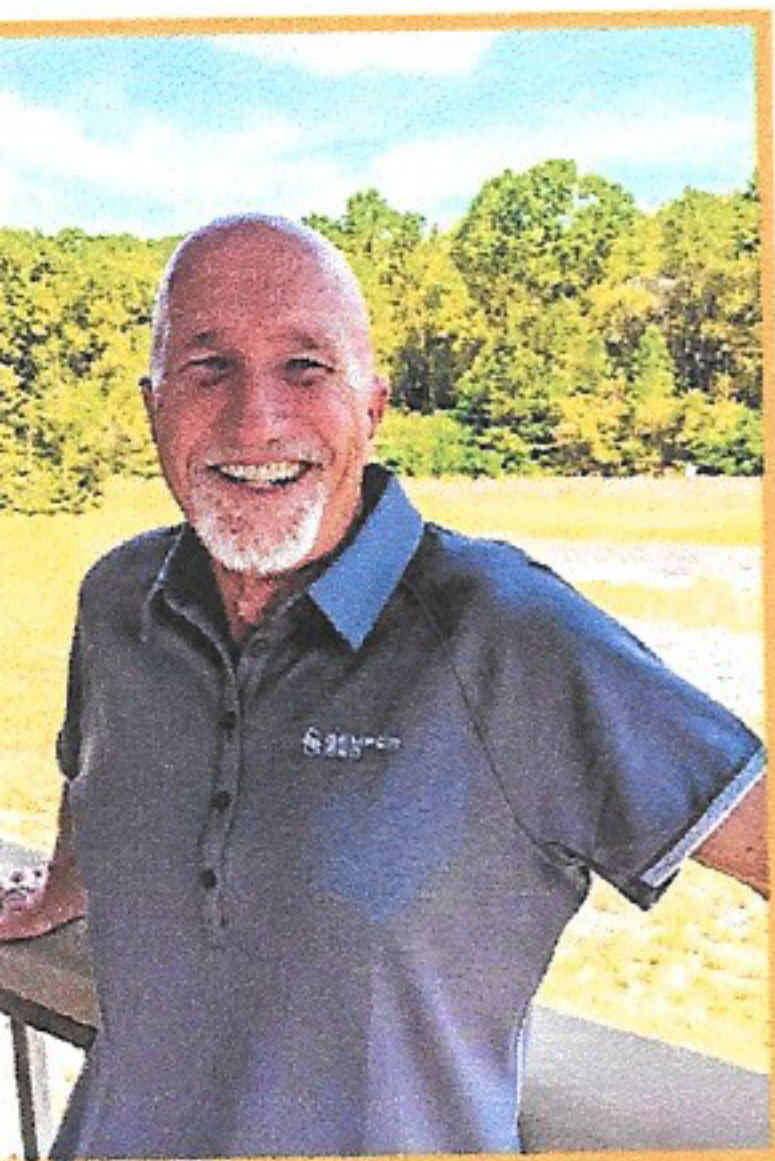


Book Reviews



By William J. (Jay) Carson

Disclaimer: These are the author's subjective opinions, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any organization or other individual. A human prepared this article, with assistance from Microsoft Editor and Grammarly.

Some cybersecurity soapbox speakers are saying to focus on your particular area and not worry about other areas. I think to be a cybersecurity professional you need a general awareness of all the profession's areas. Please never stop your professional continuing education/learning program.

Some book review readers may think my "Metadata" statements on readability (passive voice) are pointless. In addition to encouraging your professional reading, my secondary goal is for smart technical people (like you!) to author books that are read. Plenty of excellent writers with limited technical knowledge beat the cybersecurity pros in the publishers' competition! Passive voice percentage is an indicator of how difficult the reader is going to find your book. Sure, they might plow through a classic or a coursebook regardless of difficulty, but if you want to write for the cybersecurity community at large, you need to make it readable.

