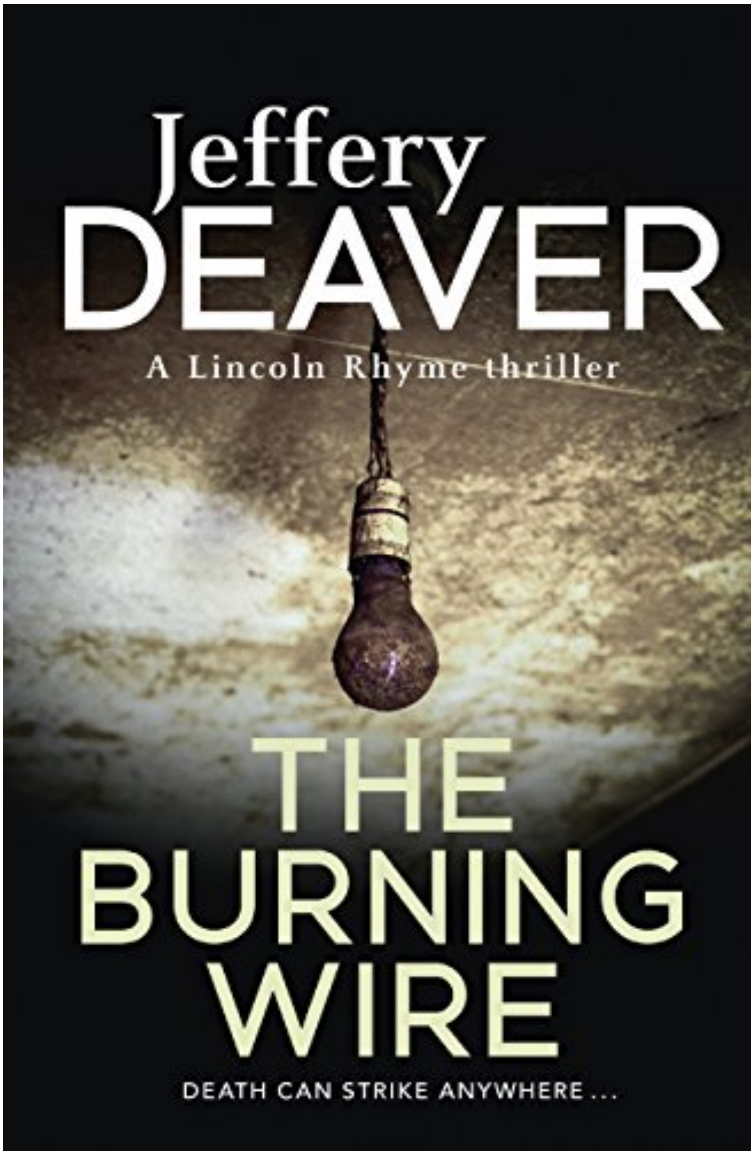
The Burning Wire: Lincoln Rhyme Book 9



Par Jeffery Deaver
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[Free] The Burning Wire: Lincoln Rhyme Book 9

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurLincoln Rhyme must contend with a new killer and an old nemesis. 'The best psychological thriller writer around' - The TimesNew York City is being held to ransom. Manhattan's electricity grid is being used to murder people... and more attacks are planned.While the FBI and Homeland Security struggle to determine who's behind the carnage, Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs race to decode the forensics in order to prevent the next assault.But all is not what it seems. Lincoln Rhyme soon finds he's up against a merciless killer with a unique weapon - one that can be found in everyone's home and office.What's more, one of the few criminals to have ever slipped Rhyme's net is back in operation. Working in Mexico, the deadly assassin known as the Watchmaker has set his murderous sights on more innocent

