

# Election Perfection for Debut Author

With the U.S elections nearing their conclusion and Brexit talks in full swing, there is no better time for some political satire, to invite conversation and perhaps lighten the mood on this troubling political climate.

Cue Belfast author Andy Luke, whose debut novel *Axel America and the U.S Election Race*, captures the surreal spirit of current politics. A comedic take, the novel follows Axel America, a paranoid radio DJ, as he attempts to singlehandedly take on multi billionaire media mogul Morgan Rump. The stakes are high, as Rump is in the running for the United States presidency.

Starting out as a self-taught graphic novel artist, Andy Luke spent over a decade producing his own comics before branching into prose and script-writing, penning television comedy sketches and award winning short stories.

In 2011 Luke produced *Hold the Phones it's Alex Jones*, a comedic series of graphic novels taking on political conspiracy and mainstream media. When Donald Trump announced his bid for the presidency Andy knew he had to take up the reins once more.

After a discussion with publisher Andrew Gallagher at Enniskillen comic fest, Luke began work on *Axel America*, but the election wasn't the only race at hand. Luke found himself in a race against time, as real world political landscapes constantly shifted throughout his drafting period. The real life election race provided new plot twists and inspirations on a weekly basis.

With a first draft swiftly finished in May, Luke began his hectic process of real-time redrafting. Fresh drafts were produced weekly until late August, just in time for its September release.

An independent radio DJ battling a figure backed by the mass media is the perfect plot to discuss the nature of our media. *Axel* tackles the rise of independent journalism and blogging culture against an increasingly unreliable mass media that seems intent on distributing negativity and fear mongering. These themes tie in well with Luke's passion for conspiracy theories, with the book championing some popular theories whilst challenging others. Luke describes his mix of comedy and conspiracy as a new genre – *Sitcomspiracy*.

In an effort to capture the political zeitgeist, almost no stone was left unturned in Luke's intense restructuring of plot. The advent of Brexit inclined him to give his characters differing opinions on the referendum too, yet the choice was made to avoid more raw subject matter that wasn't appropriate for a comedy, like ISIS or recent incidents of police violence.

An intense look at the absurdity of politics, *Axel America* jokingly asks; who is really in charge?

**Caimin O'Shea**

*Released 5 September through Fermanagh based AG Publishings, Axel America is available in ebook format from Amazon and Smashwords priced £3.99, or paperback from Belfast based stores The Thinking Cup and No Alibis bookstore priced £9.99.*