



American Neolithic

Terence Hawkins

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In a starred Kirkus review, American Neolithic was called "a towering work of speculative fiction that will have readers rethinking what it means to be human."

America is a Police State Lite. Drones patrol the skies. The Patriot Amendments have gutted civil liberties. The Homeland Police and Patriot Tribunal have exclusive jurisdiction over all legal actions implicating national security.

Enter Blingbling, the last literate member of the sole surviving band of Neanderthals, sent into the world to earn money for his people, who live in hiding on Manhattan's Lower East Side. After he is implicated in a hip-hop murder, shadowy benefactors retain a lawyer, the hard-boiled Raleigh. When a routine DNA swab reveals that he fits no known human genotype, the Homeland Police take notice. If Blingbling's true ancestry is disclosed, his people are in jeopardy. Raleigh finds himself caught in a professional and personal trap that can destroy his client, his career, and much more.

Political satire, courtroom thriller, and speculative fiction, American Neolithic is also a story of loyalty, betrayal, and redemption. Terence Hawkins has written a smart, dark, funny book that is ultimately deeply moving.

American Neolithic Details

Date : Published May 21st 2014 by C&r Press (first published December 20th 2013)

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Author : Terence Hawkins

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From Reader Review American Neolithic for online ebook

B. Thomas Harwood says

I really enjoyed this book. At just under 200 pages it is a nice, compact read, but it tells a bigger story about the direction this country of ours was teetering dangerously close to going down just a few short years ago. Indeed, there is no guarantee we will not ultimately choose that path in the future if the wrong string of events plays out. Fast paced and seasoned with just the right amount of humorously biting social commentary along the way, I could see this book appealing to a wide audience ranging from dystopia lovers to readers of politics and any fan of Stephen King's non-horror work. Mr. Hawkins leaves the door cracked open for a follow up with this one and I for one hope he writes it!

Daniel Cline says

American Neolithic is excellent! I couldn't put it down. Reminiscent of the works of Jim Harrison, Philip K. Dick, George Orwell, and Jonathan Swift, but projecting the author's unique voice, it presents a world that is sadly too believable, and describes with acid humor how America has changed in recent years. We view this world through the eyes of a lawyer who dedicated his life to representing the downtrodden, and the eyes of a Neanderthal, who made the mistake of trying to succeed in the human domain. Fox News fans be warned, you may not like this book. For the rest of us, it's a highly entertaining work of satire, with a lot of truth thrown into the mix.

Dana says

What a spectacular read. BlingBling has my heart. I am so grateful to Mr. Hawkins for giving me the opportunity to read this novel in its intended format(thanks again).

Right from the beginning the writing flowed beautifully, making this an easy read.(Although the police state was a bitter pill to swallow). I became so invested in the characters and this book had me questioning my morals constantly. It's somewhat of a depressing read, but an important one as well.

I wanted this novel to be longer, I need to find out what happens next!

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

Dinikara says

American Neolithic is a highly inventive novel with unique and compelling characters. A scrappy lawyer, Raleigh, unwittingly takes on the murder case of a lifetime--representing a neanderthal who soon becomes

ensnared in a judicial system over-run by oppressive laws. When the Department of Homeland Security discovers his client's DNA is not human, Raleigh takes on the system. Satire, social commentary, speculative fiction. It's all there. This is a great, fast-paced read that left me with plenty to think about long after I finished it.

Suleman Ali says

A Goodreads Free Giveaway!

'American Neolithic' is a wonderfully strange and compelling story set in the not too distant dystopian future.

What was great about the story was that by covering the same event from two very different perspectives, the reader is able to enjoy two very different, yet very fun stories.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and the jumps between the two perspectives worked great. The dark and almost sinister feel of the legal wranglings in a police state was well paced and gave a real outlook of a future that could await us as our liberties are exchanged for 'safety'. This was beautifully contrasted against the 'human' story of BlingBling with his search for survival and acceptance.

Will be keeping an eye out for more from this author!

Gili G says

A funny, inventive, and highly readable take on America's various forms of cultural and political madness. And a provocative meditation on our comfortable assumption that we humans are at the top of the evolutionary heap.

I loved everything about Blingbling the Neanderthal and the other members of his "nest:" their chattering fellowship, their solemn rituals, and their abiding passion for Mocha Latte. Terrific fun!

