CONFIDENTIAL



RICK CARLILE

THE FIRST-EVER **POST-TRUTH**, **SCIENCE-FACT** ADVENTURE NOVEL!

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[&]quot;Seriously! I mean, whaaat? Amirite!?"



RICK CARLILE

THE FIRST-EVER **POST-TRUTH**, **SCIENCE-FACT** ADVENTURE NOVEL!



Fake News Confidential The First-Ever Post-Truth, Science-Fact Adventure Novel!

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1

AN ACRONYM OF "DENIAL"

I was about fifty feet away when the piconuke whip-cracked out of the sky and detonated above the GMC Denali, turning the speeding truck into a flaming pile of junk in a burst of blue Cherenkov energy, sending me diving face-down into the snow. As I looked up, the Denali's remains cartwheeled screaming into a snowdrift and burned angrily.

A piconuke might sound like a cute Japanese cartoon character, but it's a smarter and more insidious weapon than its miniature blast radius might suggest. By the time I struggled to my feet I knew with horror that not only had its electromagnetic pulse wiped my bodycam's memory of its incriminating footage, its gamma-ray charge had likely robbed my body of its reproductive ability. Fifty feet — a debatable distance. Time would tell. A nasty, clever weapon that turns journalists' incontrovertible evidence into unreliable hearsay and good breeding-stock humans into evolutionary dead-ends. Cute, it ain't.

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That's what I am, by the way - a journalist. Trust me on that. Others might call me other things, more insulting things, but I'm one of the few real investigative reporters left in this benighted country.

You might know me. You might've heard me on some scratchy, interference-ridden shortwave radio station as your rental car passed through the periphery of an automatic repeater's broadcast zone in the hot dead rustbelts where America's glorious twentieth century gave up the ghost so the communist Chinese could pump filth into the air from their slave factories and build grandiose empty plastic cities in the desert that are designed to last twenty years and will collapse into dust before anyone ever moves in. You might've heard my voice from the tinny headphone speakers of a fellow-traveler's cellphone on one of our once-great metropolises' stinking, meatpacked cattle-cars they call public transport as you return to your two-hundred-square-foot single person's social housing allotment after a hard day at whatever pointless activity your chem-retarded drug-stunned mind gives you the ignorant audacity to call a job. You might know me. Or you might think you do.

Everyone in the Denali was dead. I knew it, and I wasn't going to get any closer in case of lingering radioactivity. They were beyond help. I'd come to the rendezvous to get their side of the story, but it looked like their side wasn't a story any more. You gotta know when to cut your losses. Choose your battles.

The local cops had been on their tail all the way from the occupied federal facility standoff, and showed up within five minutes, the FBI shortly after that. The local yokels seemed

genuinely bemused but the Feds had their story down pat and gave me the stock version with so little fanfare I knew they knew I had no choice but to go along with it.

Sure — criminals, escaping from the cops, blew themselves up with the unstable IEDs they meant to use against the authorities. Domestic terrorists. Right-wingers. White males. "Militia-men," remember that blast from the '90s past? Bitterly clinging on to guns and God like spoiled brats on the tit. Bad, shameful, wrong, nasty, deplorable people. Standard narrative. Never mind the facts, feel the emotions.

Without the bodycam footage showing that telltale awful blue Cherenkov radiation, what could I do? Nada. The fuckers were laughing in my face. They knew it was a game. A dangerous game. So did I. But they were fully-paid-up salary-types with families to think about and fourteen to twenty-six paid days' leave a year and I'm a dedicated, crazed investigator with a burning love for God, Man and Justice, and, it looked like, no need to worry about a family.

No contest.

Next time.

I'd nail 'em next time.

2

FLORIDA MAN

A week later back home in Florida, I was tired. After twenty years down here in the sun and lubricating humidity I'm not really set up to tolerate cold climates any more, and they make me feel my age. Bones and joints — you don't worry about them down here in the ever-loving sunshine, but up there in the chillier latitudes you think of nothing else. It sucks, and I'm still a young guy. I've got to fix my diet and exercise more.

Many people say the best thing about Miami is just how close it is to the United States of America. I can take the joke without taking offense. Offense is a sign of weakness, and to take some without any being offered is just plain rude. We receive some of the best *legal* immigrants from our surrounding nations and it's overall a positive thing. Certainly you're not going to risk a ninety-mile sea journey on a rickety raft from Cuba if you don't feel the capitalist free world is right for you. Folks like that build businesses, *create* jobs — they want to work hard to achieve the American Dream.

They're not like the terrorist sleepers and sympathizers streaming into arrogant, complacent, collapsing Europe, hidden undetectably amongst the columns of migrants, who think they can frighten and dominate their foolish host cultures into submission. Did you know that fifteen in every hundred people currently in France *admit* to supporting ISIS? Hate fact! Look it up if you don't believe me!

The terrorists tried that kind of intimidation once in Texas and didn't make it past the parking lot — thanks to good guys with guns. Good guys like you and me. *Molon labe*, motherfuckers. Come'n'git'm!

