

Benjamin Dancer

Author of *Patriarch Run*

Media Inquiries
Stephen J. McConnell
Marketing Director
Conundrum Press
steve@conundrum-press.com

Author Bio

Benjamin Dancer is the author of the literary thriller *Patriarch Run*, the first book in a series that will include *Fidelity* and *The Story of the Boy*. He also writes about parenting and education and has been featured in *Bitch Magazine*, *The Humanist*, *Truthout*, *The Copperfield Review*, *The Denver Post*, *Manifest West*, *The Nettle Tree*, and various other magazines and journals.

Benjamin is an Advisor at a Colorado high school where he has made a career out of mentoring young people as they come of age. His work with adolescents has informed his stories, which are typically themed around fatherhood and coming-of-age.

SHORT

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Book Synopsis

Nine years ago, Jack Erikson was deployed to China to protect the United States from a cyberattack. Now, suffering from a drug-induced amnesia, he is unable to recognize his own son. What Jack knows for sure is that an elite group of operators is determined to kill him. What he does not yet remember is that he controls a cyber weapon powerful enough to return human civilization to the Stone Age. If Jack lives long enough to piece together his mission and his identity, he will be forced to choose between the fate of humankind and that of his own family.

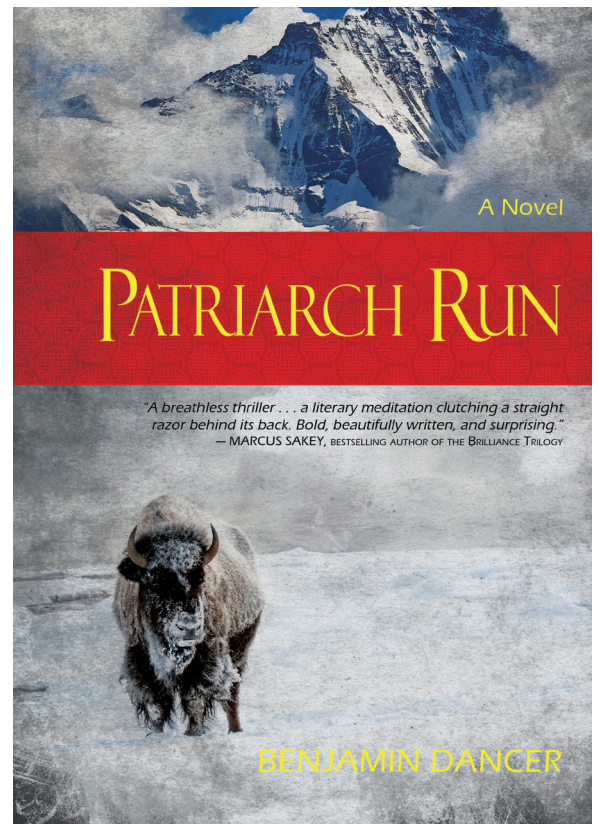
Readers of Cormac McCarthy and Peter Heller will appreciate the suspense and the Western setting. In his thrilling literary debut, Benjamin Dancer also explores the timeless themes of fatherhood and the fraying fabric of global stability.

THEMES

National Security: *Patriarch Run* has been endorsed by prominent national security experts for its realistic portrayal of the vulnerability of America's critical infrastructure.

Sustainability: The novel has been endorsed by leaders in the sustainability movement for its depiction of the existential threat the human species poses to its own existence.

Coming-of-Age: The story has been endorsed by experts on adolescence as a powerful coming-of-age story.



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Sample Q&A

What inspired you to write this book?

I wanted to tell a story about fathers, and I wanted to weave in themes that would make it exciting in a realistic and meaningful way.

NATIONAL SECURITY

The premise of the novel is based on two existential threats to the nation. The first of which is the vulnerability of the power grid to cyber attack. What interests you about that?

I came across a report written for Congress ([Report of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse \(EMP\) Attack](#)). It was the scariest thing I've ever read. Because of that, I knew it would make for a great story. And the threat met the realism requirement I had set for the book.

Some of the nation's most prominent experts on the vulnerability of the grid have endorsed your story for its accuracy and realism. How did you get those details right?

I studied their reports, and I sent the material to them to be fact checked.

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, the author of *On Killing* and one of the world's foremost experts on the psychology of combat, also endorsed your novel for its accuracy regarding the gunfights. What kind of research did you do to get that right?

I know my way around firearms. But that only got me so far. Since I've never been in combat, I relied heavily on Grossman's research and on hundreds of first-person accounts of combat to get the psychology right.

SUSTAINABILITY

The second existential threat to civilization you write about in *Patriarch Run* is overpopulation. What attracted you to that theme?

Math. Once I did the math, I realized we had a huge problem on our hands. The size of the human population might just well be the single biggest threat we face. I wanted to contextualize that threat in an enviro-thriller.

BIPARTISAN SOLUTIONS

National Security is traditionally viewed as a conservative issue, while sustainability is traditionally viewed as a progressive issue. How did you manage to bridge the two and win so many endorsements from both sides of the political spectrum?

Truth is a great unifier. I've never seen myself on the left or the right. So I've always been able to see the common ground. Once you look past the ideologies, the left and the right have a lot in common. Solutions for one side can also be used to solve problems on the other.

COMING OF AGE

You said you set out to write a story about fathers. Why is that important to you?

I can't think of a more universal theme, something we care more about than our own fathers, than doing right by our own children as parents.

The sheriff and Jack can be read as two types of fathers. Was that intentional on your part?

