

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Mystery in the Archives: The Historiography of Denial, Henrietta Schmerler's Rape and Murder, and Anthropology's Project of Prevention

Megan Steffen

ABSTRACT In July 1931, a young student of anthropology at Columbia University named Henrietta Schmerler was raped and murdered while researching the White Mountain Apache in Arizona. Although anthropologists have for decades repeated a received narrative that uses idealized fieldwork tropes to blame Schmerler for her own rape and murder, a careful historiographical analysis reveals most scholarly work on Schmerler's case relies on archival sources that have been deliberately censored or else on unfounded assertions about Apache culture. By investigating Schmerler's death and treating historical archives as crime scenes, this article demonstrates how archival restrictions have prevented an honest, evidence-based reckoning with the legacies of American anthropology's founding figures, untangles the origins of anthropology's belief that rape in the field can be prevented, and argues that the denial Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Gladys Reichard display upon hearing that an Indigenous person might have raped and murdered Schmerler still haunts anthropology today. [*history of anthropology, sexual violence, archival research, denial, Boasian anthropology*]

RESUMEN En julio de 1931, una estudiante joven de antropología en Columbia University llamada Henrietta Schmerler fue asaltada sexualmente y asesinada mientras realizaba una investigación en la White Mountain Apache en Arizona. Aunque los antropólogos han repetido por décadas una narrativa aceptada que usa tropos de trabajo de campo idealizados para culpar a Schmerler por su propio asalto sexual y asesinato, un análisis historiográfico cuidadoso revela que la mayoría del trabajo académico en el caso Schmerler depende de fuentes de archivo que han sido censuradas deliberadamente o si no de afirmaciones infundadas sobre la cultura apache. Al investigar la muerte de Schmerler y tratar los archivos históricos como escenas de crimen, este artículo demuestra cómo las restricciones de los archivos han impedido un lidiar honesto, basado en evidencia con los legados de las figuras fundadoras de la antropología estadounidense; desenmaraña los orígenes de la creencia de la antropología que la violación en el campo puede ser prevenida; y argumenta que la negación que Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead y Gladys Reichard exhiben al oír que una persona indígena puede haber violado y asesinado a Schmerler aún ronda la antropología hoy en día. [*historia de la antropología, violencia sexual, investigación de archivos, negación, antropología boasiana*]

1931年七月, 哥伦比亚大学年轻的人类学学生 Henrietta Schmerler 在亚利桑那州的白山阿帕契印第安人保留区做调研的途中被强奸并杀害。之后的几十年间, 人类学家们重复着一种公认的观点: Schmerler 的遇害应归咎于其自身对田野调研的天真想象。然而通过严谨的历史影像学考据, 我们会发现关于 Schmerler 一案的学术研究往往依赖于被刻意审查的档案资料或者基于对阿帕契印第安人文化毫无依据的断言。本文将历史档案作为案发现场深入调查了 Schmerler 的遇害

案, 显示出档案资料的限制是如何规避了诚实循证的案情推断, 美国人类学奠基人们对本案的深远影响, 以及人类学界对于在田野调查中强奸是可以被避免的执念根源所在。本文认为当初弗朗茨·博厄斯, 鲁思·苯尼迪克特, 玛格丽特·米德和格拉迪斯·理查德等人对原住民强奸并杀害 Schermerler 的可能性的一致否定仍在当今学界作祟。【人类学的历史, 性暴力, 档案研究, 否定, 博厄斯博人类学】

It was a dark and stormy summer. From Indian reservations throughout the American Southwest, anthropologists wrote letters to each other describing heavy, disruptive rains. Franz Boas, the founder of the first anthropology department in the United States of America, at Columbia University, was in Germany visiting family. Ruth Benedict, his unofficial second-in-command at Columbia, was in New Mexico with a group of students studying the Mescalero Apache. Gladys A. Reichard, a lecturer at Barnard College and Boas's favorite, was in Ganado, Arizona, studying Navajo weavers. Margaret Mead alone remained in New York City, preparing to sail for fieldwork in New Guinea.

It was 1931, and a young anthropology graduate student named Henrietta Schmerler was going to the field for the first time. At Columbia, she had taken classes with Boas, Benedict, Mead, and Reichard, and she planned to study the White Mountain Apache in Whiteriver, Arizona. Although her letters from the field are cheerful, they reveal an anxiety about whether she has the resources—both material and intellectual—to do her work. In a July 16, 1931 letter to her father, she explains that since she doesn't have a car, she's been relying on a white farmer for transportation:

I'd have been lost without him, as he has taken me around in his car a good deal. Besides, it's a wise thing (as far as personal safety goes) to have them see that he's interested in my personal welfare. I'm buying a horse (for \$25) this week, and so will be able to get around a little better than heretofore.¹

On July 18, 1931, Schmerler waited for a ride to a dance she hoped to document. She never made it to the dance. On July 20, 1931, the white farmer she'd mentioned in her letter reported her missing when she failed to come collect her horse. Her body was discovered on July 25, 1931, at the bottom of a gulch. Her clothes were "partly torn from her body" and "signs of struggle" were found at the top of the canyon.² Physicians called to the scene found Schmerler had "a broken nose, the front teeth knocked out" and "a long knife wound two or three inches in depth" on the right side of her neck.³ Authorities also found evidence that she had been raped, an act that was euphemistically referred to as "abuse." After a several-months-long search for the killer and an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a jury of twelve white men convicted an Apache man named Golney "Max" Seymour of raping and murdering Schmerler after offering to take her to the dance on his horse. Schmerler had

been in Arizona for only twenty-five days. She was twenty-two years old.

THE SCHMERLER CASE AS A WHODUNIT

In *Henrietta Schmerler and the Murder that Put Anthropology on Trial*, Henrietta Schmerler's nephew Gil Schmerler (2017) examines the FBI's dysfunction during the Great Depression, describes their questionable interview techniques, and explores the different facts that may have been glossed over or distorted during their investigation. Whether Seymour was solely responsible for the rape and murder of Schmerler is a historical question; my concern here is a historiographical question that emerges decades later. Since the 1930s, accounts of Schmerler's rape and murder have been alternately censored, distorted, and held up as an object lesson by anthropologists and historians of anthropology (G. Schmerler and Steffen 2018). Within a year of her death, anthropologists had crafted a narrative that blamed Schmerler for her own rape and murder. Anthropologists combined different narrative elements to present Schmerler as flawed and her death as fateful: she was too naïve about sex or else too experienced, she disregarded instructions and did not properly prepare, she funded her own trip and went without institutional approval, she put herself in danger by asking questions about sex, and she should have known that a woman riding a horse with a man was tantamount to consenting to sex in the local context. Most of these elements are contradictory, doubtful, or demonstrably false. How did a narrative that Schmerler could have prevented her own rape and murder by being more prepared become so widespread? How did anthropologists who never set foot in Whiteriver come to believe they understood the ethnographic significance of sharing a horse for the White Mountain Apache? Who is to blame for blaming Henrietta Schmerler for her own rape and murder?

Schmerler's rape and murder is a historical crime; the historiographical crime is a continuing failure to acknowledge that even if Schmerler made bad decisions—an open historical question—she still would not have deserved to be raped and murdered. To solve this mystery, I investigate suspects from three time periods: Columbia anthropologists in the 1930s, anthropologists writing history in the 1980s and 1990s, and contemporary historians of anthropology. My crime scenes are not in the American Southwest but in a series of archives: the Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers at Vassar College, the Franz Boas Papers at the American Philosophical Society (APS), the Margaret Mead Papers at the Library of Congress (LoC), the Department of Anthropology

Records at Columbia, and the American Anthropological Association's *Anthropology Newsletter* archives. The clues point to, if not an intentional intergenerational conspiracy to shape the story of how anthropologists thought about Schmerler's death through omission, falsehood, and misdirection, then a surprisingly effective unwitting one. What were anthropologists at Columbia in the 1930s protecting when they sacrificed and destroyed Schmerler's reputation almost immediately after her death? Why were scholars in the 1980s and 1990s so quick to reject evidence of Schmerler's helplessness in favor of the narrative they received from their mentors? And what happens when anthropologists today either ignore Schmerler's story or repeat it as it was told to them?

