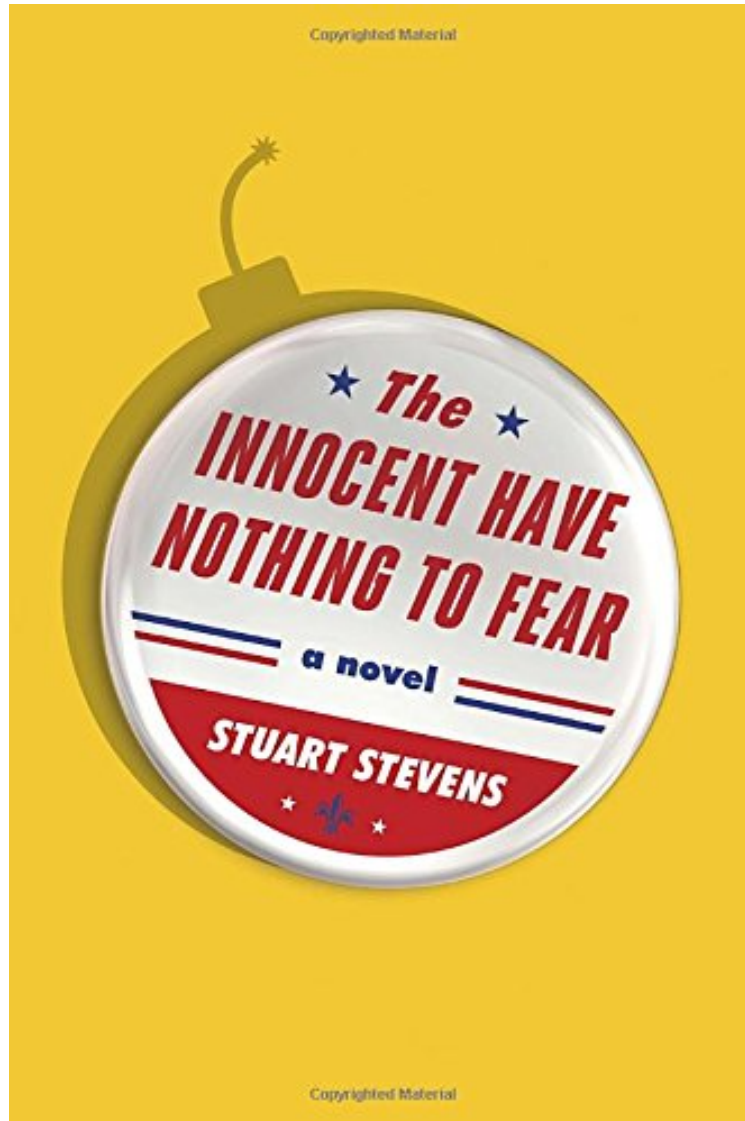


[Ebook pdf] The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear: A novel

The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear: A novel

Stuart Stevens

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Stuart Stevens : The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear: A novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear: A novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very well written!By Uncle ElmerStuart Stevens is a good writer with a fine understanding of American politics. This is a really good book for all students of the modern day political scene. My concern here is that there are reviewers that appear to have not read the book and also know little about Stuart Stevens. These reviews are misleading as one said the book was for "libs" and, in fact, Stuart Stevens worked

