



Pandemic: A Novel

By Scott Sigler

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Scott Sigler's Infected shocked readers with a visceral, up-close account of physical metamorphosis and one man's desperate fight for sanity and survival, as "Scary" Perry Dawsey suffered the impact of an alien pathogen's early attempts at mass extinction. In the sequel Contagious, Sigler pulled back the camera and let the reader experience the frantic national response to this growing cataclysm.

And now in Pandemic, the entire human race balances on the razor's edge of annihilation, beset by an enemy that turns our own bodies against us, that changes normal people into psychopaths or transforms them into nightmares.

To some, Doctor Margaret Montoya is a hero—a brilliant scientist who saved the human race from an alien intelligence determined to exterminate all of humanity. To others, she's a monster—a mass murderer single-handedly responsible for the worst atrocity ever to take place on American soil.

All Margaret knows is that she's broken. The blood of a million deaths is on her hands. Guilt and nightmares have turned her into a shut-in, too mired in self-hatred even to salvage her marriage, let alone be the warrior she once was.

But she is about to be called into action again. Because before the murderous intelligence was destroyed, it launched one last payload — a soda can-sized container filled with deadly microorganisms that make humans feed upon their own kind.

That harmless-looking container has languished a thousand feet below the surface of Lake Michigan, undisturbed and impotent . . . until now.

Part Cthulhu epic, part zombie apocalypse and part blockbuster alien-invasion tale, *Pandemic* completes the Infected trilogy and sets a new high-water mark in the world of horror fiction.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Q&A with Scott Sigler (Interviewed by Carl Zimmer)



Scott Sigler, Author of "Pandemic"



Carl Zimmer, Interviewer

Carl Zimmer is a columnist at the *New York Times*, where his column “Matter” appears each Thursday. He has written twelve books, and also writes regularly about science for magazines including *National Geographic* and *Wired*.

Q. You've based a whole series of books on the horror of these parasitic alien creatures. Why do you think people are so scared of them? It can't be just a fear of death, right? Imagine, *Cardiac: A Horror Novel of Heart Disease*. I mean, it just doesn't have the same snap as *Infected*. So what's going on?

A. As humans, we have a universal fear of something getting inside of us, working against us, hurting us or even *killing us*. We also dread losing control, being manipulated to do things we don't want to do, losing our free will—the amorphous fear of Big Brother, for example, or the ongoing fascination with regular folk turned into brain-hungry zombie hordes. A parasite that can turn you into a paranoid killer while at *the same*

time eating you from within combines those terrors.

My books resonate because the parasitic “bad guy” isn’t something you can run away from, or lock your doors against. It gets *inside you*, becomes a part of you, and destroys who you are. Once you’re infected, there is no escape.

Q. There is sometimes nothing quite as boring as a scientific paper. And that’s a good thing. Science needs to focus on the details, relentlessly, in order to move towards the truth. So how do you draw from science to create fiction that people want to keep reading?

A. As important as science is to my books, I’m always very aware that the driving force needs to be the *story*, not the *idea*. That’s always been the essence of science fiction, using the experiences of characters we can connect with to convey a larger concept. In transmuting that approach into horror fiction, hard science provides realism and validity that makes the scary stuff even scarier: everything seems more frightening because the reader feels that *this could really happen*. Vampires are scary as hell, but there is a safety in that fear because we know (most of us do, anyway), that they don’t exist. With science-based horror, the reader watches pieces being assembled, knows those pieces are *real*, and that makes for a different experience.

Q. You are writing science-based horror in an age of — shall we say — pseudoscience horror. Why do you stay away from the paranormal?

A. Paranormal horror is great and, as a *reader*, I enjoy it. As a *writer*, however, I naturally gravitate to telling stories that pass the “sniff test” of something that could really happen, and could happen right now.

If you have a super-powered Big Bad that can change reality with the wave of an ancient hand, then anything is possible and the rule-set can change at the author’s whim. I can read those stories; I’m just not adept at writing them. I’m more comfortable telling a tale where the world around us is the world around us, not camouflage for a hidden realm where physics don’t apply.

In that way, I think of myself more as a thriller author using horrific elements than a “horror author,” which usually implies use of the supernatural and/or undead that have a scientific explanation. When my stories do drop a fantastic, unexpected element, I want my readers to be able to go back and think, “This is perfectly inline with the rest of the story; I could have seen this coming but I missed it.”

Q. You’ve mentioned in the past that my nonfiction book *Parasite Rex* influenced you. Just out of personal curiosity, what happened?

