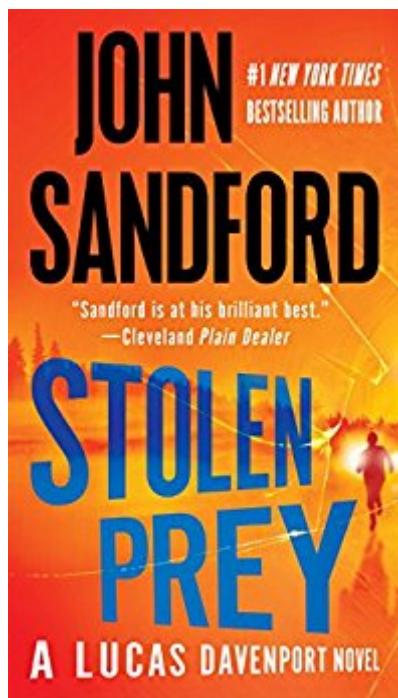


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Stolen Prey (The Prey Series Book 22)



Synopsis

The brilliant Lucas Davenport thriller from the number one New York Times bestselling author. Lucas Davenport has seen many terrible murder scenes. This is one of the worst. In the Minnesota town of Wayzata, an entire family has been killed—husband, wife, two kids, dogs. On the wall, in blood: “We’re coming.” No apostrophe. There’s something about the scene that tugs at Lucas’s cop instincts—it looks an awful lot like the kind of scorched-earth retribution he’s seen from Mexican drug gangs. But this is a seriously upscale town, the husband ran a modest software company, the wife dabbled in local politics. None of it seems to fit. Until it does.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Sandford is back with the latest installment (#22) - Stolen Prey - in his wildly successful and hugely popular series featuring Lucas Davenport, an agent for the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Investigation. "Lucas's job at the BCA was mostly self-invented, and included politically sensitive cases, or cases that might attract a lot of media attention." When a pair of tweakers rob him at an

ATM, breaking his wrist and damaging his ego, he embarks on a long term mission to find them. This is put on the back burner when the superintendent of the BCA calls - a case that is definitely going to be in the spotlight needs Davenport's skills. An entire family has been found murdered - slaughtered really, tortured in unimaginable ways. Lucas's investigation leads places no one saw coming - this isn't just a spree killer. It looks like a Mexican gang hit. What could this software engineer have done to bring this wrath on his family? Soon enough the DEA and a pair of Mexican Federales are also on the case. But everyone seems to have their own priorities concerning the case.....I've always enjoyed Lucas and his irreverent flaunting of the rules. He's getting older and little mellower, but still has no problem side stepping protocol to get things done. I love the barbed banter between himself and team members Del Capslock, Jensen and Shrake, but no Davenport book is complete without Virgil Flowers. Those tweekers robbing ATM's? Flowers has been put to work on the case - which seems to be leading to stolen.....horse manure?"Somewhere along the line, it occurred to him that he hadn't spoken to Virgil Flowers. He'd probably taken the day off, and knowing Flowers, he'd done it in a boat. The thing about Flowers was, in Lucas's humble opinion, you could send him out for a loaf of bread and he'd find an illegal bread cartel smuggling in heroin-saturated wheat from Afghanistan. Either that, or he'd be fishing in a muskie tournament, on government time. You had to keep an eye on him."I have expressed doubts about Davenport's adopted daughter Letty in past books, but my opinion has changed. She's definitely growing on me and I think we'll see more of her in future books. As always, Sandford has concocted a whip smart, action filled plot with lots of threads to keep your finger on. He employs a great twist that caught me unawares part way through. I have enjoyed this series from book one and nothing has changed - I still eagerly await every new entry from one of my favourite authors - and curse myself when I finish it in a day!

This is Sandford at his best. Davenport is semi-retired but called in to help the BCA and Los Angeles DEA solve a bank fraud case that netted \$22 million (then laundered into gold), which is also connected to an uber-violent (is there any other kind?) Mexican drug cartel who sends three killers to Minnesota to torture and kill their way to getting the loot. I like a good dose of forensic stuff in my detective novels and Davenport has access to the considerable capabilities of his bureau's forensics department. I read a few reviews of a recent Sandford novel that said he'd just mailed it in for that one, but with *Stolen Prey* I think he's back at full strength. I've only given a 5-star review to one of his books, so this 4-star one represents about as good as it gets IMHO.

I have read most of John Sandford's books and have always been able to count on him to provide a timely, intelligent, humorous and engaging story. I'll often go back to him (or to George Pelecanos) after reading new authors in the Vine Program. Reading Sandford and/or Pelecanos between Vine reviews is like clearing your palate after tasting wine samples, it grounds you and reminds you immediately how great authors should read. I noticed two things in this novel that were different from John Sandford's previous works. One is that he no longer fleshes out the characters he continues to use in his series. New readers are advised to read his previous efforts to learn what the history of these characters are and what they bring to the story. The other aspect is the great detail that Mr. Sandford went into to describe the atrocities committed by his Mexican criminals against a husband, his wife, and their two children. While this may be timely based on the horrors we have read about currently used south of the border, it is hard to read when you take the place of the father watching his wife and children being abused and tortured--and then being dismembered himself. All of this occurring without any gain by the criminals. With all the news reports we now receive about beheading, limbs removed, mass graves and other atrocities, this might be natural for a writer to stay current with the times we are in. I just hope that we don't become so exposed to this that it appears to be "normal".

Since the first Prey book was published I have been a fan. I would love to have them all on my kindle but the cost is crazy. I spent a lot purchasing them the first time, most in hardcover. It is crazy to have to spend \$10. for books that are 10 to 20 years old. I know, I know, the publisher sets the price so this is one customer who will only be purchasing when they are on special with prime or unlimited.

I have read all of the Prey series up to this point and have to say it is the worst of the bunch. I felt like someone else wrote it, not Sandford, ESPECIALLY when the comment was made about how the pit bull MUST have been tortured for it to act that way. Get real. Lucas Davenport would never have been part of that conversation. The entire book was a huge disappointment.

Unlike some series authors, Sandford never repeats himself. "Stolen Prey" does give us the fascinating characters we've gotten to know so well, but thrusts them into a new, suspenseful and often terrifying story. The slaughter of a suburban family takes Lucas Davenport and his colleagues (including agents from the FBI and DEA) on an investigative odyssey that involves Mexican hit men, computer hackers, money laundering, gold sent through the mail, betrayal and the safety of Lucas'

own family. Sandford's plotting ability is superb; he is not predictable although in retrospect, the surprises always make sense. Things never develop and end the way you think they will (the resolution of a subplot involving ATM robberies, stolen horse manure and a magic mushroom operation is unexpectedly hilarious, for instance). Highly recommended.

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