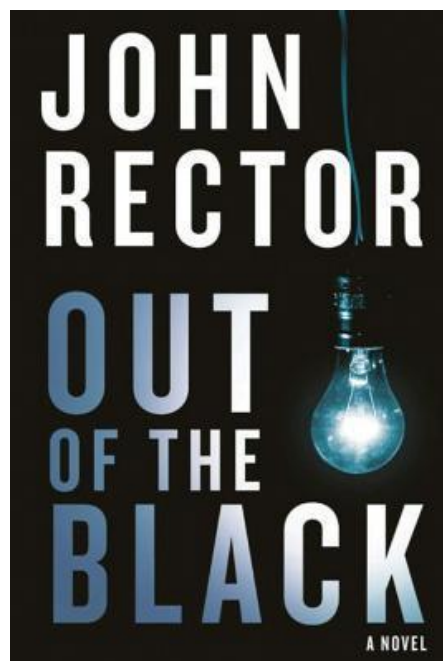




Out of the Black

John Rector

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From bestselling, International Thriller Award-nominated author Rector (*Already Gone*), a thriller about a man driven to darkness in order to save the light of his life.

After Matt Caine loses his wife in a car accident, all he has left is his daughter, Anna. But just as the little girl—who survived the accident—finally starts thriving, Matt’s former in-laws threaten to take her away via a bitter custody battle. Desperate to keep Anna and in debt to some dangerous local thugs, Matt has no good options. But he does have Jay, one very bad friend. Just out of jail and plagued by drug addiction, Jay tempts Matt with a foolproof kidnapping scheme. But what sounds like the perfect solution to all his problems eventually leads Matt through a nightmarish maze of betrayals and reversals, pushing him to his breaking point—and beyond.

Out of the Black Details

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From Reader Review Out of the Black for online ebook

Kemper says

(I received a free ARC of this from NetGalley.)

Matt Caine must have crossed a black cat's path before walking under a ladder and opening an umbrella indoors while breaking a couple of mirrors because he is one unlucky son-of-a-bitch.

His wife was killed in a car crash that badly injured and traumatized their daughter, and Matt had to take out loans against his house to pay the medical bills. When the banks threaten to foreclose, Matt borrows money from his old buddy Murphy who dabbles in loan sharking, but he can't find steady work and the interest on the debt is piling up. Murphy doesn't want to hassle Matt, but it's bad for business to let someone slide and his partners are getting antsy.

Matt's in-laws are making noises about taking his daughter away because his grief and a case of PTSD from his time in the Marines have left him unfit and unable to provide for his daughter. When his friend Jay starts talking about a foolproof plan to kidnap the wife of a wealthy man for a payday that would solve all his problems, Matt knows that it's a bad idea, especially since Jay is an untrustworthy junkie. As his options dwindle, he eventually convinces himself that it's his only way he can keep his daughter. The kidnapping plan goes about as well as you'd expect as Matt's lucky streak continues.

In John Rector's *The Cold Kiss*, he took the old crime story scenario of someone finding a bag of money and trying to get away with it and made a fresh story out of it. He does a similar thing here with the idea of a decent guy forced by circumstances into taking part in a crime in which things go screwy. It's a fast-paced story with a relatable main character and some good twists and turns along the way.

I wish a bit more about Matt's history as a Marine had been explained because other than a comment from his mother-in-law about his wife had told him about his nightmares, we don't get much more than that. While he knows his way around a gun, there's nothing in the action stuff to suggest that he's been in combat before. There's also a cute neighbor who is a little too good to be true that loves his daughter and is always available to babysit when he needs her to. Of course, she's also attracted to Matt who is too conflicted about his dead wife to act on it.

I also had a slight problem with (view spoiler)

I'm focusing too much on the flaws here and nitpicking this more than I meant to. It really is a solid story with good action and a fast pace to it that should make any crime fan happy.

Also posted at Kemper's Book Blog.

Ron says

Rector delivers another solid quick paced thriller that keeps the reader turning pages.

OUT OF THE BLACK sat on my TBR pile for a couple weeks when I was looking for read to take with me on a recent business trip which would leave me in limbo for about 3 hours during travel. I figured, I'd read parts on each flight, and finish up while holed up in my hotel room. I hit the end before the wheels hit the

tarmac. I could not flip pages fast enough.