While I hope to correct historical falsehoods, that is not my primary goal. Instead, to paraphrase Gil Schmerler (2017, 244), I am trying to figure out why Henrietta Schmerler's story "has been told in so many ways, by so many people, to serve so many purposes," and—I might add—through so many archives. This article joins efforts to understand how academics' personal yet historically contingent beliefs about sex and gender shaped their disciplines (Haraway 1984; Milam 2015). Each decade brings its own concerns to Schmerler's story with the same results: blaming Schmerler for her own death protects the reputation of American anthropology's founding figures, preserves the right of women to go to the field (Steffen 2017), and implies that Schmerler could have prevented her own rape and murder. This project of prevention insists that if anthropologists were to read, plan, and know enough, sexual violence could be avoided. This is not true: not in the field, not in the academy, and not at home. By untangling the origins of this project of prevention, I demonstrate how anthropologists undermined their own arguments about the humanity of the people they worked with through their treatment of the Schmerler case. Denial—of responsibility, shared vulnerabilities, and the capacity of those who are not anthropologists to do harm—remains central to anthropology as a discipline.

CRIME SCENE #1: THE 1986–1987 ANTHROPOLOGY NEWSLETTER DEBATE OVER SCHMERLER

Our first set of suspects appear in the pages of *Anthropology Newsletter* (now *Anthropology News*, henceforth *AN*) in the 1980s. This is the first time since Schmerler's murder appeared in contemporary newspapers that anthropologists publicly shared a narrative that only circulated privately. In May 1986, *AN* published a letter by Nancy Howell titled "Occupational Health and Safety: An Issue in the Culture of Anthropology." Howell attacks, among other things, her colleagues' "infuriating" tendency to brag about fieldwork hardships, the "depth of denial" about fieldwork's risks, and their "macho stance" toward fieldwork (10). The effects of Howell's call for prevention were immediate. In the next issue, Nathalie F. S. Woodbury (1986b, 3), the author of a regular column for *AN*, questions whether a "macho stance" is the

problem; women, too, are reckless. Woodbury tells a story of an unnamed woman:

Unknowing of, or ignoring, the sexual significance of getting up behind a man on his horse, she invited rape and her death. When I taught in New Mexico immediately after World War II, the event was still discussed by Southwest Indian students and the aggressiveness and sheer stupidity of the fieldworker were wondered at. (3)

The woman is Schmerler. Note the plot here: Schmerler died because she did not know the culturally coded sexual meaning of sharing a horse with a man.

The debate continues in *AN*. In November 1986, Deborah Tannen condemns Woodbury's "oxymoronic statement" that Schmerler "invited rape and her death" (2). Tannen goes on: "If sexual advances are invited, they are not rape. . . . Even decidedly inappropriate behavior does not justify rape and death." In a letter aggressively titled, "No—Unpreparedness," Woodbury (1986a, 2) denies that she wanted to blame Schmerler, but then does so by arguing that "fieldworkers of either sex must be aware of what certain behavior, particularly subtle body language, can lead to, particularly in heterosexual situations, which add a dynamic element." Woodbury seems to think rape might always be a consequence of "heterosexual situations," and again, the narrative shifts: Schmerler was a bad fieldworker because she could not read sexual cues, and her failure is tautologically proven by the fact that Schmerler died during fieldwork.

Woodbury is capable of being courteous in the face of criticism,⁴ and yet her defensiveness dominates the next four issues of *AN*. In January 1987, Woodbury is armed with Schmerler's name, maps, a photo of Benedict, a new claim that Schmerler convinced Columbia to let her go to the field by funding her own trip, and a letter quoting letters that, confusingly, also quote letters (Woodbury 1987a, 3–4). One of the letters is from Benedict herself, admitting that Schmerler was "unwise" and guilty of "errors of technique" (quoted in Farrer in Woodbury 1987a, 3). That Woodbury would locate primary sources to rephrase the story recounted in Benedict's (then recent) biography seems excessive (Modell 1983, 180–83); however, the letters give Woodbury's interpretation a veneer of legitimacy. Even Benedict believed Schmerler had committed errors, Woodbury argues. If Benedict blamed Schmerler, why wouldn't we?

CRIME SCENE #2: THE RUTH FULTON BENEDICT PAPERS

Woodbury's approach leads us to another archive/crime scene: the Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers at Vassar College. Benedict's first letters about Schmerler are to Odd Halseth, an archaeologist based in Phoenix, Arizona. In May 1931, Benedict writes to Halseth asking for his advice on two women students going to Arizona for fieldwork. One is "an older woman who will be driving her own car" and wants to

study the Papago; the other is “a girl student” who wants to study the White Mountain Apache and “would have no car.”⁵ Halseth, eager to please (and to ask Benedict to support his Guggenheim application), writes back advising against studying the Papago because it is too hot and against sending the second student without a car. Instead, he suggests they go together to Whiteriver, Arizona, where a Catholic priest he knows can vouch for them.⁶ While we do not know whether Benedict passed this advice on, we do know that these two women did not go to the field together. The first, Ruth Underhill, went to Sells, Arizona. The second was Schmerler.

Immediately after Schmerler’s death, Halseth writes to Benedict in shock; he advised Benedict to send her student to Whiteriver, but he “did not dream that anything like this could happen.”⁷ Benedict, in a July 28, 1931 letter, thanks Halseth for his concern and writes, perhaps in reference to his Guggenheim application:

It is a crying shame to have you at large in the Southwest and without funds to carry out your plans as you would like. I do not know yet whether Miss Schmerler’s unused funds are safe, so I cannot tell whether any funds are available to go on with work in that field. I shall 1st let you know.⁸

There are two important facts here. The first is that, contrary to Woodbury’s claim, Schmerler did have funding from Columbia.⁹ The second is that Benedict offered whatever might be left of that funding to another anthropologist (who did not even have an affiliation with Columbia) less than four days after Schmerler had been confirmed dead. (Halseth, to his credit, clarified immediately that in light of the tragedy he “didn’t even suppose that there would be a continuation of ethnological work.”)¹⁰

Benedict’s cold yet officious offer to Halseth is characteristic of how, after Schmerler’s death, she focuses on reassuring her colleagues that anthropological fieldwork will continue uninterrupted. She responds to condolences with lengthy strategic missives. To Halseth, she confesses she is trying to keep a distance from the investigation to preserve her own research;¹¹ to Jesse Nusbaum, she writes fearfully about the trial’s impact on Apache–anthropologist relations;¹² to Alden Mason, she writes that while Schmerler’s death is “terrible,” Benedict’s own work “will not be interrupted by this tragedy.”¹³ Her militant professionalism may have been necessary. Alfred L. Kroeber, who founded the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, after receiving the first PhD granted in anthropology by Columbia University, in 1901, begins a July 30, 1931 letter to Benedict like this:

I assume the Fort Apache tragedy has no connection with your party. If the news accounts are right, she [Schmerler] seems to have been indiscreet—perhaps mixing personal problems with technique of work. But it is rather terrible, and may hurt fieldwork.¹⁴

Kroeber implies that Schmerler—and anyone with a “connection” to her—may harm the discipline. Kroeber’s prefer-

ence for men scholars was not a secret,¹⁵ and his letter is a good reminder that the positions of women anthropologists were far from secure.¹⁶ Benedict’s restraint is a reasonable defense against colleagues who might use an emotional response against her.

