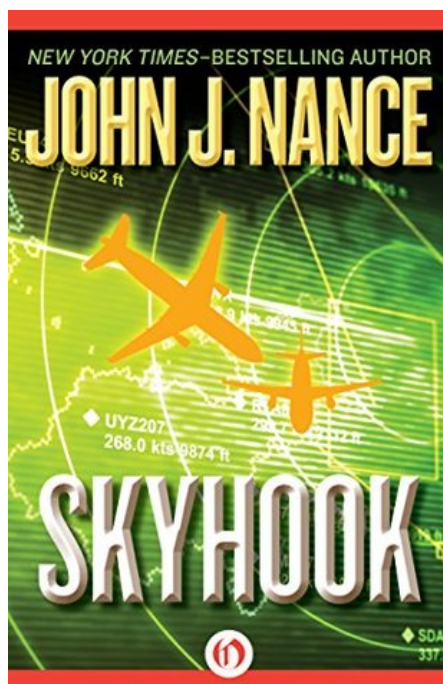




Skyhook

John J. Nance

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A scientist and a pilot's daughter investigate a top-secret computer program that can control any plane in the sky in this spine-tingling thriller from *New York Times*–bestselling author John J. Nance

For eighteen months, Dr. Ben Cole has worked to develop Skyhook, a highly advanced autopilot that can direct aircraft from the ground. On the first test run, something goes wrong over the Gulf of Alaska plunging Cole's plane toward a supertanker at maximum speed. But moments before impact, the computer switches off, saving his life.

Seeking answers, Cole joins forces with April Rosen, whose pilot father narrowly missed his own midair collision over the same waters where Skyhook was tested. Unraveling the mystery of these near-disasters pits Cole and Rosen against shadowy forces within the Pentagon who will go to dangerous lengths to keep the public from discovering the true purpose—and the real dangers—of Skyhook.

Skyhook Details

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From Reader Review Skyhook for online ebook

LecturerRich says

a bit convoluted but okay

Jeff Brateman says

Argh! The only reason to finish this boring excuse for a book is for something to happen. It was written with suspense, action, etc... but nothing really happened. Even in the end, nothing happened. Hello? Was this supposed to be some post 9/11 concept that is geared to make us scared? Or is it the wave of the future that we are to accept with one open arm? Or does it just suck? The latter seems the best choice.

ELizabeth says

very mildly entertaining.

Sue Stewart says

Outstanding book - extremely complex with so many layers of deception and secrecy - could not wait to see if the Rosen's would succeed with their hunt and what was really going on with the government. Be on your toes to follow all the twists and turns and plot changes.

Kara Jorge says

During the top-secret testing of a new remote flight control box, something goes horribly wrong, and a Gulfstream nearly crashes. At the same time and, obviously in the same airspace, 747 captain Arlie Rosen flies his Albatross into trouble. Arlie, using visual flight control, flies into a cloud bank where he throws a propeller blade and crashes. He and his wife Rachel are rescued, but Arlie gets his pilot's license revoked by an overzealous FAA inspector. This sends his daughter April and family friend Gracie on a campaign to clear Arlie's name. They are met with the usual stonewall of bureaucracy, with a behind-the-scenes cover-up at work, as well.

Even though we were aboard the Gulfstream when we know it took Arlie Rosen's Albatross out of the sky, with the added bonus of sitting in with the head software engineer while he worried over the failing program that caused the crash, the book goes round and round, after round, between the government brass, the Rosen clan, and the software engineer as they slowly and laboriously figure out what was obvious to us by the end of Chapter One. When the resolution finally drags itself to the party, everything gets tidily tied up, all the nice guys win and get promoted, and there are smiles all around.

With some fun, likeable characters, snappy dialogue, and a believable story line, this could have been a decent book. As it was, I couldn't make myself warm to anybody. The Rosens lived a cushy existence and

April had obviously never had a bad day in her charmed life. At 25, she's a high-paid vice president at a cruise line and can just walk away from her job without a thought. Nobody at work minds, though, because she's such an asset to the company. She lives in a high-rise condo. Gracie, her surrogate sister, is close to the family, though everyone is always quick to point out, not actually a part of it. Gracie has secured a position at Jantzen and Pruzan, a high-buck law firm that values her so much, they hand her the moon when she drops what must surely be a crushing workload to work on her personal issues, using her employer as a front, instead. She also has the amazing ability to never need to speak to a judge during business hours and instead chooses to bother them at home, where they let her in, hear her out, lecture her on impropriety, and then give her her way. She lives on a yacht and drives a Corvette.

Dialogue is stilted and more often than not used as a forum for the author to complain about his dislike of slang. This only serves to put these self-righteous characters one plane further away from anywhere I want to be. Added to that is the utterly ludicrous plot that goes nowhere, circling the obvious around and around. We got it already. Why can't any of these Pleasantville characters figure it out? This had to be the sloppiest government cover-up in history, which all could have been avoided if someone high up had told the FAA to back down and give Arlie his license back. But then there would have been no story.