Book #1 of this review, here we go:
Faux, Zeke. Number Go Up: Inside Crypto's Wild Rise and Staggering Fall. Crown Currency (2023).
Sound Bite: Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat (Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad).

If you are one of the cryptocurrency speculation devotees, and think all regulated financial intuitions are inherently evil, you are going to hate this book! You will also hate human trafficking tied so effectively to cryptocurrency abuses. For me, I am going to be a little more polite on those scamming calls, as they may be human trafficking victims.

er. My public library has a copy, so expect it in your library.

I took a one-page sample of the text to analyze for readability. Using a Wikipedia article about the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test, the writing level and style measurement is high school level. There was 0% passive voice in my sample, and please note a low percentage is typical of professional writers. This article is under 5% passive voice, for comparison.

Table of Contents (abbreviated/modified and annotated in bold font in parenthesis by me)

1. "I Am Freaking Nostradamus" (**Protect me from my friends**)
2. Number Go Up Technology (**OK, but limited in tech detail**)
3. Doula for Creation (**Egos!**)
4. The Plastic Surgeon (**These billionaires came to crypto differently**)
5. Getting Hilariously Rich
6. Cat and Mouse Tricks
7. "A Thin Crust of Ice"
8. The Name's Chalopin. Jean Chalopin. (**Inspector Gadget - no, really!**)
9. Crypto Pirates
10. Imagine a Robin Hood Thing
11. "Let's Get Weird"
12. "Click, Click, Click, Make Money Make Money" (**Think Wall Street attitudes before the 1929 crash**)
13. Play to Earn
14. Ponzinomincs (**Yep!**)
15. All My Apes Gone (**You will not believe this! You really will not believe this!**)
16. It's the Community, Bro
17. Blorps and Fleezels
18. Pig Butchering (**The public is the pig, butchering = scam**)
19. "We Have Freedom"

Almost 400 years ago financial speculation over tulip bulbs struck the well-established Dutch business community. Although "Tulip Mania" was not actually as bad as its hype, the event does point out how ridiculous people can be. In your mind swap out 'tulip bulb' with 'cryptocurrency,' and you will get my point.

In the case of cryptocurrency, people with exceptional training and experience in science and technology sometimes function as if they do not respect the conventional rules, especially of law and ethical financial management. Are they so smart and paper-rich that they can hire lawyers to get them out of any problem? In the book photo, Sam Bankman-Fried looked unhappy as he was being extradited to the US after Bahamian jail time. Cyber entrepreneurs should take heed before deciding to get 'edgy.'

Another book, Michael Lewis' Going Infinite: The Rise and Fall of a New Tycoon is out, and he has a terrific business writing reputation. I like Number Go Up better. Do not think Number Go Up is a 'rush to press' book to capitalize on the hype. The research and investigative reporting are meticulous. Zeke Faux has extensive footnotes compiled at the end of his book, as he covers the cryptocurrency scene.

The Author

Zeke Faux is a business news reporter with a bachelor's degree from Cornell. He has 13+ years on the business news beat. I have not seen evidence of an IT or cybersecurity background, and it shows in his otherwise excellent writing. In his defense, he did begin explaining cryptocurrency with the mysterious Satoshi Nakamoto, so I think he does know the fundamentals.

The Metadata

A 2023 publishing date! The online ordering cost, including shipping, is under \$25. The hardcover version is under 300 pages. You can cut that cost if you use an e-read-

20. No Acceptamos Bitcoin (**What really happened when El Salvador went officially crypto**)
21. Honey is Better (**Arrogance**)
22. Assets Are Not Fine
23. Inside the Orchid

Hill, Kashmir. **Your Face Belongs To Us: A Secretive Startup's Quest to End Privacy as We Know It. Random House (2023).**

Sound Bite: Halloween may be over, but facial recognition technology is very scary. Do not let technology out of the lab without studying all societal impacts and getting ethical frameworks/public protections in place.

