



Reckless Disregard

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Former topnotch attorney Parker Stern, still crippled by courtroom stage fright, takes on a dicey case for an elusive video game designer known to the world only by the name of "Poniard." In Poniard's blockbuster online video game, *Abduction!*, a real-life movie mogul is charged with kidnapping and murdering a beautiful actress who disappeared in the 1980s. Predictably, the mogul--William "the Conqueror" Bishop--has responded with a libel lawsuit. Now it's up to Parker to defend the game designer in the suit.

In defending Poniard, Parker discovers that people aren't who they claim to be and that nothing is as it seems. At one point, his client resorts to blackmail, threatening to expose a dark secret about Parker. Then, many of the potential witnesses who could have helped the case die prematurely, and the survivors are too frightened to talk. Parker begins to feel as if he's merely a character in a video game, fighting malevolent Level Bosses who appear out of nowhere and threaten to destroy him.

Reckless Disregard Details

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Author : Robert Rotstein

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From Reader Review Reckless Disregard for online ebook

Jim says

Parker Stern, former lawyer and now mediator is comfortable after having walked away from being a full time lawyer. Parker it seems suffers from stage fright in the courtroom. One day a mysterious "client" known only as "Poniard" hacks into Parker's computer to hire him as a lawyer in a law suit. Parker keeps fighting against wanting to work for this "Poniard" especially since he will not make himself known. Poniard it seems is being sued by William "The Conqueror" Bishop. Bishop is a ruthless businessman and is bent on crushing this Poniard character. The suit revolves around a long lost movie, "The Boatman", and it's star/ director Felicity McGrath. Felicity had long disappeared way back in July of 1987. Bishop is being represented by Parker's one time love, (get ready for it)... Lovely Diamond. Parker and his assistant Brenda must battle Bishop in addition to a cast of crazies who act out one of Felicity's movies. Murder and mayhem soon send the case all over the place. Parker himself who has a long buried secret must reveal something he's hidden for over 20 years. I found the book to be a pretty good read. The many characters are somewhat partially developed. There are of course a few twists and turns that are not seen coming from these characters. It's lively dialog helped move the story along at a quick pace. I'd recommend this book for those who enjoy a good mystery/ thriller. I gave it 4 stars out of 5. Only reason I did not go all way to 5 out of 5 was because I had a little hard time with keeping characters straight. Couple places in the book I got somewhat confused. This however didn't really take away from the reading experience. Pick this one up for a pretty good read !

Marlys says

I could not put this book down! I would recommend this book to everyone. I can't wait for the third book to be released!

Becky says

When a notorious and anonymous video game designer's latest creation accuses a big-time Hollywood mogul of murder, it stirs up a hornet's nest of trouble that's been decades in the making. The mogul, William Bishop - aka William the Conqueror - is not one to stand idly by and watch his "good" name get dragged through the gutter. Nope. He hires the law office of Louis Frantz to represent him in a libel lawsuit against the game designer known as Poniard. And Poniard, well he wants none other that Parker Stern to be his defender. Problem is, Parker still hasn't overcome his debilitating stage fright. And yet, Parker agrees to take the case after all.

In the game, a character based on actress Felicity McGrath appeals to players to solve her disappearance. Poniard believes Bishop is responsible and intends for the game to be used as a modern day investigation. As Parker investigates his client's claims, it becomes apparent that this is more than the paranoid delusions of a game addicted youthful mind. As the case progresses to court, threats become all out violence and Parker loses one of his own. Now there's no way a little thing like stage fright will keep him from going up against Frantz and Bishop!

When I reviewed last year's Corrupt Practices I didn't know quite what to expect. I knew Rotstein's debut was a legal thriller and I knew that Sue Grafton, one of my favorite authors, blurbed it as being "...a terrific book..." and that was enough to get me curious. I'm not a HUGE fan of legal thrillers, something I've

admitted here in the past. I can blame it on an overabundance of lackluster reads in the sub genre too early in my reading career. And yet I'm well aware that beyond the disappointing ones, there have been quite a few legal thrillers by quite a few authors that I've quite enjoyed (quite!). Authors like Michelle Martinez and Lisa Scottoline, for example, and thanks to his fabulous debut, Robert Rotstein, have opened me up a bit more to the sub genre. All that's to say is that I was definitely looking forward to returning to Parker Stern and Reckless Disregard.

One of the things I find so unique about this series is Parker himself (yeah, we should be able to say that about every book, but it's not always the case). Parker has a twisted and interesting past: one time child star who's shed that image and tries to keep all connections between Parky and Parker nonexistent. His mother is a high up with a very well connected Hollywood based cult, and we learned more than a few details about just how nasty they were in Corrupt Practices.

