

5.0 out of 5 stars A MUST READ!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!, July 13, 2010

By Lori Caswell "dollycas" (FALL RIVER, WI)
(TOP 500 REVIEWER) (VINE VOICE) (REAL NAME)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

Al Qaeda plans to attack Minnesota's Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant to remind everyone they are still very active and to get back in the international headlines. They have recruited some homegrown anarchists to add to their terrorist forces, one of which is a Three Mile Island survivor with a huge grudge against the power plant, and two more with questionable education and background.

James "Beck" Becker is a former elite U.S. government intelligence operative who has retired to his childhood hometown of Red Wing, Minnesota just a few miles from the Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant. After a university professor's body is found along the shore of the Mississippi River, clearly murdered, "Beck" gets in on the investigation and all his instincts tell him, this dead body is just the start of something much bigger. He is very concerned when he learns the professor's assistant is missing along with what could be a very dangerous piece of lab equipment. Later clues like a missing fertilizer truck and an international phone call only confirm to "Beck" that terrorists are involved and that something major is going to happen, but he can't convince any government officials that a huge threat exists. So with the help of his American Indian friend "Bull", he tries to foil the plan on his own.

I LOVE IT!!!!

I am so glad John Betcher sent me the extraordinary thriller. It is scary good!! I say this because this fiction could easily become reality. This could definitely be a "ripped from the headlines" story. When I think of terrorist targets in the United States, I think of major cities, Washington D.C., New York, maybe Los Angeles, but this story takes place in my "backyard", the Upper Midwest. Also we know from history there are terrorists and their supporters here in the states, and this story brings them out front and center. Yes, this story is fiction but it has all the details that make you realize this could really happen. While this book entertains it also raises the readers awareness that there are people that want to hurt Americans.

I had the pleasure of reading, reviewing and interviewing the author after her sent me his first book, The Missing Element, and while I truly loved that book, I enjoyed this book even more. **This book is now tied with Harlan Coben's CAUGHT as the best book I have read this year.** If you like a riveting, page turner this is definitely a book that should be in your hot little hands today. Don't wait, click the link and order this book today! You will not be able to put it down until you finish the last page and you will be thinking about the reality of it for a long time after you put this book on your keeper shelf.

5.0 out of 5 stars. A great plot ... Fun Characters ..., July 2, 2010

By Bobbie - "Andromeda's Grandma" (United States)
(TOP 100 REVIEWER)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

In *The 19th Element*, we find James Becker, "Beck" to his friends, his close friend "Bull," and his wife Beth back to solving another mystery. Beck was formerly with special operations, and has now retired and brought his family to this small, safe town where he can finally live under his own name.

This particular story begins with a dead professor found in the small community of Red Wing where Beck and Beth now live. Beck, who "plays at" being a lawyer begins to check out the details and it seems like everything is shouting terrorism. But small towns and bureaucracies aren't willing to consider this as a possibility, so Beck begins to explore the situation on his own.

In this book, Betcher answers many questions concerning the characters in *The Missing Element: A James Becker Mystery*, and adds a new level of believability to his characters. And, while two of the antagonists could have seemed corny by their very stupidity, the response of those around them to the acts is equal to our own puzzlement, making them actually believable.

John Betcher offered me a complimentary early copy of this book for review since I enjoyed his first one, however I was unable to read it until last night. I thought I'd read a couple of chapters then drop off to sleep. I didn't - I was intrigued enough to read it to the end in a single setting, and I was up well past midnight.

I do tend to be a bit "tougher" on authors who offer me their books, so I must admit that early on I found myself locating a periodic table to find the 19th element, as well as checking out what it could do. I double checked the online information on storage pools for spent nuclear rods, and current risk issues concerning them. And finally, I checked, and sure enough the takeoff checklist for the B24 can be found online. As far as I can tell, not a single detail was incorrect!

If anything, this book made me more aware of the issues related to nuclear power and the problems with long-term storage of nuclear waste.

I also want to comment that while Betcher keeps up the intensity of the story, Beth and Beck continue to show one another respect and love. And Betcher tells the story without resorting to a bunch of four letter words to shock his audience, or graphic intimate details of the romance between Beth and Beck. Five stars, for a wonderful story, and even more a story I am willing to strongly recommend to my friends.

5.0 out of 5 stars I Love James Becker...Series Must Continue Says This Fan!, July 3, 2010
By Glenda A Bixler "Glenda" (Pennsylvania)
(VINE VOICE)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

It was just luck that I happened to read *The Missing Element* first, because it quickly pulled me in as a fan of this series. One of the reasons why I wanted to read the book is that he advertised it as somewhat like the writing of Robert B. Parker, who was one of my favorite authors

And I was pleased to see similar dialogue and a wonderful threesome fighting crime as was displayed in the Spenser series...John L. Betcher had my attention!

