

Forlesen and coal and railroad magnate Frick

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 12 Sep 2014

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Marc Aramini — 12 Sep 2014, 20:52

For those of you who don't read through the long short story write ups I do, thought I would throw this out there. When Forlesen wakes up, he sees a man with a gold tooth and a mole who he believes should be him but isn't. This man is mentioned several times as the highest executive on the E.F. day, Ernie Frick. Forlesen finally meets Frick at the end of his day. (At one point there is even a rumor that Frick talks to the computer, though he isn't a programmer)

During his drive there, the hitchhiker Abraham tells Forleson that "coal and the railroads" buy the legislature and later when he is playing bet-your-life the skiing obsessed manager increases bidding on snowmobiles, opens a new territory, and shuts down coal, oil, and shoes. Forlesen has been associated with oil all along, with oil stains under his car and all his food tasting oily, and when he awoke he perceived his naked feet as shoes. Coal and the railroads happen to be the business of the real life partner of Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, who was notorious for his staunch anti-union tactics which at one time involved erecting fences with barbed wire and rifle holes for Pinkertons to break a strike where many workers died. When Forlesen is first descending to the industrial and corporate section from the highway, he notes that the buildings look like they are fortified as if against attackers. This resonates pretty well with the famous Frick strikes.

I don't think the mention of coal and railroads buying the legislature is any coincidence - at one point Frick was called the most hated man in America and an assassination attempt was made on his life. Was this universe made for Frick? (ie - the first kind of dead mentioned in the red book). Is this Frick's punishment? Obviously they have different first names, Henry and Ernie.