

## From the Liberty Library

• Why do well-educated antiwar activists call the president of the United States “the new Hitler” and argue that the U.S. government orchestrated the Sept. 11 attacks? Why does Al Gore believe that cars pose “a mortal threat to the security of every nation”? In other words, why do smart people fall for stupid ideas? The answer, Daniel J. Flynn reveals in *Intellectual Morons: How Ideology Makes Smart People Fall for Stupid Ideas*, is ideology. Flynn shows how people can be so blinded to reality by the causes they serve that they espouse bizarre, sometimes ridiculous, and often dangerous positions. The most influential social movements have spawned ideologues who do not care whether an idea is good or bad, true or false, but only whether it can serve their cause, Flynn says. Learn more at [www.randomhouse.com/crown](http://www.randomhouse.com/crown).

• To most observers — including many conservatives — the so-called Republican Revolution of 1994 was anything but revolutionary, and the Contract with America that propelled the GOP into power was just a gimmick. But in *The Enduring Revolution: How the Contract with America Continues to Shape the Nation*, Fox News reporter Major Garrett turns this conventional wisdom on its head, revealing how the Contract with America and the Republican Revolution changed lives in startling ways. The Republicans have fundamentally altered the approach to taxes, national defense, terrorism, welfare, entitlements, health care, education, abortion, gun control, and crime, among other issues. Garrett concludes from his research that America is a vastly different place after the Contract than it was before it. Also from Crown Forum Books.

• Despite facing the constant grim reality of terrorism, the Israeli economy is surprisingly robust. How do businesses in Israel stay viable in a chaotic environment, and how do they rebuild in the wake of destruction? Based on in-depth personal interviews conducted in Israel by author Dan Carrison, *Business Under Fire: How Israeli Companies Are Succeeding in the Face of Terror — and What We Can Learn from Them* offers inspirational and instructive stories about the techniques Israeli companies have used to thrive in the face of extraordinary adversity. Packed with first-person accounts from CEOs, managers, and in-the-trenches employees who have “been through it all.” More at [www.amanet.org](http://www.amanet.org).

• On a cold morning in December 1944, a platoon of 18 men under the command of 20-year-old Lt. Lyle Bouck were huddled in their foxholes trying desperately to keep warm. Suddenly, Hitler had launched his bold and risky offensive against the Allies and the small American platoon faced the main thrust of the entire German assault. Vastly outnumbered, they repulsed three German assaults in a fierce day-long battle, killing more than 500 German soldiers and defending a strategically vital hill. In dramatic prose, Alex Kershaw brings to life the story of America’s most inspiring stories of World War II, in *The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II’s Most Decorated Platoon*. Details at [www.perseusbooks.com](http://www.perseusbooks.com). CJ

## Book review

## State of Fear: Creating Environmental Disasters

• Michael Crichton: *State of Fear*; Harper Collins; 2004; 603 pp; \$27.95

By PAUL MESSINO  
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RALEIGH  
Most Michael Crichton novels are decorated with beautiful women, page-turning action sequences, roller-coaster-sized plot twists, and extraordinarily heroic protagonists pitted against equally dastardly villains. Crichton’s latest novel, *State of Fear*, is not extraordinary, at least not in these respects. What does separate this novel from its literary cousins is its truism for the modern world.

Our society, as Crichton writes, is in a state of fear, where “there is always a cause for fear. The cause may change over time, but the fear is always with us [because] fear pervades society in all its aspects. Perpetually.”

This being said, Crichton’s novel does well to locate a current and insidious source of fear as well as its prime propagator. Much of the novel develops a modern origin for this on-going fear in society through the works of nonprofit, environmental organizations. Since the early environmental movements in the 1970s, nonprofit eco-organizations have absconded vast amounts of wealth.

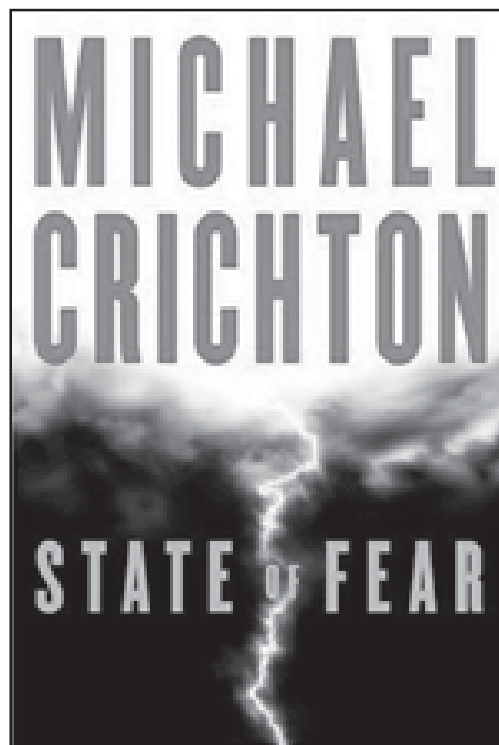
Through their litigation, they have both secured their propriety in the world and ensured their livelihood in shaping public policy and opinion. Coupled with the current trend of journalism to report the most devastating and sensationalized stories regardless of their veracity, environmental groups nationwide succeeded in perpetuating less-than-truthful claims about the degradation of the environment.

