



The Race

Richard North Patterson

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Can an honest man become president? In this timely and provocative novel, a maverick candidate takes on his political enemies and the ruthless machinery of American politics.

Corey Grace--a handsome and charismatic Republican senator from Ohio--is plunged by an act of terrorism into a fierce presidential primary battle with the favorite of the party establishment and a magnetic leader of the Christian right. A decorated Gulf War Air Force pilot known for speaking his mind, Grace's reputation for voting his own conscience rather than the party line--together with his growing romance with Lexie Hart, an African-American movie star--has earned him a reputation as a maverick and an iconoclast. But Grace is still haunted by a tragic mistake buried deep in his past, and now his integrity will be put to the test in this most brutal of political contests, in which nothing in his past or present life is off-limits.

Depicting contemporary power politics at its most ruthless, *The Race* takes on the most incendiary issues in American culture: racism, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, gay rights, and the rise of media monopolies with their own agenda and lust for power. As the pressure of the campaign intensifies, Grace encounters betrayal, excruciating moral choices, and secrets that can destroy lives. Ultimately, the race leads to a deadlocked party convention where Grace must resolve the conflict between his romance with Lexie and his presidential ambitions--and decide just who and what he is willing to sacrifice.

The Race Details

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From Reader Review The Race for online ebook

Kathleen says

I picked this up on cd, as I was in the mood for a political thriller. I remember liking some of Richard North Patterson's books years ago and decided to give this one a shot. First, let me say, that the reader (Michael Boatman from Spin City) is simply out of this world fantastic! This is a by-the-numbers thriller with stock characters with an uninteresting and unbelievable love story tacked on, but because Mr. Boatman was reading, I stayed interested! While nothing out of the ordinary, Mr. Patterson keeps the pace brisk and there are a few genuine surprises (although you can see some plot twists coming a mile away). Not a must read, by any means, but if you are looking for someone who knows how to read a book, give this one (and Mr. Boatman) a try.

Sarah says

I am still reading this book, but am finding it very difficult to get through. I'm frustrated with the plot line and find parts of it somewhat offensive (due to the heavy emphasis on religion). I am always one to finish a book even if I find it boring, but I am seriously considering putting this one up on the shelf unfinished. I'm moving on to another book, but will probably come back to this one before it is all said and done.

Coming back after I finished the book I was glad that I worked through everything and somewhat enjoy the book. I don't agree with others who think this book is the best one in years, but ultimately it was a new way to look at the politics of Washington DC. It's not a bad book, but I don't know if I would spend the week reading this book again.

Dr. A. says

Though slow at the beginning and with one lull in the middle I ended up really enjoying this book. By the end I couldn't put it down and read late into the night -- something I haven't done in awhile. It was nice to see a book that painted Republicans in a decent light as it seems hard to find that and take it seriously. But the book didn't offer reprieve either. The social issues discussed in the book include race, homosexuality, religion, and more. Worthwhile for an easy read between more serious books. Highly recommend!

David says

This is the story of a race for the republican nomination for President of the United States, particularly from the point of view of Senator Corey Grace - Iraq war hero, who is ostensibly an honest man, but has his own secrets and demons to hide.

The book alternates between a love story between Grace and a movie star, and the race for the nomination with two other rivals - one who will pull any trick or dirty tactic to win and the other a staunch religious zealot trying to win to restore god to the country.

First of all, im going to make a big claim here so hold on to your hats! I didnt believe this book. There i said

it. I know that's a big claim to make, when I'm an Englishman living in Australia commenting on American republican politics, but I just found the three main characters just too unbelievable. The three sides of the nomination just seemed too distinct, seemed too clear on their differences, whereas in my view most politicians these days are a blend of grey and beige.

But I'm happy to admit that I could be being naive! I feel that way more so when I read the afterword and find some republican heavyweights have contributed to the book...so who am I really to make such comments? but it's just how I felt, right or wrong...sorry....

Secondly, when I chose the book to read I was looking for a good tense description of a political tiff - trying to recapture that feeling of watching the last season of the West Wing (the debate episode is still I think the benchmark of how debates should be in any country! but then politics isn't carefully scripted...is it?)

