



Rough Draft

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For twenty years, bestselling author James W. Hall has been one of the most highly respected thriller writers around. With last year's *Body Language*, Hall garnered acclaim from authors like James Patterson and Michael Connelly, and from reviewers in publications like *People* and *The New York Times*. Now, Hall serves up *Rough Draft*, which is at once both his most personal and his most gripping book to date.

A few years ago, while browsing in a used bookstore, Hall found a copy of one of his early novels full of strange marginal notes and underlined passages and other cryptic messages. Fascinated by these weird hieroglyphics and unable to get them out of his mind, he used this as the basis for *Rough Draft*, a novel about a woman crime novelist who stumbles across a similar book and finds in those marginal notes what seems to be a direct message from the killer of her parents.

Hannah Keller's struggle to find her parents' killer, and at the same time protect her son, takes the reader on an extraordinary ride through James Hall's best thriller to date.

Rough Draft Details

Date : Published January 25th 2000 by St. Martin's Press (first published January 1st 2000)

ISBN : 9780312203832

Author : James W. Hall

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From Reader Review Rough Draft for online ebook

Carolyn (in SC) C234D says

This is a very good story about a female mystery writer/ex-cop whose parents were murdered five years ago. Now the FBI is using her as bait to catch a serial killer.

I think James Hall is an excellent writer. I have enjoyed several other of his novels.

False says

Another great Hall novel. I had no idea that Dennis Lehane was one of his graduate writing pupils and did research for him. A strange book about dysfunctional families (which Hall goes back to time and again) and the manipulations used to bind the tie. Highly enjoyable.

Andy Plonka says

Although I enjoyed this book, parts of the plot were eerily similar to others of this ilk that I have read. The bits about hacking the internet went right over my head.

Joe Sobieski says

Definitely the best of the 3 James W Hall books I just read; but still can't give it more than a 3-star "like" due to some issues with the plot and some editing errors. This novel was published back in 2000; which is the most recent of his 3 books I've reviewed. I feel this one is better than 1998's "Body Language"; which I thought was better than 1996's "Buzz Cut". I'm interested in reading some of his more recent work to see if the improvement continued.

Laura Verdin says

Slow to start, but so worth it
So many twists and turns
Loved it

Susan says

Hannah Keller was the public information officer for the Miami Police Department on the day her parents were murdered. It was also the day her first novel was published. It was two years ago and now the case,

never solved, has come back to haunt. I love all of James Hall's books and this one is nearly as good as the rest, but it does have a nearly fatal flaw. I am so weary of children being used as plot toys I could spit. You know from the first minute the kid is introduced that the plot will turn on the kid's safety. Kind of knocks the surprise element in the gut.

Carly Kirk says

Up until the end of the book I probably would have given at least 3 stars, but I just wasn't a huge fan of the ending. The book is well written and kept me interested, but still lacked something for me. Maybe it's that I didn't really connect with the main character. Also there was a plot point introduced that didn't ever get used/resolved, I don't want to give away any of the plot but it involves the FBI agent in charge of an operation taking place in the book. I think plenty of other people will enjoy this book, but since I didn't like the ending it kinda tainted the rest of the book.

Sharon says

I ran across this title in a box of books from our storage unit, and it sounded like it might be a good one. The main character, Hannah, is an author whose son witnessed her parents being killed. Hannah is also a former police officer who believes she knew who was responsible for the murders and why.

So, when she finds a copy of her first novel in the child psychiatrist's waiting room ...and it has that suspect's name in it, she starts an investigation of her own.

There's a subplot involving the murder of a senator's daughter, and these two stories are intimately connected.

I just didn't feel drawn to any of the characters whatsoever. I read the entire book hoping to feel connected to *someone,* but I fairly soon figured out that (view spoiler).

So, three stars. Just not really my cup of tea.

Alicia Utter says

This was written a while back, definitely followed the thrillers of the time. The kidnapper was such a thug, and there was a little much thug. But it was an interesting experience between him and his girlfriend. I enjoyed the dynamics, but the main character was a little too perfect. It made things flat.

This was a type of book that would be great for a trip. quick, enjoyable, but a little cookie-cutter.

Dale says

Strong, entertaining read

This is my first foray into a book by James W. Hall. I found it to be an entertaining read with a couple of really good plot twists. The original premise of the FBI sting seems so silly that I cannot imagine anybody would permit it, but once I got past that part it was a great spring break thriller.

While the villains were fairly interesting, I found myself really rooting for the underachieving FBI agent, Frank Sheffield...

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Vfields Don't touch my happy! says

This was my first foray into this writer's stories. His females are interesting but not always ones I care about. The secondary/supporting cast is always fulfilling, but his strengths are his lead male characters. They are just this side of lazy, dangerous and honest. If we could put them all in one book or continue in a series form we'd have pure gold. A cop's parents are murdered and her son witnesses the whole thing becoming consequentially traumatized in the process. Throw in a crazy female FBI agent and an even crazier murderer for hire and you've got one heck of a good action packed book.

Joan says

I only discovered this author within the last 6 months and have read 5 or 6 of his novels. I rated this one 3-star instead of the usual 4-star mostly because the level of gore was a little past my cut-off point. The plot was extremely well-developed and complex; the writing style was fascinating (as usual); and the characters, even the diabolical Hal, were extremely bodied and interesting. Quotes to remember: "Not exactly a yes-man, still Charlie was a guy who could sing harmony to any tune." "It was the same way Frank's ex-wife had looked at him most of the time. Collecting faults, adding them to the heap." "Enough cock-sure arrogance floating around that room to power Manhattan through a July heat wave." "Helen looking at his bare chest. Studying it, like she was counting the hairs, doing a masculinity calculation." "He kept studying her but she didn't feel invaded or violated or any of that male-pushy stuff. A guy trying to force his advantage. None of that. Just his eyes prowling around inside her, seeing some of the stuff she kept hidden there." "(it) had been a fashionable suburb when Hannah was growing up, but much like this part of town, it had begun a long slide into third-world fragmentation, a melting-pot where nothing melted anymore." "Her life had been one long tantrum." "...so impressed with their wealth and power that he lost his way. That was his weakness. He was easily dazzled. Money impressed him so."

Lisa Decesare says

This was a solid mystery featuring an ex-cop turned writer who, along with her son, is haunted by the murders of her parents. She becomes an unwitting pawn in an undercover FBI operation to catch an elusive assassin who murders his victims using only his bare hands. Unfortunately for the FBI she begins to track them and try to unravel their plan. This was a really solid read. Good characters, a very interesting villain, and a different (but not too out there) mystery. I really recommend this one to anyone.

Michelle says

Exciting and easy read. A few "out there" moments, but overall, a very well-spent evening or two with a great author,

Nikki Handros says

As a Miami girl, I always enjoy reading a novel set on home turf. With James W. Hall, the pleasure is doubled by his superb writing skills.

Hall knows how to keep a story going at full speed, fueled by skillful dialogue. His characters are full-bodied, original and realistic.

The plot has multiple murders, from crime writer Hannah Keller's parents to crazed maniac Hal Bonner's seemingly random victims. Mix in more than 400 million in missing drug proceeds, the FBI and a U.S. senator and you've got a plot twisted within a plot. This is a suspense novel for those with the highest standards.