A. *Parasite Rex* was part of my original research for the first book in this series, *Infected*, and two facts in it blew me away. The first was that parasites make up *two-thirds* of the species on this planet, meaning that parasitism is the dominant survival strategy. Parasites *win*.

The second thing was that parasites can, quite literally, mind-control their hosts and destroy the host’s survival instinct. Talk about *true* horror: parasites can force hosts to commit suicide, either by leaving their natural environment, or by *making them attracted to their predators*.

When I started applying what I learned in *Parasite Rex* to human hosts, it created disturbing, deeply unsettling possibilities — as anyone who has read *Infected* can tell you.

Q. To complete the circle from nonfiction to fiction and back, do you find your novels can entice people to find out more about science? Are you a gateway drug for knowledge?

A. My first responsibility is to tell a well-structured story that doesn't "cheat" by making up new rules when it is convenient for the author. "C" is believable and possible because "B" was already done, and "B" seems real because we all learned about "A" in high school. When I do it right, the story feels complete and has a logical — if completely over the top — ending. That's what makes my readers happy.

I feel my *second* responsibility, however, is to show just how damn cool science is. Many of my readers Google the seemingly far-out discoveries and technologies they find in my stories, and are shocked to learn these things actually exist. From there, I hope in my heart of hearts that they keep searching and keep learning.

From [Booklist](#)

Sigler's gritty Infected trilogy wraps up as the author takes humanity to the brink of extinction. The extraterrestrial invaders, who came to Earth in the form of a virus that takes over the human body, seemed to have been vanquished or at least seriously roadblocked in the last book (*Contagious*, 2009). But the aliens' last-ditch attempt to exterminate humanity lies, waiting to be activated, at the bottom of one of the Great Lakes. Dr. Margaret Montoya, who has already done more than her share to keep humanity from being wiped out, is coerced out of self-imposed retirement to investigate some strange goings-on in Lake Michigan and finds herself on the front lines of the alien invaders' most powerful attack. As human beings turn into cannibalistic monsters, and it seems impossible to contain this new threat, Margaret puts her own life on the line to save billions. Sigler's brand of visceral, in-your-face horror, complemented by well-drawn characters and some very smart writing, will make this a surefire hit with horror and sf aficionados. --David Pitt

Review

Praise for *Pandemic*:

"With its razor-sharp prose and attention to detail, combined with skin-crawling body horror and apocalyptic threat, *Pandemic* reads like the love child of Michael Crichton and David Cronenberg. I haven't been this creeped out by a book in a long time."--James S.A. Corey, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Leviathan Wakes*

"This one's a killer. In *Pandemic*, our chance against the apocalypse hangs by a slender thread of hope. Sigler brings serious game with a book that rocks the action while delving deep into character. Highly recommended."--Jonathan Maberry, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Extinction Machine*

"Page-turning, spellinding, horrifying, and thrilling...a pulse-pounding alien disease outbreak-slash-invasion story."--Ramen Naam, author of *Nexus*

Praise for Scott Sigler's *Infected* and *Contagious*:

"Fraught with tension...*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* meets *The Hot Zone*." --*Rocky Mountain News*

"[An] amped up read...full of pressure-cooker mind games." --*Entertainment Weekly*

"A pulpy masterpiece of action, terror, and suspense."—James Rollins

"Rip-snorthing, gun-blasting, autopsy-performing action, complete with explosions and forensic science." --*Sacramento News & Review*

"Nothing short of incredible...continues the work that Robert A. Heinlein left undone, but it's also a horror

novel, a military thriller, a mystery...you've never read anything like it." -*Bookreporter.com*

"Gutsy, ambitious, and completely seductive...a definite must-read." -*Booklist*

"A marvel of gonzo, in-your-face, up-to-the-minute terror."—Lincoln Child

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Darren Meekins:

What do you in relation to book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what you problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They have to answer that question simply because just their can do this. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this specific Pandemic: A Novel to read.

Roderick Donnell:

This book untitled Pandemic: A Novel to be one of several books this best seller in this year, here is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this book in the book retailer or you can order it by way of online. The publisher in this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, as you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason to you personally to past this e-book from your list.

Marquita Oswald:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their sparettime with their family, or their friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, going to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book may be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the e-book untitled Pandemic: A Novel can be excellent book to read. May be it may be best activity to you.

Gloria Castaldo:

Pandemic: A Novel can be one of your basic books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to place every word into joy arrangement in writing Pandemic: A Novel yet doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource information that maybe you can be certainly one of

it. This great information can easily drawn you into completely new stage of crucial considering.

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