



# Freedomland

*Richard Price*

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## **Freedomland** Richard Price

The celebrated author of *Clockers* delivers his most compelling and accomplished novel to date.

A white woman, her hands gashed and bloody, stumbles into an inner-city emergency room and announces that she has just been carjacked by a black man. But then comes the horrifying twist: Her young son was asleep in the back seat, and he has now disappeared into the night.

So begins Richard Price's electrifying new novel, a tale set on the same turf--Dempsey, New Jersey--as *Clockers*. Assigned to investigate the case of Brenda Martin's missing child is detective Lorenzo Council, a local son of the very housing project targeted as the scene of the crime. Under a white-hot media glare, Lorenzo launches an all-out search for the abducted boy, even as he quietly explores a different possibility: Does Brenda Martin know a lot more about her son's disappearance than she's admitting?

Right behind Lorenzo is Jesse Haus, an ambitious young reporter from the city's evening paper. Almost immediately, Jesse suspects Brenda of hiding something. Relentlessly, she works her way into the distraught mother's fragile world, befriendng her even as she looks for the chance to break the biggest story of her career.

As the search for the alleged carjacker intensifies, so does the simmering racial tension between Dempsey and its mostly white neighbor, Gannon. And when the Gannon police arrest a black man from Dempsey and declare him a suspect, the animosity between the two cities threatens to boil over into violence. With the media swarming and the mood turning increasingly ugly, Lorenzo must take desperate measures to get to the bottom of Brenda Martin's story.

At once a suspenseful mystery and a brilliant portrait of two cities locked in a death-grip of explosive rage, *Freedomland* reveals the heart of the urban American experience--dislocated, furious, yearning--as never before. Richard Price has created a vibrant, gut-wrenching masterpiece whose images will remain long after the final, devastating pages.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Freedomland Details**

Date : Published November 29th 2005 by Delta (first published January 1st 1998)

ISBN : 9780385335133

Author : Richard Price

Format : Paperback 655 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Crime

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## From Reader Review Freedomland for online ebook

### Laura says

I don't know what I expected from this -- certainly not the brilliant exposure & exploration of racism in America I got. Price's dialogue is dead-on, and his stories are just heartbreaking. Un-put-downable.

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### Paul Bryant says

I reviewed *Clockers* and *Lush Life* but not this mighty novel. What's that all about, hmm? Exhaustion, I think, because all these novels are quite similar and told in the same manically detailed no-stone-unturned way and they all do the same thing, which is to take a tale from the urban underbelly which could be easily summarised in two sentences and expand it into a 700 page brainmelt.

I love them all, but I read *Freedomland* first (5 stars), then *Lush Life* (4 stars), then *Clockers* (3 stars). So hmm, I think Richard Price is wearing off. He needs to make a come-back. I think he should find a story from the seamy side of the American experience which you could easily summarise in ONE sentence and blow it up into a THOUSAND page novel.

Actually, I think if you haven't read this guy, you could prolly read them in the reverse order to me, and your rating would also go 5, 4, then 3.

But these three novels add up to 1,700 pages. That's like Lord of the Rings or sumpin. And all of these 1,700 pages are between a high three and a clear 5. There is not one page that drops to a two. So, you know, I urge you. Consider yourself urged.

There is a guy who works for the same company I do whose name is Richard Price. I asked him, are you **THE** Richard Price. But he just said he was **A** Richard Price.

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### Daisy says

Price is an author in the vein of David Simon. He's a white man who, for whatever reason, can really write about the black experience. I don't know if that's a fair or accurate assessment - or one that he would even want to claim - but it's the feeling I get when reading his novels.

Price uses some of the same tricks as Simon, the most prominent being his unwillingness to dumb down or explain street slang, his jumping straight into a story without bothering to lay out an easily understood back story. The reader is left to figure it all out, untangling the suspense like a silent character in the book itself.

This particular book was about a white woman whose son has gone missing. She claims she was carjacked by a black man. A city wide search instantly ensues and naturally, racial tensions are stretched to the snapping point.

While this book was good, there were times when I was vastly annoyed by the drawn out wordiness of it. The book spans approximately 2 1/2 days and yet it's over 500 pages long. Many elements of the plot are too drawn out, although in Price's defense, even the most inane seeming subplot is usually brought to some

satisfying (or pointed) conclusion.

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### **Pete says**

Overly long, drawn out, melodramatic, anticlimactic waste of time.

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### **Jenn says**

That was a loooooong book. Over 700 pages. I'm surprised I finished it as I somewhat remembered the movie. I knew how it ended. But I didn't recall the actual ending. I had forgotten certain key points. I knew there was a race thing going on but I didn't remember the walk and the clash that happened near the end. I expected a clash and envisioned a much more violent one.

