

Rules of Prey Study Guide

Rules of Prey by John Sandford

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Plot Summary

"A rooftop billboard cast a flickering blue light through the studio windows. The light ricocheted off glass and stainless steel: an empty crystal bud vase rimed with dust, a pencil sharpener, a microwave oven, peanut-butter jars filled with drawing pencils, paintbrushes and crayons. An ashtray full of pennies and paper clips. Jars of Poster Paint, Knives." (Chapter 1, pg. 1). This is the seemingly innocuous opening of this thriller, *Rules of Prey* by John Sandford.

The maddog is a deranged killer with some of his victims being known as the Chosen. The serial killer is a lawyer who does extensive research on his victims and is a meticulous planner who pays attention to details. He has studied the case of other killers and bunglers learning what mistakes they made, trying to make sure he doesn't make the same mistakes which would lead to his capture. The killer has developed a list of rules which he follows and he leaves one as a note at each killing.

They are no hard and fast motives for the killings. The maddog, whose name is Louis Vullion, feels the urge to kill, so he kills. He used to torture and kill squirrels as a teen and found he derived sexual pleasure from the acts. The same was true of his first killing, a high school classmate who had offended him with a remark she made. He moves to the Twin Cities area after graduating law school, and the killings become more frequent.

Lucas Davenport is the police officer assigned to the case. He is a video game inventor, wealthy, unethical and illegal in many of his tactics. Both Davenport and Vullion come to view the situation in terms of a game and each tries to anticipate the other.

Sandford takes the reader into the mind of the killer. He is driven and can't control the urge to kill and the reader watches how he selects his subjects and performs his research and planning. Sandford also takes the reader through the steps of the police investigation and how they diligently track down clues and follow leads. The reader is there as Davenport begins to focus on Vullion and watches Vullion squirm as he begins to realize he is under surveillance. The lawyer in him has him destroy all of the evidence, including that planted by Davenport; but it doesn't diminish his need to kill, which is eventually what did him in.

Rules of Prey is fast and exciting reading. The reader will not be able to put the book down once he begins the novel. It is fast and easy reading and is a book that will definitely hold the reader's interest.



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary

"A rooftop billboard cast a flickering blue light through the studio windows. The light ricocheted off glass and stainless steel: an empty crystal bud vase rimed with dust, a pencil sharpener, a microwave oven, peanut-butter jars filled with drawing pencils, paintbrushes and crayons. An ashtray full of pennies and paper clips. Jars of Poster Paint, Knives." (Chapter 1, pg. 1). This is the seemingly innocuous opening of this thriller, *Rules of Prey* by John Sandford.

The thriller begins with the maddog killer stalking his prey. He feels very alive in the final minutes of the stalk. His intended victim is a female artist. This isn't his first killing. His first was a high school classmate who had offended him with a comment and he killed her three years later. His second killing was a hooker, who was one of the Chosen. He was in his second year of law school. As a lawyer in the Twin Cities, he continues his killings using meticulous planning and studying various murder investigations. He had his own rules and he adhered to them.

He knows he is insane and he accepts that fact. He knows that the police investigating the case think that he is a sex freak. Psychiatric profiles said he was afraid of women but he disagrees with them, having a good reason for everything he does.

As a child he liked to torture and kill squirrels. This is how he experiences his first orgasm. The intellectual thrill of the killing enticed him more as he grew older. It is a game to him with him playing against the police. Each time he killed, he would leave a message for the police with the worlds cut from the newspaper; but none of this appeared in the press.

He is waiting outside for his intended victim, the female artist. When he grabs her, she fights and sprays Mace at him. He loses his gun in the fight and eventually begins to run away, as she hits him with a pipe. He leaves her building and drives back to Minneapolis.

Lucas Davenport is buying a racing form and discussing the horses with the clerk. He also buys a book of Emily Dickinson poems. He sits on the lawn of the County Center building and watches the women walking by. He is being observed and photographed by Internal Affairs. The two officers observing him discuss him and say he has some good busts and five killings. The rumor is that he has something on the Chief. Davenport is wealthy and is very popular with the press. Lucas is watching their surveillance van, since he knows he is under surveillance. While this is taking place, the maddog killer is killing another victim.



Chapters 1-2 Analysis

This book takes the reader into the mind of a deranged killer. The maddog enjoys what he does. He calls his victims the Chosen and feels more alive than ever after stalking his victims. His first victim, from high school, had offended him with a comment. The second killing was in Dallas during his second year of law school. She was a hooker.

Killing is a game to the maddog. He is playing against the police and feels that he is smarter than they are. Vullion refers to his father as a gamer and he learned to think in the manner of a gamer from his father. He leaves one of his rules with each body and is upset that this fact doesn't appear in the press. He wants his colleagues to follow the progress of the investigation and discuss it with him, not knowing that he is the killer. Vullion wants to be able to bask in the glory of what he thinks will be discussions about how smart the killer is. This is why he is upset about the notes not being included in the press reports. He wants them to know how clever he is because his rules are basically a guide for not being caught. They are also a way of taunting the police.

Maddog needs to kill. He needs the stimulation. He is upset when he is thwarted by his third Chosen victim in the Twin Cities. The female artist fights him off, Maces him, and hits him with a pipe. He had to flee from the building having lost his gun. He isn't worried because he feels the gun can't be traced to him.

Lucas Davenport is a wealthy police officer who is being investigated by Internal Affairs. He knows he is under surveillance and he is watching the surveillance van that the two officers from Internal Affairs are in. He is not worried about the surveillance.



Chapters 3-4

Chapters 3-4 Summary

Maddog spotted his victim at the County Clerk's office. He hadn't attacked the artist yet, but was thinking about her. He knows there will be another killing after the artist. The woman at the County Clerk's Office is a real estate agent. He introduces himself as an attorney at Felsen-Gore, says he is thinking of buying property, and obtains her business card. As soon as she walks away, he is thinking of the artist again.

Maddog has visible bruises after attacking the female artist, and he drives to the south lake district where the office of the real estate agent is located and begins his stalking. He spends a week watching her and learns her routine and then finds a vacant house in the area. The following Thursday he makes an appointment with Jennie Lewis to see the house. She picks him up and he introduces himself as Louis Vullion. As she is detailing the good points of the neighborhood, he is mentally going through his plan. He attacks her and ties her to the bed, then goes to look for a knife in the kitchen.

The two police officers from Internal Affairs have followed Davenport to a race track, when the Chief calls them and tell them he needs to talk to Davenport. They walk over to him and relay the message. Lucas tells them which horse to bet on and the horse wins. After the race, Lucas goes to the Chief's office where he learns of the attack on Carla Ruiz, the female artist, and the note with a rule on it. The gun was found and traced. It had disappeared from the police evidence room from another case. Chief Daniel tells Lucas about the Jeannie Lewis murder and assigns Lucas to the case. The murder will be announced that evening at a press conference and he wants Lucas to be there.

The police are working the crime scene at the house in Lake Nokomis. They examine the note with the rule and find a half circle under the tape. They think the murderer wears surgical gloves, even when he prepares the notes. They talk to Lucas about the potato in the sock that they found and other aspects of the case. Lucas returns to the station house, calls Carla Ruiz, and makes an appointment to interview her. After the press conference, Lucas spends the night with reporter Jennifer Carey, who keeps trying to learn more about the serial killer.

Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Maddog is always looking for potential victims. Before he attacks the female artist, he meets Jeannie Lewis, a real estate agent, at the County Clerk's Office. He introduces himself as an attorney from Felsen-Gore and says he is looking to buy a home or condo. She gives him her business card and after the botched attack on the artist, he spends a week stalking her. He learns her routine, develops his plan, and contacts her



after finding a house he says he wants to see. Her body is discovered later that afternoon.

All of his victims have dark hair, just like his mother did. These are the only kind of women that appeal to him. He isn't interested in the many blonds that are in the Twin Cities area. Vullion prides himself on the amount of research he does on each of his Chosen and on the amount of time he spends planning every detail of the crime. He uses his legal research skills to plan his crimes and to avoid detection by the police.

Why does Vullion always pick women with certain characteristics? Who do they represent to him? Is he trying to figuratively kill his mother or some other woman from his childhood? No indication is given.

The two Internal Affairs officers follow Lucas to a race track and then are told to deliver a message from the Chief, which ends their surveillance. Lucas learns from the Chief that he was under surveillance because a gun, a murder weapon that was missing from the evidence room, was found at the scene where Carla Ruiz was attacked. He is cleared of suspicion and assigned to the serial killer case. At the Lake Nokomis house, he discusses the case with other officers and then makes an appointment with Carla Ruiz.



Chapters5-6

Chapters5-6 Summary

Lucas reads the newspaper reports about the press conference. There is no mention of Carla Ruiz. He attends a meeting in the Chief's office, where it is announced that the assistant to Lyle Wullfolk, who heads homicide, will be the one to report all information to. The man's name is Harmon Anderson. They talk about the press and the investigation regarding who took the gun from the evidence room. Lucas says he wants to talk to the thirty four people they know had access to the room. They have data on the three murdered victims and Carla Ruiz, but not much more. The only thing they have in common is that they are all women. They also note that the time interval between killings is becoming shorter and there have been no weekend attacks. Everyone at the meeting receives a notebook with all of the information on the case. It will be updated daily and they are not supposed to show it to anyone or reveal information about the existence of the notes.

After the meeting, Daniel tells Lucas that one of his functions will be to feed information to the press at various times. Lucas isn't happy about this because he has good relations with the press and doesn't want to be caught lying. He then goes to interview Carla Ruiz, who he questions thoroughly and in detail. He finds that Carla thinks the man is from New Mexico due to his accent, as he walks her through the attack. He makes a date with her for the next evening.

Lucas discusses the case with an old grade school friend, Sister Mary Joseph, who used to be Elle Kruger. He is interested in her assessment of the killer and how he chooses his victims. When he returns to his office, Carla calls to tell him the shoes with the bubble are Nike Air model shoes. At the daily meeting, Lucas reports the information he has obtained during the day and then goes on to talk to the people who had access to the evidence room. The one who took the gun will not be prosecuted if he comes forward.

While Lucas is waiting for a phone call from the person who took the gun, Jennifer calls saying she received a lead about a survivor of a serial killer attack. Lucas says he will set up a meeting with the Chief, which he immediately does. The call Lucas is waiting for finally comes and they set up a meeting and Lucas meets Officer Harry Roe, who took the gun and gave it to a neighbor. The neighbor said the gun was gone and she didn't know where after her husband had died.

Chapters5-6 Analysis

Lucas is called to a meeting at the Chief's office with the other investigators that are working on the serial killer case. They are organizing their investigation and coordinating the flow of information. After the meeting, Lucas is told he will have the



duty of feeding items to the news sources. He isn't happy about this because he doesn't want to be caught lying to the press. He wants to maintain his good relations with them.

Lucas's questioning of Carla Ruiz is intense and thorough as he makes her relive moments of the attack. He told her he had to scare her to see if she would remember any details that were missing from other interviews. She did. She told Lucas about the cologne, what she thought was a New Mexico accent and that the attacker wore sneakers with a bubble on the side, which are later identified as Nike Air sneakers. These are details that other questioners haven't drawn out of her and they represented important information about the attacker. If he hadn't been so harsh with Carla, he wouldn't have been able to draw this information from her.

Lucas reports all of his information at the daily meeting and they begin to form an idea that they are looking for a white collar worker who recently arrived from one of the Southwestern states. They will check forwarding addresses. Lucas also meets with the people who had access to the evidence room and tells them the one who took the gun will not be prosecuted if he comes forward. They are more interested in catching a sadistic serial killer than they are in the theft. However, if the person doesn't come forward, an investigation will take place along with prosecution. The man comes forward later that evening. He is officer Harry Roe who took the gun to give to a dying friend. He is able to provide Lucas with a further lead about the gun and since they are so short on information, it is a lead that they need.



Chapters 7-8

Chapters 7-8 Summary

At the next group meeting, the detectives decide they don't have much useful information in their notebooks. They don't know for sure that the serial killer is from the Southwest but it is something to go on. Lucas reports that he found the person who took the gun. He will interview the widow that afternoon. When Daniel mentions the leak to Jennifer Carey about the survivor, someone suggests that it might have come from St. Paul. Lucas says he is checking leads on doctors and that they should look for common threads. The group also discusses the fact that the post office information on forwarding addresses is not computerized and would take a team of men three months or longer to check the post offices in the Southwest. They discuss other possibilities, like driver's licenses.

After the meeting, while walking in the hall, Lucas meets Carla Ruiz and tells her about the leak. They discuss the different ways of handling the situation. Lucas tells her that after the press conference, she could spend several days at his cabin at the lake.

While questioning Mary Rice about the gun and trying to develop a list of people who might have it, Lucas calls Carla to see if she was at the courthouse before she was attacked and finds she was there three weeks before the attack. Mary's dead husband had worked for the city and also knew a lot of county employees. He also found that Jeannie Lewis was frequently at the County Building. The detectives decide to check on the other murder victims to see if they had visited the County Building and find that all of the women had been within a month of their deaths.

Maddog saves the newspaper stories about the killings. He is pleased by them, even though he knows they will cause problems if the police ever find them. However, he figures that if the police are ever in his home, it's all over anyway. He also watched all of the press conferences and taped some of them. Maddog becomes interested in Lucas Davenport when he finds he is a video game inventor. He is becoming obsessed with the new coverage to the extent that his work at the law firm is beginning to suffer. He begins to feel the need to kill again and knows he must begin working on a new victim.

He runs into a law firm associate who invites him to attend a gallery opening, which he does. The associate is Bethany Jankalo. Louis, the maddog, is in the gallery of Carla Ruiz.

Chapters 7-8 Analysis

The police group discusses their progress at their daily meeting. Their notebooks have three hundred pages of information, none of which seems very useful to them. Since the post officers address forwarding is not computerized, they discuss other ways of trying



to obtain the information. These daily meetings are brainstorming sessions for the officers. They pool their knowledge and analyze the facts that they have.

Carla Ruiz is obviously upset about the leak to Jennifer Carey. Lucas tells her the Chief will be calling her and they discuss the different ways of handling the situation. She is nervous about forcing a press conference but doesn't want them hounding her. Lucas suggests that she go away for a few days after the press conference and says she could stay at his lake cabin. She talks to Lucas about obtaining a gun for protection. Lucas seems to be crossing a professional boundary when he offers Carla the use of his cabin.

Lucas and the detectives find another common thread - all of the women had been at the Hennepin County courthouse within a month of being attacked by the serial killer. Even though it is a lead, Lucas warns that their killer is too smart to make it that easy for them.

