Clarion Review

Humor

The Execution Channel: A Political Fable
Michael McCord
Michael McCord
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Four Stars (out of Five)

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If an empty chair remains at the virtual dinner table of Voltaire, Joseph Heller, George Orwell, and Jonathan Swift, reserve it for Michael McCord, whose bold satire, *The Execution Channel: A Political Fable*, should be required reading for every American. It is laugh-out-loud funny and so chilling readers should don fur coats before opening the book.

McCord is a freelance journalist, editor, columnist, and veteran political reporter. A master of satire, he cleverly derides both human folly and vice. As columnist and humorist Art Buchwald once said, "You can't make up anything anymore. The world itself is a satire. All you're doing is recording it." It's frightening to realize that's precisely what McCord has done in *The Execution Channel*, his first novel.

This dark satirical romp will surely raise the hackles of people of all political stripes, albeit for different reasons. In the author's fictional country, "Real America," the profit motive guides all decisions; textbooks extol the virtues of the Ku Klux Klan and compliment slaveholders for "attention to profits"; politicians engage in a "War on the Poor"; neighborhood militias arm themselves with legal backyard rocket-launchers and missiles; and the "Liberty Court" rules that capital punishment appeals delay justice and therefore are "economically inefficient."

In Real America, three characters join forces to glorify public executions that feed the belly of the profit monster. Lawrence C. "Demon Seed" Bowie, governor of the Real American Republic of Texas, rules through greed, corruption, and unparalleled devotion to the "Galtian Imperatives," a reference to profit prophet Ayn Rand and her *Atlas Shrugged* hero, John Galt.

“Real Americans should not let this wicked practice of majority rule ever happen again,” Bowie declares, explaining that the “outdated one-man one-vote scheme endangered our rights to exist as a party because there were more of you than of us.”

Bowie partners with mega-financier James “Big Stake” Frimmer and down-on-his-luck reality television show producer Jason Bravtart to create “The Execution Channel,” a “televinet” show with live broadcasts of gory executions staged in the 65,000-seat Final Justice Stadium. The program is intended to eliminate the “dead-weight inefficiencies of democracy” and enrich the rich at every opportunity.

McCord writes in an uncluttered journalistic style. His plot is solid, filled with sufficient twists and turns to sustain attention and curiosity. The colorful characters are so ludicrous they could only be real. McCord’s political world also includes “characters” so immediately recognizable they are disguised only by Saran Wrap—President Burt Octavian, a black man “born in Africa and Indonesia simultaneously,” and Carrie Hilton, a woman running for President in 2016. All that mars this otherwise winning novel is inadequate copyediting. The book contains several typographical errors, including duplicate, omitted, and misspelled words.

Read *The Execution Channel: A Political Fable* and it will make you guffaw, cringe, and wipe cold sweat from your brow. Then give copies to everyone you know. The future of the real America may depend on it.

Nancy Walker