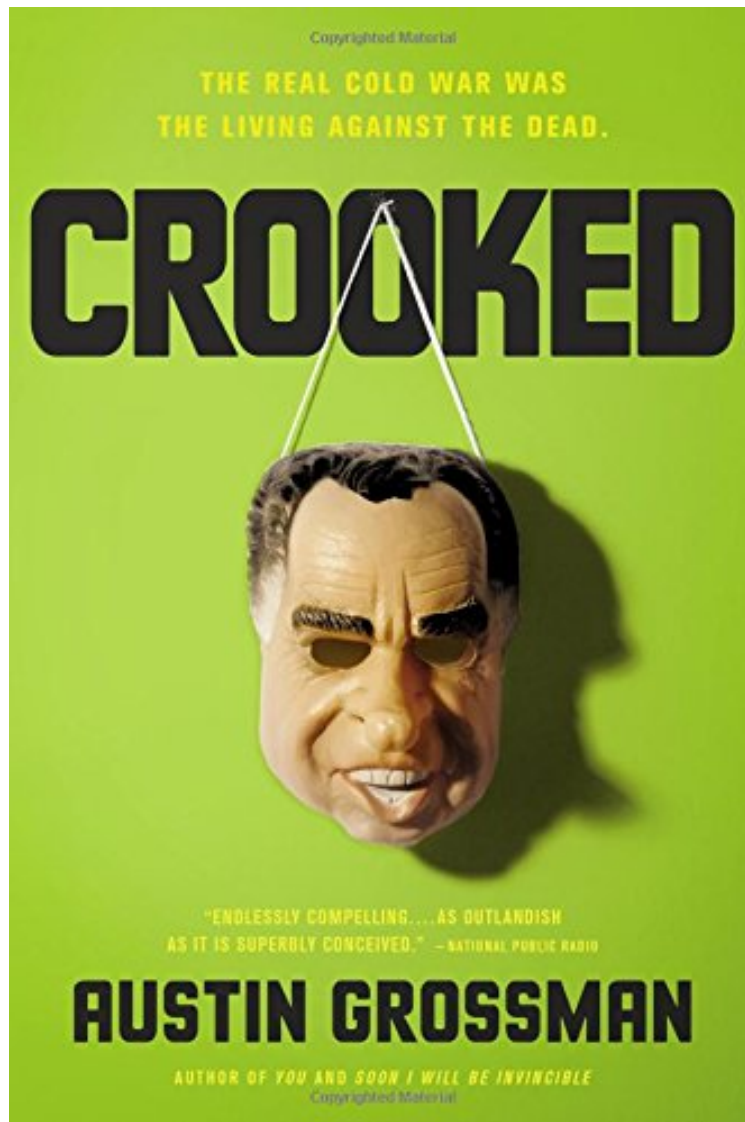


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## Crooked

*Austin Grossman*

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#575546 in Books Grossman Austin 2016-08-02 2016-08-02 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x 1.00 x 5.50l, .0 #File Name: 0316198528368 pages Crooked | File size: 61.Mb

**Austin Grossman : Crooked** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crooked:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Best Secret History since Tim Powers's "Declare" By MissLemonThs a secret history novel concerning Richard Nixon getting entangled in the occult underbelly of the Cold War during his political career. It was brilliant -- almost as good as Tim Powers's "Declare," which is the best secret history book I've read. Austin Grossman does a great job of filling in the gaps of history with occult underpinnings and providing supernatural backstories for historical oddities. So many nice little asides about historical figures and minor events. I

would not lightly compare a book to *Declare*, but *Crooked* totally lives up to the comparison. Highest possible recommendation. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Good when it could have been great

