

The Whistler Study Guide

The Whistler by John Grisham

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Plot Summary

The following version of the novel was used to create this study guide: Grisham, John. *The Whistler*. Doubleday, October 25, 2016. Kindle.

A corrupt judge, theft from an Indian casino, a fatal car wreck, and disappearing witnesses converge in John Grisham's *The Whistler*. Lacy Stoltz, a worker with the Board on Judicial Conduct, got more than she bargained for when she accepted the invitation to investigate what a contact called the most corrupt judge in American history. The novel explores the ease of exploiting the sovereign governments of Indian reservations as well as the way money can be used as a motivator to encourage people to participate in illegal activities.

Lacy and her partner, Hugo Hatch, went to St. Augustine to meet with Greg Myers, a man who wanted to file a formal complaint on Circuit Court Judge Claudia McDover. He and two other people, including a mole who worked with McDover, believed that McDover had gotten condos as payments for her influence in the building of a casino on Indian territory. McDover was not only given condos, she was making a good deal of money from her portion of funds stolen from the casino by Vonn Dubose, leader of a group known as the Coast Mafia.

Not far into their investigation, Lacy and Hugo are lured onto the reservation where the casino was located by a man who promised to talk to them about the corruption in the casino. Instead of getting information from an informant, Lacy and Hugo were hit head-on by a Dodge Ram, badly injuring Lacy and killing Hugo. Although tragic, it was through this wreck that the first real break in the case came when investigators were able to identify the driver of the truck that hit Lacy's car.

With the FBI's help, Lacy's initial investigation leads to the discovery of a witness embedded in Dubose's gang. Testimony breaks the case open and all five major members of Dubose's gang as well as the dirty judge are arrested.



Chapters 1-3

Summary

In Chapter 1, Lacy Stoltz and Hugo Hatch, a team from the Board on Judicial Conduct, travel together to St. Augustine, Florida from their office in Tallahassee. They had been working together at the board for nearly nine years. They were supposed to meet with a man who had given Lacy only a code name, Randy. Even though there had been no formal complaint filed yet, their boss, Michael Geismar had told them to check out what the man had to say.

At the restaurant where they had been instructed to meet Randy, the two waited two hours before heading back to the car. Inside the car Lacy got a phone call from the man who had been spooked because he did not expect Hugo to be with her. He asked to meet Lacy alone at the Municipal Marina. Once they met, the man introduced himself as Ramsey Mix and suggested they talk on his boat because it was more private.

Lacy told the man she would get on the boat with him but would leave if she heard the engines crank. Hugo waved at Lacy and the man from the rail of the marina. When Mix learned Hugo would be told the details of their conversation, he decided Hugo could join them on the boat.

In Chapter 2, Mix described how he had spent 16 months in jail for mail fraud after he got caught up in a friend's scheme to make money fast. He had lost his license to practice law at that time but had since then gotten his license back. He lives on his boat, The Conspirator, with Carlita and has a happy life.

Mix went on to tell Hugo and Lacy that he had one client. He worked with this client through an intermediary and did not even know the client's name. When Lacy questioned his lack of information, Mix told her that the case involved money, corruption, and people willing to kill to keep their dealings covered up. The client was hoping to get money for turning in those who were corrupted with the use of the Florida Whistleblower Statute. Both the client and Mix would profit. Lacy infers that the client is an employ of the state of Florida in order for them to be able to file a claim under this statute. Because nothing can be done without a signed formal complaint, Mix is willing to sign the complaint that will set the investigation into motion. He tells them that in order to keep himself safe, he has legally changed his name to Greg Myers. That is the name he will sign on the complaint.

Myers told the two he was meeting with them not only to pique their curiosity in the case, but also to let them know there was danger involved in the case they wanted to back out of it. He described the case as involving not only misconduct but corruption, bribery, dirty cash and rigged trials. He added there was also a wrongful conviction as well as two murders associated with the story he was about to tell them. He said he had not contacted the FBI because he did not trust them.



Because it was so hot, Mix suggested they take their conversation to a nearby bar with air-conditioning. He told them about the Catfish Mafia a group rumored to have dealt in bootlegging, prostitution and gambling. They would work out of any county where they could bribe the sheriff. Eventually they set up along with Mississippi Gulf Coast. The group eventually became known as the Coast Mafia and did their work in land deals and cocaine trafficking. The current leader of the gang has become infatuated with putting casinos on Indian land. This information led Lacy to assume they were dealing with an Indian casino, a bad judge and the coast mafia. He said they would get the full story as soon as their boss agreed to investigate. As he watched them think over what he had told them, he almost felt sorry for them.

In Chapter 3, at the BJC's headquarters, Lacy, Hugo, Michael and Sadelle gathered to talk over the information they had gotten from Myers. They had researched Myers and found that all the information he had given them had checked out. They decided that if they did start the investigation and it became dangerous, they would take the case to the FBI, a move they were allowed to make whether or not Myers approved. Two days later, Lacy was finally able to get Myers on the phone again. After being told by Michael that they would investigate the case, Myers called back and asked Lacy if they could have a second meeting.

That weekend, Lacy visited with Hugo and his wife, Verna, in their home as she often did. Verna confessed to Lacy that Hugo seemed worried about a big case that Michael had given them. She added it particularly bothered her because it was the first time Hugo had mentioned that he wished he could carry a gun.

Analysis

With a contact in hiding who is unwilling to use his real name, an atmosphere of unease is quickly established in this novel. As they listen to the story that Myers tells them, Lacy feels uncomfortable and Hugo worries about his family. Hugo's wife later tells Lacy that Hugo has told her in connection with the case they are considering that he wishes they carried guns. These reactions cause the reader to believe there is something connected with this case of which they should be afraid.

Myers is definitely afraid. He has legally changed his name and will sign a complaint in the matter that he has called the BJC to investigate. He uses several "burner" cell phones, pre-paid cell phones that can be purchased without a contract and with cash so that they are hard to track, in order to mask his identity and location. Even though he arranged the meeting with Lacy, Myers is spooked when she shows up with Hugo and does not meet her at the restaurant as planned.

When Myers does agree to talk to Lacy and Hugo about the case, he makes comments about it that make it appear to be a high stakes and dangerous case. The group in charge of the criminal action is called the Coastal Mafia. Regardless of what this group actually does, the term mafia brings up images of smoky back rooms, threats, intimidation, unexplained disappearances and outright murders. He even goes so far as



to tell Hugo that the group they are dealing with has committed murder and that there is a man who is in jail accused of murder even though it is believed he is innocent.

The secret nature of Myers' client adds to the sense of unease in the novel. Myers does not know the name or even the gender of the client. He has never talked to this person before. All of the business he does with this person is through an intermediary. The only thing they know about this person is that they are an employee of the Florida State Government. They know this because it is believed the person can file a claim under the Florida Whistle-blower Statute which covers state employees.

An important object mentioned in this part of the novel is the formal complaint that Myers says that he will sign. When this complaint is signed, it will be a sign that there will be real action taken on the complaint. Before that time, the BJC is not legally able to do even any background work on the case. After the complaint is filed, the BJC will have 45 days to assess the complaint before they have to notify the judge that a complaint has been opened against them.

The author makes a distinction between the BJC and the FBI in this section. The Board of Judicial Conduct oversees the behavior of judges. They are not criminal investigators and carry no arms with them on their jobs. Myers does not want to involve the FBI because he does not trust them. He has chosen the BJC because even though they cannot investigate criminal matters, they can issue subpoenas. The subpoenas in which he is particularly interested are those of a judge whom he believes is working in cooperation with a gang.

Even though Myers tells Hugo and Lacy they will be bringing down a nasty group of criminals, it appears that the goal of the person bringing the complaint is to make money. He, or she, stands to collect a good deal of money if the claim is found to be justifiable. Because he has helped out with the case, Myers also will make a cut of that money.

Myers admits to Lacy and Hugo that it was his desire to get rich quick that landed him in jail years before. He got caught up in a deal with a friend who was making money fast without knowing the man was cooking, or falsifying, his accounting books. Because he was cooperative with the officials and told what he knew, he only had to serve 16 months in jail.

Discussion Question 1

How does the author develop a sense of foreboding about the case that Myers is asking Lacy and Hugo to take?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss Myers' personality and background. Do you think he is a person you would trust? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 3

Why do Lacy and Hugo consider taking the case? Why does their boss encourage them to take the case, regardless of the unusual circumstances? Discuss your opinion of their decisions.

Vocabulary

decimated, fanaticism, irksome, miffed, intermediary, reformed, enterprise, bureaucrats, tepid, litigants, allure, bogus, groveling, edifice, relegated



Chapters 4-5

Summary

In Chapter 4, Myers meets with Lacy and Hugo again on his boat. He begins his story by telling him about Vonn Dubose, a descendant of the original Catfish Mafia and leader of the current group. He began with cocaine trafficking but found there was more money in the casino on Indian property. Dubose hides his holdings behind offshore companies. The workings are all overseen by one law firm in Biloxi.

Dubose had begun buying land around the Tappacola reservation in Brunswick County and then in the early '90s approached the Indians with the idea of the casino known as Treasure Key. The tribe was split over the idea of a casino. Son Razko led the opponents. In 1993 Son and his group won the vote with 54 percent. Soon after, Son was found dead. He had supposedly been caught in bed with another woman by that man's husband, Junior Mace. Mace was found guilty of the murder of Son and his wife. It was Claudia McDover, the circuit judge for that district, who oversaw the trial. She appeared to favor the prosecution.

Since the leaders of Brunswick County wanted the tax revenue they believed would come from the casino, they agreed to build a four-lane road that would lead to the casino. Lawsuits were filed by people who owned the land on which the road would be built. McDover, who was in charge of the lawsuits, ramrodded the litigation by making an agreement with the county to pay the property owners twice what their land was worth. Another referendum was held and those in favor of the casino won.

Mace's trial has been up for appeal and even though those reviewing the trial were critical of McDover's procedure, there were no serious errors discovered and the appeals were turned down. Myers doubts that Mace killed his wife or Son but there were two inmates called to testify against him who claimed Mace bragged about the murders. Mace's alibi witness was also shaky. Myers suggests that Hugo and Lacy begin by talking to Mace.

Myers next talks to Hugo and Lacy about McDover, the judge whom Myers and his secretive client believe is corrupted. McDover went into law after she got burned in a divorce. While working in a real estate firm, McDover met up with Dubose. He has heard that the two dated for a while but he cannot verify that rumor. She ran for circuit court judge for the first time in 1993. The trial of Mace was one of the first over which she presided.

Lacy asked Myers to talk about the corruption he suspected. He said that as soon as the Indians began building the casino, Dubose began building as well. One of his developments is a golfing community called Rabbit Run. He told Lacy that he believed that the judge owned four condos in that development. She owns these condos through a company that makes it home in Belize. Myers believes that company is owned by



Dubose. He thinks the condos are in exchange for legal favors done by McDover for Dubose.

Myers told the two of a squabble between Dubose and McDover in 2001 in which he believed McDover had been turned down by Dubose when she asked for a larger portion of the cash he was skimming from the casino. Because the county was not getting the tax revenues it thought it would on the casino, they convinced the state to make the new four-lane a toll road. After the squabble, McDover approved an injunction saying the toll booths were unsafe. That injunction shut down the road keeping people from going to the casino. When McDover and Dubose finally came to an agreement, the injunction was lifted and life went back to normal. Myers admits to Lacy and Hugo that he hopes to find evidence against McDover that she is benefiting from a portion of the profits from the casino. He indicates that is from where she is getting her money.

Myers also told Lacy and Hugo that he was worried that as soon as McDover was served with the complaint, she would notify Dubose and then start moving assets around. He asked if Lacy and Hugo could stall giving her the complaint. Lacy said it probably was not a good idea to stall because if they did a lawyer could use the delay to throw out the case.

Myers gives Lacy and Hugo a bit more information on his client, whom they call the mole. He will only tell them that the mole is in a position where she is very close to McDover. They also learn that Phyllis Turban is the woman whom McDover uses as her lawyer. It was suspected the two were more than just friends.

When they left Myers on his boat, he suggested that he might go further under cover. Lacy and Hugo wondered why he was worried that Dubose and McDover would find him but they did not ask him.

In Chapter 5, at the prison in Starke, Lacy asked Mace if he could give them names of Tappacola who would be willing to talk to them. Mace told them that he believed that his wife and Son had been murdered and he was set up to be charged for their murder. Mace claimed not to know Dubose but Lacy and Hugo suspect that he did by the way his jaw clenched when they mentioned him.

Analysis

A good deal of background is included in this section. Myers lays out the basics of the Coast Mafia, the gang that he believes has infiltrated itself into the Treasure Key Casino, the one located on the Tappacola reservation. The case includes two fifteen year old murders, believed to be committed by the Coast Mafia in order to ease the way for the casino to be built. Compounding matters is the fact that it was McDover, the judge whom Myers wants Lacy to investigate, was the judge who presided over the trial of Junior, the man accused of killing his wife and her alleged lover. Myers believes the two were murdered but not by Junior. He thinks someone wanted both Junior and Son, who were against the casino, out of the way and staged the murders to frame Junior.



Hoping that the county will get proceeds from the casino, county leaders agree to build a four lane road to the edge of the reservation. When they learn they will not be able to tax the proceeds from the casino, the county leaders make the road a toll road, a way for them to cash in on the success of the casino.

Dubose also hopes to cash in on the casino in more ways than one. First he builds his condos, developments, and golf courses all around the casino in hopes the casino will draw the people to his properties as well. If Myers' suspicions are correct, Dubose went to far as to get a circuit court judge to cooperate with his misdeeds so that the casino could be built. In exchange for her help, Myers believes at the least, that McDover has been given four condos in Dubose's properties that could be considered to have been given to her as bribes.

To make matters worse, a good deal of Dubose' properties are not even owned by an American company but instead by overseas companies. "A company domiciled in the Bahamas is governed by its laws, and they have a way of protecting their companies" (44) Myers tells Lacy and Hugo. Because of this overseas protection, it will be difficult to even identify all of the businesses owned by Dubose and his people. In the same way, the casino on the Indian reservation is not ruled by the American government. These Indian reservations are considered sovereign nations and do not have to report to the government. For this reason, it is unsure how much revenue Treasure Key even brings in each year. "Don't know the numbers, because the Indians who run the casinos report to no one, but it's believed Treasure Key is easily in the half-billion-dollar-a-year range" (31).

Because the land owners who campaigned against the casino change their minds when they are offered double the amount their property is worth, it shows that even people's allegiances can be purchased. Myers notes that a majority of people against the casino were those who would loose their land when the casino and four-laned highway were built. They quickly loose their objection to the casino when they learn they will be reimbursed handsomely for their property.

There is some fear on Myers' part that once McDover knows that a complaint has been filed against her, she will hire a lawyer and begin covering her tracks. He encourages Lacy and Hugo to try to delay serving her with the complaint but he is told it is not a good idea. They are equally afraid that if they do not follow proper procedure and serve her with the complaint within the required 45 day period, she and her lawyers will get the complaint thrown out.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the background of the Coast Mafia. Based on what you have learned so far about the Indian reservations, why would it benefit them to get involved in the Tappacola casino?



Discussion Question 2

How would having a corrupt judge help Dubose's plan? How does McDover show that she will not allow herself to be pushed around?

Discussion Question 3

In what way is money a motivator for all parties involved in this story (with the exception of Lacy and Hugo)?

Vocabulary

allure, syndicate, veritable, notoriety, eminent, domiciled, vehemently, implicitly, rampant, facilitated, notorious, inverted, unanimously, dissents, recant



Chapters 6-8

Summary

In Chapter 6, McDover left her office in the Brunswick courthouse early and drove to the casino. She thought of the casino as hers because she had put so much effort into getting it into existence. She could also close it down if she wanted to do so. When she looked at the casino from the viewpoint that it produced jobs, and made people happy, she did not feel bad that she was stealing some of the profits. Since their conspiracy had been working for eleven years, she did not think there was any danger it would be uncovered.

Her own condo featured a hidden vault in which she stored some portable assets like cash and jewelry. She had also acquired expensive collectibles with the money she received from the casino. Dubose arrived at 5 p.m. He carried the leather satchel that contained \$250,000, McDover's half of the month's money taken from the casino.

McDover and Dubose had begun working together when he approached her eighteen years prior to finance her campaign. He needed to get rid of the circuit court that was on the bench then so he got the casino built. She had gotten money from him since then but never asked questions about his procedures. Even though she had truly believed Junior had been guilty of the murders when she first convicted him, McDover had begun to have doubts about his guilt as the years went by. She did not like the idea that someone in Dubose's gang had shot both Son and Eileen, and then gotten rid of the two prisoners who testified at the trial. Even though she pretended she was not, she was scared of Dubose and his men.

