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Clarion Review ★★★★☆ THRILLER

Time of Ends: An Apocalyptic Political Polemic

Geoff Robberts
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Biting social and political commentary marks Time of Ends*, a provocative thriller led by a grieving man.*

In Geoff Robberts's thriller *Time of Ends*, a grandfather kills an outspoken political pundit and sparks a revolution.

After the loss of his twin brother and his wife, Bill hopes that his retirement will hold no further surprises. But then a school shooting takes the life of his granddaughter, pushing Bill past his breaking point. From his perspective: the nation has been polarized by politics, with most Americans keeping their heads down and trying to stay below the fray. When Bill hears an incendiary pundit spouting hateful rhetoric about the shooting that his granddaughter was a victim of, he lays out a plan to assassinate the pundit in the hopes of stopping the hatred.

From the inciting incident of Bill listening to rhetoric surrounding the shooting, the story is tense. Bill's act ripples throughout the country, with like-minded citizens seeing his action as the sole means of correcting all that is wrong with contemporary America. A Second Amendment militia springs up, and political figures across the spectrum are targeted and taken out. As the death toll rises, the FBI and other authorities struggle to find the culprits of the copycat murders. The militia claims responsibility, but the evidence fails to connect anyone to any one murder. Bill's dream of silencing hate and rebuilding America seems close to fruition as the story races toward a showdown between the militia and the standing government.

Though no one in the cast is heroic, Bill's initial motivations are at least sympathetic: he knows that nothing will bring back those he loved, but his spirit is broken from hearing hate and watching his country crumble. Still, it becomes increasingly clear that he and other vigilantes are not meant to be idolized; theirs is a cautionary tale. Colorful conversations capture the cast's sense of dissatisfaction across locales and demographics, clarifying their individual susceptibility to political rhetoric.

Bill's nephew tries to get mental health assistance through Veteran Affairs; the story follows his decline, emphasizing that his pain led to him joining the militia. Indeed, many of the militia members have similar backstories; they feel forced to take up arms and make sacrifices for what they believe in. Still, the means by which they, in particular, seek to achieve their goals are abhorrent, and are flagged as such. Nonetheless, excitement builds as Bill and others evade capture, leaving no signs of their presence and showing respect for firearms.

From Bill learning the heart-wrenching news of the shooting to the initial assassination planning, the book's focus on broken people pushed to the edge is crystal clear. Through perspective shifts—between Bill, his nephew, and other like-minded citizens—a painful depiction of their lives and motivations lends the mounting tensions credence. The prose itself is sparse; as the book focuses on characterizations over imagery, the characters and their reactions are most of what is known about this world.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (November 1, 2021)

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