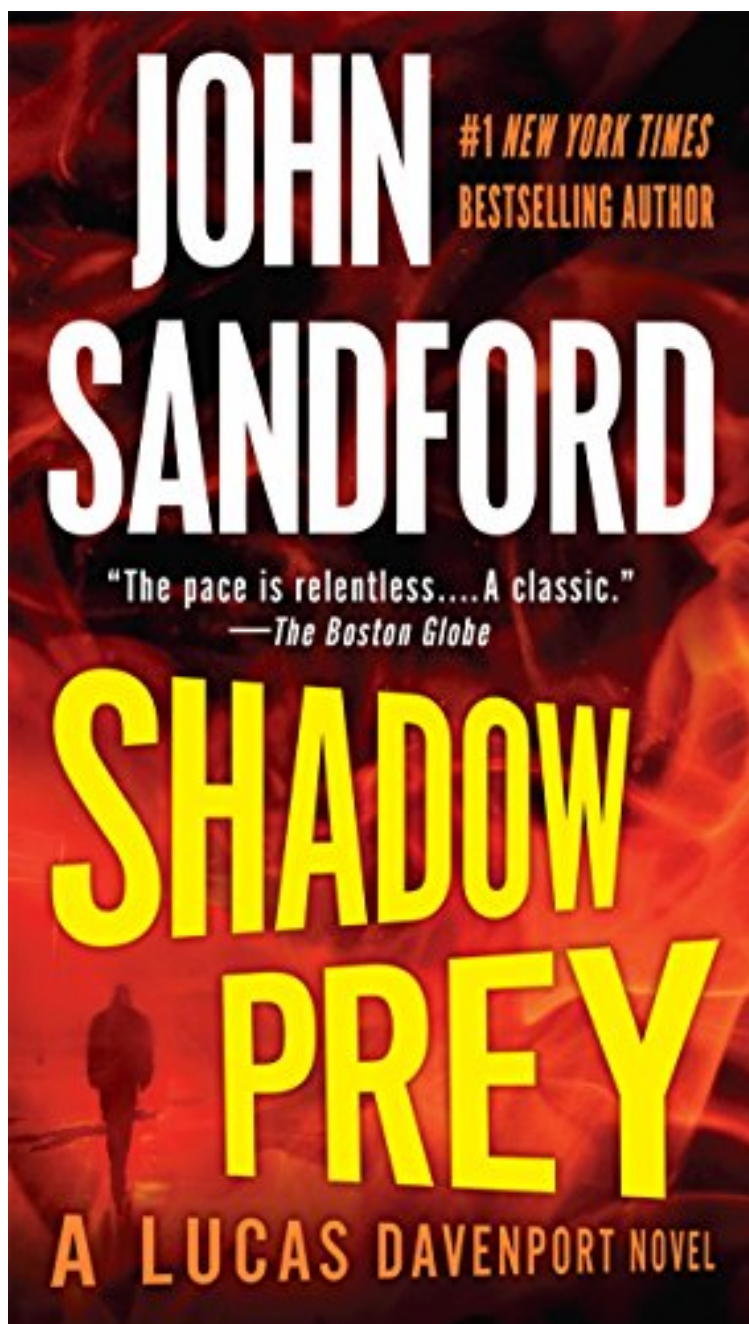


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Shadow Prey



Par John Sandford
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Description : Description du produit Lucas Davenport goes on a city-to-city search for a killer with a grisly m.o.--he slashes his victims' throats with an Indian ceremonial knife.

