



Junior

Ray Donley

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At times comical, at times thoughtful, this novel is packed with memorable moments and refreshing insights on some of the more serious parts of life. A highly readable account of one man's journey from suspected terrorist to sought-after celebrity.

-- Kirkus Reviews

This book provides a light-hearted take on matter we often take too seriously for our own good -- politics, religion, and sports!

-- San Francisco Book Review

JOSHUA WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR HIS FATHER'S VOICE ON THE RECORDING

Junior! How's it hanging, young man? If you are listening to this, that means I am dead and you are alive, which is of course exactly how I planned it. Yes, I knew the explosion was going to happen, and I made sure you and Pete were out of town when it did . . .

Junior, first let me say that I am sorry about what happened. Second, I am sorry everyone is blaming you. Unfortunately, things are gonna get worse before they get better. But you have Jennings blood running through your veins, boy, and I know you can handle whatever happens. You are my only son and I love you very much.

Thirty-year-old Joshua Jennings Jr. is the last living member of his family and the primary suspect in a terrorist bombing that killed the president, the vice president, and his own father. To make matters worse, Joshua discovers that his father planned the explosion and set up Joshua to take the blame.

Overnight, the media transforms Joshua into a celebrity criminal. He rockets to first place in the Criminal Fantasy League standings. Feature films and bestsellers explore his motives for blowing up the president. A television personality proclaims Joshua's innocence so she can market "Let Him Be" T-shirts. ? The Baptist News Channel announces that Joshua is the Antichrist, and that the end of the world is near.

Junior is Joshua's journal. It chronicles his three years as a fugitive on the run from law enforcement and vigilantes while he tries to figure out how he fits into his father's plan. When Joshua mysteriously disappears, the journal is discovered and becomes a worldwide bestseller, described by scholars and literary critics as "a classic study of the human condition."

Junior Details

Date : Published January 1st 2012 by River Grove Books

ISBN : 9781938416002

Author : Ray Donley

Format : Paperback 370 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Mystery

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From Reader Review Junior for online ebook

S.A. Mahan says

An excellently written satire about the world we live in. And the life and ministry of Jesus Christ? Yes, that's right. Very imaginative, full of great insights, and extremely funny. I really enjoyed the whole premise, and eagerly plunged right into Joshua Jennings' journal. It did drag on a bit for me, but hey, 3 years is 3 years, right?

A Reader's Heaven says

(I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.)

Thirty-year-old Joshua Jennings Jr. is the last living member of his family and the primary suspect in a terrorist bombing that killed the president, the vice president, and his own father. To make matters worse, Joshua discovers that his father planned the explosion and set up Joshua to take the blame. Overnight, the media transforms Joshua into a celebrity criminal. He rockets to first place in the Criminal Fantasy League standings. Feature films and bestsellers explore his motives for blowing up the president. A television personality proclaims Joshua's innocence so she can market "Let Him Be" T-shirts. The Baptist News Channel announces that Joshua is the Antichrist, and that the end of the world is near. Junior is Joshua's journal. It chronicles his three years as a fugitive on the run from law enforcement and vigilantes while he tries to figure out how he fits into his father's plan. When Joshua mysteriously disappears, the journal is discovered and becomes a worldwide bestseller, described by scholars and literary critics as "a classic study of the human condition."

I really did try and enjoy this novel. There was so much potential for this to be so very good but, for me at least, it fell down in the end.

From the start, the premise got my attention: Joshua is the primary suspect in a bombing murder and he has to fulfill the wishes of his dead father along the way to proving his innocence. And, for the most part, the author pulled this plot off pretty well. The ending was a bit of a disappointment (somewhat predictable) and that was a let down.

More of a disappointment, though, was the style the book was written. I am not a fan of "journal" format and this got very annoying, very quickly. The overuse of footnotes was also a turnoff for me. It just jumbled things up and made them all the more confusing. Also, some of the serious observations along the way are potentially lost in the absurdity of some situations.

Overall, what was a decent enough story could have been a much better one...in my opinion only, of course!