for Mitt Romney who is hardly a "Bernie Sanders" lib! This is my take-if you like politics and want to get an insider's view of the game then this book is the way to go. It is fair to all political parties and beliefs and, despite one misguided and confused reviewer saying it's for libs (who either did not read the book and/or know what a "lib" is), this is a balanced perspective on politics backed with a great story! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not What it Could/Should Have Been By M. Bonsiero The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear by Stuart Stevens has gotten some buzz in the wake of the Trump campaign, nomination and election for having "predicted" the rise of a Trump kind of candidate. Armstrong George, a brash, boisterous, charismatic Republican running on an extreme anti-immigrant platform, is on the verge of the Republican nomination at a contested convention against the sitting Vice President, while the VP's campaign manager (our main character, JD Callahan) tries to win the delegate fight and swing the nomination to his candidate. Based on that description, the book seems interesting, particularly if you are interested in the inner workings of politics or wondering about the underlying currents that lead to Trump. Stevens himself is a political insider, having managed Mitt Romney's presidential campaign so he undoubtedly has a lot of working knowledge that would make for an interesting read. The problem is, we never quite get the plot that a top line description of the book promises. Instead of a political drama, the story hedges much closer to a generic crime drama or mystery that happens to be set at a political convention. George is a decent enough allegory for Trump, but we never spend any extended time with him or hear why exactly he is so out of the ordinary or controversial. His "New Bill of Rights" is often cited as "crazy" but it is literally never explained beyond its title. The book portends to be about a contested Republican National Convention, but we never get to see any delegate wrangling, or even any of the convention itself. The protagonists come up with one half-formed plan but we don't get to see its implementation or if it would have worked. What does happen? There's some weird-ish family drama centered around the main character and his brothers, our hero having to face down his past. It's not original, but it's not badly done, either. There's a mystery involving bombs going off around the convention, which actually is probably the "A" plot, which is resolved in a slight twist ending, but the narrative fails in putting anyone we care about (or really anyone at all) in any kind of danger that would give it real punch. And ultimately the ending never really meshes with the premise that is presented in the opening of the book. It's not all bad. The writing is solid, the pace is fast and there's some insights Stevens offers that you couldn't get from most other novelists. The characters are realistic and the setting is a fairly interesting very-near-future dystopia that seems scarily plausible. But even that is not explored nearly as much as it could have been. This book does a fair amount of things well, but ultimately it didn't do them enough or consistently. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A NOVEL THAT ANTICIPATES THE NEWS. By Joey SeaGate This novel might as well be today's newspaper story. It is eerily close to describing the Trump candidacy. The narrator is a Republican political consultant, as is (or was) the author. Set in New Orleans, at the Republican convention where a dangerous blow-hard, quasi fascist figure is pitted against the current (female) vice president. The delegate count is close and could be influenced by a series of explosions both scaring delegates away and potentially driving them into fear motivated fascistic vulnerability.

A dark comedy set at a contested Republican convention, written by a veteran political insider—the funniest and most prescient novel about politics in years. “[Stevens] brings a full arsenal of gifts to this enterprise: humor, tactile prose and an insider’s knowledge of the hardball tactics employed on the campaign trail.... By far the most interesting parts of this novel are the behind-the-scenes accounts of the tactical and strategic maneuvering of political operatives ...Stevens is a terrific raconteur — funny, observant and highly entertaining.” —Michiko Kakutani The New York Times New Orleans in July: it's hot and sticky and squalid. J. D. Callahan is in the middle of the political race of his life and displeased to be back in his hometown. His candidate, the sitting vice president, is neck and neck with an anti-immigrant, right-wing populist as the Republicans head into their first brokered convention in decades on the heels of a staggering global economic crisis. Soon after a series of dye bombs set off a mass panic and tilt the convention toward the vice president's law-and-order opponent, J. D.'s estranged brother shows up and asks for an inconvenient favor at a most inconvenient time, threatening to reveal a family secret that would ruin the legacy of their civil rights journalist father and destroy J. D.'s own reputation if he doesn't follow through. As J. D. scrambles to contain the damage on all sides, he finds himself contending with a sexy, gun-toting gossip columnist, an FBI agent convinced that J. D. is devious enough to set the bombs himself, and an old corrupt political friend of his late father with a not-so-hidden agenda. For the first time ever, J. D. is forced to reconcile the political career he's always put first with the past he's tried to leave behind as they careen toward each other on a disastrous collision course he may not be able to stop. Hilarious and remarkably sharp, Stuart Stevens's *The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear* is an endlessly entertaining whodunit and a brilliant satire of our political culture.

“[A] suspenseful satire... It's old-school politics with a caustic jambalaya of trouble... Set in the very near future, this fun romp through high-stakes politics plays in interesting parallels to the antics of the current 2016 presidential race.” —Booklist “[An] inside scoop on the kooky backstory of American politics... This is, after all, a special kind of manufactured public entertainment, a world of engineered leaks and staged surprises... Stevens has assembled all the

accoutrements for a crazy political novel.”—Ron Charles, *The Washington Post* “No, this book is not about the 2016 presidential campaign. But the fact that even these aspects of the novel are in sync with current events validates its author's credentials as a cagey veteran political operative.... J.D.'s rueful, acerbic commentaries... make up the best part of this fast-paced carnival of bile, guile, and blow-ups. In an era as politically mercurial as our own, even the most far-fetched events depicted here sound utterly plausible.” —Kirkus