But it was *The 19th Element* that won John L. Betcher his own place on my list of favorite authors. This novel firmly sets the character, Beck, in a solid role of hero in my book! Not willing to give away anything, I can only say that the climactic plane scene is really amazing!

James L. Becker is an attorney-at-law who went back to his childhood hometown of Red Wing, Minnesota, to begin his retirement after 20+ years of hush-hush military intelligence operations. His wife, Elizabeth, also has quite a background, but she's a minor character in *The 19th Element* and I did mention to the author that I missed their lively, fun dialogue this time! To which I got an "Understood." (Well, if you don't ask...LOL)

Beck could keep busy with his law practice, but whenever something happens in or around Red Wing, he tends to look at it from all angles...and if it doesn't "feel" right to him, he'll start to asking questions. So of course when a dead body is found on the Mississippi River shoreline north of his town, he immediately wanted to know more--who was he, first of all.

Gunner (Doug Gunderson) is Ottawa County's Chief Deputy Sheriff. Normally, he wouldn't be interested in having a "civilian" involved in his business, but he has already discovered that Beck always seems to make sense and usually is of help, even if he's somewhat pushy about knowing everything! Actually, they are old school friends and Gunner is one of the few individuals who was persistent enough to be told a little of Beck's background. Besides, while Gunner operates strictly by the book, he knows that Beck...has his own rules. I love the dialogue between the two men...

After the usual press by Beck to be told all, he learned that the dead man had been a professor of Agriculture at the university. He had been stabbed. And his lab assistant, Farris Ahmed, was also missing. Beck was already profiling and wanting to know the international activities, etc. Of course, Gunner's response was strictly stated: "No racial profiling..."

But Beck was already thinking! Were there any ties to Al Qaeda? What was in the area that might be of interest to terrorists? And to be more specific--what had the professor been working on in his lab? Was there anything missing?

When you ask the right questions as Beck did, you start getting a handle on the possibilities! The

professor had been involved with studying the use of potassium and had invented a "potassium electrolysis separator." With the device, it was possible to extract pure potassium from potassium chloride, transforming it from a solid to a gas, which would then convert to solid potassium metal... What readers will learn is that it can be a very dangerous explosive!

And the potential interest in the area? Oh, that would be the...nuclear plant, specifically, the Minnesota's Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant--See front cover!

The thrilling suspense comes in as Beck uses one clue after another to arrive at what the plans will be. His knowledge and experience, plus his inborn wisdom allows an empathy that reflects not only the overall plan but the details that must be considered and countered.

Especially, when nobody supports his announced theory of a major threat and only his friend Bull will work with him... that is, until it is almost too late!

Wow! I loved it! John L. Betcher has written a thriller that will keep you turning pages and reading until you finish, especially once you arrive on the scheduled day! The choice of potassium as the explosive is very risky; events leading to its use, in themselves, are dangerous. The characters created to support the incident lead to the terror in many ways...only in America...right? Don't know what I mean, well, you're just going to have to read the book! You won't be sorry...

5.0 out of 5 stars Bridget's Review, November 26, 2010

By bridget3420 "Bridget Hopper" (KY)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

The 19th Element is an heart-pounding, pure adrenaline rush. I actually felt exhausted after reading it. This is probably one of the highest compliments that I could ever give. When I get so wrapped up in a book that I feel like I'm the main character, I know that I've read a winner! I loved this book!

5.0 out of 5 stars 19th Element even better than his first effort... and that was damn good., July 16, 2010

By A. I. Dodge "A Customer" (Harpwell, ME)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

The first thing that struck me as I read The 19th Element, the next James Becker thriller, was that my chemistry knowledge had not completely been lost, and I knew what element he was referring to in the title. And that element is very much the center to this tale of terrorism and sloughy bureaucracy.

The novel makes a very interesting point as we near the 10th anniversary of 9/11. It speculates that because there have not been any major attacks by al Qaeda, we are not as well protected as

we are led to believe. Combined with changing technology of warfare, that has made us vulnerable once more.

The character Beck is clearly a worried man, then again that is what he does for a living. He discovers a plot to blow up a nuclear power station and create a Chernobyl-style disaster on an enlarged scale. Not only does he have to find out what a sleeper cell is up to, he also has to battle lazy and incompetent bureaucrats who think he is paranoid.

As with Betcher's previous book the prose does not dally about. It moves quickly and I was able to read the novel in one afternoon. His minimalist approach to writing might not be for all, but it does make for a pacy read.

It can be seen as absolute antithesis to those weighty tomes that clog up the airport bookstores. This would make a perfect book to read on the plane, especially as airplanes feature in the novel.

