

# A Journey into Techno-Thriller Fiction with BREAKFIELD AND BURKEY

In the vast landscape of literature, where genres intersect and narratives evolve, there emerges a unique blend of technology, history, and suspense in the Enigma Series crafted by authors Breakfield and Burkey. Rooted in over two decades of professional experience, their combined expertise forms the foundation of captivating stories that seamlessly weave together the past and present of technological innovation.

Breakfield, a seasoned technology expert with a penchant for delving into the intricacies of security, networking, and digital realms, joins forces with Burkey, whose focus on optimizing customer experiences in the technology domain adds depth to their collaborative efforts. Together, they breathe life into the Enigma Series, a collection of award-winning tales that transcend age and gender boundaries, offering readers a fresh perspective on the possibilities and perils of modern technology.

In our exclusive interview with Breakfield and Burkey, we explore the genesis of their literary journey, from the inception of the Enigma Series to the intricacies of blending historical events with contemporary technological landscapes. Their insights shed light on the challenges of crafting compelling narratives while staying true to the ever-evolving world of technology.

Throughout the interview, Breakfield and Burkey offer glimpses into their dynamic partnership, revealing how their individual interests and professional backgrounds influence the storytelling process. From the creation of multidimensional characters to the exploration of ethical dimensions in technology, they provide fascinating insights into the intricate balance between fiction and reality.

As we delve deeper into the Enigma Series, Breakfield and Burkey unveil the secrets behind keeping the narrative fresh and engaging across twelve books, each offering a stand-alone experience while contributing to a cohesive universe. From character development to the incorporation of real-life IT industry experiences, they offer a behind-the-scenes look at the craftsmanship that goes into crafting a

*Breakfield and Burkey unravel Enigma Series, blending history and technology. Dynamic duo discusses ethical dilemmas, character depth, AI's role, and professionalism shaping authenticity in techno-thriller fiction.*

captivating reading experience.

With themes ranging from the ethical implications of technology to the misuse of artificial intelligence, Breakfield and Burkey continue to push the boundaries of techno-thriller fiction, offering readers a thought-provoking journey through the complexities of the digital age. As they embark on new literary ventures, we eagerly anticipate the next chapter in their thrilling saga.

Join us as we embark on a journey into the heart of the Enigma Series, where history, technology, and imagination converge to create an unparalleled reading experience.

"Breakfield and Burkey are masterful storytellers, seamlessly blending history, technology, and suspense in the Enigma Series. Their dynamic partnership and keen insights elevate techno-thriller fiction to new heights."

**The Enigma Series is deeply rooted in the history of technology, particularly the enigma encryption machine from WWII. How did the idea of blending historical events with modern technology come about, and what challenges did you face in creating this unique narrative?**

The enigma encryption machine is the beginning of the computer age. Encrypted communications are at the core of everything we do or ask of computers. Computers broke the enigma encryption device in 1942 when the Allies began reading their adversaries' plans. Ever since, the world has been adopting and advancing the breadth and depth of technology.

Modern-day technology users have bad actors from the Darknet one step ahead of the good guys. Growing up in tech has allowed us to watch the digital cat-and-mouse contest between computing adversaries. We naturally decided it made a foundation for fic-

tion we dubbed early on as Techno Thrillers. Each book in the Enigma Series has a different technical attack launched by the bad actors that the good guys/gals must defeat. Scary, relatable, and all too real.

**Your backgrounds are diverse, with Breakfield being a technology geek and Burkey having a strong focus on customer-experience technology. How do your individual interests and professional experiences influence the dynamic when co-authoring the books?**

Response: As technologists, we were privy to many digital solutions born before most folks saw or adopted them. We speculate how a bad actor would use this to an individual, business, or country's disadvantage. Breakfield scans the horizon for emerging technology, and Burkey watches customers plug it into their environment for personal or business use. They discuss troubling areas of the new offerings and how to avoid the pitfalls when adopting the new capabilities. Lucky for us, a conveyor belt of new technologies is headed for use, so we have plenty of story material.

