

Utopia, Jeanne, and SFT

Gary Heartsill

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Abstract: A short story on “Seven Days in Utopia” noting the movie, the book, and a trip to the “Links of Utopia Driving Range” were all used as background for this profound visit. It is advertised as “Golf’s Sacred Journey” well, that is the other half of the title of the book. David Cook who wrote the book did such a good job they made a movie of it.

Being impressed with a good golf book is the reason for sharing this paper as today it means as much to me as it did when Jeanne and I drove to Utopia and spent some time walking the Links.

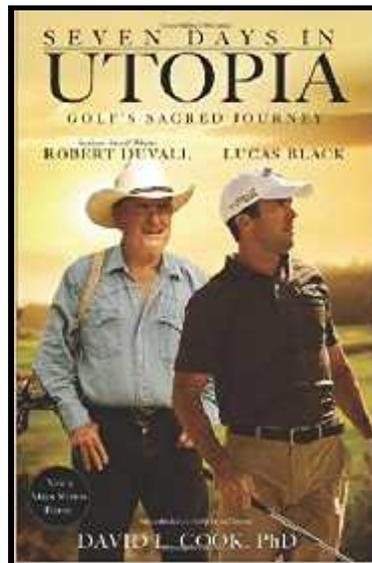
Key words: Johnny (JC), Luke, Sara, K.J. Choi, a painting, Pilot’s Checklist, Hickory Sticks, Buried Lies, a goat ranch, bunch of golf terms, bunch of coaching terms, (couple of side trips), and of course, the title: **SFT**.

Seven Days in Utopia

Actually, Jeanne tricked me. She had a movie she wanted me to see and she knew if she told me what it was all about I wouldn't go. There are just some Christian movies I am not interested in sitting through. She told me Robert Duvall was starring in the movie.

It worked. Course Duvall in just "Lonesome Dove" or "Apocalypse Now" puts him in the top ten easily. How could I have a problem seeing this movie? We saw it four days after it came out. I had the book three days later and the movie DVD as soon as I could get it.

The book may be a leg up on the movie but not much. This is one of the few that will be almost as good as the other. Actually, having them both is a complement and then after our trip down