Even more so than the last one this book screams to be made into a movie. A script would be easy to pluck from this novel.

I recommend both this release and the previous one. It is a fine summer read for your next few days off.

5.0 out of 5 stars First-rate plot from a first-rate author, June 27, 2010

By Paul G. Gutterman
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

The 19th Element has a more realistic plot than any thriller from any of the so-called "big name" authors. That makes the terrorist plot on a nuclear plant all the more chilling and riveting. Don't begin reading until you have a block of time as once you begin it is very hard to put down!

I usually pounce on any plot flaws in this genre and find very few books that can withstand scrutiny. Although I'm no expert in any of the various components that make up the plot (e.g., nuclear plants, WWII bombers, potassium) the detail was extremely convincing. **I'm serious when I say that it is probably one of the best, apparently most realistic plots I've read in a long time.**

The more I read books from successful authors the more I want to swear off reading any more because they seem to be resting on their laurels with cookie-cutter plots and variations on previous themes. John Betcher has created fresh characters and cares enough to get the details right. I highly recommend the book.

John Betcher has a second book with the same characters called "The Missing Element." One recommendation I would have is to ignore the publication dates and read "The 19th Element" first. It appears that much of "The 19th Element" was likely written first and does a better job of introducing the main characters. I thoroughly enjoyed both books of this new series and eagerly await the next in what I believe will be a long and enjoyable run.

5.0 out of 5 stars Although the terrorist plot is complex, it requires only a minimum of suspension of disbelief, June 27, 2010

By Charles Ashbacher (Marion, Iowa United States)
(TOP 50 REVIEWER) (VINE VOICE)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

This book kept me up until 1 AM one night, keeping my mind active when the rest of my body was edging towards exhaustion. Most of the recent attempted acts of terrorism in the United States have been failures and extremely simple in structure, which eliminates them as interesting material for thrillers based on terrorism. In this book, Betcher has concocted a complicated plot where success on the part of the terrorists would be catastrophic for the United States.

What makes that work is that the vulnerabilities that the terrorists are attempting to exploit are plausible. I tend to be a deep thinker when I read thrillers in the sense that my interest level drops if I consider the machinations of the plot to be too unrealistic. That never happened here, the attempt to sabotage the Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant in Minnesota is one that on the surface seems to be at least possible. At least to the extent that only a minimum of suspension of disbelief is needed.

James "Beck" Becker and his creator are rising stars in the terrorist thriller genre; Beck is a deep thinker capable of connecting disparate and nebulous dots. He is also a man of action when the situation requires it.

5.0 out of 5 stars The 19th Element, June 25, 2010

By Fran Lewis "Fran and Bertha"
(VINE VOICE)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

What would happen if potassium were used for creating an explosion to destroy a nuclear plant? What would happen if you could take potassium or 19th element used in fertilizer by agriculturists and extract it in its purest potassium elemental metal form? You might look at this element in a totally different way. Creating an explosion so horrific that it would not only rock the Twin Cities and many other states thousands of miles away. The death toll would be insurmountable and the end result catastrophic. Boom! Life as you know it would be gone. Think about it!

September 11, 2001 really did happen. It was supposed to be a wakeup call for the United States to pay attention, close attention to Al Qaeda and their terrorist cells. Information that was intercepted before these attacks did not raise any cause for alarm and those in charge became too complacent and you know the end result. America needs to pay close attention or what they now have planned as author John Betcher will relate in his novel " The 19th Element," would make 9/11 pale in comparison. As the novel opens a body is found of a professor in the Prairie River. His goal was to create a device that would extract potassium in its metal form to be used as a

form of fertilizer. However, this professor was killed for much more as you will learn. Al Qaeda has totally different agenda and has sent many of its operatives into the mainstream of our society to carry out their deadly deeds in the name of Allah. But, there is much more. As the author relates at the start of the novel Al Qaeda's threat to the United States has diminished and we are not paying enough attention and are no longer in fear of any imminent strikes. Think again. Never take a blind eye to what these people are capable of doing. Their purpose and goal is to create a nuclear holocaust by attacking the Mississippi Prairie Nuclear Power Plants. Will they succeed? Enter James Becker or Beck as his friends call him. Former elite government operative, now attorney at law, Beck will stop at nothing to find out the real reason for the death of a college professor and the disappearance of his assistant.

Three Mile Island created a nuclear blast that many thought would have little or no serious consequences. That was not true as John Sigler learned when his entire family succumbed to cancer and much more. Thinking he was not affected by the radiation fall out, he sought out groups, people, organizations or anyone that would help him avenge the deaths of his parents and brother -namely the United States was the enemy and he would make them pay. But, there is so much more. The terrorist engages the aide of some homegrown anarchists, and John who survived Three Mile Island has a vendetta of his own against the nuclear plant wants to assist if not conduct the attack. The deceased professor's assist Farris Ahmed has his own agenda in mind.

