



## **Fly by Night**

*Ward Larsen*

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## **Fly by Night** Ward Larsen

A top-secret drone crashes in the lawless Horn of Africa. The CIA is prepared to write off the loss, until evidence surfaces that the wreckage of their prized aircraft is hidden in a hangar outside Khartoum's main airport. The hangar is owned by a shady cargo airline that flies ancient DC-3s across Africa and the Middle East. The name of the company does nothing to still concern: FBN-Fly by Night Aviation. The U.S. government must find out what is in the hangar, and when an FBN airplane crashes, the opportunity arises for the National Transportation Safety Board to send an investigator to get to the bottom of things. Jammer Davis is the NTSB's biggest headache, but also its best solo operator. He goes to Sudan in the name of solving an air crash, but with the true aim of locating the priceless remains of America's latest technological marvel. As Davis enters this inhospitable world, he finds the two disparate mysteries strangely intertwined. True to his nature, Davis barges ahead. Yet everything he finds takes him in reverse.

## **Fly by Night Details**

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Author : Ward Larsen

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# From Reader Review Fly by Night for online ebook

## Janet Lynch says

Didn't enjoy this one anywhere near as much as the first and third books in the series. It was hard to get into and too technical at times. The setting in Sudan didn't interest me and Jammer Davis seemed to make one bad decision after another.

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## Charlene Intriago says

I always like these "thriller" books - a US drone goes down in Africa, falls into the wrong hands, and of course a hero has to come along to save the day. It helps if he's a little bit of a maverick - makes him and the story all the more interesting. I did check out a map of Sudan to see exactly where I was while reading this book and some pictures online of the vintage DC-3 airplane. It made me appreciate everything our hero had to go through.

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## Susan C Stafford says

### Great adventure story

As I began to read, my first impression was that this was like a high-end adventure film. It started with an opening scene, then (after normally credits would have rolled) switched to the hero playing rugby. It is here that the hero receives his mission and the story takes off. It's a good story and I was impressed by the authors ability to develop characters, build the narrative, and set scenes. There were times when I felt like I was sitting in a bar with a bunch of pilots of no specific allegiance, who were telling me about Jammer Davis and his exploits. Put my strongest impression was that this was an author who knew how to take care of his readers. There is enough explanation to keep those of us who are not pilots clued in to the story. Some characters are drawn with quick strong brushstrokes, so I know exactly what they're like without a great deal of explanation. Others are developed over the course of the book, so I get to know them gradually but thoroughly. Quick explanations are provided about the things I might not know, without making me feel talked down to or taking away from the narrative. There's plenty of action without getting too gory, and a little romance, but not a lot of sex. This is the second book in the series, yet I was able to enjoy the story without having read the first book. It's always a good feeling to be in the hands of an author who knows how to tell a story and knows how to take care of his readers. If you like adventure, mystery, and well-crafted stories, you will love this book.

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## Wayne says

Another 3 1/2\* for a Jammer Davis novel. That's just between an "I liked it" and "I really liked it". As with Fly by Wire (Ward Larsen's 1st Jammer Davis novel, Fly By Nite takes the reader on a trip to the Horn of Africa where Jammer has been sent to investigate the disappearance of a high-tech US drone. Jammer is a 'devil may care' sort of guy and a top notch investigator for the NTSB and often for the CIA.

While in Africa he gets involved with a shady cargo airline company called FBN....thus the title. He runs into an old nemesis who flies one of their planes, stays at their air-strip, and discovers all sorts of strange things. As in the first Jammer Davis novel, he also gets involved with a gal who, in this case, is a doctor caring for the down and out in Sudan. One can't help liking Jammer and his unorthodox ways. This is another exciting aviation novel.

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## **Robert Carraher says**

"Jammer" Davis is to detectives what bulls are to china closets. As he explains it, "I am more of a nuisance than a detective. But I get results." And that he does. Hidden inside this techno thriller is a mystery novel, and it succeeds as both.

The CIA has lost one of its top secret, latest generation drones, Blackstar, somewhere in the vicinity of the Horn Of Africa. It is assumed destroyed upon crashing, and it may have even gone down in the Red Sea, so no worries...until a "source" in Sudan gets word out that it may just be hidden inside a secretive hanger on the edge of a desert airport operated by an upstart third world air cargo company, Franklin, Bates and Noble; FBN. FBN is indeed a Fly By Night aviation company, hiding behind an international consortium of owners and named after a law firm that has a bad reputation for representing dubious clients, many of Arab descent.

Neither the airport, or FBN existed until a few months ago, so for a company flying ancient DC-3s as cargo aircraft around Africa and supplying arms to rebels and dictators alike to maintain a secret hanger is a bit suspicious. To cement that suspicion, the airline is headed up by an Islamic cleric named Rafiq Khoury. In what sounds too convenient, FBN recently reported one of their DC-3s crashed, and as part of an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) crash investigation, the CIA has manipulated the job to get an NTSB investigator sent in to investigate the cause of the crash.