From Benedict’s papers at Vassar, it appears Benedict only begins to blame Schmerler for her own death to students and colleagues after Reichard writes about her second trip to Whiteriver in July 1932. Part of Reichard’s mission was to smooth over Columbia’s (and, by proxy, anthropology’s) relationship with William Donner, the superintendent of the reservation at Whiteriver. As Kroeber’s letter implied, the future of anthropological fieldwork depended on the goodwill not of the Indigenous peoples that anthropologists studied but of white authorities like Donner. Donner tells Reichard that Schmerler brought whiskey to the reservation and implies that she was having sex with interlocutors. “No one here seems to blame anyone but her now,” Reichard writes.¹⁷ Despite its reliance on a questionable source, Reichard’s letter seems to have released Benedict. A few days later, on July 20, 1932, Benedict ends a letter to Underhill with a reference to Schmerler:

[Reichard] says they have proof that [Schmerler] took whiskey onto the reservation. It makes me ill to think of anybody’s [sic] doing that, under the circumstances. . . . I had been sure that she was blameless in that anyway. It’s just a year ago now.¹⁸

The “it” in that last sentence refers to Schmerler’s rape and murder. In this paragraph, there may be something like grief, but there is also something just east of relief. If Schmerler is to blame, then Benedict, her mentor, is not.

In truth, Benedict would never have been publicly held responsible. Though she often acted as department chair, at Columbia she was still a woman, and Boas was still the ultimate authority. Boas’s correspondence about Schmerler with Benedict is frequently reproduced as follows:

I cannot tell you how shocked and also worried I am by the fate of Henrietta. I am trying to imagine what may have happened and cannot conceive of anything that should have induced nowadays an Indian to murder a visitor. [In another letter after receiving a detailed report on the events:] It is dreadful. How shall we now dare to send a young girl out after this? And still. Is it not necessary and right? (Mead 1959, 408–10)

Most interpretations of these two letters focus on Boas’s instinct to protect women by keeping them from the field (e.g., Howell 1990, 95; cf., with slight variation, Howard 1984, 128), but I am equally interested in the omission this particular reproduction enables. Benedict never wrote to Boas with a detailed report (a fact Boas notes with frustration in multiple letters to her). The report referenced here is from Reichard, the same person who repeated Donner’s claim that Schmerler brought whiskey to the reservation.¹⁹ Reichard went on to advise many anthropologists, including Nathalie Ferris Sampson, who, after marriage, became Nathalie F. S. Woodbury, the author of *AN*’s “Past Is Present” column.²⁰ Almost every extant

account of Schmerler's death circulated among anthropologists in the 1930s comes either from contemporary news reports or else from Reichard or Underhill, both of whom got their information from Donner, the man responsible for maintaining peace on the White Mountain Apache reservation (Underhill 2014, 155–58).²¹

CRIME SCENE #3: MORRIS OPLER'S LETTER IN ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS

Donner and Reichard may be our original culprits, but remember: this conspiracy to blame Schmerler for her own rape and murder is intergenerational. The mystery isn't just why anthropologists blamed Schmerler but why they *continued* to do so decades later. Return to the pages of *AN*, where Woodbury devotes her "Past Is Present" column in March 1987 to a letter from Morris Opler (1987, 3), who was with Benedict in 1931. The plot thickens, or maybe ossifies; Opler writes that Schmerler was a Mead imitator who was researching sex among the Apache. "The youth who slew her interpreted her emphasis on sex in her research as a sign of looseness and invited her to ride behind him on his horse, something that young people of opposite sex among the Apache do not do unless they are courting," Opler writes. Schmerler was "unaware" of this custom, and "the struggle, assault and death followed." Opler's use of passive voice to describe a rape and knife attack that left Schmerler dead and disfigured is stunning (G. Schmerler 2017, 87–89).

But remember, it's 1987. *Writing Culture* was published less than a year earlier. Opler is writing from a discipline where "culture" is still anthropologists' exclusive domain of expertise. So it perhaps comes as a surprise when two nonanthropologists contest Opler and Woodbury on ethnographic grounds later that year. Schmerler's niece and nephew Evelyn Kamanitz and Gil Schmerler (1987, 2) write in to *AN* to solicit help with a book about their aunt's life. "Nowhere have we found reliable evidence of any specific taboo concerning a single woman riding horseback with an Apache man or that such an action necessarily implies a sexual invitation or assent," they write. "Furthermore, the assumption that Henrietta actually did ride with her murderer—or ride voluntarily—rests on the testimony of the murderer and his brother-in-law." This is not only an empirical, ethnographic question but also a challenge to anthropologists who believe that "culture" is something they alone can mobilize for their own goals.

The anthropological community ignores Kamanitz and Schmerler (G. Schmerler and Steffen 2018). No one responds with evidence of the taboo; in fact, the conversation goes on as if they'd never written. In Howell's *Surviving Fieldwork*, Opler's letter from March 1987 provides the definitive account of the incident (Howell 1990, 94–95). Three years later, *Hidden Scholars*, a history of women in anthropology that compliments itself for avoiding "the shrillness and bias" of feminist works (Woodbury and Woodbury 1993, ix), relies on Opler's letter extensively when writing about Schmerler (Parezo 1993, 362).

CRIME SCENE #4: FOOTNOTES IN HISTORIES OF ANTHROPOLOGY

It is hard not to read the ascendancy of Opler's narrative of Schmerler's death—especially in *Hidden Scholars*, which is a women-led, women-centered historical project—as perpetuating the myth that despite the number of women anthropologists working in the first half of the twentieth century, the history of American anthropology must be a history of men, by men. His 1987 letter is not the first time Opler authorized himself to tell Schmerler's story. Fourteen years earlier, Opler edited a book of his correspondence with Grenville Goodwin, an anthropologist who studied Western Apache customs without an advanced degree or institutional affiliation before dying suddenly of a brain tumor at age thirty-two. In an April 4, 1932 letter to Opler, Goodwin writes that "that murder trial" has made Columbia "pretty unpopular in the Southwest now" (Goodwin in Opler 1973, 24). Columbia's institutional reputation—not Schmerler's lost life—is the subject at stake here. Opler's editorial decisions make it clear that he not only agrees with Goodwin's analysis but also wants to demonstrate that Goodwin was right to later note that Columbia was not "to blame for all this" (24). In a footnote, Opler explains that Goodwin is referring to "a graduate student" who was "murdered by Indian youths" in 1931 (24n17). Without citations, he states,

There was evidence that she had been extremely indiscreet, largely because of ignorance of how some of her actions would be construed. The trial and attending publicity dragged on until the spring of 1932 and made difficulties for those who wished to engage in Apache research during this period. (24n17).

The narrative is familiar, but it's the absence of Schmerler's name here—which Opler knew, given that he was with Benedict when Schmerler was murdered—that catches the eye. Even in the story of her own death's significance, Schmerler is erased so that two men can use her murderer's trial as an occasion to write about the things that matter to them: institutions, reputations, fellowships, access to Indigenous people, other men.

Opler's editorial attitude in the 1970s is in line with his mentor Benedict's administrative attitude in the 1930s. Benedict spends much of her letters that summer writing not about Schmerler but about Opler, Sol Tax, Jules Henry (then Blumensohn), John P. Gillin, Regina Flannery Herzfeld, and the other students she was training in Mescalero, all but one of whom were men (Babcock and Parezo 1993, 31). In the constructed narrative, Schmerler's rejection from the Mescalero program—along with a nonmetaphorical allegation that she had trouble opening a door (see Parezo 1993, 362; see also Woodbury 1986b, 3)—is viewed as a sign that she must have been incompetent rather than a reflection of Benedict's desire to influence the students who would actually get university appointments: men.

This decades-long commitment to perpetuating the received narrative about Schmerler produces willfully shoddy scholarship. Researchers looking for evidence of Schmerler's

“extreme” indiscretion are hard-pressed to find it until *after* she’s dead, at which point statements about her behavior become evidence not of indiscretion but of how people used indiscretion to justify her death. In a biography of Benedict, Judith Modell (1983, 181) uses a July 28, 1931 letter as evidence that Schmerler “insisted” on going to work with “a reputedly fierce tribe” and that Benedict sent Schmerler to the field “with some anxiety”; however, in the letter, Benedict recalls *Boas* characterizing the tribe as “fierce,” wonders whether *she* might have made other arrangements for Schmerler, and notes that Schmerler’s letter made her fieldwork conditions seem “quite all right.”²² Parezo cites Opler’s 1987 *AN* letter, Modell’s account, and an un-bylined 1931 article from *El Palacio* as the sources for her claims that Schmerler “never tried to understand proper female Apache roles and behaviors, was too impatient to learn, and had a tendency to barge into situations without thinking” (Parezo 1993, 361–62). All of these historical claims—about Benedict’s state of mind and Schmerler’s character—are specific, and to make them, scholars should provide evidence, archival or otherwise. They do not.

