



Order 66

Karen Traviss

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After the fierce combat of *Hard Contact*, *Triple Zero*, and *True Colors* comes the spectacular culmination of New York Times bestselling author Karen Traviss's gripping Republic Commando series. As a battle-scarred era nears its end, a shattering power play is about to stun the entire galaxy . . . and set in motion events that will alter destinies and resound throughout history.

Even as the Clone Wars are about to reach an explosive climax, no one knows if victory will favor the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) or the Separatists. But no matter who wins, the stakes are highest for elite Special Ops clones like the Republic Commandos in Omega and Delta squads—and the notorious renegade Advance Recon Commando troopers known as Null ARCs.

With Republic forces stretched to the max and casualties mounting, the last thing these beleaguered warriors need to hear is that Chancellor Palpatine is keeping vast armies of secret clone troops in reserve. Sergeant Skirata, a mentor to the clone commandos, has no intention of standing idly by while Palpatine sends them into battle like lambs to the slaughter. Skirata begins to plan the clones' escape from the GAR, but his heroic effort will be in vain unless he can reverse the clones' accelerated aging process.

Caught in the treacherous dealings of their leaders, and locked in the battles of their lives, the disillusioned Null ARCs and Commandos nonetheless fight with everything they've got, determined to wrest victory from the Seps and save the galaxy.

But even the deadliest weapons may not be powerful enough to defeat the real menace. And nothing will stop the apocalyptic horror unleashed when Palpatine utters the chilling words *The time has come. Execute Order 66.* Translation: The Jedi have tried to stage a coup, and all must be shot on sight.

With their faith in the Republic and their loyalty to their Jedi allies put to the ultimate test, how will the men of Omega and Delta squads react to the most infamous command in galactic history? All the breathtaking action, suspense, and intrigue of Karen Traviss's Republic Commando series comes alive in *Star Wars: Order 66*.

Order 66 Details

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From Reader Review Order 66 for online ebook

Crystal Starr Light says

"An order was an order. And orders had to be followed, or else society fell apart."

The last book in the Republic Commando series! There was no way you could keep it from me. How would the clones that Karen Traviss has spent the last three books developing deal with this time altering order?

The clones from the last three books gear up in the final days of the war. Kal Skirata, den father, as it were, delves deeper into finding if the age acceleration can be reversed. Drama occurs between Ordo and Besany, Atin and Laseema, Darman and Etain, and Fi and Parja as they all deal with the "relationship" question. And pressure from the outside might force our courageous commandos to go into hiding far before the end of the war.

I Liked:

I tend to get a bit rambling here, so I want to streamline it for the ease of the reader and for the ease of the writer:

Writing

1.Karen Traviss pulls no punches. Right off the bat, not a page into the book, she has one of Jusik Bardan, who left the Jedi Order because of the hypocrisy of it, face another Jedi. Through his eyes, we see how desperate the Republic is to use a Jedi commander of such a young age, how, to the citizens of Coruscant (much like the citizens of America), life goes on as if there was no war, how maybe not everyone thinks the Jedi are peaches and cream, like so many Star Wars authors paint them, and how the Jedi are no better than the Separatists, if they are willing to resort to slave labor to fight their war. And this is only 4 pages into the book! Traviss continues this line into the book, showing the gray to the Jedi that most authors refuse to do, and revealing the errors, arrogance, and hypocrisy of the Jedi Order.

2.The Republic Commando books are thinking books. I love my brain candy, don't get me wrong, but sometimes, I think Star Wars authors try to hard to make brain candy and don't really sit to think through the situation. I would have loved to see Traviss write a book set in the New Republic era, when all the Empire attacks were occurring. Would she show how silly the New Republic was? How little better they were to the Empire that they were so against

Plot:

1.Why do the clone troopers have no problem turning on their Jedi commanding officers? This has been a question that has plagued me ever since I saw it on screen. Why? Was there no devotion, no growing attachment? Here we learn A) that Jedi aren't the all-loved beings that every other Star Wars novel paints them, B) many (I refuse to believe only Jusik and Etain treated their clone troopers like human beings) Jedi treated the clones like property, sub-beings, and C) the troopers are drilled to obey orders. So when the order comes through, they truly believe the Jedi are traitors to the Republic (which they were bred to serve). And because they are always told to follow orders, they do. I appreciate how KT solves this conundrum.