This 'deus ex machina' could have been a flaw in the writers craft, but Larsen handles it the way he handled fighter jets in real life. Khoury called for an investigation in fear that someone may have actually seen the DC-3 go down, and he expected Sudan's own Air Safety investigators to handle the investigation and pencil whip it. He didn't expect that it would get kicked upstairs to the world body, ICAO, and certainly not that they would have the temerity to assign the job to the hated American's and the NTSB.

This is where Jammer comes in. A maverick ex-fighter jock, who flew numerous missions in Desert Storm, and was a better pilot than Airman - no respect for bull@#\$%^ from his superiors, he recently worked for the NTSB as a chief air crash investigator. Better yet, he has a reputation of charging ahead and getting the job done. The CIA asks Davis' old Air Force buddy to recruit Davis to go to Sudan and under the guise of investigating the crash of a 70 year old DC-3, and determine clandestinely whether Blackstar has been recovered by this cleric. But Davis's thinks Clandestine is something you light in church, he's about as secretive and covert as a tarantula on an angel food cake.

Davis is officially retired from both the Air Force and the NTSB, and is dealing with the recent death of his wife in a car crash, as well as a teenage daughter who has grown distant from him following the loss of her mother, and is currently attending school in Europe. Davis takes the job.

As soon as he lands in Khartoum, the action begins when he is waylaid by some Sudanese highway robbers who end up biting off more than they can chew in the 6'4" 230 plus pound Davis. And when he arrives at the airport run by FBN, he is greeted by their chief pilot, Bob Schmidt, an ex fighter jock himself whose

irresponsibility led him to a dishonorable discharge from the Air Force, brought about by Davis' condemning report. Needless to say, no love loss between Schmidt-head and Jammer.

What follows is a top notch mystery, cloaked in a techno thriller, as immediately Davis discovers that, as suspected FBN flies arms, drugs, and black market diamonds as well as UN Humanitarian supplies to NGOs. After all, this is the horn of Africa where there is no effective governments but there are plenty of buyers for all of the above.

Davis is there investigating the DC-3 crash only as a cover for finding out what happens in the closely guarded hanger, and whether or not some extremist faction, or dubious private army has recovered the high tech and stealthy Blackstar. But Davis can't leave the DC-3 crash alone. Things don't add up. For instance, why did FBN even report the crash in the first place, and further, why did they apparently report one plane crashed, that Davis discovers is actually still being used, but in disguise of another DC-3. To add to the masterfully wrought tension of the story, Davis develops a yen for an Italian aid doctor and his sparring match with Schmidt is nonstop. His side trips to avenge the beating of the Italian doctor and one of her African aids, gets him on the wrong side of the Sudanese army as well.

Davis follows the clues, like a bull following a red cape, from the top of the worlds highest pyramid (which he nearly wipes out) to the depths of the Red Sea, the whole time thoroughly pissing off everybody that gets in his way.

The book is very story driven through the use of the mystery wrapped in the thriller, and fans of Clancy and Coonts will love it, as Larsen writes tighter prose than Clancy and doesn't befuddle the reader with technology like Coonts. The characters are well developed, if a bit predictable and light-weight at first glance. But in the end they turn out to, not quite, live up to the expected stereotypes, and consequently leave the reader very satisfied and hoping to read more of the in future adventures. The plot is excellently conceived, and includes very pertinent subject matter, including a peripheral reference and `setup' to the recent events of the Arab Spring revolts.

The sense of place, the lawless horn of Africa, is almost a cliché, but he avoids cliché and goes deeper to explore the heart and soul and motivations of the real people, not the view point the reader would have by only listening to the popular press.

It all adds up to a very good read, and one the reader is likely going to want to revisit time and time again. If Ward Larsen isn't already considered in the top tier of thriller writers today, he is grabbing shirt tails, a la Jammer Davis, and throwing others off the ladder as he reaches the top.

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## Eric says

3 shakey stars

This book was about a 2.5 read until the last 25% of the book. I found the idea behind the main plot sort of lame. The characters are good. *Fly By Night* is not as nearly as good of a book as the first one. Still this book has its high points and was fairly entertaining.

The CIA's top secret drone crashes in the eastern Sahara Desert and winds up in the hands of some Sudanese

radicals. An airplane crash coincidentally happens shortly afterwards. Sudan doesn't have governmental agency to investigate plane crashes and relies on other countries to investigate, usually France. Jammer Davis gets the job to investigate the plane crash which is really a covert mission to find the lost drone. The place that lost the plane is a company called **Fly By Night (FBN)**. It is a shady cargo hauling outfit flying 70-year-old WWII vintage DC-3 prop planes. They haul anything from UN medical supplies to ammo and guns to tribal commandos in the Congo.

The personnel who keeps this dinosaur fleet in the air are some American aviation outcasts. One of which, is a former Air Force pilot who has an unpleasant "history" with Jammer. One colorful character is a FBN pilot from Louisiana named Boudreau.