But I felt somewhat unsatisfied with the political descriptions (though it would help if I understood the American political system more intricately than I do) and then before long the book would turn to the love interest, which just felt disjointed to me.

Overall, it wasn't a bad read, the pages turned without too much trouble, but I just didn't connect with the book in the way I was hoping for.

Patsy Chilson says

Wow politics is a dirty business as are the parties and the deals and the compromises.....
Everyone needs to drop the parties and work on the individual issues in America.
Great read....

Roberta says

The book was a bit political thriller, a bit drama, and a bit romance. The story chronicles a turning point in the life of Senator Corey Grace, a potential Republican presidential nominee. Part of the novel is Grace working through the mistakes in his life as he blames himself for every tragedy that has occurred to his friends/family. Another part of the novel is the adventures of the chief runners and potential runners in the Republican primary from start to finish. You see a good guy become a bad guy, a good guy remain a bad guy, and a person that you don't like so much become human (and nope I'm not going to tell you who fits what bill).

I'm not sure the story is very connected to reality as I'm not sure a Republican that fits Grace's profile could even get elected to the Senate. He's fiscally moderate or liberal, socially moderate to liberal, and strong on defense. He's very open and doesn't compromise his principles, but since a good chunk of the Republican party doesn't even fit his basic beliefs not sure how he'd get elected.

Not a bad book, but not a great book. Pretty easy read though and thought provoking.

Mark says

Reminiscent of an old Fletcher Knebel novel "Dark Horse, especially the shaking & moving of a contested national convention...written in 2007, Richard North Patterson is prescient in capturing the hijacking of both parties, by their more radical elements & how difficult it is for our moderate, war hero Republican hero Sen. Corey Grace to win the nomination...decent except for his gratuitous slams toward social conservatives!!!

Carl Alves says

The Race is poorly written, not very believable, trite, and annoying to read. There was little to no credibility or positive aspects about this novel. What makes it worse was that the author clearly had a political agenda in this novel. The level of bias interfered with any possible enjoyment. I don't read fiction to hear about an author's political beliefs, but Richard North Patterson clearly used this as a soapbox for him to espouse his own theories.

In this novel, Senator Corey Grace, a Republican from Ohio, who is a Gulf War hero, is in line to get the party's nomination for the upcoming presidential race. He is opposed by some of the people pulling strings within the party. The race changes when he enters a relationship with Lexie Hart, an African American actress lobbying for stem cell research.

There is so much wrong with this novel and just about nothing right. For one thing, stem cell research is the biggest issue in the campaign, when in real life it ranks about 100th in terms of political priorities. Secondly, the characters are caricatured cartoons instead of real people. The political axe-grinding by the author is nauseating. There is nothing remotely believable about any aspect of this novel. This is one of the worst novels I have read. Don't waste your time with it.

Carl Alves – author of Blood Street

Mack says

I have found that I have an odd predilection for books about political campaigns. I prefer it when they don't ascribe to any one party's view point, but instead try to encapsulate both the awe-inspiring optimism and historical context of our nation as well as the wide ranging foibles of ego, humanity and Americana that make our political process, well....kinda f#*%ed up honestly. So I've read both fiction (*Supreme Courtship*) and non-fiction (*Team of Rivals*) and plays (*The Best Man*) and even watch the unpopular 6th and 7th seasons of *The West Wing*. These don't always satisfy my desire for a balanced view of the political process, but they do satisfy my desire to imagine political strategists crafting plans in a battle for the hearts and minds of the American people.

The Race satisfied me in much the same way. Driving from Ohio to Wisconsin and back again this past weekend I was listened to the story of a "maverick" Republican senator, a war hero and iconoclast who voted his mind and would not debase himself to political chicanery. If that protagonist seems impossibly idealistic-it's because he is. Patterson latches on to this hero ("Cory Grace") and romanticizes him into an All-American icon (quarterback, air force pilot, dating a movie star, etc.). None of his political rivals stand a chance of winning the audience's sympathies and it becomes difficult not to see this as a simplistic battle between good politics and bad politics, as opposed to real politics.