With vivid descriptions of the nuclear plant, the method of how to create these explosions and a definite understanding of chemicals and how they interact, author John Betcher takes the reader on a dangerous journey inside the world and mind terrorists who will stop at nothing to attain their goals. Just think of what would happen if these people really had enough potash or potassium chloride in its natural form to attack a nuclear plant's spent fuel tank. Vulnerable to sabotage given the right circumstances depending on what side you are on the unthinkable could happen. Let's hope no one finds out.

Beck is not alone in his quest. His friend Bull is right by his side to join in his escapades as his Beck's wife Beth. As Beck learns more about the processes involved in creating a nuclear blast and our lab assistant is feverishly working to put his plan in action, we learn a lot more about this 19th element and how dangerous it would be if this diabolical plan came to pass. But, what happens next is not only frightening but mindboggling.

One man fighting against those who refuse to believe him. A gut feeling, instinct and with pure raw energy, James Beck hatches a plan to try and thwart the terrorists before it's too late. But, can he and will he succeed? With the aide of the deputy sheriff, his friend Bull and knowledge of chemistry, potassium and nuclear weapons, this one man is fighting to save so many people, not just in Ottawa County.

One man betrayed by his country and wants avenge the deaths of his parents before its too late. One man risks everything for one small town in Mississippi against all odds and the beliefs of others that this could never happen. A professor who created a potassium electrolysis device to help farmer and agriculturist's crops to grow. The 19th Element, Potassium, what will be the end result.

John Betcher has created a character as cunning, intelligent and resourceful as Clancy's Jack Ryan, Brad Thor's Scot Harvath, and Berry's Cotton Malone, we have a new character that we can all hope will come back in many more of this great author's novels. Mind stimulating, thought provoking and eye opening: Al Qaeda is always watching and waiting for us to look away! DON'T. With an ending that will keep you the edge and twists and turns that will surprise you, The 19th Element is not just about the effects of Potassium it is also the Element of Surprise.

This is definitely one of my favorite picks for 2010.

5.0 out of 5 stars Exciting Summer Read, July 12, 2010

By Steve Moore (New Jersey)

This review is from: The 19th Element, A James Becker Thriller (A James Becker Mystery/Suspense Novel) (Kindle Edition)

Do you need an entertaining and action-packed book for your summer reading? This is it! A very realistically portrayed terrorist attack in an unusual setting provided me with a nerve-wrenching adrenalin rush. If you're into suspenseful thrillers, try this one on for size.

That said, let me calm down a little and pass on some less emotional words about Mr. Betcher's writing. In the banner to my website I have running quotes and one of them reads: "The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense." This piece of writing philosophy is due to Tom Clancy.

Often reality just doesn't make sense. For example, the recent spy case discovered by the FBI where I found out some of my neighbors were Russian spies--inept and ineffective, to say the least, but still the situation was a throwback to the Cold War. If I had written a story like that, it wouldn't have seemed real!

Mr. Betcher, on the other hand, has written a novel that makes alarming sense. The yarn he spins is about an al Qaeda attack on Minnesota's Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant. And the jihadists find help as they enlist two homegrown anarchists and a Three Mile Island survivor with a vendetta against nuclear power plants. These fundamentalists are a formidable team. Their efforts are aided by a complacent security group that seems incapable of listening to our lawyer hero Becker's warnings. The peaceful Midwestern setting is in danger of becoming ground zero for a nuclear tragedy.

There is no mystery here. The terrorists have a plan and it is up to ex-intelligence operative Becker to stop them. As usual in suspense novels, the author throws up all kinds of roadblocks in our hero's way. These increase the tension and reflect on the Clancy quote: does it make sense if the hero succeeds? To the author's credit, the conclusion is not that obvious. And I certainly won't ruin the read by giving away the ending. There is nail-biting enjoyment to be had by not knowing.

I also reviewed Betcher's other novel, *The Missing Element*. While that was an entertaining read, this novel is better. If you worry about such things, these novels can be read independently--in fact, I'm not quite sure about their chronological order. *The 19th Element*, a thriller, focus more on Becker and contains more interesting action while *The Missing Element*, a mystery, has the same main characters, including Becker, more fleshed out. You will probably like them both. I did.

In my own fiction and in my blog posts I have written about our complacency towards terrorism. How many nuclear plants are there in the U.S.? I took a tour down the Hudson from West Point a few weeks ago and sailed past one. It didn't look too secure. How many chemical storage tank facilities are there in the U.S.? Private enterprise passes the buck to government with respect to protecting these and government doesn't have enough manpower to cover the "soft spots." Manhattan, D.C., and other cities' transportation systems and other infrastructure are very vulnerable. Major shopping centers might as well have targets painted on them.