Prsentation de l'diteur The #1 New York Times bestselling series. Lucas Davenport goes on a city-to-city search for a bizarre ritualistic killer. "Ice-pick chills...a double-pumped roundhouse of a thriller." Kirkus sFrom the Paperback edition.Extrait In the Beginning . . .They were in a service alley, tucked between two

Dumpsters. Carl Reed, a beer can in his hand, kept watch. Larry Clay peeled the drunk Indian girl, tossing her clothes on the floor of the backseat, wedging himself between her legs. The Indian started to howl. Christ, she sounds like a fuckin coon-dog, said Reed, a Kentucky boy. She's tight, Clay grunted. Reed laughed and said, Hurry up, and lobbed his empty beer can toward one of the Dumpsters. It clattered off the side and fell into the alley. Clay was in full gallop when the girls howl pitched up, reaching toward a scream. He put one big hand over her face and said, Shut up, bitch, but he liked it. A minute later he finished and crawled off.

Reed slipped off his gunbelt and dumped it on top of the car behind the light bar. Clay was in the alley, staring down at himself. Look at the fuckin blood, he said. God damn, Reed said, you got yourself a virgin. He ducked into the backseat and said, Here comes Daddy. . . . The squad cars only radios were police-band, so Clay and Reed carried a transistor job that Reed had bought in a PX in Vietnam. Clay took it out, turned it on and hunted for something decent. An all-news station was babbling about Robert Kennedy's challenging Lyndon Johnson. Clay kept turning and finally found a country station playing Odetta Billy Joe. You about done? he asked, as the Bobbie Gentry song trickled out into the alley. Just . . . fuckin . . . hold on . . . Reed said. The Indian girl wasn't saying anything. When Reed finished, Clay was back in uniform. They took a few seconds to get some clothes on the girl. Take her, or leave her? Reed asked. The girl was sitting in the alley, dazed, surrounded by discarded advertising leaflets that had blown out of the Dumpster. Fuck it, Clay said.

Leave her. They were nothing but drunk Indian chicks. That's what everybody said. It wasn't like you were wearing it out. It's not like they had less than they started with. Hell, they liked it. And that's why, when a call went out, squad cars responded from all over Phoenix. Drunk Indian chick. Needs a ride home. Anybody? Say drunk Indian, meaning a male, and you'd think every squad in town had driven off a cliff. Not a peep. But a drunk Indian chick? There was a traffic jam. A lot of them were fat, a lot of them were old. But some of them weren't. Lawrence Duberville Clay was the last son of a rich man. The other Clay boys went into the family business: chemicals, plastics, aluminum. Larry came out of college and joined the Phoenix police force. His family, except for the old man, who made all the money, was shocked. The old man said, Let him go. Let's see what he does. Larry Clay started by growing his hair out, down on his shoulders, and dragging around town in a '56 Ford. In two months, he had friends all over the hippie community. Fifty long-haired flower children went down on drugs, before the word got out about the fresh-faced narc. After that it was patrol, working the bars, the nightclubs, the after-hours joints; picking up the drunk Indian chicks. You could have a good time as a cop. Larry Clay did. Until he got hurt. He was beaten so badly that the first cops on the scene thought he was dead. They got him to a trauma center and the docs bailed him out. Who did it? Dope dealers, he said. Hippies. Revenge. Larry Clay was a hero, and they made him a sergeant. When he got out of the hospital, Clay stayed on the force long enough to prove that he wasn't chicken, and then he quit.

Working summers, he finished law school in two years. He spent two more years in the prosecutor's office, then went into private practice. In 1972, he ran for the state senate and won. His career really took off when a gambler got in trouble with the IRS. In exchange for a little sympathy, the gambler gave the tax men a list of senior cops he'd paid off over the years. The stink wouldn't go away. The city fathers, getting nervous, looked around and found a boy with a head on his shoulders. A boy from a good family. A former cop, a lawyer, a politician. Clean up the force, they told Lawrence Duberville Clay. But don't try too hard. . . . He did precisely

what they wanted. They were properly grateful. In 1976, Lawrence Duberville Clay became the youngest chief in the department's history. He quit five years later to take an appointment as an assistant U.S. attorney general in Washington. A step backward, his brothers said. Just watch him, said the old man. And the old man was there to help: the right people, the right clubs. Money, when it was needed. When the scandal hit the FBI kickbacks in an insider-trading investigation the administration knew where to go. The boy from Phoenix had a rep. He'd cleaned up the Phoenix force, and he'd clean up the FBI. But he wouldn't try too hard.

