

## Plutocracy

**Abraham Martinez**

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A money-ruled future is the setting for the inspired, unnerving graphic novel *Plutocracy*.

Homero quits his job as a detective and turns to investigative journalism, researching the Company, the all-powerful organization that has united the world and all but eradicated serious crimes. To his surprise, Homero finds a willing, Company-associated publisher for his planned exposé, and is granted access to Company archives and an interview with its president. It is later revealed that the Company's cooperation is driven by reasons other than educating the public.

The story extrapolates many modern political issues: health insurance, public funds propping up businesses, selling human organs for transplants. The Company's policy of recording and collecting personal data, including phone calls, creates an emotional moment as Homero hears his dead mother's voice.

The plot goes to extremes; on a television game show, a man sells shares of himself, surrendering his freedom to make decisions. But there are also sober and thought-provoking debates about ethics and morals, as one Company man points out that death is a cost of business, observing that tunnels were built under waterways despite the statistical knowledge that four workers would die for every mile.

There are enough surprises to propel the story beyond its politics. Its art, aided by a moody color palette, is bleak and effective in depicting an efficient, organized, and soulless society. Dazzling cityscapes and interior architecture details convey those aspects with cold symmetry, seen in the Company's archives, rows of power lines, even an overhead view of a parking lot.

*Plutocracy* is fine entertainment, but it's also a firm, memorable warning about the dangers of unfettered capitalism.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2020)

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