

# [Flight patterns](https://assignbuster.com/flight-patterns/)

Ten Little Indians by Sherman Alexie explores the lives of various native Americans who pursue their own dreams amongst the " white," stereotypical Americans who make assumptions about them. They try to combine their own versions of " the little brown guys" with expectations from other native Americans and Americans in general.

Each chapter concerns the struggles of individual Native Americans as they carve their niche in society and the sacrifices they make whilst " fitting in." Their personal trials and triumphs test them to their limits. Chapter 5, " Flight Patterns" is about William, himself a native American, married to a native American, a Spokane woman, but who is far removed from his culture, wanting to " smell only of soap and after-shave." He does not smoke or drink and is contemptuous of this stereotype. William represents the typical American businessman and is " a warrior for the great tribe of American business," revealing a a somewhat tongue-in-cheek mockery of the " white" man's viewpoint that native Americans are all tribal in one way or another.

William and Marie live in Seattle and he is a traveling salesman. They have a daughter of five and a healthy adult relationship. Marie tries to make him stay home rather than leave on his latest trip. William is desperate to stay home but knows he can't and he can only " objectify" his wife as he thinks of her and leaves for his trip. Here, it is clear that sexual desire crosses all boundaries. Often left out of stories, the sexual references bring a basic reality to this chapter in an effort to ensure that the reader understands that in many things people are just the same, even if they won't admit it.

William is somewhat complicit in the stereotype that is the native American and describes himself to his taxi driver as the " bows and arrows" type of Indian not the " bejeweled" Indian from India. There is a connection with the taxi driver, from Ethiopia, who has his own cultural boundaries to cross and responsibilities as he must send money home. William, comfortable and middle class can appreciate what he has which is often not the case for the Spokane Indians.

On a serious note, the subject of 9/11 is prevalent and " The War on Terror" significant with the necessity for technology ever relevant. The irony of investing in " socially responsible funds," very much a white man's capitalism and therefore largely unacceptable to many cultures does not escape reference.

Alexie makes the reader smile and sometimes cringe from a recognition of himself (or herself) in the character portrayals or representations of biased human beings and everyone's struggle for survival.