McDover had two topics to discuss with Dubose. First she asked him to consider giving parole to a man who stole \$40,000 from him. The man has bad health and has served 14 years in prison. He has been assaulted in prison multiple times and has brain damage because of the assaults. His wife was dying of ovarian cancer. McDover had the power to give him parole but Dubose ordered her not to do so. He wanted the man to die in prison. McDover also mentioned to Dubose that she was getting older and was ready to retire. Dubose was happy with the idea but did not let on to McDover.

In Chapter 7, Cooley met Myers to talk about McDover's travel habits as well as her meetings at her condo near the casino. Cooley had attached a GPS tracking device to McDover's car so that he could find this condo where she went once a month after leaving the office early. The mole had provided him with detailed travel records for the past seven years. Greg questioned Cooley, trying to get more information about the mole but he was unsuccessful. Cooley told Greg the mole was living in fear because of the depth of the crimes with which they were dealing. Greg admitted he was not worried about his own safety. He doubted Dubose could find him, and if he did, he would just take off in his boat.



Alone in her condo, Lacy began reading one of the memos that Sadelle had prepared about the Dubose case. This particular memo detailed information about the Tappacola Indians. One of the more interesting facts is that once a Tappacola turns eighteen, they receive a dividend check from the casino for \$5,000 each month. A person has to be at least 1/8th Tappacola to qualify for the dividends. The tribe is led by a chief, in this case Elias Cappel, who oversaw the tribal issues as well as running the casino.

In Chapter 8, Lacy and Hugo arrange to meet with Wilton, Junior's brother. Wilton said that he was unable to get a job at the casino because he had been among the people who had voted against it. He thought perhaps he had been wrong to campaign against the casino because it had been so good for the community.

Wilton believed McDover had been too young and too inexperienced when she oversaw his brother's trial. He doubted that Son was having an affair with Eileen. He also doubted that Junior had killed them but said his brother had been framed but that he had no idea who had done the framing. He said he had heard a rumor that a man named Dubose, the leader of an organized crime ring, had been behind the building of the casino but that rumor, as well as Dubose's involvement in the deaths of Son and Eileen had been forgotten.

Lacy and Hugo suggested that perhaps Wilton knew someone from the casino who would be willing to talk to them. He replied that even those who were unhappy with the casino would not tell secrets about their own people. He believed that all the people they might be able to talk with are afraid of the tribe leaders and Dubose's gang. After their meeting with Wilton, Hugo and Lacy drove to the casino and spend some time there watching cash change hands.

Analysis

McDover and Dubose make their first appearances in this section of the novel. It appears that Myers has his information correct and the two are indeed skimming money off the casino. McDover seems careful around Dubose. She likes the money. Even though she could override his decisions, she probably would only do so if conditions were serious.

Dubose's complete lack of sympathy is illustrated in his decision to not let McDover approve parole for Wilson Vango. McDover describes a situation that is truly terrible. The man has served 14 years in jail for stealing \$40,000 from Dubose. That's less than twenty percent of what Dubose made in one month from his casino skimming. Even though Vango's wife is dying of cancer and he has brain damage from his many assaults in jail, Dubose wants the man to die in jail. He proclaims he hopes them man will die from another assault, proof of how cold, calculating and revengeful Dubose is.

The one trait that Dubose and McDover have in common is their love of money. Dubose says to McDover "The great thing about you, Claudia, is that you were so easy to corrupt, and, once corrupted, you fell hopelessly in love with the money" (63). McDover



admits that she likes her way of life, but is getting tired of serving on the bench. She wants to retire and suggests to Dubose that she might do so. His desire for riches is so great that he believes he can work without a judge, especially if it means he will have to stop paying her such a large portion of the cash.

Information that will soon become important is the information about the sovereignty of the Indians. Even though there is word that each of the members of the tribe receives a \$5,000 dividend check from the casino, “there is no way to verify this because, as in all matters, the tribe reports to no one” (70). The tribe has its own chief and board of council members who oversee the workings of the casino. They also have their own constable and crew of police officers to keep the peace. “As a sovereign nation, the Tappacola make and enforce their own laws, with no real regard for outside interference” (72).

With the casino providing revenue that is putting money in the pockets of the Indians, most of them are happy with the way things are and do not want to cause problems. The casino has even brought good schools and a medical clinic as well as a college fund for those who want to go to college. Because of these good things the casino has brought to their people, Wilton suggests perhaps he was wrong to campaign it against it being built.

Even though Wilton says there are a good number of positives the casino has brought to their reservation, there are also some negative things. First, he, and anyone who voted against the casino have not been able to get a job there. The fight over the casino separated the tribe, a rift that has never healed. Additionally, many of the men who cannot get jobs have turned to drugs and alcohol. They have money from their dividends, just nothing to do during the day so they get into trouble. Wilton also points out that it is because of the dividends that there are not as many children born to the Indians. The women are “punished” for getting married because their dividends are cut in half once they do get married. For this reason, many women just do not get married, therefore there are fewer children. “You have to invest in children for a healthy society,” (77) Wilton tells Lacy and Hugo.

While Wilton does not believe his brother was responsible for the deaths of Son and Eileen, the reader learns that even McDover has her doubts. In the text it is indicated that McDover had truly believed that Junior was guilty at the time of the original trial but through the process of the appeals, she has begun to doubt her original judgement. Like Dubose, though, she is too happy with her life of riches to right what she might have done wrong. Wilton, meanwhile, tells Lacy and Hugo that he has no doubt that his brother was set up for the murders.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss Dubose’s personality. How does his disregard for human emotions and lack of sympathy make him more dangerous?



Discussion Question 2

How does greed alter a person? Discuss Dubose's comment that he was able to corrupt McDover so easily.

Discussion Question 3

Research the governmental rules for Indian tribes. How might this separation from traditional government be good for the tribe? In what ways might it be bad?

Vocabulary

contrived, destitute, commute, divulging, inundated, divulging, cajoled, reconciliation, fixate



Chapters 9-11

Summary

In Chapter 9, Lacy met with Eddie Naylor, the director of the Florida Gaming Commission, in his office. He told her that he had very little control over the Indian casinos. He was not allowed to inspect the operations in an Indian casino or even inspect the books. They were required to turn in a quarterly report of gross revenue but the gaming commission has to take the word of the accountant that they are telling the truth. When Lacy told him what she was investigating, Naylor said he was not surprised since the casinos had the ingredients perfect for that sort of corruption.

Naylor did add that the threat that they could be punished by the FBI generally kept the Indians in line. He was not sure if even the FBI could demand a casino's account books. He asked if it was the Tappacola casino that Lacy was investigating. When she told him that it was, he said he was not surprised since he had heard rumors of a shady man being involved in the casino from the beginning. He said he had heard nothing about skimming cash or a judge being involved in the scheme.

Meanwhile, Hugo and Justin Barrow were playing golf at Rabbit Run to cover taking pictures of McDover's condo. On the way home from their outing Hugo met with Al Bennett at his office in Eckman. Bennett was the man who ran against McDover in the election for her second term. Hugo determined that the man had never been able to find any dirt on McDover during the election and that he had never even heard any rumors of any wrong doing.

Lacy located Son's widow, Louise, and arranged a meeting with her. Louise would not talk about the murders, or the casino. She called the casino a blight on her people. Louise, like Wilton, told Lacy that she would not be able to find anyone who worked in the casino who would talk to her. Louise would barely consider the idea that her husband had been murdered because he was against the casino.

In Chapter 10, even though they did not have enough evidence to convict McDover, Lacy told her boss that she and Hugo both believed that what Myers had told them was the truth. Because they had hit a brick wall as far as evidence, Michael told Lacy and Hugo they needed to try to get more information from Myers.

When Lacy was finally able to get in touch with Myers three days later, she arranged a lunch meeting. Myers told Lacy and Hugo he had more information but made them wait until an odd-looking couple who sat next to them left the restaurant. He has photographs of McDover visiting one of her condos in Rabbit Run as well as a man who arrived after she did. He carried a satchel full of something into the condo but when he left the satchel appeared to be empty. The two met like that on the first Wednesday of every month. Myers and the middleman assumed the man was Dubose and that he was delivering McDover her cut of the casino's earnings. Myers also handed the two folders



with the details of the trips that McDover and Phyllis took together. He pointed out that with their salaries, they would not be capable of paying for the jet fuel alone. He suspected they were paying for it with stolen money.

Later, Myers called Lacy to tell him the McDover and Phyllis were leaving the following day on another trip. He suggested that they check about Gulf Aviation so they could get a look at the person they were investigating.

In Chapter 11, McDover noticed Hugo sitting inside the Prius when she parked her car in the lot at Gulf Aviation. Phyllis was waiting for McDover inside the plane. They had begun dating during their third year in law school but then separated after graduation. Now, the Tappacola were making them rich and they were planning a getaway once they both retired. When they arrived in New Jersey, a car was waiting to take them to their apartment in a Manhattan high rise.

On Saturday morning, an Armenian named Papazian brought a collection of gems for McDover and Phyllis to look through. They always purchased the gems, which Phyllis called “portable wealth” (106), with cash. From a coin dealer they purchased gold coins and other collectible coins. They considered their money laundering trip successful.

Analysis

Even though they have talked to many people who believe that what they are alleging could have happened, Hugo and Lacy seem to have come to a stand still as far as collecting hard evidence. Because the novel is told from the third person point of view of an omniscient narrator, the reader knows that what Myers has told Hugo and Lacy is indeed happening. The reader also knows how hard McDover and Dubose work to keep their tracks covered.

The shopping trip that McDover and Phyllis take to New Jersey illustrates the care they take to keep their assets clean. The trip is described as one intended to launder some of their dirty money. With the money they buy jewels and gold because assets that can be quickly liquidized for cash. McDover and Phyllis are on a chartered flight, so they do not have to worry about answering any questions about what they are carrying on board the plane or how they got it.

In Lacy’s meeting with the director of the gaming commission, she learns that there is literally no oversight for the money that comes into the Indian casinos. He is not allowed to look at the books or inspect the workings of the casino in any way. He tells Lacy, “If a casino wants to fudge on its financials and skim cash off the top, or under the table, doesn’t really matter, there’s little to stop it from doing so. It’s a perfect storm for corruption” (84). Even though the casino does have to report its revenue to the gaming commission, Naylor says that there is nothing to insure that the numbers that those casinos are correct.

Concern that someone might get hurt in Lacy and Hugo’s investigation continues to be suggested. Naylor points out to Lacy that: “there is a lot of cash, and it does strange



things to people. I'd be very careful, Ms. Stoltz. Very careful" (85). He acknowledges that people will do things for money that they would not do in ordinary circumstances. Myers additionally tells Lacy and Hugo that the people with whom they are dealing would not hesitate to kill anyone they thought was looking into the money laundering scheme.

Although it is not a major theme, notice that there are comments about Hugo's race throughout the novel. In this section, for instance, when Hugo goes with Justin to pretend to play golf in order to get close to McDover's condo, he thinks about his opinion of golf. He had been raised believing that golf was a white man's game played at country clubs owned by white men. Another example of this is McDover's thoughts to herself that it was strange to see Hugo sitting in the Prius in the parking lot because there were not too many blacks involved in the charter business. Both these ideas indicate a feeling that blacks cannot earn enough money in order to play sports like golf or ride in chartered aircraft.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Louise believes so strongly that the finding of the judge concerning her husband's death is true? What does it say about her relationship with her husband?

Discussion Question 2

What does it mean for Lacy and Hugo that the Tappacola people are so unwilling to talk about what is going on in the casino? Why are these people so unwilling to talk?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the way that McDover and Phyllis "launder" their money. What does this term mean?

Vocabulary

pliant, blight, bogus, coerced, impropriety, embezzlement, exploits, credence, queued



Chapters 12-14

Summary

In Chapter 12, when Hugo finally arrived for a meeting, he told Lacy and Michael that he had been on the phone with a man who would not give him his name. The man, who said he was an Indian and a worker at the casino, wanted to talk to them about some shady stuff that was going on there. Michael suspected they were being set up but Hugo trusted the man. It was decided they would meet with him.

Late that night, the man gave Lacy and Hugo directions from the casino to a secluded spot on the reservation. When they reached the spot, they could see the man's shadow. He would not let them see his face. He accused them of not having the clout they needed to put people in jail, and then disappeared. Uncomfortable, Lacy and Hugo got back into the car and left.

As they drove away, there were headlights in the distance. Hugo complained that his seatbelt had come unlatched again. As Lacy glanced at him, he screamed. A pickup truck hit them head-on. Lacy's airbag deployed but Hugo's did not. He hit the windshield. His face was cut and a long gash was opened on his neck.

The driver of the truck got out, he was wearing a motorcycle helmet and kneepads. Another truck was pulling up behind him. He stepped over to look at the car before he got into the second truck. His nose was bleeding. The driver got back into the truck and drove away without calling 911. Another passing car and a person who lived nearby called authorities and alerted them of the wreck. Lacy was taken by Medevac to the hospital in Panama City. Hugo died at the scene.

Lyman Gritt, the constable did not want to have to make the call to tell Hugo's wife about the death. He tracked down Michael, called him and told him what had happened. After telling Verna about Hugo's death and waiting with her until her mother came, Michael drove to the hospital in Panama City.

In Chapter 13, at the hospital, Lacy was in a medically induced coma. Michael drove to the reservation and talked to Lyman who told him the pickup had crossed the center line of the road and hit the Prius. The truck had been stolen and they had been unable to find the driver. Lyman wanted to know why Hugo and Lacy were on the reservation but Michael said he could not tell him at that time.

When Gritt showed Michael the things that had been taken from the Prius, Michael noticed right away both Lacy and Hugo's cell phones were gone. There were also no briefcases or computers in the car. Because there would have been files about the case in their briefcases, Michael called Justin and asked him to watch Lacy's apartment until he could get there. They found Lacy's briefcase and iPhone in her apartment. Because he did not want to see Verna again so soon, Michael asked Justin to go to Hugo's



house to look for his phone and briefcase. Justin learned that Hugo's briefcase was at his house. Hugo's cell phone, however, had been with him.

The following day, Michael and Justin returned to the reservation to see Lacy's car and the truck that hit them. He stressed to Gritt how important it was for both vehicles to be kept exactly as they were. Gritt tried to assure them that the cars would be kept. Gritt additionally took the men to see the scene of the wreck and described to them what had happened. He said the wreck had happened so quickly that Lacy had no time to react.

Frog Freeman had his store open on Monday night, the night of Lacy and Hugo's wreck. He was working on a beer cooler when a man came into the store looking to buy beer, ice and rubbing alcohol. Frog thought it was a strange combination. Because he had been robbed several times, Frog had installed surveillance cameras. When Frog looked at the people in the truck, he noticed the man in the passenger seat had a bloodied nose. His first thought was that the boy had been in a fight but the next morning he began to hear the rumors about the wreck. Frog called Clive Puckett, the sheriff of Brunswick County, and showed him the video. They both thought the time frame fit and that perhaps the men were not strangers but knew one another.

In Chapter 14, Michael gathered the remaining staff at BJC and told them what he believed had happened to Lacy and Hugo. Although the case had seemed dangerous, they had to investigate the formal complaint. Michael said he was not sure where the case would go from there, but that he felt Hugo had died under suspicious circumstances.

Meanwhile, a private investigator visited the police in Foley, Alabama from where the Dodge truck had been stolen. The private investigator had been on another case when he saw a Honda pickup next to the truck that had been stolen. He thought the two in the Honda were suspicious so he recorded them as one of them broke into the truck and then drove away in the Dodge. The license plates on the Honda were tracked to Berl Munger, a felon on parole. Because it was not a serious crime, the investigation into the truck was delayed.

When Myers learned in the paper what had happened to Hugo, he cursed himself because he had been the one to set the circumstances in motion.

Analysis

The investigation takes a fatal turn when Hugo is killed and Lacy seriously injured in a car wreck. Information given immediately leads the reader to believe that the wreck was no accident. Remember, of course, because of the third person point of view, the reader has all of the information, but the characters only have a portion of it. Therefore, only the Foley police know about the video showing the men stealing the Dodge Ram. Only the sheriff in Brunswick County and Frog know about the surveillance camera footage of the two men in the truck whom they suspect were responsible for the wreck. Even without this information, Michael and Gritt suspect that the wreck was not an accident.