Still there's a lot to like about the book. It digs in deep to the political strategizing I find so compelling. It turns photo ops and press conferences into miniature assaults on other candidates and asks serious questions

about the goals of the Republican party (i.e. fiscal conservatives v.s. social conservatives). It allows for some stirring rhetoric and clever dialogue that reminds the reader/listener of what they wish politicians would say (rather than the trite sound bites we seem to be burdened with). The performing reader (Michael Boatman) has a solid arsenal of voices and stays consistent throughout offering especially good televangelists and bloviating cable news pundits.

But while it's entertaining at times, I kept noticing myself rolling my eyes. Especially in the early going the tone is stilted with large swathes of text fairly crying out for a neon sign proclaiming: HEY LOOK HERE COMES SOME EXPOSITION!!!! Patterson frequently forgoes engaging with diverse opinions in favor of leaning on hyper-emotional anecdotes. Some (like Grace's memories of his younger brother's suicide) strike a chord, others (like a pseudo-9/11 attack) seem woefully contrived. And again and again the absolutist distinction between the principled Grace and his manipulative rivals seems more like a campaign pamphlet than an actual novel.

Patterson does offer one phrase that I absolutely love: "running for President is the true American odyssey". I think that's true: you have a bunch of "would-be" symbols of our nation, traveling throughout the country; encountering the unique cultures, issues and beliefs of each region; fighting with others for the chance to control our nation, and fighting with themselves over how much to compromise for the sake of appealing to everyone. I think that *The Race* simplifies that odyssey a little more than I would like...but as long as there is an odyssey to imagine, I'll be satisfied.

(Note--I'm not sure about that grade...feel free to leave a comment arguing with me and I may bump it up)

Mary Catherine says

A book about the ins and outs of a Presidential campaign. A maverick Republican senator decides to run for President and faces all of the challenges that come with the territory. His race is complicated by the fact that he has just started a romance with an African-American actress.

I was slightly disappointed with this book, mainly because Patterson has written political thrillers before and this felt like a retread to me, particularly the forbidden romance plotline.

But with the real-life primaries heating up, this is a very timely read. The best part of the book is matching the fictional characters with real people; some of the parallels are very obvious. If you enjoy politics and are eagerly anticipating the upcoming primary season, you will enjoy this one.

Jack says

I listened to the unabridged version of this book and the most impressive part of that experience was the reading by Michael Boatman (formerly an actor on *Spin City* and *Arliss*). He was absolutely the best reader I have ever heard on an audiobook.

To the actual book...

A timely and fun passing of time. With the 2008 race upon us, it's nice to relax a little with some interesting characters, many of whom have a lot more integrity than the real folks hoping to become our next president. Patterson's last foray into presidential politics was his trilogy on Democratic President Kerry

Kilcannon. So it's kind of fun to see him take a look at the other side of politics: the Republicans. His main character, Sen. Corie Grace (R-OH), is a young war hero hoping to win a GOP nomination upset against the favorite, Sen. Marotta (R-PA). It's clear that Patterson is dredging up some real-world stories from recent political history. Marotta and his political advisor, Price, are reminiscent of the Bush-Rove duo. An interesting re-telling of the Bush-Rove shameful shenanigans of South Carolina in the 2000 race is well done. At times it's difficult to listen through as a disgraceful deed is told yet again. Clearly this puts Grace in the mold of John McCain, though Grace is younger. There's also a Colin Powell character, a Bob Jones character, and a few other folks to make it different enough from reality.

What keeps me from rating this higher was the completely unrealistic and disappointing ending. Still, I hope there are sequels.

Mario says

I really wanted to like this book, but, right from the beginning, I found three fatal flaws that I just couldn't move past. One, the main character, though described as a Republican, doesn't really fit within the party on any level. He acknowledges that he is a social liberal, which isn't really a problem, but claims to be a fiscal conservative and strong on defense, when none of his actions show him to be the latter, and the only time he has a chance to prove the former, his actions explicitly show it to be untrue. By any reasonable estimate, he is not a Republican at all but a middle-of-the-road Democrat.

A second problem is that you never see the Democrats at all, which makes it even harder to see Corey as fitting within the Republican party as he is, by far, the most liberal politician in the book. Some sort of comparison with politicians further to the left (preferably as over-the-top as the Republican caricatures) would have made accepting Corey as a plausible Republican far easier.

