Clarion Review

Science Fiction

The Cattle
Greg M. Sarwa
Ampol Publishing
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Four Stars (out of Five)

In his 2006 novel *The Cattle* author Greg Sarwa explores the frightening possibility that Big Brother could become larger than life in the United States much sooner than we realize not only stripping citizens of their privacy but endangering them as well.

With O'Hare International Airport and the City of Chicago as the story's backdrop government agencies prepare to enforce the "Real ID Act of 2005" in which each U.S. citizen and visitor will have an identification microchip implanted underneath their skin. Dubbed the United States National Identification System the purpose of the microchips is to provide a unique tracking and identification mechanism containing each person's vital statistics medical and credit histories and more. On the surface the program seems simple enough designed to fight terrorism. Those inside the program however know there is much more at stake.

On the night before the program is to launch however something goes desperately wrong jeopardizing the project and the secrecy surrounding it. Brian Warburton a computer programmer at O'Hare discovers the problem and fights for his life to unleash the truth.

Chicago journalist Jacob Reed and Polish immigrant Anna Tabor become unexpectedly embroiled in the chaos surrounding a security breach at the airport and a potential leak to the public regarding the true nature of the Real ID Act. As Reed and Tabor unravel the mystery government and law enforcement agencies search for the pair hoping to intercept the evidence that could expose the program's deception and destroy the country's faith in its government.

Presumably Sarwa's debut novel this story is well-written action packed and easy to follow. Readers will enjoy the frenetic pace of the story with its fascinating twists and turns. What will concern readers however is how close Sarwa's fictional story may be to reality. While the book is not intended to be a truthful or accurate accounting of government programs or goals the story will cause readers to think twice about privacy issues and the frightening possibilities

suggested by *The Cattle*.

Although well done this book is not without its flaws. It lacks thorough editing which creates both grammatical and punctuation errors throughout the book. While not significant enough to spoil the story the excessive use of commas occasionally interrupts the story's flow. In addition the characters' conversations are sometimes inane not adding anything new to the story.

Overall however readers will enjoy this fast paced novel that asks more questions than it answers. It is a scary but gripping read!