



## Binary

*John Lange (pseudonym) , Michael Crichton*

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Political radical John Wright is plotting an act of mass destruction – and federal agent John Graves has him under surveillance, trying to figure out what the plot is.

When a government computer is hacked and a high-security shipment of nerve gas gets hijacked, Graves puts the pieces together – but can he stop Wright from unleashing his weapon before it kills a million people ... including the President of the United States?

## Binary Details

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Author : John Lange (pseudonym) , Michael Crichton

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# From Reader Review Binary for online ebook

## it'chy says

reads like a wake-up call

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## Skylr says

This book was an exciting read and kept my attention the whole time. It wasn't as good as some of Crichton's others but I still enjoyed it.

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## Adam says

Fast, easy, fun, and masculine to a ludicrous degree. So, pretty much exactly what you want when you pick up a pulp novel to read over the summer break. It was cool getting to read a Michael Crichton book from before he was THE Michael Crichton. Kind of feels like watching batting practice at a major league ballgame, or showing up to the symphony early and hearing all the instruments get tuned up.

Something that did surprise me about this book that sets it apart from most other pulp novels: absolutely no sex. Not even the suggestion of any. Honestly, I'm not even sure who the naked lady on the cover of the book is supposed to be. There's really only one female character in the entire novel, and to say she's disposable would be putting it nicely. The book fails the Bechdel test miserably - not only do two women characters not talk to each other about something other than a man, but two women characters don't appear at all. There's only one, and she talks to some men... about another man.

Overall, though, you can't complain too much. Reading this book is like getting on a rickety old roller coaster at a traveling carnival. If you have a good time and the entire thing doesn't fall apart by the end, you're happy.

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## Al Young says

This is one of the novellas Crichton wrote as he put himself through med school. Obviously, this is of interest to more of a few people, so it's been reprinted a few times. In fact, one recent cover of this book makes it look like something out of Chandler/Ellroy/Sin City pulp fiction (which it isn't even close to).

That said, it is some of Crichton's early work as a pulp writer. That seems contradictory, maybe oxymoronic, but Pulp Crichton is actually exactly what you think it might be. It's pulp but it has to be all science-y.

It's a short 200-ish page book about a potential bombing of the 1972 GOP Convention (which was planned for San Diego). Crichton has to give it a chemistry spin and the 'this could actually happen any day now' hysteria at the beginning and end of the book is a nice pulp touch.

If he had written this in the 90s, he probably would have fleshed this out to a 600-page monster and its film would have been a mega hit. Since Crichton's career wasn't quite there yet, it's a quick and dirty story of a cat and mouse between a flawed cop and a genius criminal mastermind.

Nothing here life-changing, but for a quick cheap (99 cent ebook) read, it is quite a fine time killer

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### **Trent says**

Grade: B- ...John Lange (an early pseudonym used by Michael Crichton) writes a rather ho-hum novel in Binary. The most interesting thing is reading this book as a time capsule of cutting edge computer technology circa 1972.

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### **Alan Vecchio says**

This could of been a good thriller if the author (John Lange aka Michael Crichton) had not made his main characters so dense, gullible and down right stupid. These "heroes" are supposed to be highly trained intelligence officers but, throughout the book, they can't figure out the simplest clues that are staring them in the face.

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### **George K. says**

Απ? την τελευτα?α φορ? που δι?βασα κ?ποιο βιβλ?ο του Μ?ικλ Κρ?ιτον π?ρασαν π?νω απ? δυο χρ?νια και η αλ?θεια ε?ναι ?τι μου ?λειψε λιγ?κι. Β?βαια εδ? ?χουμε να κ?νουμε μ'?να παλπ μυθιστ?ρημα που ?γραψε ο Κρ?ιτον με το ψευδ?νυμο Τζον Λαντζ, ?ταν ακ?μα σπο?δαζε και δεν ε?χε αρχ?σει την μεγ?λη καρι?ρα του ως συγγραφ?ας, οπ?τε δεν μιλ?με για τον κλασικ? Κρ?ιτον. Με το ψευδ?νυμο αυτ? ?γραψε συνολικ? οχτ? βιβλ?α, π?νω-κ?τω της ?διας αισθητικ?ς και ποι?τητας, τα οπο?α αν?κουν πλ?ον στην τρομερ? σειρ? παλπ μυθιστορημ?των Hard Case Crime. Το 2013 ε?χα διαβ?σει ?να ?λλο βιβλ?ο του που ?γραψε ως Τζον Λαντζ, το μοναδικ? του μ?λλον που κυκλοφ?ρησε στα ελληνικ?, με τον τ?τλο "Πλωτ? φ?ρετρο" (Grave Descent στο πρωτ?τυπο), ?να πολ? καλ? περιπετει?δες θρ?λερ αλ? Τζ?ιμς Μποντ.