You may call me an alarmist but this is the reality of terrorism. We treat terrorism in our fiction in order to create suspenseful stories. But maybe we're giving the bad guys too many ideas. They really do want to hurt us. The saving grace so far is that the terrorists have been incompetent. The bomb in Times Square didn't go off, for example. If it had...well, there were a lot of people in Times Square that balmy summer evening.

Part of our complacency is surely due to the fact that we feel far away from all those problems in the Mideast. I don't understand this at all. After 9/11 and recognizing that we have long, mostly unguarded borders, I can't believe we're impervious to foreign infiltration. And don't forget those homegrown types like the Times Square bomber. Our complacency is not justified.

John Betcher's description of how the terrorist attack on the power plant is planned, with technical details all in place, is far too real. It satisfies Clancy's criterion completely. As a consequence, this fictional account should scare you out of your socks. Let it be a warning. A corollary to Clancy's quote might be: If it makes sense, it could become real. This is a service offered by fiction authors to the reading public that is often overlooked. Be entertained but aware of the warnings between the lines.

5.0 out of 5 stars G. K. Bostic's Review, January 28, 2011

By Gloria Bostic

Amazon Verified Purchase

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

The 19th Element was a suspenseful ride that had me turning the pages faster and faster as the seriousness and danger of the terrorist threat grew. The main character, James Becker, is a retired government intelligence agent who brings with him a knowledge set and skills that help him determine that there is a threat, that the nuclear power plant may be the target, and that Al Qaeda is behind the plot. The author's knowledge of his subject matter, especially in the area of chemistry, added to the believability of his premise.

As someone who resides in the vicinity of TMI, I found that Betcher's references to the accident at Three Mile Island in 1979 added to the plausibility of such a threat.

The character, Beck, was believable and the reader enjoys his interaction with his wife as well as the characters Gunderson and Bull. These humorous, and at times touching, interactions lighten the mood of the book while the enormity of the imminent threat keeps the readers holding their breath until the very end.

5.0 out of 5 stars A first rate psychological thriller-Highly Recommended!, August 3, 2010
By RCBR

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

Told from the point-of-view of a former elite U.S. military intelligence operative, and the perspective of an Al Qaeda-backed terrorist cell, *The 19th Element* by John L. Betcher is a first rate psychological thriller that will hook your interest early and keep you reading non-stop until the final page.

Although this is the second release in the series, *The 19th Element* takes place a few months prior to the author's debut, *The Missing Element*. James "Beck" Becker has settled into retirement and is attempting to live a normal life, putting his law degree to use with a legal practice in his hometown of Red Wing, Minnesota. Not much happens in the small town so when a scientist-professor of agriculture is found murdered and the only suspect, a lab assistant, is missing, Beck takes notice. Beck may be officially retired from government intelligence work, but he cannot ignore his training, experience, or gut reactions. When he discovers that the assistant is Arab he brings his theories to the local police.

Ottawa County's Chief Deputy Sheriff, Doug Gunderson, is somewhat aware of Beck's background and the pair has a friendship that goes back to school days. However, Gunderson is leery about starting a "terrorists in Red Wing panic" based on Beck's gut feelings and little hard evidence. When not one but two fertilizer trucks are hijacked, Beck begins to put the pieces together. He envisions an Oklahoma City-type bombing and the only target worth hitting would be the nearby Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant. Fearing a Chernobyl style meltdown, Beck continues his investigation despite the lack of support from any government agency or Gunderson. Beck has no faith in the FBI, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), state police, or power plant security to ward off a terrorist attack and calls in his ex-military friend, Terry "Bull" Red Feather, for help.

We meet perhaps the strangest sleeper cell imaginable. An Arab lab rat (desperate to show his worth to Al Qaeda) who is capable of turning a truck load of pot ash into a powerful bomb, and a pair of brainless, redneck anarchists led by a bitter and dying survivor of the 1979 Three Mile Island incident.

The author brings all the players together for a tour de force final few dozen pages that make *The 19th Element* one of the most entertaining, exciting thrillers I've read in a long time. Becker is a character that you can cheer for. The banter between Beck and his wife, and Beck and

Gunderson shows the author's substantial talent for writing dialogue. A relentless pace, quirky yet realistic dialogue, and fascinating, believable characters keep the pages turning. Considerable research, attention to detail, and a well-plotted story make this a memorable read. Highly recommended.

