



ALSO BY CLINT ADAMS

NOVELS

The Seventh Ritual
My Watch Doesn't Tell Time
Don't Be Afraid of Heaven
Fear Ain't All That
Just Say Mikey

SCREENPLAYS

The Seventh Ritual

EVANGELINE

The Seer of Wall St.

a novel

Clint Adams



Credo Italia
San Francisco

published by



Credo Italia

350 Bay Street, Suite 100-124
San Francisco, California 94133 USA

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2015 by Clint Adams
All rights reserved.

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, scanned, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright holder and the above publisher of this book. Please do not participate in or encourage piracy of copyrighted materials in violation of the author's rights. Purchase only authorized editions.

Manufactured in the United States of America

ISBN13 978-0-9768375-7-2 (hardcover)
ISBN13 978-0-9768375-9-6 (paperback)
ISBN13 978-0-9768375-8-9 (e-book)

*To those wise enough to know
that yours is the only 'yes' that matters*

EVANGELINE

It's All Relative

In the summer of '62—after filling my tummy with paella at the Gates of Spain restaurant in Santa Monica—my great-aunt Pearl told me with pride, “Clinton Dean, you’re a direct descendant of John and John Quincy Adams.” Not knowing how to react to this info, nor to the sprawling family tree placed before me, I asked, “Can I eat my custard now?” after having studied the kiddie menu.

20+ years later, immediately upon meeting my captive scene partner, Jessica (Paul) Stanton in *The Trojan Women* at Cal, she asked, “So, what are you all about?” Flashing back to childhood for some reason, I responded, “I’m a direct descendant of John and John Quincy Adams.” Jessica next said, “No kidding. Then you must also be related to Evangeline Adams.” Busy adjusting my too-short and skimpy toga, I uttered back, “Who’s that?”

The following year, atop the John Hancock Observatory in Boston, I looked out to the harbor where the Tea Party had taken place. Instigated by Samuel Adams; kin, troublemaker. I liked that. I liked him. For the first time I took ‘being an Adams’ seriously.

Decades later, now a writer, I reflected on a few back-burner projects waiting to be set free. There she was, my great-great _____, Evangeline Adams. Someone I believed to be a part of me.

From 2012-2015, thousands of hours of research, development and refinement went into *EVANGELINE*’s twelve drafts.

Hiring a genealogist to determine the exact nature of my familial relationship to Evangeline Adams next became crucial. No way could I truthfully refer to Evangeline as my great, great-anything—once, twice or three times removed—if I wasn’t certain.

Today I learned conclusively that I’m not related to Evangeline, John or John Quincy Adams. Disappointed? Absolutely. Regretful that I took on this project under false pretenses? Never. In this book, I got to pay tribute to one of America’s first female entrepreneurs by relaying a story from a century ago that’s equally as relevant today; a total privilege. Evangeline, this is for you.

— *Clint Adams, Spring 2015*
Northern Nevada

Sun @ 28° TAURUS 7'52 (1914)

Six thousand five hundred and seventy days remain in my life, according to my astrological calculations. As a woman of society, now a rather mature woman, decorum prevents me from divulging how many days have come prior. My first began in Jersey City, New Jersey, a locale some might regard as unbecoming a member of America's First Family, but a start to my destiny nonetheless. Nearly three years after the reunification of America's North and South, on an overcast and gusty Saturday, February eighth, at precisely eight-thirty in the morning, the pendulum attached to my internal clock took its initial swing. Its continued movement is something I've learned to never take for granted.

"Make every moment count...as if your life depends on it," my most loyal client, financier J.P. Morgan, always said while straightening the line of his eyebrows with his forefingers. Wise words from an extraordinary man, a titan whose few vulnerabilities, according to him, were divulged only to me. J.P.

never wasted time, or opportunities. This afternoon, I've taken his example to heart. I plan to create a moment that will live on forever. Today, I'll stand firm and show everyone that I truly do matter.



“Miss Adams, do you feel that it will be your well-known clientele—royalty, financial barons, moving picture stars—and your luxurious suites at Carnegie Hall, that will influence the judge's decision most?”

On the first of two white marble steps leading to the entrance of the West Side Magistrates Court at 314 West 54th Street in midtown Manhattan, I'm forced to stop. Not yet underneath the twenty-foot archway to this Italian Renaissance Revival structure with its softly inviting terra cotta outward appearance above, my blood begins to simmer under the pressure of cumulonimbus-filled skies above. This is exactly why I've chosen to fight.