Parker's involvement in this new case also leaves his Parky persona potentially up for discovery and pits him once again against the Church of the Sanctified Assembly as the cold case of Felicity's disappearance begins to connect to an old film seemingly scrubbed from everyone's memory (one Parky apparently made an appearance in).

Of course Parker's involvement also places him in danger as it becomes ever clearer that whoever is behind the disappearance of Felicity McGrath is willing to do whatever it takes to avoid discovery.

Rotstein's latest followed right in the footsteps of Corrupt Practices with an equally engaging and smart mystery and continued growth of Parker and the characters around him as well. Rotstein's series is perfect for fans who enjoy darker thrillers, whether they be of the legal vein or not :)

Lisa Hunt says

I was hoping this would be a great find, but ended up just meh. I'd give it 2.5 stars. There were a lot of elements to the story that just weren't my cup of tea (anonymous video game geniuses, celebrity cult stuff, secret identities of child movie actors) so that took away from the courtroom stuff for me. I'll keep looking!

Daco Daco says

I had the privilege of reading an advanced copy of Reckless Disregard. I loved every page of it! Very deserving of the two, not one, but two STARRED reviews by the biggies. Kirkus and Booklist. The mystery kept me guessing until the very end and I was pleased to see more of the Lovely Diamond, x-porn star turn crack courtroom attorney. Rotstein not only weaves a terrific thriller, but his gift of telling a story is JUST spectacular!

So who is Poniard?

Great novel for the gaming world...game on gamers!

Matt says

Robert Rotstein returns with another sensational thriller that is sure to keep the reader hooked until the final page turn. Again mixing the best from legal and courtroom sub-genres, Rotstein provides the reader will a great piece that entertains as well as educates. Parker Stern is still coming to terms with the end result of his last significant case and the fallout that caused the death of a dear friend. Choosing a lighter type of law, he turns to legal mediation, which has all the draw for him of watching beige paint dry. When he is contacted through a messenger program by a computer game developer, he is intrigued by the idea put before him. A new game has just hit the market, one that places William 'the Conqueror' Bishop in the middle of the alleged kidnapping and murder of a 1980s movie actress, Paula 'Felicity' McGrath. When Bishop finally slaps a libel lawsuit on the developer, who goes by the moniker 'Poniard', Stern is ready to do all he can. However, it would seem that Poniard enjoys remaining in the shadows and running the show without regard for commonplace rules. When Stern discovers that he will face-off against his old love interest, Lovely Diamond, he is prepared, though not all that keen. As gamers slowly crack the various levels of this new game, they discover additional clues that tell a twisted backstory of how Bishop might have killed Felicity for his own gains. In a number of 'user-led levels', there are scenes of extreme violence that play out in reality, leaving defence witnesses and informants dead. All this is troubling, but nothing more so that learning that the Church of the Sanctified Assembly is involved, a cult with which Stern had an unfortunate connection until his mid-teens. This will be one case that Stern could never have expected handling with a client who refuses to heed legal advice. Might the libel suit be the least of his worries, as those around him turn up dead? Rotstein has done it again with a second stellar piece in collection that has all the elements of a superior series. Highly recommended for those who enjoy novels that test the limits of the legal world.

Rotstein has a wonderful way of not only presenting a case with legal implications, but also offering believable arguments during that journey inside the courtroom, unique for writers of the genre. The story is complex and nuanced in its discussion of key legal elements, but written in such a way that the reader wants to come back to learn more. Parker Stern remains a strong character, exhibiting much more than a great legal mind. Those who read the series debut will remember mention of his early years as a child film actor and more recent debilitating stage fright in the courtroom. With these still part of the backstory, Rotstein pushes a new angle, the struggle for Stern to discover what happened to sour his romantic relationship with Lovely Diamond, another key player in the opening novel. As Stern picks up the pieces from that failed romantic period, he is forced to wrap his head around a new form of legal matter with a client that he cannot control, particularly because they remain in the ether of cyberspace. Working with the limited information he has, Stern will do his best, though is blindsided at numerous times throughout the piece. Stern uses his strongest legal maneuvers to keep the reader entertained, even if it will not be enough. There are a handful of other characters who shape the story, including the aforementioned Lovely Diamond, who continues to work diligently within the parameters of the law. William Bishop also proves to be an interesting character, with a long history in the movie industry. Poniard is able to extract many interesting tidbits to keep the reader wondering how countless interactions between Stern and Bishop will play out. The story of this book is anything but simple, yet Rotstein makes it easily palatable without watering down the arguments, particularly with the use of a video game and an elusive defendant. The reader must buckle down to take part in this fast-paced thriller, which touches on a number of legal and personal issues simultaneously. I can see a great deal of interest coming from these books by those who enjoy the theme and hope the third novel in this series offers up another sensational story.

