

Questions for Dr. Edwin Krupp, Open Letter

John Major Jenkins, Director of [The Center for 2012 Studies](#)

Dr Ed Krupp is the Director of Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, for some 40 years. He has written popular trade books as well as articles on Maya astronomy in *The Griffith Observer* newsletter, *Sky & Telescope* magazine, *Astronomy* magazine, and elsewhere. He is or has been on the editorial board of several journals including *Archaeoastronomy Journal* (ed. John B. Carlson).

In November 2009 Krupp gave a presentation at The Beckman Center in Irvine, California, as part of the Distinctive Voices series sponsored by grants from the Kellogg Fund, the Casey Fund, and the President's Circle Fund of the National Academy of Sciences. The Center website states it is "a program of the National Academy of Sciences Communication Initiative to increase science literacy." Krupp's talk is posted here: <http://media.voicesatbeckman.org/dv/110409/index.html>. (Also at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGJRGE52WU4>.) It was co-sponsored by the Orange County chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), was titled "Time's Up", and was all about critiquing 2012 publications, which at that time necessarily did not include any writings by professional scholars (because none, except Robert Sitler and Anthony Aveni, had produced anything. Aveni's book probably appeared too late for Krupp's consideration, having been published a mere two weeks earlier. Sitler's 2006 essay on "The 2012 Phenomenon" was overlooked by Krupp).

Krupp dealt with books, ideas, and theories that have appeared in trade publications, Krupp himself being no stranger to the challenges of writing for trade publishers and a popular readership. His presentation at The Beckman Center was given apparently on November 4, precisely the day of the premiere, nearby in Hollywood, of Roland Emmerich's 2012 disaster movie. I had been tapped by Sony Pictures, a month earlier, to participate in their press conferences for the movie, offering my expertise in conversations with the media. I had told them that my work has argued and shown for almost two decades that the Maya did NOT believe 2012 would be a cataclysmic doomsday, and I seriously considered how effective I might be in conveying this truth. My liaison with Sony Pictures said my position didn't matter, and I decided it would be worth the effort. There was no payment, though travel and lodging was covered. My book *The 2012 Story* (Tarcher/Penguin, 2009) was also slated for release, and it would be good promotion (something all free-lance authors must pursue and, hey, how many independent Maya scholars get to promote their new book on the Hollywood Red Carpet?).

So, I was on the Red Carpet while Krupp was giving his talk nearby. Perhaps he knew this, which might explain some of his angry comments. I was able to facilitate a good interview on the Red Carpet, with the help of my brother, which we edited and posted on Youtube the next day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tV-tOkWmF1Y>. It emphasized my position that the Maya didn't think of 2012 as a doomsday. Contrasted with the apocalypse porn that surrounded me, it made for an honest yet satirical report.

Ed Krupp and I communicated by mail between 1996 and early 1999. I had sent him several essays on my new findings relating to Maya astronomy and the 2012 date in their calendar. I may have even sent him a copy of my monograph *Izapa Cosmos* (1996). In any case, we did have a few cordial exchanges, but after I sent him my published book in 1998, followed by a letter in January 1999, there was no response from him. That was our last direct communication as of early 2015. Sixteen years. He doesn't appear to have written a review of my book for the Griffith Observer newsletter, which was offered as a possibility. But he was clearly busy crafting

his narrative of 2012 books and authors, into which I would be fitted, and his viewpoint is expressed in his November 4th Beckman Center presentation and his *Sky & Telescope* article in the November 2009 issue.

Thereafter, he gave virtually the identical presentation at least two more times: Orange County Astronomers meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xL5gyy5tuZA>, March 2011) and at his alma mater Pomona College (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZvZR7OT9Rs>, 2011?) (That's all I'm aware of; there may be more.) As late as December 2012 he was still addressing the hyped and alarmist doomsday propaganda, when he spoke and participated in a panel with Andrew Fraknoi and David Morrison, at a conference on December 11 sponsored by the Seti Institute and his employer, The Griffith Observatory.

In my questions to Krupp I will focus on his Beckman Center presentation, which is posted as a video on The Beckman Center website for their Distinctive Voice series, as well as in at least two posts on Youtube. Before beginning I need to state unequivocally what my work on 2012 has been about, since the early 1990s. It can be done very simply: **The creators of the Long Count intended the 2012 period-ending date to target a rare astronomical alignment within the cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, and saw this alignment as signaling (not definitively *causing*) the need for deity sacrifice in order to facilitate worldrenewal.** A more detailed treatment is in Appendix 1.

