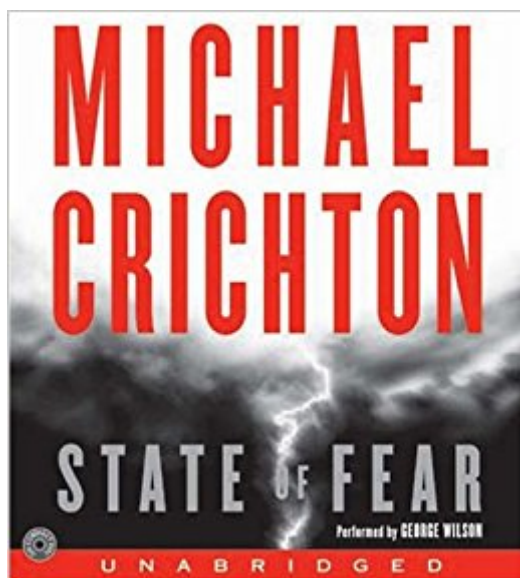


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# State Of Fear



## Synopsis

The undisputed master of the techno-thriller has written his most riveting -- and entertaining -- book yet. Once again Michael Crichton gives us his trademark combination of page-turning suspense, cutting-edge technology, and extraordinary research. *State of Fear* is a superb blend of edge-of-your-seat suspense and thought provoking commentary on how information is manipulated in the modern world. From the streets of Paris, to the glaciers of Antarctica to the exotic and dangerous Solomon Islands, *State of Fear* takes the reader on a rollercoaster thrill ride, all the while keeping the brain in high gear.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

.com Exclusive Content A Michael Crichton Timeline .com reveals a few facts about the "father of the techno-thriller." 1942: John Michael Crichton is born in Chicago, Illinois on Oct. 23. 1960: Crichton graduates from Roslyn High School on Long Island, New York, with high marks and a reputation as a star basketball player. He decides to attend Harvard University to study English. During his studies, he rankles under his writing professors' criticism. As an act of rebellion, Crichton submits an essay by George Orwell as his own. The professor doesn't catch the plagiarism and gives Orwell a B-. This experience convinces Crichton to change his field of study to anthropology. 1964: Crichton graduates summa cum laude from Harvard University in anthropology. After studying further as a visiting lecturer at Cambridge University and receiving the Henry Russell Shaw Travelling Fellowship, which allowed him to travel in Europe and North Africa, Crichton begins coursework at the Harvard School of Medicine. To help fund his medical endeavors, he writes spy

thrillers under several pen names. One of these works, *A Case of Need*, wins the 1968 Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Allan Poe Award. 1969: Crichton graduates from Harvard Medical school and is accepted as a post-doctoral fellow at the Salk Institute for Biological Science in La Jolla, Calif. However, his career in medicine is waylaid by the publication of the first novel under his own name, *The Andromeda Strain*. The novel, about an apocalyptic plague, climbs high on bestseller lists and is later made into a popular film. Crichton said of his decision to pursue writing full time: "To quit medicine to become a writer struck most people like quitting the Supreme Court to become a bail bondsman." 1972: Crichton's second novel under his own name *The Terminal Man*, is published. Also, two of Crichton's previous works under his pen names, *Dealing* and *A Case of Need* are made into movies. After watching the filming, Crichton decides to try his hand at directing. He will eventually direct seven films including the 1973 science-fiction hit *Westworld*, which was the first film ever to use computer-generated effects. 1980: Crichton draws on his anthropology background and fascination with new technology to create *Congo*, a best-selling novel about a search for industrial diamonds and a new race of gorillas. The novel, patterned after the adventure writings of H. Ryder Haggard, updates the genre with the inclusion of high-tech gadgets that, although may seem quaint 20 years later, serve to set Crichton's work apart and he begins to cement his reputation as "the father of the techno-thriller." 1990: After the 1980s, which saw the publication of the underwater adventure *Sphere* (1987) and an invitation to become a visiting writer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1988), Crichton begins the new decade with a bang via the publication of his most popular novel, *Jurassic Park*. The book is a powerful example of Crichton's use of science and technology as the bedrock for his work. Heady discussion of genetic engineering, chaos theory, and paleontology run throughout the tightly-wound thriller that strands a crew of scientists on an island populated by cloned dinosaurs run amok. The novel inspires the 1993 Steven Spielberg film, and together book and film will re-ignite the world's fascination with dinosaurs. 1995: Crichton resurrects an idea from his medical school days to create the Emmy-Award Winning television series *ER*. In this year, *ER* won eight Emmys and Crichton received an award from the Producers Guild of America in the category of outstanding multi-episodic series. Set in an insanely busy and often dangerous Chicago emergency room, the fast-paced drama is defined by Crichton's now trademark use of technical expertise and insider jargon. The year also saw the publication of *The Lost World* returning readers to the dinosaur-infested island. 2000: In recognition for Crichton's contribution in popularizing paleontology, a dinosaur discovered in southern China is named after him. "Crichton's ankylosaur" is a small, armored plant-eating dinosaur that dates to the early Jurassic Period, about 180 million