At forty-two, Lawrence Duberville Clay was named the youngest FBI director since J. Edgar Hoover. He became the administration's point man for the war on crime. He took the FBI to the people, and to the press. During a dope raid in Chicago, an AP photographer shot a portrait of a weary Lawrence Duberville Clay, his sleeves rolled above his elbows, a hollow look on his face. A huge Desert Eagle semiautomatic pistol rode in a shoulder rig under his arm. The picture made him a celebrity. Not many people remembered his early days in Phoenix, the nights spent hunting drunk Indian chicks. During those Phoenix nights, Larry Clay developed a taste for the young ones. Very young ones. And some of them maybe weren't so drunk. And some of them weren't so interested in backseat tag team. But who was going to believe an Indian chick, in Phoenix, in the mid-sixties? Civil rights were for blacks in the South, not for Indians or Chicanos in the Southwest. Date-rape wasn't even a concept, and feminism had barely come over the horizon. But the girl in the alley . . . she

was twelve and she was a little drunk, but not so drunk that she couldn't say no, or remember who put her in the car. She told her mother. Her mother stewed about it for a couple of days, then told two women she'd met at the res. The two men caught Larry Clay outside his apartment and beat the shit out of him with a genuine Louisville Slugger. Broke one of his legs and both arms and a whole bunch of ribs. Broke his nose and some teeth. It wasn't dope dealers who beat Larry Clay. It was a couple of Indians, on a comeback from a rape. Lawrence Duberville Clay never knew who they were, but he never forgot what they did to him. He had a lot of shots at Indians over the years, as a prosecutor, a state senator, a police chief, an assistant U.S. attorney general. He took them all. And he didn't forget them when he became director of the FBI, the iron fist on every Indian reservation in the nation. But there were Indians with long memories too. Like the men who took him in Phoenix. The Crows. Ray Cuervo sat in his office and counted his money. He counted his money every Friday afternoon between five and six o'clock. He made no secret of it. Cuervo owned six apartment buildings scattered around Indian Country south of the Minneapolis Loop. The cheapest apartment rented for thirty-nine dollars a week. The most expensive was seventy-five. When he collected his rent, Cuervo took neither checks nor excuses. If you didn't have the cash by two o'clock Friday, you slept on the sidewalk. Bidness, as Ray Cuervo told any number of broken-ass indigents, was bidness. Dangerous business, sometimes. Cuervo carried a chrome-plated Charter Arms .38 Special tucked in his pants while he collected his money. The gun was old. The barrel was pitted and the butt was unfashionably small. But it worked and the shells were always fresh. You could see the shiny brass winking out at the edge of the cylinder. Not a flash gun, his renters said. It was a shooter. When Cuervo counted the weeks take, he kept the pistol on the desktop near his right hand. Cuervo's office was a cubicle at the top of three flights of stairs. The furnishings were sparse and cheap: a black dial telephone, a metal desk, a wooden file cabinet and an oak swivel chair on casters. A four-year-old Sports Illustrated swimsuit calendar hung on the left-hand wall. Cuervo never changed it past April, the month where you could see the broads' brown nipples through the wet T-shirt. Opposite the calendar was a corkboard. A dozen business cards were tacked to the corkboard along with two fading bumper stickers. One said SHIT HAPPENS and the other said HOW'S MY DRIVING? DIAL 1-800-EAT-SHIT. Cuervo's wife, a Kentucky sharecropper girl with a mouth like barbed wire, called the office a shit hole. Ray Cuervo paid no attention. He was a slumlord, after all. Cuervo counted the cash out in neat piles, ones, fives and tens. The odd twenty he put in his pocket. Coins he counted, noted and dumped into a Maxwell House coffee can. Cuervo was a fat man with small black eyes. When he lifted his heavy chin, three rolls of suet popped out on the back of his red neck. When he leaned forward, three more rolls popped out on his side, under his armpits. And when he farted, which was often, he unconsciously eased one obese cheek off the chair to reduce the compression. He didn't think the movement either impolite or impolitic. If a woman was in the room, he said Oops. If the company was all male, he said nothing. Farting was something men did. A few minutes after five o'clock on October 5, an unseasonably warm day, the door slammed at the bottom of the stairs and a man started up. Cuervo put his fingertip on the Charter Arms .38 and half stood so he could see the visitor. The man on the stairs turned his face up and Cuervo relaxed. Leo Clark. An old customer. Like most of the Indians who rented Cuervo's apartments, Leo was always back and forth from the reservations. He was a hard man, Leo was, with a face like a cinder block, but Cuervo never had trouble with him. Leo paused at the second landing, catching his breath, then came up the last flight. He was a Sioux, in his forties, a loner, dark from the summer sun. Long black braid trailed down his back and a piece of Navaho silver flashed from his belt. He came from the West somewhere: Rosebud, Standing Rock, someplace like that. Leo, how are you? Cuervo said without looking up. He had money in both hands, counting. Need a place? Put your hands in your lap, Ray, Leo said. Cuervo looked up. Leo was pointing a pistol at him. Aw, man, don't do this, Cuervo groaned, straightening up. He didn't look at his pistol, but he was thinking about it. If you need a few bucks, I'll loan it to you. Sure you will, Leo said. Two for one. Cuervo did a little loansharking on the side. Bidness was bidness. Come on, Leo. Cuervo casually dropped the stack of bills on the desktop, freeing his gun hand. You want to spend your old age in the joint? If you move again, I'll shoot holes in your head. I mean it, Ray, Leo said. Cuervo checked the other man's face. It was as cold and dark as a Mayan statue. Cuervo stopped moving. Leo edged around the desk. No more than three feet separated them, but the hole at the end of Leo's pistol pointed unwaveringly at Ray Cuervo's nose. Just sit still. Take it easy, Leo said. When he was behind the chair, he said, I'm going to put a pair of handcuffs on you, Ray. I want you to put your hands behind the chair. Cuervo followed instructions, turning his head to see what Leo was doing. Look straight ahead, Leo said, tapping him behind the ear with the gun barrel. Cuervo looked straight ahead. Leo stepped back, pushed the pistol into the waistband of his slacks and took