The question comes from a stout, broad-eyed, bald man of about twenty-five, impertinent in his demeanor, uninspired in his delivery. He's neglected to offer to share his umbrella on this dingy day, and now he poses questions to me without a proper introduction? “And you are?”

With clammy beads of sweat accumulating on his upper lip he says, “Ralph Slocum, ma'am. *New York Times*.”

“Clientele? Carnegie Hall? You forgot to mention that my lineage traces back to Presidents John and John Quincy Adams. Perhaps it's this fact that will impress the judge most.” At that, he has the decency to blush. “Sir, none of these will have any bearing on today's outcome.”

Next to me on the slippery, rain-soaked step, my steadfast

twenty-three-year-old secretary and confidante, Bavarian-born Sabine Goldman, agrees with a fierce nod, causing her Jewish Chai pendant to bounce against her ample chest. As is her own unique style, Sabine chooses to wear sheer linen weeks before the arrival of summer, while incessantly humming *I'm on My Way to Mandalay* because she doesn't know the words.

"Ma'am. John Pierpont Morgan. Three presidents of the New York Stock Exchange. King Edward. All those bon vivants?"

"Mr. Slocum, the judge's decision will have nothing to do with those that have selected my services. I am a woman who conducts business. Two hundred Carnegie Hall has been a more than suitable site to render what I do; my address does not make me more credible, less credible, than the next person."

"And how do you feel this decision will impact the future of your business, your 'calling'?"

"My business as an astrologer?"

"Not only that, but the future of astronomy in general."

"You do mean to say astrology, not astronomy. Is that correct?"

"Yes, of course, ma'am. Astrology. Exactly."



Two hundred dollars. A petty and simplistic restitution, the cost of the emerald brooch I wear atop my tweed lapel. I could have merely paid the fine, but I requested a hearing instead. When the entirety of one's life's work is under scrutiny, a court case is nothing more than a paltry pittance to endure for unequivocal justice.

So now, like thousands of defendants who have come before me, my fate will shortly be decided in this frigid, second

floor courtroom situated on the periphery of Hell's Kitchen. All I can hope is that the marinara sauce I imagine Judge Freschi ate last night left his Italian taste buds satiated, leaving him hungry for nothing more than the truthful aftertaste of my testimony.

The black-eyed bailiff, with one hand mysteriously remaining in his left pants pocket commands, "All rise," seemingly directed to me. My unexpected upward and paranoid stance causes my library of astrological reference books, including my Swiss Ephemeris, my bible, which gives the positions of astronomical objects in the heavens at a given time, to tumble to the floor from my lap like a singular clap of applause. Some pages even become dislodged from their bindings, but my hands quickly regroup them. Although my nerves begin to rattle under the now-piercing gaze of every thief, hoaxer, prostitute and possible Black Hand-extortionist now staring at me, I refuse to be embarrassed. These books are here for spectacle and show, identical to the two hired esquires to my rear. J.P., may he rest in peace, has left me in good counsel. The billions of dollars I generated for him have come back to me in the presence of two of Wall St.'s finest attorneys. The judge should take note, but I'm not wagering on it.

After I've collected my belongings, the bulky bailiff continues, "The Superior Court of New York County, State of New York, is now in session, the Honorable John H. Freschi presiding. Please be seated and come to order."

I feel a stern tap on my right shoulder, ordering me to sit. Then a second. My tactile attorney has earned his pay, twice now. Together, we three behold the parade of criminal horror stories on the docket before us, and we judge for ourselves the defendants on trial.

"Are you nervous?" olive-drably dressed Attorney #1 asks, two octaves above being audible.

“I feel secure about the outcome. Nervousness is felt only by those less certain. *Vinci Omnia Veritas*,” I answer back with authority, while my posterior notices the crude lumpiness of the worn, padded red velvet seat upon which my piles are seated.

In my good man’s eyes I can see the absence of Latin within them. Proper English to all present from this moment forward. “Our case is coming soon. Is that correct?”

“Very soon. If the petty larceny hearing preceding ours ends quickly, the judge will surely address you next.”

Indeed the theft inquiry ends before it begins when a newspaper dealer fails to appear against his accused. The young man, with hair greasier than a streetcar’s axle, doesn’t look as relieved as one would imagine. There’s an air of disappointment about him rather than elation at the dismissal. What was it that he had stolen? A stack of overpriced 5¢ copies of the Sunday *New York Times*? If practice makes perfect, I’d deduce that he’ll re-visit the newspaper merchant until the thief gets the attention he’s seeking.

“The next case, the People ex. rel. Adele D. Priess versus Evangeline S. Adams. Will the parties please rise.”