You may hate the idea, on an ethical basis, of artificial intelligence systems using face recognition at all. Lord of the Rings fans may liken it to the "One Ring to Rule Them All"; something to be destroyed. Others may think the concept of "Forbidden Fruit" has not worked since Adam and Eve, so we had better understand it and establish legal safeguards. Regardless of your viewpoint, this book will add value to your decision-making.

This is a book about the birth of a company called Clearview AI, and where commercial face recognition technology was in late 2022 - early 2023. It is the result of years of investigative reporting and detailed research. It will make your mind spin with ethical considerations. Warning - this is not a technical book to tell you how facial recognition can be coded. It is much more about its pervasiveness, power, current limitations, and its dangers.

The Author

Kashmir Hill has been a technology and privacy reporter for the New York Times for over four years. She has a bachelor's degree from Duke and a master's in journalism from NYU. She has been reporting for over 15 years. She has reported for Gizmodo and Forbes.

The Metadata

A 2023 publishing date! The online ordering cost, including shipping, is under \$30, again half with an e-reader. The hard-cover book is over 300 pages, including extensive notes pages. My local public library system has a couple of copies, so I expect yours will as well.

I took a one-page sample of the text to analyze for readability. Using a Wiki-

pedia article about the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test, the writing level and style measurement is high school level. There was around 4% passive voice in my sample, and it reads well. Again this article is about 5% passive voice, for comparison.

Table of Contents (abbreviated/modified and annotated in bold font in parenthesis by me)

Part I The Face Race

1. A Strange Kind of Love (**Introduction of some of the principal players**)
2. The Roots (350 B.C. - 1880s) (**Face reading Pseudoscience**)
3. "Fatface is Real" (**Making cruel assumptions about people based on facial characteristics**)
4. If At First You Don't Succeed (1956-1991)
5. A Disturbing Proposal (**Smartcheckr, predecessor of Clearview AI**)
6. The Snooper Bowl (2001) (**Facial Recognition at the Super Bowl**)
7. The Supercomputer Under the Bed
8. The Only Guy Who Saw It Coming (2006-2008) (**Birth of privacy landmark 2008 Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act**)
9. Death to Smartcheckr

Part II Technical Sweetness

10. The Line Google Wouldn't Cross (2009-2011) (**Line = Facial recognition**)
11. Finding Mr. Right
12. The Watchdog Barks (2011-2012) (**Watchdog = FTC**)
13. Going Viral
14. "You Know What's Really Creepy?" (2011-2019) (**AI Franken quote**)
15. Caught in a Dragnet
16. Read All About It

Part III Future Shock

17. "Why the (expletive) Am I Here?" (2020) (**The infamous false arrest of Robert Williams**)
18. A Different Reason to Wear a Mask (**COVID time**)
19. I Have a Complaint
20. The Darkest Impulse (**Public shaming enabled by facial recognition**)
21. Code Read (**or Floyd Abrams (representing Clearview) v. the ACLU**)

22. The Future is Unevenly Distributed
 23. A Rickety Surveillance State
 24. Fighting Back
 25. Tech Issues
- Happy Reading!

PS - If you have a book you want me to read & review, please use the email address in my bio to let me know! Thank you to ISSA's co-chair of the Privacy Special Interest Group, Janelle Hsia, for recommending next month's selections.

Up next month:

- Hoepman, Jaap-Henk. *Privacy Is Hard and Seven Other Myths: Achieving Privacy through Careful Design*. The MIT Press (2021).
- Buolamwini, Joy. *Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What Is Human in a World of Machines*. Random House (2023).

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The Cyber Librarian

Additional sources used in the article:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whom_the_gods_would_destroy,_they_first_make_mad
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulip_mania
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ponzi_scheme
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biometric_Information_Privacy_Act
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch%E2%80%93Kincaid_readability_tests
6. LinkedIn profiles for authors listed, where available.

About the Author

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