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"This novel is scarily realistic."

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THE Mezonic Agenda

HACKING THE PRESIDENCY

A Novel by

Dr. Herbert H. Thompson

Spyros Nomikos

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THE Mezonic Agenda

HACKING THE PRESIDENCY

HACK ALONG WITH THE HEROES AND VILLAINS AS THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY HANGS IN THE BALANCE OF CYBER-SPACE

Dr. Herbert H. Thompson
Spyros Nomikos

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In six days Chad Davis will testify before Congress on the security, stability, and safety of Advice Software Inc.'s e-vote software. He is a world-renowned expert on software security, and his testimony will determine if the software will be implemented for use during the 2004 U.S. Presidential Elections. All is well until he receives a cryptic CD on the software from a notorious hacker, which ignites a string of murders and uncovers a dangerous conspiracy. A race against the clock, Davis must use his knowledge of buffer overflows, format string vulnerabilities and zero-day exploits to penetrate physical and cyber defenses, ultimately uncovering Advice's plot to fix the US presidential elections. What's the software's secret? Will Davis find out before his testimony? What is *The Mezonic Agenda*?

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In *The Mezonic Agenda*, Chad Davis is a computer expert who must use all of his skills and knowledge to unlock the CD and solve the secret of Advice's software. The story may be fiction, but the science is all too real. Every day, real-life security experts use the methodology and tactics implemented by Davis in the story. The following appendices touch upon these technologies, their history, and their role in the present-day. From the origins of voting to the modern-era realm of buffer overflows, you'll be given a tour of the technology behind *The Mezonic Agenda*.

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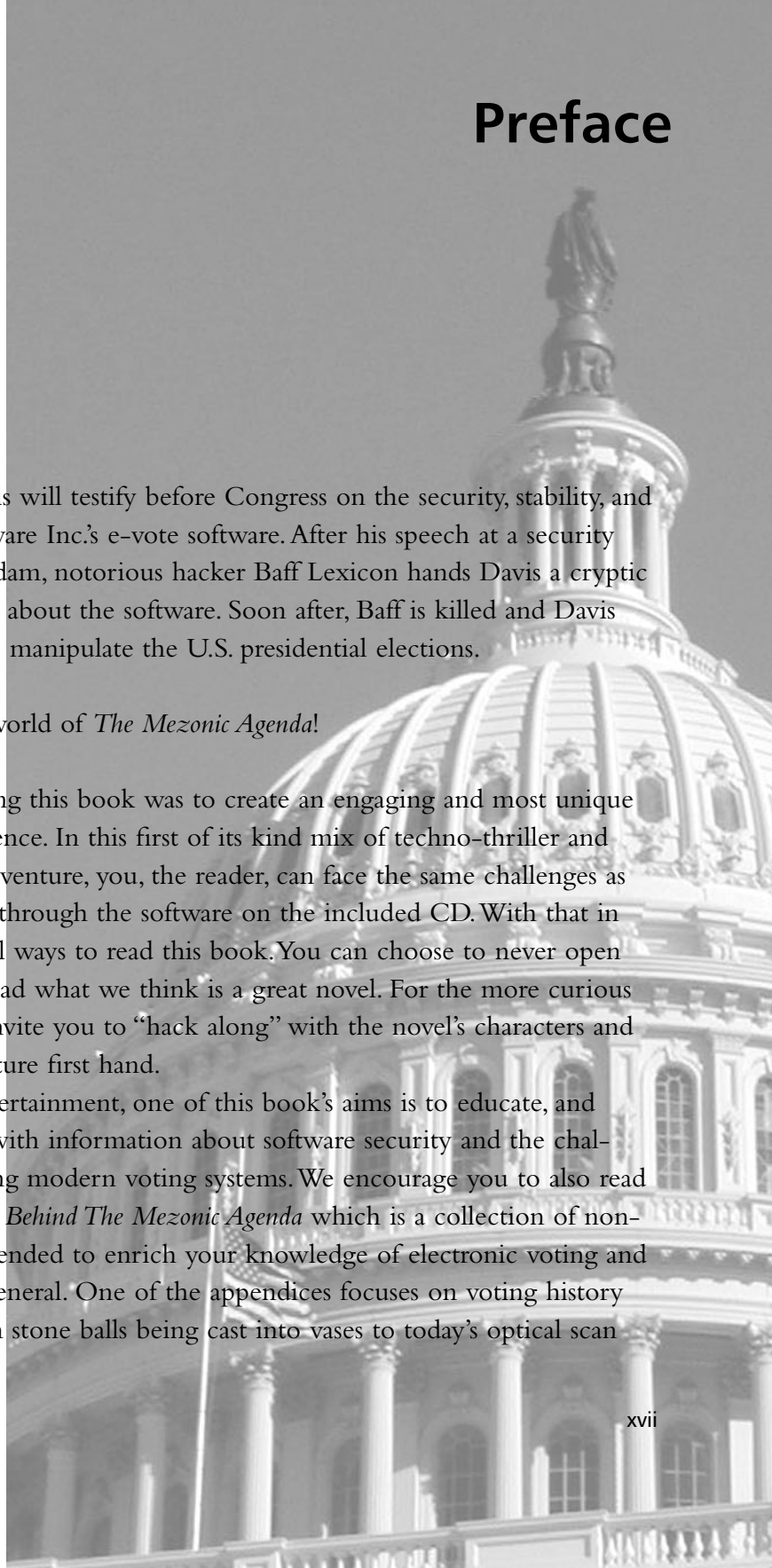

