

# ALLEN & UNWIN

MICHAEL DUFFY

## DRIVE BY

Inside a Western suburbs crime family



'You name it, name any place and I'll tell you some boy got kneecapped or drive-byed.' JOHN HABIB

### A compromised Attorney General

Attorney General Stephen Brown is under fire for considering his position after revelations his group is a family affair.

was targeted last week with officers at Western local court.

Political opponents were quick to respond to the news. 'If he can't control his own drug war, how can he control the state?' said one Labour colleague.

It is understood the proposed Drug Abuse Act, which contains several tough laws, is strongly opposed by Police Minister Chris

Pyne and other members of the government. They are concerned about the possibility of an electoral backlash to a law that would lead to the jailing of a large number of young people.

The Opposition said the Cabinet must 'bring order, discipline and compromise'. It also insists we need to crack down on those people are working but aren't

### DRUG EMPIRE RUN FROM GAOL

A parliamentary inquiry has found how David Habib ran his wealthy empire in the Western suburbs.

His family, especially Habib's biggest drug dealer in the town of Newcomb, made a fortune for middle-class families in gold and generally never had trouble staying out. The inquiry has found photos



# READING GROUP NOTES

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## About the book

'If *The Godfather* was set in Sydney today, it would be about the Lebs. But brothers, lots of brothers. Fathers don't matter anymore.' - Detective Inspector Brian Harris

John Habib is the mechanic son of a Muslim Lebanese-Australian crime family in Sydney's Western suburbs. His oldest brother is in a maximum security prison, his middle brother is becoming increasingly fundamentalist, and his younger brother Rafi is on trial for a murder he swears he didn't commit. John has no reason to disbelieve Rafi but there are things going on in the family that he just doesn't understand. Why has his brother taken control of the family away from their father? Are the police really trying to set up Rafi? And what is the compelling evidence they say will put him away? John sets out to prove Rafi's innocence in the face of his predatory older brothers and some Lebanese-hating cops.

Bec is a good detective who doesn't know why she's been ordered to attend Rafi's trial. She was previously thrown off the investigation for voicing the opinion that he might be innocent. As the court case goes badly wrong, she finds herself torn between her loyalty to the senior police she respects and the truth.

The book's epigraph is a quotation from the philosopher Hayek about the impossibility of one person ever knowing everything about any complicated event. This is one of the book's themes, as the story of the central murder changes during the investigation and trial.

Not since Peter Temple's *The Broken Shore* and *Truth* has the world of criminals and police been so uncompromisingly and authentically drawn. This brilliant, fast-paced novel will seize you from its first page and not let you go till long after its explosive, mind-twisting conclusion.

## About the author

Michael Duffy has worked for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sun Herald* as a reporter of crime and other urban issues. He has written two true crime books and the novels *The Tower*, about crime and globalisation, and *The Simple Death*, about voluntary euthanasia and the law.

## Reviews & Quotes

### Praise for *The Tower*

'A gripping, fast-paced debut that introduces Michael Duffy's simple, true and confident voice to an army of crime lovers. Sure to be a hit with fans of *Underbelly* and Michael Connelly, *The Tower* unites classic noir suspense with seat of the pants action set against the glimmer and grime of the harbour city, where the sharks are beginning to circle.'









– *Sydney Unleashed.com*

'This is crime reporter Michael Duffy's first novel but it's well-informed by his real-life experiences of a more sinister underworld beneath Sydney's bright surface.' - *M2*

## Praise for *The Simple Death*

'The themes [Duffy] encompasses are universal, and it wouldn't be a surprise if in the near future he doesn't rank with some of the world's top crime writers.' - *Spectator Australia*

## For discussion

-  'Sometimes you have to be humble, forget about finding the answer. You need to accept that you're still searching for the right question. It came to her that this where folk often go wrong, without knowing it.' (*Drive By*, pp. 244)  
Discuss. Do you agree with Bec Ralston?
-  Consider the following exchange:  
'Our intel says he's honest'  
'Yeah?'  
'What the family call him, Honest John' (*Drive By*, pp. 58)
-  What is the significance of Bec's recurring dream?
-  Discuss the feud between Sam Deeb and the Habib family.
-  'Please call me Karen. We're partners in this trial.' As though she could make it true by just saying it. (*Drive By*, pp. 124)  
Discuss the development of Bec and Karen Mabey's relationship throughout *Drive By*.
-  Harris frowned. 'If *The Godfather* was set in Sydney today, it would be about the Lebs. But brothers, lots of brothers. Fathers don't matter anymore.' (*Drive By*, pp. 57) What does Harris mean? Do you agree? Consider this in relation to John's concerns about the lack of respect shown by his brothers to his own father.
-  Consider John Habib's narrative throughout *Drive By*. What conclusions do you draw?
-  Who do you believe, by the end of *Drive By*?



## Suggested Reading

*The Tower* – Michael Duffy

*The Broken Shore* – Peter Temple

*Hard Revolution* – George Pelecanos

*The Breaker* – Minette Walters

*The Wyatt Novels* – Garry Disher

*The Simple Death* – Michael Duffy

*Mystic River* – Dennis Lehane

*The Night Ferry* – Michael Robotham

*The Old School* – PM Newton