2.Etain realizes why the Jedi disapprove of attachment. In the previous books, Etain kept wondering why and then barreling headlong into a relationship with Darman. Here, she learns, through relations with her son, why the Jedi don't like it. I appreciate Traviss even mentioning it (it would be very easy for her to have her characters refuse to admit there was a problem at all).

3.Trying to fit in other Star Wars Expanded Universe lore. Traviss brings up the horrid creation, Callista, from the horrid books by Barbara Hambly. I liked her thoughts, but would have enjoyed even more. I liked the foreshadowing of Order 66 with the revelation of 150 contingency orders. And learning why Jango sided with the Jedi, his mortal enemies, was very insightful indeed.

4.Once the words "Execute Order 66" appear on the page, the novel really goes into high gear. The pace picks up, the tension is high...who will come out alive and who will die?

5. Karen Traviss isn't afraid of killing off her own characters. After Michael Reaves copped out of having Darth Vader kill Jax in *Coruscant Knights* (sorry if I spoiled that for you), I was relieved to see KT wasn't like that. I won't say who or how many die, but she is realistic.

Characters:

1. Walon Vau. Man, this guy gets some of the best quotes, one of them being very similar to the one I used for the title of this review. I can really understand his mind, how he thinks. He may be apparently cold and emotionless, even the Jedi who feel him out think he is, but Walon Vau doesn't just do something because it feels right. He uses his mind. He calculates. And that is why I find him so fascinating!
2. Mandalorian culture. Again, Traviss imbues her novels with Mandalorian culture. I rather liked the marriage "ceremony" (though the frequency with which it occurred, I must disagree with), how it is a line said between the man and the woman together. And that is it. It fits with their culture well. Also, I like the warrior/family angle. It's nice not to have yet another pacifistic culture in the Star Wars universe. I know Star Wars is a big universe, but you have Alderaan and Coruscant. You don't need Mandalorians too.
3. Favorite characters: Scorch (perhaps because he too holds himself, but isn't afraid to speak up about the injustices), Mij Gilamar (because it's too cool to have a Mando doctor, particularly one that reminds me of Dr. McCoy from Star Trek), Niner (whom I liked from HC, but can't get enough of), and Maze (because he is dedicated, he reads, and he endeavors to do his best at his job, doesn't want to desert at the drop of a hat).

I Didn't Like:

While I have a lot to admire about this book, I also have some complaints:

1. Unclear sense of morality. I love how so many characters (Kal, Besany) are considered "moral" when they still commit crimes. Espionage, treason, embezzlement, breaking and entering, impersonating Republic officials...those are crimes. Those are against the laws. Those are "wrong". Those are immoral. So, I would love for Traviss to be a bit more clear when she says Kal and Besany and whomever are so "moral". Does she mean that the characters want justice? What sort of justice? Who dictates what this justice is?
2. "Let's get everyone married" mentality. Last book, it was "let's get everyone a girlfriend". Well, today's trend is marriage. Tomorrow's will probably be children. Nonetheless, while I enjoyed the marriage ceremony, I think doing it three...four...a billion times in the book (or mentioning it that many times) really deadens its impact. Make the ceremony special. Don't have everyone rushing out to get married to his/her significant other just before everyone dies. Some people will die without ever being married to his or her partner. Showing otherwise, in such a realistic book anyway, is fantastical.
3. Besany. I so don't like her, she gets her own bullet point. I am sick to death of her "so beautiful, it's a curse" characterization, so sick of hearing how quickly she helped out the Mandos, and how easily she can handle the fact her boyfriend/husband murders. She isn't that smart, clever, or anything. All she is is a girlfriend for one of the many clones. And her sudden attachment to Jilka and not wanting her to be blamed for Besany's treason? Where did that come from? When did she turn out to be a person who cared about someone who wasn't Mando?
4. Mandos are good, Jedi are bad. I do have a deeper appreciation for this, and am beginning to see the other side (and see that that view is often pushed by characters like Kal Skirata), but nonetheless, I wish that Traviss would tone down the Mando God complex. There is nothing the Mandos can't do. They are moral, they are strong, they are thoughtful, they are great warriors, they are great husbands, lovers, boyfriends, fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, and second-cousins twice removed, they are honorable, they are God incarnate. On the other hand, the Jedi are arrogant, demeaning, hypocrites, and oblivious. They all are glory-seekers, they all act like they know better, and they all treat clones like sub-humans. Again, I realize that many of the most guilty sections were written by Mandos, but still, I wish the virtues of General Zey and his actions were held in higher regard. Remember, Mandos are willing to be bought to fight someone's war. I do note that the Jedi fight the war to "save" the Republic, because they are arrogant enough to think they know what's best for it.
5. Etain and Jusik don't feel any sorrow for knowing many of their friends died in Order 66. Etain is too busy trying to leave and get to Darman and her son (understandable, but still, does she not have any pain or sympathy to her fellow Jedi?), and Jusik is too busy rallying the forces to care about Order 66. Even if they both disagree with the Jedi and their tenets, I have a hard time believing they would feel no sorrow, no loss,