Paul
ARH

Laurie says

A most interesting book which combines at least two satirical layers through all the journal entries. I was surprised that I was unable to locate this 2012 title at a nearby library. I read it on the iPad at my free week on Oyster (kindle-like). Junior is on the run after the violent deaths of the presidents, vice-president and his father, called Senior. There are thousands of niche cable channels. Every event, holiday, and arena has a sponsors name. Violence abounds.

At the same time, shades of Christopher Moore and Lamb, the 3 years that Junior is on the run parallels Jesus' last 3 years. The ages are the same, his friend, Pete; Junior's companion, the traveling, doing deeds, providing for the blind, etc. There are, I'm certain, many more, but it's an area with which I'm not too familiar.

One consistent note throughout this book, is that it is funny, very funny.

Rina says

Let me start by saying:

- 1) This is probably right up some (even many) people's alleys.
- 2) I got this book for free through the Goodreads giveaways.
- 3) The book has some fun Texas references because the author is from Texas.

If 1-3 weren't true, I probably wouldn't have bothered finishing this book. Unfortunately, neither made me enjoy this book. A book that is 350ish pages took me nearly two months because I had little drive to actually pick up the book after I started reading it.

The premise was interesting - Junior (the protagonist) is on the run after being suspected of a terrorist plot that killed the President, the VP, and his own family. He is, of course, innocent, but how will he ever prove it?! He gets a message from his father, who is dead, but seems to know exactly what was going to happen and his pulling the strings from beyond the grave. Intriguing and creepy. My perfect combo.

Then things just get ridiculous. This all takes place in some future land where the author seems to have gone crazy with what-ifs. What if all the Jews moved to North Dakota and created New Jerusalem? What if marijuana was legalized? What if Mexico became part of America? What if our fascination with criminals merged with our love of fantasy football? What if taxing soda escalated to just taxing overweight people? What if the battle over which God is right became a regular contest? What if HIV became airborne, then cured, then we put all the homosexuals in their own cities? What if the solution to incidents of child molestation in the Church was to remove all male priests and leave it to the nuns? Etc, etc, etc... FYI, the author's bio even says that he just started making things up because he was sick of writing factual legal briefs. While that makes sense, I just couldn't get on board.

Some of these hypothetical situations made you think about how something could be taken too far. There are nuggets, little statements, that are valuable and well-written. However, the actual events unfold in a completely unrealistic way that is never explained. The author uses an academic analysis style that makes it plausible that the text of the story is never made into a better, more cohesive plot. A professor is analyzing the manuscript written by Junior. Random things are footnoted with scholarly references/critiques/analysis, historical notes, or a comment that they don't make sense or could not be factually verified.

It was a farcical world that, maybe, I could have gotten on board with, but it just seemed like rambling as they wander the country and discuss "historical" events or political developments. It was all just layered on too thick. They occasionally revisit the mystery, throw in a romance for good measure, and eventually wrap it up at the end. SPOILER: It gets wrapped up in the most predictable way - the Islamic terrorists (funded by oil money in the Middle East) did it. Also, the guy gets the girl (who turned out to be more than met the eye).

Great premise, but a disappointing product in the end.

WiLoveBooks says

This is written in the format of Joshua's journal as he is trying to avoid being arrested or killed for something he didn't do. Sounds serious, but done in a somewhat humorous way. Joshua meets some very interesting characters along the way, and even gets some mysterious help from his dead father. There are footnotes as if his journal had been discovered, published, and studied. The footnotes contain information about things that happen later that Joshua couldn't have known about, speculations by scholars, and references to other entires. They added to the story and some were really funny. This book is very entertaining and I recommend it for anyone who enjoys clean, witty humor about politics, religion, sports and more.

scribes23 says

I'm afraid this book took it too "light-hearted". Sure It was fun to read, interesting takes on politics and sports, but I'm afraid I was looking for more, more meaning to it, with a plot like that, surely the author would come up with more, meaningful scenes.

ARC copy from Publisher via Netgally

Kim Hansen says

I found the book Junior, by author Ray Donley, to be delightfully funny in parts, but at the same time, it asked thought provoking questions and really made you think. I love this in a book!