The Beckman Center "[Time's Up](#)" presentation of November 4, 2009. "[The Great Doomsday Scare](#)" article for *Sky & Telescope* (November 2009 issue), posted on the NASA.gov website, *Sky & Telescope* website, and the Griffith Observatory website.

Questions Addressed to Dr. Krupp

(1) Do you believe that readers of my 1998 book *Maya Cosmogenesis 2012* would conclude that I believed the Maya predicted the end of the world in 2012?

Here is a quote from your Beckman Center talk:

"In this book [*Maya Cosmogenesis 2012*] Jenkins, in restating an unfounded belief, asserts 'the Maya believed the world will end in 2012.' You will find that passage in that book. The Maya *didn't* believe that." — Ed Krupp, "Time's Up," The Beckman Center, November 2009. Mark 49:40. Audio links (windows media file or mp3): <http://alignment2012.com/krupp1.wma> (MP3: <http://alignment2012.com/krupp1.mp3>)

This basic statement was repeated, almost verbatim, in other presentations you gave until at least March of 2011. (2) Do you feel that your statement accurately conveys my belief and position on the Maya and 2012?

Here is a quote from your *Sky & Telescope* article:

"The ancient Maya of Mexico and Guatemala kept a calendar that is about to roll up the red carpet of time, swing the solar system into transcendental alignment with the heart of the Milky Way, and turn Earth into a bowling pin for a rogue planet heading down our alley for a strike." — Ed Krupp, "[The Great Doomsday Scare](#)," November 2009.

This sentence appears in your article. (3) Why should I not embrace and broadcast to others that you stated this, with the emphasized insinuation that you believe it? It's a sentence that appears in your book! Proof! Could it be that I might effect such a deception only by taking your quote out of context and failing to report the very next sentence in your article? Because this is exactly what you did in your truncated partial-sentence quote, extracted from my 1998 book. I was discussing the viewpoint of a 2012 doomsday book, and satirically paraphrased their "certain" position on it (much like you did in the sentence I quoted from your article). The word "end" is in quotes in my written sentence (which, of course, did not get conveyed in your voicing of the line). In my *very next sentence*, I state "But what does this mean?" I then make a clear distinction between dubious "end of the world" language and an "end of a World Age" renewal doctrine demonstrable within the Maya Creation Mythology. There are dozens of passages in my book that clearly express my non-doomsday position on 2012.

So, I'll restate my earlier question in a different way: (4) Would a critic who cherry picks a truncated quote from my book, ignoring the context of the discussion, in order to convey to his audiences that I believed the Maya predicted the end of the world in 2012, perhaps harbor an unprofessional and/or malicious bias? The inflection of your spoken words is important and telling, which is why I've provide two audio clips of your voice.

The accusatory intent of your construct is clear, because a few seconds later you cast blame: "Jenkins is probably more responsible than anybody for the current flurry and character of the interest in 2012 – although you gotta hand it to Arguelles for really lighting the fuse." This clearly refers, in the context of the 2012 doomsday movie just coming out and your overall take on the 2012 topic, to the ubiquitous doomsday-2012 meme. And "lighting the fuse" is a metaphor for triggering a bomb going off, causing great destruction. Audio clip: (windows media file <http://alignment2012.com/krupp2.wma>) / (mp3 <http://alignment2012.com/krupp2.mp3>).

Meanwhile, as I alluded to above, *on this same day as your presentation* I was being dogged on the Red Carpet by my Sony liaison while I tried to get recorded a statement as to the Maya *not believing the world will end in 2012*. My comments made to reporters theoretically went out to millions of people. By the way, I had refused to sign the Sony release contract, which had all manner of ridiculous protections and provisions for Sony, including the clause that I could never sue Sony or their parent company for anything, ever, for all time. As a result of my refusal to kowtow to corporate Hollywood, it was unclear whether my wife and I would have viable airplane tickets home the next morning.

Of the media interviews I did, *Time Magazine*¹ and "Teen Hollywood" accurately reported my non-doomsday position: <http://www.teenhollywood.com/2009/11/10/2012-should-you-be-scared>. In which I said about the movie: "It has a brief reference to the galactic alignment at the beginning, but there is a tendency by the media, and I've experienced this directly for many, many years, to use this kind of standard bumper sticker that the Mayans predicted the end of the world in 2012, and I just can't reconcile that with what I know from my own research into the evidence."²

(5) How many presentations do you recall you gave, in which you conveyed one or both of your statements about my work to your audiences? (I found three that are posted online). (6) Did anyone ever approach you with a correction? (7) Is there anything in our letter exchanges of 1996-1999 that gave you the impression about my work that you conveyed to your audiences? (I find nothing).

