

***South* by Lance Charnes**
Discussion Questions

1. Is Luis a criminal? Why or why not? Do you think it's possible to do the right thing for the wrong reasons, or the wrong thing for the right reasons?
2. Bel says to Ros, "I just can't fight anymore" (p. 22, paperback edition). Discuss the various ways that Bel finds to continue fighting, despite her words. Why do you think she refuses to help Ros?
3. Discuss Nora's relationship with Paul. Who do you think is the dominant member of their household, and why? Take into account that in every instance where they disagree during the story, Nora defers to Paul.
4. Place yourself in Nora's position. If you learned what she had, what would you have done? How much – if anything – would you risk to bring the truth to light? Would you ask a criminal for help if you needed it?
5. Is McGinley a hero, villain, or some of each? Is he a good law-enforcement officer? Do you approve of his methods? Why or why not?
6. Who was your favorite character, and why? Who was your least-favorite character, and why? Who was the strongest character, and what made them seem that way to you?
7. Do you think anything like the Terrorist Detention Program (*South's* network of prison camps in the western U.S.) could actually come about? Why or why not? Given the provocation – the terrorist attack on Wrigley Field that killed thousands – would you support or oppose a real-world TDP? Would you do so publicly?
8. *South's* America has become a poorer, less healthy, more brutal and less secure place than it is today. However, it has also achieved full employment, has a booming industrial sector and is an energy exporter. Is this a good tradeoff? Would you want to live there?
9. Newport Beach – a wealthy real-world beach community in Orange County, California – has become a walled, gated enclave in *South's* world. Do you think similar cities would opt to isolate themselves from their less-well-off neighbors if allowed? What effect do you think that would have on (a) their residents, and (b) their neighbors? Can you think of instances where this has already been done?
10. Small drones are sold today in electronics stores and on the Internet. Do you have any interest in owning a drone? If you had one, what would you do with it? Would you object to your neighbors owning a drone?
11. Do you think the amount of cultural change required to generate the social and economic conditions seen in *South* could occur in the next twenty years? Why or why not?

12. How strong a role does religion play in this story? Other than the obvious (Nora's predicament), how does it manifest itself?
13. What other aspects of *South's* reality would you have liked to hear about, but weren't included in the story? Given the conditions of the book's world, how do you think these bypassed issues would work?
14. Real-world gunfights tend to be messy, confused actions, frightening to both participants and onlookers, in which far more shots miss than hit their targets. Did the author portray this reality effectively in the action sequences? Do you find this preferable to the usual Hollywood depiction of gunfights, and why/why not?
15. Consider the various fates of the principal characters. Which ones ended up the way you expected? Which ones had outcomes different from what you expected? If you could change one main character's fate, whose would it be, what would you change, and why?