The third is that I guessed the basics of the entire plot no more than fifty pages in (my only mistake was (view spoiler)).

Overall, I was pretty disappointed.

Ed says

I was pleasantly surprised at how good and compelling this book was. Without thinking, I grabbed it off the shelf on my way to the Doctor's office and got hooked almost immediately.

The story describes a fictional Republican primary campaign set in 2008. Patterson must have had a crystal ball as he predicted many of the issues that would be-devil the last two presidential campaigns and the upcoming 2016 fight. The main character, Corey Grace, is a Senator and war hero. His opponents in the primary season are a fundamentalist preacher, Bob Christy, and a fellow senator and insider, Rob Marotta, who will do anything to gain the nomination. It only focuses on Republicans, and the difficulties a moderate has trying to earn the Republican nomination.

The problems Grace faces underscore many of the issues Republicans have in being forced to kowtow to both the religious right and tax hating big donors. A major part of the book describes a fictional primary in South Carolina where every dirty trick seen in the recent past is used to try and destroy both Grace and Christy. It was hard to not recall the kinds of tactics often ascribed to Karl Rove and evident in the 2000

Republican primary in the same state. Adding to the difficulty is Grace's decision to continue a romantic relationship with a black actress, Lexie Hart. Though, fictional, the story rang true because it described tactics that have actually been used in recent political campaigns.

There were a couple sub-plots that, while adding to the action, were unnecessary to the major narrative including an Al Qaeda assassination attempt. That notwithstanding, I had a hard time putting the book down even though I had some pressing chores to accomplish. I was especially entranced by the last part of the book that takes place during the nominating convention. The ending is a little contrived but does tie loose ends together and provide a satisfying conclusion.

What can I say except that even if you have no interest in the current political process you will enjoy this book. If you have an interest, you will devour it.

Jeanne says

Let me start by saying that although I enjoyed this book, I did not give it 5 stars for the following reasons:

1. It was leaner than typical RNP fare. It was RNP Lite.
2. The ending was lame.
3. At a certain point, none of the bad guys were distinguishable from each other, as is often the case with naughty Republican politicians.

That having been said, I did really like this novel. It is a fast-paced political thriller about the race to become the nominee for the Republican party in the next presidential race.

The candidates are: Reverend Bob Christie, a wack-o member of the crazy Christian right; Rob Marotta, a less wacked out, but still super-conservative, who likes to play dirty; and our hero, Senator Corey Grace, Gulf War hero, straight-shooter, and all-around nice guy.

You can pretty much guess what the plot's like, with very few twists. But it's still good. RNP makes you feel like you're a part of the campaign at every turn.

If you like RNP, you'll like this.

10/31/07

Tina says

This book took me forever to get into, but once I did it was a quick and enjoyable read.

It is in three parts, the first part is a lot of set-up, flashbacks and exposition. The last two-thirds is when the ride starts.

As a main character, Corey Grace is almost freakishly perfect. He's a hero, a decent guy, says what he means and not what he thinks people want to hear. He's a young, handsome white Republican dating a beautiful Oscar winning, young, fabulous Democratic, liberal black actress. In short, he's someone who'd never actually make it in politics. But this is fiction, so, there you go.

The romance is nice and adds a little angst for Our Hero, but frankly, the guy has enough angst without the added twist of the girlfriend. He's running for President and his party doesn't want him to win. His main opponent has a campaign manager who is just about the slimiest, dirtiest piece of work you'd ever want to meet. And he there is his own version of Rupert Murdoch who hates his guts.

The stand-out part is the whole primary in South Carolina. As one character says "South Carolina, too small for a republic, too large for an insane asylum. You're headed for the heart of darkness, boy."

I did think that there were too many convenient events, too many loose ends tied up. I don't mind the dangly bits left dangling once in awhile. This was just too pat for my taste. But, as I said above, this is fiction, so there you go. And I was disappointed in the the ending. I thought it was a bit of a cheat.

I give this three stars because, well, it feels like a three star book. I liked it well enough, but that is pretty much it.