CRIME SCENE #5: THE RECENTLY UNRESTRICTED FILES IN THE MARGARET MEAD PAPERS

Understanding why scholars in the 1980s and 1990s blamed Schmerler requires an understanding of why they resist blaming Benedict, who remains at the center of these secondary accounts. While *Boas*’s biography is often used as a means to better understand his scholarly work or evaluate his impact (e.g., Blackhawk and Wilner 2018), with few exceptions (e.g., Young 2005), Benedict’s biography is usually presented not as a means to an intellectual goal but as an end. Unlike *Boas*, Benedict’s success as a scholar requires explanation, and her biography acts as a manual that demonstrates how women can succeed. Because Benedict was Schmerler’s advisor and Schmerler’s death was the result of sexual violence by a man against a woman, scholars like Parezo (1993, 361–62) have assumed that this is a story about women (cf. Steffen 2017). The implicit hypothetical in Woodbury’s *AN* columns—*Did Benedict actually blame Schmerler for her rape and murder?*—appeals to Benedict’s authority as one of the first successful women anthropologists. It implies that to contradict Benedict’s interpretation is to contest the legitimacy of a legacy that made the careers of women anthropologists possible. It disguises a historiographical and ideological concern for Benedict’s legacy as a historical question.

Benedict’s legacy is difficult to evaluate historically for logistical reasons. Both Mead’s and Benedict’s papers were managed by Mead, who placed extensive restrictions on both their papers (for a chronological account of those restrictions, see Young 2005, 53–54). The Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers is an archive of Benedict’s *professional* self; it contains only the portion of her correspondence that Mead approved. In the letters Modell cites that do not show Benedict remembering Henrietta as naïve (Modell 1983, 325n163), Benedict

is carefully curating a version of events for powerful men. These are her letters, but they are professional, *not* personal.

Benedict’s personal thoughts are contained in the recently unrestricted files in the Margaret Mead Papers at the Library of Congress.²³ Mead and those she charged with managing her papers after her death are fiercely protective of her legacy, and I’ve found several instances of controversial letters moving or disappearing after their reference in publications.²⁴ As of November 2018, letters recently opened to the public revealed the familiar but uncited narrative Modell and Parezo ventriloquized. After Schmerler’s death, Mead and Benedict write to each other feverishly, without waiting for a response. In an undated July 1931 letter, Mead writes that she believes Schmerler “is a silly fool” and that her rape and murder “will successfully prevent any girl doing good fieldwork for years.”²⁵ She continues:

There’s always the chance that it was just a coincidence with some angry person—not her bad judgement, but if she’d done as she was told, I don’t see how it would have happened. Not this way anyhow. I told her to attach herself to the women and to get young girls’ confidences who would be always with her.²⁶

Here they are, finally: the instructions to work with women, which Schmerler must have ignored. Note that they emerge after the fact, as a justification for Schmerler’s terrible death and as part of Mead’s attempt to shield herself from blame.

In Mead’s papers, Reichard’s fabled August 1931 report from her first trip to Whiteriver (a version of which she must have given *Boas*) also emerges. In an August 8, 1931 letter to Benedict, Reichard reports gruesome details about the condition of Schmerler’s body unflinchingly, but as she begins to consider who might be responsible (Seymour wouldn’t be charged for months), she begins to lose her nerve. She first admits that on reservations “Indians + Whites drink terribly + rape is their besetting sin.”²⁷ Then she implies that whoever raped Schmerler had to kill her because, unlike Apache women’s reports, which are mostly ignored, a white woman might cause her rapist to face real punitive consequences. Having cleared whoever killed Schmerler of culpability, she pivots toward a broader question of accountability:

I do believe that all responsibility—except perhaps ours, + I don’t quite know how we can blame ourselves—must be put on her. She was not only foolhardy but headstrong. But God! What a punishment. It is too unthinkable.²⁸

This is the closest Reichard comes to considering that she and the rest of Schmerler’s mentors at Columbia might bear some responsibility for what happened to their student; in all subsequent correspondence, she confidently blames Schmerler for being wild and indiscreet.

Benedict privately comes to the same conclusion. After receiving Mead’s July 1931 letter, Benedict forwards Reichard’s report to Mead. She is relieved to hear Mead gave Schmerler instructions. Benedict writes that she too had told Schmerler to either live with a family or hire a young woman to live with her, but admits “the punishment [Schmerler] had to take for her mistakes is so terrible that it’s almost

besides the point to dwell on them.”²⁹ Benedict could not have known that for decades anthropologists would deliberately dwell on Schmerler’s mistakes, but she tells Mead she had been “giving Henrietta every benefit of the doubt,” in part because she identified Schmerler with Mead.³⁰ Mead disavows the similarities between herself and Schmerler: “it had never entered my head that you would make that identification of me and Henrietta . . . maybe it’s because I disliked Henrietta so that I never identified myself with her.”³¹ Anticipating elements of Opler’s future narrative that would portray Schmerler as someone who idolized Mead’s work on sex in Samoa, Mead further distinguishes herself by implying Schmerler slept with her interlocutors; unlike Schmerler, Mead writes that she doesn’t “go in” for young men in “primitive” places because “it’s not safe.”³² There’s no date on this last letter, but the latest it could have been written is August 18, 1931: exactly one month after Schmerler died alone in a ravine.

No wonder, perhaps, that Mead worked so hard to keep these letters from public view. By using the tropes of preparation, foolishness, and wild sexuality to discredit Schmerler, Benedict, Mead, and Reichard insulated themselves from blame and portrayed the violence she’d encountered as something exceptional that could only have happened to a bad anthropologist who disobeyed instructions. This is an especially ironic reason to criticize Schmerler given it was Mead’s insubordination when sailing for Samoa against the wishes of both Boas and her then-lover, Edward Sapir, that allowed her to do the fieldwork that made her famous (Lapsley 1999, 120). Nevertheless, Schmerler’s women teachers continued to distance themselves from her and insist that the rape and murder were her own fault: not their fault, not the fault of Apache man who would eventually be charged, and certainly not Columbia’s fault.

CRIME SCENES #6 AND #7: THE FRANZ BOAS PAPERS AND RUTH UNDERHILL’S MEMOIR

Besides sympathy for Schmerler, what’s missing from anthropologists’ accounts in the 1930s are perspectives from people in the White Mountain Apache Tribe and the stakes of Schmerler’s rape and murder for them. To find out what cultural factors might be at play, Boas consults not anyone living in Whiteriver but Paul Kirchhoff, an anthropologist who worked with a different Apache tribe. The point, for Boas, is not to find about the person who might have raped and murdered Schmerler but to understand his *culture*; the possibility that rape and murder might happen regardless of culturally specific motivations seems to escape him entirely. Kirchhoff tells Boas that the White Mountain Apache are “friendly and agreeable,” that “very special circumstances” must have “led to this deplorable accident,” and that he “always felt there could be no place safer and more pleasant in the U.S. than in an Indian reservation.”³³ Kirchhoff’s letter ignores the obvious circumstance that distinguished Schmerler’s experience from his (her gender) and also the fact that while a reser-

vation might be the safest and most pleasant place he, as a white immigrant to North America, felt he could be, many members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe may have felt differently. In 1869, the US Army scouts who established Fort Apache in what would become the White Mountain Reservation were ordered “if possible to exterminate the whole village” (White Mountain Apache Tribe, n.d.). The reservation’s governance by Donner, a white man, in 1931 was one result of the Apache Wars between the US Army and various Apache nations; the government boarding school in Fort Apache was another. White Mountain Apache living near Whiteriver in 1931 had suffered extraordinary violence at the hands of US authorities within their lifetimes for failing to appear “friendly and agreeable” to white men like Kirchhoff.