Yes, it was. I wanted to write about a father who sacrificed himself for his son and about a father who sacrificed his son for himself. I think that is the spectrum on which every dad has to decide who he wants to be.

Rachel, Billy's mother, is a strong character in the story. It seems that her conflict is more internal. She realizes that she needs to learn to love herself. Do you also see that as a universal theme?

Yes, I do. It's the first step that allows for other types of personal growth.

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Advance Praise

“Truly marvelous. *Patriarch Run* is a breathless thriller disguising a heart of pure poetry; a literary meditation clutching a straight razor behind the back. Bold, beautifully written, and surprising page-by-page, this is one of the most assured debuts I’ve ever read. Benjamin Dancer is the real thing.” –MARCUS SAKEY, bestselling author of *The Brilliance Trilogy*”

“*Patriarch Run* starts with a bang and doesn’t let up. Benjamin Dancer is an immensely talented writer; his assured, lean prose and stark realism will appeal to fans of Cormac McCarthy and Don Winslow.” –A. J. BANNER, international bestselling author of *The Good Neighbor*

REALISM

“*Patriarch Run* captures the vulnerability of our nation’s critical infrastructure. In this case the fiction is as frightening as the reality. A seemingly futuristic story about a new way of warfare, played out against a seemingly futuristic background of disillusioned patriotism, divided personal loyalties, and identity crisis—except Dancer understands that the future is now!” –DR. PETER VINCENT PRY, Executive Director of the EMP Task Force on National and Homeland Security, a Congressional Advisory Board; served in the Congressional EMP Commission, the House Armed Services Committee, and the CIA; author of *Blackout Wars*

“*Patriarch Run* accomplishes something few thrillers have achieved: it gets the guns right, and it gets the psychology of the gunfight right. Benjamin Dancer writes the gunfight scenes with a realism seldom seen in fiction.” –LT. COL. DAVE GROSSMAN, author of *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* and *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace*

COMING-OF-AGE

“In *Patriarch Run* we have a first-rate novel, full of intrigue, excitement and gorgeous prose, as well as a gripping exploration of our gendered culture and the poignant moments and difficult decisions entailed in coming of age. Without being heavy-handed about the right choices, Dancer provokes our much needed questioning of the rules by which we live.” –TERRY A. KUPERS, M.D., Professor at The Wright Institute, author of *Revisioning Men’s Lives and Prison Madness*

“This thoughtful thriller invites readers to consider both motherhood and fatherhood on multiple levels—emotional, psychological, even practical. A gripping coming of age story, *Patriarch Run* demonstrates the real meaning of mature self-acceptance in the face of terror, trauma and abandonment.” –GLORIA DEGAETANO, founder and CEO, Parent Coaching Institute

SUSTAINABILITY

“Benjamin Dancer has illustrated that our greatest villain is overpopulation. Can the global community confront this most daunting adversary—too many people on a limited planet?” –PAUL R. EHRlich, Bing Professor of Population Studies Emeritus; President, Center for Conservation Biology

“In Old Testament times, there were only about 30 million people on Earth, yet they were already fighting over wells. With 250 times that number today, as Benjamin Dancer’s story notes, we’re literally fighting over everything. Atop that, nature is fighting all of us, for its very life. Overpopulation isn’t just one more environmental problem: if there weren’t so many of us, there wouldn’t even be environmental problems. Fortunately, this one is solvable, humanely and surprisingly cheaply. I hope that once the blood from this dark spy saga dries, Dancer’s readers are inspired to inquire how. They just might find their hopes rekindled.” –ALAN WEISMAN, author of *Countdown* and *The World Without Us*

“*Patriarch Run* reminds us that progressive, human-rights enhancing initiatives that help women and men plan their families are the best option for slowing down and eventually halting global population growth. Funding family planning information and services today, along with encouraging small family size decisions, are far preferable to a population-driven apocalypse tomorrow.” –WILLIAM RYERSON, President of Population Media Center, CEO of Population Institute

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Media Information

MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Benjamin is available for TV, radio, print and blog interviews. He can also provide experts on the issues of our critical infrastructure, sustainability, and coming-of-age to go on the air with him.

SUGGESTED TOPICS

Sustainability

- Sustainability: the larger the human population becomes, the more difficult it is to manage it sustainably.
- The best way to reach a sustainable population size is through initiatives that help women and men plan their families

National Security

- Over the last 100 years, our civilization has evolved to become absolutely dependent on a vulnerable power grid. *Patriarch Run* explores a threat to our critical infrastructure that could come in the form of a cyberattack, EMP attack, or coronal mass ejection.
- Renewable energy is a critical component of any plan for a secure infrastructure.

Bipartisan solutions

- Renewable energy makes for a more sustainable and more secure future.

Coming-of-age

- Fatherhood and coming of age are two themes rooted deeply in our psyches. How do we manage our relationships with our fathers? What type of parents do we want to be for our own children?

TALKING POINTS

- Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, the author of *On Killing* and one of the world's foremost experts on the psychology of combat, said, "*Patriarch Run*...gets the psychology of the gunfight right. Benjamin Dancer writes the gunfight scenes with a realism seldom seen in fiction."
- *Patriarch Run* explores two existential threats to our civilization that are often overlooked: overpopulation and our absolute reliance on a vulnerable power grid.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

Benjamin is available for media and speaking appearances. Please contact him at BenjaminDancer@gmail.com

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Stephen J. McConnell, Marketing Director, Conundrum Press, steve@conundrum-press.com

