

Disruption

Chuck Barrett

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For fans of Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum, Disruption is an absolute yes.

Things that thriller novels are not: politically correct. Things that thriller novels are: fast-paced, sweat-inducing, heart-pumping. *Disruption*, the latest shot of adrenaline from best-selling author Chuck Barrett, gets top marks in both categories. *Disruption* is true to its genre and delivers a satisfying punch.

Disruption is set in the immediate future: an age when cyberterrorists network on Twitter, ditch traceable IP addresses, and take down government tech support with the click of a button. Black-hat and white-hat hackers battle for control over an underworld that trades code the way cartels swap bricks of cocaine. Jake Pendleton, a former naval-intelligence officer turned secret operative, turns up in time to penetrate the mysterious world of cybercrime.

Having saved the day in Barrett's earlier novels *Breach of Power*, *The Toymaker*, and *The Savannah Project*, Jake is already warmed up and ready to roll. Assisted by his predictably lovely partner Francesca Cataranzo, Jake heads for Italy to track down a hacker named The Jew. Racial stereotypes abound: there seems to be a swarthy terrorist, a ruthless mercenary, and a pinkie-ring-wearing kingpin on every page. However, Barrett sticks with the facts, and while the plot twists may be a bit predictable, that doesn't diminish the speed of this page-turner one bit.

Barrett's descriptions of how programming works at the cyber level are compelling and clear, detailed enough to create tension but not overly technical—as with the Collar, a neotech torture device, “a ring of prongs capable of delivering an electric shock to the host [with] an explosive compound “ inside. With a master's touch, Barrett leaves lit fuses in every chapter, building to an explosive conclusion.

Though the novel may not break new ground, it is current and extremely provocative in a post-9/11 culture where technology and tech crime are hard facts in our increasingly paranoid world. For fans of Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum, *Disruption* is an absolute yes.

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