no tremors in the force as the people they loved and cared about died. What happened to the Obi-Wan feeling from "A New Hope", of a thousand voices crying out in terror being suddenly silenced? Jusik and Etain still use the Force, but can't feel the Jedi die through the Force? SPOILER: Jusik ought to feel something when Maze kills Zey, but no, nothing is ever mentioned. Because Zey was a good(ish) Jedi, not a Mando, and thus, not worthy of remembrance. END OF SPOILER.

6. The book is engaging enough, but the first part is pretty darn slow. I didn't realize it until the "Execute Order 66" line, but I wish KT could infuse a bit more action into her books, like she did with *Hard Contact*. Also, the Order came late into the book, and while I know the first part sets up for the second, I wish that the book focused more on the actual execution of Order 66 and not the prep.

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

As always, the language is mad-up Star Wars (in this case, Mando) language. In some cases, it is pretty obvious what the "English" term would be.

Ordo is Besany's lover; Etain and Darman had a baby together. Laseema is oogled. Rather tame, on the whole.

The book is about commandos, so expect some gunplay, explosions, serious injuries, and character deaths.

Overall:

People have called these books many a thing, from the best thing to happen to Star Wars Expanded Universe to complete and utter heresy. But one thing remains: people talk about them endlessly. And how could you not? These books aren't like most of the Star Wars "dreck": they make you think. They force you to find your opinion and defend it. They bring to light parts of the Jedi that many don't like to see, but that are obvious, even if you only watch the movies.

So, in this final chapter of the Republic Commandos, I think I've finally gotten an idea of what the proponents of Karen Traviss' divisive books are talking about. Life is messy. The Jedi are messy. There is no easy answer. And anyone who says otherwise is lying to him or herself. For *Triple Zero* and *True Colors*, I voted three stars because of the slow story, huge cast of characters, and the Mandos are better than Jedi mentality. But in *Order 66*, I feel these problems are not so great. For not failing to point out the faults, for lighting the unlit, and for, above all, being entertaining, I give *Order 66* a four stars.

Gary Varga says

The reason I read Star Wars novels is for escapism. This escape is supposed to place me in a familiar universe but the familiarity is less about the contents of that universe than its feel. It is supposed to be a little cheesy perhaps but always fast, exciting and fun.

This Star Wars novel looks into how the change from a Republic into an Empire took place from the perspective of members of the army (yes, clones).

At the start and towards the end of the book the Star Wars feel is there, however, the middle of the book is almost mired in a reality that such a situation would really cause. I cannot see how it could not have done so. I was left feeling that whilst the subject matter was dealt with well, perhaps too well, maybe it just wasn't Star Wars.

For the Star Wars fan, the only perspective reader I would recommend this book to, there are plenty of "answers". The quotation marks are to highlight that, yes, this is a piece of fiction about a fictional universe and should not be taken seriously.

John Carter McKnight says

Traviss's Republic Commando novels are excellent, and Order 66 is the culmination of her serialized story. With some discussion among friends recently about Jedi-as-bad-guys, I wanted to go back to the foundation: Traviss makes the case at length, in the demi-canon that was the Extended Universe, that Order 66, for the clone troops to kill all the Jedi, was not only a lawful order but largely a moral one.

Traviss's Jedi knowingly command a slave army. They're complicit in the treatment of human beings - the clones - as disposable property. They never ask the key questions as to how the army came about. And, Traviss argues that the reason they never noticed that the Chancellor was Sith was because they'd so fallen from the light side of the Force they were blind to any difference.

