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Conservatives Should Make Time to Read Michael Crichton's *State of Fear*

by Myron Ebell

This year's most politically incorrect book--and also the one likely to have the biggest impact on public opinion--is not by *Human Events*' Ann Coulter. Nor, surprisingly, is it by any other prominent conservative writer or talker. It's Michael Crichton's new novel, *State of Fear*.

When I first thumbed through my copy, I was worried that this time Crichton had gone too far in weighing down his plot with complex scientific information. That the characters spent too much time in long didactic discourses.

Happily, this first impression was wrong. Crichton works his usual magic, deftly weaving loads of technical detail, including footnotes, graphs, and charts, into a fast-paced adventure. His tens of millions of devoted readers will not be disappointed. *State of Fear* is a page turner.

But this review is not aimed at Crichton's fans, but at conservatives who don't usually read sex-and-violence-packed techno-thrillers. My advice to fellow conservatives is: make an exception. Read *State of Fear*.

What makes *State of Fear* thoroughly objectionable to liberal establishment orthodoxy is that Crichton has cast as his villains leaders of the modern environmental movement. And to top that, the scam that environmentalists are trying to peddle is global warming alarmism.

Environmentalists who have spent thirty years convincing the public that their motives are pure are going to be outraged. They will complain that the portrayal of Nicholas Drake, president of the National Environmental Resource Fund, is a reprehensible caricature of real environmentalists. True, but it does make a change from the genre's usual assortment of slimy corporate bad guys and their crude right-wing politician stooges who have no regrets about destroying the planet if only they can make a buck out of it.

Crichton doesn't hint that environmental leaders are in it for the money and the power. He hits us over the head with it. In one hilarious passage, Drake is caught on a surveillance tape explaining to his PR chief what's wrong with global warming:

"I hate global warming," Drake said, almost shouting. "...It's a (expletive deleted) disaster."

"It's been established," Henley said calmly. "Over many years. It's what we have to work with."

"To work with? But *it doesn't work*," Drake said. "That's my point. You can't raise a dime with it, especially in winter. Every time it snows people forget all about global warming.... They're trudging through the snow, *hoping* for a little global warming. It's not like pollution,

John. Pollution worked. It still works. Pollution scares the (expletive deleted) out of people. You tell 'em they'll get cancer, and the money rolls in." (page 295)

Against a background of exotic settings, beautiful women, and non-stop danger, his naïve young hero, Peter Evans, is sucked into stopping a global conspiracy that threatens millions of lives. He is also slowly introduced to the facts about global warming (and a number of other environmental issues). What Peter learns is that what everything he knows is true about global warming -- because that's all he's ever heard from the major media -- is false.

Crichton asks the right questions, gets the scientific facts correct, and shows that the facts don't support alarmism.

And for those who still have doubts or simply want more information, he attaches a lengthy bibliography, a statement of what he has come to believe about global warming and what's wrong with the environmental movement, and an essay on "Why politicized science is dangerous."

So hats off to Michael Crichton. He has written an entertaining book, which is normally praise enough for any novelist. But he deserves much more praise than that. For someone whose continuing success depends on media approval, speaking truth to power takes courage.

State of Fear is the perfect gift for liberal relatives and friends who do believe everything they read in the major media about global warming. Even if they're not totally convinced, it will at least raise some doubts. And if they are offended, you can reply that the dust jacket gives no hint that it's an attack on one of the sacred cows of modern liberalism.

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