This is the moment of my lifetime. My eyes blink shut, then open. Three times. No, not a dream. No one is beside me. Inconspicuously I look behind me to my left, where one attorney gives me a stony grin. I look beyond him and—There. There in the spectator section gazes my trustworthy secretary, Sabine. She always wears a grimace along with a vibrant ruby red scarf, much too seductive for any professional setting. At second thought, a sardonic sneer, rather than a grimace. Sabine’s attendance here today comforts me, except when she hums; at any given moment, she can put the fear of God in even the most well intentioned human or pet.

Sabine nods. Yes, I see it. In a split second my eyes move on

to her right. There sits the beloved comrade of my Aquarian soul, demure yet conspicuous to me, Emma Sheridan-Fry. In her violet plumed hat and perfect posture Emma doesn't need to grin, grimace or nod. Emma needn't do anything. Seeing her poise, her grace, the way she breathes in air that's always unforced makes my anxiety diminish, my heart full, my being calm, while reinforcing my desire to get these proceedings underway for businesswomen everywhere who fight to be taken seriously. I smile at my Emma and stop searching. Instead, I turn back to the front of the court and cast my azure eyes upon the judge perched at an altar-like rosewood table with russet trim before me. He appears to be a genial man. Still a mystery though what he enjoyed for dinner last night, nor if his stomach found it agreeable or not. If he belches into his clenched hands I'll be certain of my presumption.

Judge John H. Freschi, upon more finite examination, somewhat resembles my diminutive, dimple-chinned and olive toned client, Enrico Caruso. Or am I just being small minded? Perhaps both have origins in southern Italy; perhaps both come from opposite ends of the boot.

"Miss Evangeline Smith Adams?" the prosecutrix, whose overall girth and bulging biceps make her look better suited to coach football, asks.

Thinking all along that it was the judge himself with whom I'd be speaking, uncertainty and confusion take over. "Yes, your—Miss, Mrs." Based on appearance and demeanor, I assume I'm being interrogated by a perpetually unmarried woman. "It is Miss, isn't it?"

"I'll ask the questions. Now, you are the proprietress of the..." Miss Scrum's mouth twists unpleasantly. "...business, shall we say?"

"That's correct, ma'am. It is indeed a business. A consulting

business.”

“Where advice is given...by you. And do others, within your business environs, provide advice?”

“I am the only one. I have a staff of several secretaries and stenographers. Researchers as well. To be exact, there are twenty-five people under my employ. None but I offer advice.”

“And this work takes place at two hundred Carnegie Hall.”

“I have several suites there. Ten-oh-three Carnegie Hall is my private office.”

“Isn’t it true that you, initially, were turned down, time and time again, while searching for these *suites*?”

“Well, yes. That’s cor—”

“Your presence was unwelcomed at every building housing office space. Why exactly was that?”

“But, ma’am. As you yourself mentioned, we did locate—”

“Your Honor, please let it be known that the suites to which Miss Adams refers are artists’ studios, *not* offices. For the likes of performers and such,” the prosecutrix says while tilting her head fully back, now addressing the ceiling.

I looked at the judge, insecurity and indecision hovering outside my mind, the way a child seeks support from a parent.

“Finish your thought, ma’am,” the judge says.

“We did locate studios at Carnegie Hall. There are more th—”

The prosecutrix interrupts. “Before we delve into an explanation of what you call ‘your work,’ ‘your profession,’ do you understand why you are here? Fraud. Fraud by fortunetelling. A crime.”

“I understand. Perfectly. I’m no fortuneteller.” Defiance enters my voice. “Rather than pay the fine, I’m here now, to demonstrate what I do.”

“At the taxpayer’s expense. Do you know how bus—”

While fiddling with his gavel by means of his fingertips, Judge Freschi interrupts Miss Scrum. “It is the nature of your *business* in general. You have chosen to come before me today to, in essence, defend your business rather than yourself. Am I comprehending the nature of your wishes accurately?”

“Yes, and I most appreciate your time with me in this place of law, your Honor.”

“Well, I must say, you are standing in the company of two most-accomplished and successful defenders.”

“Thank you, Judge Freschi,” the polished lawyer behind my right shoulder says mildly, raising his forearm for all to view the diamond cufflink set in sterling silver he attempts to re-clasp.

Hearing his faux-bravado voice, even for a split second, agitates me. I am here to defend myself. Me alone. This is *my* task. I, with all due respect, am the star attraction, in this, the center ring. The price I’ve paid to attain this standing has been high, with many years of toil and trouble to prove a singular point: astrology is the oldest science on the planet.