Louis, the maddog, is fascinated by the press coverage of the killings. He saves all of the newspaper stories and video tapes some of the television coverage. He becomes interested in Lucas because he is a game inventor. Louis begins to feel the urge to kill again. When Bethany Jankalo invites him to attend an art gallery opening with her and her date, they argue about the quality of the art and he briefly thinks of killing her, since she is associated with the exotic quality of the art. Just then he sees Carla Ruiz, whose gallery he is in. He feels that he is over Carla but Know he must prepare for another victim before the urge becomes too bad.

Vullion cannot really control the urge to kill because he becomes obsessed by his victims and can't get them out of his mind. Carla is the only victim to have survived his attack and in spite of his failure, he feels he is over her, meaning that he is no longer obsessed by her. It is almost as if he must kill to get rid of the obsession.



Chapter 9-10

Chapter 9-10 Summary

Jennifer Carey tells Lucas she's decided to go on half-time work with the studio as a producer and have a baby. Lucas offers to marry her but she says no. She tells him that she wants to interview the survivor, meaning Carla, but he tells her that the Chief said no. He calls Carla to arrange the interview before Jennifer finds her identity and says he will drive her to his lake cabin afterward. When Lucas calls the Chief's office, he is told to come in immediately. They have found a welfare worker who is a suspect. Jennifer, who was listening on the extension, picks up on the name Ruiz. Lucas says he will set up the interview for that evening and Jennifer agrees not to report on what she overheard.

The welfare worker suspect they have is named Jimmy Smithe. He fits part of the profile and they can link him to two of the women. The group decides to quietly investigate him. After the meeting, Lucas tells Daniel about the arrangements for the interview and press conference later that evening. He also says he will be going to his cabin after the meeting.

Lucas illegally enters Smithe's home using a pick. He looks around the house, finds several boxes of prophylactics and takes one of them since the serial killer uses them. In the closet are several pairs of Adidas shoes but no Nike Airs. After looking around, Lucas leaves the house.

Back at the Chief's office, he finds the prophylactic checks with the list they have, but it is not enough for them to issue a warrant. Smithe also regularly jogs past a house that Lewis sold several weeks before she was murdered. They will also check his garbage.

The interview and press conference take place that night. The people at the press conference don't know about the interview. After the press conference, Lucas drives Carla to the cabin and they talk during the three hour trip. He shows Carla around the cabin and rests before driving back. As soon as he is back at the office, Daniel tells him to fly back in a chopper to see if Carla can identify Smithe. The police are trying to serve a warrant on Smithe and need as much evidence as possible. Carla recognizes Smithe from art gallery events that they have both attended. Daniel tells Lucas that they will now arrest Smithe.

When Smithe is brought in for questioning, he is uncooperative on the advice of his attorney, Lucas believes Smithe is innocent and is mad at Jennifer because she told one of her colleagues about him which forced the police to question Smithe before they were ready to. Jennifer reports the whole story, including Smithe's name, in a live broadcast.



Chapter 9-10 Analysis

Lucas is surprised by Jennifer's sudden announcement that she is taking a leave of absence from reporting to free lance write and to produce on a half-time basis for the studio. She is pregnant but refuses Lucas's offer of marriage. They decide they will work out their arrangement regarding the baby and their relationship in the coming months. When Lucas is talking to the Chief on the phone, Jennifer is listening on an extension and learns about the suspect and the name Ruiz. Lucas says they have to work out the rules in the future for these kinds of situations, but agrees to set up the interview with Carla for that evening.

Lucas should have been more careful knowing that Jennifer was in the house even if she didn't think she would go as far as eavesdropping on an extension phone. Her nosiness and reporting could endanger the investigation as she forced the police to reveal Carla's identity and to arrest Jimmy Smithe before they were ready to.

Lucas takes Carla to his cabin so she is out of the Twin Cities area after the interview and press conference. They know the press will be trying to talk to her and she doesn't want to deal with that.

Jennifer forced the police to question Smithe before they were ready to by having one of her colleagues report on a possible suspect. Smithe refused to answer questions on the advice of his attorney. Lucas and Jennifer quarrel when Jennifer reveals Smithe's name in a live broadcast. She comes to Lucas's house in the middle of the night and they talk. Lucas still wants to marry her.



Chapters 11-13

Chapters 11-13 Summary

Louis Vullion, the maddog, is upset when he learns about the arrest of Smithe. He reports to work but doesn't function very well since he is preoccupied about the Smithe arrest. While sitting in court, he listens to another case involving Heather Brown, whose real name is Gloria Ammundsen. He looks at her file when he finishes his case. After dinner, he cruises around the city and spots Heather Brown. He walks up to her and begins to talk. When they finish, he calls Lucas Davenport from a phone booth and tells him the police shouldn't have arrested Smithe. He won't know anything about the notes, and then recites the rules in the notes he has left. He hangs up before Lucas can say anything.

Lucas realizes the caller knows what is in the notes and that he has a Southwestern accent. He relays the information to the Chief. They know the maddog will strike again and they now have to find a way to release Smithe. They also wonder about the cop Carla identified from the pictures since Lucas has an unlisted phone number and the only way it is available is from the building directory.

Smithe provides alibis for two of the murders. While the alibis are being checked, Lucas leaks the information to one of the television stations and tells her they'll find Smithe being checked out that afternoon. The reporter and crew are there to interview Smithe when he is released.

Vullion learns of Smithe's release at his office. His colleagues mention that the police think the killer is impotent. Vullion is furious at this since his colleagues are laughing and he feels they are laughing at him. He goes home for lunch to watch the news reports and works at the office through the weekend only to find that another attorney took the credit for the research he did. This further enraged him.

The maddog goes back to the street and picks up Heather Brown. He kills her at the motel she took him to and then sits in a bar and has a few drinks. Afterward, he drives by the motel and sees the police cars there. He sees the reporter Annie McGowan, who said he was impotent, arrive with her crew. Deciding he has taken enough risks that night, he drives home.

Chapters 11-13 Analysis

The maddog is enraged about the arrest of Smithe, so enraged that he calls Lucas at home and tells him that they arrested the wrong man. Smithe won't know anything about the notes, and he recites the rules that were given in the notes. He also tells Lucas that if they don't release Smithe, the maddog will do something to remedy the situation and hangs up before Lucas can do anything. Vullion has already spotted Heather Brown in court that day and found her on the street.



The police realize they have to release Smithe or there will be another killing. Luckily, Smithe provides an alibi that checks out. Lucas leaked some information to a television reporter that they think the killer is impotent. This enrages Vullion, who finds out from his colleagues at the office. They are laughing and he feels that they are laughing at him.

That night he finds Heather Brown on the street and kills her at a local motel. He is pleased with the way the crime went. After leaving the motel, he had a few drinks at a bar and then drove by the motel. As he drove by, he saw Annie McGowan and her television crew arrive. She is the reporter who said he was impotent. He wants to stop but feels he has already taken enough risks.

The fact that Vullion is so angered at the news report about the killer being impotent may have forced Vullion's hand in killing Heather Brown. He wanted to prove to the police that he is not impotent. It is possible that the police may have forced Vullion's hand by telling the press that they thought he was impotent. He might not have felt such an urge to kill if he hadn't been taunted.



Chapters 14-16

Chapters 14-16 Summary

Carla is relaxing at Lucas's cabin and accepts his offer of staying there longer. Lucas is at the cabin with her when he receives the call about another killing. Lucas calls Annie McGowan with the news and tells her that they were expecting him to kill a hooker and then leaves for Minneapolis. He drives to the crime scene and learns that the killer left the door ajar after the killing and the curious clerk knocked and found the body. From the way she was tied, she didn't struggle so they figure she was paid for bondage.