One of the things that leads Michael to this conclusion is the fact that both Lacy and Hugo's phones given to them by BJC are missing. Michael is comforted only when the briefcases carrying their paper notes are found in their homes.

The wreck is additionally suspicious because it happened on the Indian reservation. Lacy and Hugo were lured to that area by a phone call from a man who claimed he had information to give them about the casino. The wreck not only happened in an isolated area of the reservation but the area where it happened is under the jurisdiction of the Indians. As Michael tells his associates, "We plan to push hard for an investigation, but we're dealing with the Tappacola tribe, not your typical law enforcement agency" (130). Because the Indians do not want to lose the benefits the casinos bring them, they may not be willing to investigate the wreck, or label it as suspicious. Notice that Michael and Justin seem suspicious even of Gritt's promise that the Dodge Ram and Prius will be kept where they are for the investigation.

There are a variety of significant objects included in this section of the novel. The first of these is the Dodge Ram truck that is used to hit the Prius. The men who planned the wreck intentionally chose this big, heavy truck so that it would do the most damage to the Prius. It is a symbol of intent to hurt to hurt Lacy and Hugo. A liquor bottle in the truck makes it appear as if the driver of the truck had been drinking.

Also of importance is the motorcycle helmet and protective pads the driver of the truck is wearing. These items are proof that the driver of the Dodge intended to ram into the Prius. He, or someone else, had prepared for his safety and wanted to make sure he would not be hurt.

The video footage taken by the private investigator showing the theft of the truck as well as the surveillance video taken in Frog's store will be significant later in the novel as the investigation deepens.

Discussion Question 1

How does Hugo's death in the wreck change the atmosphere of the investigation and the tone of the novel?

Discussion Question 2

Why would it have been devastating to the BJC and the investigation if someone had gotten Hugo's and Lacy's briefcases? Use information from the novel to support your answer.



Discussion Question 3

Why is it significant that Frog turned his video surveillance over to the sheriff of Brunswick County, instead of the chief of police on the reservation? How might this help the BJC?

Vocabulary

impounded, rendezvous, loitering, vaguely, imperative, salvage, probe, litigation, imperative, skeptical, tentatively, perils, inevitable, deftly, haunts, unpretentious



Chapters 15-18

Summary

In Chapter 15, Michael visited with Lacy for a minute after the doctors allowed her to wake up from her coma. He was shocked how bruised and swollen her face was. After her mother visited with her for a minute, Michael told Lacy that Hugo was dead. When he asked, she confirmed that she had her BJC phone with her. He worried that if they were able to hack the phone they would find Myers. Later that day, after Lacy was moved to a private room, her pushy older brother Gunther arrived. Gunther tries to push Lacy into talking to him about the crash.

Gunther, who was a commercial property developer, set up a makeshift office in Lacy's hospital room. He insisted on being allowed to spend the night there. He comforted her when she woke up with a nightmare. She told him she had seen the truck just before it hit them. When she asked, he confirmed to her that Hugo was really dead.

In Chapter 16, Michael visited Lacy the next morning. He and Gunther were at first suspicious of each other. Michael wanted to talk about the investigation and suggested that Gunther give them some privacy. He refused. Lacy said it was okay for him to stay. He told Lacy he had not been able to get in touch with Myers. Lacy told him what she could about the wreck before the two men went to talk in the hallway. Gunther was happy when Michael instructed him to keep Lacy talking to help her memory return. He also asked Gunther to keep the constable away from Lacy because he did not want that man questioning her about why they were on the reservation. In exchange, Gunther told Michael he thought the wreck was suspicious. He wanted details. He and Michael went for a walk so they would talk.

Later that day, Lacy sent Verna an email expressing her sympathy. It was not answered. Michael attended the funeral on Saturday. He sat in the balcony with the other whites who attended. The funeral was two hours followed by a graveside service. Although the accepted story was that Lacy and Hugo had been hit by a drunk driver, Michael and a few others suspected Hugo's death had not been accidental. At the graveside service, there were two men watching the service with binoculars from where they were sitting in a car.

In Chapter 17, Lacy was transferred from the hospital in Panama City to Tallahassee. At the new hospital, Gunther began making Lacy walk. He told her that the wreck was no accident. In order to help her remember all that she could, Gunther began questioning her. That evening, her room was full of visitors. After visiting hours were over she and Gunther fell asleep.

In a dream, Lacy remembered Hugo complaining about his seat belt. He screamed. She remembered the lights. They were close and unavoidable. She remembered the sound of the collision and the impact from the airbag. Hugo was moaning. There was a man



wearing a light on her left side, and then on Hugo's side of the car. She saw the truck drive around. When Gunther woke her up he asked Lacy if he remembered what the men had looked like. She did not. The nurse came in the room and told Gunther that Lacy's pulse had spiked and she needed to rest.

In Chapter 18, the chief and his son, Billy Cappel were waiting for Gritt when he came to the meeting they requested. Adam Horn, the chairman of the council, arrived shortly after. Elias Cappel, the chief, Billy Cappel and Horn wanted to know what was happening with the investigation into the wreck. Gritt did not include the video surveillance that the Foley police had provided. He did have a copy of Frog's surveillance because he was afraid the chief might already know about it. Gritt had copies of both videos at his house.

The men wanted to know from Gritt what Lacy and Hugo were doing on the reservation. He did not have an answer for them. He showed them the video feed from Frog's store. Because Gritt suspected the men in that video were connected with the wreck, Gritt was relieved of his position as constable. The chief refused to give a reason for the termination. He instead insisted the Gritt leave right away and leave the files in his office.

Michael visited Lacy later that day. He warned Lacy that Verna was threatening to sue everyone imaginable. One of the ideas for lawsuits that had been thrown out concerned suing Toyota because of the faulty seat belt and air bag that did not work.

Analysis

Suspicion rises when the chief, Elias Cappel, and his side men fire Gritt when they suspect that he is not going to cooperate with them about the investigation into the wreck. They are concerned because they fear he will do a true investigation into the wreck and may find information that will prove damaging to the tribe. The reader additionally suspects that the three leaders from the council may already know something about the wreck and how it was caused.

The video footage continues to be of importance in this section Gritt gives the chief the copy of the surveillance that Frog turned in because he suspected that the sheriff of Brunswick County might have already told the chief about it. When the chief sees the video he does not believe that there is any connection between it and the wreck. In fact, he suggests to Gritt "if you stretch things, we're supposed to believe that the guy with the busted nose was driving the stolen truck that caused the accident?" (158). This statement indicates how hard the chief is trying to downplay the video.

The video footage that Gritt got from the Foley police is kept secret from the chief and the others. Since Gritt suspects that the chief will bury the footage he hides that of the theft of the truck and has already made himself a copy of Frog's footage. Gritt obviously understands how the politics at the Indian reservation work. Still, Gritt is surprised when he is fired.



The example of Gritt getting fired is an example of how politics work on the Indian reservation. The chief and his cronies have tight control over the reservation. When they tell Gritt he is fired they do not even have to give him a reason. Gritt knows that he has no way to fight back against the leaders. The only possibility he has to get revenge on the men is by hiding the one video and hoping the time will come when he will be able to use it.

Meanwhile, Lacy remembers more about the crash. It makes it more apparent that the wreck was not an accident. She remembers a man, perhaps two men, poking around the car after the wreck. It was probably at this point that the phones were stolen. She also remembers the two men driving away together.

Gunther explodes into the novel as a person to be reckoned with. Even though he appears to have Lacy's best interests in mind, he is coarse and frustrating to the others who are trying to take care of her. He and Michael do share information about the wreck but it is clear that Michael does not trust Gunther with all of the information about what Lacy and Hugo were doing on the reservation the night of the wreck.

In the scene describing Hugo's funeral, what might be described as reverse racism takes place. "Michael, a child of the 1960s and Jim Crow, saw the irony of the blacks in the best seats while the whites seemed banished to the balcony" (145). In this section, Michael is one of the few white people who attend the funeral. He notices the irony in the whites taking to the balcony while the blacks sit in the main level of the church.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the chief's act of firing Gritt. Why do you think he is fired? Give reasons to support your answer.

Discussion Question 2

Do you think Gritt does the right thing by keeping the video from the Foley police away from the chief? Why or why not? How might Gritt use this video?

Discussion Question 3

Why is it so important that no one finds out why Lacy and Hugo were on the reservation when they had their wreck? How might this information damage their investigation if it were to get out?

Vocabulary

ludicrous, arbitrary, purloined, surreal, dirges, rendition, dissension, trepidation, tort



Chapters 19-22

Summary

In Chapter 19, late on Monday, Lacy's mother returned to stay a few days with her. Gunther had to go home on urgent business. At home the next day, Lacy had tea with her mother and next door neighbor, Simon, who had watched her dog while she was in the hospital. Michael visited later that day. Even though he offered her a leave of absence, Lacy insisted she would be back at the office the next week. He also brought up to her that they had two weeks to file the complaint or drop the case. Lacy told him she planned to go ahead with the case. Michael agreed since they both believed Myers and his claims even though they had little evidence.

Lacy also told Michael she believed there was a gang involved in Hugo's murder. She indicated at least three men were involved. There was not only the man who lured them to the reservation and left in the middle of trying to talk to them but also the man who rammed their car and the one who picked him up. She also believed another person had tampered with the seatbelt and airbag in her car. When she indicated she doubted the Tappacola could probably not solve the murder, Michael asked if she was thinking they needed to involve the FBI.

Lacy indicated it was not time to involve the FBI yet. She said she was afraid that if they called the FBI that Myers would duck out and they would lose the information the mole could provide. Lacy also believed McDoover would be surprised when the complaint was filed. She would not yet be aware of all the information that the BJC had collected about her.

In Chapter 20, on Wednesday, Lacy finally received an email response from Verna. Verna wrote about her grief and said she wanted to see Lacy but was not ready yet. She also asked Lacy not to respond to her email right away either.

After her mother left on Thursday morning, Lacy's bell rang. There was a man at her door. It was Myers. He already suspected the wreck was not an accident. He begged for details. Lacy first told Myers to have Carlita throw any phones he had used to call her overboard. When that was done, she told him the story. As Lacy told Myers the story, she remembered the man who had walked up to their car had a light on his head like a miner's light. Myers was worried when he learned that Lacy and Hugo's phones had been stolen.

Lacy asked Myers what the men responsible had gained by killing Hugo. He said he believed the goal was to intimidate them. He said he thought Lacy was safe since they had not killed her during the car wreck. If she turned up dead at this point, it would cause too many questions. He did not think they could find him, and also thought the mole was safe. Myers sensed Lacy was uncomfortable and asked if she wanted him to



withdraw the complaint. She said she could not do so because it would mean that Hugo had died for nothing.

It was when Myers told Lacy that she could not work the case by herself that she took the opportunity to suggest they needed to involve the FBI. She plans for them to serve the complaint on McDover before they contact the FBI. Myers said it would be okay if Lacy contacted the FBI but that he would have no contact with them. He would only give her information from the mole.

Before he left, Myers told Lacy to be careful. He gave her a burner phone to use to contact him from that point forward. He said he would send her a new phone every 30 days. He warned her not to let the phone fall into the wrong hands.

In Chapter 21, Michael, Justin, and Lacy went together to serve McDover with the complaint. They were not surprised to see that McDover already had involved her lawyers. She had hired Edgar Killebrew and his associate Ian Archer. When they were given copies of the complaint, there was no obvious shock or surprise. McDover commented that the complaint was absurd. McDover asked about the confidentiality of the investigation, worried people would get hurt by the rumors that would circulate. Lacy informed her that people had already been hurt in the course of their investigation. McDover and her lawyers seemed to be most concerned that they did not know who Myers was or where he lived. Michael told them that information had been withheld.

During the car ride back to the office Justin said he believed it indicated guilt that she had hired lawyers even before she knew what she was being accused of. He comments also how much Killebrew charged and wondered how McDover could afford the fees. Michael said he sensed fear in the judge.

Since they were so close, Lacy wanted to see her wrecked car. Even though Michael did not think it was a good idea, he took her to the reservation's police department. They were told that Gritt no longer worked there. The new constable had gone home. At the impound lot, they saw that both Lacy's Prius and the Dodge Ram were gone. Lacy said he thought that they needed to talk to Gritt.

In Chapter 22, Billy Cappel had been hired as the new constable. When the Foley police contacted him about arresting Burl Munger, the man who helped to steal the Dodge Ram, Billy promised to help. Instead of contacting the police department he said he would, he called his father and his father warned Munger there was a warrant out for his arrest.

The Foley police also mentioned the video they had sent Gritt. He thought Gritt had taken it. Billy Cappel reported to his father about the video as well. The police in Foley promised to send another copy of the video but did not get in a hurry to do so. When Billy Cappel and the chief visited Gritt, he claimed to know nothing about the video, even when they threatened him. In reality, Gritt had copies of both videos hidden in his attic. He planned to use them if a day of reckoning ever came.



Shortly after the wreck Gritt had investigated more closely the wreck scene. He wondered why someone had stolen a truck and driven it to the reservation, an action that seemed to make no sense. He wondered also why the JBC lawyers were on the reservation property. His third question was how the accident had happened even if the man was drunk. He knew there was more to the wreck than just a fatal crash involving a drunk driver. As he examined the scene, he noticed tire tracks leading away from the accident. He followed them until he discovered where a wad of what appeared to be bloody paper towels had been disposed of. He put the towels in a zippered bag and kept them as evidence.

Chief Cappel went to an empty condo on Seagrove Beach to meet with Dubose. Dubose had just come from a meeting with the judge, who was frantic. Chief Cappel told Dubose there were two videos. They first watched the one of the truck theft, which they had finally gotten from the Foley police. Dubose said the theft had been a contract job. When Dubose saw how clearly the men's faces were visible in Frog's video, he became angry. He knew both of the men. When he asked if the video could be contained, Chief Cappel responded the only person he was concerned about was Gritt. Dubose asked why Gritt was unhappy and Chief Cappel reminded him that he had approved for Gritt to be fired so they could take charge of the investigation. Dubose asked Chief Cappel to take care of Gritt while he would take care of the boy who had driven the stolen truck.

Analysis

A good deal of investigative work seems to revolve around hunches. Even though they have found no proof, both Lacy and Michael believe there is some truth to what Myers has told them. For this reason, Lacy wants to proceed with the investigation even though her partner has been killed. The fatal wreck actually adds more suspicion to the entire situation because it seems to prove that there is, indeed, something happening on the reservation that certain people do not want Lacy and Hugo to find out about. Although they may have believed they would discourage Lacy when they arranged for her partner to be killed, Lacy actually was more intent on investigating McDover because she did not want Hugo to have died for no reason. She believes she owes to her partner to keep the bad guys from winning.

Myers is spooked by the theft of Lacy and Hugo's phones that were used for their work through the BJC. Even though Lacy tells him it is unlikely that anyone would be able to hack the phones, Myers gives Lacy a burner phone to use when she calls him. These burner phones are significant objects because they indicate how afraid Myers is that he will be located and also how serious the situation has gotten. The burner phones can be bought with cash so they cannot be easily traced. To cover his tracks even more completely, Myers gets a different burner phone every month. He indicates to Lacy he wants her to call him only from the disposable phone he has given her.

It appears that whatever affiliation Dubose and his gang have with the casino, the Indians are aware of it and are willing to help cover his tracks. Again, it is a case of



money. Even with Dubose and McDoer dipping into the casino's funds, the Indians are still profiting handsomely. They know that if the casino is shut down, their flow of money will stop. For this reason, Chief Elias Cappel made his son the constable so that he could keep a finger on the investigation into the wreck that killed Hugo. When the Foley police call Billy Cappel with the identity of the man who stole the truck and request help in arresting him, Billy Cappel does not pass the information on to another police department as he was asked, he instead calls his father to let him know what has happened. Instead of getting arrested, Munger, the man who stole the truck is tipped off and he disappears. The only way that Elias Cappel would have known to tip Munger off would have been if he were closely involved with the details of the wreck.

Meanwhile, Gritt finds a piece of evidence that will prove to be the most important in the case. While investigating the wreck scene, Gritt discovers what looks like a wad of bloody paper towels. Knowing from the video surveillance that the man who drove the truck had a bloody nose when the truck pulled up in front of Frog's store, Gritt infers that the towels have that man's blood on them. He does not tell anyone about this bit of evidence he has recovered.