From the co-authors of *Game Change* and *Double Down*, praise for *The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear*: “Stuart Stevens is that rare authorial animal: a political novelist who actually understands politics, who appreciates how the ambition to run the country both shapes and warps character, and who can lay it all down on the page with verve and aplomb. Gimlet-eyed, mordantly funny, and staggeringly well-timed, *The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear* is the perfect fictional echo of the savage surreality playing out in real time on the national stage.” —John Heilemann “Vivid, fresh, and funny. The characters are nuanced, the dialogue zings, and the bracing breeze of authenticity gusts from every page. Stuart Stevens knows a heck of a lot about a lot of things—politics, the press, T.V., D.C., New Orleans, love, lust, ambition, family ties, and the pressures and promises of the world's most powerful job. It all comes together in this terrific book. Smart, crafty, spot-on timely, entirely refreshing and hugely entertaining, *The Innocent Have Nothing to Fear* is a great read and a total winner.” —Mark Halperin

About the Author STUART STEVENS is the author of six previous books, and his work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Esquire*, and *Outside*, among other publications. He has written extensively for television shows, including *Northern Exposure*, *Commander in Chief*, and *K Street*. For twenty-five years, he was the lead strategist and media consultant for some of the nation's toughest political campaigns. He attended Colorado College; Pembroke College, Oxford; Middlebury College; and UCLA film school. He is a former fellow of the American Film Institute. This is his second novel. www.stuartstevens.com Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Chapter One It was the heat everyone noticed first when they got off the plane. Then it was the smell of garbage. Welcome to my hometown. America's favorite party town. Broke, full of garbage, half the city on strike, twenty--nine percent unemployment, the highest murder rate in the civilized world (if the adjective fits), a leader in kidney disease and strange tropical maladies normally found in the slums of Mumbai, a town so corrupt that even a casino went bankrupt before it opened because the politicians were so greedy they couldn't wait to steal it all. Welcome to New Orleans. Mayor Simmons had promised that if the Republican National Convention came to New Orleans, he'd scrub the city like his mama's kitchen. Even though he was a Democrat, he understood what the convention money would mean for a very broke city. Everybody on the Site Selection Committee had said they were very impressed, but of course they weren't thinking about silly things like cleanliness and sanitation when they picked New Orleans. Hell no. At a time when half the country was convinced that the nation was in a depression and the other half was hoping it was only the worst recession in fifty years, with a president so shell--shocked he wasn't running for reelection and a disgraced vice president forced to resign, the honorable men and women of the Republican Party Site Selection Committee knew they had to keep their focus on the important elements of a successful convention: a massive and ready supply of sex and alcohol and a local culture that made it damn near imperative that you take advantage of both at every opportunity. New Orleans was a city still in crisis after Katrina and the Crash, and the Republicans on the selection committee could claim with a straight face that they were picking the city as a show of support in the “great city's difficult days.” Never mind that was true of just about every city in America these days, but with New Orleans you could also pretend it was such a fascinating place—so quaint, so Old World, such a cultural jambalaya, wasn't it? When the Site Selection Committee came to New Orleans and the mayor greeted them at Louis Armstrong Airport with the Second Line Jazz Band and took them straight to Antoine's and a private room, where they marveled at the waiters who could remember every order and never write down a word, well, the deal was just about done. Everybody had “Huîtres en coquille à la Rockefeller” —Oysters Rockefeller, a dish the restaurant had created in 1899 and named not because John D. Rockefeller liked the dish but because he was rich and so was the sauce. Then they wandered out on St. Louis Street and quickly found their way to Bourbon Street, and by sunrise there was little doubt that the Republicans were coming to New Orleans. To show solidarity with the great American city that had suffered so much. Of course. The Site Selection Committee had visited in December when the city was just cool enough not to smell, but now it stunk like a big pot of gumbo that had been rotting in the heat for several weeks. It had been over a hundred degrees every day for more than a month with ninety percent humidity, the hottest summer in a century. Didn't Democrats warn us about global warming? This was a climate invented to make garbage smell in a hurry, and the stench brought tears to your eyes. A fierce run on scented candles had driven prices up and more incense had been sold in the city since Ravi Shankar played a three--day concert in 1968 at the Warehouse. As if to deliberately torture Republicans for their troubled history with labor unions, the whole city seemed to be on strike: the cabdrivers, the teachers, even the cops were threatening to walk out. Everybody saw the Republican convention as their big chance to cash in, to embarrass the city into coughing up more pay to avoid ruining a moment of glory. But that only worked if you could embarrass the city, and so far, God bless him, Mayor Tom Simmons, the first white mayor of New Orleans in over two decades, gave a very good impression of not giving one good goddamn what anybody thought. What I loved about the guy was that he understood his market. He knew he didn't get elected to bring the city together; he wasn't the guy who was going to get everybody to join hands and sing