The police question Vincent Short, the motel clerk, but he claims he doesn't know anything. Lucas finds out who Heather's pimp is. The police will pick him up for questioning but then find out that he has left town.

Lucas goes to the clerk's office for some files when Vullion is there. Lucas doesn't recognize him and asks the supervisor who he is. She can't remember his name but tells Lucas what case he is working on. Lucas checks the file of Jefferson Sparks, the pimp, and finds the name of a health club. The owner tells him that she thinks Jefferson Sparks is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Jennifer and Lucas have dinner together and talk. She says she is not a working reporter anymore but he still isn't sure if he can trust her. He tests her by saying he doesn't know where Annie McGowan's information is coming from but none of it is true. The next morning Lucas finds the police in Iowa have arrested Sparks on a bogus charge and are holding him for Lucas to question and Lucas must fly there. Sparks tells Lucas that he saw Heather talk and leave with a man, and describes him. The man looked like a farmer but his hair was styled. Sparks is released after the questioning and Lucas drives back to Minneapolis. At home, he studies the information from the case and begins to wonder if the killer is involved in the legal profession. He feeds Annie information about a witness who says the maddog looks like a farmer and from the smell of him, they think he is a pig farmer. He watches the tape of the broadcast and designates Annie as one of the Chosen.

He thinks of killing a crippled law student who lives several blocks away. He had done his research on her. He goes out and ends up calling Davenport and tell him he has another Chosen, and hangs up. He is still seething about the hog farmer business.

Chapters 14-16 Analysis

Lucas learns of the Brown murder while he is at his cabin with Carla. He leaks some information to Annie McGowan and drives back to Minneapolis. After checking the crime scene, he returns home. In the middle of the night Annie knocks at his door. He doesn't answer, but begins to think of his relationship with women. Jennifer is pregnant, Carla is at his cabin and now there is Annie. Annie misinterprets Lucas' actions in leaking



information as an interest in her. She acts on it when she appears at his home in the middle of the night. At this point she does not realize that he is using her as a lure for the killer. Vullion is provoked enough to call Lucas again.

After finding out the name of Heather Brown's pimp, Lucas goes to the County Clerk's office looking for information. Louis Vullion is there when he walks and immediately recognizes Lucas, who doesn't know him, but learns from the supervisor what case Vullion is working on. He also learns the name of a health club from the files and goes there and finds that the man with Heather looked like a farmer.

Lucas again uses Annie McGowan. He tells her there is a witness that saw the killer. From the description and odor, the police think the killer is a pig farmer. Vullion is enraged when he hears this, so enraged that he designates McGowan as one of the Chosen. He calls Lucas, lets him know how upset he is about the hog farmer business, and says he has another Chosen. Does Lucas realize that his actions, through McGowan, are causing women to be killed?



Chapter 17-19

Chapter 17-19 Summary

At the detectives' group meeting, they conclude that they are coming up with nothing. There is no way to track the killer through drivers' licenses and they are receiving some information through the post offices. They are checking the names that they have. Lucas talk about the phone calls and how they followed McGowan's broadcasts and how she fits his type. Daniel orders a watch to be placed on her and Lucas says that she might be their chance to catch the serial killer. He doesn't tell the Chief that he has been feeding her misinformation.

McGowan is informed of the surveillance and is happy. Her television station will be taping some of it. The publicity will help her career. Lucas visits the surveillance team and is shown their set-up. He will try to be there every evening.

On the tenth day after the killing of Heather, they know the killer will be striking again in the next week. They decide to publicize information about his appearance and what kind of woman he prefers. Lucas calls Annie McGowan with the information. The next week, while they are still watching McGowan, the maddog kills the crippled law student he had selected.

The maddog obtained a flier with the information about the killings when he was at the courthouse. He wonders what other information they have. Vullion takes off early from work and sends his secretary home early. Deciding he has a large population of women to choose from and that the police don't really have anything, he begins to feel the urge to kill again.

A neighbor of Cheryl Wheatcroft was walking the night she was killed and noticed another man who walked several blocks to a parked dark blue Thunderbird. The police have a meeting with representatives of the press. They want the press to downplay the coverage of the serial killer.

Vullion gained entry to the law student's home by saying he was offering residencies at his law firm. After killing her, he had called Lucas Davenport, leaving a message on the answering machine. After the body is found, Lucas phones Annie with the information.

Chapter 17-19 Analysis

Lucas has basically set up Annie McGowan as a lure for the killer by the information he fed her. The Chief orders surveillance on her and Lucas says he doesn't know where Annie obtained any of the information. He deliberately lies to the Chief, knowing that he has helped set Annie up as a lure. Lucas is at one of the surveillance posts every evening as he was when the maddog killed the crippled law student.



The maddog is at first disturbed by the flier and leaves work early. He decides that the police can't really have anything on him and begins to feed the urge to kill another Chosen. The flier seemed to circulate around his office, where his colleagues and staff were laughing at some of the information. Vullion takes this personally.

The maddog's murder of Cheryl Wheatcroft, the crippled law student was particularly brutal. She was stabbed repeatedly. Since she was paralyzed, parts of her body had no sensation and the stabbing indicated that the maddog was trying to find out where she did and didn't feel pain.

The police want the press to deemphasize their coverage of the serial killings. They feel the press is harming their investigation and instilling fear in the population that could lead to other accidental killings. Lucas doesn't say anything about his own role in provoking the killer through the misinformation he fed Annie McGowan. He doesn't seem to see that as endangering her or anyone.



Chapters 20-22

Chapters 20-22 Summary

Vullion basked in the coverage of the Wheatcroft killing. He continued to tape and replay the press reports as he fantasized about Annie McGowan. The media was full of reports until Monday, when the coverage just about stopped. He began his research on Annie McGowan by using computerized county tax records and reads books on burglary and knows how the Son of Sam was caught. Vullion begins to think about his car and where he should park it. After obtaining McGowan's number, he calls and says he mis-dialed when she answered. On Sunday, he drives around the neighborhood in his dark blue Thunderbird. Neither surveillance team notices him. He decides he will strike the next night.

In checking out the missing gun, Lucas visits art dealer Alan Nester who won't talk to them. They check the value of Mary Rice's remaining netsuke and finds it worth eight thousand dollars. Nester purchased fifteen for five hundred dollars. They can arrest him for fraud, but find when they return to his gallery, the he has left for Chicago. They will use this as a lever to obtain information from him.

The surveillance team is discussing the multitude of calls to McGowan's home over the weekend with no messages left on the answering machine. They are notified by radio that a strange man is walking through the neighborhood and his description is given. The maddog has parked five blocks from the house and when he entered the alley behind McGowan's house when he hears the noise of cars and squealing tires. He panics and starts to run. The police chase him. When Vullion vaults a fence, he is bitten by a Doberman, but escapes. The following police were attacked and shot the two dogs. The dogs owner shoots one of the police officers and is them shot by the other. Since the police, not knowing what was happening, focused on the gunfire, maddog reached his car and escaped. By the time the call went out to stop all dark blue Thunderbirds in the area, Vullion was home.

The press covered the incident and the police expect a lawsuit.

Chapters 20-22 Analysis

The maddog is reveling in the press coverage of the Wheatcroft killing and is puzzled when the coverage suddenly stops after a few days. He begins his research and meticulous planning of Annie McGowan, even driving by her house on Sunday in his dark blue Thunderbird, where he isn't detected by either surveillance team. He decides he will attack McGowan the following night. He seems to feel the need to do so right under the nose of the police. Vullion finally realizes that he was set up by the news reports and that the police were waiting for him.