Apparently, the CIA romantic interest in Book 1 didn't pan out. She doesn't even get an honorable mention in this book. The "lady of intetest" in this book is a beautiful and hot tempered Italian doctor who is a rotating volunteer providing medical care to the local Sudanese people. She and Jammer get off to a rough start but manages to get caught up in the intrigue.

Underlying all these story elements is a radical plot involving the drone. Jammer mostly focuses on the plane crash investigation for clues to figure out what is going on in the wholly suspicious situation. The process results in a slow read with some contrived scenes to keep it from fizzling altogether. That is until last quarter of the book. It is still kind of hokey but turns out be a tense and exciting climax.

This isn't a *bad* story. I just think the story has a weak foundation so the writing is kind of forced. I still really like this author and will be checking out his other books.

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### **Arnold Kellos Jr says**

**Wow**

I've been a huge Lee Child, Jack Reacher fan for years having read them all. I have new hero and his name is Jammer Davis. Read Fly by Wire first, then read Fly by Night and you will be hooked. Ward weaves his tales in a way that sucks you in like you've pulled into a giant tornado. Thank you Ward for creating this bigger than life character. A true 10.

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### **Veselin Nikolov says**

This seems to be the most ridiculous of the three books about Jammer Davis. The main protagonist is some sort of white washed Hulk - Indestructible, strong, and knows how to fly airplanes. There are moments of the book that are plausible, but it's mostly one-of-those-thrillers where the action is important, the last-minute twists are important, and the plausibility is well hidden.

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### **Philip says**

Some good some bad, so a solid if average 3 stars:

\* **THE GOOD:** Larsen is a pretty solid writer; has a decent style and definitely knows airplanes, so his technical stuff sounds spot on - a great example of "write what you know."

\* **THE BAD:** Unfortunately, Larsen *doesn't* know Sudan, the story's main setting. As I'm going to Khartoum soon, I thought reading a thriller set there would be pretty neat - but the story never gets any closer to Khartoum than the airport, (which Larsen locates much farther out of the city than it really is). So there is really no detail or feel for Sudan specifically, and as a result this is just a generic desert-based story that could be set in any generic Muslim country. So *big* disappointment here.

\* **THE SO-SO:** The first half of the book is basically "Enter the Dragon" - guy sent undercover to apparently do one job, while lurking around at night doing his real sneaky "find out what's really going on" job. And the second half is your standard ticking clock "bring down the aircraft before it hits its target" actioner. Not bad, but nothing unique either. Plus, a few proofreading misses, along the "don't know what do to" line. And one of the more egregious gaffe I've seen in a long time when our hero dons a baklava rather than a balaclava to go out snooping around at night - unless he really intended to bribe his way out of trouble with a delicious pastry dessert. Oh, and there's a gorgeous Italian doctor working away in the middle of nowhere - when is there not? And finally - yeah, gotta deduct at least a coupla points for naming his hero "Jammer." When was an action hero last named Bill or Frank?

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## **Michele Bailey says**

### **Buckle your seatbelt!**

Five stars for another incredible "Jammer" adventure! Is there anything that this man can't do? Ex-military, jet fighter pilot with combat action and a mind that never quits. He's somewhere between Mitch Rapp and John Ryan, as he answers the call of his country while helping the CIA, and investigating air disasters, while raising a teenage daughter as a single parent. WOW!  
Can't wait to start "Passenger 19" !

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## **Va toebbe says**

### **Hanging on to my sofa...what a ride!!**

Wow...hanging on to the edge of my sofa for dear life. Exciting and believable. I think I'm falling for Jammer....and offer kudos to author Ward Larsen. Thanks!!! If you are wondering whether to read this book or no?? If you live for excitement by vicarious means ...get the book.

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## **Jayne Navarre says**

### **Another fun spin with Larsen**

This is my second wild adventure with Jammer Davis. I know nothing about flying planes or crash investigations, but the author does a great job at making it feel real and easy to understand. The subject matter doesn't interfere with the story, and the story is great! Light reading.

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## **Stephen Dahlin says**

### **Crash Landing**

This is book two in the Jammer Davis series, it can be read as a stand alone however as you would only miss some subtle nuances of the first book. This book follows the travels of Jammer as he investigates another crash & stop another possible terrorist attack. If you have watched & are a fan of Jack Bauer & the show 24 you will enjoy this book & series.

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## **Rene says**

Great, action-packed thriller. Mr. Larsen's books are real page-turners, that's for sure. I haven't been disappointed with any one I've read -- this series or the David Slaton series (new one coming out soon in the Slaton series!! ;-)) I would have liked a tie-up regarding the other American pilots -- Beaudreau, Johnson (one other I think). I don't like any loose ends.

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## **John E. Donovan says**

### **J D does it, again!**

Author Ward Larsen does it, again, bringing us an even wilder ride than in his first in the series book, Fly by Wire. Jammer Davis is bigger and badder then ever, doing what he does best, figuring out how a plane crashed, and in the process of doing so, getting himself right in the middle of some very dangerous people! Larsen's Jammer Davis series has only gotten better, with this 2nd book, and if there's a book #3 coming along, I'll be sure to buy it, as soon as it becomes available!

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