



Quantico

Greg Bear

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It's the second decade of the twenty-first century, and terrorism has escalated almost beyond control. New weapons are being spawned in remote basement labs, and no one feels safe. In North America, the FBI uses cutting-edge technology to thwart domestic terrorists. The War on Terror has reached a deadly stalemate. The FBI has been dispatched to deal with a new menace. Like the Anthrax threat of 2001, a plague targeted to ethnic groups has the potential to wipe out entire populations. But the FBI itself is under political assault. There's a good chance that agents William Griffin, Fouad Al-Husam, and Jane Rowland will be part of the last class at Quantico. As the young agents hunt a brilliant homegrown terrorist, they join forces with veteran bio-terror expert Rebecca Rose. But the plot they uncover-and the man they chase-prove far more complex than anyone expects.

Quantico Details

Date : Published April 17th 2007 by Vanguard Press

ISBN : 9781593154455

Author : Greg Bear

Format : Hardcover 326 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery

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Ben says

This book was FANTASTIC. What if Homeland Security was 1/2 of our military, what if we never left Iraq, written by a master of science fiction. Solid.

D. B. says

Greg Bear is a giant in the circles of pre-millennial "hard" science fiction. His previous books have dealt scientifically with time travel, interstellar war, and the destruction of the Earth. With *Quantico*, he takes the William Gibson approach and sets the story in the not-so-distant future; in fact, the world in the book isn't much different from our own in the present.

The premise of a post-9/11 future still wracked by terrorism is as far removed from the comfort zone of sci-fi that one hesitates to keep this book within that genre. A few of the futuristic conceits, like remote disabling of vehicles and pocket-sized substance analysis devices, are either already in play or are in development today; so the usual sci-fi separation of our time from a future time by way of advanced technology simply isn't there. Overall, the storyline comes across as any other crime-thriller novel on the shelf, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Bear is strong when it comes to making ridiculous astrophysics shit make sense, but he also draws fairly intricate and deep characters, and the FBI agents he creates for *Quantico* are no exception.

The story itself, about planning and quashing a bioterror attack in the Middle East, reminded me a lot of Frank Herbert's *The White Plague*; not just for the germ warfare angle, but also because the primary antagonist's personality splinters along the way to the point where he doesn't know what he's doing the attack for or why.

One of the more interesting things about reading a book like this, where the author is writing more or less out of their natural element, is that with the veneer of their customary genre stripped away, you can examine their writing style in the raw. Imagine if other, more commercial authors tried the same thing; would their audiences remain loyal?

Alex says

Sad to say, I enjoyed this book the least of any of Bear's, and I've read nearly everything he's written.

I've had trouble with some of his previous works, not being able to find a character I liked, but in those the stories carried me past it. In this one I never could. The overall premise and twist is interesting, but not worth the time investment to get to.

Greg Bear is one of my favourite authors, so it pains me to give a bad review. This one's a miss.

Michael says

My first experience with Bear's non-genre fiction, *Vitals*, was pretty negative. *Quantico* was a lot better. According to Bear, *Quantico* (a near-future thriller) is the first part of a lead-in to his SF sequence that began with *Queen of Angels* - a great novel. The connections aren't obvious here, but apparently the subsequent book, *Mariposa*, makes the connections much more obvious.

I don't read thrillers often because I don't find them to be particularly good stories. The characters here aren't well-written but the bioterrorism story is enjoyable.

Kelly says

A very scary story. Too close to reality to be a comfortable read.

Jackie says

Newly minted FBI agents from training facility *Quantico*, William Griffin, Fouad Al-Husain, and Jane Rowland are almost instantly involved in the hunt for a terrorist using biological warfare. An anthrax-like substance has been found that doesn't necessarily kill, but robs people of their memories. They seem to be in the throws of dementia.

As the hunt takes them all over the world...Turkey, Iran, Israel, they are unaware, at first, that it is one of their own, an American terrorist who has some grievances to settle, that is ultimately behind the attack.