**The R-Group in your series provides technology insights and analytics to various entities. How do you balance the fictional aspects of your storytelling with the real-world implications of technology, especially considering the rapid advancements we see today?**

Response: Sometimes we don't. Weeks before we released book 10, The Enigma Source, which delves into the cryptocurrency battles between providers touting theirs as the best, Venezuela made good on our prediction that they would be forced to institute a Central Bank Cryptocurrency to support their crippled economy.



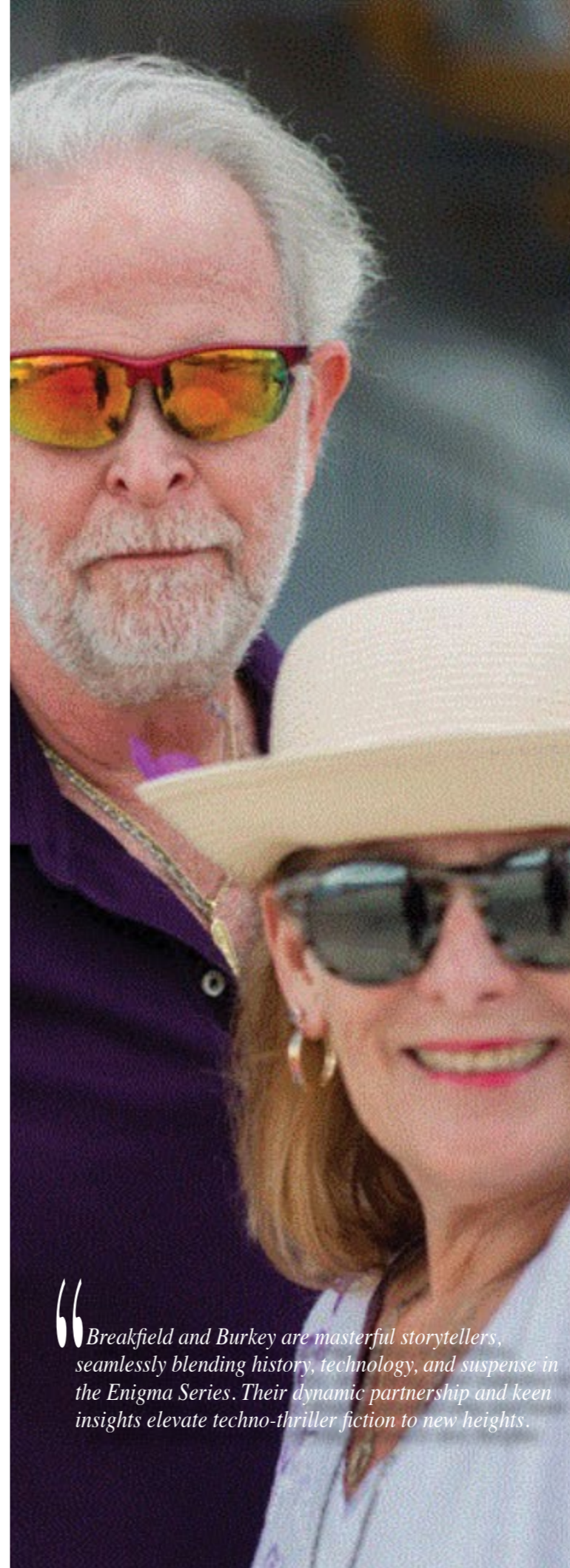
We sent a flame mail to Maduro asking him to hold off until we had released the thriller. We can't print his response here since your gentle audience of good breeding would be appalled at the coarse response. The last portion of this might have revealed too much, but then again, we are storytellers.

