

THE REAL DEAL

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What they're reading now

Real estate pros share picks for books on “Casablanca,” the inspiration for “Seinfeld,” and the life of Einstein

By [Angely Mercado](#) | July 01, 2017 01:00PM



Wallace Schwartz

Partner, Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP

What are you reading right now, or what did you finish most recently? “We’ll Always Have Casablanca” by Noah Isenberg, about the making of the movie “Casablanca.” Since then, we have planned a “Casablanca”-themed birthday party for my 94-year-old mother-in-law, had dinner with the author, and I now own a white dinner jacket.

What spurred you to read that book? When I read a review of the book in the New York Times, I realized that it would be a great idea to have a “Casablanca” birthday party. My wife, Elizabeth, invited the author to speak at this event. Unfortunately, Noah could not make it, but he was very gracious [and agreed] to meet us for dinner, answer our “Casablanca” questions and tape a birthday video greeting as well.

Has anything from the book stuck with you? “Casablanca” focuses on a topic that is very relevant today: the plight of refugees. The tears being shed during the famous scene in which they sing [France’s national anthem] “La Marseillaise” are the real tears of real refugees. Of the more than 75 actors and actresses in the film, only four were born in the U.S., and many had recently fled from Nazi-occupied Europe.

Zachary Elias

Rental/Listings Manager, DJK Residential

What are you reading right now? “Seinfeldia: How a Show About Nothing Changed Everything” by Jennifer Keishin Armstrong.

What spurred you to read that book? I have always been a big fan of “Seinfeld.” I’ve seen every episode multiple times and still watch the reruns almost nightly. I have even competed in “Seinfeld” trivia contests.

Has anything from the book stuck with you? I’ve always known a great deal about the episodes and characters simply from watching so often, but I knew much less about the inspiration behind the show. The book provided a look into the writers’ real-life events that led to the creation of so many of my favorite scenes.

Would you recommend it to others? I would 100 percent recommend this book to others, whether they are fans of the show or not. It’s an entertaining read that also offers poignant comments on general society.

Sterling Jawitz

Head of Real Estate Partnerships, Common

What are you reading right now? “Einstein: His Life and Universe” by Walter Isaacson.

What spurred you to read it? Besides being fascinated by modern physics, I picked it up to get a better understanding of how Einstein’s surroundings shaped his perception of the world, and how his challenging of conventional wisdom allowed him to succeed.

Has anything stuck with you? Einstein’s life is a story of brilliance, perception and the reimagining of the universe. It teaches us to constantly question facts and explanations and also recognize that our perceptions and insights are flawed. These are all good lessons to internalize, whether we are looking to the literal ends of the universe, or just thinking about the skylines of our cities.

Would you recommend it to others? I would absolutely! Isaacson is one of the great historians of our time. He offers insight into the Europe in which the great scientist grew up, and fled. He brings to life a brilliant mind and a very human person who struggled in the pursuit of love and happiness.