

Clancy's novel starts with everyday work-consume terror

...then Things Take a Strange Turn

David Annarelli

2022

a review of

We Take Care of Our Own by Christopher Clancy. Montag Press 2021

Imagine Amazon, Walmart, Exxon, Mobil, Pepsi, Coke, Fox News, Blackwater, the AMA, and Haliburton all rolled into one messy Play Dough ball of a supraconglomerate. The only corporation.

Add the military, and you have USoFA Worldwide with its finger in every pie, in bed with everyone and everything. And, it's leading the War on Terror around the world the way a rock band goes on tour.

Christopher Clancy, whose writing appears in this magazine, has written a political satire and Orwellian warning that is a little closer to home than many of us would care to acknowledge.

Set in Fiscal Year 20—, the world is in a perpetual state of war against terror as much for stock market prices and entertainment as for safety and security

The book follows Linda Held, a single mother of a son with cystic fibrosis, who is pursuing a medical career while trying to hold together her life. She applies for a job with USoFA World Wide that has implemented a pilot program dubbed SoldierWell that offers psychological support to returning veterans of the ongoing wars to cope with their PTSD.

Using the INSIST Technique, the brainchild of Soldier-Well Director Miles Young, USoFA sets out to correct the thinking of emotionally devastated soldiers. However, it isn't long before a more nefarious and ulterior motive seeps in from the shadows, lurking and ugly.

The book screams everyday America; right here; right now, and has all the trapping found in your daily news feed. Video games based on ultra-violence—Terror Busters 10K—which is also the entertainment on TV, and at stadium mass rallies. The ginned-up war on terror dominates life.

At one point, the protagonist parks in a lot at one of the rallies. “Then, up pulled an elongated golf cart driven by an older woman with a submachine gun hanging from a thin band around her shoulder and a ball cap that read ‘Escort Red Level.’ You folks be wanting a life, I suppose,” she said.

It isn't difficult to imagine our country just like this since we are a good part of the way there now

As Linda begins her work with two soldiers back from the front lines, a sense of sympathy easily develops for the character. You want her to succeed. You want the therapy to work. You want the soldiers to heal.

Attachment to the characters grows. You care about their fate and...wait a minute. Things begin taking a strange turn...that is not good.

There's a point where you believe that things are going to turn out a certain way, but then realize how it's all going to end. It's not a surprise turnaround from what you expected though what comes in the last two pages, I only barely saw coming. But, no spoilers here.

The book contains good wit, relevant satire, and an engaging plot. But, satire as a forewarning for what this country could become. It's infrastructure is already in place.

David Annarelli is a father, musician, activist, and contributing writer to the Prison Journalism Project. He writes from the Pocahontas State Correction Center in Virginia where he fights to get back into court on exonerating evidence.

He was arrested inside his Virginia home during a severe mental health crisis in 2016. Instead of using de-escalation techniques, an officer who didn't identify himself, kicked open the door to the home and opened fire. David returned fire. Everyone survived without serious injury.

David was charged with malicious wounding of a law enforcement officer and sentenced to 20 years in prison.



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