Gerald Weaver says

I would like to recommend American Neolithic, by Terence Hawkins, but what I really mean is that it should be on everyone's required-reading list. It is a tour de force of how a story may be told in both a minor and major key. It proceeds from the outlandish premise that a Neanderthal in our midst has come to be represented in a criminal trial by a wise and witty attorney whose hangdog countenance is just the way he greets what we all should see of the surreal injustices of this world. It proceeds from there, with elements of Phillip Roth and Franz Kafka - only a bit more humorous than either, to open up to become a complex metaphor for the way our society is evolving, for the manner in which we treat each other, and for all the unutterable threats that lurk behind the veneer of our modern world. And it does this with high humor and a light touch, and a low-key wisdom that will have you taking notes as you compulsively turn the pages.

Most readers will be drawn to the defendant, BlingBling, one of the few remnants of that less evolved species, which disappeared several thousand years ago. His worldly erudition and witty insights will leave the reader wondering and questioning not only the evolution of our own species, but also the nature of progress itself. But the warmth and the put-down-the-book-for-a-moment laughs reside in the person of the lawyer, Raleigh, whose humane self-awareness is only exceeded by his proclivity for getting himself into hilariously difficult situations, all as a product of his own abundant if somewhat recondite compassion. There are layers within layers within American Neolithic, with perhaps the subtlest being that what we may be doing to ourselves now is exactly how we once rendered that other species extinct. Funny, how that is.

Tuck says

a sci fi a sorts, in where a representative neanderthal all round dolt but really, a sensitive guy, and hip hop dude of sorts gets busted by homeland security. lawyers are involved, and rich fat cats, and some inter-genera shenanigans happen. the whole premise could easily be applied to intra-species relationship to, to power, the pigs, and the home-tribe. fun , fast, thought provoking read,

E. says

Imagine that a small band of Neanderthals survives in contemporary America. Imagine also that after another terrorist attack the US goes even further to the right, amending the Constitution expanding governmental power and limiting civil liberties because of "national security" and that the Religious Right has gained even more political power, basically enacting the laws that they've been wanting to enact for thirty years. Now imagine the Neanderthals encountering that America. It won't go well for anyone.

That's the premise of this cross-genre novel by Terence Hawkins, who it was my pleasure to befriend while attending this year's Yale Writers' Conference. Terry, a Yale alum and local New Haven attorney, is the director and guiding spirit of the program. Rumor has it that the participants enjoy each other so much and the program works so well because everyone is hand-selected by Terry. If so, I'm even more honored that I made the cut, for he is a funny, charming, smart, encouraging, and dapper man. But enough with the flattery. This novel is fantastic.

Terry's humor is wickedly sarcastic. I'm sure knowing him (and having heard him read a few passages) influenced my reading of the book, because I could hear his voice and his actual sense of humor the entire time I was reading. But you don't have to meet Terry to find this book funny.

And it is funny, right up through the point that it's frightening. Because it is ultimately a commentary on what might have happened to America, and theoretically still could, if the anti-terror and theocratic forces were to gain even more control.

So, whether you like a good story, engaging characters, witty and insightful writing, or being made to think about serious issues, you might enjoy this book.

Greg Harris says

"American Neolithic" connects, first, with a brilliantly written character voice, the cynical, funny, hard-bitten lawyer Raleigh, who's constantly being undermined by his attachment to impossible cases. In this book he's handed a doozy: an illiterate hair-salon janitor who's being framed for murder, in what at first looks like a high-profile case of hip-hop violence.

It also connects through its setting in a near future where Patriot-Act suspension of civil liberties is enshrined in the constitution, and the religious right has decisively won the culture wars. Raleigh's progress through New York City is dogged by drones, terror-level announcements, and the prospect of incarceration in an expanded Guantanamo.

But most of all, it connects through the wonderful inventiveness of the premise implied in its title: the 'criminal' turns out to be one of a handful of surviving Neanderthals, who've been blending in to the New York/New Jersey population for generations. He goes by the name BlingBling, and in the chapters he narrates we get an account of an alternate evolutionary path free of jealousy, hatred, and the kind of paranoia that leads to things like the Patriot Act. Although at times BlingBling (and the Neanderthal nest he's part of) seem to risk being 'Noble Savages', the novel never loses sight of the kinds of compromises their lives entail. And of course, when these living proofs of evolution come to light in a society that's given itself over to Biblical literalism on creation, all sorts of complications ensue--which makes for a delightful novel, that will stick with the reader a long time.