Rector introduces us to Matt Caine, a Gulf War vet who recently lost his wife in a car accident that also injured he and his daughter. The recovery has left him broke, unable to find a job, and owing money to the wrong people with no good way to become flush again. Desperation leads Matt to a bad plan from an old friend. In true fashion, Rector and his protagonist discover there is something lower than the bottom of the barrel, as Matt is beaten down both physically and mentally.

What depths will a man go for his family? OUT OF THE BLACK has you turning pages to find out.

Richard says

Once again John Rector has written a potent thriller that is addictive and enjoyable and guaranteed to keep you turning pages. Following Rector's usual theme of protagonist getting in way over their heads in crime, this novel follows Matt Caine, a recent widower who is struggling with finances and taking care of his daughter on his own. Adding to that, he is in deep to a loan shark gangster that he has a history with. He is approached by a shifty, drug-addicted old buddy with a quick kidnapping scheme. From the beginning, he thinks it's a bad idea but feels like it's only choice, as long as he can keep control of the situation. And of course, he realized that's a bunch of bull and control quickly starts to spiral away.

The novel is a great read for a lazy afternoon, a day at the pool or on a long bus or plane ride. Rector always has a knack for sustaining a great pace throughout his novels and you'll never be bored. Actually, I wouldn't be surprised if people flew through this in one sitting. It really moves. You can really feel Matt's desperation as the issues escalate and the villain is particularly menacing this time around. I did have a little issue with Matt's relationship to Brian Murphy, the loan shark that he's in debt to. I never really bought into him being such a great friend to Matt; such a great friend that he'll help him out when shit hits the fan in the story, but not a good enough friend to forgive his debt and not threaten to hurt him if he doesn't pay it back. I never truly bought into that. But the scenes between Brian and Matt feature some great moments and cool dialogue. I also felt like the ending is a bit anti-climactic and not as dark as I was hoping for, but who says that a noir ending ALWAYS has to be a downer? It's a fun and exciting read, so any issues were minor to me and I enjoyed it! Definitely recommended to thriller fans!

I reached out and lifted her chin until our eyes met, then I leaned in and kissed her. I wanted that kiss to say all the things I couldn't. I wanted it to tell her how sorry I was, and that no matter what happened, she wasn't to blame. But most of all, I wanted the kiss to take away all the pain I'd caused.
Of course, it didn't.
And when I pulled away, all I could taste was the salt of her tears on my lips.

Kimberly A. Bettes says

Wow! This book blew me away. There were twists and turns I didn't see coming, and I found myself literally gasping at several points in the story. Plus, I actually caught myself grimacing (for those in the know, I'm referring to the Dash scene--you know the one). This is a fantastic story, and if you're not reading it, you're missing out on a crazy ride. This may be my favorite Rector book so far. Absolutely amazing. Kudos to the

author!

Ray Palen says

What a great book! John Rector's OUT OF THE BLACK takes a simple premise, complicates it and then allows it to spin out of control. It's a great ride that is rarely predictable but ultimately very satisfying.

Ex-Marine Matt Caine is not only suffering from PTSD but also the grief over losing his wife in a violent car accident that also badly injured his little daughter, Anna. He is out of work and deeply in debt to a local gangster/bar owner with no way to pay him back. His in-laws are threatening legal action to take custody of Anna. With no where to turn, Matt meets up with an ex-con buddy named Jay who has a fool-proof plan to kidnap the wife of a local billionaire and request half a million in ransom. What should be quick and easy goes very, very bad and Anna ends up being kidnapped by the very people Matt was looking to extort money from.

OUT OF THE BLACK shows just how far one man will go to save himself and the only family he has left. To that will require him to do things he never thought himself capable of and commit sins that can never be forgiven. Very enjoyable novel that is easily consumed in a single sitting. Enjoy!

Patrice Hoffman says

Out of the Black by John Rector is one crazy ride. Since the death of Matt Caine's wife, he just never seemed to get his things together. With the threat of losing his house, daughter, and possibly his legs he's agreed to go in on possibly the worse planned kidnapping of a rich woman.

