

Book Review – Tom Clancy’s Op-Center: Scorched Earth

By George Galdorisi; St. Martin's Griffin; Trade Paperback; 320 pages

BY CHUCK OLDHAM (EDITOR) - AUGUST 9, 2016

George Galdorisi ably continues the Op-Center series with Tom Clancy’s Op-Center: Scorched Earth, the third book of the rebooted franchise.

Although Galdorisi went solo in writing Scorched Earth, it contains all of the gripping action that distinguished the previous two books. In Scorched Earth, a fictional ISIS leader vows a personal revenge against an American admiral after a U.S. Navy airstrike results in the death of his only son. He orders ISIS sympathizers on American soil to kidnap the admiral and transport him to Mosul for an execution to be carried out live on television. Meanwhile, losing patience when the investigation and budding rescue seem to grind on, the admiral’s son, a Navy SEAL, goes on a one-man mission to rescue his father.

There is no doubt concerning the antagonists’ – the terrorists’ – murderous plans. The only questions revolve around the details of those plans and how quickly they can be carried out. Will the terrorists have the time to carry out their plans? Will the Op-Center team and its allies be able to win their race against the clock? Galdorisi artfully weaves a narrative that maintains suspense through to the final pages.

As usual in this series, beginning with *Out of the Ashes* and continuing with *Into the Fire*, *Scorched Earth* contains a potent mix of conventional military operations, from Navy airstrikes and special operations forces raids on terrorist bases, to operations in the United States by Op-Center’s own domestic strike force (a fictional component of the FBI’s Critical Incident Response Group Hostage Rescue Team). Underlying and informing the kinetic actions of these forces are the investigations undertaken by the organization’s “Geek Tank” on desktops and online.

The late Tom Clancy has been called the father of the techno-thriller, but he is perhaps best known for books like *The Hunt for Red October* and *Red Storm Rising*, that centered around a different, bi-polar world – a Cold War world. The original Op-Center series, created with Steve Pieczenik, was a nod toward a new world order. *Scorched Earth* is a satisfying and entertaining read and a worthy addition to the revived series, adding more members to the cast of characters – including, I was pleased to see, an Adm. Oldham – and giving more insight into a world of hybrid warfare not so far removed from our own.