Kudos, Mr. Rotstein, for a great continuation to this series. I'll be sure to recommend it to others as I wrap my head around all you had to say.

Love/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

A Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...>

Douglas Lord says

Attorney Parker Stern is damaged-goods: once a hotshot trialist, his awful courtroom stage fright has consigned him to doing boring mediation work in Santa Monica. Not yet 40, unmarried, no kids, and independently wealthy, Stern gets mucho excitamento when retained by a mysterious video game developer who is revered as a folk hero for his aggressive political activism, and is known as Poniard. Poniard's games—such as his version of Macbeth set in the White House—“oppose imperialism, capitalism, fascism, and the cult of celebrity.” The developer's latest, Abduction!, is a survival-horror game that accuses a mighty business magnate of orchestrating an actress's disappearance/murder. It's straight-up libel, so it's illegal. Using his huge brain, guided by advice from a beloved mentor, and relying on help from two trusted assistants, Stern maneuvers around the defense of his client. The situation is replete with corporate barbarism, murder, spurned love, and more murder, all of which requires Stern to very, very carefully kick a lot of hornets' nests in the just-right spots—and work extra-hard to keep his own secrets private. One great twist gives readers sneak peeks at the case's clues through the eyes of an 11-year-old boy who doggedly works through Abduction!'s levels. While readers may well feel that there are too many threads to the plot, the book has more intimately drawn characters (e.g., an anguished Alzheimer's patient and his wife) than your typical legal thriller. VERDICT Rotstein clearly explains the legal-esque bits (like libel) and his workmanlike style is a breeze to read. A refreshingly merciless attitude toward killing off characters and the frenzied pace make this second “Parker Stern” novel (after Corrupt Practices) a swirling, careening, and *completely* addictive experience.

Read the Books for Dudes interview with author Robert Rotstein, a California attorney, [here](#).

Find reviews of books for men at Books for Dudes, Books for Dudes, the online reader's advisory column for men from Library Journal. Copyright Library Journal.

James Ziskin says

I loved this book. A great mix of thriller and mystery, with a colorful cast of incredibly novel characters. Rotstein is a master at describing Hollywood and the politics and inner workings of the movie business, especially where it intersects with the law. The plot is a clever and complex mise en abîme, with an online game mirroring real-life events. It's witty and very exciting. You won't want to put this one down. Highest rating. Can't wait for the next Parker Stern novel.

Tamara says

Review originally posted: [Traveling With T](#)

This book was sent to Traveling With T in exchange for a fair review.

Reckless Disregard

Parker Stern is a lawyer with a problem. Not a money problem. Not a gambling problem. But, it's a problem. He has stage fright (I know- a lawyer with stage fright!) So, Parker is content to work behind the scenes- to get cases settled, to mediate amongst clients. No big courtroom cases for him, thank you very much. Then, he gets contacted by Poniard. A person no one knows- Poniard has kept his identity a secret from many. Why does Poniard need a lawyer? Well, he created a game called Abduction! where the claim is that William "The Conqueror" Bishop had Felicity McGrath killed. William Bishop claims this is slander and sues Poniard- who in turn goes searching for Parker Stern to represent him.

Parker, at first, is nervous about taking the case. William Bishop is not an easy foe and technically Poniard is guilty of slander since there has been no proof revealed. But the more that Parker and Poniard communicate (always via instant messaging) Parker begins to feel differently about this case. Could it be that because Lovely Diamond, ex porn star turned lawyer, is opposing counsel that has his blood moving? Or could Parker Stern have another reason for wanting to find out the truth about what happened to Felicity McGrath?

As each piece of the mystery is revealed, the reader finds some surprising gems. The boy who loves the game of Abduction! is much more of a character than he once appears. Secrets, back door dealings, and murder- all are part of the process of finding out the truth of this case.

Traveling With T's Thoughts:

When approached about this book, I was intrigued. I like a good courtroom setting and this one had the makings of something that was good, but with a little quirk thrown in for entertainment. I mean- come on, a lawyer with stage fright, an ex-porn star turned top-notch lawyer, and a client who refuses to reveal himself, his location or any other information- yep, pretty quirky!

The characters, the settings- the mystery- it had appeal. It was entertaining and enjoyable. A slight (very slight) READY PLAYER ONE feel to me as I was reading RECKLESS DISREGARD. While I did like it, I didn't always love it. There was a few times that I wanted to put it down because, at times, there was some unnecessary info- or maybe it was necessary but at that point you did not know- so it almost had a "filler" feeling. But, by the end, I was glad that I did not put it down because I would have missed out on an interesting storyline.

Looking for a courtroom book with less legal maneuvers and more quirk? Interesting characters, legal cases that are mysterious (but also have a humorous side?) Then I suggest RECKLESS DISREGARD!