The story of these novels is primarily one of a Mandalorian training sergeant coming to see the clones as not just fellow humans, but as family, and engineering a subtle and extensive con to rescue his trainees - the first generation Null troops and the more individualistic commando squads - from the ongoing war. His clones are people, as distinct as any band of brothers. Some fall in love, some self-destruct, some are clowns, scholars, fatalists, nihilists.

The climax of the novel is the issuance of Order 66. Here, unlike in canon, there's no "command chips" implanted in the clones turning them into automata at the proper signal. There's just a lawfully-issued order from the commander in chief in a time of crisis. Soldiers obey orders - and few Jedi have won sufficient loyalty for their troops to look the other way. A few do, though; one of my favorite scenes is of a rogue Jedi who's just married a clone trooper trying to sneak out of a cop diner, to find her way barred - until the army patrol has passed out of sight.

Traviss also created the Mandalorians as a rich, vivid, and believable culture, unfortunately brutally (if not explicitly maliciously) jossed by the Clone Wars animated series (the Duchess of Mandalore? Really?!). Her Mandalorians may not be canon, but they live on in a good bit of the lore and language of the Star Wars MMO, and especially in roleplay there.

They deserve to - and you may come to believe that the Jedi Order deserved its fate as well.

Cameron Hill says

I found this book very entertaining to read and very insightful about the universe and the republic before the order 66 occurred. It also gives a side to the clones about what they think about how their life go after the. The book is very long and with the point of view changing every chapter, the book left me hanging every chapter and it make me want to keep reading. The plot thickened very quickly, with twists and turns everywhere. The characters had good depth and from reading the other books this book continued to build on the others, but it is also very easy to just pick up and learn what happened before in just this book.

Ron says

Fitting climax to the series, but ... but the book's climax—while fitting and appropriate—was not well told. Hard to say more without spoiling it, but I was very dissatisfied with how Traviss handled what was perhaps the most important scene of the book--no, her whole Commando series. It simply wasn't well done.

On the other hand, this book's overall story and storytelling were good. Seeing Jedi from the grunt/clone/Mandalorian perspective is a refreshing change from the hero-worship pervades much Star Wars literature. It's not that it's necessarily right; it's just a welcome balance.

Obviously not the last in this particular thread, *Order 66* sets the hook for more.

Chad Bearden says

If you're not a Star Wars nerd, then don't even bother reading this review. In it, I will be writing under the premise that the Star Wars novels are something to be taken seriously. They're not, of course (supposed to be taken seriously, that is), but when reading guilty pleasure fare such as the "Republic Commando" series, it is best to heed the advice of Roger Ebert, who states that when criticizing something, you should judge it based not on what it is about, but *how* it is about it. And though the topic of this book (clone troopers raised to be perfect soldiers looking for love and freedom in a galaxy at war) is a bit silly, Karen Traviss treats her subjects most seriously, writing a damned good novel about a rather silly premise. If you're not a Star Wars nerd, you may not be able to get past that premise. But if you are willing to judge it on its own terms, this is a novel definitely to be absorbed and enjoyed.

So, the review.

To begin with, I've always felt that Star Wars novels are at their best when they shuffle the main cast off to the sidelines and focus on secondary and even tertiary characters (what's the word for the fourth level?) Luke Skywalker and Han Solo are interesting characters to an extent, but the stakes are never very high. Back when Bantam was still publishing the EU books (that's 'Extended Universe' for the uninitiated), I felt guilty reading them not because I was indulging in geeky fun, but because I was paying Hardback Novel prices for crappy cookie-cutter stories where nothing of any import happened.

With the exception of the original two EU series (Zahn's Thrawn trilogy, and Anderson's Jedi Academy trilogy), my favorite stuff was the X-Wing series. Michael Stackpole took background character, mixed them with a handful of original creations, then turned them loose in the Star Wars universe. THAT was interesting.

Karen Traviss has a similar remit with her "Republic Commando" series, and she does an equally entertaining job. Actually, maybe a better job, because not only does she create a basket-full of new interesting characters, she also fleshes out and makes rather compelling the backgrounds and personalities of Clone Troopers, giving them their own unique little society; she explores (here as well as in her contributions to the recent "New Jedi Order" novels) Mandalorian society, and practically builds an entire world around their mercenary culture; and she establishes a rather credible and sad series of events that would lead to Clone Troopers suddenly, and without question murdering their Jedi generals. And the kicker? She does this with characters based on a video-game!