**In your speaker introduction, it's mentioned that technology is the weapon of choice in today's world. How do you explore the ethical dimensions of technology in your stories, and do you believe that the R-Group's actions reflect a certain moral stance regarding technology use?**

We watch security technicians and architects invest vast amounts of time trying to create secure but open environments for their companies to use various applications. Pick one headline like data breach, ransomware, DoS attacks, botnets, or phishing, and we'll show you someone made a mistake that resulted in a horrible day that made bad guys a fortune. Conversely, the bad actors from the Darknet fail over and over to breach the defenses until they find one attack vector no one considered. The digital extortion continues. Our bad actors always miss one thing: the R-Group knows how to use those same tools to trap and bring them to justice. That is why everyone wants them on the moral high ground.

**The Enigma Series not only delves into technology but also incorporates fun facts and trivia about both of you. How do your personal experiences, such as Charles's interest in flying and Rox's stepfather's involvement in The Manhattan Project, shape the characters and events in your books?**

If you work in the tech world, you can lose track of what's occurring in



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the rest of the world. Brilliant programmers were once characterized as sitting in a closed room with snacks and soda as requests were slipped under the door. They kept the door closed to avoid distractions when concentrating but people talk. To make our nerdy characters relatable, we make them three-dimensional with human elements for balance. We also pull character elements from people we've worked with or met during our travels. We've traveled to most of the places in our stories for business or with our families, though we often conduct extensive research on a local place of business.

Here's a special insight. There are several characters (okay, the evil ones) made up of individuals who really ticked us off at one point or another. These are the ones that get whacked by the R-Group. Admittedly, it is satisfying to destroy these bad actors in a story—revenge without jail time.

**Congratulations on winning the 1st place in the 2017 Texas Author Awards for Techno Thriller with The Enigma Series! How did the idea of blending technology, suspense, and real-life I.T. industry experiences come about, and what inspired you to embark on this thrilling literary journey?**

Breakfield and Burkey started writing technical manuals and white papers for publication with Auerbach Press and again for our companies. Nothing is more depressing than to finish a project, only to be told to start updating it because the technology environment changes so fast.

Burkey hit on writing fictional thrillers with technology baked into the background. Each one of the techno-thrillers in the Enigma Series contains a different technical attack leveled at the world. The R-Group sets out to uncover the bad actors and neutralize them. The fun part is to tease out a credible story with well-developed characters, good and bad, that keep the reader guessing what will happen next. In the writer workshops we've attended, they preached about writing what you know. We know people, and we know technology.

**With twelve books in The Enigma Series, how do you keep the narrative fresh and engaging for your readers? Are there overarching themes or elements that tie the series together?**

We hope your readers will appreciate that we don't use a standard formula for these books. Each book is written

as an excellent stand-alone thriller, but shares enough about the R-Group to make the story enjoyable to a first-time reader. The stories are richer if read in order. Our characters learn, grow, and adapt over time like people everywhere.

We had one reader complain about a detestable character she read in book four, The Enigma Wraith. By book six, The Enigma Always, she appreciated how the character had become redeemable. We believe multiple story threads and evolving characters deliver a more satisfying series with no cliffhangers to ruin a book.

**The Enigma Series features more than 100 characters inspired by real-life I.T. industry professionals. How do you balance the technical aspects of the storyline with character development, romance, and humor to create a well-rounded and captivating reading experience?**

Characters come and go. Some are short-lived, while others, like the R-Group, face growing character development and new challenges. In literature, yes, but in life, no one lives forever. A new generation of the R-Group family business is introduced in The Enigma Threat and the difficulties we put the team through. We have a few last times for some characters and several first times that set the stage for our next series the Enigma Heirs. In the real world and our techno-thrillers, children are the next ones to fight the good fight and achieve their best lives.

**In The Enigma Threat, you explore the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) being misused and its role in a world where the R-Group becomes the hunted. Can you share a bit more about the inspiration behind this theme and how it adds a unique dimension to the series?**

We see the role of AI resulting in two main outcomes. Breakfield and Burkey are familiar with AI use in controlled scenarios where the benefits are excellent. We also see the grim potential of misuse of AI and weaponizing it. In The Enigma Threat, we continue