an obsidian knife from his front pantspocket. The knife was seven inches of beautifully crafted black volcanic glass, taken from a cliff at Yellowstone National Park. Its edge was fluted and it was as sharp as a surgeons scalpel. Hey, Ray? Leo said, stepping up closer to the slumlord. Cuervo farted, in either fear or exasperation, and the fetid smell filled the room. He didnt bother to say Oops. Yeah? Cuervo looked straight ahead. Calculating. His legs were in the kneehole under the desk: itd be hard to move in a hurry. Let it ride, he thought, just a couple more minutes. When Leo was putting on the cuffs, maybe the right move . . . The gun glittered on the desk a foot and a half from his eyes. I lied about the handcuffs, Ray, Leo said. He grabbed Cuervo by the hair above his forehead and jerked his head back. With a single powerful slash, Leo cut Ray Cuervos throat from ear to ear. Cuervo half stood and twisted free and groped helplessly at his neck with one hand while the other crawled frantically across his desk toward the Charter Arms .38. He knew even as he tried that he wouldnt make it. Blood spurted from his severed carotid artery as though from a garden hose, spraying the leaves of green dollars on the desk, the Sports Illustrated broad with the tits, the brown linoleum floor. Ray Cuervo twisted and turned and fell, batting the Maxwell House coffee can off the desk. Coins pitched and clattered and rolled around the office and a few bounced down the stairs. Cuervo lay face up on the floor, his vision narrowing to a dim and closing hole that finally settled around Leo Clark, whose face remained impassively centered in the growing darkness. And then Ray Cuervo was dead. Leo turned away as Cuervos bladder and sphincter control went. There was \$2,035 on the desktop. Leo paid it no attention. He wiped the obsidian knife on his pants, put it back in his pocket and pulled his shirt out to cover the gun. Then he walked down the stairs and six blocks back to his apartment. He was splattered with Cuervos blood, but nobody seemed to notice. The cops got only a very slender description. An Indian male with braids. There were five thousand Indian males with braids in Minneapolis. A large number of them were delighted to hear the news about Ray Cuervo. Fuckin Indians. John Lee Benton hated them. They were worse than the niggers. You tell a nigger to show up, and if he didnt, he had an excuse. A reason. Even if it was bullshit. Indians were different. You tell a guy to come in at two o'clock and he doesnt show. Then he comes in at two the next day and thinks thats good enough. He doesnt pretend to think so. He really thinks so. The shrink at the joint called it a cultural anomaly. John Lee Benton called it a pain in the ass. The shrink said the only answer was education. John Lee Benton had developed another approach, all on his own. Benton had seven Indians on his case load. If they didnt report on schedule, he'd spend the time normally used for an interview to write the papers that would start them back to Stillwater. In two years, he'd sent back nine men.