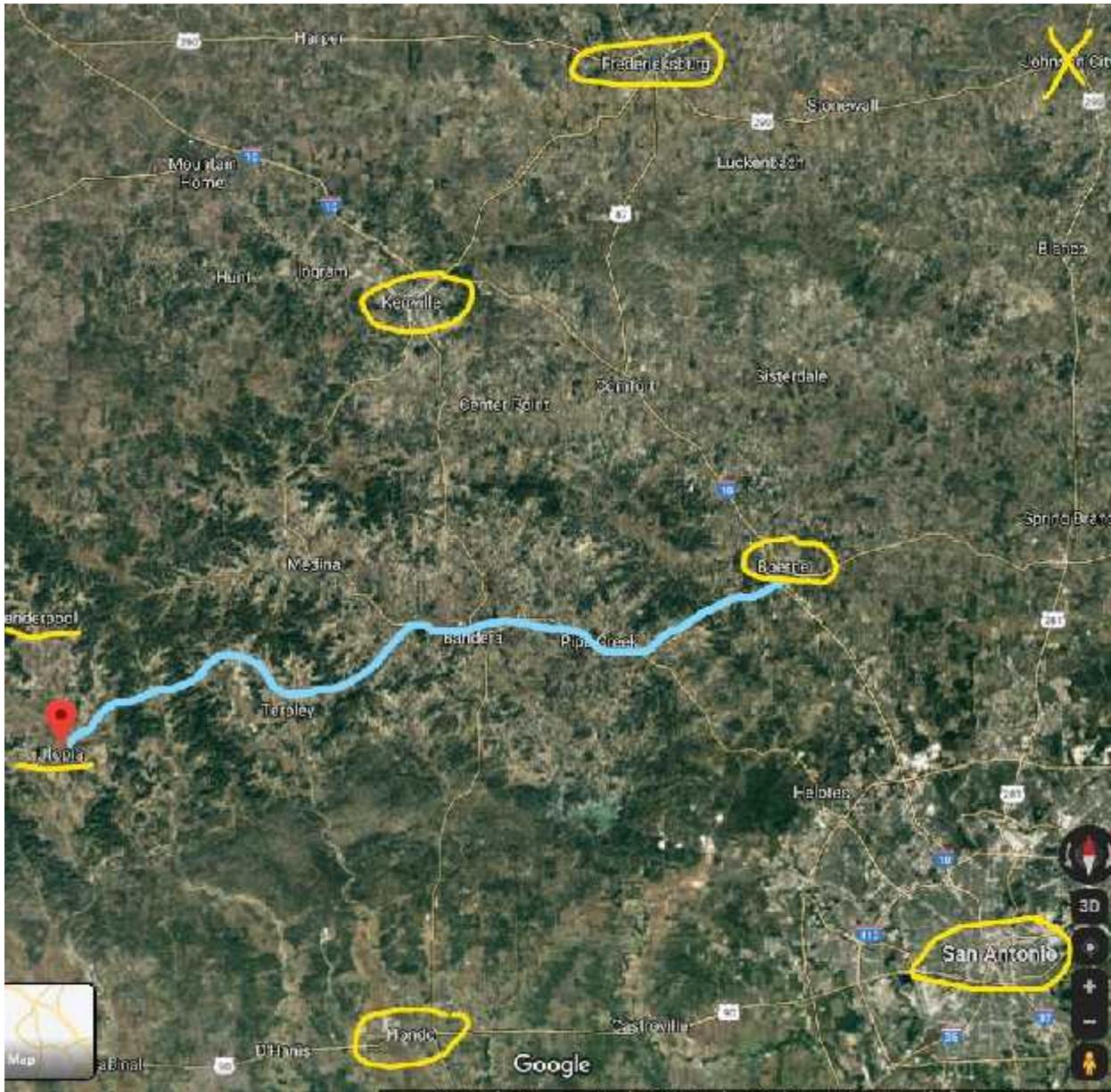


there they are all bundled up!



For a quick review see the movie trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0oUpqz2FJk>

Back in August of 2013 Jeanne and I combined a trip with our trailer to see Claire graduate from Texas State University in San Marcos, over to Boerne to see Carl and Dianna Brandborg, and took off most of Sunday to whip on west to Utopia.



The red dot/drop shows Utopia. The blue line from there to Tarpley, Bandera, Pine Creek, and on back to Boerne on Interstate 10. The trip is about 50 miles and this whole area shows Texas at its best. Up the road from Boerne to Fredericksburg (just outside of Luckenbach) and down to Kerrville would make a very good weeks' vacation. This is beautiful hill country, well, less Johnson City – I avoided that. However, having spent some time in San Antonio while in the Air Force I noticed straight west on 90 is Hondo Texas...we had an auxiliary airfield there and I used to shoot landings while out from Randolph AFB while flying both the T-33 and the T-38.

Couple of side bars: Two trips to Kerrville and Fredericksburg. Jeanne and I flew to Kerrville in the early 80's in my little side-by-side stunt plan called a "Swick T" for an airshow. This part of the country is as pretty from the air as it is driving by the way and we didn't fly very high. I was to do an aerobatic show and noticed the exact same kind of stunt plane on the line. No big deal but there weren't that many of this type flying. Well, he flew first and we watched him spin into the ground. Was not a pretty sight and I decided not to fly my show. We bundled up and flew home noting in those days losing a stunt pilot was not an unusual event in our Dallas Acrobatic Club.

Jeanne and I drove the trailer just a few years ago to Fredericksburg (German: *Friedrichsburg*) mainly to appreciate some art work and splendid food in this historic city. Of course, one of our five star warriors is from here, namely Admiral Chester W. Nimitz...not many of us have an air craft carrier named after us: see CVN-68 NIMITZ (which I saw in San Diego back in ought eight).



National Museum of the Pacific War. Just to the right of this mast is a conning tower of a submarine. The rest is below and inside of the building.



Jeanne waiting for a live war reenactment at Nimitz Museum.

Right turn to Utopia, or left?



Movie sign Luke sees at the "T."



My photo of the left turn to 187 from 470.

Well, we are at the left turn to, or the "T" in our book, movie, or the reality of which way to turn. This has caused me some heartburn while writing this paper and it just came to me the sense of even talking about a book made into a movie and someone fact checking to see if we are being Hollywoodized, hoodwinked, or just lied to.

If they can't get the right direction to take how can they expect a reader/watcher or golfer find the way to the Links of Utopia? What can we believe about the book with a bunch of errors?

Let me say this again and ask some questions. How you answer the question or how the question is answered determines the truth, the reality, the life, the crux, the whole story of spending Seven Days in Utopia. My heartburn is not over the issue of the movie folks making up an incorrect sign and a few other items "not in the book" or "not really real" but my heartburn is over the decision on what to believe. Then, what difference does it make?

