

[Hark, the raven](#)

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Newberg novelist completes fourth cyberthriller

By KARL KLOOSTER Of the News-Register

Raven's Run is John Trudel's fourth book in four years. It lays claim to being a Cybertech thriller, which sounds like an international intrigue sub-genre.

In his first three novels, the term actually connotes the direct connection to an Oregon-based corporation called Cybertech.

The company is indeed cyber, as in "Internet-focused" and tech, as in "high." But what makes all three books compelling is the ways in which they grapple with their global implications, Internet-driven and otherwise

God's House involved the ability to generate mammoth amounts of electricity from relatively inconsequential quantities of seawater without pollution — a near-miraculous energy source of unprecedented scope and scale.

In *Privacy Wars*, Cybertech's small, but ingenious team of in-house savants has invented an apparently unbreakable form of software encryption that guarantees its customers unfettered use of the Internet for whatever purpose they choose.

Cybertech once again takes center stage in "*Soft Target*" by creating an Internet-based communications network accessible only by members of Congress. It ensures that the government's legislative decision makers can meet virtually on a moment's notice without having to physically come together in Washington, D.C.

Trudel's newest techno-thriller, "*Raven's Run*," minimizes the Cybertech connection. Instead, it takes readers on a trip through time, creating a part-fact part-fiction account of the dynamics surrounding Antarctic exploration since the 1940s.

In that regard, the exploits of an actual person named George O. Noville,

and his connection to the Antarctic saga, are traced right up to his supposed demise at the hands of a CIA assassin.

And therein lies the crux of the tale. Boundless natural resources, including an immense supply of crude oil and rare minerals related to nuclear fission, are believed to lie beneath the permafrost of the world's fifth largest continent.

However, exploiting them is banned by international agreement. Since 1959, 50 nations have become signatories to the Antarctic Treaty which sets the continent aside as a scientific preserve.

No national may make any territorial claim, conduct military activity or engage in efforts to extract natural resources through mining, drilling or any other means. Exploration and research is the common, shared goal.

Raven's Run initially focuses on key events that led up to Antarctica's current status. Central to the pivotal early year was Noville, an aviation hero who, following in the prop wash of Charles Lindbergh, served as navigator on a successful trans-Atlantic flight in 1927.

He was also involved in Operation High Jump, officially known as The Antarctic Developments Program, which culminated in the successful 1946-47 U.S. Navy effort to establish Little America.

These incidents are true and notable pieces of history, but Noville's later role as a clandestine appointee of President John F. Kennedy to strengthen America's claim on the ice-locked continent are figments of Trudel's fertile imagination.

Following the plot, that top-secret project foundered in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis and never got underway again, which brings us to the present day.

One rogue nation has chosen to defy the Antarctic Treaty and secretly establish a mining operation for the purpose of finding and extracting uranium. Iran is not a signatory to the Antarctic Treaty and, as such, has taken over a Japanese research base, using it as a cover for their illicit scheme.

Underlying motives and machinations add intrigue to the ***Raven's Run*** sub-plots. But an important thread running throughout demands suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader.

Josie, a young American woman with paranormal powers, can summon images of events past and present by “remote viewing.” Her uncanny capability allows Trudel’s Jonathan Bourne-style protagonist, Raven, to thwart attempts of an Iranian-American death squad to kill her.

Raven, a heroic character of uncertain origins, trusts no one. It is with visceral certainty that he believes distrust is what keeps him alive.

Josie’s viewings lend otherwise inaccessible insight that exposes the motives of Iran’s Pasdaran leaders and their efforts to exploit Antarctica for their own purposes.

The author uses Josie’s talents to best advantage, while interjecting some of his own, often poignant and sometimes even prescient, socio-political commentary into the mix.

His opinions on who really ordered, planned and carried out the JFK assassination are included. Think a big, boisterous Texan and a slew of subsequent “accidental” or otherwise amazingly coincidental deaths.

Using the voices of certain characters, he further expresses a world view that gives pause for serious consideration. Take for example the unrealistic demands made upon U.S. counterintelligence personnel.

“No critical thinker would expect anyone to prove the future price of a stock, the point spread of bowl games or which candidate would win an election. But somehow proof was expected for agent reports and threat assessments.”

On the global scale, his opinion of America’s ability to lead the way and make just decisions is scathingly pessimistic.

The Iranian plotters hold Americans in such low regard, they said, “Naively stupid people with a lot of power make us afraid.”

One of Trudel’s intellectually astute characters was ascribed as holding this opinion, “America had drifted into ponderous central bureaucracies that were too much like the old Eastern Europe for his taste. It was a weakness which modern terrorists and other enemies were only too happy to exploit.”

Anyone who is into international intrigue would relish ***Raven’s Run***. It’s fascinating, fast-paced and thought-provoking. And it’s available on Amazon as well as at the author’s website, www.johntrudel.com.

A sequel, ***Raven's Redemption***, is scheduled for publication in 2015.

And that's what I found out while OUT and ABOUT — admiring those who dare, but harboring no personal desire to set foot on Antarctica.

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