victims, whose identities are as yet unknown ...Lincoln Rhyme must race against the clock, juggling the two investigations, as they hurtle headlong toward their deadly outcomes.The ninth instalment of the electrifyingly thrilling Lincoln Rhyme series. ExtraitThe Burning Wire Chapter 1 SITTING IN THE control center of Algonquin Consolidated Power and Lights sprawling complex on the East River in Queens, New York, the morning supervisor frowned at the pulsing red words on his computer screen. Critical failure. Below them was frozen the exact time: 11:20:20:003 a.m. He lowered his cardboard coffee cup, blue and white with stiff depictions of Greek athletes on it, and sat up in his creaky swivel chair. The power company control center employees sat in front of individual workstations, like air traffic controllers. The large room was brightly lit and dominated by a massive flat-screen monitor, reporting on the flow of electricity throughout the power grid known as the Northeastern Interconnection, which provided electrical service in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Connecticut. The architecture and decor of the control center were quite modernif the year were 1960. The supervisor squinted up at the board, which showed the juice arriving from generating plants around the country: steam turbines, reactors and the hydroelectric dam at Niagara Falls. In one tiny portion of the spaghetti depicting these electrical lines, something was wrong. A red circle was flashing. Critical failure... Whats up? the supervisor asked. A gray-haired man with a taut belly under his short-sleeved white shirt and thirty years experience in the electricity business, he was mostly curious. While critical-incident indicator lights came on from time to time, actual critical incidents were very rare. A young technician replied, Says we have total breaker separation. MH-Twelve. Dark, unmanned and grimy, Algonquin Consolidated Substation 12, located in Harlemthe MH for Manhattanwas a major area substation. It received 138,000 volts and fed the juice through transformers, which stepped it down to 10 percent of that level, divided it up and sent it on its way. Another message appeared. MH-12 offline. RR to affected service area from MH-17, MH-10, MH-13, NJ-18. Weve got load rerouting, somebody called unnecessarily. When substation MH-12 went down, the computer automatically began filling customer demand by rerouting the juice from other locations. No dropouts, no brownouts, another tech called. Electricity in the grid is like water coming into a house from a single main pipe and flowing out through many open faucets. When one is closed, the pressure in the others increases. Electricitys the same, though it moves a lot more quickly than waternearly 700 million miles an hour. And because New York City demanded a lot of power, the voltagesthe electrical equivalent of water pressurein the substations doing the extra work were running high. But the system was built to handle this and the voltage indicators were still in the green. What was troubling the supervisor, though, was why the circuit breakers in MH-12 had separated in the first place. Get a troubleman over to MH-Twelve. Could be a bum cable. Or a short in the Just then a second red light began to flash. Critical failure.NJ-18 offline. Another area substation, located near Paramus, New Jersey, had gone down. It was one of those taking up the slack in Manhattan-12s absence. The supervisor made a sound, half laugh, half cough. A perplexed frown screwed into his face. What the hells going on? The loads within tolerances. Sensors and indicators all functioning, one technician called. The supervisor stared at the screen, waited for the next logical step: letting them know which new substationor stationswould kick in to fill the gap created by the loss of NJ-18. But no such message appeared. The three Manhattan substations, 17, 10 and 13, continued alone in providing juice to two service areas of the city that would otherwise be dark. The computer program wasnt doing what it should have: bringing in power from other stations to help. Now the amount of electricity flowing into and out of each of those three stations was growing dramatically. The supervisor rubbed his beard and, after waiting, futilely, for another substation to come online, ordered his senior assistant, Manually move supply into the eastern service area of MH-Twelve. Yessir. After a moment the supervisor snapped, No, now. Hm. Im trying. Trying. What do you mean, trying? The task involved simple keyboard strokes. The switchgears not responding. Impossible! The supervisor walked down several short steps to the technicians computer. He typed commands he knew in his sleep. Nothing. The voltage indicators were at the end of the green. Yellow loomed. This isnt good, somebody muttered. Thiss a problem. The supervisor ran back to his desk and dropped into his chair. His granola bar and Greek athlete cup fell to the floor. And then another domino fell. A third red dot, like a bulls-eye on a target, began to throb, and in its aloof manner the SCADA computer reported: Critical failure.MH-17 offline. No, not another one! somebody whispered. And, as before, no other substation stepped up to help satisfy the voracious demands of New Yorkers for energy. Two substations were doing the work of five. The temperature of the electric wires into and out of those stations was growing, and the voltage level bars on the big screen were well into the yellow. MH-12 offline. NJ-18 offline.MH-17 offline. RR to affectedservice areas from MH-10, MH-13. The supervisor snapped, Get more supply into those areas. I dont care how you