Quantico will scare you out of your mind, hoping that something like this will never happen. Yet it is full of scientific passages that are confusing to a non-scientific person. And, the ending is unfathomably disappointing and wraps up much too quickly. Not really a fan of this story.

Andrew says

well It has been some times since I have read any new Greg Bear (and I will admit I have no idea why this book was already listed as read) but it brought back quite a few memories. The first is that I forgot how much I enjoyed his work - even though it does not necessarily sit well with others. I still think *Blood Music* is a great book although I know options are divided.

Then there is the other side of to his work. Greg Bear to me is a hard science fiction writer and as such does like to cite a lot of possible or near possible technology. Now this might be the reason for some peoples dislike of his work for me, however had worked in and along side similar technology the "what if.." questions posed are all too plausible. And that for me mixed with the human element makes for a very potent and chilling story.

Yes the action is slow to start with, with a lot of disconnected narratives running along side each other where you think what the connection is - but it is not till the later stages do you actually realise what is going on. I

particularly like how more connections are exposed in the book which take a tenuous link and make it realistic and plausible.

Greg Bear is to me a great story teller and apart from his habit of occasionally over explaining the science present (which at times is neither needed or even welcome) he is able to take a story and make it both fantastic and credible at the same time.

Kim says

Initial thoughts: Really poorly written thus far. Hanging on just to see if things improve in the next 10-20 pages. I really should try to remember the Greg Bear Rule - half his stuff is amazing writing, half is just junk.

18 July 2008: I actually gave the book 50 more pages and it just kept getting more predictable and less interesting. This book reminded me a lot of *Blood Music* (an earlier Greg Bear book), which wasn't bad as a short story but that I really disliked as a full novel. *Quantico* had a lot of potential, but was too wordy, had too many competing storylines, and failed to capture my interest.

Topher says

I normally like Greg Bear. This one was just a little too depressing.

Amy "the book-bat" says

3.5 stars for me

Mark says

I read this book on vacation. It's a mindless read, in that you don't have to think a whole bunch. I was not overly impressed with the writing or the plot.

NeilWill says

Quantico by Greg Bear is a near future bio-terror technothriller from an author perhaps better known for his hard science fiction. It is unrelated to the TV show of the same name, other than the fact the FBI academy is within the Marine Training base of Quantico.

It starts with some unlikely clues, and some FBI trainees, and some long hidden terrorists. It becomes about anthrax, and then something stranger, and an attack on the world's major religions.

Bear's plotting is sparse for a techno thriller, requiring you to pay attention to keep up; hints about the

political situation in Washington and around the world come into sharp focus to frame the final confrontation.

Read This: For clever and interesting near future thrills.

Don't Read This: If you prefer things clear rather than the murky, shades of grey, hidden clues and hints this book prefers.

Charl says

A scarily plausible terrorist scenario that will be possible in the near future if it's not already.

Juan Arellano says

A pesar de q Bear es más conocido como autor de género (CF) esta novela no salió en una colección de CF. De hecho está ambientada en un futuro muy cercano, y es más un thriller q otra cosa. Es un poco previsible, y muy "estadounidense", aunque ya puestos en lo de thriller hubiera preferido más acción. Es decir, te pinta un peligro terrible, y luego no pasa casi nada de lo previsto, todo para que se luzcan los buenos gringos. Lo más bajo que he leido de Bear... pero no por eso se deja de leer de un tirón.

Azriel says

Knowing the author's penchant for hard Sci-fi, (despite this being my first novel by him), I was pleasantly surprised by the techno-thriller aspect of the book, feeling both realistic (taking place in what is now 2-4 years ago) and frighteningly fantastic (as some of the vividly described technology has yet to enter use. One strong point that was unexpected was the dialogue, which was especially vibrant in the excellent voicing of the audiobook version I heard. The setpeices are exciting, and the ending feels like a climax of a level of Black Ops II (complete with drones and orbital mass drivers). This is hard Sci-fi for a Clancy fan.