1. Is the turn to Utopia left or right?

2. Is the airplane Johnny and Luke flew a Cessna 172 (book) or a Cessna 180 (movie)?

3. *Why did the movie have Johnny leaving Luke in the rain after a terrible argument? Wasn't in the book.*

4. *Why do we have to either ruin a good book by watching a god-awful poorly done movie, or ruin a good movie from a god-awfully poor book?*

5. *What good does it do to go to the battle field and try and reenact the golf shots or try to paint a picture of our shot around the great big ole oak tree?*

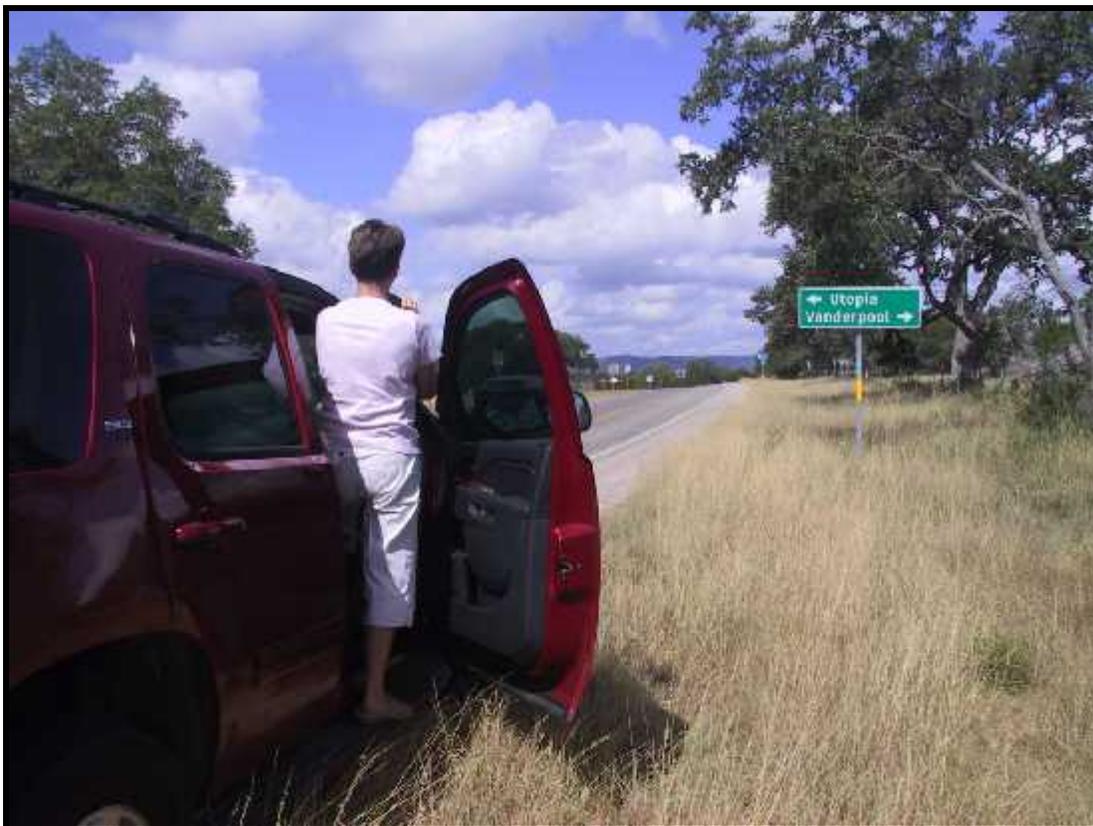
6. *Did he miss the putt?*

7. *What does reading, watching, and visiting Utopia have to with SFT?*

All of these questions may/may not get answered in this paper but let me run you down the road where Jeanne and I went. Let me kick some of this around. I did, by the way, get a new golf shirt – and a coffee cup but did Jeanne really trick me?

First of all here is Jeanne taking another picture of the 'proper' (real) sign on which way to turn or how to get to Utopia. As drawn on page 3 highway 470 goes on to Vanderpool is about 8 miles to the north or right. Utopia is a left turn 2 miles to the south. This is the only real spot you can turn off between these two towns. Again, who cares?

Let's play golf!



The Utopia Golf Course

Here it is!

A little south of town on the west side of the highway.



Let me put some lines on it showing the fairways and holes. One needs a good map on the golf course (even with just nine holes) or a good map on the course of life.



Already lied to you saying it only had nine holes – a ‘minimalist nine.’ Well, this is the second time around so this would be the “back nine” - maybe? My ‘guess’ is, given the club house lower right the first hole would be to the north shown as 12 in this picture. Play would be around the cemetery in the middle between 13 and 14. 15 and 18 go north and south ending up with 10 going to the southwest corner and then the long fairway east as number 11. When you go down there the pro will give you better instructions¹...To the west is the Sabinal River.