A decade after Schmerler’s rape and murder, Underhill began working at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where she recorded the harsh conditions children at Fort Apache’s government boarding schools were subjected to in official government publications (quoted in Reyhner 2018, 67). Underhill’s perception of herself as an advocate for Indigenous people is likely why, despite never speaking to Seymour (the man convicted of murdering Schmerler), she gives herself license to fictionalize his motives anyway in her posthumously published memoir.³⁴ Underhill not only blames Schmerler by implying she “invited” sexual attention but also portrays her rape as a misunderstanding:

He expected they would immediately go into a love act . . . she’d had no such idea. . . . She was frightened and screamed, but he thought her screams were just acting. He proceeded and began to kiss her and let it go further. Finally she yelled loudly, “I’ll tell the white people! I’ll tell the white people!” when he heard that, he was scared and quite wild, and he killed her with a knife. (Underhill 2014, 157–58)

There is no evidence that this is how Schmerler’s rape and murder happened (cf. G. Schmerler 71–74, 210–21), and “let it go further” is quite a euphemism for rape and murder. Underhill is using her expertise as an anthropologist to write a fictionalized account where Seymour—not Schmerler—emerges as a tragic victim of circumstances beyond his control.

DENIAL AND THE PARADOX OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL POWER

Consider, nevertheless, the host of violent consequences for Seymour and the White Mountain Apache Underhill summons when she imagines Schmerler’s last words to be “I’ll tell the white people.” As Boas, Benedict, Reichard, Mead, and Underhill must have known, a story like this was precisely what “the white people” expected to hear. Most contemporary news accounts of Schmerler’s rape and murder highlighted popular stereotypes of the Apache as violent by nature; one article ends ominously, “We trust that the tragedy of which Miss Henrietta Schmerler was the Victim will not be made the basis of a report in the east of an Apache uprising.”³⁵ Another attributes her death to a “vile

Indian brew” consumed during “orgies” (Woodward 1931, 69). With the exception of Reo Fortune, who made the repulsive suggestion to Mead that authorities shoot ten men randomly “to show them that they can’t get away with this” (Howard 1984, 128), anthropologists in the 1930s mobilized to blame Schmerler not only to protect their own access to the field but also to protect Seymour from the death penalty and the White Mountain Apache from collective punishment. In statements to the FBI, anthropologists argued for Seymour’s life by insisting that Schmerler’s rape and murder were inevitable because as a White Mountain Apache man, he culturally could not have done otherwise.³⁶ They seem to believe they were sacrificing Schmerler’s reputation to save not just Seymour but also the White Mountain Apache Tribe from harm; however, by doing so, they denied the full scope of Seymour’s humanity, which includes the ability to do harm.

This denial is fundamental to Schmerler’s story and to anthropology. Openly stated refusals to see or imagine characterize many 1930s anthropologists’ responses to Schmerler’s rape and murder. Boas “cannot conceive of anything that should have induced nowadays an Indian to murder a visitor,” Reichard finds Schmerler’s death “unthinkable,” and Mead doesn’t “see how it would have happened.” When Boas states that he cannot imagine what would cause an Indian to rape and murder an anthropologist, he is to some extent signaling that, as an anthropologist who has championed the right of Indigenous people to exist as they are, he cannot *bear* to imagine it. This was true for most of the Columbia anthropologists. Days after Schmerler’s body is found, Benedict hopefully reports that her Mescalero interlocutors think white men must have killed her.³⁷ The degree to which Schmerler’s corpse is mutilated similarly makes Reichard think that white men must have done it.³⁸ And even after Seymour was convicted, Underhill (2014, 151) still refuses to call him a “murderer” and refers to him instead as Schmerler’s “killer,” not because she thinks he didn’t do it but because she doesn’t think he can be held responsible.

Although anthropologists today lean less on the culture concept than Columbia anthropologists in the 1930s, this patronizing, professional prerogative to protect the people they work with continues to plague the discipline. It echoes faintly in the 1980s debate in *AN* when Tannen (1986) implores her colleagues not “to use our anthropological awareness of cultural relativity to excuse crimes,” and Opler (1987), just a few months later, does it anyway. On the one hand, when anthropologists deny that the people they work with do harm, they are also denying a crucial aspect of those people’s humanity. On the other hand, a nuanced argument about how members of an oppressed group do harm can have the unintended effect of justifying violence against that group by playing into dehumanizing stereotypes (di Leonardo 1992). Publicly acknowledging that Seymour was both a victim of structural racist violence and also a person who raped Schmerler, cut her throat, and left her for dead at the bottom of a gulch

might have led to Seymour’s execution. Who, under those circumstances, needs nuance?

If anthropology as a discipline has any power, this denial is at the heart of its paradox. The interpretation of Schmerler’s rape and murder that blames her also conveniently serves the interests of all the powerful institutions it touches, even those that might otherwise be in conflict with each other: the Bureau of Indian Affairs charged with maintaining peace, the white men profiting from governing the White Mountain Apache Reservation, the Columbia anthropologists who felt entitled to study Indigenous people, the newspaper reporters hungry for a lurid tale about breaking gender norms and racist stereotypes, and the historians of anthropology who are invested in the reputations of their teachers and predecessors. For these people, the story works; for Schmerler and Seymour, ironically, it does not. In 1932, a jury of twelve white men sentenced Seymour to life in prison for raping and murdering Schmerler. He was released on parole in 1952, but he returned to prison in 1957 after soliciting sex from a ten-year-old girl. He was released on parole again in 1963, and his parole supervision finally ended in 1978, two years before his death in 1980. While those writing in the 1980s and 1990s are hard to excuse, anthropologists in the 1930s may generously be seen as fictionalizing Apache culture to protect Seymour from harm—but even then, their attention is short-lived and self-serving. Not a single anthropologist ever refers to Seymour by name; in their letters, he appears as “the Indian,” “an Indian,” or “a young Indian.” After the trial concludes with Seymour escaping the death penalty, anthropologists lose whatever interest they had in Seymour. No letter from any of the anthropologists who argued so vehemently that Seymour could not have done anything but rape and murder Schmerler appears in his probation file.

CLUES FROM WHITERIVER: “I HAVE TO LIVE HERE, YOU KNOW”

And what about the people who stayed in Whiteriver after Seymour’s trial was held in English, a language he may not have understood (G. Schmerler 2017, 220), and run by a defense lawyer who may never have been paid (163), who argued that Seymour was like a cat who killed “because it could not resist its instincts” (quoted in Mattina 2019, 137)? Kamanitz and Gil Schmerler may be the only researchers of Schmerler’s story to visit Whiteriver.³⁹ They report that Mary Velasquez, one of Schmerler’s main interlocutors, who made her the traditional dress she was wearing the night she was murdered, cried and said, “with clear but understandable hyperbole, ‘She was my best friend’” (G. Schmerler 2017, 55). This sentimental display stands in stark contrast to the chilly reception they received from Arthur Guenther, a white Lutheran missionary and the son of Reverend E. E. Guenther, a witness for the defense at Seymour’s trial. When Kamanitz asked Arthur Guenther what he remembered about the trial, “He refused to answer. ‘I have to live here, you know,’ he told her” (G. Schmerler 2017, 208).

Arthur Guenther's father understood that race determined Seymour's sentencing; in a letter to Seymour's parole officer in 1954, the elder Guenther points out that "three young Apaches from this reservation who, deliberately and in most brutal fashion murdered their wives," only had to serve five years.⁴⁰ Seymour's sentence is longer only because Schmerler was white.