I'm one of the few who actually enjoyed the majority of the Star Wars movie prequels, but there were tons of places where George Lucas skimmed on cause & effect storytelling in order to give us big plot twists and shocking turns-of-event. With the "Republic Commando" series, and particularly with "Order 66", Traviss fills in a lot of those gaps, and in my opinion, provides four novels that actually enhance the films. Yes, I said it: these books actually make watching the movies more enjoyable.

The above comments could be read as a review of the series as a whole, but there are particular things about "Order 66" which should probably be mentioned.

For example: Traviss's decision to not actually mention the eponymous contingency plan until well past the half-way point in the book. A part of my brain was wondering if there were any Star Wars fans out there being massively disappointed with a novel named after a huge turning point in Episode III that didn't seem all that concerned for several hundred pages with mentioning said turning point.

You see, Traviss hasn't set out to write a novel about big action set pieces and explosions and wars and battles. Though all of that is in the background, she is far more interested in writing intimate studies of a few of her characters. Most of the individual members of Omega and Delta squads are pretty thin on character, but the few she singles out (Etain, Darman, Fi, Skirata, Jusik, and even a little of Scorch and Vau) are so well drawn that when things go south in the book's finale, it's surprisingly heartbreaking to see everyone put through the wringer.

And as for the finale, it works so well because Traviss takes such care to keep contingency order #66 under wraps until very late in the game. If you've seen the movie, then you already know what is going to happen. So instead of simply indulging in the obvious melodrama that Order 66 could bring about, Traviss lets her readers watch the cast go through their lives, naively planning their futures and exploring their new freedoms, while you, the reader, cringe since you know that everything is going to end in catastrophe. It was a subtle choice I honestly didn't expect to find in a Star Wars book.

I've read almost every Star Wars novel written, and I've never had any urge to read the non Star Wars stuff by any of the EU authors. I hear Kevin J. Anderson and James Luceno and Michael Stackpole have written all sorts of other great sci-fi. But frankly, I don't care. The Republic Commando series actually has me wondering if maybe it would be worth my time to go check out some other Karen Traviss works. I'm honestly *that* impressed with her writing.

If you're a fan of the EU, don't miss this series. Karen Traviss has easily written the best Star Wars books of the last ten years.

Joseph says

I know you have heard the expression it is not you, it is me... Well this is definitely the case here. I didn't read the first three books, so I was really missing stuff here on the relationships and characters in the book. I was really just interested in the action and events with Order 66. I was told I could probably read this without reading the other ones and well that was partially true.

The good was that she gave the clones (did I say clones...) and the Mango's their own dialog. It was better than having them talk like everyone else. It was a bit hard to follow and understand some of those words, but still good. She gave depth to the clones as well.

The not so good parts were...it was a bit wording to say the least. Some of it could have been cut. Maybe like 25-50 pages worth. I am surprised they didn't mention Anakin when it came to the Jedi and their relationships with the clones. For the most part she portrayed the Jedi as not liking the clones (Obi, Mace and Yoda, etc). She also had them hating them back. I never thought of them not liking or hating each other. The book was practically over when the actual order 66 was executed.

I guess the rating would have been higher if I read the other ones as well. Or if I didn't like the other ones I might not have read this one... So basically I don't recommend if you haven't read the first three books.

David Drent says

Wow. Now that was a great series, I was genuinely surprised by the ending, but happy about it at the same time. Best thing, it's been left open enough for them to continue the story if there's a call for it.

I hope it continues.

Awesome read.

Thanks to my wonderful wife for getting me the series. She knows me so well. :)

Andrew Liptak says

Karen Traviss's four book series based off of the Republic Commando video game came to a close with the publication of her latest Star Wars novel, Order 66. The book is a slightly uneven affair, with a number of story lines coming to a close in a quick, complete fashion. The book is by no means a bad or uninteresting read, but it's not the best of the four.

I came across Karen Traviss when I was in High School, when I began to read Asimov's, a long-running Science Fiction magazine. Karen had published a couple or short stories through them, and I had found that I enjoyed them very much. When it was announced that there was to be a tie-in novel about the Republic Commando game, I wasn't all that interested until I heard that it was Traviss who would be writing it, and the first book didn't disappoint, introducing readers to a series of new characters and a moral element that has largely been lacking in a number of the Star Wars books that have come out recently.