(8) Have you kept up with more recent studies and books on 2012, by myself and by other Maya scholars, including your friends and colleagues? And has your attitude changed toward the idea that we might be able to reconstruct what the ancient Maya thought about 2012? (This was my *modus operandi* beginning in the early 1990s, which was not utilized in academic publications by professional scholars until the *Wayeb* no. 34 monograph by Barbara MacLeod & Sven Gronemeyer in August of 2010, released four months after my presentation on the 2012 text from Tortuguero Monument 6 at the 75th meeting of the *Society for American Archaeology*).

Finally, (9) can you acknowledge the following three factual errors? The second one, in particular, had repercussions in how you conceived and characterized my work as merely echoing the McKennas' earlier work, and that my book *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* merely "repackaged" already stated earlier ideas. These are very misleading statements, if one understands what the McKennas actually wrote in the first edition of their book (1975), and what the state of the 2012 discussion was when I began my effort, in the early 1990s, to reconstruct, with evidence, *what the ancient Maya believed about 2012*. In other words, despite a few partial or indirect clues, the effort was non-existent when I began. The following statements in your article are echoed in your presentations.

A Few Errors of Fact

1. On Frank Waters' *Mexico Mystique* (1975) book. You write in your "Great Doomsday Scare" article:

Waters also miscalculated the date when the calendar would supposedly pull down the shades. "The end of the Great Cycle . . . will occur Dec. 24, 2011 A.D."

No, Waters did not "miscalculate" this, he drew it from Maya scholar Michael Coe's 1966 book (cited in Waters' bibliography), and he is the one who miscalculated it (which has been well known for many years), and which Coe (2011) admits. This incorrect statement is repeated and currently maintained on the Griffith Observatory website:

<http://www.griffithobservatory.org/events/2012.html>, where you (Krupp) provide an endorsement link to Morrison's "Ask an Astrobiologist" page on the NASA.gov website.

2. You write: "Another book in 1975 also spotlighted the Maya calendric roundup. Dennis and Terence McKenna discussed it in *The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens, and the I Ching*. That book at least got the Baktun-13 end date right: Dec. 21, 2012." In actual fact, the 1975 first edition did not explicitly mention *December 21* of 2012, and it did not at all, anywhere, mention the Maya or the Maya calendar. The posited mathematical Time Wave, based on the Chinese I Ching, was projected to end "a 4,300-year cycle . . . around the year 2012" (174). The final phase of his Time Wave is elsewhere described as "the ingression of novelty into our own epoch, from 1945 to 2012" (184). That's it. There are no Maya or Mesoamerican Studies sources listed in the bibliography, and the terms "Maya", "the Maya calendar", and "2012" do not appear in the Index. The McKennas had not yet, in fact, committed to the solstice date in 2012, and they were unaware of the coincidence of their I Ching-based theorizing with the 2012 date in the Maya calendar. This was introduced in a few sentences added to the 1993 second edition of their book, along with a new sky diagram (which you depict in your presentation). (The "1993" edition didn't really hit the shelves until early 1994.)

3. My book *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* was published in 1998, not 1995, although some of my earlier findings were published in my 1995 books *The Center of Mayan Time* and *Izapa Cosmos* (1996). I wonder if you even had it in hand when you wrote your critique. Your quotes pertain to my Introduction, which you may be aware has been freely posted on my website, in full, since 2002.

Ed, here's another correction for you. In your article in *Handbook for Archaeoastronomy and Ehtnoastronomy* (ed., Clive Ruggles, 2004), you wrote on page 278 that "E.C. Krupp wrote the first widely circulated, nationally distributed detailed commentary on dubious 2012 notions (Krupp 2009)..." Well, it's fine to pat yourself on the back, but this is a totally false statement. As my article in *Zeitschrift fur Anomalistic* (2014) and my chapter in the Gelfer anthology (*2012: Decoding the Countercultural Apocalypse*, 2011, intro by Michael Coe) point out, I have been critiquing dubious 2012 notions, in addition to academic discussions and mentions of 2012, since the early 1990s. (My early book *Tzolkin*, 1992/1994, can be considered an early example, which was distributed domestically and internationally). Also, my book *The 2012 Story* (Tarcher/Penguin) came out the month before your article and it contains lengthy and detailed chapters that critique dubious 2012 notions and theories (e.g., Waters, Arguelles, Calleman, Joseph, McKenna, etc), and I didn't commit the basic factual errors that you did in assessing these ideas, which I enumerate above). Another article of mine which critiqued the burgeoning 2012 mess in the marketplace (e.g., Lawrence Joseph's book and others), and which saw mainstream national and international distribution, was *Fear and Lying in 2012-Land*, published in the anthology of social critique called *You Are Still Being Lied To* (editor Russ Kick, New York: The Disinformation Company). It was released in January 2009. In fact, it had been on the shelf of my local Barnes & Noble bookstore for many, many months when your *Sky & Telescope* piece appeared in the magazine section. Those are just a few examples --- not to mention my 2011 chapter in the Gelfer anthology which critiques you, Aveni, Lounsbury, along with other distortion-meisters in the popular marketplace (Xerox copy enclosed).

