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Style

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BOOK WORLD

The area between space and time

Michael Dirda reviews Kathleen Ann Goonan's science fiction novel "This Shared Dream," which imagines U.S. history took a different turn in 1963. **C3**



“It's not an expose. It's just my story, and I wanted to tell it.” — Catherine Crozier, onetime assistant to Jack Kent Cooke. **C2** ▶

MOVIES

Subject-matter jurisdiction

Kathryn Bigelow's Osama bin Laden film draws concern from Rep. Peter King. **C3**

CAROLYN HAX

Getting help doesn't mean you've failed

Feeling anxious and stressed out? There's nothing wrong with going to see a professional. **C4**



LIVE TODAY @ washingtonpost.com/conversations The Going Out Gurus discuss ideas for local entertainment 1 p.m. • Jen Chaney gives you the rundown on Hollywood 2 p.m.

Swashbuckler of yore returns from fog of hacking crisis

Media mogul Murdoch holds forth with Wall Street analysts, media

BY PAUL FARHI

What a difference three weeks make. Media tycoon Rupert Murdoch met Wall Street analysts and the press via conference call Wednesday for the first time since appearing before a committee of the British Parliament on July 19 to

Capitol ill

Bickering, dithering Congress isn't looking too good in public's eyes

TOUGH CROWD: The U.S. public has rated the following higher than it now rates Congress:

BY ROSALIND S. HELDERMAN AND PEYTON M. CRAIGHILL

NO, SERIOUSLY: There's been more faith in the following than there is in lawmakers now:

Cloning sheep. Cloning humans, even. Caning teen vandals. Believing that aliens have descended from space and abducted humans. These are all things that, at one time or another, have enjoyed more public backing than Congress is getting right now.

Even President George W. Bush, at his lowest of lows during the 2008 financial crisis, was more popular than



BOOK WORLD

Beltway time bandits set history on a new course in 'This Shared Dream'

BY MICHAEL DIRDA

Many people are convinced that Washingtonians — or at least those who work for the federal government — don't actually live on the same planet as the rest of the country. Kathleen Ann Goonan's "This Shared Dream" suggests that this view is almost right. This excellent science fiction novel is part "Inception," part "Back to the Future," part "Jumanji" — and it takes place almost entirely in Washington and Northern Virginia.

When the novel opens in 1991, Sam Dance, an engineer, and his wife, Bette, a Montessori teacher, have been missing for a long time. First Bette simply vanished in 1963; then, more than a decade later, Sam did the same. No one knows why they disappeared or whether they are alive or dead.



THIS SHARED DREAM

By Kathleen Ann Goonan
Tor. 367 pp., \$25.99



ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/AP

YEARS IN THE MAKING: Kathryn Bigelow and Mark Boal working on a film about the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

For security official, movie about bin Laden is a threat

BY JASON UKMAN

In a town that runs on access, Hollywood filmmakers get it, too — and that apparently has the chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security concerned about what kind of access the Obama administration has provided to filmmaker Kathryn Bigelow, who is making a movie about the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal, the award-winning team behind "The Hurt Locker," have been developing a project on the search for bin Laden since 2008. Boal is a former magazine journalist who spent time with U.S. forces in Iraq and has extensive contacts in the military. The movie is about the decade-long "black ops" effort to capture or kill the al-Qaeda leader.

In a statement Wednesday

Boal, but he insisted that they were not provided with classified information.

A spokesman for the National Security Council said King's claim's "ridiculous."

"When people write articles, books, documentaries or movies that involve the government, we do not ask to speak to the officials, we do not ask to accommodate them. We want to ensure the facts are correct. It's hardly a novel approach in media," said the spokesman. Tommy Vietor, a former House Committee on Homeland Security would have discussed important topics to discuss the threat from terrorism. King's concerns follow a series of investigative reports about the killing of the al-Qaeda leader. Most recently, the New York Times published a long

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The couple did leave behind a rambling old house, with a perennial trust set up for its maintenance and care. They also left behind three now grown children, Jill, Brian and Megan, who have been more or less scarred by the mysteries surrounding their parents' lives and their own childhoods.

