

Sense of Direction

Book Club Questions

- 1) With cartels growing in strength and developing paramilitary capabilities do you believe that our border crossings are safe from an attack such as the one outlined in this book?
- 2) Do you believe the border should be closed off and militarized as Senator Dunn proposed? If not, would your answer change if just as in the book our border was attacked by drug cartels with paramilitary capabilities?
- 3) Do you think Dewey Garrison was treated fairly? If he had engaged the attackers it would have led to his certain death. Was it unreasonable what he did?
- 4) Contrast Thaddeus Quincy's relationship with his son Hampton with Steven Kaye's relationship with his son Ross (the campaign worker). Also contrast Thaddeus and Hampton's relationship with the way Steven and his son Scott (the sheriff's deputy) interact.
- 5) Horsey DeWitt was ruthless in his attempts to derail Dallas Dunn. The general tends to place all of the blame on Hampton. How responsible was the general in creating the environment that first got Horsey involved in doing dirty tricks for the company years earlier?
- 6) Did you agree with all the advice that Marion Tyler gave Dallas Dunn. Although it turned out well how could her handling of the alleged affair, as well as the shootings that fateful night have backfired?
- 7) The constitution requires a candidate for president be at least 35 years old. Given society's attention to dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, should there be a maximum age for a candidate to run for president?
- 8) These days the younger generation has many individuals who want to make a difference, give back to society – and change the world. They want to do things that interest them rather than just make money. They are referred to as the "Millennial Generation." What do you think of Ross quitting his high paid job for the opportunity to take a position on a campaign that could end at any time?

- 9) Thomas Grant obviously suffered from mental defects as a result of his experiences in Vietnam, including the physical and mental torture he experienced in captivity as a prisoner of war. In addition the VA Hospitals appeared to have dropped the ball in the treatment of his many afflictions.

Was any of the animosity Thomas felt towards Dallas Dunn justified? How culpable was Dunn with regard to everything that had gone down in Southeast Asia? Did Dunn fail to exert the leadership necessary to help Grant deal with his feelings of abandonment? Did he try to rally the other POWs to support Grant rather than shun him? Or was the animosity simply a product of Grant's misguided interpretation of events? Was Grant just a man who lost his ability to face the reality of his predicament? Or was he a man who was bullied and scapegoated by a bunch of bitter soldiers including Dallas Dunn? Might Dallas Dunn have sacrificed Grant a second time, as a means of keeping the other prisoners united? Was it easier to blame Grant instead of taking the full responsibility for his platoon's massacre? Yet Dunn did praise Grant in his speech from the terrace. What did you come away with as the truth in this matter?

- 10) Should Steven and Dallas have stopped somewhere to make a phone call? Do you believe they should have returned to Kaye's house that night or checked into a motel somewhere? Could the fact that their car's windows were shot out have influenced their reaction?
- 11) What do you think Dianne Strickland will do with the money sitting in the offshore bank accounts? Do you think she will use it for herself, return it to the general, donate it to charity, or let it sit there untouched even after her own death?
- 12) How do you think you would have reacted if you were driving Senator Dunn when the bullets struck the car at the railroad crossing? Would you have tried to get help or do you think what Steven and the senator did was the appropriate response?
- 13) Was Horsey's goal of killing Dallas Dunn justified? Given his brother's death in Korea, Horsey was willing to go to extreme measures to ensure that pilots would only have the best equipment. Do you believe Horsey's declining health impaired his judgment and was a the contributing factor in his decision to assassinate a sitting U.S. Senator?

Or do you believe his terminal illness only helped him crystalize his resolve to eliminate Senator Dunn?

- 14) Did Steven give the appropriate level of support to his son Ross during their initial conversation? Did Steven handle things right? Do you think Steven offered Ross his support, was he trying to dissuade him in a strong manner, or was his tone a reasonable well balanced response? What would you have said to Ross? How would you have reacted? What should a parent's role be when trying to advise a young man who is already 23 years old?
- 15) Was it irresponsible of Ross to have enlisted his father's help and was it irresponsible of Steven to accept his chauffeurs role, given Steven's poor sense of direction?
- 16) "Sense of Direction," the books title, has multiple meanings. Try to relate the title to as many situations or to as many individual characters as you can. Did you find the title intriguing and was it one of the reasons why you chose to read this book?