So, let us go to a better prepared and marked up overhead (plane view) of the course and I will point out the places we visited and that are pertinent to the book, movie, and reality.

¹ Toward the end of the paper I will argue these numbers are all wrong and number 12 is actually the number 1 fairway and the number 10 fairway for the back nine. You just can’t get good help these days...



1. Where we came in – old barn on the right and tee box to the left.
2. Cemetery – Links sign, where to bury lies, and where Johnny held Sunday morning ‘meeting.’
3. The big oak tree – Jeanne and I with the painting.
4. The club house – kept looking for Johnny Crawford but he was not there.
5. The driving range, entry, and where Luke crashed his car. This is the south road to the course.

[Understand Hollywood moved all over this section and part of *Friedrichsburg* where the author David Cook lives. This means the driving range is where (2) is above but not in the picture shown as (5). No big deal but when trying to follow a script while watching the movie and then go down there to trace some signs, steps, and shots it gets a little piercing. Again the test is between what is written, or in the movie, or is it reality? Could be life too...

The Links, Seeing the painting, Feeling the heat, and Trusting we are not on a Goat Ranch.



This spot (5) is on the south road to 187 from the driving range which is just behind us. My square mirror is a large mirror temporarily mounted for seeing around my trailer – it was not with us here. The next shot below is looking north at the driving range (5). To the left behind is the pro shop.





This is the tee box for the first hole north (#12 on the plane view) and sits just north of the club house. To me, in spite of all the numbers on previous pictures it seems to me this is the number one hole for the front nine and number 10 for the back nine (I was correct the whole time).



"We all own par on the first tee. It is on the 18th green that one has to face the music. How similar to life."

This next one is the tee shot on the number two hole tee box. It is located at number (1) on the plane view picture on page 9 above.



Back of the tee box on number two (2). You will see this one in the movie.

“Signing a Masterpiece”

Number **3** is next, or

3. The big oak tree – Jeanne and I with the painting.

This is a big piece of the course (book, movie, and life).

It is chapter 5 in the book and has to do with “Seeing” your shot. Luke shows up a few minutes late (and pays for it) but then Johnny gives Luke the instructions for his painting lesson. This sets up the whole book, Luke’s mission, and is a starting for all of us whether playing golf or living our lives. This did get Jeanne’s attention. Johnny said “A good picture produces feel and feel produces trust” (p. 65).



See his red line he painted around the tree. This is where he wants to hit his ball.



If you zoomed on the sign it says

"To be a great player, you must be a great shot-maker. To be a great shot-maker, you must become and artist" (p. 64).



Johnny's is on the left.



This picture Jeanne took does a couple of things to add to the book, movie, and life. First, she took the shot moving the tree out of the way to focus on showing the line or vision Luke drew that he was then going to make with his iron shot around the tree.

You can see the ball in his picture on this side of the tree. Johnny had placed the ball there and asked Luke how he would place his shot. Then he told him to draw it and got on his tractor and drove off.

Luke drew it, got his iron out and the ball went exactly like he drew it.

Notice the green behind me and the one in the painting. Pretty close...

An interested reader will be able to see a walkway across the empty pond behind my head by looking on page 9 as you can get a bead on the oak tree, the concrete bridge, and on out past the empty pond to what looks like some white sand traps.

For a good reason the purple in the background is good enough reason to call this part of Texas "hill country" (you see a lot of this in southern California too).

An interested golfer will be able to appreciate chapter 8 "Hickory Sticks" when he is playing a round with Johnny and ends up about 10 feet from where he had painted his picture. He asked about Johnny on page 118 "How in the world could he have anticipated this"?

He responded to himself setting up the see, feel, and trust theme of the book with "I could see the red shot line from the painting all the way to the pin set in the back right." After his shot just six feet away for birdie he thought to himself "Picasso!"

Yes, he set a course record.

