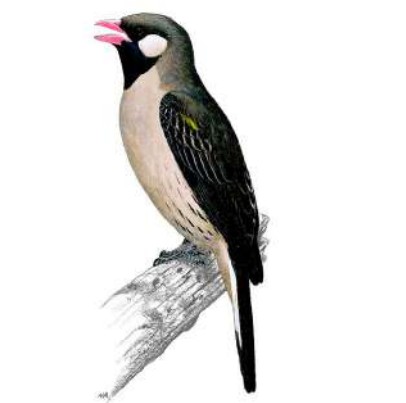
Dan Saladino
Georgia is the most likely country in which grapes were domesticated and the first winemakers were practicing their craft. They have a technology that predates the barrel by thousands of years — the qvevri. These are terracotta vessels that you bury underground with whole branches of grapes with skin and pips [seeds] inside. Many people think France and Italy and Spain and California are great wine-producing regions. Here is a place where the relationship with wine just goes up another level. There is a reverence and spiritual dimension to wine drinking.



A workshop where Georgian qvevris are being made. (Photo/Dan Saladino) Our relationship with food mirrors our relationship with nature

Benji Jones
In your book, you talk about how losing certain foods isn't just about losing resilience, flavor, and culture, but also about our changing relationship with nature. You explain that some groups, like the Hadza people of Tanzania, are deeply connected to their environment through food — and by losing certain foods, we may be losing these connections.

Dan Saladino
The Hadza story brilliantly sums that up. I followed some of these hunter-gatherers out within a landscape of baobab trees. In those trees, some of which are a thousand years old, you can find bees' nests and one of the greatest prizes the Hadza can find: honey. It's an extremely important food — and their favorite food — but it's hard for them to find the hives high up in the trees. The Hadza whistle, and after a period of time, if they're lucky, a very humble-looking bird will fly down. The bird will start a "conversation" with the hunter-gatherers and lead them to a tree with honey. The bird knows where the honey is, whereas the hunter-gatherers have the fire and the smoke to get rid of the bees, which are a risk for the bird. The Hadza can go up, extract the honey, and then leave something behind for the birds.



An illustration of a greater hon-

eyguide. (Photo/Brown Bear/Windmill Books/Universal Images Group via Getty Images.)

Toward the end of the Hadza visit, we went to a mud and brick hut, and inside there were cans and cans of soda. This was a source of sugar and energy that could mean that they no longer use that skill to find honey within our lifetimes — something so fundamentally important to human history could disappear.

Benji Jones
Do we run the risk of glorifying some of these older cultures? Don't some of these groups want soda — or access to health care, or other benefits that come with Western or modern life?

Dan Saladino
There's story after story of another culture coming in and imposing its food and



its farming systems and its values and its desires on these Indigenous food systems. My argument is that people should be given the choice. They should have access to health care, but that doesn't necessarily mean that their way of life should be fundamentally changed because they're buying into our system.

How to save endangered foods

Benji Jones
There are clearly a lot of things that don't work with our food system. What gave you hope while reporting the book? What inspired you?

Dan Saladino
There's a network of people out there who are saving the diversity of foods. Before Covid, they gathered at a slow food event to bring their foods from around the world, and share stories about what they've saved and what threats they're facing. This solidarity is what gives me optimism.

In southwestern China, I met a farmer saving an extremely rare type of highly nutritious colored rice. He got out his

phone and sold rice through WeChat to people in Beijing and Chengdu, some of the biggest cities in the world. Modern technology can actually connect us.

Benji Jones
The food industry is massive and largely run by just a small number of companies. How does one person help prevent these unique foods from going extinct?

Dan Saladino
It's important to understand what we mean by endangered foods and diversity. I think we should all choose our favorite foods and interrogate the diversity of that food. Explore cacao, coffee, or different types of cheeses. Then maybe develop a relationship with a cheesemaker and become a different kind of customer — somebody who's supporting a local farmer.



A man dries a rare, prized type of Venezuelan cacao called criollo. (Photo/Dan Saladino)

This also needs to be dealt with on a much larger scale. I was inspired by stories of cities, such as Copenhagen, where schools use diversity as a criterion for the contracts they're issuing to farmers: Don't just give me the cheapest apples — give me a choice of apples, and we will reward you. That's also happening in Brazil. Over the last few decades, they've had a policy that requires schools to source 30 percent of ingredients from local family farms.

These levers do exist for governments to make a big, significant change. I also think we have the most selfish reasons to embrace diversity — our own health. We know what's happening in many parts of the world, in terms of type 2 diabetes, cancers, and other diseases that have a food dimension. Perhaps we will be motivated by health to try and bring diversity back into the food system. The science says we need to. (Courtesy vox.com)