Πως ?χει η ιστορ?α: ?νας πολιτικ? ριζοσπαστικ?ς και ακρα?ος τ?πος, ον?ματι John Wright, ετοιμ?ζει μια πρ?ξη μαζικ?ς καταστροφ?ς, που αναμ?νεται να πλ?ξει την π?λη του Σαν Ντι?γκο, ?που γ?νεται η συνεδρ?ση του κ?μματος των Ρεπουμπλικ?νων, με παρουσ?α του ?διου του προ?δρου των ΗΠΑ. Ο ομοσπονδιακ?ς πρ?κτορας John Graves παρακολουθε? για καιρ? τις κιν?σεις του Wright, χωρ?ς ?μως να ?χει κ?τι χειροπιαστ?. ?μως μια το χακ?ρισμα εν?ς κυβερνητικο? υπολογιστ?, μια η κλοπ? εν?ς τρομερ? θανατηφ?ρου αερ?ου και αρκετ?ν κιλ?ν πλαστικο? εκρηκτικο?, ε?ναι κομμ?τια που αν ενωθ?ν δημιουργ?ν την ολοκληρωμ?νη εικ?να μιας συνωμοσ?ας. ?μως ο Graves και οι δι?φοροι ?λλοι πρ?κτορες και αστυνομικο?, ?χουν να κ?νουν μ'?ναν πραγματικ? ιδιοφυ? εγκληματ?α. Ο χρ?νος πι?ζει, εν? ?λοι πρ?πει να πα?ξουν το παιχν?δι του Wright...

Ήχουμε να κ'νουμε με Ήνα κλασικΉ περιπετειΉδες θρΉλερ, γεμΉτο δρΉση, εκπλΉξεις, αγωνΉα και Ήνταση, η ατμΉσφαιρα του οποΉου θυμΉζει πολΉ περιπετειΉδεις ταινΉες της δεκαετΉας του '70, Ήσως και του '80. Ε, και αυτΉ εΉναι κΉτι που μου αρΉσει πολΉ, μιας και δηλΉνω φαν τΉτοιου εΉδους βιβλΉων και ταινιΉν. ΣΉγουρα ποιοτικΉ Ήσως να μην φτΉνει Ήλλα βιβλΉα του Κριττον, που εΉναι πιο μεγΉλα σε μΉγεθος, με περισσΉτερες πληροφορΉες και αναλΉσεις, αλλΉ σαν ιστορΉα μου φΉνηκε πολΉ καλΉ, γρΉγορη και χωρΉς περιττΉς λεπτομΉρειες, Ήπως πρΉπει να εΉναι Ήνα σωστΉ παλπ θρΉλερ. Η γραφΉ απλΉ και κατανοητΉ, με Ήλες τις απαραΉτητες περιγραφΉς των διαφΉρων σκηνικΉν, καθΉς και με ρεαλιστικΉς διαλΉγους. Οι χαρακτΉρες χωρΉς βΉθος, αλλΉ κΉνουν την δουλειΉ τους. ΓενικΉ εΉναι Ήνα βιβλΉο που το ευχαριστΉθηκα τΉσο, Ήσο αν το διΉβαζα στα ελληνικΉ. Δεν συνΉντησα δυσκολΉες και μου φΉνηκε σαν μια πολΉ καλΉ και ψυχαγωγικΉ εΉξσηση των αγγλικΉν μου. Το μΉνο σΉγουρο εΉναι Ήτι θα προμηθευτΉ και θα διαβΉσω και Ήλλα βιβλΉα του "Τζον Λαντς".

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### **Kandice says**

This book was obviously well researched just like all of Crichton's books. I always find that thrilling, especially when it's about something dangerous, like explosives and nerve gas in this title. The low stars are not for that, nor are they due to the pacing. This was a perfect title for Hard Case Crime, thrilling and told at breakneck speed. The low stars are for lack of depth.

Crichton isn't known for creating characters. It's the situation of his tales that really grab the reader. Often that's enough to make me overlook the lack of characterization, but here it simply wasn't. We don't get to know anyone in this book despite having access to a personality profile!

I would recommend this as an airplane or beach read, but that's about it.

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### **Mars says**

You see that naked woman on the cover? What the bloody f\$%^ is that about? There is one hooker being interviewed, for a grand total of maybe a quarter of a page, and she provides no useful info whatsoever.

It's not terrible, but if it wasn't quite so cringe- and facepalm-inducing, it would have fared much, much better.

(if you know that a super-smart dude has acquired a considerable quantity of [deadly stuff] and a variety of [unusual supplies], of \*course\* the rational approach is to not pick him up immediately but to play mind-games with him)

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### **Scott says**

A fast-paced thriller that barrels right on from the start without any extra stuff. I don't usually like novels that could easily be made into movies, I prefer more depth and development, but Crichton keeps you on the edge of your seat wanting to see what will happen next, how the detective will solve the puzzle.

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## **Adrian McCarthy says**

A straightforward thriller with a little touch of Crichton-esque techy complication thrown in. A very fast read. Not much in the way of characters, which seems typical for Crichton. (I'm not sure why one of the editions shows a woman on the cover. None of the characters in the story are women; there are only a couple small references to the sexual conquests of one of the men.)

