

AUTHOR'S TRILOGY BEING ADAPTED FOR TV

CHRIS CLAY

cclay@mississauga.net

Flashforward was the very first of Mississauga science fiction author Robert J. Sawyer's novels to be turned into a television series.

But, if you asked him, it wouldn't have been his first choice.

It was adapted into an ABC series back in 2009 that ran for 22 episodes and was generally well-received by critics. But, as Sawyer told the News, it was actually one of his books that he liked the least.

Recently it was announced that No Equal Entertainment has secured the rights to his award-winning WWW Trilogy - the novels *Wake*, *Watch* and *Wonder*. He calls them his favourites and is thrilled they were chosen.

J.B. Sugar is executive producer along with Sawyer and they hired Shelley Scarrow to adapt the novels for TV and to write the pilot. The goal is to have the script done by the summer and a

pilot filmed by fall.

"Shelley ... with her obvious grasp of and affection for my novels and her terrific genre script work, was our first choice," said Sawyer, adding he was a fan of the Emmy Award-nominated Sugar's work turning his friend Kelley Armstrong's novels into the series *Bitten*. "I'm delighted we've landed her."

Sawyer is open to having it either appear on broadcast television or be available through a streaming service.

The trilogy follows Caitlin Decter, who is blind, but is given a new cutting-edge retinal implant that allows her to see the internet. She discovers a form of sentient intelligence alive and hidden in the web.

The two - human and entity - become fast friends, but a shadowy division of the American government becomes aware of its existence and seeks to destroy it.

The series touches on a variety of contemporary issues such as the nature of privacy, gender identity, cybersecurity and oth-

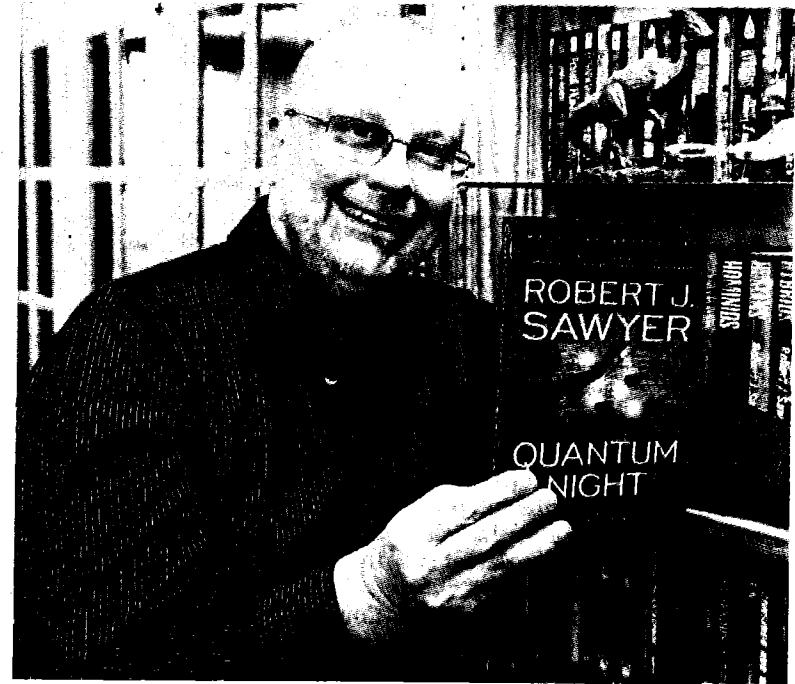
ers.

Sawyer says science fiction has a "long history" of exploring conflict between humans and computers but that humanity typically loses.

"I passionately felt that there had to be a place for a win-win scenario in which we survive as an equal partner with artificial intelligence with our essential liberty, individuality and humanity intact," he said. "It's one no one else has dramatized in movies or on TV before."

More of his works could be coming to television as Sony Pictures Television ordered a pilot for his novel *Rollback* last year. The script was written by Anne Cofell Saunders, who served as a staff writer on *Battlestar Galactica*, and they're waiting to hear if it will be picked up for production.

He plans on releasing his 24th novel, *The Oppenheimer Alternative*, in July 2020. It will be the 75th anniversary of the first detonation of a nuclear bomb and the book is an alternative history that looks at the group of scien-



Rob Beintema/Metroland file photo

Mississauga author Robert J. Sawyer holds a copy of his novel *Quantum Night*. It was recently announced that his WWW Trilogy of books are being adapted for television.

tists that worked on the Manhattan Project and what would have happened if they have stayed together to make amends for the destruction they had wrought.

Sawyer says it could possibly be his last novel as he looks to do more writing for film and television, although he says no formal decision has been made.

Peel Biog.

SAWYER, Robert J.