

Essay #3: The Gumsandal

Inherent Vice and *The Big Lebowski* feature a detective that could be alternatively described as a “hippie,” “doper,” or, as stated in *Inherent Vice*, a “gumsandal”. In a 750-1000-word essay, **evaluate** the gumsandal as a detective, especially as an **alternative** to the **hardboiled detectives** we’ve seen thus far, classic (Op, Marlowe) and contemporary (Brendan, Jake). Your essay can focus on what the gumsandal offers as a detective in terms of his **approach to knowledge, his understanding of power, or the narrative effect of a gumsandal as opposed to the hardboiled detective**. However, you can also focus on other issues, as long as you evaluate the gumsandal as a detective in contrast to other detectives we’ve read or seen this semester. Your essay should have a **clear thesis**, supported by **relevant and specific details** and **quotations** from the above texts.

The following quotes from “The Rise of Slacker Noir,” a Slate Magazine video viewed in class, may be useful to prompt the above discussion. However, these quotes are **not necessary** to the essay and should only be used as a jumping off point. In other words, your thesis statement should not be the same as any of the below statements.

1. “A slacker noir is a mystery in which the protagonist’s primary goal is to extricate himself from the main storyline rather than solve or somehow resolve the conflict”
2. “It’s the small tonal switch from pursuit to escape that separates apart these fundamentally similar genres... [B]oth genres share a cynically similar attitude”
3. “Slacker heroes are victims of circumstances, lacking control over their own destinies, no matter the relative righteousness”
4. “The trial at hand [in a slacker noir] is, for him, simply an obstacle to the way of a detached, self-involved way of life. Their motivation is unraveling a mystery in order to remove themselves from it and return to anonymity”