



Circumference of Darkness

Jack Henderson

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This electrifying debut thriller delivers a gripping tale of Big Brother gone mad amid a modern world on the verge of endless war. Brimming with high-powered suspense, here is the brilliant, frighteningly believable story of three masterminds locked on a breathtaking collision course—the outcome of which will determine the fate of the United States.

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Twenty-two-year-old Jeannie Reese is a computer wunderkind—and the top architect of next-generation security for the Department of Defense. Her latest brainchild is IRIN, the most powerful surveillance technology ever developed. To date, IRIN has remained ultraclassified and inactive. But on the day a shocking act of terrorism strikes U.S. shores, the presidential order comes to launch Jeannie's creation against the dark forces behind the attack.

Known only as Phr33k, forty-one-year-old John Fagan is a legendary, reclusive computer hacker. For years he has expertly hidden himself while operating freely within the shadows of the Internet's background noise. He has remained in complete seclusion despite his infamy as the author of a slew of massive electronic crimes—and despite his long-ago, now eerily prophetic, scenarios of terrorist warfare against America.

Under Jeannie's direction, IRIN gathers and analyzes endless data—and unearths Phr33k. If she is to stop the next stage of a terror campaign clearly begun years before, Jeannie will have to find the überhacker; but that is only the beginning. For she soon discovers that Phr33k is being held by the leader of a vast terrorist network, who now plans to use this unique genius to conceive and deliver his final, fatal blow: a devastating nationwide wave of unparalleled destruction.

For his part, Phr33k is used to working alone. But all that will have to change.

He has a new challenge, one unlike any he's faced before: how to provide Jeannie Reese with one outrageous, impossible shot to short-circuit the perfect, unstoppable scheme he so masterfully—and so unwillingly—helped to create.

From the Hardcover edition.

Circumference of Darkness Details

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Author : Jack Henderson

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George says

Amazing thriller debut from Jack Henderson, this story roughly follows the premise set up by John Carlin in his famous 1997 article "A Farewell to Arms", which was since also adapted by the Die Hard franchise (Live Free or Die Hard).

The book is exceedingly entertaining and despite being on the longer side given the genre, it's impossible to put down. There is only one downside and that's the fairly black & white portrayal of the main characters but otherwise it's well researched and stays close to reality, making it a bit scarier - especially if you're familiar with the topic.

Dj says

An excellent read.very fast moving and great for a techie like me :)

Slightly dated in a few technical details but fun nevertheless.

The ending feels a bit contrived but the overall plot is superb.

Best part was that I had mailed Jack about a quote he used in the book and he actually mailed me back in a day. Now that's taking care of your fans :)

highly recommended if you love fast moving action thrillers

DJ

Alex Murphy says

Is the sexy/super-genius early twenties that is super tough yet virginal/sexually naive a trope? Because I've read examples of this character in at least three books other than this one. And did she have to become attracted to an overweight nerd old enough to be her dad? Especially less than 3 days after her boyfriend was killed, in a suicide mission to rescue said nerd. Its just that you wouldn't have it the other way round would you. Either a handsome fit young man attracted to a fat 50-ish women. Or a Sheldon from Big Bang theory getting it off with an Angelina Jolie type so why is OK the other way round? Sorry to go on but it really bothered me for some reason. Perhaps because her boyfriend professed his love in his last message and went ahead with the mission knowing he would die.

Main plot wise, OK I guess. The idea that 9/11 was inspired by internet chatter in the early 90's and a 'super' terrorist attack is planned by a coalition of terror groups, and a bunch of hackers and a US agent have to work together to stop it, especially the CGI fake news reports. The book starts of well, but drags in the middle and the ending seems a bit messy. Things prop up like Jeannie (super sexy agent) was a result of her parents selecting the best sperm and egg donors for some kind of super genius and taken to work for government when she is about 10, comes up and is forgotten as for some reason she was sexually abused by her dad seems just thrown in. As is the main hacker genius John Fagan (fat 50 nerd) being bullied by his dad, that made him able to stand up to torture, oh and reading about it. I bet Navy Seals and the SAS are taught to resist torture by a reading about it. As a action thriller is your thing it you might like it, but there are much better reads.

Zuki says

good fast nerdy book to read. couldnt put it down.

Peter says

Really exciting book, centred on a couple of super-brainy geeks, some crazy computer programs, lots of action, and a plot for overthrowing the government. What's not to like? :)

There are various techie references thrown into the narrative which I appreciated, although I did note a few minor mistakes. (How many compilers create a Windows executable which contain the text of source code comments, for example?) The mistakes were not a big deal at all though.