do it. Anywhere. A woman at a nearby control booth sat up fast. Ive got forty K Im running through feeder lines down from the Bronx. Somebody else was able to bring some juice down from Connecticut. The voltage indicator bars continued to rise but more slowly now. Maybe they had this under control. More! But then the woman stealing power from the Bronx said in a choking voice, Wait, the transmissions reduced itself to twenty thousand. I dont know why. This was happening throughout the region. As soon as a tech was able to bring in a bit more current to relieve the pressure, the supply from another location dried up. And all of this drama was unfolding at breathtaking speeds. 700 million miles an hour... And then yet another red circle, another bullet wound. Critical failure.MH-13 offline. This was the equivalent of a huge reservoir of water trying to shoot through a single tiny spigot, like the kind that squirts cold water out of a refrigerator door. The voltage surging into MH-10, located in an old building on West Fifty-seventh Street in the Clinton neighborhood of Manhattan, was four or five times normal load and growing. The circuit breakers would pop at any moment, averting an explosion and a fire, but returning a good portion of Midtown to colonial times. And then: Oh, Jesus, Lord! somebody cried. The supervisor didnt know who it was; everybody was staring at their screens, heads down, transfixed. What? he raged. I dont want to keep hearing that kind of thing. Tell me! The breaker settings in Manhattan-Ten! Look! The breakers! Oh, no. No.... The circuit breakers in MH-10 had been reset. They would now allow through their portal ten times the safe load. If the Algonquin control center couldnt reduce the pressure of the voltage assaulting the substation soon, the lines and switchgear inside the place would allow through a lethally high flood of electricity. The substation would explode. But before that happened the juice would race through the distribution feeder lines into belowground transformer boxes throughout the blocks south of Lincoln Center and into the spot networks in office buildings and big high-rises. Some breakers would cut the circuit but some older transformers and service panels would just melt into a lump of conductive metal and let the current continue on its way, setting fires and exploding in arc flashes that could burn to death anybody near an appliance or wall outlet. For the first time the supervisor thought: Terrorists. Its a terror attack. He shouted, Call Homeland Security and the NYPD. And reset them, goddamn it. Reset the breakers. Theyre not responding. Im locked out of MH-Ten. How can you be fucking locked out? I dont Is anybody inside? Jesus, if they are, get them out now! Substations were unmanned, but workers occasionally went inside for routine maintenance and repairs. Sure, okay. The indicator bars were now into the red. Sir, should we shed load? Grinding his teeth, the supervisor was considering this. Also known as a rolling blackout, shedding load was an extreme measure in the power business. Load was the amount of juice that customers were using. Shedding was a manual, controlled shutdown of certain parts of the grid to prevent a larger crash of the system. It was a power companys last resort in the battle to keep the grid up and would have disastrous consequences in the densely populated portion of Manhattan that was at risk. The damage to computers alone would be in the tens of millions, and it was possible that people would be injured or even lose their lives. Nine-one-one calls wouldnt get through. Ambulances and police cars would be stuck in traffic, with stoplights out. Elevators would be frozen. Thered be panic. Muggings and looting and rapes invariably rose during a blackout, even in daylight. Electricity keeps people honest. Sir? the technician asked desperately. The supervisor stared at the moving voltage indicator bars. He grabbed his own phone and called his superior, a senior vice president at Algonquin. Herb, we have a situation. He briefed the man. Howd this happen? We dont know. Im thinking terrorists. God. You called Homeland Security? Yeah, just now. Mostly were trying to get more power into the affected areas. Were not having much luck. His boss thought for a moment. Theres a second transmission line running through Manhattan-Ten, right? The supervisor looked up at the board. A high-voltage cable went through the substation and headed west to deliver juice to parts of New Jersey. Yes, but its not online. Its just running through a duct there. But could you splice into it and use that for supply to the diverted lines? Manually?... I suppose, but... but that would mean getting people inside MH-Ten. And if we cant hold the juice back until theyre finished, itll flash. Thatll kill em all. Or give em third-degrees over their entire bodies. A pause. Hold on. Im calling Jessen. Algonquin Consolidateds CEO. Also known, privately, as The All-Powerful. As he waited, the supervisor stared at the techs surrounding him. He kept staring at the board too. The glowing red dots. Critical failure... Finally the supervisors boss came back on. His voice cracked. He cleared his throat and after a moment said, Youre supposed to send some people in. Manually splice into the line. Thats what Jessen said? Another pause. Yes. The supervisor whispered, I cant order anybody in there. Its suicide. Then find some volunteers. Jessen said you are not, understand me, not to shed load under any circumstances.Revue de presse'The most creative, skilled and intriguing thriller writer in the world [Deaver] has produced a stunning series of bestsellers with unique characterisation, intelligent

characters, beguiling plots' --Daily Telegraph'Another corker precision-engineered to keep the reader turning the pages without a hitch' --Evening Standard'One of the great detective teams of contemporary crime fiction come storming backDeaver never disappoints, and this novel shines' --Independent on Sunday