Order 66 picks up where True Colors leaves off- Jedi Etain Tur-Mukan has had her child, Jusik has left the Jedi Order, Fi has been brought to Mandalor, the ARC troopers are working on infiltrating the computer systems of the Republic and Skirata is working to find a way to reverse the rapid aging in order to give the clones a full and normal life after the war is over.

One of my main concerns with the series as it's progressed over the past couple of books is the vast complexity that they have come to. There are a number of very diverse story lines that have largely taken away from the main focus of the original novel - Delta Squad, with Niner, Atin, Darman and Fi. The cast of characters has been expanded, and that goes for the story lines as well. To some extent, this is a good thing, and it falls in with what Karen has done with her other, non-Star Wars books - they've become extremely rich with plots and characters, turning them into books that really make you think. In the Star Wars universe, this is a rare thing, and Order 66 stands as one of the better books in the series for this trait. On the other hand, it feels somewhat overburdened at times. The first half of the book starts off fairly slowly, and its not until the last half in which the action really picks up, where Karen shows once again that she's one of the better writers when it comes to combat situations - Clone operations here are possibly the most realistic and logical than in any other book series, save for the X-Wing Series by Michael A Stackpole and Aaron Allston.

What also sets this, and her other Republic Commando books, apart is the care and devotion that is paid to the Clone Troopers. I've made this point in other reviews - the clones might be genetically the same, but Karen has expertly crafted numerous characters that are wholly different from one another in different situations and in the way that they approach problems. This comes particularly at the end, when one of the team members is left behind in a battle and presumed killed. Karen doesn't shy away from making the characters really hurt when she needs them to be, and the book ends on somewhat of an unclear and unresolved note, which seems very fitting, given how this book ends around the time of Revenge of the Sith.

The absolute strongest point is the morality of the characters, and constant questioning of right and wrong on the part of the Clone Troopers and the Jedi and Republic that brought them into battle. The reactions of many of the Clones during the order to kill the Jedi surprised me, given where I was thinking the story was going and the attitudes of the Jedi up to that point, and it makes me re-think some elements of the movie - the clones weren't mindlessly following their orders to kill their Generals - they had legitimate issues with the way that they were treated and used in the war, and genuinely saw the Jedi as a threat.

One of the big sticking points that I found in this was not the overall complexity, but the Mandalorian subplots that Karen has worked into the series. While it was running full tilt by the time this book came around, the plot took up a lot of the book in places, where it didn't really seem to need to. Karen pulled it out and made it a fully-formed and well realized idea, but at points, it seems a little out of place. This was one element where I wished that the sequels were a little more in line with the first book, in that they focused a bit more on the combat actions of the Clone Commandos.

One of the interesting parts is how the issue of only a couple million Clones has been resolved, and by doing so, ties in her novel with several other pieces of Clone Wars fiction, most notably Timothy Zahn's short stories, Hero of Cartao and his Heir to the Empire trilogy, with the use of the Spaarti cloning technology. Throughout the events of this novel, it's clear that a vast wave of Clone Troopers, including elements of the 501st, were a much larger, quickly grown generation of Clone Troopers, coming in during the months leading up to the final battle over Coruscant. This has been a sticking point for Karen and has caused some trouble for her on message boards by irritated and annoying fans. Despite the troubles that have been caused, it is nice to see that this issue is somewhat resolved, and it is fantastic to see mention of the 501st, of which Karen is an Honorary Member, and a group that she looked at a lot in her novelization of the Clone Wars. The 501st Dune Sea Garrison is honored with a thanks in the beginning of the book.

Order 66 is a fine installment in the Republic Commando and Clone Wars series, and I'm sad to see it go. It is a rich and complex read, one that is far superior to most of the novels in the Star Wars line for its stand on moral issues, its writing and genuine care that makes me remember that these books are leaps and bounds above most of the tie-in novels that are on the market nowadays.

While the book is not a perfect read (or cover, for that matter. Side note - I'm not sure who thought that the current cover was a better one than the original, but it's not, and should be changed back. Like right now. Ahem.) but it's a superior one that stands out from the rest of the books out there.

(originally printed: <http://jeditrilobite.wordpress.com>)

B. M. Polier says

I am absolutely astounded by how interesting Karen Traviss makes these books. I like the occasional military book, but these I relish. As there are still many things to resolve, I hope that another one is in the works.

