

## Top Ten Reasons Why Indians Are Good at Basketball

1.

The same reason we are good in bed.

2.

Because a long time ago, Creator gave us a choice: You can write like an Indian god, or you can have a jump shot sweeter than a 44oz. can of government grape juice—one or the other. Everyone but Sherman Alexie chose the jump shot.

3.

We know how to block shots, how to stuff them down your throat, because when you say, *Shoot*, we hear howitzer and Hotchkiss and Springfield Model 1873.

4.

When Indian ballers sweat, we emit a perfume of tortillas and Pine-Sol floor cleaner that works like a potion to disorient our opponents and make them forget their plays.

5.

We grew up knowing that there is no difference between a basketball court and church. Really, the Nazarenes hold church in the tribal gym on Sunday afternoons—the choir belts out “In the Sweet By and By” from the low block.

6.

When Walt Whitman wrote, *The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race*, he really meant that all Indian men over age 40 have a pair of vintage Air Jordans in their closets and believe they are still magic-enough to make even the largest commod bod able to go coast to coast and finish a layup.

7.

Indians are not afraid to try sky hooks in real games, even though no Indian has ever made a sky hook, no Indian from a federally recognized tribe, anyway. But still, our shamelessness to attempt sky hooks in warm-ups strikes fear in our opponents, thus giving us a mental edge.

8.

On the court is the one place we will never be hungry—that net is an emptiness we can fill up all day long.

9.

We pretend we are playing every game for a Pendleton blanket, and the MVP gets a Mashantucket Pequot-sized per capita check.

10.

Really, though, all Indians are good at basketball because a basketball has never been just a basketball—it has always been a full moon in this terminal darkness, the one taillight in Jimmy Jack Tall Can's gray Granada cutting along the back dirt roads on a beer run, the Creator's heart that Coyote stole from the funeral pyre cursing him to walk alone through every coral dusk. It has always been a fat gourd we sing to, the left breast of a Mojave woman three Budweisers into Saturday night. It will always be a slick, bright bullet we can sling from the 3-point arc with 5 seconds left on a clock in the year 1492, and as it rips down through the net, our enemies will fall to their wounded knees, with torn ACLs.