Art dealer Alan Nester returns to talk to Lucas. When the police check the value of Mary Rice's netsuke, they find Nester has defrauded her. Nester is gone to Chicago when the police return to the gallery. They will use the fraud as a bargaining chip to get Nester to talk.

The surveillance team at Annie McGowan's house has a multitude of phone calls to her vacant home over the weekend. They all move into position to catch him as he runs. He enters a yard with dogs and is bitten. When the police follow, they are attacked by the dogs and one of the officer's shoots the dogs and is then shot by the home owner. The surviving officers shoots the homeowner. The other police, including Lucas, enter the fray, thinking the shoot out is with the killer. In all of the confusion, Vullion reaches his car and escapes. Afterwards, Lucas feels guilty because he didn't focus on the killer.



Chapter 23-25

Chapter 23-25 Summary

When Vullion reaches home, he can't believe that the police didn't follow him. He bathes, washes his clothes, cleans the car, and gathers all of the items he uses in his crimes into a garbage bag. He tears up the newspaper stories and flushes them down the toilet. Taking a cab to the airport, he rents a car, having decided to keep his own out of sight. He drives on the Interstate into Wisconsin, stopping to deposit pieces of garbage along the way. He makes sure that he scatters the evidence in different places so it will be next to impossible to track. He spent the night in an Eau Claire motel. He mentally replays the whole evening and realizes that the McGowan house was under surveillance and he walked into it.

The police know the man they were chasing fell into soft clay and alerted the hospitals in case he seeks medical treatment. They know the man was wearing brand new Reeboks. Lucas learns this, then goes home to sleep. He wakes to Jennifer pounding on his door and she accuses him of setting up Annie McGowan. The news team has him on tape. She wants an interview with him and Carla Ruiz which both agree to and do. After the interview, they have an argument.

Vullion did not return to Minneapolis until the next day, having called in sick at work and arrived late in the day. As he is leaving the office, he sees the television interview with Lucas and Carla. Later that evening he tapes one newscast while he watches the other. He studies the replay and reaches the same conclusion that Jennifer reached: Lucas and Carla are sexually involved. This provides him with ammunition to use against Lucas.

Chapter 23-25 Analysis

The maddog is amazed that he wasn't followed by the police. He rents a car and disposes of any incriminating evidence by throwing it away in different trash cans along the Interstate. Maddog spends the night in an Eau Claire hotel so the receipt will show he was out of town at the time of the incident. He knows he will be caught some day, but walking into a trap set by the police is not the way he envisioned it.

Jennifer figures out that Lucas used Annie McGowan and confronts him. Both Carla and Lucas agree to tape an interview for Jennifer. During the interview, Jennifer realizes that Lucas is romantically involved with Carla and asks him about it afterward. They part.

Vullion learns of the interview when he is leaving his office. He tapes it and studies the tapes. He also concludes that there is a romantic link between Carla and Lucas.

The fact that Lucas is a gamer and the fact that he tried to frame Vullion adds further fuel to the fire. Vullion likes the challenge of a game and this makes Lucas of special



interest to him. If Jennifer hadn't forced the interview with Carla and Lucas, Lucas might not have figured out their romantic involvement.

Vullion knows that he is under police surveillance and this does not seem to deter him. It seems to make the game more challenging to him. The police do not realize that their surveillance has been spotted.



Chapter 26-28

Chapter 26-28 Summary

Lucas and his colleague, Sloan, visit Nester again. He claims he paid the asking price to the Rices. Lucas says they won't press felony fraud charges if he gives them the information they want: he can deal with Mary Rice's attorney. Nester tells them how he purchased the netsukes and that he doesn't know anything about the gun. He didn't spend much time there because Rice was waiting for his attorney to pick up his will. They call Mary Rice and ask her to look at the last page for the lawyer's name. It is Louis Vullion.

Lucas has the name checked through the state. They learn from the description that he has red hair and a dark blue Thunderbird. The police place Vullion under surveillance. When the maddog goes to the mall after dinner, Lucas goes to his home and illegally enters. Lucas can't find anything that could be used to obtain a warrant. The only thing he can find is a video tape of the news conference. He stuffs photos of the victims under the mattress. As he leaves the house, he is signaled that Vullion is leaving the mall.

Daniel and Lucas discuss the illegal search. Lucas omits telling him of the victim's pictures that he planted under the mattress. They don't have any link to the gun and not enough to arrest him on, so they keep Vullion under surveillance. The maddog spotted the surveillance when he was driving on the Interstate. The surveillance car had a broken left-turn light that made it easy to spot as Vullion drove around.

Vullion thinks of the situation and knows they will wait for him, but Vullion finds the transmitter placed under his bumper and the pictures under the mattress. He burns the pictures and formulates a plan during the night.

Chapter 26-28 Analysis

Lucas's handling of Nester paid off because Mary Rice came up with the name of Louis Vullion who handles her husband's will. A check of the name with the state revealed he had a dark blue Thunderbird. He was placed under surveillance and when he was at the mall, Lucas searched his home and planted pictures of the victims under Vullion's mattress. The illegal actions of this police officer could negate the case against the serial killer. It was Lucas' illegal search of Jimmy Smithe's home that led to the arrest of the wrong man.

The police surveillance is spotted by Vullion because one of the cars had a broken light over the turn signal. While thinking the situation over at work, he remembers that Lucas Davenport craves video games. From this, Vullion concludes that Lucas will try to game him. At home he finds the radio transmitter under his car bumper and the pictures under his mattress. He burns the pictures and lays awake most of the night trying to observe where the surveillance teams were located. After several hours, he formulates a plan.



Chapter 29 - 30

Chapter 29 - 30 Summary

Lucas makes a silencer for one of his guns and hides it as Carla arrives. She tells him she had a visit from Jennifer Carey the previous evening. They have decided that Jennifer can have Lucas. Carla is breaking off their relationship and says Jennifer will arrive in several hours. When she does, she tells him that Annie McGowan has a new job with the network.

Vullion's urge is mounting again, but it has to wait. He has to implement his plan against Lucas. He needs to be free of the surveillance for two hours and he accomplishes this by paying a visit to a colleague at another law firm. After the visit, he leaves the building by another exit and takes a cab to a used car lot where he pays cash for a car. He then buys the various supplies that he needs and locks them in the truck of the car he had purchased and leaves it on the street by his home. He reappears to the surveillance teams walking into his office since he decides that this way they will think they lost him accidentally.

Chapter 29 - 30 Analysis

Lucas receives a surprise from Carla and Jennifer who have discussed their relationship with Lucas. Carla is stepping out of the picture leaving Lucas to Jennifer who tells Lucas that she doesn't want him to fool around until the baby is at least one or two years old. Lucas is surprised at this but doesn't seem too upset that he wasn't included in any of the decision making process. He doesn't try to talk Carla out of it.

Vullion feels he can control his urge to kill long enough to put his plan into effect. He needs to slip away from the surveillance team for two hours which he successfully does. During this time, he pays cash for a used car and purchases the equipment that he requires. He then returns to his office. This shows the depth of his planning.

Vullion isn't even slowed down by the police surveillance. He just works around it, so intent is he in carrying out the plan that he formulated. He doesn't even consider stopping the killings and just develops his plans in the context of the police surveillance.