The videos both of the theft of the truck and that from Frog's store prove to be a source of stress for Dubose and his men. Cappel is allowed a personal meeting with Dubose to show him these videos. This meeting cements the suspicion that Cappel is working in cooperation with Dubose and his gang. Dubose's reaction to the videos show that he is guilty of involvement in the wreck that killed Hugo. He issues plans to "take care" of the man who was driving the stolen truck when it hit Lacy's car as well as Gritt, because Cappel believed Gritt had a copy of the incriminating videos.

McDoer also acts suspiciously when she hires a very expensive, and very pushy, lawyer to represent her when she is issued the complaint filed with the BJC. Most interesting about this act of hiring an expensive lawyer is that McDoer made this move before she even knew of what she was being accused.

Also raising suspicion in this section of the novel is the disappearance of both Lacy's Prius and the stolen Dodge Ram truck from the salvage lot on the reservation. Michael had stressed to Gritt how important it was for those two pieces of evidence to be preserved. While Gritt had understood Michael's concerns, Gritt lost control over the vehicles when he was fired as constable. Now the two vehicles, both evidence in a possible murder case, are missing. It can be assumed that Elias Cappel had the cars removed as soon as his son took charge of the job as constable.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it significant that Gritt withheld evidence he uncovered in the wreck that killed Hugo? How might this work in the BJC's favor? How might it work against them?



Discussion Question 2

What is the tone in this part of the novel? How does it affect you as a reader to know that Dubose, McDover and the others are really as guilty as Lacy believes they are, even though there is no way to prove their guilt?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Lacy's decision not to involve the FBI yet in the investigation. Do you think her decision is the right one? Use examples from the novel to support your answer.

Vocabulary

perfunctory, flamboyant, palpable, defamatory, divulge, libelous, compromised, leverage, accomplice, entity



Chapters 23-25

Summary

In Chapter 23, two days after the complaint was served on McDoover Lacy got a call from Killebrew. He told her that he had decided against filing a motion to dismiss the complaint because he believed it would draw attention to the complaint. Michael laughed at the call and its implied threats but Lacy was still unsettled.

She attempted to locate her wrecked Prius. The trail led her to a salvage yard in Panama City. When she arrived she was told that someone had bought the car for cash and had already hauled it away.

Verna called and Lacy met her at her house to talk. Because she was getting a life insurance policy from Hugo, some of her distant relatives were asking her for money. She said she had decided not to file any lawsuits but did ask Lacy about the seatbelt. Lacy admitted she thought someone had tampered with both the air bag and seatbelt. She told her what they knew so far about the accident on the promise that Verna would tell no one, not even her lawyer.

In Chapter 24, Lacy and Michael met with FBI agents Luna, Pacheco, and Hahn at the FBI's Tallahassee office. Lacy goes through the story with them. The agents read the papers she gave them on the casino, McDoover and Dubose. Lacy additionally told them she did not believe the wreck in which she was badly injured and Hugo killed was an accident.

After they had gotten all of the information, Pacheco seemed eager to start work on the case but Luna hesitated. He asked Lacy how she would proceed with the case. She said she would start by trying to solve Hugo's murder because she thought it would lead back to Dubose. She suggested they start by trying to find the person who was driving the truck at the time of the wreck.

Luna told Lacy they would have to submit the case, as well as an estimate of manpower to their higher ups. Luna said he thought it was a great case for the FBI but was not sure his boss would agree. He said he would contact them after he had spoken to his boss and gotten a reply.

In Chapter 25, Lacy received a letter from Wilton in her morning mail. The two met at the DoubleTree Hotel where he was staying. At the hotel's coffee shop, Wilton told Lacy that Todd Short, one of the two prisoners who had testified against Junior, had resurfaced and talked to Wilton. He said Short had been facing a big drug charge but the prosecution had allowed him to plead to a significantly lesser charge if he would testify against Junior. Short had been paid \$2,000 for his testimony. He had left town after he learned Robles, the other prisoner who had agreed to testify against Son had been killed. Lacy told Wilton she thought the new information would be good for Junior's



case but that he needed to contact his lawyers in Washington. Wilton also suggested to Lacy that Gritt was a good man and that he might know something about the wreck. He added there were several rumors circulating about what had been happening on the reservation with the fatal crash and the firing of Gritt. Before she left, Lacy agreed to call Junior's lawyers in Washington and tell them about the appearance of Short.

After four days, Pacheco met with Lacy in the BJC office. Although they had presented the case to their boss and recommended opening a file but their boss had refused. Even though he had pushed, the boss had stuck with his answer. Pacheco said things might change if there was any new information learned about the case. Knowing it was their last hope, Lacy began working on a subpoena for McDoover's files dealing with the condemnation proceedings prior to the building of the Tappacola tollway.

Analysis

Even though the agents from the FBI are interested in the case, their workload prevents their boss from allowing them to open a case file on it. Without the help of the FBI, Lacy and the others at BJC do not have much of a case because the investigation required is too much for them. They do not have the ability to investigate organized crime and have to stick with McDoover. Even though they are not allowed to do any investigating, even the FBI agents recognize that McDoover's behavior is suspicious. Pacheco, for example, comments: "Well, she must be guilty of something if she hired Edgar Killebrew" (205). Killebrew's continued threats to Lacy and requests that she drop the case indicate that he is worried that something will be found in the investigation.

Even as the case on which Lacy is working seems to be losing ground, a break has finally come in Junior's case. One of the men who lied in his testimony at the original trial has come forward and is willing to recant his testimony. This change in his testimony could not only get Junior out of prison, but could initiate new investigations into how Son and Eileen were really killed.

Wilton gives Lacy a good tip when he suggests that perhaps Gritt had information that could help her in the investigation of Hugo's death. With the information that Gritt does have, an investigator could try to identify the driver of the truck. Interestingly, this is the direction that Lacy suggested that the FBI take if they were to take the case. Without the help of the FBI, however, it is doubtful that Lacy would be able to follow the lead on her own.

Suspensions continue to rise when Lacy finally tracks down the salvage lot to which her Prius was taken. The owners tell her that her car is not there, it was purchased for cash and hauled away. They are unable to provide her with the name of the person who bought the car. This seems like an attempt on someone's part to cover up wrongdoing in the wreck. It is even more suspicious when one considers that the seatbelt on Hugo's side of the car could not be fastened the night of the wreck, something he had not had a problem with before, and that his air bag did not deploy. The car may have been purchased in order to cover up some sort of tampering with these safety devices.



Meanwhile, Verna contacts Lacy and the two finally talk. Verna admits she is no longer thinking about filing any lawsuits and that she had been given good advice. Although it upsets her, Lacy tells Verna all of her suspicions about the wreck in which Hugo was killed.

References continue to be made about Hugo's skin color. During her conversation with Wilton, Wilton makes a comment about how unusual it was for a white woman and a black man to be together on the reservation. Lacy asks "Is his being black suspicious?" (216) to which Wilton replies, "Not really. We're not hung up on skin color. But you have to admit it was unusual" (216). Characters in the novel continue to think about the working relationship between Lacy and Hugo based on stereotypical beliefs about whites and blacks. Because it was unusual for a white woman and black man to be traveling together, their presence on the reservation property automatically raises suspicions.

Discussion Question 1

What sort of statement do you believe the author is trying to make with his regular comments about Hugo's skin color?

Discussion Question 2

How is Lacy's investigation stifled by the FBI's refusal to join? How do you think things will proceed from this point?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss how Junior's case will be affected by the snitch's new testimony. Do you admire Short for coming forward at this point? Do you think he is just concerned about his own guilt?

Vocabulary

pompous, defamatory, litigator, invalidated, compromised, affable, concise, methodically, ambushed, decisively, compromised, encryption, culled, perpetually, illicit, recanting, incredulous, voluminous



Chapters 26-28

Summary

In Chapter 26, Gunther returned on Saturday. He flew in instead of driving and Lacy picked him up at the airport. He asked about the case on which Lacy was working and was angry when he learned that the FBI had declined to join the investigation.

At dinner that night, Lacy made a deal with Gunther not to use their phones during the meal. The first person whose phone vibrated would be the one to pay the bill. She put her work and personal phone on the table along with the burner phone Myers had given her. To her surprise it was the burner that interrupted their meal.

When Lacy answered the phone, it was not Myers voice but instead a strange male asking for Lacy Stoltz. He introduced himself as the intermediary, and said he did not know where Greg was. They arranged to meet on the Capitol Grounds in 30 minutes.

The man introduced himself as Cooley and directed Lacy and Gunther to walk with him as they talked. He told them that Carlita had last seen Myers when they docked the boat in Key Largo and he went onshore for a beer. He never came back. Carlita had stayed on the boat and was waiting for instructions on what to do. Because he needed to remain — from Myers, he could not go and get her. Cooley made no secret of the fact he believed Dubose's men had found Myers and killed him. He asked if the complaint was still valid if Myers was dead.

Because he had the plane, Gunther offered to go get Carlita when Cooley mentioned that he would like to rescue her and secure Myers' things. Even though Lacy did not want him to get involved, Gunther insisted.

In Chapter 27, even though Michael was not happy about Gunther's involvement, he eventually agreed to the plan. Michael had argued the trip to pick up Carlita was not worth the trouble because the complaint was about to be closed since Myers was missing. Lacy, however, argued the file could not be closed if the FBI were to get involved.

The trip to pick up Carlita was uneventful. She brought along a laptop computer and a backpack full of Myers' paperwork. Even though Lacy had hoped Gunther would return home, he announced he planned to stay with Lacy a few days longer. Late that afternoon, Pacheco texted Lacy to ask if they could meet for a drink. Lacy invited him to her house but warned him that Gunther was there. Although they had agreed not to talk about business, Gunther brought up that Myers had disappeared about five minutes after Pacheco arrived. Lacy told him the story and Pacheco said the local police would have to investigate Myers' disappearance first. It still did not qualify as a case the FBI could investigate. He did, however, leave Lacy's apartment with the backpack of paperwork and Myers' laptop.



In Chapter 28, on Monday morning, Lacy detailed to Michael what had happened during her impromptu meeting with Pacheco. Because there was nothing left for her to do, she had decided to go and visit Junior. She had been invited to sit in when he met with his lawyers from Washington. Before leaving to meet with Junior, Lacy reread the memo that Sadelle had prepared about the murders of Son and Eileen. Significant in the memo was the statement that McDover had seemed to favor the prosecution throughout the entire trial.

As Lacy drove to Starke, she remembered how she and Hugo had made this drive together just less than two months before. Junior gave her his sympathies and told her that he suspected the wreck was no accident. He also told Lacy that he'd had a visit from Gritt. Like Wilton, Junior told Lacy that he believed Gritt was a good man. Gritt claimed he knew the truth about the wreck and was willing to talk about it. Junior told Lacy that Gritt wanted to talk to her. Wilton would arrange the meeting.

Junior reminded Lacy that Gritt and Wilton were afraid of Dubose and his gang. He suspected if it were known that Short had resurfaced that he would be killed. When Lacy commented that the members of the gang could not just keep killing people, Junior said he believed they would stop at nothing to protect themselves. During the meeting with Junior's lawyers, they said they had gotten video deposition from Short and were preparing to file for a stay of execution. Salzman was hoping for a new trial, one that would not be presided over by McDover.

Analysis

The best hope for Lacy's case at this point is for the FBI to be able to get involved so that agency can investigate the criminal side of the case. Even after Myers, the man who signed the formal complaint, goes missing Pacheco tells Lacy the disappearance will first have to be investigated by the local police before the FBI could hope to get involved.

Meanwhile, Lacy and Gritt are a step closer to meeting. Junior confirms Wilton's belief that Gritt is a good man. As Junior describes him: "Gritt has a conscience and he knows about the corruption" (245-246). Unlike the other Indians at the reservation who live in fear of Dubose and the chief, Gritt is willing to speak out even though his life is being threatened. Junior tells Lacy he will contact Wilton and have him arrange a meeting.

This meeting between Gritt and Lacy is important because Gritt is the only one who knows about the paper towels that possibly bear DNA evidence from the driver of the truck that hit Lacy's car. This bit of evidence may be what is needed to bring the FBI into the case. Gritt additionally has copies of the footage both of the theft of the truck and of the two men when they stopped at Frog's store. At this point in this investigation, Lacy, Michael and the FBI have no idea these videos even exist.

Threatening to cause the complaint filed by the BJC to be withdrawn is the fact that Myers has disappeared. Knowing what she does about Myers and his need for the



money, Lacy does not think that Myers willingly stepped away from the case. Cooley is clear in his belief that Dubose and his men somehow found Myers and killed him. If Myers is dead, it means that the BJC cannot legally go forward with the complaint. The only way to keep the case alive at this point is for the FBI to become involved.

Notice again in this section the mention of difference in beliefs between blacks and whites. When Lacy is explaining to him that it is believed Junior was found guilty of a crime he did not commit, the following description of Gunther's thoughts is included: "Gunther, like most white people, thought the idea of an innocent man on death row was absurd" (223). The implication is that blacks understand that it is not uncommon for innocent people to be found guilty of crimes they did not commit. Whites, however, have a blind trust in their legal system not to put an innocent man behind bars.

Now that one of the men who originally testified that Junior bragged about killing Son and Eileen has recanted his testimony and admitted he was getting paid to lie on the stand it appears that Junior will get a new trial. Even though this is good news for Junior, it means the murder of Son, who spoke out against the casino, and Eileen, are unsolved. One can infer that perhaps these two were also victims of Dubose in his plan to get his casino built regardless of who he had to kill to do so.

Also significant in this section is Lacy's belief that Myers did not walk away from the complaint because he was counting on the money. True to human nature, Myers is expecting a big payout from the conviction of McDover under the whistle blower statue. Lacy believes he needs the money too badly to walk away from the case willingly. The indication is that Myers values the promise of money over even his own safety.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it more important that Lacy realizes for her to meet with Gritt? Do you think the evidence he holds might be the pieces of information they can use to get the FBI involved in the case? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

How does Myers' disappearance affect the complaint filed by the BJC? Do you think it is Dubose's gang who caused Myers to disappear? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

How might Son's exoneration help the case Lacy is investigating?

Vocabulary

finagled, dissertation, blatant, lore, rampant, predecessor, contingency, breach, ballistics, vehemently, latitude, animated, laudatory, deposition, exuded



Chapters 29-31

Summary

In Chapter 29, Lacy agreed to a dinner date with Pacheco. She did not do so because she was hoping it would help improve the odds that the FBI would join the BJC in its investigation. At dinner they shared the typical talk and familiarized themselves with each other until Pacheco asked about Lacy's visit to Junior. She told him that Short, one of the witnesses had decided to recant his testimony, a move that might give Junior a new trial. At her apartment, Pacheco told Lacy that the FBI was close to beginning an investigation. Luna was more interested since Myers' disappearance. He told her that if she could give them anything else that it might convince Luna, as well as their head, to start a file.

In Chapter 30, Wilton arranged a meeting between Gritt and Lacy at a doctor's office. He believed no one would suspect anything if they talked there. Michael rode with her for the meeting. In the waiting room, Lacy sat until Gritt's wife was called for her appointment. At that time, she and Gritt met outside in the hallway. He first asked that his name not be brought up in connection with the case since he had a wife and family to protect. Next, he gave Lacy a flash drive that he said contained the video from Frog's store and the one the Foley police had sent him. He also gives Lacy a piece of the bloody paper towel. He suggested that she have a DNA test run on it quickly.

Michael contacted a friend, Abbott, with the Department of Law Enforcement who promised to talk to the commissioner and see if he could get a DNA test run on the paper towel. Abbott apparently got permission because he met with Lacy and Michael at the lab that evening. The doctor performing the test said it would take only about two hours to get results. An additional half hour was needed to run the results through the criminal database.

Michael and Lacy returned to their office where they watched and discussed the videos that Gritt had shared with them. Just before 8 p.m. they got a call saying they had identified the driver of the Ram truck. He was Zeke Foreman, a parolee. Abbott sent over mug shot pictures of Foreman. Both Lacy and Michael believed the passenger in the truck looked a good deal similar to Foreman. Lacy called Pacheco to see the videos and look at the photographs.

In Chapter 31, Pacheco and Hahn caught up with Foreman at his meeting with his parole officer. They confronted him with the information that they knew he had been on the reservation the night of Hugo's murder. He gave them a dumb look, and they arrested him for capital murder.

At the FBI's office, Rebecca Webb, the assistant U.S. Attorney introduced herself to Foreman. He continued to deny his part in Hugo's death until he was shown the video from Frog's store. Webb told Foreman that because they knew he was working for



someone else when he killed Hugo they had a deal for him. If he cooperated with them and gave them the information they needed about who had planned the wreck, he would go free. She told him he would be set up in the witness protection program where he could begin a new life where ever he liked. Foreman asked to speak to a lawyer and was given Parker Logan, a man who had represented him before.