By Shawn P. Cooke "Crooked" has a novel and refreshing conceit. What if Nixon, instead of being the shame of the American presidency, was instead the secret savior of the nation, who sacrificed his reputation to preserve us from the great Lovecraftian horror of the Cold War? The execution, unfortunately, was not sufficient to elevate the book from the gee-whiz factor of its premise into the ranks of the great works of alternative history. Grossman's work suffers from an odd front-loading. The bulk of the book takes place during his early political career, as a Congressman, Senator, and Vice President in the Eisenhower White House. Though relevant, and full of the sort of creepy rising action that you might expect from a book that dips into the Lovecraftian mythos, these sections feel like a delay of the payoff we were promised from the excellent opening chapters. When that payoff arrives, however, it is rushed. I had been hoping to see Nixon as the inheritor of the magic inherent in the American executive branch. He is, though not in the way a reader might have expected after the first chapter. I was hoping for occult adventures, after the style of Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter. Instead, we orbit on the fringes of an interesting story without ever landing. By the end, I felt more frustrated than entertained. I was frustrated not at the book but at Grossman, who obviously has the writing chops to tell an engaging story, but chose to overload the appetizers and skimp on the main course. As I turned the last page, I was left with the distinct impression of having read the outline of an excellent book. That's not to say that I found nothing to enjoy. Grossman succeeds extremely well at the atmospheric, painting a picture of existential dread mixed with a subtext of horror. And yet, he brought humor into the story in just the right places. His characterization is superb. We get to know Nixon extremely well, and witness his marital struggles with Pat. His relationship with Arkady and Tatiana is central to the book - perhaps too central? - but we are left with a feeling of them as real characters doing their best in an unreal world. At the end of the day, "Crooked" is a taste of alternate history, a book that requires that much of the depth be supplied by the reader. Its strength is the ability to hint at a much larger and more encompassing story than what is told; its weakness is the inability to tell enough of that story to satisfy.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not? A crock.

By Patrick Burnett Perhaps the greatest achievement of *Crooked* is teaching me more about the life of Richard Milhouse Nixon than I knew previously. To be honest, I never had much interest in the man himself, and so never read any of the multiple biographies available. But the author of *Crooked* surely has, and so, by carefully discarding all of the sorcerous, alchemical bulls\*\*\*, was I able to absorb some of his hard work and knowledge. But for actually reading and being entertained by the novel, I fear I am left just as bereft as when I started. Austin Grossman makes much of Nixon's stature as the last great black-magician-president of the US, but actually does nothing with it. Instead, he paints a sad portrait of a sad sack who became successful by accident, therefore invalidating all of his overblown claims. The best character in this construct are those who are not real - Arkady and Tatiana, Nixon's Iron Curtain handlers who feed their pigeon just enough to survive, and Gregor, who very clearly died early on, but suffered a resurrection of convenience when Grossman had written himself into a corner. I enjoyed *Crooked* mostly, but I feel it represents the death of print as a medium perhaps more than most. It is fan-fiction about reality that was rushed to print without nearly enough people asking "why?" Why is this happening? What is the outcome? Can you clarify this? The answer from so many authors now who want to see their names in print is "just do it, or I will publish it digitally on ." And so we slide out of relevance.

Acclaimed novelist Austin Grossman reimagines the ultimate American antihero. Richard Milhouse Nixon lived one of the most improbable lives of the twentieth century. Our thirty-seventh president's political career spanned the button-down fifties, the Mad Men sixties, and the turbulent seventies. He faced down the Russians, the Chinese, and ultimately his own government. The man went from political mastermind to a national joke, sobbing in the Oval Office, leaving us with one burning question: how could he have lost it all? Here for the first time is the tale told in his own words: the terrifying supernatural secret he stumbled upon as a young man, and the truth behind the Cold War. What if the man we call our worst president was, in truth, our greatest? Combining Lovecraftian suspense and international intrigue, *Crooked* is a masterwork of alternative history, equal parts mesmerizing character study and nail-biting Faustian thriller.

"Ingenious ... every moment [is] perfectly motivated ... more believable than the truth. *CROOKED* works as gleeful satire, as wacky alternate history, and as a thriller, but what really shines is the character study at its center." Neil Hollands, *Library Journal* (starred review) "Crooked confirms and details the extremely esoteric and occult presence we always suspected lay at the heart of the Nixon administration. It's got spies, and political intrigue, and a sitting President spilling his own blood onto a pentagram hidden beneath the Oval Office rug, which is to say there are few of my buttons this book does not push." John Darnielle, *Author of Wolf in White Van* "At once wildly imaginative and deeply intimate, *CROOKED* is a demonically fun political thriller. The brilliance of Austin Grossman is in making big stories personal, even when the big story is super-powered presidents and intercontinental necromantic missiles." Max Barry, *author of Lexicon* "In telling the secret story of Richard Nixon, Austin Grossman draws back the curtain on American history. Senator Joe McCarthy should have been much, much more frightened. Once I started reading

Crooked, I couldn't put it down. But be warned, even as you devour this book, it will devour you."?Daniel O'Malley, author of *The Rook* About the Author Austin Grossman is a novelist and game designer. His novels include *Soon I Will Be Invincible*, *YOU*, and *Crooked*. *Soon I Will Be Invincible* was nominated for the 2007 John Sargent Sr. First Novel Prize. His writing has also appeared in *Granta*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*. His major game credits include *System Shock*, *Deus Ex*, *Dishonored*, and *Dishonored 2*. He is currently Director of Game Design and Interactive Storytelling at Magic Leap.