

# Chapter 25

The chapter opens with Lucas Davenport injured after a violent confrontation with Hanson, a suspect in multiple child murders. Del, his colleague, assesses Lucas's wounds—a deep cut on his forehead and a slashed shoulder—before they are treated by paramedics. Lucas is taken to the hospital, where a plastic surgeon stitches him up. During the procedure, Lucas calls his wife, Weather, who is alarmed but reassured by the surgeon. Meanwhile, Jenkins, another officer, confirms Hanson was killed during the altercation, and evidence at his home—including trophies and VHS tapes—links him to the murders of the Jones sisters and other victims.

At the hospital, Lucas recovers from the anesthesia while Del updates him on the aftermath. Hanson was shot dead by Jenkins during the struggle, and the woman he held hostage, Betty Ludwig, escaped with minor injuries. The investigation reveals disturbing evidence in Hanson's home, such as locks of hair and personal items from victims. Lucas expresses relief that he won't have to view the incriminating tapes. The sheriff's department is briefed, though tensions arise over the lack of prior coordination. Lucas defends his impulsive actions, explaining he acted to protect Ludwig, despite the risks.

After being discharged, Lucas returns home, where Weather scolds him for his recklessness. His injuries make resting uncomfortable, but colleagues Jenkins and Shrake visit to confirm the shooting was justified. Public Safety Commissioner Rose Marie Roux holds a press conference, declaring Hanson responsible for at least six child murders, including his uncle and Marcy Sherrill. The case will require extensive investigation to identify all victims. Rose Marie and Weather later admonish Lucas for his behavior, urging him to appreciate his team's loyalty.

The chapter concludes with reflections on the aftermath. Funerals are held for Sherrill, Hanson, and the Jones sisters, while Todd Barker, another victim, survives a lung

infection. Hanson's relatives attempt to sue the state for property damage but settle quietly to avoid public scrutiny. The BCA's DNA advancements are highlighted, showcasing their role in solving the case. Lucas, mostly healed after two weeks, contemplates the events alone, leaving the reader with a sense of closure but lingering questions about justice and the toll of his work.

