Clarion Review

General

Throwing Stones
John Wasik
Phillip Parrish
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Three Stars (out of Five)

German police investigator Thomas Freiderich has family scattered all over the world. When he learns that his nephew Jusef may be involved in a planned terrorist attack against the United States he feels compelled to locate the youth and get him out of danger. This novel follows him through his desperate chase after Jusef.

This is however no ordinary thriller. The authors use the story to show the origins of widespread enmity against the US and to argue that Americans are quite unprepared to fight the "war on terrorism."

Freiderich flies to Cleveland where his sources have told him Jusef may be located. An old friend he met at an international police convention tells him to inform the FBI but the agent he contacts shows no interest in his tale. He is forced to rely on his friend and other local sources to carry out his search.

Americans are he believes incredibly naive. They don't realize that all over the world people feel violated as American troops chase terrorists through their countries; they want no part of US-style democracy. Lacking tanks and missiles to drive the Americans away they hide in doorways and throw stones at US armored vehicles. Some go farther and join the terrorists.

Meanwhile terrorists are planning to attack not spectacular targets like the World Trade Center but the nation's infrastructure—with assaults on bridges and electric plants in smaller cities throughout the country. Jusef urged on by a devoted believer his own age will be among the attackers. Freiderich's sources in Germany tell him the US government is aware of the plot.

When he asks one of his police sources in Cleveland whether the US is prepared to meet the threat he gets this answer:

"Yeah everywhere but here. The whole homeland security thing is

> *a joke. They don't care about us; all the money goes to protect the east coast and Washington. Our helicopter is grounded the police boats are in dry dock two-hundred-and-eighty-six laid off….I remember when we were a police department—not armed social workers."*

The novel's message is clear and the plot is believable. Aside from Jusef and his uncle however the characters lack the detail to become fully human and the plot sometimes gets lost in flashbacks. Whether the disparaging descriptions of American naiveté and lack of preparation for terrorist aggression are true or not is difficult to tell but readers will surely find the possibilities disturbing.

Carter Jefferson