

January 6th and the Millennial Horde

Andy Lazris

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Drawing on recent history, January 6th and the Millennial Horde is a satirical novel that emphasizes political hypocrisies.

In Andy Lazris's dystopian novel *January 6th and the Millennial Horde*, a congressman takes drastic measures following an attempted coup.

Jim, a Democratic congressman from a Republican area of Pennsylvania, responds to COVID-19 by supporting disciplinary measures against those who refuse to wear masks or get vaccinated. At the same time, he opposes federal mandates, not wanting to upset his Libertarian base. Following the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, he is struck by the recognition of what could have happened. The event radicalizes Jim, and he begins championing policies that criminalize pro-Trump and antiscience rhetoric.

Jim is joined in his efforts by a college student, Mary Lou. She makes national news after she murders classmates who participated in the January 6th riot or who spread misinformation about COVID-19. She and Jim urge media outlets to promote their message. They want to punish those states and individuals who fail to comply with their version of the truth. As Mary Lou converts liberals into killers overnight, a new peril arises from the ashes of the peril that Jim had hoped to stomp out.

Jim is constructed as a vengeful authoritarian, though he self-identifies as a Democrat in Libertarian clothing. While initially acting out of respect for science and individual freedom, he loses his sense of integrity following the Capitol attack. His interactions with others are one-sided and performative; he works to maintain appearances, despite his depraved fantasies. He develops monikers for others, too—sometimes clever (as with Mike Not-Pennsylvania), but often childish (as with A-O-Crazy). Such quirks are a frequent point of distraction from the narrative. Additionally, in conversation, all of the characters sound alike, and their long speeches slow the book's progression.

This perspective-driven novel is loud in decrying a dichotomous view of politics and COVID-19 management. In the process, it nurtures a dichotomous view of its own, asserting that those who adhere to their beliefs without question, regardless of what those beliefs are, are unintelligent and undeserving of respect. Sweeping statements are made about Democrats and Republicans alike.

As it becomes increasingly hyperbolic, the narrative undermines its own declared encouragements toward a levelheaded approach to crises. There are a handful of insightful ideas, including about fearmongering and bodily autonomy, but they are overshadowed by the novel's fearmongering in the opposite direction.

Drawing on recent history, January 6th and the Millennial Horde is a satirical novel that critiques hypocritical political ideologies.

AIMEE JODOIN (August 13, 2022)

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