By William Potter for Reader's Choice Book Reviews

5.0 out of 5 stars Always a Beck Fan, October 13, 2011

By Madeover

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

Another Hooray for John Betcher and his character James "Beck" Becker. Beck is at it again fighting crime in Betcher's newest novel The 19th Element.

This book is the 2nd in the James Becker Thriller series. (I loved it too!) I was thrilled that Mr. Betcher enjoyed my review so much that he gave me a chance to read his 2nd book. I loved this one too. The story is about attorney James "Beck" Becker who just happens to be retired from government service. He and his wife Beth (who is also retired from government work) attempt life in the small town of Red Wing Minnesota.

Unfortunately for Beth her husband seems to struggle with small town lawyering. I loved what she said at the end of the book..."Babe. You can't keep playing Rambo. I like our life here in Red Wing. And I'd really love for us to grow old together." Her voice was playful but poignant."Doll" I said. (reviewers comment. I would love to be called 'Doll'.) "I can't stop being who I am. And part of that will always involve taking calculated risks. Would I be the same husband if I spent my days cooped up in that law office, or my evenings in front of the television?"

I loved this one part to me it just so describes Beck. I love his character. He is charming. He is trustworthy and as described by Beth, I see part Rambo and part; oh darn who is the Bruce Willis Die Hard character? You know who I mean. And well maybe a little Mel Gibson thrown in.

Betcher does a great job of telling a story. There is suspense, thrill and humor all rolled into one great book. I have to say though this book was a little more on the technical side than the previous book. And for me it was a little disappointing. But that is just me. What I missed was the "Beck" escapades. And the 'Beth' moments. But I was pleased to be introduced to one of their daughters.

Of course Bull (Becks friend and stalwart companion in crime fighting) and Gunner (the county Deputy Sheriff) all played apart in solving the crime and getting the bad guys. And sorry to disappoint but I am just not going to give any more of the story away. You'll just have to buy the book. Trust me you'll enjoy it.

I would highly recommend this book for all audiences. There was no foul language. And the

only bedroom scene was at the very end and was not suggestive or explicit at all. This book and the first in the series (no need to read book one first)But I highly recommend it!

5.0 out of 5 stars Make sure you have time to read cause you won't want to put it down!!, August 22, 2011

By Jessica "The Guardian of the Crossroads" (Florida)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

This was my first thriller type book to review and I must say it was AWESOME and I can't wait for more. Im not going to go into the story as I don't do spoilers but you just HAVE to check this book out!!! I started this book yesterday in the car (no I was not driving) and I just couldn't put it down!!

So if you are a love of thriller books than this one is deff for you!!!

4.0 out of 5 stars page turner, August 13, 2011

By Donna Muller "yesitis" (south dakota)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: The 19th Element, A James Becker Thriller (A James Becker Mystery/Suspense Novel) (Kindle Edition)

The character personality is real and true. The plot line is fascinating and, though predicatable, fascinating in the course of events.

5.0 out of 5 stars A realistic, page-turning thriller., August 1, 2011

By D. Dorow "Doug Dorow" (Minneapolis, MN)
(REAL NAME)

Amazon Verified Purchase

This review is from: The 19th Element, A James Becker Thriller (A James Becker Mystery/Suspense Novel) (Kindle Edition)

John Betcher has written a realistic, page-turning, pulse pounding thriller. The 19th Element is a thriller full of details to make you feel you are part of the story from beginning to end as the hero, Beck, uses his brains rather than brawn to defeat the terrorists.

I'm glad there are more books to read in the series because I'm hungry for more.

4.0 out of 5 stars An entertaining thriller you won't want to put down., July 14, 2011

By R. Guidice "rmg711" (Queens, NY)

(REAL NAME)

Amazon Verified Purchase

This review is from: The 19th Element, A James Becker Thriller (A James Becker Mystery/Suspense Novel) (Kindle Edition)

Mr. Betcher proves you don't have to get a novel produced by a big name publisher for it to be a success. My fingers kept hitting the advance button on my Kindle as the interesting story kept me in suspense. The writing was top-notch; a thoroughly professional job from start to finish. The main character, James Becker, proved to be a different type of hero. Not your typical tough guy, he was someone you could relate to because of his unpretentious style. Betcher also painted a detailed setting of the small Minnesota town in the book. I'm sure he must be a resident or live in the vicinity because of the way he described the surroundings. All in all, an impressive thriller about a frightening but realistic scenario of the times we live in. I'll be adding John Betcher's name to my list of authors to read.

5.0 out of 5 stars Timely Nuclear Thriller!, April 8, 2011

By SammySutton (Midwest)

Amazon Verified Purchase

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

John Betcher's work shines in this timely nuclear thriller; The 19th Element.

In the spirit of disclosure, I purchased, and read, The 19th Element because I thought it and the author seemed interesting. At no time did I enter an agreement with the author to read or review his work.