Out of the Black is a first person narrative that moves at an exceptionally fast pace. Given it's length, there's no time to slow down for pesky details. This isn't a bad thing at all and is why I enjoyed this novel. Although there's no time for the reader, as well as Matt Caine to catch our breaths, I still felt the details were not skimpy at all and made for a well developed novel.

Matt Caine, our hero, is the voice throughout and is likeable enough that I can ignore that he's idiotic enough to go in on a half-baked kidnapping plan. At first I wondered why he wasn't warning his self enough to stay away from his drug addicted cohort, but then considering his main motivation, it's understandable. He wants to keep his life. Caine wants to give his daughter a stable enough home so he won't lose her. Getting "easy" money seemed like it would solve all his problems. Only... we wouldn't have a novel if it did.

Ultimately, John Rector's Out of the Black is one thrilling and exciting ride. There's enough action and emotion to keep readers on the edge of their seats. I recommend this novel to anyone who's between books and just needs something fun to read in the mean time. I will definitely be reading more by this author.

Naomi says

Read my full review: <http://bit.ly/1jCcIvX>

My opinion: I am a John Rector fan and it is because of this type of writing. Rector weaves a story that one

wonders what is real and what is twisted. There was a sense of realness to this book as well. One could honestly see it happen.

One of the things that I loved about this book that normally isn't a favorite of mine is that it is told in first person narrative. It really helped to make the book pop and developed a connection with the narrator (Matt) to understand why he would participate in such a crazy idea.

Although I wouldn't say that this is my favorite Rector novel, it is a good one and not to be missed.

Steven says

Matt Caine is trying to raise his daughter alone after his wife was killed in a car crash, but he's in debt to his hair roots and has borrowed money from a knee-breaker. When his in-laws seek custody of his daughter he escalates his wrong decisions and throws in with a junkie friend to kidnap the wife of a gangster. From that point on Caine just keeps making mistake after mistake and getting deeper into a morass that seems to offer no way out. Although the opening setup was bit slow for my taste and the ending was slightly anti-climactic, the rest of the book was a complete page-turner. Rector just keeps piling on the complications, chapter after chapter, never letting more than a few pages go by before a new obstacle appears or a dumb decision is made by Matt that causes him more grief.

Gloria Bernal says

Have to admit it moves along at a good pace. Matt is a good man trying to rectify his bad choices. Circumstances have left him hurting financially. He gets pressured into taking a risk as a driver in a kidnapping plot that "just can't fail," which predictably does. It just spirals down from that point. It does keep your attention, but could have offered the reader more satisfaction if the character development had been better. Little is mentioned about his time as a Marine in Afghanistan, very sketchy details about his relationship with his deceased wife or her accident, and very little about his relationship with a female neighbor whom he seems involved with more than he cares to admit. Even his daughter's personality was lacking in detail. There are some unexpected twists here that will satisfy mystery readers. It does have some graphic details in the crime scenes.

This is a one or two sitting read, I read it in one day and at 249 pages for the ARC, it is a fast read for most anyone. What it did do for me is inspire me to search out his previous works which have very good reviews. I do intend to read them, as I love fast-paced, complex situations in my crime novels.

Steve Lowe says

Let's call it 3 1/2 stars. If nothing else, Rector knows how to make a narrative hum right along. Imminently readable, solid plot, maybe a little lacking in the characterization. For a first-person narrative, it never felt like the main character was telling this story. Felt sort of detached, and thin, but still a satisfying thriller that will take a couple days to zip through. Of the 3 Rector books I've read, this one might be my least favorite, but again, not a bad book at all. Read it. If you dig crime and thrillers, you'll probably dig this one just fine.

Brandon Nagel says

Another winner from John Rector. A father pushed into making bad decisions due to unusual circumstances. The story is as dark and Noir as it gets. Bad choices lead to a desperate father doing anything to get his daughter back. Quick and action packed highly enjoyable read. Recommended.

Benoit Lelièvre says

My favorite Rector, so far. While the stroytelling remains minimalistic and unreliable, Matt Cain is by far, Rector's most original and better defined creation. OUT OF THE BLACK is half-way between the classic thriller and noir and it drags you to the other side of the mirror and into a seemingly quiet working class neighborhood's brutal underworld.