Logan arranged for Foreman's mother and sister to be moved with him and put into the witness protection program. After that was settled, Logan recommended that Foreman take the deal he was being offered. Foreman agreed.

The FBI officers began questioning Foreman, an interview that was videotaped. Foreman said the man who was driving the truck was Clyde Clyde. Foreman worked for Clyde at the two hotels he managed. The day before he was to crash the Ram into Lacy's car, Clyde had offered him a job that he said would pay \$5,000 in cash. The night of the wreck, when Foreman learned what he was supposed to do, he wanted out but there was no place he could go. After the crash, Foreman said he did not remember Clyde bringing anything with him out of the car, but that he did poke around it.

After a few weeks, Foreman thought he was in the clear but Clyde had sought him out and asked him to leave the state until he called him. Foreman got a call from Clyde but did not answer it. He had snuck back into town in order to meet with his parole officer. Shortly after they talked to Foreman, the FBI put taps on all four of Clyde's phones.

Analysis

The blood stained paper towel is a significant object in the investigation because it turns out to be the piece of evidence that marks a turn in the case. With DNA evidence as well as Foreman plainly in sight in the video taken from Frog's surveillance cameras he cannot deny that he was involved in the crash that took Hugo's life.

It is at this point that the prosecutor from the national attorney's office begins to work her magic. Because they know that Foreman is not part of the gang and would never have killed Hugo on his own, they allow him the opportunity to tell them what he knows about the larger criminals in exchange for freedom. While Foreman could have lied to them about the identity of the man in the truck, it is highly unlikely. After all, he did sneak back into the state even after Clyde told him to stay away so that he could meet with his parole officer.

Foreman's testimony brings into play Clyde, who appears to be a bigger fish in Dubose's gang. Clyde manages two hotel, both of which are owned by the same company in Belize that owned a strip mall in Brunswick County. The FBI believes this connects Clyde to Dubose, a connection they had been hoping to make all along. In order to get more information about Dubose, the FBI begins a wire tap on all four of his phones.

A secret weapon of law enforcement that has improved since its conception is DNA testing. It is the ability of investigators to extract and identify DNA out of even a dried out



paper towel that provides an important break in the case. Even more impressive is that lab technicians have the DNA positively identified and have matched it with a man in their criminal database within three hours of Lacy and Michael turning over the paper towel.

Because the BJC is not considered law enforcement and does not have the authority to demand a DNA test, they face a hurdle in getting the paper towels tested. Not just anyone can demand a DNA test at a crime lab. Luckily Michael has a friend who works at the Department of Law Enforcement who is able to get special permission to have the towels tested.

It is a credit to Lacy's integrity that she does not intend to use her relationship with Pacheco to influence the FBI or the investigation. She dates him because she likes him and is attracted to him. Regardless, at the conclusion of their date, Pacheco tells Lacy that if they were able to find even another small piece of evidence, the FBI would join the investigation.

The video footage once again proves to be imperative in Lacy's investigation. Because Frog was suspicious of the two men who came to his store late at night and had the forethought to give that footage to Gritt, it is now in Lacy's hands. With the identification made through the DNA analysis of the bloody paper towels, Lacy and Michael are able to positively identify the man who was driving the truck at the time of the wreck. They not only have his DNA at the scene, they also have his picture as he tends to his bloodied nose.

Discussion Question 1

Why is the identification of the driver of the truck that hit Lacy's car enough evidence to bring the FBI on board? Use examples from the novel to support your answer.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the way the U.S. District Attorney uses a plea deal to get Foreman to give them information about Dubose and his gang.

Discussion Question 3

In what ways is Lacy's meeting with Gritt a turning point in the case? Describe how it changed the status of the investigation both for the BJC and the FBI.

Vocabulary

sequestered, pretension, hounding, derelict, clandestine, languid, shenanigans, blitzed, indigent, abeyance, syndicates, mulled



Chapters 32-34

Summary

In Chapter 32, Lacy received the information she had requested by subpoena from McDover's office. There was little included that was not public record.

As McDover admired the collection she had put together in the vault of her condo, she was beginning to feel the beginning of panic. Dubose tried to convince McDover they should not be nervous but McDover was worried because she had been accused of wrong doing. After McDover fumed and threatened to resign, Dubose told her that the complaint against her would be dropped because Myers had disappeared. McDover thought he had been killed but Dubose convinced her that he was only on the run.

Dubose pointed an accusing finger at McDover and asked her if she had leaked anything that could have alerted Myers to what was happening. McDover told Dubose that Phyllis was obsessed with security and would not tell anyone anything. She ran her secretaries off every 18 months or so to keep anyone from getting too close. JoHelen was the only worker who had been with her for a significant time, seven or eight years, and McDover trusted her.

Lacy got a phone call from Cooley. He admitted he was spooked because of Myers disappearance. He said he was sending her a package with a new burner phone. Included would be a phone number for the mole. If Lacy needed him and was not able to get in touch, she was to call the mole directly.

In Chapter 33, Pacheco approached Clyde in the elevator of the Surfbreaker. He introduced himself as FBI and took him to his suite where three other agents as well as Webb were waiting. They tell Clyde he is under arrest for capital murder. After being read his miranda rights and told that his phones, as well as the phones of his girlfriend, had been wiretapped, Clyde was distressed enough he threw up in the trash can. He requested a lawyer, Gary Bullington. The man charged an outrageous fee to come to the hotel at last minute.

While they waited on the lawyer to arrive, they showed Clyde the video footage of the theft of the truck as well as the footage from Frog's store. Pacheco noticed Clyde was already turning into putty. For good measure, the agents showed him the video they had made of Foreman.

When Bullington arrived at the hotel, he and Clyde talked in the bedroom of the suite for an hour. When they finished, Webb told the pair that Clyde was being offered a plea agreement. He would plead guilty to one count of first degree murder and could work off his prison time by giving the FBI information about Dubose and his gang. If they left the hotel room without agreeing to the deal, however, it would not be available again. Clyde eventually agreed, realizing he did not really have a choice.



In Chapter 34, Dubose's gang was ruled by Dubose and four other men who referred to each other as the Cousins. The other Cousins included Henry "Hank" Skoley who appeared to be Dubose's right hand man; brothers Vance and Floyd Maton; and Ron Skinner. Clyde was a member of the next layer of the gang, those who managed Dubose's hotels and other businesses that seemed legitimate. It was when Clyde got a job as an assistant manager at one of Dubose's hotels that he entered the gang without even being aware he was doing so.

Clyde completed his first criminal operations when Hank showed him how to launder money through the bars in his hotels. Clyde learned to cook the books so that there was nothing of question in them. Clyde was truly indoctrinated into the gang when he went on a boys' trip with Hank and the Maton brothers. He was given the rules of the gang. He was taught how to launder money through the casino.

The chain of events that led to Clyde being involved in Hugo's death are described. Hank told Clyde he had been selected to help out with a problem involving McDoover because no one would suspect him. Hank had brought the stolen truck and provided tags for the Honda that Clyde would drive. Clyde did not know who the man was he acted as the informant. He did, however, take the cell phones and the computer. He did not know anything about any tampering with the seatbelt or airbags on Lacy's Prius.

When the video had first surfaced, Dubose and Hank had been furious about it but things had settled down. Because of the information he gave the FBI, Clyde did not leave his hotel in handcuffs. He knew he would be arrested later in a raid. He wondered if he should tell his wife what had happened. He even considered suicide.

Analysis

As Clyde admits, money is truly a motivating factor. He was lured into his position in the Dubose gang by the money he was making at his job before he even realized what was happening. He did not think twice about why he was being paid so much more than industry standard to work as the manager of two hotels. He was right in thinking it was because Dubose wanted to keep his employees loyal. Clyde was right but did not know how much loyalty was required.

In order to infiltrate Clyde into the gang, he was started out with small things. He was taught how to launder money through the bars in his hotels. When he was successful with his laundering efforts, he was given bigger jobs including laundering money through the casino. Clyde did not really consider what he was doing a crime at this point. When Dubose approached him about the car crash, Clyde felt he had no choice but to comply.

Notice the way Dubose spreads the work around so that no one person knows all the details of any one job. For instance, with the wreck involving Hugo Clyde only knows about the wreck itself. He does not know where the truck came from or that it was stolen. He does not know who pretended to be the informant who lured Lacy and Hugo



to the reservation. He does not even know why Dubose wants Lacy and Hugo hurt. Even though he knows so little about the wreck, Clyde does know enough that he is able to lead the FBI investigators to Dubose and explain the workings of the gang to the FBI.

While Clyde is admitting to the FBI that it was his love of the money that he was earning that got him into the Dubose gang, McDover is becoming less enthralled with the money she is earning from the casino.

There is suspicion that perhaps it is JoHelen, McDover's court reporter, who is the mole. She appears to be the only one besides Phyllis who has known McDover for an extended period of town. This would explain why the travel records that the mole provides to Myers only go back seven years. McDover tells Dubose that JoHelen had worked for her for seven or eight years.

Important also in this section is the way that the FBI can compound offenses to make a crime more serious. When Junior was convicted, for instance, it was because he also allegedly stole Son's wallet that he was charged with capital murder. Similarly, because Hugo's death was a murder for hire it was considered a capital case. For this reason, those involved in the murder face the death penalty if they are convicted. The FBI is able to use the extenuating circumstances and stricter penalties as a way to manipulate criminals into becoming informants by offering lighter sentences.

Discussion Question 1

How did the Dubose gang go about manipulating Clyde to get him to do what they wanted?

Discussion Question 2

Do you think JoHelen, McDover's court reporter, is the mole? Why or why not? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion Question 3

Why is McDover worried? Why does McDover want to retire? How does Dubose try to persuade her to stay calm? Are his claims that she is in no trouble believable? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

terse, terminated, implicate, violating, insatiable, confidants, despise, incredulous, putrid, banished, blanching, infiltration, confine, surname, fictitious, racketeering, retrospect, fitfully, syndicate



Chapters 35-37

Summary

In Chapter 35, Delgado is introduced. He is the man who shot Son and Eileen, then met Junior in a bar and bought him a beer later that night. Delgado was responsible for killing Digger Robles, one of the men who gave false testimony against Junior during the murder trial. He almost killed Short but the man moved out of town. The narrator notes that Dubose made a serious mistake when he did not let Delgado take care of the wreck involving Lacy and Hugo. Dubose had wanted to test Clyde but also had no choice because Delgado was in the hospital with kidney stones.

Fully recovered, Delgado broke into JoHelen's condo under the disguise of being a pest control worker. Meanwhile, JoHelen was watching Delgado's movements on her iPhone as she tried to take transcription in court. She knew something had changed in McDover's attitude toward her. JoHelen was worried because one man, Hugo, had already been killed; Myers had disappeared and now Cooley, who had helped her come up with the plan to out McDover, was leaving her, apparently having a nervous breakdown. JoHelen knew the man in her house worked for Dubose and that meant the gang leader suspected she was involved in the crimes.

In Chapter 36, as she drove home, JoHelen tried to determine what she should do. She was surprised how angry she was with Cooley since he had left her behind. Deciding she could not stay in her home alone knowing how easily the man had broken into it, JoHelen packed her car and drove aimlessly. She paid cash for a hotel that night. With no one else left to get in touch with, JoHelen called Lacy and told her that she was scared.

JoHelen told Lacy that she knew McDover because she had worked as her court reporter for eight years. She detailed the man who had broken into her house Lacy advised JoHelen to call in sick with a stomach virus. Lacy also suggested to JoHelen that she stay around people as much as possible and to call her in the morning.

In Chapter 37, Clyde met with Hank at a construction site. A Timex watch on his arm let him know when the FBI, working out of a FedEx truck was within range of their conversation. In an empty condo, they met with Dubose. Clyde told Dubose he could not find Foreman. Clyde also suggested he was willing to leave town if Dubose thought that was what he needed to do to help quell the situation. Dubose agreed to think about his offer. Next, Clyde addressed the wreck and the fact that he had not been told what he would be doing. He got Dubose talking about intimidation and killing people. In the van, Pacheco was pleased with the statements that Clyde got from Dubose.

JoHelen did not call Lacy in the morning because the burner phone she had with her was dead and she had forgotten to bring the charger. When Lacy did not hear from JoHelen, she became concerned. Meanwhile, JoHelen drove home to get her charger.



While she was there a neighbor mentioned a plumber had come by her house and looked like he was trying to break in. The neighbor had yelled at him and stopped him. As soon as the phone was charged, JoHelen called Lacy.

Analysis

Delgado, Dubose's secret weapon, is introduced in this section of the novel. Delgado is who successfully framed Junior for the murders of Son and Eileen. He also killed Digger Robles, one of the men who testified against Junior. Had Short not left town and disappeared, Delgado would have killed him as well. Dubose believes that if he had used Delgado to arrange the fatal wreck in which Hugo was killed, there would not have been as many mistakes made in that murder. All of this information given about Delgado gives the reader a picture of how ruthless he is in carrying out Dubose's instructions. This knowledge of Dubose's ruthless personality is necessary in helping the reader understand how much danger JoHelen is in when Delgado begins poking around her apartment. If he has been instructed to kill her, he will more than likely be successful.

An important technique to note in Grisham's writing style is the way that he slips information in when discussing other, sometimes unrelated topics. For instance, "The debilitating pain hit just hours after he had broken into Lacy's car and tampered with the passenger's side air bag and seat belt" (304). The author is in the middle of explaining why Delgado could not take part in the fatal wreck when he mentions that Delgado's kidney pain started right after he disabled the seatbelt and air bag on the passenger's side of Lacy's car. This offhanded remark lets the reader know not only that Lacy's car was tampered with and who was responsible for that tampering. Also slipped in with Delgado's introduction is the information that he was the one who set Junior up for the murders of Son and Eileen. The reader, as well as many others, suspected Junior had been set up but until this point were not aware of who had actually carried out the murders.

In addition to the fact she has watched her apartment be searched by Delgado, JoHelen is also jumpy because Myers has disappeared and Cooley has walked out on her. It is because of her desperation that she contacts Lacy directly. Interesting is the idea that the females are characterized as the stronger characters. Cooley, who came up with the plan to blow the whistle on McDover has bailed out on his partner. JoHelen and Lacy are left to face the heat alone.

Meanwhile, Clyde is successful in getting the information that the FBI needs during his wire tapped meeting with Dubose. A significant object in this wire tapping is the Timex watch that Clyde always wears. A replica with a wire tap and an alert so Clyde will know when the FBI is able to hear him is made for Clyde to wear to the meeting. This watch is significant because it shows that the FBI is able to use any conceivable object as a listening device. Even something as inconspicuous as a watch can be used as a listening device.



Discussion Question 1

How is Clyde's testimony important to the FBI? How are they able to persuade him to cooperate with them?

Discussion Question 2

What does the reader learn with the introduction of Delgado? How does this add suspense and tension to the situation?

Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast Myer's disappearance with Cooley's disappearance. Do you have any respect for Cooley? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

debilitating, annihilate, harried, keel, pandering, deftly, impede, vagaries, ascertaining, surveillance, galore, entice, affluent, despises, presiding, transcripts, discretion



Chapters 38-40

Summary

In Chapter 38, the grand jury convened on a Friday to hear testimony concerning the indictments of Dubose and his gang. Foreman and Clyde had already been indicted so the jurors knew part of the story already. Pacheco was the first witness. Foreman and Clyde testified next. After day long testimony the jurors chose “to indict Vonn Dubose, Hank Skoley, Floyd Maton, Vance Maton, and Ron Skinner for the capital murder of Hugo Hatch, and for the aggravated assault of Lacy Stoltz” (328).

During dinner that night, Pacheco told Lacy about the indictments. After the first indictments were served and the Cousins arrested, their homes and businesses would be raided along with those belonging to McDover, Phyllis, the Cappels and the lawyers in Biloxi. A second indictment for racketeering would include several arrests to be coordinated with the raids. The plan was to get everyone involved with the conspiracy behind bars before there was time for anyone to tamper with any evidence.

In Chapter 39, on Saturday morning Pacheco called Lacy to ask if the mole was a court reporter. If so, the FBI had picked up on some talk among the gang members and thought she might be in danger. Lacy got in touch with JoHelen but the woman spooked and hung up when Lacy mentioned the FBI. Lacy got in her car and headed toward Panama City Beach, the place where JoHelen said she was staying. When Lacy finally got JoHelen to answer the phone again, Lacy told the woman that she was on her way to get her.