Seymour entered McNeil Island Penitentiary in Washington State in 1932. By 1933, the child that he held briefly outside the courthouse in Globe, Arizona, before going to prison was dead (G. Schmerler 2017, 230; G. Schmerler, n.d.). By 1935, his wife at the time of Schmerler's rape and murder had remarried. When Seymour returned to Whiteriver in 1952, his brother was in jail and he had nowhere to stay (G. Schmerler, n.d.). When I read a letter explaining that in 1957, Seymour once again went back to prison, this time for soliciting sex from a ten-year-old girl,⁴¹ I think of Arthur Guenther's refusal: "I have to live here, you know." Schmerler set out in part to find what it meant to live in Whiteriver in 1931. Her fieldnotes have early records of the Sunrise Dance, a coming-of-age ceremony for girls.⁴² She also records that a similar ceremony for boys seems to be practiced secretly despite being banned by US authorities, who saw it as contributing to the Apache's "warrior" culture (Norelli 1994). In Schmerler's last entry on July 18, 1931, the day she died, Velasquez is helping her transcribe songs from the Sunrise Dance. I wonder who else Arthur Guenther was thinking of when he refused to speak to Kamanitz. Was he thinking of Velasquez, who decades after helping Schmerler with her fieldnotes went on to become the first woman elected to the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council (AZWHF 1988)? Was he thinking of the mother of the ten-year-old girl Seymour threatened to kill in 1957 after she objected to his attempt to rape her child (G. Schmerler, n.d.)? Or the unnamed women whose husbands were only sentenced to five years in prison for murdering them? Those women had to live in Whiteriver, too.

As Alix Johnson (2017) points out, "asking for safety and justice is always a claim to belonging." Schmerler did not belong in Whiteriver; although she did ultimately die there, she did not have to live there. Schmerler did, however, belong to the anthropological community, and it makes more sense to ask for justice for her there than in Arizona. Even after the #MeToo movement demonstrated how widespread experiences of sexual violence are, anthropologists are still struggling to interpret her story in a way that does not appear to be fateful. In *A Passion for the True and Just*, Alice Kehoe (2019, 63) reprises Underhill's misunderstanding narrative and recounts Schmerler's rape and murder in the passive voice, describing "a new reluctance to let young women work on reservations, the result of the 1931 murder of a Columbia graduate student by an Apache man who misunderstood, and was angered by, her insistence on asking about Apache sexual customs." In a review of Gil Schmerler's (2017) book, Pauline Turner Strong (2018, 7) suggests that the one reason for Schmerler's death might be "the cul-

tural imperialism and entitlement at the heart of salvage ethnography." "Without this sense of urgency and entitlement," Strong continues, "Henrietta Schmerler might not have been sent to the White Mountain Apache reservation with so little preparation" (7). While Strong's critique of anthropology's entitlement is well put, her belief that Schmerler was raped and killed because she lacked "preparation" is yet another iteration of anthropology's project of prevention, where idealized tropes of fieldwork are used to justify her death. It's impossible to know whether Schmerler could have prevented the particular circumstances of her rape if she'd had more time, more training, or more familiarity with Apache culture; however, these things do not insulate people who are not anthropologists from sexual violence in their everyday lives. Although the cultural case for blaming Schmerler rests on the idea that she should have known riding a horse behind an Apache man signifies consenting to sex, no one has been able to contradict Kamanitz and Gil Schmerler, who could find no evidence of the practice outside testimony for the defense at Seymour's trial (G. Schmerler 2017).

CRIME SCENE #8: THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY RECORDS

It's difficult to find written evidence of this practice that predates Seymour's trial. I know because I too looked for it; I too searched for evidence of Schmerler's wrongdoing. What I found instead is a letter from Donner, the superintendent of the reservation, to the commissioner of Indian affairs in the Columbia University Department of Anthropology Records. This final archive/crime scene contains a detailed record of everyday life in Boas's department. The letter is dated July 27, 1931, two days after Schmerler's body was found and four months before FBI investigators would declare Seymour their primary suspect, so Donner can only write in hypotheticals:

[Schmerler] had been quite familiar with Indian boys and would not hesitate to get on the same horse-back of an Indian to ride to the dance, which procedure, if true, might be perfectly safe with most of our Indian boys especially when they are sober, but which procedure would not be safe with some of our Indian boys when partially intoxicated, especially with the suspects we have locked up.⁴³

Donner is not an anthropologist, which is perhaps why he does not fictionalize the Apache cultural practice that puts the blame on Schmerler right away. Instead, he's tentative: It *might be perfectly safe* to accept a ride on the back of a man's horse. When Schmerler did so, it was not, which makes both no difference and all the difference.

Schmerler might have returned from her first summer of fieldwork *perfectly safe*; instead, after Schmerler's death, Columbia begins a series of brutal maneuvers to avoid institutional liability that should be familiar to anyone who's brushed up against a Title IX case at a US university. Because Boas had been ill, Benedict had been acting as chair (Young 2005, 145). Schmerler's rape and murder—beyond


its hypothetical effects on the future of women conducting fieldwork—had the immediate effect of ending Benedict’s de facto role as chair. In the wake of an incident as serious as this, important men—the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the superintendent of the reservation, the secretary of Columbia, and the father of the victim—reach out to the department and demand to speak to another man. Beginning in August 1931, Boas gamely takes up the department’s official correspondence until he falls ill again in the winter and Benedict appears to take parts of it back over, sometimes going so far as to write letters *as* Boas.⁴⁴

Remember where these letters are: not with the rest of Boas’s papers at the APS but in the department records at Columbia. For Boas and Benedict, these are institutional decisions, not personal ones, regardless of the personal effect they might have on others. Even in our own decade, scholars continue to insist that “Columbia settled out-of-court with Schmerler’s father” despite the fact that there’s no evidence of a lawsuit in the Columbia Archives (e.g., Mattina 2019, 136).⁴⁵ Despite working in a discipline ostensibly devoted to understanding the worldviews of others, the views of anthropologists—not Schmerler’s family—were the only ones that mattered.

Nothing exemplifies this self-interested tendency more than the way Boas and Benedict handled the \$30 (roughly \$478 in 2020) that Schmerler gave the white farmer for the horse she never ended up collecting. After her body was found, the white farmer returned the money to Donner; he in turn sent it to Frank Fackenthal, the secretary of Columbia;⁴⁶ Fackenthal then sent it to Boas.⁴⁷ On November 18, 1931, Boas asks Schmerler’s father, Elias Schmerler, “whether your daughter had any money of her own that she took along with her on her trip” or whether the check was funding from the university.⁴⁸ Elias Schmerler cannot answer with certainty beyond telling Boas which bank Schmerler was using for her travelers checks.⁴⁹ Boas writes to the bank, which tells him they cannot determine whether the \$30 belongs to the department or to Schmerler.⁵⁰

This is the last time the \$30 is explicitly mentioned in Boas’s correspondence. In the second week of December 1931, a box with Schmerler’s possessions arrived at the department. Perhaps when Elias Schmerler came to collect everything left of his daughter that had not been considered evidence, Boas also handed him the check for \$30 with an apology about the delay. What appears to have happened, however, is that Boas kept the money. In a private letter to Mead held in Mead’s papers, Benedict writes that on December 27, 1931, Elias Schmerler requested Schmerler’s unspent funds to be returned to him by asking pointedly, “Is Columbia Henrietta Schmerler’s heir?”⁵¹ Instead of the money, Benedict, Boas, and Fackenthal send Elias Schmerler a letter with “additional precautions to be taken for the future in order to safeguard workers in the field.”⁵² Benedict notes that the letter does more to protect Columbia and the department than anyone else.

