

ABOUT THE BOOK

“The volume of the book” – Hebrews 10:7

HOW IT GOT STARTED

In April of 1956, Jean Shepherd, an overnight New York disc jockey on radio station WOR, was engaging with his audience in a mocking way about people he deemed so-called experts who pretend to know about everything. Snobs, he called them. Posers was another descriptor employed to describe these critics who have an opinion about everything but usually little expertise on which they base their declarations. He wanted to expose some of the frauds with the loudest voices for just what they were. He urged his audience to go to their local bookstore the next day and ask for a copy of the book 'I Libertine' by Frederick Ewing, neither of which existed. Live on-air, they hatched a broad backstory about the author, making him sound scholarly and exotic. Many in his audience did this the next day.

RESPONSES

Jean predicted that the first request at a store would result in an employee perusing a list and pronouncing that there is no such book. The second request, he believed, would elicit the response, "It's on order.." The third would have the store personnel call the book distributor to demand copies of the book. Jean began to get testimonials from his audience, corroborating what he expected would happen. Word of this new book began to spread, and soon, mentions started to appear in newspaper columns about the new in-demand book. The New York Times even listed it in their latest books to watch out for section. Soon, experts began to claim that they had read the book and offered opinions about its contents. Book club members began arguing about whether it was a classic. A student at Rutgers University wrote a paper titled, 'F.R. Ewing: Eclectic Historian, with footnotes he made up of non-existent interviews the author was supposed to have given. He received a B+ with a comment about his great research. In his nationally syndicated newspaper column, 'It Happened last Night,' which reported on Broadway, Earl Wilson claimed to have had lunch with Mr. Ewing and his wife Marjorie on their way to India. Other papers featured columns in which the reviewers wrote critiques of the non-existent book. Finally, as more and more people claimed to have read the book, one newspaper columnist tracked down its origin story and revealed the hoax. A lot of people were embarrassed. A postscript is that once the truth was known, a published, with Shepherd's permission, employed an author to write a book using the title "I Libertine." That book became a bestseller.

THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK

Frequently, I hear people expound about something the Bible says or pronounce about how Jesus would have felt on a particular issue playing out, and it's apparent they have had little contact with the book they reference. Here is the good news. We don't have to pretend to know what the Bible says or what Jesus said. We can read the book ourselves and find the authoritative answer to our questions. And more than finding out what the book says about something we can intimately commune with. Jesus for ourselves. He said, *“Lo, I, come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God”* (Hebrews 10:7). He awaits you now in the pages of His book.