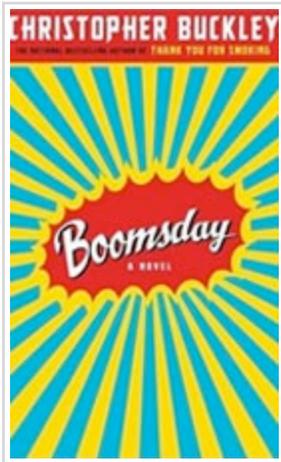


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Boomsday

Christopher Buckley advocates for the final Big Chill.

BY KEVIN ALLMAN



Cassandra Devine is one pissed-off 29-year-old. An overworked whiz at an evil Washington PR firm (is there any other kind?), she's broke and miserable, and her taxes keep getting raised to boost the Boomers' Social Security benefits...which they're squandering on second homes and third wives. So she posts a call to arms on her widely read blog, and overnight armies of teens and 20-somethings are taking their violent protests to the rest homes and golf courses of America, horrifying the hippies who have segued effortlessly from LSD to Lipitor. So begins *Boomsday* (12 Books, 318 pages, \$24.99), the latest satire by Christopher Buckley (*Thank You for Smoking*, *Florence of Arabia*). It's more bitter than his previous novels, with a deeply cynical edge that should appeal to fans of Martin Amis and Max Barry; Buckley may be aiming for laughs, but tell that to Cassandra when she's snarling about "self-indulgent, aging Boomers who are wrecking the U.S. economy and economically enslaving the next generation." Soon an ambitious senator, smelling young votes, has partnered with Cassandra to sponsor tax breaks for Boomers who are willing to check out early to help save Social Security—the "Voluntary Transitioning Bill," co-sponsored by Oregon's junior senator Ron Fundermunk ("He represents a state that's dying to commit suicide"). And with the addition of some strategic bennies to the bill (deductible Botox! Grandchild day-care!), even the all-powerful senior-citizen group the Association of Baby Boomer Advocates (ABBA) has signed on to support their own members' self-snuff. Buckley makes the workings of Washington awfully funny, and *Boomsday* is stuffed with clever ideas—perhaps too stuffed; the last third of the book, about a presidential race uniquely geared to appeal to "U30s" (the under-30 crowd), feels like a separate novel. The power of the blogs obviously makes Buckley nervous, but to his credit he doesn't write off the 1980s babies as a vacuous bunch of iPod people and MySpace cadets. Cassandra is as smart as she is angry, and her crusade to forcibly retire the Grateful Dead generation with the ultimate golden parachute should give boomers a really big chill.

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