**Touching Spirit Bear Webquest**

**Click on the links below or read the articles given, and fill out the information about topics found in the novel, *Touching Spirit Bear*.**

**Setting**

***Read the information below about the setting of the novel. Then answer the questions on your handout.***

Ketchikan is well known as the salmon capital of the world and a paradise for sport fishermen and naturalists alike. During the summer months, our town bustles with visitors from all over the world. While the rustic boardwalk on Creek Street preserves a distinct historic feel, the town hums with new construction to keep up with the everexpanding wave of tourism.

Ketchikan has a population of 14,500 and is built along a steep hillside, with sections of the town built right over the water on pilings. An outstanding collection of totem poles make a visit to Ketchikan essential for anyone interested in Native art. Ketchikan's name supposedly comes from the native term "Katch Kanna", which roughly translates: "spread wings of a thundering eagle" and rightly named,for you only need to look along the water line and you're likely to see many bald eagles on waterside perches.

Our beautiful town is located on the western coast of Revillagigedo Island, near the southernmost boundary of Alaska. It is 679 miles north of Seattle and 235 miles south of Juneau. The 2.2 million acre Misty Fjords National Monument lies 22 air miles east of Ketchikan. Ketchikan is the first Alaska port of call for northbound cruise ships and State ferries. It lies at approximately 55° 20' N Latitude, 131° 38' W Longitude. The areaencompasses 3 sq. miles of land and 1 sq. miles of water. The area lies in the maritime climate zone noted for its warm winters, cool summers, and heavy precipitation. Summer temperatures range from 51 to 65; winter temperatures range from 29 to 39.

Ketchikan averages 162 inches (13.5 feet) of precipitation annually, including 32 inches of snowfall. Established originally as a fishing camp, Ketchikan today bustles with activity. Ketchikan almost seems today like it had been built for its many visitors. The Ketchikan Airport is located on its own island, Garvina Island. From Ketchikan's airport it is a short ferry ride across Tongass Narrows to the city of Ketchikan. We also welcome one or more Alaska State Ferries nearly everyday and cruise ships grace our harbor from May through September. On a busy day, we could have as many as 6 large cruise ships at a time in our harbor.

**TLINGIT**

**1. Click on the link below. Then answer the questions on your handout.**

<http://www.bigorrin.org/tlingit_kids.htm>

(If the link doesn’t work, see the Tlingit word document on the website)

**2. Click on the link below. Then answer the questions on your handout.**

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR/Values/tlingit.html>

(If the link doesn’t work, see the Tlingit word document on the website)

**3. Click on the link below. Then answer the questions on your handout.**

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR/Values/index.html>

(If the link doesn’t work, see the Tlingit word document on the website)

**The Spirit Bear**

**Click on the link below. Then answer the questions on your handout.**

<http://www.bearlife.org/kermode-bear.html>

Watch the spirit bear video. Then answer the question on your handout.

[**https://vimeo.com/9459771**](https://vimeo.com/9459771)

**Totem Poles**

**Click on the link below. Then answer the questions on your handout.**

<http://www.manataka.org/page30.html>

**Circle Justice**

**Read the article below. Then answer the questions on your handout.**

**Circle Justice in the Real World**

[Ben Mikaelsen](http://www.gradesaver.com/author/ben-mikaelsen/)'s [*Touching*](http://www.gradesaver.com/touching-spirit-bear/) [*Spirit Bear*](http://www.gradesaver.com/character.html?character=34953) is one of the only works of fiction to explore the concept of Circle Justice, but Mikaelsen comments on a specific application of a real, legal process used both in Native American systems and in some Western systems.

The entire premise of this book is that Circle Justice allowed [Cole Matthews](http://www.gradesaver.com/character.html?character=34937) to serve his punishment in an alternative way by being banished to an Alaskan island where he could do no harm to others and where he could commune with nature in a healing process. Mikaelsen himself admits in the "Author's Note" that banishment to an island is not the traditional sentence of Circle Justice even within native communities.

In native tribes, particularly the Tlingit tribe, Circle Justice has been used for centuries to deal with criminal problems in the community. It usually involved spiritual or cultural traditions such as sweats, sacrifice, ceremonies, or other similar activities. Generally, the tribes find that this helps foster unity not just between the convicted and others in society but also between the members of the circle who would otherwise not have a reason to come together for the betterment of their community.

In the Western context, the legal use of Circle Justice has its origins in Canada, where many of these tribes exist. The term used by some in Canada is "Circle Sentencing." The guidelines and requirements for circle sentencing were laid out in a 1995 case. Ordinarily, there must be a conviction of guilt or an acceptance of guilt by the accused, along with true contrition for one's actions. According to the Native Law Centre of Canada, circle sentencing "presents a healthy opportunity for emotional expression of grieving, anger, and support, and has a strong focus on accountability, reparation and restoration of peaceful and just relations in the community."

For the circle sentencing even to be a possibility, the judge, victim, police, and community members must all make themselves available and willing to invest time to monitor the criminal's progress. This requirement is why it has been difficult to spread too far since it is very time-intensive. The "sentences" can still include jail but might also include Indian customs such as those described above, counseling, and more.

In the US, the only state to use circle sentencing (and even then, only in very limited cases) is Minnesota, and this perhaps explains Mikaelsen's choice of that state as the setting for Cole's hometown. While it can be a very rewarding experience as seen in *Touching Spirit Bear* and in other anecdotal accounts, it is still unclear whether Circle Justice is a model that can be widely replicated. It certainly is an interesting alternative to the traditional criminal justice system.