

FOR YOUR FORENSIC BOOKSHELF

Edited by Tim Louwers, CPA, CISA, CIA

This volume of the *Journal of Forensic Accounting* includes four reviews of books that address some aspect of the prevention and detection of computer fraud. In today's ever evolving high-tech environment, we must maintain a heightened awareness of the dangers, as well as benefits, presented by computer technology.

Reviewed by Tim Louwers

Takedown: The Pursuit and Capture of Kevin Mitnick, America's Most Wanted Computer Outlaw – By the Man Who Did It

Tsutomu Shimomura with John Markoff
1996, 325 pp.
Hyperion, Inc.

Takedown is a technological thriller that chronicles computer security expert Tsutomu Shimomura's pursuit and capture of notorious computer hacker Kevin Mitnick. Known as the Dark Side Hacker, Kevin Mitnick allegedly plundered the Internet at will, stealing files and information from computer systems throughout the world in the 1980's and early 1990's. He was suspected of many computer related frauds including the computer network theft of software from several cellular telephone companies.

This non-fiction tale illuminates the good, the bad, and the ugly of the computer world. Shimomura's pursuit of Mitnick began after his computer network at the San Diego Supercomputer Center suffered an attack. Angered by the attack and others that followed, Shimomura was determined to find the mysterious intruder. His quest aided the FBI in Kevin Mitnick's arrest and conviction.

Takedown is a real life-thriller – a manhunt conducted entirely over telephone wires and in the deep dark labyrinth of computer networks. Reading about the capture of Kevin Mitnick in itself is fascinating, but reading it as told by the person who did it lends greater credibility to the story. While often technical, Shimomura and co-author/journalist John Markoff offer clear and insightful layman explanations of how cyberspace works and the problems and controversies it has introduced.

With the daily developments in the technology industry, it is important to realize how quickly networked computers can be harmed. Through networks, any individual with time, money and motivation can remotely attack a system – read, delete, add, copy, and even reroute information. *Takedown* is an important story that helps security professionals develop a better awareness of the importance of Internet security.

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