Meanwhile, Delgado was watching JoHelen’s room. She knew he was there and had not moved. Her curtains were pulled shut. He planned to follow her if she left her room but was uncomfortable with taking a shot because there were too many people around.

When Lacy called JoHelen again, JoHelen gave her the name of her hotel. She left her room and walked to the lobby. As soon as she saw Lacy’s car she jumped in and told Lacy that a man was after them. They zigzagged out of Florida and when they decided no one had followed them they stopped to eat. JoHelen told Lacy her complaint with the Indians and the judge was that she had been denied the ability to register as a Tappacola even though she believed she was one-eighth Indian. She had seen others who had been registered in the tribe even though they’d had less proof of their lineage than she did.

As they continued to drive, JoHelen told Lacy the story of how she had met Cooley and the two had cooked up the whistle blower scheme. He had been her lawyer for two divorces and they began dating. Cooley heard about Dubose’s gang and was envious of the money he earned from the casino. When he was jailed for tax evasion, he met Myers. Myers was willing to sign the complaint against JoHelen’s boss, something that both JoHelen and Cooley did not want to do.



JoHelen was not sure where Cooley was, but was angry with him. He had encouraged her to take the job with McDover and began the process. Because of the tragedies that have happened so far in the investigation, JoHelen wished she had never allowed herself to become involved. After getting out of jail, Cooley had needed money and the whistle-blower operation seemed the perfect way to make that money.

In Chapter 40, once they reached Valdosta, Lacy drove to the general aviation terminal. Gunther was waiting for them. He flew them to Franklin, North Carolina where Rusty, Gunther's friend, took them to an isolated mountain cabin where they could hide out until arrests were made. Once they arrived, Lacy called Pacheco and told him where they were hiding.

Later that day, JoHelen told Lacy that even before Cooley had suggested they blow the whistle on McDover, she had already noticed inconsistencies. Most importantly, the judge had a wardrobe she could not have purchased on her salary as a judge. She explained how she had stolen McDover's keys so Cooley could have access to the woman's office. McDover believed she had lost her keys and was relieved when she found them on the floor near a trash can. As they researched, they discovered the expensive charter jet trips taken by Phyllis and McDover, and then learned about multiple residences in other towns and even other countries.

Analysis

The reader learns in this section of the novel that JoHelen acted not only out of her desire for revenge against the judge but also out of anger because she was denied profits from the casino. Because JoHelen's mother is one-quarter Indian and her father one-half Indian, JoHelen should have qualified to receive dividend checks from the casino. Because JoHelen is unable to find her father for a positive identification, she has been denied her money. "I spent years trying to find him, not for any emotional or sentimental reason, but purely for money. If he is, or was, one-half, then I'm one-eighth" (339). To make matters worse, JoHelen does not look like an Indian, a factor that was held against her when she tried to register. She tells Lacy she has seen people with less proof of their background than she approved for checks from the reservation.

Meanwhile, JoHelen long suspected that McDover was also benefiting from proceeds from the casino. One of the things about McDover that tipped her off was the way the woman dressed. JoHelen knew that on McDover's salary there was no way she could afford the wardrobe and accessories that she wore around the office.

Meanwhile, JoHelen had the many people who are milling around the hotel in Panama City working in her favor. Delgado was unable to take a shot at JoHelen in her hotel room because she had her curtains pulled shut. He is afraid to take a shot at her when she leaves the room because of the number of potential witnesses. What the ladies lack in brawn they make up in brain power. They take off as soon as JoHelen gets into Lacy's car. They travel aimlessly taking many twists and turns along the way. Regardless, they do not stop until they have reached Georgia.



Discussion Question 1

How does JoHelen get away from Delgado? What things does she have working in her favor?

Discussion Question 2

How does money figure into JoHelen's decision to join Cooley in his scheme to uncover McDover as a corrupt judge?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the method by which the FBI will arrest and raid the businesses of everyone suspected to be involved in Dubose's circle. How will these sudden arrests and raids be beneficial to their investigation?

Vocabulary

convened, quorum, enthralled, applicable, supersede, imminent, indefinitely, protracted, couriers, amend, paranoid, altercation, inevitable, terrain, leer, foliage, replica, compromised



Chapters 41 - Epilogue

Summary

In Chapter 41, the FBI began arresting suspects. Dubose, the Maton brothers and Skinner were arrested on the golf course as they played their weekly Sunday morning golf game. Hank was arrested shortly before when he was picked up by a Florida State Trooper after having dropped Dubose off for the game. After the arrests, the men's offices and homes were raided. Pacheco and Hahn first talked to Dubose, whom they had identified as Jack Henderson. Dubose asked for a lawyer even though Pacheco told him all his accounts were frozen and he would not be able to afford the kind of lawyer to which he was accustomed.

A semiprivate arrest was arranged for Clyde. He has still not told his wife what was happening. Both Elias and Billy Cappel were arrested when they were called to the casino after it was closed down. Phylis and McDover attempted to fly out of the country on a chartered jet but the FBI had already notified the charter service. They were arrested on the ground in Panama City. Between the two of them the women had gathered \$4.2 million in jewels and other items they were intending to sneak out of the country.

Delgado was also among the twenty-one people arrested in association with the raids. It is noted that it was several years before the FBI learned the full extent of Delgado's wrong doing.

In Chapter 42, there was little news coverage of the arrests but what was available was based on hearsay. Lacy and JoHelen were surprised and pleased that the conspiracy and corruption had been exposed. All of the businesses owned by Dubose and his gang were closed down. A lawyer, with the help of forensic accountants would try to piece together the beginnings of all of Dubose's businesses. The intent was to discover all of the assets held by Dubose and his gang.

Because they were no longer in danger, Lacy and JoHelen were allowed to return home. They decided to go to Lacy's home where they will have dinner with Pacheco to learn the details of the arrests.

In the Epilogue, two weeks after the arrests, Lacy found a man sitting on her steps when she arrived at home. It was Myers. He explained his disappearance had been part of his original plan though he had told no one about it. He believed that if he disappeared that the FBI would be forced to enter the investigation. He did not tell anyone about his plans because he wanted it to be completely believable. Myers learns that it was not his disappearance that prompted the FBI to get involved but instead the discovery of DNA evidence on the paper towels. Myers also told Lacy he had gotten a strange call on his burner phone and suspected that Dubose had located him. This call also caused him to decide for sure it was a good idea to disappear.



Gavin Prince was an additional manager of the casinos who described to the FBI how the skimming took place. His job was to take the cash box each day from the highest grossing blackjack table. While the other boxes were counted under video surveillance, Prince put the money from this box in a lock box that was picked up each day by the chief. They knew the money was being used as bribes. It was estimated as much as \$8 million each year had been taken out of the casino in that way. Meanwhile, the tribe hired a professional company to manage the casino. The additionally voted to make Gritt their chief.

Verna filed a wrongful death suit while Myers filed for a payment under the whistleblower statute. JoHelen wound up with \$5 million while Cooley and Myers got \$2.5 million each.

In the trials, Hank and Dubose were sentenced to death while the rest of the Cousins were sentenced to life with no parole. Phyllis was sentenced to serve ten years on a plea of guilty to bribery and money laundering. On the same charges, McDover was sentenced to twenty-five years. It was indicated that Lacy almost felt sorry for McDover as she was sentenced.

Analysis

In this section, the case is wrapped up and the criminals put on trial for their crimes. The author goes through a good deal of detail about the way the worth of Dubose's syndicate was determined. Just as Myers has told Lacy and Hugo there is a substantial amount of money tied up in Dubose's holdings. A good deal of this was stolen from the casino.

A description is given in this section of exactly how the money was skimmed from the casino. The proceeds of one blackjack table deemed to be the most profitable was kept separate from the other casino proceeds. The man who deposited this money into a lock box picked up by the chief was not even aware of how much money was taken out of the casino in that way.

Meanwhile, there appears to be a happy ending for everyone involved. Because it was learned that Dubose's men caused Hugo's wreck, she was able to file a wrongful death suit. It did not bring Hugo back but makes it easier for her to raise her four children without her husband's salary. Lacy even filed a suit for her losses in the wreck.

JoHelen not only gets the whistleblower money she was anticipating, she also gets to see McDover punished for her crimes. Cooley resurfaces to get his portion of the money and to try to patch things up with JoHelen. Myers also comes back and explains to Lacy why he chose to disappear. His reasons were better than Cooley, who just lost his nerve. Myers believed that if he disappeared that it would force the FBI's hand and they would have to take the case. Although his reasoning was sound it was not his disappearance but instead to identification of the driver of the truck that brought the FBI into the case.



Discussion Question 1

Consider the idea that Lacy “almost felt sorry” (374) for McDover when she was sentenced. Compare and contrast her feelings to how Myers “almost felt sorry” (19) for Lacy and Hugo in Chapter 2 when he presented them with the case involving McDover. Is there a connection between these incidents, or do you think the author’s use of these words is a coincidence?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the way in which cash was skimmed from the casino. In the case of an investigation, would it not be suspicious that there was never any video footage from one specific blackjack table?

Discussion Question 3

Do you think the criminals are given their proper punishments? Why or why not? Use examples from the book to defend your answer.

Vocabulary

exclusive, picturesque, raunchy, conjunction, appraised, antiquities, confiscated, veracity, tentacles, forfeiture, evolved, curtailed, emphatically, aggregate, unified, banished, archives, caustic, tirade



Characters

Claudia McDover

Claudia McDover is a circuit court judge who allows herself to be influenced by the promise of money. Dubose encouraged her to run for the circuit court position so that she could help cover his crimes and get the casino built. In exchange, McDover was given half of the proceeds that Dubose skimmed off the profits at the casino. She also received several condos in Dubose's developments as part of the bribe.

McDover was the judge who presided over the murder trial for Junior. Even though she had thought he was guilty when she first presided over the trial, she has begun to be convinced that she possibly made the wrong decision through the course of the multiple appeals on the case. Regardless, McDover does not speak up about her doubts but allows Junior to remain on death row.

McDover enjoys spending her money on jewels and expensive clothes. She and her lesbian lover, Phyllis Turban, take trips in chartered jets to exotic locations they could not afford on their salaries alone. They plan to retire soon out of country but are not allowed to do so.

McDover is charged and pleads guilty to bribery and money laundering. She is sentenced to twenty-five years in jail.

Vonn Dubose aka Jack Henderson

Vonn Dubose, whose real name is Jack Henderson, is the leader of the Coast Mafia. He and his gang own a variety of hotels, bars and strip malls along the Gulf Coast under the name of companies headquartered overseas.

Dubose comes under investigation because of his affiliation with the casino, Treasure Key, built on a Tappacola Indian reservation. Not only does Dubose get rich off the condos and golf courses he builds around this casino, he is also being allowed by the Indians to skim a percentage of the casino's profits for his own use. McDover shares in these profits because she has allowed the casino to be built by ruling in against any lawsuit brought forward to stop it.

After being born into a life of crime, Dubose is a hardened criminal. He thinks nothing of killing people or intimidating them in order to get what he wants. He is the one who orders Son killed when Son campaigns against the casino.

In the end, Dubose is arrested and charged with capital murder for the death of Hugo. He is found guilty and sentenced to death.



The Mole aka JoHelen Hooper

JoHelen Hooper, who is referred to as the mole in most of the novel, works as a court reporter for McDover. Her boyfriend, Cooley, encouraged her to take the job when the two began to suspect that McDover was involved in some sort of bribery scheme.

JoHelen tells Lacy she had never liked McDover and suspected she was involved in some kind of wrong doing because she liked designer clothes and jewelry. There was no way that McDover could have purchased such expensive items on her salary.

JoHelen does not become an active character in the novel until both Myers and Cooley disappear. At this point, JoHelen gets spooked because she sees Delgado break into her house and rummage through her things. She calls Lacy, the only person left, for help. Just in the nick of time, Lacy picks JoHelen up from the motel in which she had spent the night. Delgado had located JoHelen and was watching her from another hotel across from the one in which JoHelen was staying.

For her part in blowing the whistle on McDover's activities, JoHelen receives \$5 million in proceeds from the sale of McDover's assets and Dubose's properties.

Cooley

Cooley is the mastermind of the plan to uncover the corruption scheme that involves McDover and Dubose's gang. He met Myers in jail and learned that Myers would be willing to put his name on a formal complaint against McDover. During the course of the investigation, Cooley worked as the intermediary between Myers and the mole.

Later, when Lacy meets JoHelen, the mole, she learns that Cooley did a good deal of investigation into McDover's affairs. After JoHelen got a copy of McDover's keys, Cooley was able to tap her phone and hack into her computer. He was also the one who got the pictures of McDover and Dubose at the condo.

Shortly before the arrests are made, Cooley loses his nerve and hides away. He blames his skittishness on the disappearance of Myers. Regardless, he leaves his friend and partner, JoHelen with no one to defend her against Dubose and his gang.

After his fear of danger passes, Cooley resurfaces and tries to make up with JoHelen. He is due \$2.5 million of the proceeds of the Dubose fortune according to the agreement between himself, Myers and JoHelen.

Zeke Foreman

Zeke Foreman is a young man who is out of jail on parole. He works at the hotel that Clyde manages because Clyde will hire him even though he has a record. He is the one who drives the Ram truck into Lacy's Prius badly injuring her and killing Hugo.



Because Clyde offers him a good deal of cash, Foreman agrees to do a job even before he knows what he will be asked to do. By the time he has learned what Clyde wants him to do, it is too late for him to back out.

Foreman is identified by DNA evidence taken from the bloody paper towels that he threw out the window of the truck when Clyde drove him away from the scene of the crash. The FBI arrests Foreman when he sneaks back into Florida to meet with his parole officer.

Foreman decides to take the deal that the FBI offers him. Foreman, his mother, and sister will be put in the witness protection program in exchange for his testimony against Dubose and his gang. It is Foreman who gives the FBI the name of Clyde, the man who drove the getaway car from the scene of the wreck.

Lacy Stoltz

Lacy Stoltz is one of the senior lawyers at the BJC. She is the one whom Myers contacts about the possible corruption involving McDover.

After the wreck, Lacy is given the chance to drop the complaint against McDover after she is badly injured in a car wreck and her partner is killed, but she decides not to do so. She believes that if they allow the people who killed Hugo to go free, they will have allowed them to win.

Lacy presents the case to the FBI, but she is turned down initially. After Gritt gives Lacy the paper towel with blood on it that he believes came from the driver of the truck that hit Lacy and Hugo, the driver is identified. At this point, the FBI agrees to take over the investigation.

Although she is not involved in the active investigation from that point on, Lacy is instrumental in taking JoHelen, the mole, to safety after both Greg and Cooley disappear.

Lyman Gritt

Lyman Gritt is the name of the man who served as constable for the Tappacola reservation at the time that Hugo was killed in a car wreck. After the wreck, Chief Elias Cappel fired Gritt with no cause and replaced him with his own son.

When Gritt left, he took with him a copy of the video footage from Frog's store as well as the footage of the video given to him by the Foley police of the theft of the truck.

Although Elias was not aware, Gritt had already done some investigation of the wreck. He discovered a truck carrying the driver of the Dodge Ram that hit Lacy's car had left the scene through a field. He collected a wad of paper towels that appeared to have blood on them.



Even though Elias and the others were threatening Gritt, Gritt got copies of both videos as well as a piece of the paper towel to Lacy. It was with his help that the case was cracked.

Greg Myers aka Ramsey Mix aka Randy

Greg Myers, whose real name is Ramsey Mix, is the man whom Cooley meets in jail who is willing to sign a formal complaint against McDoover in exchange for part of the cash Cooley and JoHelen expect to get from the whistle blower statute.

Through a good deal of the novel, Myers is Lacy's contact person as far as information provided by the mole goes.

After the complaint is filled and the FBI refuse to get involved, Myers goes missing. It is believed that Dubose's gang got to him but Myers later explains it was part of his plan because he knew his disappearance would pique the FBI's interest in the case. He had not told anyone about his plans because he wanted his disappearance to appear as believable as possible.

Hugo Hatch

Hugo is married to Verna Hatch. The two have four young children. Hugo is Lacy's partner at the BJC. He is a black man who was one a star football player. When the two first meet with Myers, Myers wonders if he is Lacy's bodyguard.

It is Hugo who receives the call from the anonymous man who claims he wants to share information about the corruption at the casino. Hugo and Lacy go together to talk to the informant.

Hugo is killed when a Dodge Ram, a much larger truck than the Prius Lacy drives, hits Lacy's car head-on as they are leaving the reservation. Because Hugo's seat belt and airbag had been disengaged by Delgado, Hugo is thrown into the windshield and dies.