Now he had a reputation. The fuckin Indians walked wide around him. If youre going out on parole, they toldeach other, you didnt want to be on John Lee Bentons case load. That was a sure ride back inside. Benton enjoyed the rep. John Lee Benton was a small man with a strong nose and mousy hair combed forward over watery blue eyes. He wore a straw-colored mustache, cut square. When he looked at himself in the bathroom mirror in the morning, he thought he looked like somebody, but he couldnt think who. Somebody famous. He'd think of it sooner or later. John Lee Benton hated blacks, Indians, Mexicans, Jews and Asians, more or less in that order. His hate for blacks and Jews was a family heritage, passed down from his daddy as Benton grew up in a sprawling blue-collar slum in St. Louis. He'd developed his animus for Indians, Mexicans and Asians on his own. Every Monday afternoon Benton sat in a stifling office in the back of the Indian Center off Franklin Avenue and talked to his assholes. He was supposed to call them clients, but fuck that. They were criminals and assholes, every single one. Mr. Benton? Benton looked up. Betty Sails stood in the doorway. A tentative, gray-faced Indian woman with a beehive hairdo, she was the offices shared receptionist. Is he here? John Lee spoke sharply, impatiently. He was a man who sweated hate. No, hes not, Betty Sails said.

But theres another man to see you. Another Indian man. Benton frowned. I didnt have any more appointments today. He said it was about Mr. Cloud. Glory be, an actual excuse. All right. Give me a couple of minutes, then send him in, Benton said. Betty Sails went away and Benton looked through Clouds file again. He didnt need to review it but liked the idea of keeping the Indian waiting. Two minutes later, Tony Bluebird appeared at the door. Benton had never seen him before. Mr. Benton? Bluebird was a stocky man with close-set eyes and short-cropped hair. He wore a gingham shirt over a rawhide thong. A black obsidian knife dangled from the thong and Bluebird could feel it ticking against the skin below his breast bone. Yes? Benton let his anger leak into his tone. Bluebird showed him a gun. Put your hands on your lap, Mr. Benton. Three people saw Bluebird. Betty Sails saw him both coming and going. A kid coming out of the gym dropped a basketball, and Bluebird stopped it with a foot, picked it up and tossed it back, just as Betty Sails started screaming. On the street, Dick Yellow Hand, who was seventeen years old and desperately seeking a taste of crack, saw him walk out the door and called, Hey, Bluebird. Bluebird stopped. Yellow