There wasn't one anyway. This book was just plain unrealistic from start to finish, starred unlikeable characters reminiscent of a preachy 1950's TV show, and had horrible dialogue.

David says

Nance turns out another cool aviation thriller. What does a top secret military experiment have to do with the railroading of a professional pilot who crashed his plane in Alaskan waters? Why is the government seeking to immediately (without any investigation) place the blame for his crash on pilot error?

Nance turns out a good thriller with interesting aviation background and delivers an interesting cast of characters, a clever plot, and a page turner of a novel. Not nearly as good as "Turbulence" but another good book with an interesting theme.

Debra says

Interesting, technologically intriguing. The whole legal red-tape issue was solved a little too neatly, but perhaps the page limit was coming up...

Brian says

Ok, quick read.

Micky Parise says

First time reading John Nance and was rather impressed. Great plot, characters and story just flowed.

Recommend highly.

Tiffany says

I loved this book! I've loved all his books that I've read so far. I'm sure that I'll read everything he's written and is yet to write! Fun and thrilling.

Joe White says

This is a fast paced lightweight read. It seemed targeted to a general junior high school age group reading level. While there were aviation inspired action sequences, the suspense was maintained by the creation of a background force operating clandestinely to interfere with attempts to access the true purposes and scenario of actions and investigations of results of those actions. Most of the tension played out in the legal realm.

The legal system as portrayed in operation doesn't operate in the manner invoked here. There are actual elements that might match factual historical filings, but in general this book represents legal filing and courtroom fantasy.

Now for my discourse on the typical fictional fantasy application of programming and debugging skills:

Some day I would like to read a programming thriller based on actual procedures and techniques. It would probably bore the average reader to death and kill book sales. In this case, the code being employed and analyzed in operation would not be interpreted. An analyst does not simply stare at binary code looking for breach point changes. While some ASCII strings might show up in binary code, if hardcoded, in general there's nothing meaningful to be seen in executing code without profilers, memory management tools, decompilers, and a host of other tools. Code can be run and analyzed back to source, if it has been saved for execution in debug mode, but the application described here was in a live environment with expectations of high execution speed, which implies production code rather than code compiled for debugging. Debug code operates at slower speed with a larger memory footprint, requires more external library resources, and would contain injection and manipulation vector points. It would be used as its name implies, for debugging development code, and would never expect to be seen in an execution environment, outside of a programmer's test environment.

In general, author's just don't understand the gulf between compiled linked code and the originating source code and libraries. The use of checksums to validate modules is one method normally employed to validate code deployed for execution, versus the literary technique employed here of looking at byte sequences. There was never any mention of logging, registers, heap analysis, bla, bla,.. just an engineer/programmer staring at code in an executing videogame manner and being able to see in real time meaningful changes implemented in code that had apparently been injected, or was executing from a source not compatible to the planned deployed code.

And while invoking the Cray name to generate the aura of high performance computing and data analysis might stimulate reader recognition and appreciation, this is definitely a silly way to analyze source code in a dedicated known development system.

So I gave this 4 stars because the characters are somewhat realistic, the action sequences are plausible, and there is a fast paced well knit interaction of thread elements. There is no use of superstitious supernatural fantasy, and there is no complex between-governments clandestine cold war operations or espionage intrigue. There were no car chases or shooter sequences. There were no Clive Cussler super-humans who

regularly dodge bullets, have PHD level day jobs, and live through compressive explosions in each chapter. It was refreshing to read an action thriller situated in a contained environment, that went to great lengths to explain and wrap up all character and action nuances.

Wanda says

A little difficult to follow during some of the more technical discussions in the beginning. Lots of research went into the book with regards to aviation and law. Does have the government conspiracy aspect to it and has the "little guys or common people" fighting back using the law. Also shows how frustrating it can be to go up against the different governmental agencies especially when they are working together to cover something up.

Linda says

Like many other reviewers, I thought Skyhook was slow and boring. Although the plot gets off to a great start, the legal stuff was too involved and slowed the story to the point that I was flipping pages. I usually "read" audio books. This was an exception. It went on vacation with me and, if it hadn't been a library book, I would have left it at the resort. Definitely not worth taking up shelf space at home.

Dan says

This was my first experience with Nance, and I'm happy to say it was a wonderful ride. David Wilson said it right when he said,

Nance turns out another cool aviation thriller. What does a top secret military experiment have to do with the railroading of a professional pilot who crashed his plane in Alaskan waters? Why is the government seeking to immediately (without any investigation) place the blame for his crash on pilot error?

"Nance turns out a good thriller with interesting aviation background and delivers an interesting cast of characters, a clever plot, and a page turner of a novel...

Susan says

One truth is that when you pick up a novel by John Nance, you are guaranteed a great read. While this isn't my favorite Nance, it's still a long ways from disappointing. Ben Cole is working on a scheme that would essentially enable unmanned fights but at the 11th hour a snag that makes no sense is causing him great worry. Meanwhile an expert private pilot out with his wife mysteriously crashes and the FAA slams him with negligence. Nance makes every bit of all of it fit together in a thrilling story.