Rumor has it, for instance, that Bette may have been an elite OSS spy in Europe during the 1930s and '40s. Sam definitely served in World War II with his friend Wink, and the two seem to have been involved with research into a force more powerful than atomic fission. A device harnessing this mysterious energy has even been envisioned by the enigmatic Eliani Hadntz, a brilliant physicist (and physician) who believes that the world could be made more humane through the right kind of early childhood imprinting and the reinforcement of empathy in people's brain chemistries.

In the first chapter of "This Shared Dream," the 41-year-old Jill Dance is just finishing her last class as a PhD candidate in political science at Georgetown University. Though generally a superb student, she occasionally makes strange errors, once hurriedly writing in a paper that John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Which, of course, isn't true. "Kennedy had not been assassinated," she recalls, when confronted about it. "Not here. He was an international statesman, a celebrity, the father of the space program, as well as the father of several children born to women not married to him."

By the novel's second chapter, Jill has been incarcerated in St.



DUNBAR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL BY JAMI CHIKWENDIU/THE WASHINGTON POST; UPTOWN THEATER BY MARIO TAMA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; METRO CENTER STATION BY LINDA DAVIDSON/THE WASHINGTON POST

"Washington readers will get an extra kick out of Goonan's familiarity with our fair city (where she grew up). Major characters attend Dunbar High School, the Dances go to the movies at the Uptown Theater, people ride the right Metro lines, and Jill operates Serendipity Books (in the novel moved from Fairfax to near Key Bridge)."

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In a statement Wednesday, Rep. Peter T. King (R-N.Y.) called on the Pentagon and the CIA to investigate, saying he was worried about the possibility that classified information was leaked to Bigelow and representatives of Sony Pictures, which has acquired distribution rights to the movie.

"The Administration's first duty in declassifying material is to provide full reporting to Congress and the American people in an effort to build public trust through transparency of government," King said. "In contrast, this alleged collaboration belies a desire of transparency in favor of a cinematographic view of history."

Officials Wednesday reacted to King's call for an investigation with bemusement, arguing that the congressman indicated that his concern was sparked in part by New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd. In a column on Sunday, Dowd wrote that the "moviemakers are getting top-level access to the most classified mission in history."

King also cited reports that Bigelow had attended a CIA ceremony in honor of the team that carried out the raid. A representative for Bigelow said the reports were false.

At the Pentagon, Marine Col. David Lapan said officials provided assistance to Bigelow and

cuss classified information. Boal hopes that as we find out more about the threat from terrorism, the House Committee on Homeland Security would discuss important topics to King's concerns. The priority of investigative journalism is the killing of the al-Qaeda leader. Most recently, the New York Times published a reconstruction of bin Laden's capture in Pakistan. Military and intelligence officials have soured on the unavailability of information. King said the administration doesn't have a good record when it comes to tight hold on information about the raid. "To find there's a leak, you're digging out and there's a connection with Hollywood. Considering the track record over the last 90 days, I'm not sure King said in an interview. Production of the movie was supposed to start later this summer, shortly before the 2012 elections. In a statement, Boal said their film would do the works for many years. It integrates the collection of three administrations, including those of Clinton, Bush, and Obama, as well as the cooperation of the agencies and implementation of the Department of Defense and Central Intelligence Agency. "This was an American triumph, both heroic and partisan," they said. "There is no basis to suggest the film will represent a famous victory other than the victory of the American people." ukmanj@

CHANEL

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By the novel's second chapter, Jill has been incarcerated in St. Elizabeths for probable schizophrenia. In reality, she secretly bears a horrible burden: Twenty years earlier she destroyed an entire world, and possibly her parents as well.