Hand sidled over, scratching his thin beard. You look bad, man, Bluebird said. Yellow Hand nodded. He was wearing a dirty T-shirt with a fading picture of Mick Jagger on the front. His jeans, three sizes too large, were cinched at the waist with a length of clothesline. His elbow joints and arms looked like cornstalks. He was missing two front teeth. I feel bad, man. I could use a few bucks, you know? Sorry, man, I got no money, Bluebird said. He stuck his hands in his pockets and pulled them out empty. That's okay, then, Yellow Hand said, disappointed. I seen your mama last week, Bluebird said. Out at the res. How's she? She's fine. She was fishing. Walleyes. Sails hysterical screams became audible as somebody opened an outside door to the Indian

Center. That's real good about Mama, said Yellow Hand. Well, I guess I gotta go, Bluebird said, easing away. Okay, man, said Yellow Hand. See you. Bluebird walked, taking his time, his mind in another place.

What was her name? It had been years ago. Anna? She was a pretty woman, with deep breasts and warm hazel eyes. She'd liked him, he thought, though they were both married, and nothing ever happened; nothing but a chemistry felt across backyard hedges, deep down in Minneapolis Indian Country. Anna's husband, a Chippewa from Nett Lake, had been put in the Hennepin County Jail. Drunk, late at night, he'd seen a Coke machine glowing red- and- white through the window of a gas station. He'd heaved a chunk of concrete through the window, crawled in after it and used the concrete to crack the machine. About a thousand quarters

had run out onto the floor, somebody told Bluebird. Anna's husband had still been picking them up, laboriously, one at a time, when the cops arrived. He'd been on parole and the break-in was a violation. He'd gotten six months on top of the remaining time from the previous conviction. Anna and her husband had never had money. He drank up most of it and she probably helped. Food was short. Nobody had clothes. But they did have a son. He was twelve, a stocky, withdrawn child who spent his evenings watching television.

One Saturday afternoon, a few weeks after his daddy was taken to jail, the boy walked down to the Lake Street bridge and jumped into the Mississippi. A lot of people saw him go and the cops had him out of the river in fifteen minutes. Dead. Bluebird had heard, and he went down to the river. Anna was there, her arms wrapped around the body of her son, and she looked up at him with those deep pain-filled eyes, and . . . what? It was all part of being Indian, Bluebird thought. The dying. It was something they did better than the whites. Or more frequently, anyway. When Bluebird walked out of the room after slashing Benton's throat,

he'd looked down at the man's face and thought he seemed familiar. Like a famous person. Now, on the sidewalk, as he left Yellow Hand behind, as he thought about Anna, Benton's face floated up in his mind's eye.

Hitler, he thought. John Lee Benton looked exactly like a young Adolf Hitler. A young dead Adolf Hitler. From Publishers Weekly: A terrorist conspiracy, masterminded by a small group of Native Americans, embarks on a series of ritualistic murders, offing public officials known for their record of prejudice against Indians, in Sandford's (Rules of Prey) second Lucas Davenport thriller. Dakota medicine men Sam and Aaron Crow recruit killers whom they arm with obsidian knives on leather thongs and send out to cut the throats of victims in Minnesota, Oklahoma and New York--for starters. Both Sam and Aaron act as fathers to young Shadow Love (since each has been his mother's lover); Shadow Love is, in fact, a psychopath who will use the Indian murder mission to fulfill his own agenda. When Minneapolis police lieutenant Davenport gets on the case, assisted by statuesque, tough-talking policewoman Lily Rothenburg, the "sulky, dark-haired madonna" dispatched from New York to observe the investigation, the story crackles with romance and suspense, especially when Lucas and Lily become the killers' prey. Lucas's personality is the novel's most nuanced: he is a rugged lover of women--including his old friend Elle, psychologist and Sister of Mercy--he fathers his live-in girlfriend's baby and spends nights inventing board games. Other characters, like Sandford's dialogue, are only serviceable, but plenty of gore and action drives the plot forward. 75,000 first printing; major ad/promo. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.