Delgado

Delgado is Dubose's favorite hit man. He tampered with the seat belt and airbag in Lacy's before he suffered from an attack of kidney stones. He was not able to participate in the wreck because he was in the hospital.

It was Delgado who had taken Son to Junior Mace's house and shot both him and Eileen. He also took care of one of the jailhouse snitches who testified at Junior's trial by drowning him in the Gulf.



It was Delgado who posed as a plumber and a bug man in order to break into JoHelen's apartment and look for incriminating evidence. He later set up surveillance of her hotel room in an attempt to kill her. He did not succeed.

Junior Mace

Junior Mace is the man who was set up in the murder of Son. Delgado actually was the one who murdered both Son and Junior's wife, Eileen. He put them in bed together so that it would appear Junior had caught the two sleeping together.

Junior was found guilty of the murders and sentenced to death. He never gave up on his claim that he was innocent.

After 15 years in jail, Junior finally seems to be getting a break in his case when one of the witnesses who lied on the stand comes forward to recant his testimony. Junior's lawyer gets a stay of execution and applies for a new trial.

Gunther Stoltz

Gunther Stoltz is Lacy's older brother. He is described as being argumentative and pushy. Regardless, he is useful in Lacy's recovery from the wreck because he makes her walk. Also, he makes her talk about the accident and try to remember what happened.

Even though Geismar does not completely trust Gunther, Gunther helps out their case once by flying to pick up Carlita after Myers abandoned her. Gunther also flew Lacy and JoHelen to North Carolina where a friend of his had a cabin in which they could hide until they were safe.

Clyde Westbay

Clyde Westbay is the man who picks up Foreman after the wreck that kills Hugo. He makes the mistake of parking in front of Frog's store when they stop for ice, beer and rubbing alcohol. In the place where they park, their faces are clearly visible on the video surveillance.

After Foreman identifies Westbay as man who was with him the night of the wreck, the FBI interrogates Westbay and offers him a deal. If he gives information about Dubose and the gang, he will be given a significantly lighter sentence than the rest of the men involved in the murder.



Luna

Luna is the FBI agent who eventually takes charge of the investigation into the reports of conspiracy and fraud involving the Dubose gang and McDover.

He is one of the group of three agents to whom Lacy presents the case. Even though he thinks the case has promise, he does not think his supervisor will approve the case because there is not enough evidence.

Luna gets more interested after Myers disappears. When Foreman admits to having been paid to drive the truck into Lacy's car, Luna takes over the investigation.

Allie Pacheco

Allie Pacheco is the FBI agent who is most interested in the case Lacy presents to them. Pacheco and Lacy develop a special friendship during the case and enjoy several meals together.

Pacheco is the agent who approaches Clyde at the hotel he manages and directs him to the suite where the other agents are waiting to question him.

When the grand jury convened to consider indictments on Dubose and his gang members, Pacheco was the first person to testify.

Wilton Mace

Wilton Mace is Junior's brother. He agreed to talk to Lacy and Hugo only after his brother told him that it was okay with him. Wilton believed without a doubt that his brother was not guilty and that he had been set up for the murders.

Wilton is not able to help Lacy and Hugo much. He tells them that there will be no tribe members willing to talk about the casino or corruption. Wilton is instrumental in arranging the meeting between Gritt and Lacy.

Junior Mace

Junior Mace is Wilton's older brother. He is on death row because he was wrongly convicted of killing his wife, Eileen, and his friend, Son. Junior was set up for the murder in order to get rid of him because he did not support the casino.

Because one of the witnesses in the original trial recants his testimony and admits that he was paid to lie, Junior is granted a stay of execution.



Verna Hatch

Verna Hatch is Hugo's wife. The couple has four children. Verna is also close friends with Lacy. She at first considered suing Lacy and the manufacturer of the Prius but once she began to come to terms with her grief, she realized Lacy and her husband had been set up and lured to the reservation.

Eventually, Verna does file a wrongful death suit against Dubose and his syndicate.

Michael Geismar

Michael Geismar is the head lawyer and boss at the BJC office where Hugo and Lacy work. After Lacy is injured and Hugo killed in a car crash, Geismar tries to monitor Lacy's work more closely in an attempt to keep her safe. Even when he tries to keep her from doing something, like flying with her brother to pick up Carlita, because he thinks it is too dangerous, Lacy generally manages to convince him she will be safe.

Elias Cappel

Elias Cappel is the chief of the Tappacola Indians. He is involved in the conspiracy in which the casino is a part. He has served the Indians as chief for two terms and has the group firmly under his control.

After the wreck in which Hugo was killed, Elias takes the freedom of replacing Gritt, the constable at the time. Conveniently, Elias replaces Gritt with his own son.

Eddie Naylor

Eddie Naylor is the director of the Florida Gaming Commission. During a meeting with Lacy, Naylor tells her that he has little control over the Indian casinos. Even though these casinos have to provide a quarterly report of revenue, Naylor and his workers have no ability to verify the numbers that are turned in. They have to take the casino workers' word that the figures are correct.

Justin Barrow

Justin Barrow is one of the other workers in the BJC office at which Lacy and Hugo work. He helps out with the case by accompanying Hugo on his golf outing to Rabbit Run. Justin knows how to play golf while Hugo does not.

Justin, who is a younger worker at the office, is relieved when Lacy insists on finishing the investigation herself after Hugo is killed.



Berl Munger

Berl Munger is the man responsible for stealing the Dodge Ram used in the wreck in which Hugo was killed. The police in Foley call the constable at the reservation, Billy Cappel, to let him know the identity of the thief. Instead of contacting a police district that could arrest Berl, Billy contacted his father, and Berl was warned there was a warrant out for his arrest.

Billy Cappel

Billy Cappel is Elias Cappel's son. When Elias fires Gritt as the constable, he puts Billy in Gritt's place. Billy has little law enforcement experience. Instead of trying to see that justice is done, Billy reports to his father any information given to him about the wreck. Elias sees to it that his friends — like Berl Munger who stole the truck — are taken care of and not arrested.

Henry “Hank” Skoley

Hank is Dubose's right hand man. He worked as Dubose's driver and bodyguard. Hank arranged Dubose's trips and bought the things that he needed. He additionally made all the email and phone contacts that Dubose needed done. Hank also oversaw all of the hotels, restaurants and amusement parks owned by Dubose. It was believed that Hank was Dubose's nephew.

Todd Short

Todd Short is one of the two men who was paid to testify against Junior. After he testified and was paid for his testimony, Short disappeared.

Fifteen years after the trial, Short decided to recant his testimony because he was dying of cancer. He agreed to testify that he had lied on the stand. It is because of Short's new testimony that Junior receives a stay of execution and is given the promise of a new trial.

Carlita

Carlita is Myer's girlfriend. After Myers disappears she is left alone on his boat. Under Lacy's directions she collects anything that might be incriminating that is on the boat. Lacy and Gunther then pick her up from the boat and take her to her home. After the case is concluded, Carlita reunites with Myers.



Sadelle

Sadelle is a paralegal who works at the same BJC office as Hugo and Lacy. She researches and produces memos about the cases that the lawyers in that office are investigating. She is considered the office's "secret weapon" (21) because she is so good at research.

Phyllis Turban

Phyllis Turban is McDover's lesbian lover. At one point McDover refers to Phyllis as her "partner in crime" (280). Phyllis helped McDover out by finding ways to hide McDover's money. Phyllis additionally accompanied McDover on her trips to launder money by buying jewels, gold coins, and other expensive collectibles.

Eileen Mace

Eileen Mace was Junior Mace's wife. She was shot by Delgado and put in bed with Son to make it appear they were having an affair. Her death was a ploy by Dubose to get rid of Son and Junior, both of whom were against the building of the casino. Junior was framed for her murder, found guilty and sentenced to death.

Frog Freeman

Frog Freeman is the store owner who gets surveillance footage of Foreman and Clyde after the wreck in which Hugo was killed. Based on the time line of the wreck and the strange purchases the men make, Frog believes they may have been involved in the wreck. He turns the footage over to the Brunswick County sheriff.

Al Bennett

Al Bennett is the lawyer who challenged McDover's run for reelection after her first term. He was defeated badly. During an interview with Hugo, Bennett said he never found any misdoing on McDover's part. He had additionally not heard any rumors of any misbehavior on her part.

Louise

Louise was Son's wife. She refused to talk to Lacy about the murders or the casino during an interview. It was clear from their talk that Louise believed that Son had been having an affair with Eileen and that was the reason he had been killed.



Papazian

Papazian is the name of the man who was willing to bring his collection of gem stones to the apartment that McDover and Phyllis owned in New Jersey. He also allowed to women to pay cash for their purchases.

Edgar Killebrew

Edgar Killebrew is the arrogant lawyer whom McDover hires before she has even been served with the complaint filed by the BJC. Killebrew tries to make Lacy back off the investigation by threatening her but he has no luck.

Doug Hahn

Doug Hahn is the FBI agent who joins Luna and Pacheco when Lacy first presents the case to the FBI. He later helps the other agents interrogate Clyde at the Surfbreaker, one of the hotels that Clyde manages.

Salzman

Salzman is the lead investigator in Junior's case. After Short decides to recant the testimony he gave at Junior's trial, Salzman believes he can get a stay of execution and new trial for Junior.

Parker Logan

Parker Logan is the lawyer who represented Foreman on his prior drug charges. When the FBI offers Foreman a deal for his information about Dubose and his gang, Logan is the lawyer called to supervise that plea deal.

Paula Galloway

Paula Galloway is the U.S. Attorney who works on the case once the FBI has been involved. She presided in the trial against five of the Cousins. Dubose and Hank were convicted and given the death penalty.

Son Razko

Son Razko is murdered by Delgado because he campaigned against the casino. The murder was staged to look like Junior had found his wife, Eileen, in bed with Son.



Digger Robles

Digger Robles is one of the men who was paid to testify against Junior. After his participation in the trial, Robles was killed by Delgado.

Abbott

Abbott is Geismar's friend in the Department of Law Enforcement who helps Geismar and Lacy get permission for the bloody paper to be analyzed by the crime lab.

Dr. Joe Vasquez

Dr. Joe Vasquez is the worker at the crime lab who analyzes the DNA on the bloody paper towel that Gritt gave to Lacy.

Rebecca Webb

Rebecca Webb is the Assistant U.S. Attorney. She is the one who offers the deal the Foreman and to Clyde. She helps with the interrogation of Clyde.

Gary Bullington

Gary Bullington is the lawyer whom Clyde calls when he is confronted by the FBI in his hotel. Bullington convinces Clyde to take the deal the FBI is offering him.

Rusty

Rusty is the North Carolina local who takes Lacy and JoHelen up to the mountain cabin where they hide until the arrests of Dubose and the others are complete.



Symbols and Symbolism

Toll Road

This toll road is a symbol of greed. The county of Brunswick originally agreed to build a road to the reservation when it was planned for the casino to be built because the county leaders thought they would get tax revenue from the casino. When it was learned the county would receive no income from the casino, they made the road a toll road so they could recoup some of their money.

Signed Formal Complaint

This signed formal complaint symbolizes Myers intent to go forward with the investigation into McDover despite his suspicion that there is danger involved in that investigation.

Leather Satchels

These matching leather satchels symbolize the transfer of money from Dubose to McDover each month. Dubose brings a satchel full of money to McDover in her condo at Rabbit Run the first Wednesday of each month. He leaves with the matching, empty satchel.

GPS Tracking Device

This GPS tracking device is a symbol of how technologically advanced the people who have been spying on McDover are. They use the device, which is put on McDover's car, to locate the condo where she meets with Dubose.

Dodge Ram

The Dodge Ram vehicle was much heavier than the Prius that was stolen. As such, the Dodge Ram was used in the head-on collision. The Dodge Ram is a symbol that the people who planned the wreck intended for it to do damage to Lacy and Hugo. The Dodge Ram is later referred to as a murder weapon.

Motorcycle Helmet and Pads

The motorcycle helmet and pads that Zeke Foreman wore when he drove the Dodge Ram into Lacy's Prius are another symbol of intent in the wreck. If the driver had not intended to hit Lacy's car, he would not have been wearing this protective gear.



Video Footage

This video footage symbolizes mistakes that Dubose's men made both in the theft of the truck and after the wreck. Because the men who stole the truck were not paying full attention to what was going on around them, they piqued the interest of a private investigator working on an unrelated case. In the same manner, Westbay parked in a clear spot in front of the store, allowing his face and the face of the driver to be clearly visible on the video.

Burner Phones

These burner phones symbolize how much need there is in this case for secrecy and anonymity. The burner phones allow Lacy, Myers, Cooley, and JoHelen to be able to communicate without fear of anyone being able to trace them.

Small Piece of Paper Towel

The small piece of paper towel symbolizes the break in the case that Lacy needed to get the FBI involved in the investigation. Once the DNA on the towel is analyzed and matched to Zeke Foreman, the FBI has a witness who can tell them that Hugo's death was a murder for hire.

The Timex

This Timex watch is a symbol of the FBI's ability to put a bug in any conceivable object. When Clyde talks to Dubose, the bug is hidden in the watch. There is even a device hidden in the watch that vibrates when Clyde is within range of the listening FBI agents.



Settings

Sterling, Florida

Sterling, Florida is the town in which McDover lives and works. The town is the county seat of Brunswick County, Florida where Treasure Key casino is located.

Brunswick County, Florida

Brunswick County, Florida is the county in which the Tappacola Indians have their reservation. It is in this county where Treasure Key Casino is located.

St. Augustine

St. Augustine is the place where Hugo and Lacy meet with Myers twice to talk about the details of the complaint he is filing against McDover.

Florida State Prison in Starke

Lacy visits the Florida State Prison in Starke twice to visit with Mace. It is in this prison that Mace is being held on two murder convictions.

Abandoned Road Near Treasure Key

It is on this abandoned road near Treasure Key that Foreman rams a stolen Dodge Ram truck head on into the Prius driven Lacy. Lacy is badly injured in this wreck. Hugo is killed.

Neptune Motel

The Neptune Motel is the place where JoHelen tries to hide from Delgado. Even though she sneaks out of her house to this hotel, the hit man is still able to find her. Lacy picks JoHelen up at this motel to take her to safety.

Franklin, North Carolina

It is to a mountain cabin in Franklin, North Carolina that Gunther takes Lacy and JoHelen to keep them safe until Dubose and the others are arrested.



Themes and Motifs

Ease of Abuse in Casinos on Indian Reservations

While the intention of tribal sovereignty is intended to allow the Indians to govern themselves, it also makes these groups of people easy prey for people who want to abuse them. Because the Indians living on these reservations do not follow the laws of the United States government, their activities, like running a casino, are also not overseen by the federal or state governments. Additionally, these reservations have their own police departments and do not allow interference from outside law enforcement.

Because there is no one overseeing the activities of the Indians, particularly in the casinos, it is easy for people like Dubose to infiltrate these businesses and demand a payoff. The casinos do not have to report their revenues to anyone with the exception of the Federal Gaming Commission. In this case, the casino is required to provide no proof that the figures they give are correct. For this reason, there is no way to know if casino money is being stolen and how much money might be being stolen.

The reader learns at the end of the novel that the chief of the Indians was even involved in the skimming of money from the casino. Since the chief was in charge of collecting the money from the casino, there was no way that he would consider an investigation of any suspected wrongdoing at the casino. It would be in his best interests to cover up any wrong doing.

With the exception of the FBI, no other law enforcement agency has the ability to come onto reservation property to investigate a crime there. Since the FBI is not terribly interested in the activities that take place on the Indian reservations, they rarely investigate any wrongdoing. For all of these reasons — the lack of governmental oversight, the presence of a private law enforcement, and the inability of other law enforcement to investigate — Indian casinos are easily abused.

Police Procedure

In *The Whistler*, author John Grisham tackles the topic of police procedures. First, the purpose of the Board on Judicial Conduct and how it differs from regular law enforcement are explored. Then, the reasons why Lacy faces difficulty in getting the FBI involved in the casino case are addressed. Finally, the manner in which Cappel and his son run the law enforcement on the reservation is offered as an example of the way police work should not be done.

The purpose of the Board on Judicial Conduct (BJC) is to investigate judges. While they have the power to subpoena records, they do not have the ability to make arrests. It is for this reason that Lacy and Hugo both wonder why Myers contacts them about McDover and the thefts he believes are taking place at the casino.