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### **Jayne says**

I have mixed feelings. Kind of liked it but expected something different in the ending. I wonder if people really interact like that sometimes and some places?

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### **Debbie says**

Richard Price, where have you been all my life? Seriously, how could I have missed this guy for so long? His credentials include being the screenwriter for "The Color of Money", "Sea of Love" and "Ransom". This novel is akin to a top-notch "Law and Order" miniseries, only more profound. His characters get under your skin in ways that make you think about them long after you put the book down. He's one of those writers that can make the setting a character, you know like Thomas Hardy does with the moors? Only here, it's the inner-city with its paradoxical hopelessness and optimism that only urban familiars will recognize. The main plot involves a white woman walking into an ER saying she was carjacked by a black guy with her son in the back of the car and the racial tensions that erupt. And yet, there's so much more. Price explores themes of motherhood, of cynicism, of faith, of just what it means to be human. Masterful.

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### **Matthew says**

this is an amazing book. After reading it I put it down and then read four more by Price--there's quite an evolution in his plotting. But throughout his books, the dialogue is as good as any I've read. His novels are as novels should be: deceptively easy to read--simple at first glance, but filled with complex prose and just enough wisdom that the reader doesn't notice until the last page is turned.

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### **Richard says**

This novel is alive in ways that so many others aren't. Price digs in and explores every aspect of the tragedy at the center of this book through the eyes of his two main characters using a verbal writing style (does that make sense?) that keeps things cooking but never feels rushed. His descriptions, his dialogue, his insight -- I came away from this book a better writer than when I went in.

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### **Jack says**

The plot plays out exactly like you think it's going to and the book feels a little drawn out, but I think it's supposed to. You don't read Richard Price for the dazzling suspense or plot twists; his talent is for making the grind of urban crime feel real. And in that sense the book's structure helps you to empathize with the key figures, especially Council, the detective on the case. He too suspects early on how this story is going to end, and as it progresses and he becomes more certain, he also becomes more desperate for it to just hurry up and get there. But it doesn't. It unravels at its own, agonizing pace, like watching an uncoming train approaching that, though it's approaching from a great distance, clearly doesn't have enough space to brake before it collides with a stalled car on the tracks.

That works well for Price's gift for portraying three dimensional, realistic-feeling individuals who are nonetheless cogs in some greater sociological whole. Everyone involved in the plot knows that the outcome of the case is almost fated; the only question is how much collateral damage there's going to be in its resolution. And, although people can pour themselves into trying to effect that outcome, it's immune to individual human forces.

Call it 3.7/3.8 stars

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### **Guy says**

Surprisingly, the slow, 'Dickensian' pace and richness that gave most of his other novels a sense of space, was actually this novel's biggest flaw. Pedestrian, even lumbering, and almost too tedious to finish.

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### **Pradeep Badatiya says**

Excellent theory of author which compels you to contemplate about your freedom.

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### **Željko Obrenovi? says**

Ne?u više uopšte da trošim re?i na genijalnost RI?arda Prajsa. Uzmite, ?itajte!

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### **Tanja says**

1,5 Sterne

Der Schreibstil hat mir überhaupt nicht gefallen, irgendwie hat sich die Story gezogen. Ich hatte das Gefühl,

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dass auf diesen knapp 640 Seiten so gut wie nichts passiert ist. Die Geschichte hätte man locker auf die Hälfte kürzen können, dann hätte es vllt noch spannend werden können. Aber so lag die Spannungskurve gleich unten. Ich habe mir wirklich durch das Buch durch quälen müssen. Alle vorkommenden Personen waren mir mega unsympathisch, ich konnte mich in keine hineinversetzen. Am liebsten hätte ich jeden einzelnen da durchgeschüttelt.

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### **Thomas says**

I heard the movie was terrible but don't let that scare you away. I read this when it came out and thought it was the best book I had read in years. The characters are alive and you can talk to them (scream at them).

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### **Ana Laura De Romero says**

Debo admitir que me costó más tiempo del que esperé, tardé en meterme en la trama y una vez pasado 'el climax' de la historia me perdieron de nuevo.

Me gustan las historias de investigación y ésta es una buena historia pero siento que tiene muchos elementos extra que nada pasaría si se eliminaran de la trama.