Jason Pettus says

(Reprinted from the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this essay, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted illegally.)

The last book I read by author Terence Hawkins was *The Rage of Achilles*, a well-done novel but nothing too terribly groundbreaking (it's simply *The Iliad* rewritten with modern language and slang); so imagine my surprise after reading his latest, the haunting and flabbergasting *American Neolithic*, and realizing that it's quite literally one of the top three books I've read in the last several years, a shocker that came out of left field for me and which made it even more enjoyable. At its heart it's a speculative tale -- the story of the very last tribe of Neanderthals in existence, who through a convoluted series of events have ended up "hiding in plain sight" within a contemporary Manhattan, with one of the members being mistaken for a developmentally challenged human by a rap gang and sort of adopted as a beloved yet laughed-at member of their posse. But when a rival gang member is killed and the blame shifted onto our hapless "Blingbling," this is where the story suddenly starts getting even meatier; for it turns out we're not in contemporary Manhattan at all, but rather a near-future America that has effectively weathered a coup by the Tea Party, which among other things has made it illegal to talk about evolutionary theory in public, which suddenly makes it a national security problem when Blingbling turns out to have DNA that is utterly unlike modern human genetics. Then if this wasn't enough, the book is a hardboiled crime and courtroom procedural as well, as our hero lawyer Raleigh navigates the tricky waters of a "justice" system under a semi-fascist state, trying

through black humor and shady dealings to keep his own hide afloat while not letting down this most curious new client of his.

Already an amazing novel just from the premise alone, what tips this into one of the best books of recent memory is that the entire thing is written in this beautifully poetic style, presenting a clan of cavemen in a startlingly original way that few would ever think of presenting themselves, a heartbreaking story of migration and loss that is fascinating, clever, and bleakly funny in equal measure. About as perfect as a novel gets, which is why it's receiving a rare 10 out of 10 from me, *American Neolithic* floored me at a moment when I was least expecting it, and it will undoubtedly be making CCLaP's best-of lists at the end of the year. If you're going to read only one contemporary speculative novel this year, make it this one.

Out of 10: **10**

Lee Jacobus says

I really enjoyed *American Neolithic*. It's a wild, very edgy story and it's filled with a remarkable knowledge of the lower East Side and the world of its inhabitants. Quite a risky book, I think. The portrait of the Neanderthal is amazing and I was quite taken with the concept of the Nest, for which Raleigh risks his life. Some of the extraordinary scenes were the comic portrayal of Yale (77) "The seasons have sharp edges in college towns." and the great scene with Mario in the Astor Place Hair shop. The bum fights scene was also surprising (136) and I liked the wit involved in the way Blingbling figures out the value of paper money (159). Naturally the threat of vivisection is terrifying (193), but that's mainly because the world portrayed in the shadow of the Patriot Act is really scary. What is imagined is pretty intense.

Bookie says

American Neolithic is one of my favorite fiction releases this spring. There's a lot of great stuff going on in these pages and Hawkins pulls it all off well. The story is set in an alternate reality version of New York, where the Patriot Act has been passed and Homeland Security has taken control of the legal system. A Neanderthal (yes a real Neanderthal!) posing as a member of a hip hop group is framed for murder and his lawyer Raleigh takes on his case. As the lawyer gets closer to the Neanderthal, he discovers that his client has more sensitivity and intelligence than most humans. The novel satirizes race, religion and pop culture, but it's also a moving piece of literary fiction. I thought I'd just gobble up *American Neolithic* and move on, but I ended up re-reading the novel a few times to savor some of the beautifully written passages (the Neanderthal is a poet, indeed!) and to take apart the book's complex themes. It's definitely a novel that will stay with you. Recommended!

Marc Fitten says

This is one funny book. *American Neolithic* is speculative, dystopian, fiction written in a style that will have you guffawing out loud. If Joseph Heller, Dashiell Hammett and Gene Roddenberry made a baby together it wouldn't come close to what Hawkins has created here. This book is readable, smart, and a lot of fun.

Zuzu Burford says

An amazing critique on the homeland security acts that Bush managed to have rushed through. The same loss of democracy has happened in Australia as well.