*This book was sent to Traveling With T in exchange for a fair and honest review. All thoughts and opinions are mine alone.

Happy Reading and Bookishly Yours,

T @ Traveling With T

Lynne Raimondo says

I was lucky to get my hands on an advance copy of this second novel by Robert Rotstein starring Parker Stern, a trial lawyer who suffers (humorously for us lawyers) from stage fright. I loved Rotstein's first, but

this one is even better. The plot is ingenious. An anonymous video designer who goes by the name of Poniard has created an online game, Abduction!, positing that a powerful newspaper magnate is responsible for the twenty-year old disappearance and presumed murder of Felicity McGrath, a one-time B movie actress. The magnate sues for defamation and Poniard, who refuses to reveal his identity, recruits a reluctant Parker to represent him, threatening to reveal Parker's past as a child movie star if he doesn't. Further complications ensue when the lawyer suing Poniard turns out to be Lovely Diamond, Parker's romantic interest. In order to defend his uncooperative client, Parker must solve the mystery of McGrath's disappearance, which may or may not have something to do with the last film project she worked on, a drug and sex-infused retelling of the Orpheus myth.

It's all great fun, but what really sets this book apart is its novel within a novel aspect. As events unfold in the courtroom, they also unfold in Abduction!, with the game molding itself to, and in some cases predicting, plot twists in the main narrative. Rotstein does a masterful job of setting up clues, and there are enough twists, turns, and surprises to satisfy the most jaded of mystery fans. If you like legal thrillers -- and even if you don't -- I highly recommend Reckless Disregard.

Brenda says

I received this book through a drawing with "Shelf Awareness" in hopes that I would give it an honest review which I am. The book was the first I have read by this author. I haven't read a good suspense novel in a very long time and this one is a real page turner. It stars an attorney Parker Stern, who was a child actor, and now as an author has a very intense case of stage fright! He's hired to defend a person known as Poniard who has written a very intense game called Abduction! He is being sued by William Bishop aka William the Conqueror, for millions as the game accuses him of killing a starlet from years past who disappeared without anyone ever being charged for her death. The book had me until the very end, when I found out well I can't tell you as that would be revealing the best part! I loved the ending and was very pleased with how the book ended it was quite the surprise! If you like mystery's this one is for you and if you aren't sure you want to read a mystery this one is for you, I fall into that camp and I really loved the book, by the cover not so much drawn to it, but after a few pages I was hooked. Pick up a copy and read it yourself!

From Good Reads here is the description of the book: Former topnotch attorney Parker Stern, still crippled by courtroom stage fright, takes on a dicey case for an elusive video game designer known to the world only by the name of "Poniard." In Poniard's blockbuster online video game, Abduction!, a real-life movie mogul is charged with kidnapping and murdering a beautiful actress who disappeared in the 1980s. Predictably, the mogul--William "the Conqueror" Bishop--has responded with a libel lawsuit. Now it's up to Parker to defend the game designer in the suit.

In defending Poniard, Parker discovers that people aren't who they claim to be and that nothing is as it seems. At one point, his client resorts to blackmail, threatening to expose a dark secret about Parker. Then, many of the potential witnesses who could have helped the case die prematurely, and the survivors are too frightened to talk. Parker begins to feel as if he's merely a character in a video game, fighting malevolent Level Bosses who appear out of nowhere and threaten to destroy him.

FrumpBurger says

Not gonna lie: I gasped towards the end. Audibly. My girlfriend laughed at me.

This one was good!

Becky says

A game designer/creator seeks revenge is the primary plot. I think one needs to be a gamer to fully appreciate the book and because I am not, I did not particularly appreciate the book. It did keep me interested. But as with so many mysteries there were events meant to deflect your attention and there were far too many characters. Again, I read it because it was my book club book...wish they could come up with better mysteries...

Elizabeth says

First time in a long time that I stayed up reading way past my bedtime!

"Former topnotch attorney Parker Stern, still crippled by courtroom stage fright, takes on a dicey case for an elusive video game designer known to the world only by the name of "Poniard." In Poniard's blockbuster online video game, Abduction!, a real-life movie mogul is charged with kidnapping and murdering a beautiful actress who disappeared in the 1980s. Predictably, the mogul--William "the Conqueror" Bishop--has responded with a libel lawsuit. Now it's up to Parker to defend the game designer in the suit.

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Juggler says

The most outstanding feature of this and Robert's first book are that they are page-turners. He is great at keeping the excitement going. I like crime novels in general and this one stands out, the author's knowledge of his topics is excellent and the connections with a city I once lived in was compelling to me. He is good at dialogue, which is essential for a good read. Parker is mostly a likeable character and I look forward to more of him.