In The 19th Element, the preface displays an actual copy of a Daily Brief presented to then President George W. Bush, one month prior to 9/11. The memo expressed concern about a possible strike within the U.S. by Bin Laden. John Betcher's early use of this letter was dynamic. It gave credence to the scenario that followed, and remained foremost in my mind throughout.

The author has a fabulous way with words. I found a great deal of personality in his lighthearted and refreshing, terminology. I personally, liked the term lawyering, I spend many hours working with attorneys, but where I come from; the term is not used.

The 19th Element is part of a series of thrillers based on James Beck an attorney from Red Wing Minnesota. After completing a long career stint within the government, he and his wife have returned home with their two young daughters to settle into a healthy family environment. John Betcher develops awesome dynamics between James, and his wife. I simply loved their relationship. Beth is a decoder, and James openly adores and respects her intellectually.

The book is a fabulous well-written thriller about nuclear terrorism. John understands and conveys the inner-workings of the nuclear facility with expertise. In light of the Nuclear Plant disaster in Japan, John's thriller is a timely masterpiece, especially for those interested in the structure, and mechanics surrounding Nuclear Plants.

The 19th Element presents a plausible concern for the potential danger they possess. I highly recommend this James Becker Thriller.

5.0 out of 5 stars Are American nuclear reactors safe?, March 28, 2011

By M. Trazi Williams (Yokohama, Japan)

Amazon Verified Purchase

This review is from: The 19th Element, A James Becker Thriller (A James Becker Mystery/Suspense Novel) (Kindle Edition)

The 19th Element by John Betcher addresses the vulnerability of American nuclear reactors to terrorist attack. A cleverly plotted, but unlikely scenario involving an attack on a nuclear power plant in America's Heartland is fostered by the alliance of a Three-Mile Island survivor, a dimwitted anti-government couple, an al-Qaeda sympathizing scientist, and al-Qaeda-strange bedfellows indeed. Mr. Betcher's detailed description of the nuclear power plant is hauntingly familiar given the extensive media coverage of the nuclear reactor crisis in Japan. While the science in The 19th Element is exemplary, the question remains: why the 19th element (think Periodic Table) when other options are more probable and easier accessed? Therein lies a fundamental axiom in understanding international and domestic terrorism: think of the unthinkable because that is how the enemy thinks. The 19th Element is a highly recommended five-star read.

5.0 out of 5 stars You've never been scared so "good!", February 3, 2011

By Martha A. Cheves (Charlotte, NC)

(REAL NAME)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

Betcher Has Done it Again with his book The 19th Element - you've never been scared so "good!"

The 19th Element - Review by Martha A. Cheves, Author of Stir, Laugh, Repeat

"Gentlemen. You sit here in this room, insulated from reality, comfortable in your delusions that you are safe from international terrorism. In your imaginary world, your families are safe. Your neighbors are safe. We are all totally safe. Your delusions have led you to the conclusion that the nuclear catastrophe waiting to happen inside that fence across the parking lot is a fiction. Of course, you all know how extreme the consequences of a successful terrorist attack on the nuclear plant would be. But because of your fantasies, you discount the dangers - not only to

yourselves and your loved ones, but to everyone in the eastern half of the United States and possibly beyond. But what if the worst possible scenario proves not to be a fantasy at all, but a deadly fact?"

These words and more are spoken by James "Beck" Becker as he tries to convince a security group meeting at the Prairie River Nuclear Plant that there is very possibly a real threat of an attempt by Al Qaeda to run a plane full of explosives into their spent fuel pool. They simply aren't buying it.

After the murder of a professor who had been experimenting with potassium turns up on the shores of the Mississippi, Beck started putting things together. When he learned the name of the professor's assistant, Farris Ahmed, he knew he was on to something big. After researching potassium, as well as the procedures taken to secure nuclear waste, Beck was positive that there would be an attack -- and the nuclear plant would be the target. But getting the attention of those responsible for security without appearing to be a total fool was almost impossible.

In reading *The 19th Element*, I've had a quick enlightenment as to how power companies make power. I've learned what actually happens to "spent" nuclear fuel. I've also been educated on the true hatred that seeps from the influence of Al Qaeda. And to be totally honest with everyone, it scares the pure hell out of me! I can see the possibilities of a nuclear disaster such as the one envisioned in *The 19th Element* actually happening. My question is, are we truly prepared for this or anything even close to this happening? I can only pray that we are. *The 19th Element* is definitely a "wake-up America" book that we should all read and listen to.