Anthropologists in 2020 may find these maneuvers—where informal networks of friends-cum-colleagues tacitly agree to use arcane institutional mechanisms to sacrifice women’s careers, reputations, and lives so that the careers of others (usually men) may continue unhindered—familiar (Leighton 2020; cf. Gluckman 2020). In narratives of Schmerler’s death from the 1980s, the (incorrect) fact that Schmerler paid for her own trip is frequently cited as just another reason she was doomed to fail (see Modell 1983, 180; Woodbury 1987a, 4). That Columbia’s anthropologists would not only disavow Schmerler but also keep the money she used to buy the horse that would have made it easy for her to turn down rides from others the way her critics insisted she should have known to do is a great irony. It is an irony that drives one to take flight in search of different predecessors, different modes of research, or maybe even an entirely different disciplinary home (Berry et al. 2017). This one, despite its best efforts, remains unrepentant, at large, and dangerous to itself and others.

Megan Steffen  Independent scholar; meganamandasteffen@gmail.com

NOTES

Acknowledgments. Thanks to Gil Schmerler, without whom this article could not have been written, Evelyn Kamanitz, and Anne Atkinson. Thank you to Jamie Yang, who funded my trip to the Library of Congress. Thanks also to John Borneman, Carol Greenhouse, Carolyn Rouse, Rena Lederman, Joel Rozen, Sebastián Ramírez, Pablo Landa, William Vega, Daniella Scuggs, Mingwei Huang, Alix Johnson, Eda Pepi, Susan MacDougall, Vivian Lu, Dr. Antonia Fried, Claudia Huang, Annie Malcolm, David Platzer, Paul Rabinow, Leah Reisman, Dierdre de la Cruz, the UMich Anthrohistory Reading Group, Deborah Thomas, Negar Razavi, Elizabeth Chin, and five anonymous reviewers for their help with different versions of this article. Finally, thank you to Jiazhi Fengjiang for translating the abstract of this article into Chinese and for her commitment to ensuring Schmerler’s story reaches the sinophone world.

1. “Henrietta Schmerler to Elias Schmerler, July 16, 1931,” personal correspondence courtesy of Gil Schmerler.
2. “RE: HENRIETTA SCHMERLER CASE,” in US Department of Justice Bureau of Investigation File 70-145-61X, April 20, 1932, courtesy of Gil Schmerler, 6.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Compare with Woodbury’s reaction to Richard Slobodin, who not only disagrees with Woodbury’s main argument but also casts aspersions on facts she’s reported (Slobodin 1987, 2; Woodbury 1987b, 2).
5. “Letter from Ruth Benedict to Odd Halseth, May 22, 1931,” in Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers (RFB Papers), of Vassar College, Archives and Special Collections Library, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193183.

6. "Letter from Odd S. Halseth to Ruth Benedict, May 29, 1931," in RFB Papers, 2. Accessed April 8, 2017. http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193185#page/4/mode/1.
7. "Letter from Odd S. Halseth to Ruth Benedict, July 25, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193147.
8. "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Odd Halseth, July 28, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193150#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity/bibliographic_details/3193150.
9. The FBI's report also states that Schmerler "provided with funds by the university" for her trip to Whiteriver. "RE: HENRIETTA SCHMERLER CASE," 3.
10. "Letter from Odd S. Halseth to Ruth Benedict, August 2, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193153.
11. "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Odd Halseth, July 28, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193150#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity/bibliographic_details/3193150.
12. "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Jesse Nusbaum, July 29, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193164.
13. "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Dr. Mason, July 29, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193151.
14. "Letter from Alfred L. Kroeber to Ruth Benedict, July 30, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3188271#page/3/mode/1.
15. Ironically the rest of Kroeber's letter is about two men scholars without funding (ibid., 2 and 3).
16. A letter written by Reichard describes a conference during which Kroeber insists he "never was a feminist" and casually leaves finding women professorships up to Boas, much to Reichard's consternation (Reichard in Woodbury 1991, 4).
17. "Letter from Gladys A. Reichard to Ruth Benedict, July 8," in RFB Papers, 2. Accessed April 13, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3188267.
18. "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Ruth Underhill, July 20, 1932," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193165.
19. "Letter from Franz Boas to Ruth Benedict, August 27, 1931," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3287487. Reichard's report may have come by phone. In Franz Boas's papers, Reichard writes in regard to Schmerler on July 26, 1931, but the next letter from her doesn't appear until August 29, 1931—*after* August 27, when Boas tells Benedict he's heard Reichard's report. See FB Papers.
20. Woodbury was also Reichard's literary executor (see Falk 1999, xi).
21. A recent biography claims that Reichard didn't blame Schmerler until *after* she met with Donner in 1932 (Mattina 2019, 134–36); however, it ignores a letter from August 8, 1931, where Reichard describes her first trip to Whiteriver. See "Letter from Reichard to Benedict, Aug. 8, 1931," in MM Papers, Box R10 Folder 3.
22. "Benedict, Ruth F.: To Boas. 1931 July 28," in FB Papers, 1–3. Accessed April 25, 2017: <http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/text:13854>.
23. The Margaret Mead Papers (MM Papers) mystifyingly holds all of Benedict's intimate correspondence with her husband, Stanley Benedict, from before Benedict even met Mead.
24. Despite poring through the box twice, I was never able to locate the letter where Mead called Schmerler an "unpleasant Jewish woman" (quoted in Lapsley 1999, 207n10). Also, the December 27, 1931; February 24, 1932; and July 25, 1932 letters cited in Lapsley (1999, 206–7) are no longer in the FB Papers because they were "deemed out of scope in our collections and were deaccessioned" (personal correspondence with staff at APS, June 25, 2018).
25. "Letter from Mead to Benedict, Received July 1931," in MM Papers, Box S3 Folder 8, 1.
26. Ibid., 1–2.
27. "Letter from Reichard to Benedict, Aug. 8, 1931," in MM Papers, Box R10 Folder 3, 4.
28. Ibid., 4.
29. "Letter from Benedict to Mead, August 10, 1931," in MM Papers, Box T3 Folder X7, 1.
30. Ibid., 1.
31. "Letter from Mead to Benedict, undated," in MM Papers, Box S3 Folder 8.
32. Ibid.
33. "August 12, 1931: Kirchhoff to Boas," in FB Papers at the APS, 1. Accessed May 10, 2018.
34. Underhill confesses that she did not like Schmerler, felt Boas favored Schmerler because they were both Jewish, and agreed to testify on behalf of Columbia at the trial of Schmerler's murderer because it meant her research trip would be paid for (Underhill 2014, 154–55).
35. "Co-ed Research Worker's Body Found in Canyon," in RFB Papers. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193067.
36. Boas insists the murder could not have been "willful," and an agent reports that Benedict told him "she felt the Indians were children mentally" (G. Schmerler 2017, 155–56).
37. "Letter from Benedict to Mead, August 1, 1931," in MM Papers, Box S5 Folder 6.
38. "Letter from Reichard to Benedict, Aug. 8, 1931," in MM Papers, Box R10 Folder 3, 4.

