



Politics in fiction

We all know that politics make strange bedfellows. But a book about politics? Perfect! Check out some recent political fiction in our collection.

Buckley, Christopher. **No Way to Treat a First Lady** (2002)

President Ken MacMann is found dead in bed next to his wife, though he'd earlier spent an amorous evening with his latest mistress. First lady Elizabeth MacMann is the primary suspect, especially since she'd recently hit her husband in an argument over his latest infidelity, an act that made the tabloids. She hires ace attorney Boyce Baylor, who just happens to be an old flame, and the two set out to clear her name. When Beth takes the stand to clear her reputation, it backfires, and Baylor resorts to jury tampering to try to force a mistrial in this satire of Washington politics and the press.

Elliott, Stephen. **Politically Inspired** (2003)

Editor Elliott compiled this diverse collection of short fiction exploring the post-9/11 political landscape.

Gore, Kristen. **Sammy's Hill** (2004)

In this first novel by Al Gore's daughter, senatorial aide Samantha Joyce works a 70-hour week as the expert on the latest health care reform bill, leaving little time for romance. But she falls hard for a handsome speechwriter, despite the fact that he works for her boss' unethical rival. In Washington, even dating becomes a political act.

Hill, Bonnie Hearn. **Intern** (2003)

23-year-old April Wayne disappears without a trace while interning for California Senator Eric Barry. When the media reveals that the senator was the last person seen with April and that the two were supposedly having an affair, he becomes their prime suspect. April's parents, shocked by the revelations, must deal with the strain on their relationship.

Krueger, William Kent. **The Devil's Bed** (2003)

President Clay Dixon, campaigning for reelection, is falling behind in the polls. Worse, the popular first lady, Kate Jorgenson Dixon, is ending their marriage—a disaster both politically and personally. When her ex-senator father is injured in an accident, Kate travels to rural Minnesota, only to learn that the accident was actually caused by David Moses, a lunatic with designs on Kate. Secret Service agent Bo Thorsen contends with the stalker, as well as backstabbing colleagues, scheming politicians, and a secret government agency with apparent ties to Moses.



Patterson, Richard North. **Balance of Power** (2003)

Newly elected president Kerry Kilcannon is battling gun lobby group the Sons of the Second Amendment. His fiancée's sister is brutally beaten by her husband, who then goes on an airport killing spree. Kilcannon goes after the manufacturer of the gun used in the spree, but the SSA rallies to push a tort-reform bill protecting the manufacturers from litigation. An involved and thoughtful meditation on U.S. gun policy.

McGrory, Brian. **The Incumbent** (2000)

Two weeks before the presidential election, Boston reporter Jack Flynn asks at a press conference why President Clayton Hutchins has pardoned a certain felon. Flynn is then summoned to join the president for golf, where a gunman barely misses the president but lands Flynn in the hospital. Flynn is hampered in his investigation of the attempted assassination, and receives mysterious phone calls that suggest an FBI cover-up. The body count rises and Flynn comes closer to the truth, raising questions of journalistic ethics, and Clinton-era politics. For more of Jack Flynn, try 2002's **The Nominee**. The publisher of Jack's newspaper is killed, and Jack uncovers possible links to confirmation hearings for a new U.S. Attorney General.

McGruder, Aaron and Hudlin, Reginald. **Birth of a Nation: a Comic Novel** (2004)

This satire was originally written as a screenplay, but turned into a graphic novel with the aid of illustrator Kyle Baker. When all of its black citizens are denied the right to vote (their mistakenly listed as "felons"), the city of East St. Louis secedes from the union and christens itself "Blackland". With a national anthem sung to the tune of the "Good Times" theme and James Brown depicted on currency, Blackland becomes a money-laundering capital and pioneers a new energy source, sparking a war with the U.S.

Meltzer, Brad. **The Zero Game** (2004)

Congressional staffers Matthew Mercer and Harris Sandler have joined a secret group of like-minded workers to play the Zero Game, which uses congressional voting and government administrative procedure as the basis for placing bets. The two decide to bet their life savings when the sale of an abandoned South Dakota gold mine becomes part of the game. Things go horribly wrong, and soon Harris and Viv Parker, a young Senate page, are fleeing a hired killer.

Roth, Philip. **The Plot Against America** (2004)

In this alternative history, aviator Charles Lindbergh is nominated for the presidency in 1940. His candidacy and eventual presidency have particular consequences for Jewish families--Lindbergh favors a non-aggression pact with Germany, and some of his domestic policies seem just as threatening to the Jewish community. Roth imagines his own family coming to grips with the political climate of the day.

Safire, William. **Scandalmonger** (2000)

Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Safire brings to life the scandals threatening the presidential campaigns of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. An ambitious journalist has the goods on both, and threatens to reveal all about the private lives and romances of each.