“Kumbaya” out by Lake Pontchartrain at sunset. Hell no. He was elected to play the tough guy, the enforcer who was brought in to bring a little order to a place where cops were hiring themselves out as hit men in their off-hours. Nobody thought he was nice when they voted for him, and by God he hadn't let anybody down yet. Simmons had become my personal hero when he was a state legislator and introduced a bill requiring every woman in New Orleans to carry a gun. This truly was a different kind of Democrat. The proposed legislation had followed a spate of particularly brutal carjackings of women at red lights. The bill hadn't passed, of course, but a compromise piece of legislation made it perfectly legal for any citizen to use deadly force against a carjacker. Within the first forty-eight hours, a twenty-one-year-old secretary blew the face off of one carjacker, and an eighty-one-year-old man shot another in the ass as the poor fellow tried to flee down Rampart Street after he saw Grandpa had a sawed-off shotgun under a huge muffuletta from Mandina's on the passenger seat. The elderly man was considered a local hero until two weeks later, when he walked into his stockbroker's office and put two twelve-gauge slugs into his young broker for not getting him out of Apple before the Crash. But then a lot of brokers were getting shot right after the Crash. When it looked like the Site Selection Committee was leaning toward picking New Orleans, I'd done everything I could to squash the idea. Nobody could figure out why I was against it, and a lot of people thought I was just being modest. After all, I was a local hometown boy made good, the son of a famous civil rights journalist, which had double currency in the Republican Party, which was desperate for some credibility on that front. I'd be returning home in at least quasi-triumph, the guy who had saved Vice President Hilda Smith's campaign, brought her back from near death in New Hampshire to a few delegates shy of winning the nomination. I was helping beat back Governor Armstrong George and the barbarians at the gate, and everybody agreed my Pulitzer-winning father, Powell Callahan, would have been so proud. If only he hadn't drunk himself to death. No, they didn't say that. But I did, that and a whole lot more. New Orleans was the last place on earth I wanted to come back to. Yes, it was my hometown. People knew me there, had known me all my life. And that, of course, is why it terrified me so much. It was thirty-six hours before the convention opened. A real convention, like the one everybody had been dying for since Al Smith won it on the thirty-sixth ballot in 1928 and Ford snatched it from Reagan in 1976. That was what a convention was supposed to be—a deliberative body, by God, not a made-for-television spectacle. I hated it. Any campaign manager would. It was a horrifying idea to roll into a convention and not have the entire process rigged gavel to gavel. This was simply unheard of. Leaving a decision as important as selecting a party's nominee to the collection of hungover party hacks, weirdo activists, political groupies, and small-timers who comprised the delegates at any convention was an affront to the very concept of modern politics, a process designed to ensure that a powerful few would manipulate a disinterested many. That's how the system worked; everybody knew that. This was America, for heaven's sake, where no one was particularly interested in parties—the political type, anyway—and everybody knew it didn't really matter who won. That was the genius of the American political system. But this time, it did matter. The country was in crisis. The Republican Party had watched a president, nominated just four years earlier in a hail of glory and promise, melt like an ice cream cone on a New Orleans sidewalk. Now the party faced what was being called the most fundamentally different choice in its history: Governor Armstrong George or Vice President Hilda Smith. In politics we always like to call each election the most important in generations. This time, it might actually be true. Faced with this crisis, the delegates and alternates and as-sorted hangers-on of the Republican convention were handling their responsibility in the time-honored fashion of conventions past: they took to the bars and clubs and partied like death-row inmates paroled for one night. But who was I to complain? It was thirty-six hours before the convention opened and I was up onstage with a bunch of Indians stoned out of their minds. Not Native Americans, but the Mardi Gras Indians, one of those New Orleans bands that never broke big nationally but were local gods. The Indians were singing “Voodoo Sex,” and Tyrone Robichoux, the lead, was leaning into me, sweating like a warm waterfall. He had a blank look in his eyes and I assumed that he was high on heroin. He usually was. Great headline: “j. d. callahan, campaign manager for vice president hilda smith, busted for drugs at convention.” Now that would be just splendid. “Following his much-publicized personal difficulties surrounding the breakup of his relationship with prominent television journalist Sandra Juarez, J. D. Callahan added to his woes by being caught with the Mardi Gras Indians in a drug bust.” Yes, that would be just perfect. I'd have to claim that I did it as part of a community-outreach campaign tactic, like “Building a bridge to the addicted community.” It might work. This was, after all, New Orleans, where the town's resident cultural hero was a not-very-reformed heroin addict named Aaron Neville, who, when asked about his heroin addiction, remarked, “It works for me.” And God knows the Indians were a diverse bunch. They probably had French, Spanish, African American, even a little Asian bouncing around in their drug-addled veins. And, yes, some Native American blood as well, the Chickasaw tribe most predominantly. Appearing with the Indians at Tip's the night before the convention opened hadn't been my idea. Blame it on Ginny Tran, press secretary extraordinaire at twenty-seven. “It'll be so cool,” she'd insisted. “The vice president's campaign manager onstage at Tipitina's. You were almost a rock star once, it'll be fabulous. Show that we're confident right before the convention. And anyway, you should get out. You look like crap.” So I'd left our war room down at the Windsor Court Hotel and committed to doing something enjoyable for a couple of hours. It had been so long, I'd forgotten what it was like. Ginny was lying, of course. At least that part about me being almost a rock star. I'm sure she wasn't lying that I looked like crap. I'd grown up in New