5.0 out of 5 stars A Thought Provoking Take On the Dangers of Complacency, November 25, 2010

By W. Bentrin (Bucks County, PA)
(VINE VOICE) (REAL NAME)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

The 19th Element by John L. Betcher

A retired agent of some type is a small town attorney. James Becker has retired from a terrorism fight to live a sedentary life with his wife and girls safe in a small, insular community. This bucolic life is interrupted by Islamic terrorists' attack on a nearby nuclear plant.

I like the way Betcher has made James Becker very human. He isn't a invulnerable, Bondish, clock and dagger semi-super hero. Becker is a nosy, competent patriot who also wants to have a family life.

The 19th element aspect is thought provoking and plausible from what I remember from college. A well thought out plot makes this book work.

The story is frightening as it is taken right out of the front page of today's paper. The complacency of authorities and the territorial in fighting by the very people who are supposed to

keep us safe is demoralizing. I look forward to seeing Betcher's next work. This is a good book to read but it may keep you up at night.

I highly recommend this book.

5.0 out of 5 stars A Mind-Bending Suspense Thriller, November 15, 2010

By Apex Reviews (Durham, NC USA)

(VINE VOICE)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

(Official Apex Reviews Rating: 4.5 Stars)

When James "Beck" Becker, a former elite U.S. government intelligence operative, retires to his hometown of Red Wing, Minnesota, all he wants is to do is settle into a normal, routine life with his newly established law practice; however, when the body of a local university professor mysteriously turns up on the shores of the Mississippi River, Beck begins to suspect foul play. Shortly thereafter, the professor's assistant goes missing, two fertilizer trucks are hijacked and stolen, and even more strange events begin to unfold - putting Beck on high alert that something terrible is about to go down...little does he know, an all but forgotten terrorist organization has plans to re-launch itself on the international stage, and - unless Beck acts quickly enough to thwart their efforts - the small town of Red Wing will soon be the new Ground Zero...

Rich with intrigue and mind-bending suspense, The 19th Element is a compelling read. Throughout the pages of his enrapturing new political thriller, author John Betcher takes the reader on a nonstop, action-packed ride of true-to-life adventure. Alternating between the perspectives of Beck and the terrorist cell, The 19th Element is sure to keep readers guessing as the plot thickens, the characters clash, and the winding tale ultimately unravels at breakneck pace. After all, as a nation, our collective memories of the horrors of 9/11 are not that far removed, and with the looming threat of terror attacks omnipresent in our daily lives, Betcher does an effective job of reminding the reader - like Beck - to stay ever vigilant, lest the wounds of the past are tragically reopened...

An entertaining read.

Josee Morgan
Apex Reviews

5.0 out of 5 stars Another entry in the John 'Beck' Becker thriller series, highly recommended, September 9, 2010

By Midwest Book Review (Oregon, WI USA)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

Nuclear power is generally regarded as safe, clean, and sustainable. But its dangers come in the

exploits of evil. "The 19th Element" follows operative James Becker as he's placed against Al Qaeda and their plot to use a Minnesotan nuclear facility for the biggest terror attack in years. With only his wits and experience and a single friend, they are tasked with stopping terror, and it won't be easy. "The 19th Element" is another entry in the James 'Beck' Becker thriller series, highly recommended.

4.0 out of 5 stars A mystery and thriller that has something for everyone!, January 9, 2011

By Sheila A. Dechantal (Brainerd, Minnesota)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: The 19th Element: A James Becker Nuclear Thriller (Paperback)

You may think that there is nothing in Minnesota that grants a nuclear attack plan.

You would be wrong.

The Prairie River Nuclear Power Plant seems to be the target and with the help of a few Minnesotans as well as a Three Mile Island Survivor with a chip on his shoulder, things are looking a bit grim.

Yet just as things are beginning to look bleak, we find retired U S Government Intelligence, James Becker, living a mere six miles from the targeted plant. As John uses his past experience to put together the clues, he is also tasked with trying to convince the government of the threat.

Can't a retired guy catch a break?

Last year I had the opportunity to read John Betcher's first book, The Missing Element. In this book I was introduced to a character I really enjoyed, James Becker. James was light-hearted character who while dealing with serious matters, still had a snappy line here and there that made me smile and want to read more.

This past fall I was offered to read John's second book and I was glad to do so. It took me awhile to fit the book into my crazy schedule but once I sat down to read it.... I was back in the world of James Becker again.

I think what makes this book enjoyable for me is that John Betcher's writing style is down to earth. I can't help but like the life he writes into his character James Becker's DNA. SO while this topic would be one I would most certainly pass on, John writes it in such a way that I found it fascinating to research the clues and solve the mystery like a side kick in the story. I, being from Minnesota as well, enjoyed this setting around the familiar area of Red Wing, a place where you really are not expecting a body to wash up along the shores of the Mississippi.