Since the FBI stays busy working with terrorism cases, they do not have much time or manpower to deal with the sort of cases that Lacy presents to them. When the local agents, Pacheco and Luna, first present the case to their higher ups, they are told not to take on the case. It is not until Lacy is able to give solid evidence of wrongdoing, which comes in the form of the DNA evidence that points to Zeke Foreman as the driver of the truck that hit Lacy and Hugo, that the FBI will open a file on the case.

Even though Gritt is a good constable and does his work as he should, the relationship between the chief and his son, who becomes the new constable when Gritt is fired, should be avoided. Chief Elias Cappel and his son, Billy Cappel, use the information they receive through other law enforcement agencies to warn the criminals they might get arrested. They also allow others to tamper with evidence. Instead of keeping the Prius and Dodge Ram on the reservation's impound lot, both vehicles are sold to salvage yards. This is bad police work since the Prius and its malfunctioning seat belt and airbag are possibly incriminating evidence.

Different Ways to Launder Money

As McDover, Phyllis, and Dubose skim money from the profits of Treasure Key Casino, there are a variety of methods they use to launder the stolen cash. Each character in the novel has a favorite way to clean their cash and hide their wealth. Some cash is even cleaned by running it back through Dubose's other businesses.

It is during a trip to New Jersey that McDover and Phyllis enjoy a few of their favorite methods of cleaning the money they have gotten from the casino. They first pay cash to buy jewels and gemstones. The women are such good customers that the dealer even makes a house call to show them his wares at their apartment. The women also trade some of their cash for gold and collectible coins. Since all of these items were paid for in cash, there is no way to prove the money used to buy the items was gotten illegally.

Clyde shares with the FBI agents that the first of his illegal deeds with Dubose and his gang involved laundering money through the bars in his hotels. Clyde was to add this money to the proceeds from the bars to make it appear the money was earned fairly. He said he was commended because he became so capable of covering up the laundered money in his account books and he found a way to launder cash through the front desk operations.

Clyde also tells the FBI that all of the managers of the hotels were also given a certain amount of money which they were to launder through the casino. When a manager cashed in his chips after playing, he was to put his winnings in a special account at the casino. The money put in this account was smuggled out of the country.

The Lure of Money

The hunger for money can be blamed for the wrongdoing of almost all of the characters in this novel. Myers wound up in jail years before the time period of the novel because



he was lured in by a get rich quick scheme. JoHelen decided to file a complaint against McDover because she knew that woman was benefiting from the Indian casinos while JoHelen, who was one-eighth Tappacola, had not even been allowed to register for dividend checks. Clyde, who becomes an informant with the FBI, admits that he stayed with Dubose even after he learned the man was involved in illegal actions because of the money.

When Myers first meets with Lacy and Hugo, he admits that he is in the position he is in because he allowed himself to be pulled in by a get rich quick scheme. Because he believed a man who was dealing in corruption, Myers wound up in jail. He also lost his law license. Despite his first experience with get rich quick schemes, Myers agrees to help Cooley and JoHelen with their plan to blow the whistle on McDover. Although the investigation is dicey at first, there are eventually arrests made and McDover is able to get the cash he wants and needs.

A good deal of JoHelen's decision to blow the whistle on McDover is her anger because she was not allowed to register as a member of the Tappacola tribe. This means that JoHelen does not get the dividend checks promised to each tribe member. While JoHelen was cut out of this means of getting profits from the casino, she suspects that McDover is earning some of her ridiculous wealth through the profits of the casino. JoHelen hopes to get what is rightfully hers, a portion of the casino profits, and also keep McDover from stealing what is not hers.

Even after he learned that Dubose and his businesses were involved in some illegal activity, he admits during questioning by the FBI that he continued to work for Dubose because he liked the money. Clyde liked the money so much at first that he did not even think twice when Hank taught him how to launder money through the bars in his hotel. It was only after Clyde was involved in the murder of Hugo that he began to consider that what he was being asked to do was not worth any amount of money.

Technology in Crime

The author explores the extensive use of technology in the world of crime and crime solving. DNA testing is one aspect of crime solving that has evolved rapidly to help police more quickly get suspects behind bars. Surveillance cameras and videos help both the good guys and the bad guys keep track of one another. Disposable cell phones provide a way for informers and informants to keep in touch with each other without the fear of their calls being traced. These are just a few of the ways criminals and police use technology to make their jobs easier.

It is because DNA testing can be completed so quickly that many suspects find themselves behind bars. A positive DNA match gives Lacy and Michael the identity of the man who drove the Dodge Ram into Lacy's car, killing Hugo. It is noted in the novel that it takes just less than three hours for the DNA to be processed and matched with a person in the criminal database. Before DNA testing became so quick, it was not



unusual for a suspect to post bail and disappear before a positive identification could be made.

Surveillance cameras also pose a challenge for criminals while they are helpful to law enforcement. Proof of this comes with the footage of both the theft of the Dodge truck and the clear images of Foreman and Clyde as recorded on Frog's video camera. Because Clyde was not familiar with this type of surveillance, he did not think to park the truck in the shadows where his face and that of Foreman could not easily be captured. He also admitted that as run down as Frog's place looked, he did not expect that there would be video cameras.

Surveillance cameras also come in handy for JoHelen because they let her know that she is of interest to someone, a person whom she believes is part of Dubose's gang. Using the cameras hidden in her house, JoHelen watches as Delgado goes through her things. He does it in such a methodical manner that she knows she would not have noticed her apartment had been searched unless she had seen it on video. He is careful to return everything to its correct location and covers his tracks well. This video surveillance gives JoHelen the heads up that she is being watched and needs to be careful.

The disposable phones used by Myers and those on his side to keep in touch with each other are important. These burner phones can be purchased with cash and do not require a contract; therefore, they are hard to trace. To be even more secure, Myers changes out his burner phone about every month.

Styles

Point of View

This novel is told from the point of view of an omniscient, third person narrator. There is no particular character of focus in the novel. The action of the novel follows a linear timeline. Information is given to the reader as it is unveiled through conversations between characters, or as it is given by the narrator.

Language and Meaning

John Grisham, the author of *The Whistler*, is a noted trial lawyer who has become famous for his crime novels. As such, Grisham uses many law terms, including ones that are specific to racketeering, in this story. There are several acronyms which could be unfamiliar to the reader. RICO, for instance, stands for Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act; and DLE is the Department of Law Enforcement. The writing is very dense with a good deal of information given in a short amount of time. The description of the characters is sparse.

Structure

The plot of the novel is developed mainly through the conversations of characters. The first half of the novel is dedicated to exposition. The problem is introduced, and Hugo and Lacy try to figure out how to investigate such a large case.

A quick rise in action begins when Hugo and Lacy are called to the Tappacola reservation and Hugo is killed in a car crash. It is not long before questions are flying about the accident while Dubose and his gang are trying to cover their tracks. The climax comes when Lacy gets the break she needs in the case when DNA evidence is used to identify Foreman, the man who was driving the truck that hit Lacy's car. This climax remains high through the interrogation of Clyde and the grand jury meeting.

The action falls as the guilty parties are arrested and their assets gathered. The denouement comes when the judge is sentenced to serve twenty-five years in jail.



Quotes

One of my early clients was a developer, a real high roller who built condos, subdivisions, hotels, strip malls, the typical Florida stuff that goes up overnight. I never trusted the guy but he was making so much money I finally took the bait.”

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 2)

Importance: During his first meeting with Lacy and Hugo, Myers tells them how he came to serve a sentence in jail and lose his law license. He had been drawn into a get rich quick scheme that went badly.

This is a long story that will take some time to unfold. It involves a ton of money, corruption that is astonishing, and some really nasty guys who wouldn't think twice about putting a bullet or two between my eyes, yours, my client's, anyone who asks too many questions.”

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 2)

Importance: Myers tells Lacy and Hugo the basics of the case he is asking them to investigate in this quote. He tells them that it is a serious case of corruption and the people involved would not hesitate to kill anyone who tries to interfere with their scheme.

And the story I can tell you involves more dirty cash than all the others combined. It also involves bribery, extortion, intimidation, rigged trials, at least two murders, and one wrongful conviction. There's a man rotting away on death row an hour from here who was framed. The man responsible for the crime is probably sitting on his boat right now, a boat much nicer than mine.”

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 2)

Importance: The more Myers tells Lacy and Hugo about the case, the more dangerous it appears. In this quote, he tells the two that there are already at least two murders that have been committed in the name of that scheme.

The question is simply this: Does the Board on Judicial Conduct want to investigate the most corrupt judge in the history of American jurisprudence?”

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 2)

Importance: Myers advertises the case that he offers to Lacy and Hugo as that of the most corrupt judge in history as he tries to persuade them to investigate the case.

In it I allege that the Honorable Claudia McDover owns at least four condos in the Rabbit Run development, courtesy of a faceless corporation called CFFX and domiciled in Belize.”

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 4)

Importance: When Myers does file a formal complaint against McDover he accuses her



only of the ownership of the four condos in Dubose's development. He believes that the other scandals associated with McDover's judgeship will be uncovered in the process of the investigation.

Anyway, Nylan Title must have some great lawyers because it is undefeated, at least in Judge McDover's courtroom. Ten to zero."

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 5)

Importance: Nylan Title is associated with Dubose's companies. Whenever there is a lawsuit against any of these companies, McDover votes in favor of Nylan Title.

But on the whole, the tribe realizes that it has a good thing going. Why rock the boat? Why should anyone worry about me? Why should Wilton help you bring down a crooked judge when everyone might get hurt in the process?"

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 5)

Importance: Myers explains that none of the Indians are willing to take a stand against the casino because it has done so much good for the community as a whole and each of them as individuals.

She lost consciousness en route to the center, so did not hear the news that Hugo had died. She would make the short flight to the hospital without her colleague."

-- Greg Myers (Chapter 12)

Importance: In this quote, the reader learns that Hugo did not survive the injuries he sustained in the wreck.

We thought there might be an element of danger, and our plan was to sort of sniff around the edges and see what we could find. Keep in mind, a formal complaint was filed, and once it was on our desk we had no choice but to investigate. I guess we should have been more careful. I should have told them not to go to the reservation Monday night."

-- Geismar (Chapter 14)

Importance: When Geismar tells the others at the BJC office what happened to Lacy and Hugo, he berates himself for allowing them to meet an unnamed witness at the reservation. Even though they had to investigate the claim, Geismar wishes that he had discouraged them from going to the reservation where Lacy was badly injured in an intentional car wreck and Hugo was killed.

The three had effectively outmaneuvered their political enemies and seemed intractable. They smothered dissension and ruled with a tight grip, and no one really objected as long as the casino was full and the dividend checks were flowing."

-- Narrator (Chapter 18)

Importance: Elias Cappel, the chief of the Tappacola, along with his two right hand men keep the Indians on the reservation from complaining about the corruption at the casino.



It is indicated that there was little complaint about the casino as long as the people got their dividend checks.

I can't do that, Greg, not now. If we walk away, the bad guys win again. Hugo died for nothing. BJC would be a joke. No. I'm still in."

-- Lacy (Chapter 20)

Importance: Lacy refuses to give up on the investigation of McDover even after Hugo is killed in a car crash. She believes that if she gives up, it will send a message to those leading the corruption and scandal that they have been allowed to win again.

The fact that she hired the most expensive lawyer around here before she knew what was coming raises suspicions. Would she hire him if she wasn't guilty of something? And how can she afford him on a judge's salary? Narco-traffickers and other big-time crooks have the cash for a guy like Killebrew, but not a circuit court judge."

-- Justin (Chapter 21)

Importance: Even before McDover knew what she had been accused of in the complaint brought against her by the BJC, she had already hired an expensive lawyer. Justin believed this move indicated guilt on her part.

The video was hidden in Gritt's attic, along with a copy of the one from Frog Freeman's store. Gritt considered himself an honest cop who'd been fired by politicians who had been compromised. If the day of reckoning ever arrived, he might need some leverage."

-- Narrator (Chapter 22)

Importance: Gritt hid a copy of the video surveillance from Frog's store and of the theft of the Dodge Ram that he got from the Foley police. He kept copies of both of these videos in the case that he ever needed to prove that the politicians who had fired him were corrupt and possibly involved in the fatal accident.

Oddly enough, I think the murder was a gift. Dubose overplayed his hand, overreacted, and did something that could come back to bite him."

-- Lacy (Chapter 24)

Importance: While presenting the evidence they have uncovered so far to the FBI, Lacy tells them she believes the murder of Hugo was a gift because it is an instance in which Dubose slipped up. This mistake may be the evidence they need in order to break the case.

I disagree. If a snitch appears with a different story and swears under oath that the cops and prosecutor knew he was lying, and he got paid cash, believe me the D.C. lawyers will be excited."

-- Lacy (Chapter 25)

Importance: Even though Wilton believes his brother, Junior, is going to die for the murders of Son and Eileen, Lacy says the story told by Short, one of the witnesses at



the original trial, may change things. She believes that if Junior's lawyers learn that Short is claiming he got paid to lie on the stand they will be able to keep Junior being killed for a crime he did not commit.

We've never met but we both know Greg. I'm the intermediary, the middleman, the guy who handles the mole. We need to talk."

-- Cooley (Chapter 26)

Importance: When Cooley calls Lacy on the phone that Greg gave her, Lacy knows right away that something must have happened to Greg.

Throughout the eight-day trial, Judge McDover, who was presiding over her first capital murder trial, favored the prosecution on virtually every issue. Only in agreeing to change venue did she show any concern for the rights of Mace."

-- Narrator (Chapter 28)

Importance: In one of Sadelle's memos, she outlines the murders of Son and Eileen and the trial of Junior. In her research, she has learned that McDover seemed in favor of the prosecution because she ruled in favor of that side in almost all of the issues that arose.

The deal of, literally, a lifetime. You talk and you walk. You tell us everything you know, you name names, give us phone numbers, histories, everything, and we'll eventually dismiss the charges. We'll place you in witness protection, set you up in a nice apartment far away, some place like California, give you a new name, new papers, new job, new life. Your past will be forgotten and you'll be as free as a bird."

-- Rebecca Webb (Chapter 31)

Importance: The FBI and United States Attorney's office offers Zeke Foreman, the man who drove the truck that smashed into Lacy's Prius, the deal of lifetime. Even though he technically was responsible for killing Hugo, he is allowed to walk away as a free man if he will tell them all that he knows about Dubose and his gang, as well as the car wreck.

Pacheco said, 'The short version, Mr. Bullington, is that we want your client to deliver the Coast Mafia.'"

-- Pacheco (Chapter 33)

Importance: In order for Clyde to be able to be accused of a lesser charge, and spend less time in prison, Clyde had to help the FBI get the evidence it needed to convict the members of Dubose's gang, known as the Coast Mafia.

The ultimate mistake of Vonn's career was choosing Clyde Westbay to take out Hugo, rather than Delgado."

-- Narrator (Chapter 35)

Importance: Just as Lacy had thought that Hugo's death was a gift, this quote confirms



that Dubose made his greatest mistake when he hired a nonprofessional to plan Hugo's death instead of using Delgado and his expertise.

The debilitating pain hit just hours after he had broken into Lacy's car and tampered with the passenger's side air bag and seat belt."

-- Narrator (Chapter 25)

Importance: Delgado was not able to take charge of the wreck in which Hugo was killed because he was in the hospital with an attack of kidney stones. It is in this quote that the author shares with the reader that the seatbelt and air bag in Lacy's car had been tampered with so they would not work properly. It was Delgado who tampered with the car.

That's me. The mole, the source, the informant. Actually, Cooley said Myers liked to refer to me as the Whistler because I'm supposed to blow the whistle on Judge McDover.

-- JoHelen (Chapter 36)

Importance: When JoHelen first talks to Lacy, she goes through the many names that Cooley and Myers have for her. Myers' name, the Whistler, correlates with the title of the novel.

First, it was a backup plan all along. I knew the FBI would be reluctant to get involved, and, as things evolved, I was right. If I vanished, then you and the FBI would believe that Dubose had found me. Another murder, mine, would prompt the FBI to take a second look."

-- Myers (Epilogue)

Importance: Myers explains to Lacy that his plan to disappear was one he had put together as a backup plan in the case the FBI refused to take on the case when Lacy presented it to them. He knew that if he disappeared, it would nudge the FBI in the direction of taking the case.

Looking back with perfect hindsight, I would not have done it. But it's done, and the bad guys are locked up, and the three of us are still standing. We're in the process of making peace, and we'll eventually have fun splitting the pie."

-- Myers (Epilogue)

Importance: After all is said and done, Myers admits that if he had known what would happen during the investigation into McDover's misdeeds, he might not have agreed to sign the formal complaint. As it is, Myers said that he plans to enjoy his part of the proceeds from the deal.