



## Fault Line

*Barry Eisler*

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## **Fault Line** Barry Eisler

In Silicon Valley, the eccentric inventor of a new encryption application is murdered in an apparent drug deal.

In Istanbul, a cynical undercover operator receives a frantic call from his estranged brother, a patent lawyer who believes he is the next victim.

And on the sun-drenched slopes of Sand Hill Road, Silicon Valley's nerve center of money and technology, old family hurts sting anew as two brothers who share nothing but blood and bitterness wage a desperate battle against a faceless enemy.

Alex Treven has sacrificed everything to achieve his sole ambition: making partner in his high-tech law firm. But then the inventor of a technology Alex is banking on is murdered... and the patent examiner who reviewed it dies... and Alex himself narrowly escapes an attack in his own home. Off balance, out of ideas, and running out of time, he knows the one person who can help him is the last person he'd ever ask: his brother.

Ben Treven is a Military Liaison Element, an elite undercover soldier paid to "find, fix, and finish" high-value targets in America's Global War on Terror. Disenchanted with what he sees as America's culture of denial and decadence, Ben lives his detached life in the shadows because the black ops world is all he really knows--and because other than Alex, who he hasn't spoken to since their mother died, his family is long gone.

But blood is thicker than water, and when he receives Alex's frantic call, Ben hurries to San Francisco to help him. Only then does Alex reveal that there's another player who knows of the technology: Sarah Hosseini, a young Iranian American lawyer who Alex has long secretly desired... and who Ben immediately distrusts. As these three radically different people struggle to identify the forces attempting to silence them, Ben and Alex are forced to examine the events that drove them apart--even as Sarah's presence, and her own secret wants, deepens the fault line between them.

Emotionally charged and politically timely, *Fault Line* centers on a conspiracy that has spun out of the shadows and into the streets of America, a conspiracy that can be stopped only by three people--three people with different worldviews, different grievances, different motives. To survive the forces arrayed against them, they'll first have to survive each other.

## Fault Line Details

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## From Reader Review Fault Line for online ebook

### Jim says

A pretty good thriller. I liked Ben, the hero, better than John Rain. Wonderful mystery & great ending, but pretty typical "shoot 'em up, bang, bang" as my boys used to call media of this type. Tough guy op, a gorgeous girl, & some real bad guys to whack. It's all that, but a bit more as well. Not everyone is as good or bad as they seem & there's a brother & old family history to contend with, too. Anyway, it was fun & relaxing. I think I'll read another. (Think potato chips.)

Eisler is an author I've been interested in, not so much for his writing as for his decision to leave one of the Big 6 publishers & start self-publishing. If you're not familiar with this, you should look up J.A. Konrath, author of the Jack Daniels cop thrillers, Be the Monkey: A Conversation About the New World of Publishing Between Authors Barry Eisler and Joe Konrath. I read the original on his blog & then got a copy for free off Smashwords, but now it's \$1 on Amazon. It brings up a lot of points about book publishing in general & how it is changing.

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### Debi says

I fortunate to pick up an ARC of Barry Eisler's new stand-a-lone novel Fault Line when I was at Bouchercon this year. You should know I adore John Rain, so I was a little miffed that Barry dared write about another character. I needed my Rain fix. So I'm biased.

His new character Alex Trevens, a patent lawyer at a prestigious law firm becomes involved in the murder of his client who wrote a new encryption program. As luck would have it Alex's big brother is a undercover operative who reluctantly helps his little brother and his attractive Arab-descent associate stay alive from the powers to be from stealing the encryption program.

My quibble was the plot wasn't complex enough, no great twists, but the pacing was good. Barry did well on the characterization of Alex. The description of high power law offices and San Francisco were right on target.

It was an enjoyable romp. An easy read and I would look forward to reading more about Alex or his brother Ben.

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### Michael says

Brothers Alex and Ben Treven may have grown up in the same house, but they couldn't be any more different. Alex is a Silicon Valley lawyer who has found his fast-track at his firm when he allies himself with an eccentric programmer whose written a new encryption software. Ben in a special-forces operative, on assignment in the Middle East.

When the creator of the encryption software is killed and Alex narrowly avoids an attempt on his life, he's forced to reach out to his big brother for help. Ben reluctantly returns and the two must race against time to

figure out who's behind the attempts on Alex's life and why. Along the way, the two will feud over long-simmer family resentments and Sarah, who works at Alex's law firm as a junior associate.