For me, Henderson's writing style is easy and enjoyable to engage with, and the characters are expressed very well. I felt myself relating to them and building up a real sense of who they were.

A great read for geeks, nerds, and anybody who likes a bit of action and intrigue.

Sandra says

A great first novel by Jack Henderson that was full of action, surprises and romance. There were a lot of details in the book that probably took the author a lot of time to research and figure out. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys thrillers with twists and turns, a book that you cannot put down until you are finished with it.

Tara says

I don't read a lot of thrillers, so I'm not sure what's average for the genre, but this seemed like it qualifies. there's a good amount of technical jargon in it, it took a solid 100 pages to get into the story. the action was great, the relationships, not so much. I get tired of the brilliant and unbelievably attractive female character. plus there were some convenient writing ploys used to open up relationships. but there were conversations that made me laugh, so bonus points for that.

Normalene says

Shades of "Wag the Dog"! I loved the characters and the plot in this story. Home-grown terrorists are just as crazy as foreign-born terrorists and just as dangerous. I loved the computer interaction and Kate's persona was spot on for an AI. There is room for more in this world so I hope I get to read them.

Heather says

this is a solid little thriller. it's getting hard for me to give those above 3 stars anymore since the genre tends to be fairly derivative. but for a present-day, political intrigue and zealot-happy book, this was pretty good. i enjoyed the tie-in to real terrorist events, and the book has pretty strong character development considering the genre, as well.

that leads to one of the few downsides, such as they are. even as they were slightly different, the characters all felt cliched, in a way: intelligent, misunderstood girl; intelligent, misunderstood guy; gay sidekick; masculine, sacrificial lamb. the only good part i can say about all that is there was no one hero, and one of the hero-types dies.

the first 50 pages are so are somewhat uneven overall. in fact, my only other complaint was the penchant for monologuing. it happens early on, then a few more times. but overall, the writing is fairly tight, and the plot turns kept me turning. :)

Bookworm(Jack) says

If you like "24", you will definitely like this quick,explosive reading. There is no dull moment in this suspenseful book. Hope you all like it. Personal suggestion, read it at the cold miserable rainy night so you will be wrapped in a heat of the greatest adventure.

Tory Wagner says

Circumference of Darkness by Jack Henderson is a real page turner that will keep you engaged until the end. It is based on events of the September 11th terrorist attack in NYC, with some amazing fictional additions. There is a heavy dose of Big Brother watching you and an incredible cast of characters, many of whom are cyber wunderkinds. Enjoy the ride!

Carl says

Gripping thriller. I loved the tie-ins with computer technology and the mad rants of the ultra right religious fanatic.I remember Clancy's scenario where a plane hits the Pentagon and takes out enough people to wherein his protagonist becomes Prez.
This book also stirs memories of De Mille's Wildfire.

Ruth Ann says

Conspiracy theory plot - I liked how he weaved a wild scenario around 9/11 and it's (heretofore unknown) aftermath.
Tech jargon - Of course it's all computer/internet/AI programs and the jargon gets a little overwhelming

sometimes.

Character development - The main two characters I liked, but the development was somewhat forced and awkward. Romance was awkward, but that kind of fit their personalities...

Continuity - abrupt leaps in POV and time that were confusing

Overall - for a debut novel, this was pretty good. As a thriller, up until the climax, there were only small bits of action and suspense.

Kieran Delaney says

Jack Henderson wrote a book, about one of the most iconic terrorist attacks in history, and bastardised it into fiction whilst shoe-horning liberal doses of paranoia and conspiracy into a tight plot and slightly obscured attack on American foreign policy. Probably not surprising then that no publisher would touch it, even in a country that prides itself on freedom of speech.

So Henderson self published it - on the internet. Long story short, the book was so phenomenally successful in its relatively tiny format that someone sat up and took notice - leading to the eventual publishing of the novel in actual paper and ink format.

And its a cracking book - split roughly into three (no not the start, middle and end smartass) the book takes place over weeks, and feels like it takes place in hours. The cover suggests its like "24 meets Tom Clancy" and whilst it maintains the pace and tension eponymous of 24 there are no stand Clancy plot devices here - the novel lurches unpredictably from start to finish.

A book that's easy to pick up and impossible to put down, Maximum Impact is a great book and better than 90% of the paperbacks in the bestseller charts that didn't need to struggle anywhere near as much to get published.

Keith says

brilliant thriller