Warren Guymon says

The book had the potential for a good story, yet was ruined with too many plot lines to follow and the characters were too hard to keep track of due to the high number of them. It may have been assumed by the author that you had read every book in the series. Now, despite me being told that it was not necessarily a chronological series it is still necessary to read all of the books to fully understand what is taking place in

this one.

Jesse Whitehead says

Female writers in the science fiction and fantasy field are fairly rare. One's that are any good are even more so. (This is not because women are bad writers it is because of Sturgeon's Law.)

Star Wars books tend to be an extreme subset of this culture. There are books by female authors but each one seems more painfully confused than the last. Kathy Tyers was quite good (thankfully, since she started off the whole Expanded Universe thing). Kristine Katherine Rusch was very good – she usually is – but only wrote one book. Then we were forced to trip through Barbara Hambly (the only Star Wars books that I have not been able to finish), Vonda McIntyre, K. W. Jeter, A. C. Crispin and Elaine Cunningham.

Then Lucasbooks released a book by a new author, Karen Traviss. To make things worse the book was a novelization of a video game for the XBOX. So now we have a tie-in novel for a video game in a tie-in universe. With some trepidation I picked up the first of Karen Traviss's Republic Commando novels and found myself living inside this universe in a way that only happens with the best of writers.

Karen Traviss is somewhat of an enigma to me. She writes books about science fiction militaries. She worked as a secretary to the British Minister of Defense for a number of years so she knows how soldiers think and act. She also writes books very fast – about three months each – but with never a word out of place. The dialogue always feels real and her writing flows smoothly. The dichotomy comes from the fact that Miss Traviss does not read. She hates reading and hates books. She gets her entertainment from television and movies and refuses to read.

Star Wars: Republic Commando: Order 66 is one of the most emotionally powerful books I've ever read. The story opens with the two Mandalorian Sergeants Kal Skirata and Walon Vau standing in the hangar of a clone trooper barracks on Coruscant reciting the names of all the fallen clones who died four years before at the Battle of Geonosis. Skirata and Vau trained the clones and adopted them as their own children.

The book is about the Commandos in Delta and Omega squads as they struggle to find meaning in a war that they are being forced to fight. Jokingly they call themselves wet-droids and give each other nicknames. Their names usually have to do with their serial number (Fi, Niner, Sev), some are representative of their personalities (Boss, Scorch, Fixer), others are Madalorian words (Darman, Atin). Each of the clones is unique.

Skirata, obsessed with saving his boys from their accelerated aging, has acquired all of Ko Sai's research into genetics and is looking for a new researcher, and a way out of the Grand Army of the Republic for his clones.

Anybody who remembers Order 66 from the Star Wars movies will know that this book is a tragedy. It moves toward the climax with a weight that tugs at every scene. The clones are stretched to their limit. Skirata and Vau are caught between the Jedi and their own agendas to save their adopted clone children. Darman, one of the clones in Omega squad, is married to Etain, a Jedi Knight and she finally tells him that he has a son. Atin struggles to overcome his hatred of Vau who abused him when he was younger in order to “make him tough enough to survive.” Niner just wants to walk straight and follow orders but he's torn with his loyalty to his 'father' Skirata and his loyalty to the Republic. Fi, reported dead after a near fatal head-wound fights with his own lost memory and coordination to become the man that he once was.

Then comes the moment when Chancellor Palpatine speaks the words that mean the death sentence of all Jedi. Darman, Niner, Atin and the others are hurled into chaos and pain that they were never given a chance to sign up for.

Karen Traviss's writing is as solid as ever. Her greatest strengths have always been the emotional impact of trauma on individuals and the great, realistic characters that she writes about. I have found myself thinking about the characters in these books as real people, comparing them to others that I meet.

Dialogue and description are some of the best I've read. Karen Traviss has woven a tapestry of culture and history into the Star Wars universe that makes sense out of the new movies and brings an emotional weight to Star Wars that it has been missing for... maybe forever.

Karen Traviss and her Republic Commando books are among the best Star Wars books out there and stand as shining examples to the world that just because it's Star Wars doesn't make it garbage. Order 66 is the best of the bunch and answers two questions that get repeated over and over. Can Science Fiction have good literature? and Can a tie-in book be good Science Fiction? The answer – according to Miss Traviss is “absolutely.”