Chapter 31-32

Chapter 31-32 Summary

Lucas is angry at the surveillance team for losing Vullion for two hours. They don't know if it is deliberate or not. If it was deliberate, what did he do during that time? Why did he buy the fishing lure? That night the surveillance tea has Vullion at home watching television when Lucas arrives.

The maddog arrives home from work, eats dinner, and then went up to the attic where he removed the plywood partition between his and the next unit's space His neighbor was a nurse who worked nights. The attic would allow him a way in and out when he didn't want to be observed. Afterwards, he walked to the store for some groceries then went home to watch the football game. At 10:45, he turned out the lights and went upstairs. Instead of going to bed, he changed into the clothes he had purchased and went through the attic and out through his neighbor's apartment. He walks to the car he had purchased and parked on the street. Driving around, he spots Lucas entering one of the surveillance houses.

Vullion stops and order a pizza, thinking he will use this as a ploy to enter Carla's apartment. At Carla's he says the pizza was ordered by a Lucas avenport, and she opens the door. He beats her and binds her to the bed.

Chapter 31-32 Analysis

Lucas is angered at Vullion evading surveillance. He wonders if it is accidental or intentional and what did he do in those missing two hours? He learns to details of what his men know and wonder why Vullion would buy computer paper when he has half a box in his home. He is also puzzled by the purchase of the fishing lure.

Vullion is involved in carrying out his plan with his usual meticulous planning and attention to detail. He figures out how to leave his home, carry out the murder of Carla Ruiz, and return home without the police knowing he has left his home. The only aspect he hadn't planned was how to gain access to Carla's apartment, but he comes with how when he sees Lucas Davenport entering the surveillance house carrying a pizza. He brings a pizza to Carla's apartment, acts as the delivery person and says that Lucas Davenport said the wine was coming. Carla opened the door for him, was beaten and bound to the bed.

To Vullion, the police surveillance was part of the game. It added an additional element of intellectual stimulation to the situation and Vullion needs intellectual stimulation. He needs to feel that he can out smart the police and this is what the surveillance did. It gave him an additional opportunity to prove how smart he is, from his own point of view. He also wants to strike at Lucas in some way.



Chapter 33-34

Chapter 33-34 Summary

The police think that Lucas has gone to bed for the night. The police on the surveillance detail are hungry and order a pizza, which Lucas does out to pick up. When Lucas returns, the police notice that there is no night light on in Vullion's home. This bothers Lucas because Vullion has had the night light on every night. It is then that Lucas remembers the attic. Lucas calls Vullion's home and there is no answer. The team runs over to his house and breaks in. Louis isn't there and there is an opening in the attic partitions. While the others are alerting the Chief, Lucas notices the light on the VCR. It contains a tape of his interview with Carla.

Lucas drives to the warehouse where Carla lives. He tells the doorman to wait for the police and breaks down the door to Carla's apartment. After a struggle, Lucas traps Vullion and uses his body to hold him down while he unties Carla. Lucas drags Vullion to the other room and holds him at gun point. Vullion says he knew about the surveillance and says Lucas won't be able to prove any of the murders. Carla is still alive, the method is different and there is not note. The maddog will try for an insanity plea and if not, he'll get eighteen years at Stillwater prison at the worst.

Davenport calls the police and leaves the line open. When Vullion moved, Lucas shot him twice, but he wasn't dead when Carla came out of the bedroom. Lucas takes Carla back in the bedroom and then puts the gun with the silencer he made in the hand of the now dead Vullion. Lucas made it look like self-defense.

Chapter 33-34 Analysis

When Lucas arrives back at the surveillance house with the pizza, one of the team mentions that the night light in Vullion's home is out. They don't think much of it, but it bothers Lucas to the point that he calls the house and receives no answer. Remember the attic, the surveillance team breaks in and find the opening in the partition in the attic and Vullion gone. Since the light was on the VCR, Lucas played the tape and found it was the interview with him and Carla. He figures that Vullion will try to kill Carla.

Arriving at Carla's apartment, he breaks down the door and subdues Vullion. He frees Carla, and then calls the police. While waiting, he shoots and kills Vullion, making it look like self-defense. Lucas did not call the police until after he subdued Vullion. He didn't notify them before he left Vullion's home, which is what he should have done. He could have cost Carla her life. Lucas also did not have to kill Vullion. The fact that he had made the silencer and brought it with him into the building attests to his plan.

As Vullion lay dying, he calls out one word: "Mom." His mother had been a small dark haired woman who died when he was in high school. Were the killings the result of his

anger at her leaving him? He is obviously looking for her or he wouldn't have called out for her.



Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

Several weeks later, Lucas appears at Elle's office with his arm still in a cast from his struggle with Vullion. He brings her a gift, an inscribed medallion. They talk about their school days and then Lucas's relationship with Jennifer who still refuses to marry him. Carla, he tells her, is in Chicago. When she asks if he feels any guilt over Vullion's death, she thinks about it and says she doesn't want to know any of the details.

Chapter 35 Analysis

Elle seems to know about Lucas' history. Vullion is the sixth man that he has killed. She asks if he feels any guilt and he asks if she wants to know the details. She says no. She apparently has guessed at the truth.

Jennifer still doesn't want to marry him and he still seems to accept the situation and her rules. He is hoping that she will change her mind someday.



Characters

Louis Vullion

The maddog is a psychotic killer, as the book opens. He is originally from East Texas where his first victim was a high school classmate who had offended him. In his second year of law school in Dallas, he killed a hooker, his second victim. The maddog is a meticulous planner who tries to perfect his techniques with each killing. As a lawyer in the Twin Cities, he studies various murder investigations and further develops his techniques.

He associates sexual pleasure with killing since he experienced his first orgasm as a child when he was torturing and killing squirrels. As he grows older, the killings take on a more intellectual thrill. He is playing a game against the police and is certain that he can't be caught. Louis saves the newspaper stores and tapes some of the television coverage. He is basically obsessed by the press coverage of the serial killings and follows it religiously. When Smith is arrested, Vullion is enraged at somebody else receiving the credit for the killings and calls Lucas. He is further enraged when reporter Annie McGowan reports that the police believe he is impotent. He then kills Heather Brown. Vullion kills Cheryl Wheatcroft after McGowan reported that he had an odor that indicate he might be a hog farmer. He selects McGowan as one of the Chosen and walks into a trap when he goes near her house. He escapes, panics and gets rid of all of the evidence of his involvement or interest in the crime.

Vullion doesn't know that the police learn his name from the Rice will. He spots the surveillance that the police have on him and begins to panic and meticulously disposes of all of the evidence. The urge to kill, however, is still there and in the end he is killed by Lucas Davenport.

Lucas Davenport

Lucas Davenport is a cop who is under surveillance by Internal Affairs. He drives a Porsche and likes to bet on horses. He also likes video games and is a video game inventor. He works for the Office of Special Intelligence and is assigned to the serial killer case by Chief Quentin Daniel. Lucas is single and lives in a three bedroom house near the Mississippi River on Mississippi Boulevard. This is where he created his video game.

Lucas's handling of the situation resulted in the surfacing of the officer who took the gun from the evidence room. He is sent to try to find who took it. He is also good at drawing information from people when interviewing them. Even after all of the times Carla Ruiz has been questioned he still draws out information about the Southwestern accent and Nike Air sneakers.



Lucas becomes romantically involved with reporter Jennifer Carey. She is pregnant with his child and he wants to marry her. She doesn't want to marry him. He also becomes romantically involved with Carla Ruiz, and when he finds Anne McGowan available, begins to question his own motives.