The weak spot in Rector's game always has been characterization and part of that is due to his narrator keeping themselves in present tense. OUT OF THE BLACK is no different, yet Cain is standing out by the way he carries himself and through the eyes of people who really know him. Once Cain lays a finger into the deathtrap his friend Jay sold him as a great opportunity, the weight of the world slams down on his shoulders and he is brought into some very violent business. Cool, quick read. Perfect for a short trip.

Robert says

If you'd like to delve into a modern Shakespearean tragedy where the dead bodies pile up faster than firewood and the inside of an incinerator never sounded so good, then you'll want to give OUT OF THE BLACK a go. Although it's all blackness all day long with nary a star in sight. And if you're looking for a more traditional review, you may want to check out Kemper's take on this novel here. Most of my reviews, shall we say, are a bit more of the untraditional variety. But with writing, you go with what you know.

Matt Caine isn't a superhero, but if he and I ever met in real life, I'd ask him for his lotto numbers, or his picks on the ponies, and then play the exact opposite, probably netting myself a nice chunk of cash in the process. If unluckiness were a job, he'd have the market nailed down cold. And if writing bad dudes were a religion, John Rector could take command of the pulpit with ease. Like James Lee Burke before him, he knows bad, and then he makes it worse and worse, taking his readers on a journey through the depths of hell without even bothering to use a map or GPS. If I had friends like Matt's—Jay and Roach and Brian Murphy—and in-laws that show as much caring and compassion as a pet viper, I wouldn't need enemies. And I'd already be dead, pushing up daisies from six feet below, in some wooden box in some unmarked grave. But Matt's a survivor, even if he isn't always the smartest one in the police lineup.

As for the pace of the story, it reminded me of a swift jaunt on the interstate. If that jaunt involved a 2013 SRT Viper, cruising along at a cool 100 MPH, with six cop cars behind me, windows down, long hair whipping in the wind, as I gave the fuzz the one-fingered salute with my eyes pointed dead ahead, dodging through traffic like some meth-induced frog.

As Kemper already pointed out, there are a few holes—not of the Swiss cheese variety—but still plot holes nonetheless. But if you focus on the ride, and don't look down at the speedometer, you'll find yourself

having a grand time, as you sing along to *AC/DC* or *Rage Against the Machine*. And you may just outrun the cops long enough to reach the end of this tale.

I received this book for free through NetGalley.

James Thane says

John Rector has a gift for creating noir stories in which ordinary people find themselves in difficult circumstances and are tempted into making one bad choice which then inevitably backfires, leaving them spiraling down inexorably into catastrophe.

In this case, a former Marine named Matt Caine has survived a tour in Afghanistan only to return to a civilian life that seems to assault him at almost every turn. The economy sucks and he can't find a decent job that will enable him to support his wife and daughter with any sort of dignity. Then his wife is killed in a tragic accident and his daughter is badly injured and now needs special care.

Caine can't afford the treatment his daughter needs; he can't make his mortgage payments and he's in danger of losing his house, sad as it is. Desperate, he borrows money from loan sharks and can't pay that back either. And if all of that weren't bad enough, his in-laws believe that they would do a better job of raising Caine's daughter and are threatening legal action to take her away from him.

With his back up against the wall on almost every front, Caine is approached by an old friend, recently released from prison, who has a guaranteed, can't-miss scheme that will make them both rich and solve all of Matt's problems. Matt knows it's a stupid idea and initially rejects it. But in the end, seeing no alternative, he agrees to go along.

Naturally, the can't-miss scheme almost certainly will be a disaster, and the repercussions are more severe than Matt could have possibly imagined, leaving him literally in a fight for his life. To say anymore would be to say too much, but this is a taut, spare thriller that will keep you awake well into the night. Rector creates believable, sympathetic characters and he paces the story brilliantly, keeping the reader on edge virtually from the first page to the last.

John Rector just keeps getting better and better, and this book will appeal to large numbers of readers who like their crime fiction dark and nasty.

Threasa says

Matt Caine has lost his wife in a car accident. His daughter, Anna, was hurt badly in the accident. He had to borrow money from some very bad men, and now he can't pay them back. His in-laws want custody of Anna, so what is he to do? He decides to go along with a plan his friend Jay made, and that is one big mistake. Now, what is Matt going to do?
