



**In spite of the cover, there's no giant ant...it's actually a computer virus called the War Bug. The artist didn't read the novel before creating the cover. Later, I wrote a short story about a cover artist who is eat alive by one of his covers. It was published in an anthology by the same publisher.**

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## **The Story**

In just a few hours, Abner Hayes' wife and daughter are going to die, and the only way he can save their lives is to team up with a deadly computer virus and travel through a virtual universe that's collapsing around them. Through suicidal game worlds, virtual landscapes that threaten to devour the unwary, and a series of insidious cyber traps, Abner and the virus must stay one step ahead of sinister forces that will stop at nothing to destroy his family in order to steal their incredible secret. Spliced with dark humor and intricate characters, The War Bug is a non-stop roller coaster thriller into a terrifying future.

## **Susan DiPlacido, Author of *Strut* and *Shuffle Up and Deal* in Blue Iris Journal**

So. What do cheese soup, sentient virtual reality beings, and a seven-hundred pound sado-masochist have to do with each other? Pick up *The War Bug* and unlock the mysteries. Part sci-fi, part action adventure, and plenty of dark humor is what Biff Mitchell weaves together, along with his eclectic and electric cast in his latest offering.

Abner Hayes is Virtual Code Geneticist, where he works online studying DNA codes of plants and animals and then simulating them offline. However, his offline world is a drag. He's alone, he lives in a hovel, and his parents have already been "included", which Abner fears will also someday happen to him. Especially if his secret about his online life is to ever leak out. Because online, he has a beautiful wife and daughter. They are not avatars from the real world like he is, nor are they flat coded programs. His wife Claire and daughter Cassie are the only two online entities to have made the leap from programs to sentient, thinking and feeling, beings. However, their time is limited because the 'net is under siege and ready to collapse. Abner has created a bubble protection for his family, but they've been abducted by some sinister forces who've figured out his secret and want to unlock it for themselves. The only way to save his family is to team up with the deadly, ultimate destruction virus, known as *The War Bug*, to find and rescue his family before the entire world crumbles to oblivion.

Thrills and chills abound as the clock ticks down and the race is on for Abner to save his family. This is a rich and complex world, but Mitchell makes it wholly comprehensible without ever losing momentum. In his signature style, the satire and laughs are woven throughout, along with a plethora of zinging one-liners and unique descriptions. The characters are rich and varied, fully-fleshed and wholly intriguing. The good guys have edges, the bad guys have allure. And even amid the brewing chaos in this strange landscape, the story flies so high and resonates because it's so very human.

It's rare that a novel can so thoroughly capture the mind, heart, and imagination. Biff Mitchell is a blessed breed of writer who mixes the real, surreal, and potentially real by fusing philosophy, science, human emotions, humor, and terror. And *The War Bug* is this writer at the top of his game.

## **Patricia Spork in eBook Reviews Weekly**

Two-hundred years in the future, nanotechnology is at its peak, although research still commences. Humans not only live and work in the real world, but also live and work online as virtual beings interacting with software programs. Abner Hayes, a Virtual Code Geneticist,

prefers living in this virtual world. Using DNA coding, he's illegally created the first sentient programs - Claire, his wife, and Cassie, his teenage daughter.

Unbeknownst to Abner, immortal life is sought by Bella Bjork, a beautiful perverted sex-monger and murderer. She teams with genius programmer Jeemo Roosevelt, a seven-foot, 700-pound sado-masochist, who seeks to break the coding of Abner's sentient programs.

But the Net is falling apart as war rages between online cities, placing Claire and Cassie in life-threatening danger. So Abner's created the world's smallest bubble computer as a sanctuary for his beloved virtual family until a new Net is developed. But before he can transfer his family's programs to the bubble computer, Claire and Cassie disappear.

As Abner searches online for Claire and Cassie, he meets the War Bug, a conniving virus behind the Net's degeneration. The War Bug, at a steep price, offers his assistance to find Claire and Cassie. But can this destructive virus and Abner save them before the Net completely crumbles, or before Jeemo fragments and deletes them all?

Biff Mitchell does a stunning job pulling a reader into his virtual world. Characters are honely carved and dialogue spiced with dark humor. Love and deceit fill the pages, as does technological intrigue and adventuresome thrills. To me, the ending is set up for a sequel, which I'd enjoy reading if ever written and published. So I highly recommend "The War Bug" by Biff Mitchell to Science Fiction fans who can stomach sexual perversion, grotesque humor, and total cyber satire.

## **Barry Hunter in Baryon Magazine**

Imagine if you will a computer crafted on a strand of DNA that is able to store all the information that is available today and is also able to process any problem in hardly any time at all. The creator of this commits suicide and the computer is lost for 150 years. Yang Yin rediscovers the DNA Bubble Computer and when he is "screwed" by the marketing group, he unleashes a program to exact his revenge

Fifty years later, Abner Hayes has taken the DNA computer and used it to create a world wherein he has created a family and enabled them with life that may be immortal. Bella Bjork, the richest person in the world wants the secret of immortality and will do anything to get it.

The only problems are that not everyone is as sane as they need to be and a rogue program, THE WAR BUG, that was introduced by Yang Yin to destroy the net at a future date.

Mitchell has taken a very unusual cast and given the internet a twist to give us a look at a future that may not be what we expect. This is an interesting and unusual book that deserves more than a passing glance.

**Visit Biff's Website**