“I will like to speak to you myself, your Honor. No one knows astrology as I do. In my humble opinion.”

“This is the business to which you are referring?”

Before answering, in my head flash the thousands of charts I’ve systematically created. The pages and pages of data I’ve summoned, the computations I’ve formulated. The azimuths, the progressions, the sextiles as well as octiles. The clients in front of me and those I know only through the post. Not only am I defending astrology; I am defending my entire existence, my livelihood, my life. Trying to convince someone of the legitimacy of this most elemental discipline is like breathing for me now. It’s done daily, without thought or planning. An inborn incident.

“Astrology is my business. That’s *absolutely* correct, Judge

Freschi.”

“Astrology. The interpretation of the stars,” the judge says, nodding. “Forgive my ignorance, but how does this differ then from astronomy?”

“Your Honor, time is of the essence. If we—”

Knowing that I may never get this opportunity again, I interrupt Miss Scrum. “Astronomy is the study of all objects outside our world. It, too, is a science. Astronomy, you could say, came from astrology. Yes, you are correct when you mentioned interpretation. Astrology is the oldest, most ancient, of all sciences.”

“Beside you, you have the books to substantiate this?”

“Yes, many. Many books have been written on this subject, writings from centuries back by men who are well respected as authorities on this subject, as well as others. *The Art of Synthesis* by Alan Leo, *Liber Astronomiae*, Guido Bonatti, *Christian Astrology* and its subsequent volumes, all written by the Englishman, 17th-century astrologist, William Lilly...” I look over in the direction of the prosecutrix to find her eyes rolling as swiftly as a spiraling pigskin thrown at midfield for a touchdown. I stop.

“To much of the public you are a fortuneteller. Do you intend to disprove this today?” Prosecutrix Scrum asks while looking at the judge, not to me.

“And I will. I am no fortuneteller and I’d now like to tell you why.”

“Please proceed then,” Judge Freschi tells me, seeming as if curiosity has gotten the best of him.

The precise moment I have been awaiting is before me. I have hitherto collected my thoughts and my words to the best of my intelligence. Before being able to express myself, I hear a distinguishable cough from behind me. I know it came from Emma. No, not strategic, natural. An organic occurrence that

provides meaning to me. A sign of sorts, as I believe it to be. Others may not. Either way, the sound from my beloved Emma validates my motives to continue.

“Firstly, I appreciate so much the opportunity to be before you, the prosecution, Detective Priess and Detective Roos today in this Superior Court. My business, my consulting business as an astrologer, comes after years of devoted study, not by chance. I believe I have earned the title of expert.”

“An expert of astrology? Not astron—”

“No more interruptions, Mrs. Scrum,” the judge commands.

Mrs.? Well, you could have fooled me. “Yes. Astrology is the science which describes the influence of the heavenly bodies upon mundane affairs, upon human character and life. To be most clear-cut, it is a mathematical or exact science deciphered via astronomy, which describes the heavenly bodies and explains their motions, etc.”

“These heavenly bodies to which you are referencing are planets. Not Heaven itself,” the judge says with a wry smirk.

I pause as those in the courtroom chuckle. “It, astrology, is an applied science in that it takes the established principles of astronomy as its guide in delineating human character. It is an empirical science, because its deductions are mathematical calculations based upon accurate data that have been gathered for thousands of years. Are you understanding me, your Honor? Mrs. Scrum?”

“I most certainly am. Please do continue,” Judge Freschi says while Mrs. Scrum lets out a sigh.

“Thank you, Judge. Astrology is the oldest science in existence. It is not only pre-historic but pre-traditional, and must not be classed with fortune telling, or any of the many forms of demonology as practiced in ancient and modern times.” I still sense reticence and skepticism coming from the

man seated before me. Like all I have ever known, this, too, will be a challenge.

“Your presentation is quite proficient. Please do carry on with your defense, Miss Adams.”

Gracious be. Another good sign.

“Astrology is the science of the effects of the Solar Currents on all living things, especially human life. The earth, in revolving around the sun, passes through twelve different currents of Solar Fluid, thus causing the great diversity in human life.”

“Currents. Like wading down a stream to discover others unlike ourselves? Diverse others?”

“Perhaps so. A path, so to speak.”

I proceed to tell his Honor more and more of what I have learned to be intelligent information. As far as I can determine he is able to absorb its meaning and ponder what I am saying as the truth.

Mrs. Scrum next bolts to her feet. “Your Honor, we cannot hold up the proceedings of the day any longer with—”

“You’re entirely correct, Mrs. Scrum.”

