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From: PIR <preines [redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 12:53 PM
To: H
Subject: Re: Request

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From The Internets...

Lionel Shriver is an American journalist and author.

Lionel Shriver was born Margaret Ann Shriver on May 18, 1957 in Gastonia, North Carolina, to a deeply religious family (her father is a Presbyterian minister). At age 15, she changed her name from Margaret Ann to Lionel because she did not like the name she had been given, and as a tomboy felt that a conventionally male name fitted her better. She was educated at Barnard College, Columbia University (BA, MFA). She has lived in Nairobi, Bangkok and Belfast, and currently lives in London.

She is married to jazz drummer Jeff Williams.

Shriver wrote seven novels and published six (one novel could not find a publisher) before writing *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, which she called her "make or break" novel due to the years of "professional disappointment" and "virtual obscurity" preceding it. In an interview in *BOMB Magazine*, Shriver listed her novels' subject matter up to the publication of *We Need to Talk About Kevin* as "anthropology and first love, rock-and-roll drumming and immigration, the Northern Irish Troubles, demography and epidemiology, inheritance, tennis and spousal competition, [and] terrorism and cults of personality...." Rather than writing traditionally sympathetic characters, Shriver prefers to create characters who are "hard to love."

Shriver won the 2005 Orange Prize for her eighth published novel, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, a thriller and close study of maternal ambivalence, and the role it might have played in the title character's decision to murder nine people at his high school. The book created a lot of controversy, and achieved success through word of mouth.

Her experience as a journalist is wide having written for *The Wall Street Journal*, *the Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, contributed to the Radio Ulster program "Talkback" and many other publications. In July 2005, Shriver began writing a column for *The Guardian*, in which she has shared her opinions on maternal disposition within Western society, the pettiness of British government authorities, and the importance of libraries (she plans to will whatever assets remain at her death to the Belfast Library Board, out of whose libraries she checked many books when she lived in Northern Ireland).

In online articles, Lionel discusses in detail about her love of books and plans to leave a legacy to the Belfast Education and Library Board. She also said this about "we need to talk about Kevin" becoming a success:

"I'm often asked did something happen around the time I wrote *Kevin*. Did I have some revelation or transforming event? The truth is that *Kevin* is of a piece with my other work. There's nothing special about *Kevin*. The other books are good too. It just tripped over an issue that was just ripe for exploration and by some miracle found its audience."

In 2009, she donated the short story *Long Time, No See* to Oxfam's 'Ox-Tales' project, four collections of UK stories written by 38 authors. Her story was published in the 'Fire' collection.

Shriver's newest book, *So Much for That*, was released March 2, 2010. It was subsequently named a finalist for the National Book Award in fiction.

In So Much for That, Shriver presented a biting criticism of the US health care system, although she has been an expatriate for most of her adult life. She expressed the same sentiment in an interview in May 2010 while at the Sydney Writers' Festival in Australia, in which she said she was "exasperated with the way that medical matters were run in my country" and considers that she is taking "my life in my hands. Most of all I take my bank account in my hands because if I take a wrong turn on my bike and get run over by a taxi, I could lose everything I have." She is a patron of UK population concern group Population Matters.