La historia empieza lenta y conforme avanza logra atraer más la atención: Una madre que sufre el robo de su auto donde va su hijo de 4 años, la ciudad se pone de cabeza buscándolo, la investigación no avanza, las teorías empiezan a apuntar hacia la propia madre y se toma como 'sospechoso' a cualquiera que se acerque en lo mínimo al perfil del 'secuestrador', se recurre a procedimientos 'extra-judiciales' y se logra una confesión, una triste confesión que comienza revelar lógica entre algunos acontecimientos y a reforzar la incoherencia que se veía en otros.

La ciudad se siente herida y ofendida, se toma como una lucha de razas y se exige reparación de daños, hay manifestaciones que terminan en más tragedias. Se pierde enfoque del objetivo principal, se hace como en todo una lucha de intereses. Llegando a un desenlace que podría tomarse como autoconclusivo, o quizá me faltó leer más entre líneas para descifrarlo bien, el final me atrapó por un segundo y me volvió a perder. En fin me gustaron algunas cosas y otras más me pasaron de largo.

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### **Emily says**

I was obsessed with Clockers after I slogged through it and got sucked in halfway through, so I had high hopes for Price's follow-up, which is set in the same fictional NJ town of Dempsey. Unfortunately it is a little overwrought and tends to rely a bit too much on Price's favorite device of ruined and abandoned places. My favorite scene in Clockers was the 'baby hospital' chapter, which literally took my breath away, but in Freedomland we see at least 2 scenes set in ruins, and it gets to be a bit much. Still, the descriptions of the abandoned theme park called Freedomland are quite haunting (note that this is based on an actual theme park called Freedomtown that used to be in the Bronx.) Price's books are no lightweights and this one is no different-- I could have done with a little less of Brenda's dialogue and a little more plot movement.

## Seth says

This book could have been a three or even four star book if it didn't have a major fatal flaw. The story is overly ambitious and not primarily feasible. The author made a good attempt to write an "epic small town" story, he remembered that it's important to have likable characters, true to form dialogue and a writing style that moves with ease inspite of the 700+ page total. But this book is full of side stories, some of which sound pretty interesting to be honest, but they don't have anything to do with the main plot theme and in most cases are not resolved in any redeeming way. I don't think the author is a fool, I think he was trying to cater to what he believes is the true experience of the police detective. Ask a person what they might have seen relative to a major crime, they might not have seen anything, but they'll let you figure that out for yourself while they fill your head with their personal troubles which you didn't come to investigate today. Two points for good narrative, but why did he have to invent a fictional Northern New Jersey county and two towns within that county? Wish he had picked actual communities, and also turned on the TV (in his Manhattan apartment) long enough to understand that New York City based Television newscasts do not send their van based reporters to report on NJ street crime. When Newark burns, they fly their helicopters over head, Why? It's easier, you don't have to fight the traffic or pay the tolls returning to Manhattan. After all, the action reporter and her girlfriends have five star dinner reservations at 8, and a private booth at Webster Hall later. They don't want to be late.. Same thing happens in Philadelphia. It's also important to recognize that more than 60% of their viewing demographics are New York State residents and they don't give two \$&i!'s about who was murdered or robbed in Hoboken, East Orange or Jersey City. Those stories are left for the NJ edition print newspapers and the local access cable channels. Anyway, enough about that. Good story over all, but two or three times flawed and receives a lesser rating as a result.

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## Leora says

After reading Freedomland, Richard Price quickly became my guilty pleasure. I have since listened to the audio version of "Lush Life" (great audio, fantastic text), and read "Clockers." There are one or two more sitting on my bookshelf. Yes it's a cops novel, but the questions is not whodunnit, it's something deeper and better. Here, there are real racial tension issues and questions of the role of a reporter, a cop, and a mother, in figuring out what happened to a kid. No one's motivations are left unquestioned, and through his incredible dialogue and commitment to shades of gray in the morality of his characters, Price brings dignity to the grittiness of cops novels, and the pleasure far outweighs any guilt.

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## Ned Andrew Solomon says

Freedomland is an epic novel. The fact that the action takes place over the course of just 72 hours, and the geographic reach encompasses only a few square miles in New Jersey does not alter that description. This is a big story that asks big questions in great depth. It's about law and order, truth and lies, the role and boundaries of the media and law enforcement, race relations, friendship, family, trust and loyalty.

At it's core is the death of a small child, which may have occurred by accident, through negligence or through foul play.

But this is not a quick who- or whydoneit. Action yields to slow-paced interactions between many

characters, as a detective strives to save a missing child, or solve a terrible crime before a city and its various conflicting factions face off, and wage war or self-destruct. The main characters are richly drawn, the dialogue is sensational, and the choices people are faced with are real and heart wrenching.

This is the fourth excellent book I have read by Richard Price, and the best so far.

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