Davenport engages in many illegal and unethical situations. He sets Anne McGowan up as a lure by feeding her misinformation. His illegal search of Jimmy Smithe's home led to the arrest of an innocent man. His illegal search of Vullion's home had Vullion find the victim's pictures that Louis had planted. Lucas wants to nail Vullion and makes a silencer for one of his guns. When Vullion attacks Carla Ruiz a second time, Davenport doesn't stop to call the police until after he arrives at her apartment. He kills Vullion, making it look like he killed in self-defense.

Jimmy Smithe

Smithe is a welfare worker for the county that fits some parts of the profile the police have developed. He lives near Lake Harriet, near where the Lewis woman had her office. He is under suspicion as a suspect in the serial killings and is quietly being investigated and observed by the police. He is released after being arrested. His alibi checked out and Lucas had received a call from the maddog. Smithe is released.

Jennifer Carey

Jennifer Carey is a local news reporter. She attended the press conference after the Jeannie Lewis killing and spent the night with Lucas. They are romantically involved and she is pregnant by Lucas, but refuses to marry him. She uses her situation with Lucas to obtain information about the serial killer case and this places a strain on their relationship. Even at the end of the book, she still refuses to marry him.

Annie McGowan

Annie McGowan is a television reporter who reports on the information Lucas gave her about Smithe being released and the killer being impotent. Davenport sets her up to lure the maddog. She uses the situation for publicity and moves to a position with the television network.

Carla Ruiz

Carla Ruiz is the female artist in the Twin Cities who would have been maddog's fifth killing and the third in the Twin Cities area, but she successfully fought him off and he fled. She becomes romantically involved with Davenport and appears in interviews with him. The maddog comes to kill her again and is killed by Davenport.



Elle Kruger

Elle Kruger, Sister Mary Joseph, is a grade school friend of Lucas. They have kept in touch through the years and she teaches at St. Anne's College in Minneapolis. He discusses the case with her because he respects her opinion.

Ranch Girl

The girl was from a ranch in East Texas and was the first victim of maddog. She was a high school classmate who had offended him with a remark she made. He waited three years to kill her.

Jeannie Lewis

Jeannie Lewis is a Twin Cities area real estate agent who meets maddog at the County Clerk's Office. After the botched attack on the female artist, maddog stalks Jeannie, sets up an appointment to see a house and kills her.

Heather Brown

Heather Brown is a young hooker who attracts Vullion's attention when she appears in court. She is killed by the maddog.

Cheryl Wheatcroft

Cheryl Wheatcroft is a crippled law student. She was one of the Chosen and her body was found two days after the maddog had killed her.

Harmon Anderson

Anderson is the assistant to Lyle Wullfolk, the head of homicide. All information regarding the serial killer investigation is to be coordinated through him.

Dallas Hooker

The hooker in Dallas was in her late teens. She was the second victim of the maddog.

Quentin Daniel

Quentin Daniel is the Chief of Police in Minneapolis. He is actively involved in the serial killer investigation.



Lucy Bell

Lucy Bell was a nineteen-year-old waitress and the first victim of the serial killer in the Twin Cities area.

Shirley Morris

Shirley Morris was a thirty-six-year-old housewife and the second victim of the serial killer in the Twin Cities area.

Lyle Wullfolk.

Wullfolk is the head of homicide in the Minneapolis Police Department.



Objects/Places

East Texas

A small town in East Texas is the site of the first killing.

Dallas, Texas

Dallas is a city in Texas where the maddog attended law school. It was also the site of the second killing.

Minneapolis

Minneapolis is the city in Minnesota where most of the killings take place.

St. Paul

St. Paul is a Minnesota city that is part of what is known as the Twin Cities, along with Minneapolis.

Lake Nokomis

The Lake Nokomis area of Minneapolis is where Jeannie Lewis was murdered.

Hennepin County Courthouse

Hennepin is the county in which Minneapolis and St. Paul are located.

North Woods

The North Woods area is where Lucas has a cabin on a lake, about a three hour drive from Minneapolis.

Cedar Rapids

Cedar Rapids is a city in Iowa where Lucas interviewed Jefferson Sparks.



Minnehaha Creek Area

The creek area is where Annie McGowan has a house where the police set up surveillance to try to catch the serial killer.

Eau Claire

Eau Claire, Wisconsin is where Vullion spends the night after he is chased by the police.

Hastings, Minnesota

Hastings is a town in Minnesota twenty miles south of Minneapolis.

Themes

Serial Killer Profile

Maddog is a deranged serial killer that is driven by his urge to kill. It is like a game to him and he derives sexual and intellectual pleasure from the act. The maddog thinks he is smarter than the police and he studies the cases of killers and burglars so he doesn't make the same mistakes that they did. A meticulous planner, the maddog researches each of his victims and plans all of the details of the crime in advance. After the act of killing, he relives the act mentally for the pleasure. He doesn't like mistakes and views the killings as acts of perfection.

Vullion becomes obsessed by his Chosen before he kills them and can't get them out of his mind. He saves the newspaper clippings and tapes the television coverage of his crimes and basks in the glory. Vullion also becomes angry at some of the coverage that portrays the killer as impotent and as a hog farmers that smells of pig manure.

When the police arrest Smithe, Vullion can't believe that they made such a mistake and calls Davenport to tell him that. The maddog wants the credit for the crimes. He knows he will be caught someday, and at the end tells this to Davenport and how he will enter a plea of temporary insanity.

His planning and attention to details allow him to evade police surveillance to plan the second attack on Carla Ruiz. He buys a second car and all of the equipment he needs while he is absent from the surveillance. This is how deranged and driven he is.

Investigative Tactics

The investigative tactics of the police, and especially Lucas Davenport, are another theme of the book. They are trying to catch a serial killer and are looking for information and checking leads. Davenport's tactics are a little unorthodox and in many cases unethical and illegal. He strong arms and scares many people into giving him information, but he gets the information that he needs. When he questioned Carla Ruiz, he made her re-enact the attack, which scared her into remembering details that she hadn't remembered in previous questionings. He obtained information about Jefferson Sparks by physically wrecking the reception area of the health club.

Davenport illegally enters the homes of Jimmy Smithe and Louis Vullion. In the case of Smithe, Davenport's actions led to the arrest of an innocent man. At Vullion's home, he planted pictures of the murder victims under Vullion's mattress, which Vullion found and disposed of. Both searches were illegal since there was no search warrant.

He also fed television reporter Annie McGowan misinformation that she reported on. This set her up as a target for the serial killer, before she knew it. She used the situation to her advantage and gained publicity and a position at the network.



Davenport didn't kill Vullion in self-defense. It was basically a pre-meditated act, since he made the silencer in advance. When he ascertained that Vullion was going to try to kill Carla, he didn't call the police until he was in her apartment. He made the killing of Vullion look like self-defense.

Relationship with Women

Lucas Davenport is a bachelor who likes to play the field. He has a romantic relationship with television reporter Jennifer Carey. She becomes pregnant and he wants to marry her, but she refuses. At the same time, he becomes romantically involved with attack victim Carla Ruiz. When Jennifer finds out about the attack survivor by eavesdropping, Lucas has to arrange a press interview. After the interview, he drives Carla to his secluded North Woods cabin, where she stays for about six weeks. He visits her on and off and they become romantically involved.

When reporter Annie McGowan comes to his home in the middle of the night, he doesn't answer the door. He knows that if he does, he will become involved with her. This is when he begins to look at his situation with Carla and Jennifer. When Jennifer learns of his involvement with Carla, she goes to talk to Carla. Carla learns of Jennifer's pregnancy, and the two women agree that Carla will stop seeing Lucas.