Immediately after the above quote from your 2014 chapter, you state that "At the same time Aveni published an entire trade book on the subject for the general reader" (p. 278). No, Aveni's book was published by the University Press of Colorado --- an AAUP approved peer-reviewed scholarly press. I emphasize this because Aveni's was the only book by a professional Maya scholar on 2012 that was NOT published with a trade publisher, and it contains at least seven factual errors that misrepresent my work, Maya methods for tracking the precession of the equinoxes, and the Izapa ballcourt's alignment. Feel free to address this problem with Aveni's book, and why you and other Aveni champions have not applied critical thinking and fact checking to his comments, one of which is a use of religious bigotry in his allusions to my work. Ethics, anyone?

Appendix 1. My Work: A Concise Description

My "work" is the effort I've been engaged in since the 1980s to understand Maya cosmology, culture, and calendrics, and specifically my effort to reconstruct what the ancient Maya thought about 2012. My awareness of 2012 began at age 12 in 1976, as I recounted in my book *The 2012 Story* (Tarcher/Penguin, 2009). My writings on 2012 can be traced to comments in my 1989 book *Journey to the Mayan Underworld* and my 1992/94 book *Tzolkin*, but reached a breakthrough and the beginning of an intense period of focus in early 1994. My "2012 alignment reconstruction" (also sometimes referred to as the "2012 alignment theory" or "galactic alignment theory") has been presented, defined, elaborated, defended, and tested in many books, personal exchanges, websites, interviews, workshops, classes, presentations, and articles beginning in 1994.

In a nutshell, in my study of the pre-Classic site of Izapa (the culture and site that many Maya scholars believe was involved in the formulation of the Long Count calendar), my study of ballgame and Creation Myth symbolism, and king-making rites, I've argued that **the creators of the Long Count intended the 2012 period-ending date to target a rare astronomical alignment within the cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, and saw this alignment as signaling (not definitively causing) the need for deity sacrifice in order to facilitate worldrenewal.** There it is in one sentence, less than 50 words. So, my reconstruction work has two aspects: a precession-based *astronomy*, and an *ideology* (which I also sometimes refer to as a "spiritual teaching"). To reiterate: my work has never been about arguing for a world-ending doomsday, nor for an *automatic and predetermined* spiritual ascension, consciousness awakening, transformation, or "bliss out" slated to happen in 2012. My work argues and deduces from presented evidence and academic sources, and articulates what the pre-Classic creators of the Long Count (the "2012 calendar") thought about 2012. More recently, I've been interested in tracing how those traditional, core ideas were maintained, adapted, or violated through the Classic Period (200 AD to 900 AD). (See, e.g., my booklet *Lord Jaguar's 2012 Inscriptions*, 2011, and essays on *The Center for 2012 Studies* website.)

Finally, how do you reconcile the fact that John B. Carlson's "deity sacrifice and world-renewal" interpretation of 2012, in the 2012 anthology you wrote the preface for (*Cosmology, Calendars, and Horizon-Based Astronomy*), echoes my own long-held interpretation of 2012 with your characterization of my work as a dubious and dismissible component of your "2012 Maya Calendar End Times Follies"? I sent article proposals to Carlson about my 2012 work between 1994 and 1999 and he, like you, received my book *Maya Cosmogonies 2012* for review in 1998.

Sincerely,

John Major Jenkins
July 7, 2015 The2012story@gmail.com

Notes:

1. Interview with Stephen Snyder, *Time Magazine*, November 19, 2009.
<http://techland.time.com/2009/11/19/mayan-expert-2012-not-just-silly-but-offensive/>
2. The previous media event and film showing I spoke to the media at, two weeks earlier in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, led to several good doomsday-fallacy exposé interviews on Channel 9 News in Denver. The 8-minute news segment they produced was broadcast the first week of November and was archived on the Channel 9 News website for several years. It included interview footage I did at the Channel 9 News studio, and was linked to a similar morning news interview I did with them in 2012. They adopted my long-argued position that the Maya didn't predict cataclysm at the end of the 13-Baktun period in 2012.