Written in the form of a journal, the book revolves around Junior (Joshua Jennings Jr), who, after the death of his father has become the prime suspect in their murder. But he is not only blamed for his murder, but also those of the President and Vice President of the U.S.

His father was killed by a bombing – a bombing that was actually part of a plan put into motion by Juniors father. And his father wanted him to take the fall for it. Knowing that he is not guilty, he becomes a fugitive for over 3 years. He writes a journal about where he goes, where he hides and how he discovers the full truth about what his father has done to him.

After writing the journal about his years on the run and the truth about the bombing, he actually disappears, never to be seen again. When his journal is found, the truth comes out and it becomes a bestseller.

I enjoyed this book quite a bit, but it was a bit difficult to get used to the “journal” format in which it is written. Once you get past that, I’m sure you will find it a very interesting and entertaining read as well!

Bree Garcia says

What an insane and strange world Ray Donley has created for us in Junior. Set in the future (not the typical kind, either), the world seems to be like our own, but with some differences, such as the Burger King New York Times and about a million more channels on TV. Junior is the diary of Joshua Jennings, Jr., the son of one of the wealthiest men in the world and who is assumed to be the murdered of his father and the President of the United States. Junior embarks on an adventure that takes him all across the United States (including newly minted Baja, Texas) for nearly three years. It was fun reading the diary entries from this confused and simple man, and it was even more fun reading about the people from his perspective. Apparently in the future, some political and high ranking figures are incredibly stupid and speak terribly when on TV. My favorite character had to be Veronica Wells, the newscaster who is the first one to speak with Junior after he supposedly “blows up” his father, and takes that story at a run. She is so self-involved and deluded that she is absolutely wonderful. As strange as it sounds, Junior seemed to me to be an updated Bible. Not so much as the stories and morals go, but for what happened after the diary was “published.” There was so much speculation about Junior, the place he visited, and the people he interacted with that it was like reading all the books about whether or not Jesus was the true son or God or if any of that even existed. The only problem I could find was that there were a billion and a half footnotes (not really, but you get the idea). The footnotes were kind of a pain sometimes, but I understand that some were necessary. All in all, fantastic book, and I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys humorous and well-thought out stories (which is most people, I’d hope!).

Joh says

Interesting book. Enjoyed it.

Jon Grumby says

I liked the book a lot. It had very nice pacing and wasn't predictable. Nice Texas references as well.

Jill says

Accused terrorist Joshua Jennings Junior’s diary entries follows his three year flight from/to justice in a futuristic American Society that includes the incorporation of Mexico into the United States and the movement of the Jewish homeland from Israel to North Dakota.

Senator Joshua Jennings had power and money. What the Senator wanted, the Senator got. Only this time, the Senator and his family, except for Junior, and all the key players for the upcoming presidential election, including the current President and Vice-President, died in an explosion at a political rally on an Indian Reservation in New Mexico.

Thanks to his father, Junior is tried and convicted by the press as the terrorist responsible when his alibi and all evidence of him being states away in Texas disappear. Now labeled the Antichrist, he zooms from being the Senator's errand boy to first place contender in the Criminal Fantasy League standings. Much to his surprise, Juniore begins getting messages from his dead Senator father and help from special interest groups that owe the old man political favors.

Along the way, you find that the Senator was behind many of the major changes in society, such as the movement of the Jewish homeland from Jerusalem to North Dakota, the incorporation of Mexico into the United States, the removal of all male priests in the Catholic Church, and the export of prison inmates to Afghanistan to keep the peace.

First time author Ray Donley uses a journal format with limited footnotes to twist the typical tale of an innocent man accused of terrorism into a social commentary on politics, religion, culture, and life in general. Follow Junior's flight after the explosion until his disappearance three years later and his mysterious emergence as a highly esteemed Apostle.

Melissa says

Have you ever read a book that seemed so real that you questioned whether it was fiction or not? With the book, Junior by Ray Donley, I found myself asking that same question more than once. The book is written as journal entries with author footnotes. As if this book was discovered after the death of Junior who was writing it. Here is a brief summary of Junior.

