

## Synopsis

Val Verde is a war torn country in Central America. Communist guerrillas funded by the Soviets are pushing this fragile political ecosystem towards a civil war. CIA Agent Dillon is tasked with defusing the situation and opts to send in a Special Forces team to eliminate the rebel leadership. Shortly thereafter, contact is lost with the team who are presumed to be killed by the rebel force. Agent Dillon then turns to his old friend Alan “Dutch” Schaefer to find out what happened. Upon landing, Dutch and his team find the missing army team skinned next to their helicopter. After finding the remains of the team and eliminating the entire rebel compound except for one hostage, Dutch and his team are under attack by an unknown creature. Hiding under the cover of active camouflage and hunting with thermal vision, an unknown predator begins to kill Dutch’s team one by one. Dutch learns from a rebel hostage (Anna) about a local legend regarding an invisible creature that uses earth as a hunting ground to hunt humans for sport. After the mutilation of his entire team, it is up to Dutch to avenge his fallen comrades. Will Dutch be able to defeat this predator, or will he, like many others throughout history, also fall prey?

## How it relates to psychiatry

Set in the fictional South American Country of Val Verde, *Predator* provides a good representation of culturally bound syndromes. A culture bound syndrome is both a psychiatric and sociologic phenomenon characterized by a disease well known to a specific culture while rare to other cultures. There is no objective biochemical etiology and it is often treated by “folk” medicine. Most culturally bound syndromes contain themes common in better-known disorders.

If one changes the protagonist view from Dutch to Anna, *Predator* is a case study of a young girl suffering from a culturally bound syndrome. It can be either spontaneous in onset, where she hallucinates both Dutch’s team and the predator, or it could have been due to the extreme stress by witnessing the attack from Dutch on her people, precipitating the hallucination of being taken hostage and being hunted by a predator.

An example of a culturally bound syndrome is Bouffée Délirante, which is well known to West Africa and Haiti. This is a brief psychotic disorder-like syndrome consisting of sudden outbursts of aggression such as those demonstrated by Dutch. The person can suffer from auditory or visual hallucinations and extreme paranoia. Since it’s uncommon for foreigners to suffer from a culturally bound syndrome, it’s more likely that Anna is suffering from a syndrome similar to Bouffée Délirante than Dutch.

Anna’s most likely diagnosis is Grisi siknis. Also known as “crazy sickness,” Grisi siknis is a culture bound syndrome that occurs in young women who reside in Central America. These women, in a semiconscious fugue state, fall to the ground and then run away grabbing weapons to fight off invisible assailants.

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