So Florida's terrific, overall. You ever notice how the mainstream media gives us such a hard time? Every time something weird happens here, it's "Florida man" this, "Florida woman" that? Like, "Florida Man Barbecues, Eats Own Face," or "Florida Woman Shoplifts Live Lobster Stuffed Down Yoga Pants, Hospitalized" — like that? Well, we all know everything has an equal and opposite reaction — and that means everything is an equal and opposite reaction to something else (work it out — it makes sense, all the way back to the Prime Mover).

So why do you think they plant stories like that — what are they reacting to? The answer's obvious. It's to cover up how great we are because they don't want people in the liberal elite enclaves of New York and San Francisco, and their ideological hangers-on up and down the right- and left-hand coasts, to figure out they could have it so much better down here. Ever notice how the Gulf of Mexico, Florida's panhandle and Atlantic coast are the only parts of the American coastline, Atlantic or

Pacific, that consistently vote Republican? Look at a map, it's true. Do your own research.

Not that the Republican party reptiles are so great either.

The regressive, repressive left doesn't care about *flyover America*, but here in God's country we irritate the hell out of them because they hate us free-thinkers occupying "their" coastal real estate, and they want us out. I swear, if the left ever gets their way and secedes from the Republic, their half-assed country's going to look like a thin-ass donut with a big old hole where the real Americans live. Makes you wonder how much they really believe in their phony religion of "global warming" if they're all so interested in coastal real estate.

I don't give a flying fuck about fake global warming so I live right on the beach. Well, a few hundred yards inland so the hurricanes have something to chew on after making landfall before they get to my property. Hurricanes, I believe in.

I was still tired but I woke up in clean satin sheets to the soft sound of the ocean, which made it all OK. I felt good. My body was recuperating, taking in the humid, hot, salt air through the skin, rejuvenating aching bones. I made a coffee power smoothie and took it over to the beach. Time to check email.

I fucking hate my phone. I don't know what it is, every time I get a new phone it's worse than the last one. Nobody else seems to have this problem. Everything's always updating, or buffering, or it crashes and reboots the phone, or some other damn thing. Sometimes the GPS app tells me to take turns off of cliffs or into the ocean. It's useless, dangerous garbage.

But I love the beach here. It really gets my blood pressure down. I can stay out here all day from dawn to dusk and never feel bored; every second of every day is different and unique. I sit from one day to another, from one season to the next, year after year, and I see the coastline change: sand grains blown in their billions from hither to thither, creating new berms and ditches, the procession of infinite blue waves moving material in and out, the crabs and the seabirds living, digging, hunting... I wish I could die here, knowing I was eternally safe from human interference, feeling only the effects of nature, my body gradually decomposing to feed the crabs and birds, my sand-blasted, sun-bleached, bone-clean skeleton finally succumbing after weeks or months to be buried in the shifting sands. Bliss.

But that's what's wrong with this world: *other people*. A body would never be left to rest in peace here, it would be poked, probed, moved, dissected, tested, written-about, talked-about, molested and finally discarded, destroyed, and dumped in some hermetic but soulless container: just as its owner was in life. By other humans who arbitrarily think they have the right, the authority, to do so. Humans who have no dignity, no wisdom to leave things alone.

After restarting the phone a couple of times I was finally able to check my damn email. I'd been off the grid a whole week so there was a ton of crap. Who the hell uses LoopedIn? Why? Why do I? If you've got a job you don't need it and if you don't have a job, it marks you out as an unemployed loser! Jesus. Anyway, I mustn't get distracted — I was starting to feel that mid-morning bloat that drains focus from the mind; I'd have to change my protein powder manufacturer to something more organic and — yeah, maybe finally make that switch from grainy gut-mangling

bourbon to nice clear vodka. But either way, I had to get back to work.

A lot of people wanted to know about last week in Oregon. I didn't want to think about it; I couldn't help them. I couldn't say anything about what happened to those poor guys — had nothing whatsoever to back me up. I had to move on and get the bastards another way. They'd won that battle, but the war was ongoing and it was anyone's fight.

The one standout was a missive from my source at a New York bank. This Wall Street insider was kinda nerdy and shy in real life, but a colossus bestriding the world of finance online as an anonymous broker-blogger. You probably know him if you're in the markets. Incisive guy. He has the most remarkable network of tech and government contacts I've ever seen; the dude can get you anything. Apparently he had a breaking story for me that couldn't wait, though he was cagey about the specifics. He'd been holding onto this juicy piece of intel for a few days but was down in town on vacation and figured it was the right time to let it drop with a degree of plausible deniability; "cover for action," as the intel pros put it.

I told him to meet me on the roof of College Station parking garage, on North-East 3rd Street, near Dodge Island. This was where the Miami Vice guys filmed the iconic motorcycle chase in whichever episode it is. My reasoning is, if you meet sources at well-known movie or TV show locations — and there are many round here — people will assume you're also entertainment folks, or fans. Either is fine by me. Cover for action.

This is the end of the preview. To get the full book, visit: WWW.CARLILE.MEDIA/GETFNC