

## The Story Behind "Who is Books?"



You've found the secret page! Here are the trivia notes behind the literary mystery novel A LINE INTERSECTED, and also the clues behind the mystery of "Who is Books?"

In the novel, THE BIG SLEEP, by Raymond Chandler, the chauffeur drives his car off the pier and dies. The death is suspicious and the police suspect murder, but the mystery is never solved in the book. Even Chandler admitted he didn't know. And he left no clues in the book for anybody to figure it out.

But what if he had? What if he left this minor mystery officially "unsolved," but hid within the novel all the clues needed for a sharp-eyed reader to solve?

In A LINE INTERSECTED a delusional homeless old man called Books believes he is living in the 18th century. Books believes he is one of the famous authors of that age, keeping company with great writers like Alexander Pope, Samuel Johnson, Jonathan Swift, and others. But who, exactly, does Books believe he is? The novel never reveals the name, but all the clues needed to solve the mystery are in the novel.

Can you solve it? No one has yet! If you think you know the answer to "Who is Books?", send a note to [Dave@DavidGrantUrban.com](mailto:Dave@DavidGrantUrban.com). If you are the first one to contact me with the right answer, I'll acknowledge you on my website and Facebook page, and send you an autographed copy of A LINE INTERSECTED.

## Trivia and Notes from "A Line Intersected"

*Caution: Contains Spoilers!*

The John Lyon, the fictional building in A LINE INTERSECTED, is based upon the Samuel Fox Lofts building, located at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Broadway, San Diego.

John Lyon, the fictional founder of Lion Clothing, is based upon two early San Diego businessmen, Isaac Kuhn and Samuel Fox. Isaac Kuhn founded the real Lion Clothing, and Samuel Fox, (who married Kuhn's sister), acquired the store after Kuhn's death in 1899.

The real Lion Clothing store never featured two life-sized bronze lions flanking its doors, although at one time two stuffed lions stood outside. Each stuffed lion had a ring that could be pulled to produce a roaring sound.

Michael Collwood's experience as a "person of interest" in his wife's murder mirrors the real-life experience of San Diegan Christopher Jon Burns, who was arrested and falsely accused of the gruesome 1990 murder of his fiancée, Tiffany Paige Schultz. Christopher Burns was

never formally charged, but remained a suspect for months. Not until the arrest and conviction of serial killer Cleophus Prince Jr., who murdered not only Tiffany Schultz, but also five other women in a nine-month killing spree, was Burns completely vindicated. Christopher Burns called the experience "worse than a nightmare."

De Anza's Angel is real. It is an odd-looking, natural marking on a mountainside that gives the appearance of a stick figure pointing up Coyote Canyon in California's Anza-Borrego State Park.

When Melanie asks Michael Collwood, "Remember when they called us Enron-by-the-Sea?" she is referring to San Diego's infamous pension fund scandal that came to light after Diann Shipione, a pension board trustee, alerted the public in 2003.

The phrase "Enron-by-the-Sea" first appeared in a September 7, 2004, New York Times article by John M. Broder titled, "Sunny San Diego Finds Itself Being Viewed as a Kind of Enron-by-the-Sea." Mr. Broder does not take credit for the phrase, but believes "it was the product of a brilliant New York Times copy editor." The phrase "Enron-by-the-Sea" went international, and remained an embarrassing San Diego moniker for years.

The fictional character handing out water to the homeless is based on San Diegan David Ross, the real-life "water man" of the homeless.

The library at Slab City exists, and is exactly as Michael Collwood describes it. The young man who calls himself "Caveman" is the real Slab City librarian

Professor Higginbotham mentions Donna Frye, the popular write-in San Diego mayoral candidate who lost the 2004 election after a court threw out most of her votes, ruling that the little bubbles were not filled in correctly. Donna Frye is married to legendary surfer Harry "Skip" Frye, and was considered an anti-establishment candidate. She was leading in the election when the New York Times published an article by writer John M. Broder proclaiming that San Diego "may soon have America's gnarliest mayor."

The character "Books" believes he is living in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England, adopting the persona of a famous writer of that era. The novel never reveals the name of this writer, but all the clues necessary to discover it are in the book.

Books' booking number is 1121990. This is the date (1-12-1990) of Tiffany Paige Schultz's murder. Tiffany was only 20 years old when she was brutally murdered by Cleophus Prince.

The Downtown Café in El Cajon is a real bar and restaurant, and a favorite haunt of the author and his wife, Kim. When the author announced he and his wife were moving out of town, the restaurant owner, Gabriel Marrujo, presented them with two bar stools as souvenirs. "Pam," the waitress named in the novel, worked as a waitress there for years until her recent retirement.

The Prowlers Car Club is a real club, formed in 1947, and is the oldest hot rod club in existence. The author's uncle, Norman Urban, was a founding member. Below is a photograph of the Prowlers taken in 1948. Norman Urban is 4<sup>th</sup> from the left, top row.



When Books comments about Jonathan Swift's joke about ugly women, he is referring to a conversation between Jonathan Swift and Lord Bolingbroke about the Queen's Maids of Honour. Swift thought the Maids "not very handsome," and pointed out the Maids' lodging was "much frequented with crows." Lord Bolingbroke replied it was because the crows smelled carrion.

Zero's story of witnessing the torture and murder of an undercover DEA agent is based on the true story of Enrique S. "Kiki" Camarena Salazar (July 26, 1947 – February 9, 1985), an undercover DEA agent who was abducted on February 7, 1985, and then tortured and murdered by Mexican drug lord Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo.

The Elephant Cage, where Michael Collwood's rescuers set him down, was the nick-name of a large antennae structure that, until recently, stood at the Silver Strand Training Complex (SSTC), located in Coronado, California. The round skeleton structure did indeed look like something that could cage elephants. It was dismantled in 2015.

The author is a fan and student of Raymond Chandler's life and work. When Michael Collwood visits his wife's gravesite, fans of Raymond Chandler will note the gravesite is near the real-life gravesite of the great writer himself.

When Roberts tells Michael Collwood he was at "the Stick," he is referring to the Silver Strand Training Complex (SSTC), where the Navy SEALs train, located in Coronado, California. The SSTC, when spoken of out loud, is referred to as "the Stick."

### **Note from the Author**

I hope you enjoyed the novel! If you did, would you leave a review on Amazon or Goodreads? Believe me, authors read the reviews and they mean a great deal to any writer. And don't forget to follow me on Facebook! 😊



*"The tragedy of man is the difference between what he can be, and what he is."*

*-David Grant Urban*