Joshua Jennings Jr. is the last living member of his family and he is the prime suspect in the bombing that killed not only his family but the president and vice president. He discovers soon after the bombing that this was all part of father's master plan. Then goes on the run from the law and also others who are trying to kill him. He becomes subject of many television shows, movies, books, and magazines and newspaper articles. The journal that he writes in gives all the details of his three years of life on the run and how he learns what his father's master plan was. He mysteriously disappears at the end of the book that is when the journal is discovered and becomes a worldwide bestseller.

My take on this book, I can honestly say that I have not read a book like this. I loved that the author gave the reader some thought-provoking questions and mixed a little humor in with all the seriousness of the mayhem that takes place in this book. I mean seriously I was drinking Mt. Dew when I read about the Great Nascar Wars 1-4. Yep folks you read that part right. That along with other tongue in cheek references to putting all the murders in prison over in Afghanistan kept this book entertaining because you never know what Donley is going to write next. I can see this book becoming a movie with sequels or even a miniseries. If you looking for a book that is entertaining as well a little serious than this is the book for you.

I give this book the Frugal Mom approval.

Josh L says

You can read my full review at [Quieted Waters](#).

Coca-Cola, prescription drug companies, and foreign countries sponsor anything and everything in Junior's America. Ray Donley writes this book as a farcical, extravagant mockery of American pop culture. Junior stretches into an imagined future, poking fun at many things about modern America, including our love of advertising, corporate sponsorship, and megabillion dollar sports industries.

Elizabeth (Stuffed Shelves) says

Review:

This is the personal journal of Joshua Jennings Jr. (Junior) who is on the run after being suspected of murdering his father, the vice president, and president of the United States. His father was actually killed by a bomb that he had set in motion, with the intention of Junior taking the blame for his death. Now Junior is labeled as a terrorist and is the most wanted man in the united states.

He's been on the run from the law, and others who want to kill him, for three years, and he kept a journal throughout the whole time to show what he went through to find the truth of what really went on with his father's bomb. Eventually Jennings leaves his journal and disappears completely. As soon as someone found the journal, it became a number one bestseller.

This book is so well written, I found myself forgetting that it wasn't true. There are scholars and famous people that Jennings refers to in the footnotes of his journal, which almost makes him sound like a prodigy or someone who could possibly predict the future. Since the book takes place in the future, it makes it even easier to believe the story could actually happen.

I have heard some people refer to the footnotes as being unnecessary and abundant, but I thought it proved even more that Jennings could possibly tell the future since it contains information that seems impossible for Jennings to have known.

He kind of reminds me of Jules Verne's books, in the sense that they both wrote about things that in the future, the events come true, or nearly true. All in all I absolutely loved the book. It had comedy, drama, thrill, and excitement that kept me intrigued throughout the book. I give this book 5/5.

for more reviews check out www.stuffedshelves.com

Lana Bradstream says

JUNIOR by Ray Donley tells the tale Joshua Jennings Jr., the last living member of his family and the main suspect in a terrorist bombing that claimed the life of the President, the Vice President and his father. Yeah.

He's hosed. Especially when he learns his father planned the whole thing -- the bomb and Joshua taking the fall for it. This book is written as Joshua's journal, chronicling his life as a fugitive for three years while he tries to figure out what happened.

JUNIOR is written very well in terms of the journal format. Indeed, there are times when you have to remind yourself that you are reading a work of fiction. The footnotes (and there are a LOT) can get rather annoying. There is a footnote on almost every single page. I am of the belief that unless your book has an intense following or is non-fiction, you do not need footnotes. They are just not necessary.

The character of Joshua is developed very well. You can really empathize with him and his current situation. I was asking myself what I would do in the same circumstances. Would I take Joshua's path or would I do something different? So, you know the book can at least get you thinking.

Even with the serious nature of the book, there are smatterings of humor spread throughout that helps it from becoming too depressing. If an author can drop a little laugh in a serious moment, that is amazing!

The book is unlike any other I have read -- in terms of the format. As far as plot goes, it seems rather worn. The terrorist plot and the innocent man accused has been used time and time again. The author shakes it up a little bit with the journal, but I can see this becoming the next standard Hollywood terrorist flick. All in all, not outstanding, but not terrible. 3 out of 5 stars.