years ago. "For a person like me, this is much better than an Academy Award," Crichton said of the honor. 2004: Crichton's newest thriller *State of Fear* is published. .com's Significant Seven Michael Crichton kindly agreed to take the life quiz we like to give to all our authors: the .com Significant Seven. Q: What book has had the most significant impact on your life? A: *Prisoners of Childhood* by Alice Miller Q: You are stranded on a desert island with only one book, one CD, and one DVD--what are they? A: *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu (Witter Bynner version) *Symphony #2 in D Major* by Johannes Brahms (Georg Solti) *Ikiru* by Akira Kurosawa Q: What is the worst lie you've ever told? A: Surely you're joking. Q: Describe the perfect writing environment. A: Small room. Shades down. No daylight. No disturbances. Macintosh with a big screen. Plenty of coffee. Quiet. Q: If you could write your own epitaph, what would it say? A: I don't want an epitaph. If forced, I would say "Why Are You Here? Go Live Your Life." Q: Who is the one person living or dead that you would like to have dinner with? A: Benjamin Franklin Q: If you could have one superpower what would it be? A: Invisibility --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

For his latest foray, Crichton alters his usual formula--three parts thrills and spills to one part hard science--to a less appetizing concoction that is half anti-global warming screed and half adventure yarn. This adds a mission impossible element to Wilson's narration: how to make pages of research interesting enough to hold the listener's attention until hero and heroine face their next peril. Unfortunately, Wilson approaches the statistical information like a newscaster communicating via Teleprompter. This earns him an A-plus for elocution and timbre, but a more average grade when it comes to dramatic interpretation. Consequently, the scientific material that Crichton spent three years researching seems even more copious in audio format than in print. And it's certainly much harder to flip past. Wilson is more successful in handling conversational passages, employing accents and adding subtle touches to various voices--a cynical tone for the hero, who's a mildly hedonistic corporate lawyer, and an edgier, less patient attitude for the beautiful, ready-for-anything heroine. As they hot-foot it around the globe, assisting an Indiana Jones-like MIT professor in thwarting evils perpetrated by a mass-murdering environmentalist, Wilson stirs up a little suspense by speaking faster and more energetically. But the book's abundance of statistics would slow any narrator's momentum, and Wilson is no exception. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

I didn't realize what I was getting into when I picked up this book recently. I've enjoyed many of Michael Crichton's earlier novels, not only *Jurassic Park* but also some of his lesser known

works such as *A Case of Need*, one of his very early novels. My impression of Michael Crichton has always been that he brought a certain amount of technical expertise to his writings, along with a level of integrity, that caused them to raise to a level above most other thrillers and similar works. Reading *State of Fear*, I found myself confounded by the point of view that began to dominate, that of skepticism regarding the global warming and environmental points of view that I had always more or less taken for granted. Surely Michael Crichton is not suggesting that Global Warming is not a Real Threat?? Can it be?? Well, it's not quite that simple, but first let me comment to the book itself. It's a good read, beginning seemingly as a 'good guy' vs 'bad guy' story with the corporate interests playing the expected role as 'bad guys', but early on there are questions raised about whether or not the bad guys are in fact the corporate interests, or if they are in fact the environmental interests, or are they both equally 'bad'. And then along the way, in the discussions that take place between the characters as they discuss the environmental movement and whether or not it is solidly based on real science and actual data, there is a good amount of real data included, for example charts of the warming trends of cities throughout the world, that do not present the expected evidence of a general warming trend. Is this real data, or something fabricated to support the story? The truth is not fully clear until the book is completed and the afterward is read (Crichton calls it his 'Author's Message' and in two or three pages he lays out very clearly his point of view with respect to the environmental movement and global warming, and it is quite interesting to read). He also substantiates the data provided throughout the book, and the conclusions he presents in his 'Author's Message', as well as the astonishingly thorough and diverse listing of references that are provided, are such that I have to feel that there is something serious here that merits thoughtful reflection. If nothing else, it is that afterword, written by Crichton to give his own point of view, that is worth reading. I am appending it here to my review, confident that I am not violating any copyright restrictions since Crichton's own website also offers it for anyone to read. This is a book that is both entertaining, and as well it is unexpected and thought provoking. I am still not sure what to make of it.-----Michael Crichton's 'Author's Message' from the book *State of Fear*:  
**AUTHOR'S MESSAGE**  
A novel such as *State of Fear*, in which so many divergent views are expressed, may lead the reader to wonder where, exactly, the author stands on these issues. I have been reading environmental texts for three years, in itself a hazardous undertaking. But I have had an opportunity to look at a lot of data, and to consider many points of view. I conclude:- We know astonishingly little about every aspect of the environment, from its past history, to its present state, to how to conserve and protect it. In every debate, all sides overstate the extent of existing knowledge and its degree of certainty.- Atmospheric carbon dioxide is increasing, and