"Fault Line" begins the story with a literal bang and rarely lets up for the next 300 pages. The story like a day of the TV series, "24" and like that show, the less you think about some of the plot twists and turns, the better. The novel is meant to be "popcorn" reading, though Barry Eisler does attempt to make it something more by throwing in the long-standing family history of Ben and Alex. The problem is the source of the tension is a bit too apparent from the first moments Eisler flashes backs to the days of Alex and Ben growing up.

But to be an enjoyable, popcorn read, the novel doesn't have to churn any new ground. And "Fault Line" doesn't. It's the type of story that is perfect for reading at the beach or the pool. Eisler's sequences of suspense work well, keeping the pages turning. And the mystery of why someone or some people want to kill for the new program will keep you interested to the very end.

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### **Joyce Lagow says**

A LibraryThing Early Reviewer book.[return][return]A software developer, who has invented a major new program for encryption of data, is murdered outside his home in California. His Silicon Valley lawyer, Alex, learns that an old friend who had been helping informally with the patent application for the new program, has suddenly died for no apparent reason. Then Alex himself comes under attack in his home, all within 24 hours of the developer's death. Frightened, Alex calls his brother Ben, a hit man for an Army covert unit that specializes in assassinations. Even though Ben and Alex have been alienated over events that occurred in their family years ago, Ben responds to his brother's call for help. Quickly, the two, along with Sarah, an Iranian-American associate of Alex's who had been helping on the patent application, are on the run for their lives.[return][return]I'm very fond of the thriller genre, and high hopes for this book when I first opened it. But very soon it became obvious that the book suffered from a major fault of its own, and that that fault was lethal.[return][return]No one expects a thriller to be a literary masterpiece with characters that will endure through the ages. You read in this genre for entertainment, not for mind-blowing insights. But the best of the genre, such as, for example, Daniel Silva's series with Gabriel Allon, are tautly written with interesting characters and good to excellent plots. Yes, there's violence and sex, but the violence and sex are integrated into the plot, not there simply because that will somehow help sell the book. Each time I read such a section in *Fault Line*, however, I had the immediate feeling that it was there, at that page and plot point, because Eisler was following some formula for the genre. The romantic interest and its development can be spotted from a continent away, and is of no interest whatsoever. It's there because the demands of the genre dictate its presence.[return][return]*Fault Line* is not tautly written; the writing is mediocre. The plot attempts to be politically now and the protagonists, all matchstick figures who never make it to one-dimensional, take sides on today's hot questions of basically do the ends justify the means as far as illegal operations and political assassinations are concerned, throwing in Iran for good measure. Eisler attempts to give his characters some semblance of humanity by placing the brothers in a family situation that creates the hostility, and there is much agonizing over the incident that caused the family to implode decades before. Actually, I found this the most interesting, because each brother turned out to be right and I thought that was a nice touch. It's just that the resolution was so badly written that you really didn't care what happened.[return][return]There is a great deal of exposition in the beginning as Eisler lays out the back story, that actually isn't bad it's probably the best-written section of the book. But the writing can not sustain the plot. I suppose the descriptions of hand-to-hand combat are realistic enough the hype about the book makes a good deal over Eisler's CIA training in this area--but frankly I found them boring.[return][return]Read only if you're left with nothing on hand for

written material but cereal boxes.

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## **Laura says**

4.5 stars

POV: 3rd Person: Alex Treven, Ben Treven, Sarah Hosseini

Mystery: Above Average

Sensuality: Warm

First in a new series about Ben Treven.

Alex Treven lives a simple life. He wakes in the same house he grew up in, works as an ambitious lawyer, goes back home to sleep in his childhood house, and does it all over the next day. When the case of a lifetime drops into his lap, he sees himself becoming partner in his law firm. When his client winds up murdered and Alex's life is threatened, he calls the one person he thinks can help...

Ben Treven lives a simple life. He wakes up in whatever city he is in, kills who he is told to, and moves on to the next city. When his brother calls him after 6 years of no contact, his simple life becomes complicated. He returns "home" to help his brother, but he isn't sure why.

This is my first Barry Eisler book and it was a savior for me. I've been in a reading rut and this one brought me out of it. I did not want to put it down. It was a fast-paced story with many facets. Alex and Ben have been estranged since they were teenagers and the only family they have left. Their past is woven into the present as they both come to terms with what happened to their family.

The three main characters-Alex, Ben, and Sarah are all very different and very flawed. I can't say that I would like any of them in real life, but they were all very real. Each only sees things through their own experiences and thinks the others are idiots. Ben is so wrapped up in the idea that Americans don't understand the "dirty" side of politics/security, that he begins to lose sight of what he is really doing. Alex is so lost in his idea of achievement and intelligence, that he comes across as whiny and annoying when faced with an unknown situation. Sarah is young and naive and blunt with her opinions. They are three sides of a triangle that need to come together to work.