“Thank you, your Honor,” she says sweetly. “Now then, time for your demonstration, Miss Adams. Take this data, look it over and divulge your findings,” Mrs. Scrum tells me while handing me a piece of paper folded neatly in quarters. “Everything on it that you need?”

The moment of truth has arrived. Upon finding the contents within, no name appears; only a birth date, including year along with location and time of birth, nothing else. All the ingredients I’d requested beforehand. “Yes, indeed, ma’am.” My heart pounds identically like the jackhammer I hear on the street outside.

“If your demonstration does take beyond the agreed-upon allotment, we will have to continue onto another case. Yours

will be over,” the judge reminds me.

Before responding, my eyes jut over to my left without a flinch. There, staring at me sternly in polished almond wood, so matter-of-factly, a Comtoise longcase clock ready to strike three. “The chart I cast will take no more than a few minutes and I will then explain it.”

With little more back and forth, Judge Freschi and Mrs. Scrum allow me to do my work in front of them, in their presence and that of everyone else in the courtroom. Although I dare not look back, I can tell that Sabine and Emma are holding their breaths.

I take out my ephemeris, my compass, my writing tools and begin cyphering and scribing. Is it interest or boredom on the faces of the twenty-or-so spectators behind me? I focus only on the task at hand, knowing no more than ten minutes will be needed to chart this anonymous person’s life story. It turns out to be a challenging, sorrowful tale to tell. But, when complete, I convey all back to the silenced courtroom.

“This is a younger man. A boy with slightly longer hair the color of flame. Clear green eyes. Skin freckled from the sun. Athletic. Playful. Obstinate. Bold in front of others, uncertain by himself. Frequently misunderstood by family members. Discontent with their misjudgments. A somber face worn in private. Sadly, this hapless lad will live a very short life. Water. A watery grave. Water, water all around him that will take his life so early...”

First a gasp is heard during my words, then a few whispers and murmurs from those awaiting their turn at trial, then nothing. Mrs. Scrum, a look of astonishment on her face, remains silent. Her eyes search out the judge.

“That was my son.” Judge Freschi’s voice cracks. He next looks down at a metal-framed object indistinguishable to me

atop his desk. “He drowned recently.” The judge’s relative speechlessness leads the prosecutor to ask more questions of me regarding the fees I charge, income, taxes paid, business licenses, my previous employment in Boston and any prior criminal activity or incarceration. I respond succinctly, accurately, truthfully with a clear conscience. Mrs. Scrum discovers nothing blameworthy. Everything I do, professionally and personally, is thoroughly legal and above board. Abruptly, Judge Freschi cuts the prosecutrix off mid-sentence and orders a brief recess.

The courtroom erupts in chatter.



When the judge returns, I stand.

“The defendant has given ample proof that she is a woman of learning and culture, and one who is very well versed in astronomy and other sciences. I say she violated no law.”

The judge glances to the prosecutrix, then to me, then to the courtroom at large while holding the paperwork I had given him in his right hand—his son’s chart. As he waves it in front of us all, he declares, “I am satisfied that the defendant has not pretended to tell fortunes, and she is accordingly acquitted. Defendant dismissed.”

My good humor is magnified when he adds, “Today, this defendant raises astrology to the dignity of an exact science.”



The same reporter is waiting in the foyer of the courthouse, and this time he follows me as we both head out of the building.

“The judge, in his most honest appraisal of me and my

efforts, has done astrology a great favor. My business goes on. I applaud the way he conducted himself today. Judge Freschi could have—”

“What do you think this decision will lead to? For you? For others?” the stout reporter asks.

“I don’t know about the others. For me, professionally, it means that my quest in life remains intact, alive.”

“Which is...?”

“To thrust astrology from reading rooms into mainstream popular culture, and to be remembered, in perpetuity, for having done so.”

“To some, you’ve already achieved this. The former anyway. Doesn’t seem like much of a challenge. And personally?”

At that, Mr. Slocum displays his first show of fine manners: he opens the front door for me. Outside, my eyes see only sunshine, no more clouds, no rain. The late-afternoon yields nothing but brightness and blue skies ahead. “To see if I can accomplish this all, indisputably, and then some, before November 10, 1932.”

“What’s so significant about that date in particular, ma’am?”

While contemplating my answer a waft of noxious air indistinguishable to my senses invades my being, causing me to briefly lose my breath. Fecal odor via the sewer? Illuminating gas? Fumes from the tenements and shanties that line Eighth Avenue nearby? Ninth? The smell of death? “Oh,” I say, “it’s just a private goal I’ve set for myself.”



As I walk down the steps of the courthouse, nothing in my life, my career, will ever again be the same.

