

Digital Mayhem

"Burn-in" by P. W. Singer and August Cole is a mystery-thriller in the police-procedural mode. Lara Keegan is an FBI agent and former military veteran. Her unique set of skills and experience qualify her to field test an advanced police robot. Keegan is soon in a clandestine struggle between technocrats and Luddites.

The narrative occurs in the near future which is depicted with scary vividness. Wearable computers have become commonplace. Humans have been laid off from most of the crucial jobs, which are now performed by robots and-or expert networks.

The gig economy is where most folks find employment. And the pay scales are rock bottom. Indeed it's hard to find jobs that society will value at all, since most essential products and services are already provided by robotic automation.

Surveillance Capitalists dominate the digital world as well as everyday life. They've evolved AI systems that track everyone and everything. The majority of folks can barely earn enough to eat and pay the rent.

Suddenly, there are a series of attacks on the social infrastructure. Keenan and her robot partner must investigate. They become focal points which will determine whether technology can heal the social fabric or whether Luddite rebels can demolish the entire technological house of cards.

This novel is engaging and well-written. The characters will intrigue and challenge readers. What's more, the narrative conveys a chilling glimpse at how our society may appear in the not-too-distant future. Five stars. Highly recommended.