Operating under the precautionary principle — the belief that it is better to prepare for the worst even if the reasons for believing that the worst might arise are unsubstantial, or at least dubious — these groups are able to turn the heads of policymakers and citizens. Unfortunately, some of the most vocal policymakers and citizens in support of this principle are the least-informed.

## Waging environmental terrorism

Taking the reader from the Arctic, to the southwestern United States, then to the cannibalized island of Gareda, Crichton uses the characters’ travel time to not only explain how eco-terrorists plan to disrupt various climate patterns across the globe, but why they must do so in order to stay financially afloat. John Kenner, almost omnipotent when it comes to environmental fact, is a professor of Geoenvironmental Engineering at MIT as well as an agent for the Center for Risk Analysis, a vaguely described agency that tracks down eco-terrorists.

Citing numerous factually sound studies (in fact, Crichton makes sure that the reader understands just how sound these studies are by including a forward to the novel explicitly indicating that all footnote references are real), Kenner debunks many of the widely circulated “facts” pointing to the catastrophic affects of global warming. Although Kenner is quick to correct the mistakes of such characters as Peter Evans, the novel’s emerging hero/lawyer, and the loudmouth movie star Ted Bradley, he does not discredit the theory of global warming



completely. Rather, it is his intent, as well as Crichton’s, to merely show that scientific studies can provide us only with raw data and not some prediction for the future.

Although raw data shows us that on average, worldwide temperatures are higher (except for Antarctica, which is getting colder), this rise is small and more than likely represents a natural global trend. No

one is sure how much of an effect man-made pollution has on this warming trend, which, by the way is only a fraction of a degree Celsius.

What the data can tell us, however, is that in high-density populations, localized surface temperatures are higher. It’s called the urban heat island effect. This, of course, makes sense. High-density populations occur when large amounts of people are crammed into a relatively smaller space, usually cities. In order to support the high population density, cities tend to use more reflexive building materials, such as asphalt and concrete, which bounce back the sun’s rays into the low-lying ozone around cities. Higher temperatures result. Localized, higher temperatures, that is.

So the question becomes, if the data gathered by scientists shows that worldwide temperatures seem to be rising by only a minuscule amount, but maybe higher in localized, high-density population pockets, why does the average American believe that global warming is a catastrophe waiting to happen?

To checkmate alarmists, Crichton begins by defining global warming. Global warming is only a theory. It is a theory that “increased levels of carbon dioxide and certain other gases are causing an increase in the average temperature of the earth’s atmosphere.” The increase in temperature is caused by the so-called “greenhouse effect.” Certain gases that create a high-level ceiling that traps heat, similar to a greenhouse, purportedly cause this effect.

## Tainted scientific process

With this clear definition, Crichton slowly ratchets down the extremism synonymous with the theory of global warming into something more feasible and conformable to fact. In part, the reason for the

global-warming scare develops with the help of sensationalized journalism and unchecked, nonprofit eco-organization growth. But, perhaps most important of all, is the intimate connection between grant supplier, scientific researcher, and peer reviewers. In other words, the scientific process itself is suspect.

With their bulging pockets, nonprofit eco-organizations are able to supply grants for numerous scientific studies. Although the creation and allocation of grants does not guarantee a desired result from a scientific study, it can influence how data is conveyed to the public.

Everyone, scientists included, approach situations with a certain frame of mind. Scientists, in particular, may begin their research with a desired goal; in the case of global warmists, they start with a presupposition that man-made pollutants cause rising global temperatures. Naturally, the numbers cannot lie. If a scientist was at all interested in remaining employed, his studies would reflect the data obtained. Instead, the numbers are arranged to tell a certain story, which is then spelled out in the conclusions of studies. These conclusions can be manipulated to predict a global catastrophe without invalidating the data gathered.

## Press validates junk science

With the help of the press — always hungry for a good story — a manipulated conclusion becomes a factual headline. Voilà, instantly portent is fact.

Crichton is quick to point out that this subtle manipulation of fact can also be utilized by industry. Yet, more often than not, environmentalists are the ones to cry foul when an industry-sponsored study reveals less than disastrous conclusions about the effects of global warming.

Because, as Crichton says “it is never a good policy for the fox to guard the hen house,” he recommends that eco-studies should be conducted more like medical studies. Medical studies require double-blind experiments as well as rigorous peer reviews before their value is assessed. Many ecological and climatology studies do not.

Or at the very least, they do not require rigorous peer review before they are purveyed to the public.

Almost unequivocally, this novel is a must read for anyone even remotely interested in the global-warming debate. Told in a style that is both captivating and entertaining, *State of Fear* will leave the reader second-guessing the hearsay of global-warming alarmists. But, even beyond this crucial gift, Crichton truly gives the reader a glimpse into the bureaucratic, social, and legal conundrum of the post-modern world.

“Because, like it or not, we’re in the middle of a war — a global war of information versus disinformation. The war is fought on many battlegrounds: Newspaper op-eds. Television reports. Scientific journals. Websites, conferences, classrooms — and courtrooms, too, if it comes to that.”

In this state of fear, decisions are made not from fact, but out of fear that is propagated by those who have the power to influence not just policy, but our daily lives. CJ

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Michael Crichton