In six days Chad Davis will testify before Congress on the security, stability, and safety of Advice Software Inc.'s e-vote software. After his speech at a security conference in Amsterdam, notorious hacker Baff Lexicon hands Davis a cryptic CD with information about the software. Soon after, Baff is killed and Davis must unravel a plot to manipulate the U.S. presidential elections.

Welcome to the world of *The Mezonic Agenda*!

Our goal in writing this book was to create an engaging and most unique entertainment experience. In this first of its kind mix of techno-thriller and interactive hacking adventure, you, the reader, can face the same challenges as the novel's characters through the software on the included CD. With that in mind, there are several ways to read this book. You can choose to never open the CD and simply read what we think is a great novel. For the more curious reader, however, we invite you to "hack along" with the novel's characters and experience the adventure first hand.

In addition to entertainment, one of this book's aims is to educate, and empower the reader with information about software security and the challenges of implementing modern voting systems. We encourage you to also read Part II: *The Technology Behind The Mezonic Agenda* which is a collection of non-fiction appendices intended to enrich your knowledge of electronic voting and software security in general. One of the appendices focuses on voting history and its evolution from stone balls being cast into vases to today's optical scan

and electronic systems. The other appendices take a piercing look at software security, cryptography, steganography, reverse engineering and software exploits.

We hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we've enjoyed researching and creating it. Please visit the books companion website at www.mezonica-genda.com for new challenges and more information on all of the topics discussed in the novel. Thanks and enjoy!

Herbert H. Thompson
Spyros Nomikos
August 2004

About the CD

Now you can hack along with the heroes and villains of *The Mezonic Agenda*! Don't just read it, experience it!

Notorious hacker Baff Lexicon has just handed internationally renowned software security expert Dr. Chad Davis a cryptic CD. Davis must decrypt this CD's contents to reveal the secrets behind Advice Software's e-voting system, a secret that has cost the lives of several people and holds the American Presidency in the balance.

Hack along with Davis as he tries to unlock the CD's mysteries. Unzip the contents to access the data on the CD. You will then have three files, and your first challenge is to decrypt one of them: encrypted.dat, where you will receive several more challenges. The CD's mysteries will be revealed in the story and you can either: read the novel and ignore the CD, perform the hacks as they appear in the novel, or the more aspiring techie can try and decrypt the CD contents without reading too far into *The Mezonic Agenda*. Do you have what it takes to expose Advice Software Inc. and ultimately save the Nation's general election from disaster? There's only one way to find out…

Visit www.mezonicagenda.com for more information and new challenges!

About the Contest

The Mezonic Agenda: Hacking the Presidency Contest challenges you, the reader, to interact with the book and CD, decrypt its contents, and ultimately control the fate of a mock U.S. Presidential Election. Contestants will attempt to vote for themselves as the winning candidate during our "simulated" election to be held in early 2005. Contestants must use their hacking skills, along with strategy, to manipulate the results of the Mezonic "mock" election. Visit www.mezonicagenda.com to enter.

Any eligible contestant can download the software from the Mezonic Agenda: Hacking a Presidency website (www.mezonicagenda.com) without having to purchase the book. The book, though, will help the reader better understand how the software works, teach them software hacking skills and ultimately aid in its exploitation.

Prizes include a free pass to the 2005 Black Hat Briefings in Las Vegas and a suite of security books from Syngress Publishing.

Syngress may require any participant receiving any prize to provide Syngress with proof that he or she is eligible to participate according to the eligibility requirements hereunder. See "The Mezonic Agenda Hack Contest Rules" in the back of the book or visit www.mezonicagenda.com for complete contest rules.