Orleans and been a journeyman guitar player in a not--so--bad blues/funk band, my major distinction being that I was the only white guy in the group. What was really embarrassing—at least it would have been if anybody had known it—was that I'd made it into the band with the help of my father, Powell Callahan, one of the last white civil rights heroes, or so everyone seemed to believe. Powell Callahan knew everybody in town. The lead singer in the band was the son of a lawyer, once a civil rights lawyer, now a corporate hotshot just off Canal Street, an old friend of my father's from the "movement days." J. D. Callahan, the only guitarist who networked his way into a black/funk band. It was silly. They dumped me after a year. Of course, I knew that a photo op with the Indians onstage at Tip's wasn't going to get us a single delegate, but I had gone along with it. Why not? It wouldn't hurt, and if it made me look a little hip and cool and confident, that was just great. God knows I sure didn't feel like any of those things. I hadn't slept worth a damn in months, I had a woman candidate who was on the verge of becoming unglued at any moment, a force of nature called Armstrong George about to devour us like a hungry wolf, and, to top it all off, they had to go and have the damn convention in my hometown. For Christ's sake, was God spending all of His time trying to screw with me, or just most of it? On the other hand, if a woman named Sandra Juarez just happened to see me with the Indians up onstage looking like I had my act together in a big--time way, that was just fine by me. It had been a little over eighteen months since my very public meltdown, which had coincided with Sandra Juarez and me breaking up. No, that wasn't accurate: my very public meltdown that resulted from Sandra Juarez dumping me. I'd like to think I was over it, focused on the future, all those things you are supposed to do. But I still thought about her more than I liked to admit. Mostly I thought about how humiliated I had been after splitting in such a spectacularly public way, which had been my fault. But also I thought about—and this is what I really hated to admit—how much I had loved being with her, living together for that year and a half. Sandra was one of the few really good print reporters who had made the transition from covering politics for The Wall Street Journal to working for television. She was first-generation Mexican--Cuban American, an unusual mix. Her Cuban mother was a doctor and her Mexican father was an auto dealer. It wasn't exactly the hardscrabble immigrant story, but still, when she looked in the camera and said, "As a first--generation Mexican--Cuban American, I understand? . . . ?," few people stopped to point out that she had gone to Groton and then Harvard. We had met when Sandra was covering the Florida governor's race. She had already moved from the Orlando market to CNN but was back in her home state covering the race. We met in the spin room after the first debate; a less romantic, tawdrier place for a first encounter would be hard to imagine. My candidate was a Cuban American woman running against a wealthy North Florida businessman, and I made the mistake of trying to play the Cuban--and--female card with Sandra. It didn't go well.