human activity is the probable cause.- We are also in the midst of a natural warming trend that began about 1850, as we emerged from a four-hundred-year cold spell known as the "Little Ice Age."- Nobody knows how much of the present warming trend might be a natural phenomenon.- Nobody knows how much of the present warming trend might be man-made.- Nobody knows how much warming will occur in the next century. The computer models vary by 400 percent, de facto proof that nobody knows. But if I had to guess-- the only thing anyone is doing, really-- I would guess the increase will be 0.812436 degrees C. There is no evidence that my guess about the state of the world one hundred years from now is any better or worse than anyone else's. (We can't "assess" the future, nor can we "predict" it. These are euphemisms. We can only guess. An informed guess is just a guess.)- I suspect that part of the observed surface warming will ultimately be attributable to human activity. I suspect that the principal human effect will come from land use, and that the atmospheric component will be minor.- Before making expensive policy decisions on the basis of climate models, I think it is reasonable to require that those models predict future temperatures accurately for a period of ten years. Twenty would be better.- I think for anyone to believe in impending resource scarcity, after two hundred years of such false alarms, is kind of weird. I don't know whether such a belief today is best ascribed to ignorance of history, sclerotic dogmatism, unhealthy love of Malthus, or simple pigheadedness, but it is evidently a hardy perennial in human calculation.- There are many reasons to shift away from fossil fuels, and we will do so in the next century without legislation, financial incentives, carbon-conservation programs, or the interminable yammering of fearmongers. So far as I know, nobody had to ban horse transport in the early twentieth century.- I suspect the people of 2100 will be much richer than we are, consume more energy, have a smaller global population, and enjoy more wilderness than we have today. I don't think we have to worry about them.- The current near-hysterical preoccupation with safety is at best a waste of resources and a crimp on the human spirit, and at worst an invitation to totalitarianism. Public education is desperately needed.- I conclude that most environmental "principles" (such as sustainable development or the precautionary principle) have the effect of preserving the economic advantages of the West and thus constitute modern imperialism toward the developing world. It is a nice way of saying, "We got ours and we don't want you to get yours, because you'll cause too much pollution."- The "precautionary principle," properly applied, forbids the precautionary principle. It is self-contradictory. The precautionary principle therefore cannot be spoken of in terms that are too harsh.- I believe people are well intentioned. But I have great respect for the corrosive influence of bias, systematic distortions of thought, the power of rationalization, the guises of self-interest, and the inevitability of unintended consequences.- I have more respect for