Overall, this was an excellent read. I was interested and intrigued and found the whole story very plausible. I highly recommend this to fans of suspense in the intelligence (CIA) political genre.

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## **Jack says**

A very cool political thriller, set mostly in Silicon Valley, about the struggle to gain possession of a new high-tech encryption code. I had a great time cheering on Alex, Sarah, and Ben, the main characters, as they tried to evade a shadowy crew of villains from one end of the Bay Area to the other. The scenes in North Beach, San Francisco's Little Italy neighborhood, were especially vivid and enjoyable. I also appreciate the author's underlying message about the dangers of top-secret U.S. government surveillance programs here at home, and the risks of U.S. covert intelligence operations overseas.

Not quite a LeCarre-esque literary masterwork for the ages, but definitely a fun and relevant read. Five not-so-top-secret stars!

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### **Raynar Ramsay says**

Fault Line departs from the John Rain series that Barry is famous for but nevertheless the story is wonderful. This is one which I finished off in only a few sittings within a day and a bit. Barry has created new fresh characters all with their merits and flaws as human beings they different beliefs and conflicts that help builds up a brilliant plot and creates tension between all characters in the story, This book is filled with Espionage, assassins, sex. It is all in here. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the black op/Assassin world. Wonderful Read 5 stars.

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### **Andi says**

Yesterday, I had the privilege of reading Fault Line by Barry Eisler. Apparently, Eisler is quite well-known for his previous books, but to be honest, when I got asked to review the book, I had never heard of him (such is the life of an English professor, I suppose — too many literary novels, not enough thrillers). And a thriller this is. Set in Northern California (particularly Silicon Valley and San Francisco), the story pursues the life of Alex, a lawyer who has come upon the “hottest” software out there; in fact, it’s so hot that people connected to it are dying. In comes Ben, Alex’s brother and black ops agent for the U.S. government. Angrily, resentfully, but dutifully, Ben comes back across the world to “save” his brother. Meanwhile, Alex’s colleague, Sarah, is also in danger, and so the three become embroiled in a plot to figure out why people are killed for this piece of code and to keep themselves alive.

Eisler mixes in technology, military/spy technique, family pain, and a little romance to pull together a fast-paced novel that keeps the reader interested without leaving her with the feeling of manipulation or hyperbole that many thrillers do. The characters seem real and honest, and from what I know (remember, English teacher here), the guns, the fighting, and the technology ring true as well (although I admit that my knowledge of most of these things comes from watching The Unit on DVD from Netflix.) All in all, the book is very enjoyable.

I wouldn’t recommend this book if you are looking for something that you want to parse apart for glorious language or if you’re going to be studying complex character development - these things are not the purpose of a thriller, and thus, they suffer a bit. Yet, if you want a quick, fun, engrossing read that pulls you out of your world (I hope this isn’t your world) and gives you a way to think about new places (or revisit old ones like I did during the San Francisco scenes) and new adventures, then Fault Line is definitely for you. Take it to the beach; cuddle under a blanket with a cup of coffee; read it at the library while your kids go to story time; teach it (as I might) as a model of narrative arc that works well. It’s versatile and fun - a good summer read.

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### **Cheryl says**

Richard Hilzoy and his attorney, Alex Treven have arranged a meeting with Kleiner Perkins. A company who is considered to have the Midas touch. Richard is really excited to meet with the people of Kleiner as he

has come up with a really great inventor. It is called the Obsidian, the world's most advanced encryption algorithm, that is it will be the world's most advanced as soon as he and Alex can seal the deal. Alex has been striving hard for the past few years to move up in the law firm he works for. He just might have received his biggest break with his latest client Richard. Alex has a bad feeling when Richard doesn't show up for their meeting. He tries calling him but just gets his voice message machine.

Shortly after, Alex gets his answer as to why Richard Hilzoy didn't show up for their meeting with Kleiner Perkins. A detective Gamez with the San Jose Police Department informs Alex that Mr. Hilzoy's body was discovered outside his home. It looks like a drug deal gone wrong. Alex suspects something is up, especially when his good friend Hank Shiffman dies. Supposedly Mr. Shiffman died of a heart attack but Alex knows that can't be right as Hank was the healthiest man he ever knew. It just so happens that Hank was helping Alex and Richard with the Obsidian project. Alex is the only one left alive who has any knowledge of what Richard was working on. Alex arrives home to find someone is in his house. Alex scares the intruder away. It seems someone or somones would do anything to get their hands on Obsidian...even kill for it!