"This Shared Dream" is a sequel to Goonan's "In War Times" (2007), winner of the John W. Campbell Award, and fans of that earlier book will know immediately what's going on. But the skillful Goonan offers enough hints to bring new readers quickly up to speed. It's not giving away anything to reveal that a Hadntz Device was developed, and that it can morph into multiple shapes, transmit molecular agents that affect the brain's empathy centers and somehow be used to navigate time streams. Only a very few people are aware of its existence and capabilities, among them Sam and Bette Dance. They also know that, at times, history reaches a kind of temporal crossroads, a highly charged nexus, and Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas was one.

Unknowingly exposed to Hadntz material since childhood, flower child Jill once, and once only, was able to travel back in time, leaving a violence-racked 1970 to return to 1963 with the aim of preventing Kennedy's assassination. Far more happens that day in Dallas than the young woman quite realizes, yet the world is nonetheless changed: In this new

Goonan's familiarity with our fair city (where she grew up). Major characters attend Dunbar High School, the Dances go to the movies at the Uptown Theater, people ride the right Metro lines, and Jill operates Serendipity Books (in the novel moved from Fairfax to near Key Bridge)."

time stream, her brother, Brian, won't be killed in Vietnam, the Middle East won't erupt in bloodshed, and the distinguished senior statesman Martin Luther King Jr. will be in line to become head of the United Nations. Moreover, computers will develop more quickly, and each person will soon rely on his or her own Q, a sophisticated combination of laptop and communicator — and perhaps something more.

All this would seem much to the good, except that Jill can never let on that the world was once different or that part of her misses that world profoundly, even as she must live with the guilt that her actions in Dallas caused her parents somehow to be eradicated from history or lost in time. Or so she thinks.

"This Shared Dream" is just getting started, as it shifts smoothly among the viewpoints of Jill; the jazz-loving, former-alcoholic Brian; and their sister, Megan, an expert on memory. It soon becomes clear, though, that certain individuals, perhaps within our own government, have learned about the existence and capacities of the Hadntz Device. Some secret, moreover, lies hidden somewhere in the old Dance residence, Halcyon House, perhaps in its library or jazz record collection, perhaps among the childhood games in the attic. The

unknown enemies also realize that history has been changed once and, with the power of the Device, could be changed again, perhaps directed down a path to a triumphantly revived Third Reich. To thwart a nexus-changing threat to the world and to those she loves, a desperate time-hopping Bette reemerges in the new 1991. Once there, she dares not reveal herself until she nullifies the dangers swirling around her children. But where is Sam?

Readers of science fiction will recognize some of the elements upon which Goonan draws, in particular the long tradition of time-travel stories and alternate histories, not to overlook those popular novels about secret adepts who manipulate history and run the world. But Goonan doesn't crank out adventure pulp. While she keeps the reader guessing about all sorts of riddles, she is just as interested in depicting family happiness, the romance of our childhoods. As a result, she writes beautifully about comic books, board games, make-believe in the backyard, drawing pictures with colored pencils, playing musical instruments, family picnics. At the same time, however, in this novel none of these familiar activities are wholly innocent. For instance, those toy astronauts called Spacies seem to have appeared

quite suddenly on the market and spread all around the world, while the young Jill's comic-book heroine Gypsy Myra clearly resembles Eliani Hadntz.

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While "This Shared Dream" is plenty exciting and expertly paced, there's a quietness, a gentleness, throughout. Its characters talk far more than they act. They aren't just action figures; they're real people, damaged yet striving, and we come to care deeply about them. Such is the power of art — the real, not imaginary, empathy-creating device. Living up to its title, "This Shared Dream" is ultimately a novel about connectedness, in every sense, and the possibility of greater harmony in what used to be called the family of man. Little wonder that Goonan's overarching metaphor for earthly felicity is improvisational jazz, the true music of the spheres.

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Dirda reviews books for The Post every Thursday. Join his discussion at wapo.st/reading-room.

that carried out the raid. A representative for Bigelow said the reports were false.

At the Pentagon, Marine Col. David Lapan said officials provided assistance to Bigelow and

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