Even though this was written in the early '70s, it has some interesting connections to today. John Graves, the hero, has reluctantly switched from foreign to domestic intelligence and has reservations about spying on U.S. citizens. After viewing the table of contents for a dossier on his current surveillance target:

Graves stared at the categories with some distaste. It was disturbing that the government should have so much information on a private individual--particularly one who had committed no criminal act at any time.

We should pool some money and send everyone in the NSA a copy.

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## **John says**

One of Michael Crichton's very first efforts (which he wrote under a pen name), *BINARY* is a very mediocre novel, but still pretty amazing considering how young Crichton was when he wrote it. Crichton would later use it as the basis for his directorial debut, a 1972 TV movie called *PURSUIT*. It's the story of two brilliant men, a government agent and a cold-blooded terrorist, who see each other as long-sought-out adversaries and can't resist playing a series of mind games with each other. The fate of Las Angeles, as well as that of the entire Republican party, lie in the balance.

To say that Crichton hadn't yet perfected his art when he wrote this would be a gross understatement. The writing is extremely flat throughout--except for the technical bits which he seems to have particularly relished. Even at that age, the man was a voracious researcher. He was also way ahead of his time, even from the very beginning of his career, and *BINARY*'s themes of terrorism, chemical warfare, political instability, and an American government distrustful of its own people seem ripped out of today's headlines. Despite a rather unpromising beginning, *BINARY*'s last couple of chapters generate a surprising amount of tension, and, at only a couple hundred pages (most of which is dialog), the book never really gives you a chance to become bored with it.

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## **Mark says**

Not a bad book, fairly loose plot, page turner but nothing in depth to really engage the brain. Written in 1972 so to read it now has some unintentional funny moments - like when they are trying to discuss the easiest and quickest way to send information. Our MC is forced to go to the police station (he is on the force) to receive his fax from the photo copier..... email anyone?

The book is all about a fast paced plot, leaving out any deep descriptions of people or places, if to compare it is a little like reading an Alistair Maclean. The plot is set early after a couple of initial major thefts. Then we settle into the 'middle story' to find out the background of the thieves and their reasons behind the intended finale. Naturally there is an attempted assassination of the President involved.

The ending builds to a climax that is defeated a little too easily and we all go home safe and happy. I would say that it is best kept in mind that this is an early "starting out" work by the guy who went on to write Jurassic Park and Congo amongst others. Still a decent read to pass the time without really having to concentrate hard.

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## **Ralph says**

In the scheme of things, "Binary" was Michael Crichton's 11th book (8th under the Lange pen-name) and yet it has the feel of being much less developed, not just in plot and characterization, but in execution as well. Perhaps the author felt a bit ill at ease in writing a purely political/spy thriller, or having to rely on a unbelievable politically conservative lunatic for a villain, or countering the villain with the fiction of a competent civil servant. Or maybe he just couldn't work up any enthusiasm about saving Republicans.

The book is set in San Diego, in 1972, when the Republican National Convention was supposed to have been held in San Diego. The RNC eventually abandoned San Diego for reasons sillier than the ones that led it to choose the town in the first place--the residents themselves were mostly apathetic about the whole thing, but for decades after it was possible to buy all sorts of souvenirs commemorating the "convention that never happened" at a thrift store in nearby Otay; at the beginning of the book, the author mentions that he "preferred not to follow the convention to Miami Beach," perhaps another indication that he only wrote the book to use a binary chemical as a plot device, since all he would have had to do was change the name of the town--his depiction of San Diego was flawed with inaccuracies and mistakes.

And yet for all the problems experienced by "Binary," it is still well written, with flashes of brilliance. It is tightly plotted, and the idea at the center of the novel, that it would be comparatively easy to steal chemical weapons from the government, is strong enough to carry the weight of a novel. The action is a bit forced at times, but the suspense is well maintained, slipping only when Crichton is preoccupied with lampooning government bureaucracy. all in all, "Binary" is a diverting novel, but probably not one that will have great endurance.

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## **Andrew says**

This is a fun page turning thriller - yes its says John Lange and yes its a pseudonym for Michael Crichton - in fact there are several other books written under this pseudonym but thats for another day.

This book is a fast pace thriller - a case of catch them if they can (in time). Yes the story sacrifices pace over depth and as such you feel that characters are never really properly fleshed out which is a shame since there are hints of a more deeper physiological cat and mouse battle forming between the two main protagonists.

Also the book is dated - the reference to the technology really does date the story and how the information was obtained in the first place - however and this is the scary part - it would not take much to update for the

modern day and the some of the concepts presented here are scarily possible in fact even more so today.

As such this is a great example of the story telling ability that Michael Crichton had as such if you want a book to while away a few hours there are many you could do worse with than read this although I will be the first to admit he has written a lot better thrillers than this,

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