ForeWord Reviews

GENERAL

Greenfield for President
Arthur D. Robbins
Acropolis Books
978-0-9676127-5-1
(Aug 19, 2000)

Jeremiah Greenfield, soon to be presidential candidate, was having a terrible day. In Job-like succession, he loses his job, wife, wealthy patron, and almost his life. The odds for success were never very good for Jeremiah: as a child, his father, the corrupt mayor of a small New York town, beat him regularly, while his mother destroyed any personal possession that mattered to him. He barely manages to avoid a prison term before graduating from high school and ends up in the army where he meets his lifelong "friend," Nick Belladonna.

Robbins, a psychologist with doctorates in psychology and French, offers for a first novel a political fable that shows that the truth will either set one free or kill. He presents a nightmarish vision of a government controlled by a minority of elites who will do anything to preserve their power.

Jeremiah's childhood traumas turn him into a pathological liar, a trait that serves him well as a reporter for the North Benware Star Ledger. His lie-riddled columns are wildly popular, especially his expose on the president's poor choice of a tie and his thought-piece on how being poor provides the medical advantage of not being able to buy foods high in cholesterol. His notoriety soon catches the attention of CRAP (the Committee to Resurrect the American Presidency). CRAP is dedicated to keeping America macho, the rich rich, and ensuring that the USA does not become another Great Britain—"a nation of faggots, where women were allowed to rule." Nick, Jeremiah's buddy, becomes a spy for CRAP.

Jeremiah is able to miraculously overcome his personal losses and becomes the presidential candidate for the CRAP-controlled PISS (Party to Insure Safety and Security). Jeremiah's goal is not to win the 2004 election but to draw enough votes away from the Democratic challenger so that the Republican incumbent, a bumbling Warren Harding-type and CRAP figurehead, can win a second term. Jeremiah, with the aid of psychotherapy, however, begins telling the truth and gains an insurmountable lead but also runs afoul of CRAP. He is so confused and despondent that suicide is his only escape. Or is it?

Robbins's first novel provides some humorous flashes and promise for his second novel,

which he is working on. His characters need to be better developed; even Jeremiah evokes less sympathy than he should. At times, Robbins's humor is sophomoric, most obviously, the thinly disguised Nixonian CRAP and PISS Party. Yet overall, this short entertaining novel holds the reader's interest and makes for an enjoyable interlude while the real 2000 campaign heats up.

Karl Helicher