people who change their views after acquiring new information than for those who cling to views they held thirty years ago. The world changes. Ideologues and zealots don't.- In the thirty-five-odd years since the environmental movement came into existence, science has undergone a major revolution. This revolution has brought new understanding of nonlinear dynamics, complex systems, chaos theory, catastrophe theory. It has transformed the way we think about evolution and ecology. Yet these no-longer-new ideas have hardly penetrated the thinking of environmental activists, which seems oddly fixed in the concepts and rhetoric of the 1970s.- We haven't the foggiest notion how to preserve what we term "wilderness," and we had better study it in the field and learn how to do so. I see no evidence that we are conducting such research in a humble, rational, and systematic way. I therefore hold little hope for wilderness management in the twenty-first century. I blame environmental organizations every bit as much as developers and strip miners. There is no difference in outcomes between greed and incompetence.- We need a new environmental movement, with new goals and new organizations. We need more people working in the field, in the actual environment, and fewer people behind computer screens. We need more scientists and many fewer lawyers.- We cannot hope to manage a complex system such as the environment through litigation. We can only change its state temporarily-- usually by preventing something-- with eventual results that we cannot predict and ultimately cannot control.- Nothing is more inherently political than our shared physical environment, and nothing is more ill served by allegiance to a single political party. Precisely because the environment is shared it cannot be managed by one faction according to its own economic or aesthetic preferences. Sooner or later, the opposing faction will take power, and previous policies will be reversed. Stable management of the environment requires recognition that all preferences have their place: snowmobilers and fly fishermen, dirt bikers and hikers, developers and preservationists. These preferences are at odds, and their incompatibility cannot be avoided. But resolving incompatible goals is a true function of politics.- We desperately need a nonpartisan, blinded funding mechanism to conduct research to determine appropriate policy. Scientists are only too aware whom they are working for. Those who fund research-- whether a drug company, a government agency, or an environmental organization-- always have a particular outcome in mind. Research funding is almost never open-ended or open-minded. Scientists know that continued funding depends on delivering the results the funders desire. As a result, environmental organization "studies" are every bit as biased and suspect as industry "studies." Government "studies" are similarly biased according to who is running the department or administration at the time. No faction should be given a free pass.- I am certain there is too much certainty in the world.- I personally experience a profound pleasure being in nature. My

happiest days each year are those I spend in wilderness. I wish natural environments to be preserved for future generations. I am not satisfied they will be preserved in sufficient quantities, or with sufficient skill. I conclude that the "exploiters of the environment" include environmental organizations, government organizations, and big business. All have equally dismal track records.- Everybody has an agenda. Except me.

Using actual verifiable data Crichton both entertains and questions commonly believed notion of climate change. When you reach the end of the novel you will have been entertained, challenged, and perhaps find yourself rethinking your beliefs of widely held belief.

Back in the 80's Michael Crichton authored "", a computer game for the Commodore 64. Aside from the fact that it was one of the only ones I've ever managed to complete, it featured indigenous tribes as one of the adversaries for the "action" sequences. The same element is featured here, in a sidebar conflict with a stereotype environmentalist "tree hugger" personality, which is a little tacky. Crichton is right on two elements, the need for a new fear to replace the Cold War Soviet Bloc bogeyman ( at least in the period prior to 9/11), and the seeming neglect of the "Little Ice Age" in determining the actual amount of global warming. For the record, I believe its effects were still being felt into the first couple of years of the 1960s. Of course the bad guys are radical environmentalist, portrayed as a much more potent and generalized version of the Animal Liberation Front back in the 80's and 90's. And oh yes, they have the abilities to control the weather and other natural force, s usually attributed to the governments of the world by conspiracy theorists. I have no problem with the writing itself, but Crichton seems to have an attitude that his references related to global warming are unimpeachable, while any references in support of global warming aren't.

I love almost every other Michael Crichton book but thought this book was pretty boring. Parts of the book are exciting and filled with suspense but other parts just dragged on and on. Long overly political conversations that felt like lectures. Found myself skipping page after page of repetitive dialog. I'd much rather re-read Jurassic Park for the 15th time than read this again.

This is a truly prophetic book written some years ago but right on in exposing "catastrophic climateers" and their refusal to entertain any ideas but their own. As all of Michael Crichton's books, it is well written and entertaining with a subtle, ironic sense of humor. I know that critics dumped on this book when it came out because it rejected the popular climate change propaganda that all right



thinking people must believe. However, anyone who thinks that climate change or any other scientific theory is "settled" is only displaying their ignorance. New data must always be taken into consideration. Even if global warming occurred solely from human activity during the last 50 years, it does not mean that will continue to be the case. That is why we must continue to observe and study the problem. Just remember we're overdue for another ice age. Hate to miss the signs of that one!

This is a typical Chrichton novel, but probably not his best. It is well written and well researched. Reviews appear to be based as much or more on the political leanings of readers rather than the quality of the writing. I felt that some of the characters were a tad contrived, but that may be an intentional construct to achieve the author's intent that the storyline be as polarized as the real-world debate regarding climate change. I found this to be an enjoyable read with the exception of the cannibalism scene. Chrichton's clumsy and forced insertion of a "Lord of the Flies" moment appears superfluous to the message of the book.

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