Buried Lies

This is circle number (2) from our plane view on page 9, or

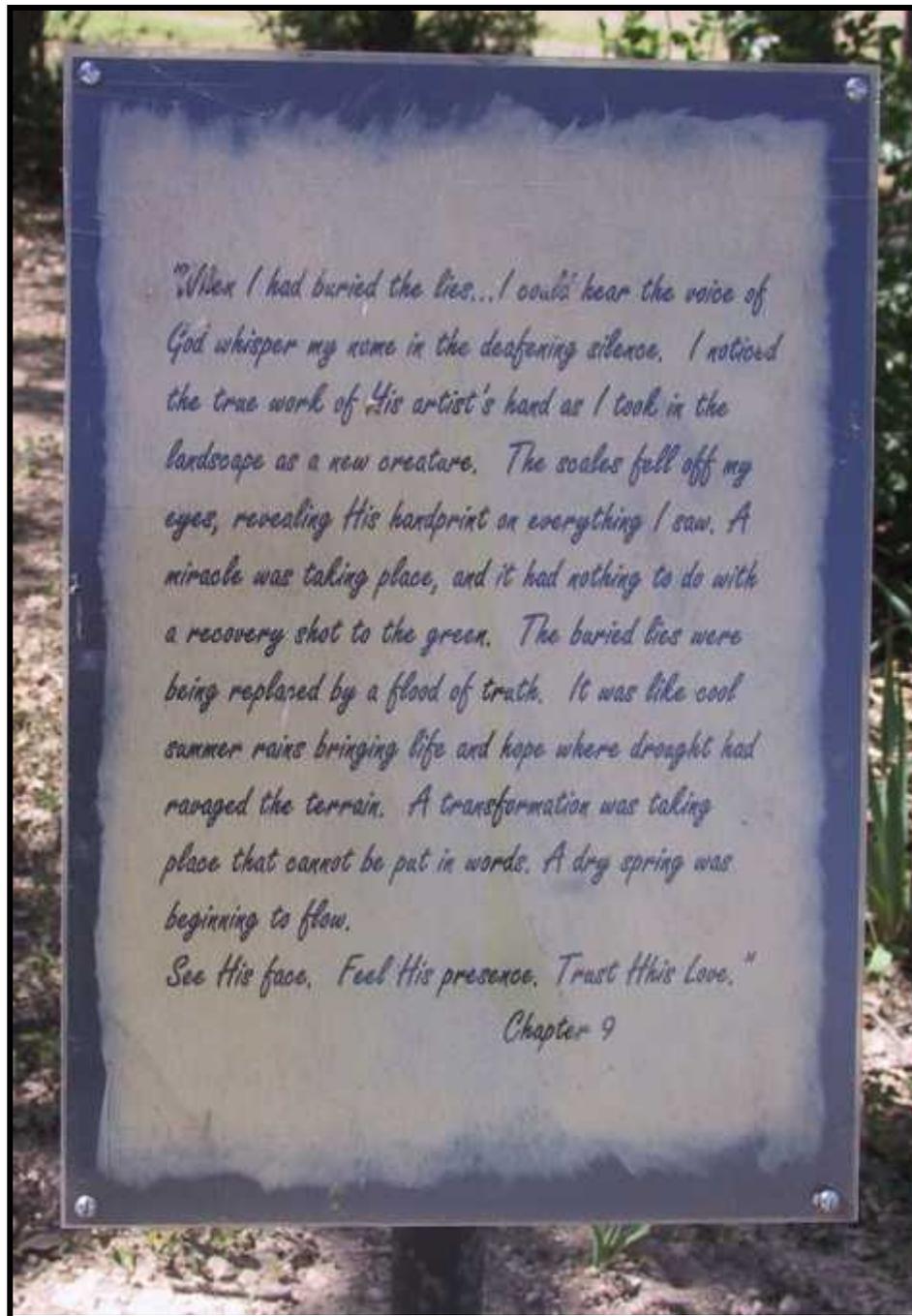
2. Cemetery – Links sign, where to bury lies, and where Johnny held Sunday morning ‘meeting.’

This section is the last portion of the paper and could be an altar call. It was for Luke. And, I might add reading the book in Chapter 9, I too felt just like Luke did. This section in the movie is good, close, moving, and worthy but the sentiment is better revealed in the book. Reading the book and playing golf, painting pictures, or flying the airplane are the parts in the book. The glue or the goo (sentimental tripe) that holds it together is with Johnny telling Luke what it is all about. He tells just what See, Feel, and Trust really mean.

This section is the glue or the goo to the book, the movie, and the trip to Utopia.



"I could hear the voice of God whisper my name in the deafening silence."



"I noticed the true work of His artist's hand as I took in the landscape as a new creature."



Jeanne with a smile on her face burying her lies.



Me with a smile on my face thinking about burying my lies...



“I now knew why Johnny’s hand was bleeding: the blood-stained shovel handle revealed the grave digger’s identity” (p. 135).

Did Jeanne trick me?

Yes.

- Thank God she did.

How about this for a punch line: *“Left or right? Which way will you turn?”*

The last picture (now, I know why I took it),

See His face, Feel His presence, and Trust His love



__SFT__