39. My own plans to go to Whiteriver for research were canceled after the outbreak of COVID-19.
40. "Letter from E. Edgar Guenther to Mr. Edward J. Dougherty, January 8, 1954," in Documents from Golney Seymour's Parole File 01, courtesy of Gil Schmerler at HenriettaSchmerler.com. Accessed July 2, 2020: http://henriettaschmerler.com/uploads/1/0/0/4/100408224/golney_docs_01.pdf.
41. "Letter from Joseph C. Butner to Mr. William M. McDermott, October 1, 1957," in Documents from Golney Seymour's Parole File 02, courtesy of Gil Schmerler at HenriettaSchmerler.com, 1–4. Accessed July 2, 2020: http://henriettaschmerler.com/uploads/1/0/0/4/100408224/golney_docs_02.pdf.
42. "FONTANA PAPERS Notes on Apache Indians by Henrietta Schmerler Whiteriver, Arizona 1931," in fieldnotes, courtesy of Gil Schmerler at HenriettaSchmerler.com. Accessed July 2, 2020: http://henriettaschmerler.com/uploads/1/0/0/4/100408224/1931_hs_field_notes_on_apache_indians.pdf.
43. "Letter from Superintendent William Donner to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 27, 1931," in DA Records. Donner's caveat that liquor could also have contributed to the danger both foreshadows contemporary concerns in the United States that blame drinking on college campuses for high rates of sexual assault and also explains why he insisted to Reichard years later that Schmerler must have brought her rape on herself by bringing alcohol to the reservation.
44. Benedict's hearing impediment made her mishear—and then misspell—many names. A January 27, 1932 letter from Boas to Elias misspells his name as "L. Schmerler" instead of E. Schmerler—the same mistake Benedict made in her letter to Elias on January 27, 1932. My guess is that with Boas bedridden at the hospital, Benedict wrote both letters, an indication that she had once again taken over the duties of chair. See "Letter from Boas to L. Schmerler, January 27, 1932," in DA Records; "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Mr. L. Schmerler, January 27, 1932," in RFB Papers. Accessed April 8, 2017: https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193157.
45. Gil Schmerler suspects this misunderstanding may have arisen because Elias's son-in-law used the stationary of his law firm when corresponding with Columbia.
46. "Donner to Fackenthal, November 7, 1931," in DA Records.
47. "Fackenthal to Boas, November 17, 1931," in DA Records.
48. "Boas to E. Schmerler, November 18, 1931," in DA Records.
49. "E. Schmerler to Boas, November 24, 1931," in DA Records.
50. "Asst. Branch Manager to Boas, November 24, 1931," in DA Records.
51. "Letter from Benedict to Mead, December 19, 1931 through January 2, 1932," in MM Papers, Box T3 Folder X7, 3.
52. "Letter from Ruth Benedict to Mr. L. [sic] Schmerler, January 27, 1932," in RFB Papers, 1. Accessed April 8, 2017. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3193157. (She addresses him as "L. Schmerler" though his first name was "Elias.")

REFERENCES CITED

- AZWHF (Arizona Women Hall of Fame). 1988. "Mary V. Riley (1908–1987)." Arizona Women's Hall of Fame. Accessed July 2, 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160623111921/https://www.azwhf.org/inductions/inducted-women/mary-v-riley-1908-1987/>.
- Babcock, Barbara, and Nancy Parezo. 1986. *Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists in the Southwest, 1880–1980; Biographical Sketches and Selected Bibliographies*. Tucson: Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona.
- Berry, Maya J., Claudia Chávez Argüelles, Shanya Cordis, Sarah Ibmoud, and Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada. 2017. "Toward a Fugitive Anthropology: Gender, Race, and Violence in the Field." *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (4): 537–65.
- Blackhawk, Ned, and Isaiah Lorado Wilner, eds. 2018. *Indigenous Visions: Rediscovering the World of Franz Boas*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- di Leonardo, Micaela. 1992. "White Lies, Black Myths: Rape Race, and the Black 'Underclass.'" In *The Gender/Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy*, edited by Roger N. Lancaster and Micaela di Leonardo, 53–70. New York: Routledge.
- Falk, Julia S. 1999. *Women, Language, and Linguistics: Three American Stories from the First Half of the Twentieth Century*. London: Routledge.
- Gluckman, Nell. 2020. "The Patron." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 25. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-patron>.
- Haraway, Donna. 1984. "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936." *Social Text* 11 (Winter): 20–64.
- Howard, Jane. 1984. *Margaret Mead: A Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Howell, Nancy. 1986. "Occupational Health and Safety: An Issue in the Culture of Anthropology." *Anthropological Newsletter* 27 (5): 2, 10.
- Howell, Nancy. 1990. *Surviving Fieldwork: A Report of the Advisory Panel on Health and Safety in Fieldwork, American Anthropological Association*. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.
- Johnson, Alix. 2017. "Violence and Vulnerability in Anthropology." Allegra Lab website, October 5. <http://allegralaboratory.net/violence-vulnerability-anthropology/>.
- Kamanitz, Evelyn, and Gil Schmerler. 1987. "Henrietta Schmerler: Perspectives and Questions." *Anthropology Newsletter* 28 (5): 2.
- Kehoe, Alice. 2019. *A Passion for the True and the Just: Felix and Lucy Kramer Cohen and the Indian New Deal*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Lapsley, Hilary. 1999. *Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict: The Kinship of Women*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Leighton, Mary. 2020. "Myths of Meritocracy, Friendship, and Fun Work: Class and Gender in North American Academic Communities." *American Anthropologist* 122 (3): 444–58.
- Mattina, Nancy. 2019. *Uncommon Anthropologist: Gladys Reichard and Western Native American Culture*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Mead, Margaret. 1959. *An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co.

- Milam, Erika Lorraine. 2015. "Men in Groups: Anthropology and Aggression, 1965–84." *Osiris* 30:66–88.
- Modell, Judith. 1983. *Ruth Benedict: Patterns of a Life*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Norelli, Gianfranco. 1994. *The Sunrise Dance*. New York: Filmmakers Library.
- Opler, Morris E., ed. 1973. *Grenville Goodwin: Among the Western Apache, Letters from the Field*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Opler, Morris. 1987. "Footnote to Woodbury's Letter." *Anthropology Newsletter* 28 (1): 2.
- Parezo, Nancy J., editor. 1993. *Hidden Scholars: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Reyhner, Jon. 2018. "American Indian Boarding Schools: What Went Wrong? What Is Going Right?" *Journal of American Indian Education* 57 (1): 58–78.
- Schmerler, Gil. n.d. "Golney Seymour after the Murder." Henrietta Schmerler website. Accessed July 2, 2020. http://henriettaschmerler.com/uploads/1/0/0/4/100408224/golney_seymour.pdf.
- Schmerler, Gil. 2017. *Henrietta Schmerler and the Murder that Put Anthropology on Trial*. Eugene: Scrivana Press.
- Schmerler, Gil, and Megan Steffen. 2018. "The Disavowal of Henrietta Schmerler." *Anthropology News* 59 (3): 17–19.
- Schmerler, Henrietta. 1931. "Trickster Marries His Daughter." *The Journal of American Folklore* 44 (172): 196–207.
- Slobodin, Richard. 1987. "What Is 'Adventure'?" *Anthropology Newsletter* 28 (2): 2.
- Steffen, Megan. 2017. "Doing Fieldwork after Henrietta Schmerler: On Sexual Violence and Blame in Anthropology." *American Ethnologist* website, November 13. <http://americanethnologist.org/features/reflections/doing-fieldwork-after-henrietta-schmerler>.
- Strong, Pamela Turner. 2018. "Cora Du Bois, Henrietta Schmerler, and the Role of Women in Mid-Twentieth Century American Anthropology." *Reviews in Anthropology* 47 (3–4): 1–22.
- Tannen, Deborah. 1986. "Blame the Victim?" *Anthropology Newsletter* 27 (7): 2.
- Underhill, Ruth M. 2014. *An Anthropologist's Arrival: A Memoir*. Edited by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Stephen E. Nash. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- White Mountain Apache Tribe. n.d. "Our Culture." Accessed May 22, 2021. <https://whitemountainapache.org/culture/>.
- Woodbury, Nathalie F. S. 1986a. "No—Unpreparedness." *Anthropology Newsletter* 27 (2): 2.
- Woodbury, Nathalie F. S. 1986b. "Past Is Present: 'Adventure' in Anthropology." *Anthropology Newsletter* 27 (6): 3.
- Woodbury, Nathalie F. S. 1987a. "Past Is Present: Amplification: The Death of Henrietta Schmerler." *Anthropology Newsletter* 28 (1): 3.
- Woodbury, Nathalie F. S. 1987b. "What Is 'Adventure'?" *Anthropology Newsletter* 28 (2): 2.
- Woodbury, Nathalie F. S., and Richard B. Woodbury. 1993. "Foreword." In *Hidden Scholars: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest*, edited by Nancy Parezo. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Woodward, Arthur. 1931. "Vile Indian Brew Believed Linked with Schmerler Murder." *The Science News-Letter*, August 1.
- Young, Virginia Heyer. 2005. *Ruth Benedict: Beyond Relativity, Beyond Pattern*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.