(9/10)

Sud666 says

First off it is exceedingly rare that I do not finish a book. Secondly, I am a huge Star Wars fan and am VERY familiar with the story and the expanded universe. Thus, it is with a certain amount of surprise I can say that I was able to read about 170 pages into this book before I just had no more desire to finish it. I was genuinely excited to find out more about the infamous Order 66- what I got is this soap opera. Perhaps my not having read any of the Republic Commando books prior to this caused my utter disconnect with the characters. I even took the time to peruse the other reviews in the middle of my reading to see if it was just me..and I see that it was. I am not sure how this book got as high a rating as it did. What didn't I like?

1- Way too many characters with very little reference (unless I presume that you've read the other novels) making it very hard to give a damn about them.

2- Does not explain the differences between the different types of Clones. I get that Null troopers and ARCs are different, but a little more explanation in a 400 pages book would have been useful. Again I freely admit that this might be because I had not read the previous novels.

3- What is with all this relationship crap going on throughout the story? It was more about these elite clones getting married (2 marriages in the first 120 pages) or their relationships with their children, adopted or otherwise. It wasn't a few references here and there, but more like blah blah I got married, blah blah oh I love this guy/girl/jedi blah blah oh Im an ARC trooper and I haven't seen my kids who hate me, blah blah I'm a jedi and I have kids that I don't see often blah blah honey do you want me to cook no? well here is a ring wanna get married? blah blah jedi who left the order (but strangely I've NEVER heard of them in any of the expanded universe- and believe me I even caught the Demagol reference so I am not ignorant of a great deal of SW lore. At the point where the jedi and the twi'lek are talking about stretch marks due to pregnancy I just gave up. Sorry but NOT my thing at all. Also having served in an elite military unit for a decade I am well aware that we, being human, do think of family, friends and loved ones-but we do NOT do that in the middle of combat. If you do..then your head is not in the game and you will end up dead. Period. So in the middle of a 4 ARC troops vs 150 rebels fight with no backup is not the time to go wondering about your wife/sons/neighbors dog, etc. Sorry..these ARC troopers are supposed to be super soldiers-it'd be nice if their head was in the game vs offworld somewhere in the middle of combat. Just a thought- i realize the author wrote for some defense publication but really?

4- Dear God the overusage of Mandalorian terms reminds me of talking to a Star Trek geek who uses Klingon in everyday talk. Once in awhile is no problem (i know what the Mandalore is, I know what the Mando'ade is, etc) but when every conversation with these ARC troops is rife with Mandolorian terms (hello some kind of appendix/glossary? That would have helped) it becomes extremely annoying.

Perhaps it's just me and I freely admit that this was just my opinion since this book received great ratings but because of these main issues I just moved on to other books. Somewhere in this Days of Our Lives meets Star Wars ARC troopers there is a great story- I liked the stuff happening in the background, some of the moral choices the Jedi Order made being highlighted, the talk about defense procurements, etc..but it was lost in the tripe of love triangles interspaced with a heavy deluge of obscure and esoteric Mandalorian words.

Lindsay Roland says

Get ready for a ride on the roller coaster of emotions. I balled like a baby. Karen Traviss has the gift of writing her characters so that they resonate with you as if you've met them in real life. You will laugh, grieve, and sympathize with these characters. She has also done an amazing job in expanding and exploring the Mandalorian culture. This series is a true delight to read and is highly recommended for any star wars fan out there. It will certainly change your perspective on the clone wars.

Rob says

This is a Star Wars novel that takes place around the same time as the movie Revenge of the Sith. It's a story about the Mandalorian trainers of the clone troopers and how a couple help organize a desertion mission to help give their clone troopers a real life. If you're a big Star Wars fan, who goes beyond the movies, particularly the first three, like I am, then you'll like this book. It's obviously part of a series itself, but you can read it without having read the others because it fills you in on a lot of old details. I saw it at the library and being the Star Wars nerd that I am, I had to check it out. It was a fun read. You get a fun perspective on how characters you didn't know about feel about the ones you do know like Obi Wan Kenobi, who's portrayed as a glory seeker, and Yoda. It also gives you more background on Order 66, the order to kill all jedi, and how clone troopers didn't just follow the order blindly, but really thought and/or believed the jedi had instigated a coup. Crazy stuff.
