

## Psychopaths Are Everywhere

**Robert J. Sawyer's first novel in three years draws on cutting-edge research**



What if the person next to you was a psychopath? And that person over there? And your boss? Your spouse? That's the chilling possibility brought forth in bestselling author **Robert J. Sawyer's** new novel *Quantum Night*. Psychopaths aren't just murdering monsters: anyone devoid of empathy and conscience fits the bill, and Sawyer's new science-fiction thriller suggests that there are as many as *two billion* psychopaths worldwide.

A far-out notion? Not at all. As Oxford Professor **Kevin Dutton**, the bestselling author of *The Wisdom of Psychopaths*, says, "Sawyer has certainly done his homework about psychopaths and he understands well that, far from being just the occasional headline-grabbing serial killer, they're *everywhere*."

Sawyer says: "Reviewers often call me an optimistic writer—one of the few positive voices left in a science-fiction field that has grown increasingly dystopian. I like to view my optimism as a rational position rather than just naïveté, and so I felt it was necessary to devote a novel to confronting the question of evil head on: what causes it, why it flourishes, why there seems to be more and more of it—and what we can do

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about it. The theme is simple: the worst lie humanity has ever told itself is, ‘You can’t change human nature.’”

**Tuesday, March 1, 2016**, is the long-anticipated hardcover release of *Quantum Night* (with simultaneous ebook and audiobook) from Penguin Random House Canada’s **Viking** imprint and Penguin Random House USA’s **Ace** imprint.

The novel’s main character is Jim Marchuk, an experimental psychologist at the **University of Manitoba** in **Winnipeg** who develops a flawless technique for identifying psychopaths.

Suddenly, though, the finger is being pointed at him, as it’s uncovered that not only had he himself been a psychopath twenty years earlier, but that he’d been responsible for horrible suffering.

With Sawyer’s usual flair for mixing science fiction with political upheaval, *Quantum Night* takes current real-life Calgary mayor **Naheed Nenshi** and makes him Canada’s first Muslim Prime Minister—spurring a psychopathic U.S. president to try to annex Canada.

Much of the novel’s action takes place at the **Canadian Light Source**, Canada’s national synchrotron, in **Saskatoon**. Sawyer was writer-in-residence there in 2009, a position created especially for him—and the first-ever writer-in-residence post at a Canadian science facility.

Sawyer extensively researched the nature of human consciousness for this book, leading to an

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invitation for him to present his conclusions at the world’s most-significant academic conference on this topic, the famed biennial **Science of Consciousness** conference sponsored by the University of Arizona in Tucson; Sawyer will speak there on April 25, 2016.

Penguin Canada is supporting *Quantum Night* with a coast-to-coast book tour with stops in **Vancouver, Prince George, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Waterloo, Toronto, Ottawa,** and more.

Ottawa-native Sawyer is one of only eight writers in history—and the only Canadian—to win all three of science fiction’s top awards for best novel of the year: the **Hugo**, the **Nebula**, and the **John W. Campbell Memorial Award**. According to the American science-fiction trade journal *Locus*, he has won more awards for his novels than anyone else in the history of the science-fiction and fantasy genres. In 2014, he was one of the initial nine inductees into the **Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame**.

*Quantum Night* is Sawyer’s 23rd novel and follows such bestsellers as *FlashForward* (the basis for the **ABC TV** series of the same name); *Hominids*; *Calculating God*; the **WWW** trilogy of *Wake, Watch, Wonder*; *Triggers*, which Canadian publishing trade journal *Quill & Quire* named the top-selling science fiction or fantasy book in Canada for 2012; and *Red Planet Blues*, which peaked at #3 on the *Maclean’s* Fiction Bestsellers List.

“I had a two-decade run of doing a book a year,” Sawyer, 55, says. “But *Quantum Night* is my

first novel in three years. I took time off following the death of my younger brother, the Emmy Award-winning multimedia producer **Alan Sawyer**, from lung cancer. That means it's going to take an extra effort to bring this book to market—and I'm very grateful to my readers for their patience and to my Canadian and US publishers for the big push they're giving this title. My Canadian editor **Adrienne Kerr** thinks *Quantum Night* is my best book yet—and I hope my readers will agree.”

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