Jennifer does not want to marry Lucas, but she wants him to refrain from other relationships until their baby is one or two years old. Lucas decides that he can live with this arrangement, still hoping that Jennifer will marry him.

Style

Point of View

The book is written from the third person point of view, with the narrator being the author, John Sandford. The book has plenty of dialogue with the author providing the details and the background for the different settings. The use of the third person allows for the different characters to present their own views. It allows the reader to observe the mind of the serial killer and to see how it functions.

The use of the third person isn't as limiting as the use of the first person would be. In the first person, the reader is only privy to events that take place in the presence of the narrator. This wouldn't allow the reader a window into the mind of the serial killer or the actions of Lucas Davenport, since the two don't come together and interact until the end of the novel. The first person points of view would be too confining for this kind of novel. The use of the third person allows the reader to see both sides at the same time and is appropriate for this kind of novel. It also allows for plenty of dialogue between the characters.

Setting

Most of the action of the novel takes place in the Twin Cities area. This is where Louis Vullion settles after graduating from law school, and this is where the majority of killings take place. There are various places in the area where the action of the novel takes place. The serial killer finds most of his victims at the Hennepin County Courthouse, and then obtains information about them so he can find them at a later time. There are different areas where the murders take place. Jeannie Lewis is murdered in the Lake Nokomis area. Annie McGowan lives in the Minnehaha Creek area. Carla Ruiz lives in St. Paul in a warehouse where she is attacked.

The maddog's first victim was in a small town in East Texas, where Vullion grew up. She was a high school classmate who had offended him with a remark she made. His second victim was killed in Dallas when he was in law school.

There are also scenes in the North Woods area of Minnesota where Lucas Davenport has a cabin, where he takes Carla Ruis after the press conference. Another setting is Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where Lucas goes to interview Jefferson Sparks. The Interstate between Eau Claire, Wisconsin and Minneapolis is where Vullion disposed of the evidence and spent the night in an Eau Claire motel to provide himself with an alibi. The road between Hastings, Minnesota and Minneapolis is the setting when Vullion ascertains that he is under police surveillance.



Language and Meaning

Rules of Prey is quick and easy reading, which is good for a thriller. There is nothing to slow down the reader, which is what is desirable for this kind of novel. The language is clear and simple with no hidden meanings, which contributes to the speed of reading.

When reading a suspenseful thriller of this type, the reader does not want anything to slow down the process of reading. The reader wants to know what happens as soon as possible. In this novel, the reader does not have to backtrack to sort out confusing details or to try to find out who the various characters are. The number of characters is manageable so the reader can remember who they are and there are few technical terms or jargon that the reader will be unfamiliar with.

The novel is written in everyday English, which is appropriate for this kind of book. It is fast reading and understandable to the reader.

Structure

The structure of the novel is very simple. There are thirty-five chapters. There are no chapter titles and each chapter tells its part of the action of the novel. The chapters are of varying length, with some only a few pages long.

The book, for the most part, is chronological. There are some places where the story jumps back in time and these are sources of information for the reader that result in more insight into the character or the situation. This does not slow down the reader or detract from the action of the novel in any way.

The structure works well for a thriller of this type. The novel is well written and holds the reader's interest.

Quotes

As for Lewis, he couldn't foul it up. Once he attacked, she had to die, because she'd seen his face, she knew who he was. So he'd practiced, as best he could, in his apartment, hitting a basketball hung from a hook in the bathroom door. Like it was a head. (Chapter 3, pg. 27)

If you use this before you talk to the chief, I'll find some way to fuck with you. I'll tell every TV station in the world how you fed the name and address of an innocent woman to a maddog killer and made her a target for murder and rape. I'll put you right in the middle of the controversy, and that means you'll lose your piece of it. You'll be doing dog-sled stories out of Brainerd. (Chapter 6, pg. 72)

The Star-Tribune had SERIAL KILLER SLAYS 3 CITIES WOMAN. The Pioneer Press was bigger and better: SERIAL KILLER STALKS TWIN CITIES WOMEN. He liked the word "stalks." It reflected a sense of a continuing process, rather than a historical one; and work that was planned, instead of random. (Chapter 8, pg. 99)

I don't know. He fixates on people and we know the type. But if you put out a female decoy. how would you know he'd even see her? That's the problem. If you could get a decoy next to him, maybe you could pull him into an attack that you're watching. (Chapter 9, pg. 132)

The maddog hung up, hurried to his car, and drove away. In a block he started to giggle with the excitement of it. He hadn't anticipated the surge of joy, but it was there, as though he'd survived a personal combat. And he had, in a way. He had touched the face of the enemy. (Chapter 12, pg. 154)

Research would be needed, but he had time. She was a good choice for several reasons. She would be satisfying; and she would teach a lesson. He was not One to laugh at. He was not one to be called a pig farmer. The Cities would be horrified; nobody would laugh. They would know the power. Everybody: they would know it. He paced rapidly, circling the living room, watching McGowan's face, running the tape back, watching again. A fantasy. A lesson. (Chapter 16, pg. 208)

You know who this is; and let me warn you. I've chosen the next one. And when you play games, you wager the One; and the Chosen will pay. I'm going to go look at her now. I'm that close. I am looking. (Chapter 16, pg. 211)

Bullshit, Lucas, you set her up and you know it and I know it, and God help me, if we could do it again I'd say go ahead. It should have worked. (Chapter 22, pg. 276)

He had not imagined being manipulated, being tricked, being suckered. He had not imagined losing the game through inferior play. (Chapter 23, pgs. 281-282)



But if we keep watching him, we should get him. He didn't get his kill. He's scared now, but if he's compelled to kill, he'll be going back out. Sooner or later. I'd be in the next week. This time, we won't lose him. We'll get him entering some place and he'll have all that shit with him, the Kotex and the potato and the gloves. We'll have him cold.
(Chapter 27, pg. 305)

I don't know. Probably nothing. It's just every once in a while ... it's like he's watching us.
(Chapter 29, pg. 319)

The maddog, breathing hard, dropped the hose and fell on her like a tiger on a staked goat. Pulling her head back, he thrust the Kotex into her mouth, wrapped her head with tape. She was dazed and unresisting. He worried for a moment that he had killed her and thought, absurdly: This is not a Chosen, this is a raid, it makes no difference when she dies... (Chapter 32, pg. 339)

"We'll see about that," the maddog said. He was growing stronger, and Lucas was impressed in spite of himself. "If I have defenses. You won't be able to prove any of the murders. After all, I did not kill Miss Ruiz. And you'll notice that my method is different this time. You won't find a note. I was going to make it here, afterward. If it comes to negotiations, I'll get an insanity plea. A few years t the state hospital and I'm out. And even if worse comes to worst, and I get a first-degrees, well, it's eighteen years at Stillwater. I can do it." (Chapter 34, pg. 347)

Necessity has no law
As Augustine describes her,
So the maddog's brought to earth
With the help of Nun the Wiser (Chapter 35, pg. 352)

Topics for Discussion

What are the maddog's rules for killing?

What is the maddog's modus operandi?

How does maddog find his victims?

In what way does Jennifer Carey force the police to question Jimmy Smithe before they are ready to?

How does Lucas use Annie McGowan? Was this ethical?

How do the police obtain the name of Louis Vullion?

Comment on the illegal tactics of Louis Davenport? What is the significance of this?