

Sidetracked

- 1 Director Philip Martin opts to frame the opening shot of *Sidetracked* as a close-up from a low-angle perspective of one looking up from the ground at the blinding sun through the branches of the yellow rape plants*. Why do you think Martin chose to open from this camera perspective? What feelings does the shot provoke?
- 2 Ekholm, the forensic psychologist from Stockholm, characterizes the serial killer as existing in “a psychic borderland” and as “hiding behind another person’s identity.” Why do you think Mankell had the murderer take on the role of the Native American warrior Geronimo? How does the murderer’s alter ego tap into a common stereotype of Native Americans? In the murderer’s fantasy life, how can a warrior right the wrongs his family has experienced?
- 3 Mankell writes: “Somehow [Wallander] had learned to endure what he saw and push it aside. But he couldn’t when there were children or young people involved. Then he was as vulnerable as when he was first a policeman.” How does the plot of *Sidetracked* highlight Wallander’s vulnerability when it comes to working with cases involving young people? How do you think this vulnerability contributed to his tendency to get “sidetracked” in pursuing the serial killer?
- 4 “When we got rid of the old Society, where families stuck together, we forgot to replace it with something else,” Wallander reflects. How does Wallander try to heal his own broken family in *Sidetracked*? Does he succeed? If you have read or watched other Wallander books or films, how is the broken family a recurring motif?
- 5 The murder victims in *Sidetracked* are: a corrupt politician, a fraudulent art dealer, a financial scammer, and an abusive father. The murderer’s family turns out to have suffered by the actions of all those killed. In other words, the murders were acts of vengeance on the murderer’s family’s behalf. And yet, there is no sense of poetic justice in these acts of revenge, since the murderer is a cold-blooded killer who commits appalling acts of terror. With the sense of despair that the murders—and murderer—evoke, how does director Philip Martin use the closing scene between Wallander and his father to restore a sense of resolution and hope to the film?
- 6 In *Sidetracked*, Wallander realizes that he “couldn’t keep his job from becoming a personal matter.” Do you think the blurring of the line between one’s personal life and career life is especially problematic for a police detective? What other careers might create the same problem? How?

*Rape plants are of the mustard family and are native to Europe.

- 7 A major difference between the novel and the film version of *Sidetracked* is that Mankell employs dramatic irony in the novel to heighten the tension: the reader is aware that Wallander and his daughter, Linda, may be the killer's final victims, but Wallander is not. How does director Philip Martin create dramatic tension through other means in the film? Why do you think the filmmakers decided *not* to have the killer pursue Wallander in the film?

WALLANDER IS A LEFT BANK PICTURES/YELLOW BIRD/TKBC SERIES FOR WGBH CO-PRODUCED WITH THE BBC, DEGETO, WGBH BOSTON, AND FILM I SKANE.
THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ARE FRANCIS HOPKINSON, ANDY HARRIES, KENNETH BRANAGH, OLE SONDBERG, ANNI FAURBYE, REBECCA EATON, AND HANS-WOLFGANG JURGAN.
REBECCA EATON IS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF MASTERPIECE. FUNDING IS PROVIDED BY PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.

MASTERPIECE, MASTERPIECE THEATRE, AND MYSTERY! ARE TRADEMARKS OR REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF THE WGBH EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION.
CLOSED CAPTIONED FOR VIEWERS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING. ©2009 WGBH EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION.



MASTERPIECE

pbs.org/masterpiece  PBS