Alex is fearful that his last hour is rapidly approaching. He turns to the one person he can count on to help him...his brother. Ben Treven works for the military as a skilled killer for the Joint Special Operation Command. He takes out the bad guys. Ben hasn't seen or talked to his family in a very long time. So you can imagine his surprise when he receives an email from Alex asking for his help. Ben knows he can't ignore Alex no matter how much he wants to as Alex is his little brother. Ben doesn't know what kind of trouble Alex has gotten himself into this time but whatever it is it must be big.

While I have never read anything by Mr. Eisler before I did enjoy this book. I just wish I could have gotten into it more as it had good potential. There was lots of action and adventure. What I feel the issue was for me is that the characters didn't draw me in and make me want to stay. So I guess you could say I did find a little fault with Fault Line but not enough to make me not want to give Mr. Eisler a second chance. I do have to say that I can see why his books are being made into movies.

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### **Jeffrey says**

A really superior thriller that grabs hold of you and takes you for a wild and satisfying ride. Unputdownable. Read it in a day.

Alex Trevian is a lawyer in California who has one client, who has invented a special technological project, but which also has a sub program inside it with a secret. Its a secret that some government and various nefarious people want to keep quiet permanently. The inventor is terminated with extreme prejudice is what looks like a drug killing. A patent officer employer who was working on the patent office application dies of a heart attack. Alex stops a home invasion, and runs for help to the only person he can think of -- his brother Ben, who just happens to be an assassin who works for the us government. Ben joins Alex in California, and Alex's beautiful assistant, Sarah, a lawyer of Iranian background, and tries to keep Alex and Sarah alive long enough to find out what is going on. there is a subplot about the reason that Alex and Ben do not talk that is believable, and the suspense and thrills really go places. Plus the ending makes sense.

A Winner and an author firing on all cylinders.

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### **Mohammed says**

A exciting action,spy thriller and more politically realistic novel than i expected.

I would have rated it 4 stars because i enjoyed it very much but the action scenes it could have been better ,like his John Rain series.

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### **Tracy T. says**

Not my favorite Barry Eisler Book. But still good. Good narration by Barry Eisler (audible review)

3.5 stars story. This wasn't my favorite book Barry Eisler book but it was still interesting. I like his story telling, it is easy to follow along and flows very well.

The story line and plot were okay. I wasn't a big fan of Ben or Alex at first, especially Ben. But then he kind of grew on me. I wasn't a fan of the "it was Ben's fault" him blaming himself was understandable but his brother blaming him was a bit douchbagish. IMO. Glad they got through that.

I am looking forward to the next book in this series it does sound even better than this book.

As for the narration, it was good. I like an author that can narrate his own work well. He does a good job on the female voices and has a nice reading voice.

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### **Bryn says**

I enjoy the John Rain books, but this stand-alone (or perhaps the first in a new series?) didn't even remotely match up. It spend most of the book on the emotional disconnect between two brothers and the action was secondary. It also ended strangely, too easily wrapping up the plot. It was a bit like Eisler decided he was done with the book, so he finished it off as quickly as possible.

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### **D.G. says**

I'm a big fan of Barry Eisler (both his books AND his narrations) but this really didn't do it for me. There was just...TOO.MUCH...

That's not why I read thrillers. I want action, excitement, kick-assery on an atomic level. Not family fights, recriminations or whining. All of the characters were so annoying that I wanted to repeatedly kick them in the soft parts.

Alex Treven is a lawyer in Silicon Valley. After one of his clients is murdered and he realizes he's next, he

calls his big brother for help. Ben is in the military and in the habit of saving his brother from trouble so even though they are estranged, he goes to help. As soon as he returns, he and his brother started fighting and it pretty much didn't stop until the end. It was tiresome. I understand that one of Mr. Eisler's strengths as a writer is the "damaged MC" and who else but family can damage a person this much but I can take drama when I'm already invested in the character. As the first book in the series, there was just too much of it.

Something else I didn't like was how Ben kept dropping people so obviously that it could get back to him. I was amazed the police didn't show up at some point and arrest him.

I DID like the ending and I'll probably read the next in the series because it connects with Rain #7. Otherwise, I probably would have skipped it.

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### **Steve says**

What a good book! Very believable, which is sometimes a problem with this genre. Our "good" guy is a tough guy to beat all tough guys, but you find out he's not a machine after all. I'll be looking for more in this series!

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