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Banks on books

EVENT. Russell Banks, author of "The Sweet Hereafter," reads from his new novel "The Reserve," about love and mystery in the Adirondacks in the 1930s. Hear him Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Philadelphia Free Library, 1901 Vine St. (215-567-4341, www.freeibrary.org). METRO



culture 09

Books

Grandpa gangster

Is Chris W. Knight related to Al Capone? He thinks he's found the answer.



Knight

JONATHAN BENDER
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INTERVIEW. We all have family secrets, which often stay buried until we have to bury a loved one. It was at his father's funeral that Chris Knight, then 13, discovered he might be the grandson of Al Capone. With his father's tattered, black address book in hand, he set off to find out about his heritage.

"I needed to let those demons out, tell the true and honest story of my family heritage."

Knight

Knight's memoir, "Son of Scarface: A Memoir by the Grandson of Al Capone" (New Era, \$19), covers more than three decades as he searches for unequivocal proof that his

father was the son of one of America's most notorious gangsters. Now satisfied that he's found the truth, Knight is working on abuse awareness with Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Metro talked with Knight as he prepared for a book launch party at Capone's former mansion in Miami, Fla.

What compelled you to write the memoir?

There were so many demons in my life—the idea that my grandfather is Al Capone, losing my dad at such an early age and my mom abusing my sister and me. I needed to let those demons out, tell the true and honest story of my family heritage.

I wanted to turn my experiences into a positive thing and offer up a message about growing up in a dysfunctional household and the effects it can have on a person.

Did you ever want to stop the search?

I actually decided to stop trying to reconnect with people who knew my father because I could tell it was traumatic based on their reactions—they would hang up on me or close doors in my face. But in writing my story, it is my hope that some kind person will come forward and help me put my life in perspective.

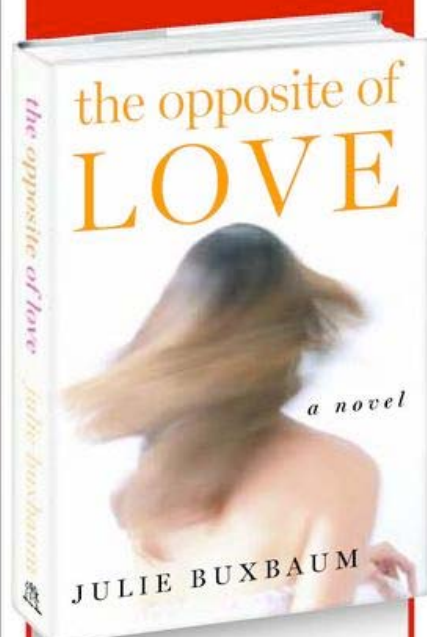
In your memoir, you speculate that Al Capone might have been bisexual or had homosexual tendencies.

That's a pretty controversial statement.

As I tell you in the book, I'm gay. And I'm curious: Is it a gene or product of your environment? When I started researching about my grandfather, I learned about his personality and behavior. I think there is something there—he just lived in a time where people weren't as open. But it's fascinating to wonder how he could have been gay and the most powerful mob boss in the world.

"Gripping, wise and extremely refreshing."

—MARIAN KEYES, bestselling author of *Angels*



"An appealing debut...."

This single-gal-in-the-city finds her white-knuckle hold on life and love slowly slipping as it dawns on her that the opposite of love isn't hate, it's emptiness.

—Publishers Weekly

"A realistic and well-written portrait of a young woman on the cusp of having it all."

—Booklist

"You'll want to keep reading all night."

—Library Journal, Starred Review

Best-seller charts

According to the Wall Street Journal

Fiction

1. "Plum Lucky" by Janet Evanovich (St. Martin's Press)
2. "People of the Book" by Geraldine Brooks (Viking Adult)
3. "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini (Riverhead Hardcover)
4. "Beverly Hills Dead" by Stuart Woods (Putnam Adult)
5. "New Moon" by Stephenie Meyer (Little Brown for Young Readers)
6. "Blackham" by Douglas



land (Crown Business)

5. "Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left, From Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning" by Jonah Goldberg (Doubleday)
6. "StrengthsFinder 2.0: A New and Upgraded Edition of the Online Test from Gallup's Now, Discover Your Strengths" by Tom Rath (Gallup Press)
7. "The Food You Crave: Luscious Recipes for a Healthy Life" by Ellis Klapper (Thurston)