

CLEAR TO THE HORIZON

DAVE WARNER

ABOUT THE BOOK

In the late 1990s, Dave Warner's *City of Light* featured the knockabout ex-footy-playing Constable Snowy Lane who went on to finally crack the Mr Gruesome serial-killer case haunting Perth. In 2015, Dave Warner published *Before It Breaks*, a Broome crime novel featuring DI Dan Clement who worked his way through a complex international mystery to nail an elusive killer.

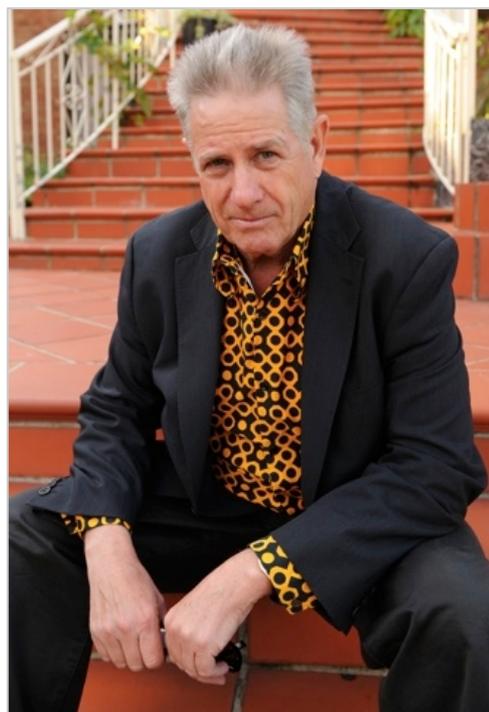
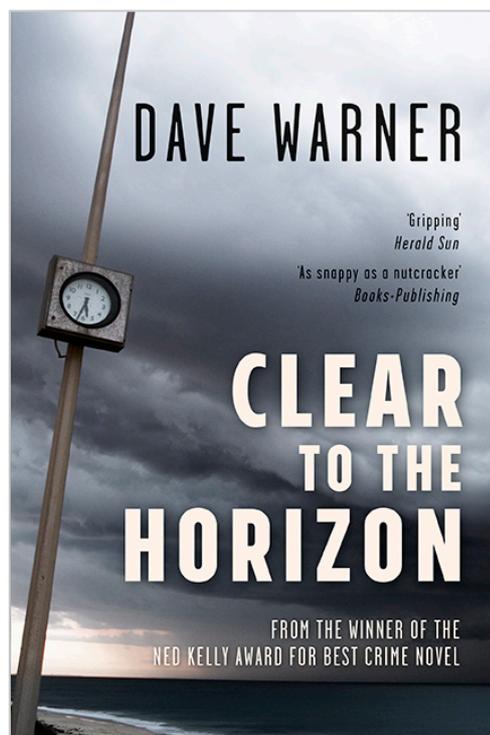
Now Snowy Lane and Dan Clement team up together in the search for a missing girl that will put them on the track of a cold-case killer who, in 1999 and 2000, abducted three young women from the Perth suburb of Claremont. Set in Broome and the gorges and watering holes of the north-west, as well as in the leafy western suburbs of Perth, *Clear to the Horizon* is a nail-biting Aussie thriller.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Warner is an author, musician and screenwriter. His first novel, *City of Light*, won the Western Australian Premier's Book Award for Fiction, and his seventh novel, *Before It Breaks*, won the Ned Kelly Award for best Australian crime fiction. He has also authored six non-fiction titles and a successful series of children's novels. Once nominated by Bob Dylan as his favourite Australian music artist, Dave Warner originally came to national prominence with his gold album *Mug's Game*. In 2017 he released his tenth album, *When*. He has been named a Western Australian State Living Treasure and has been inducted into the WAMi Rock'n'Roll of Renown.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you see as the role of the crime novelist in reflecting the stories of a place or a society back to its citizens?
2. In what ways does this book evoke the flavour of the early 2000s? In what ways do the contemporary sections reflect the values of now?
3. How does Dave Warner use the different points of view of Snowy Lane and Dan Clement to advance his story?
4. What do Snowy and Dan have in common as fathers?
5. Would you say that Snowy and Dan become friends?
6. What insights does Dan Clement gain into his own childhood and the Broome of his past from his encounters with Olive Pickering?
7. What portraits of (Australian) masculinity does *Clear to the Horizon* present? And what portraits of femininity? In what ways are the women of this novel more than victims?
8. What comment does the novel make about the privilege and protection that money can buy?
9. Ultimately, how should we judge the decisions made by Angus Duncan, Max Coldwell and Ingrid Feister?
10. What kind of resolution is there for both Dan Clement and Snowy Lane in the final chapters of this book?
11. What is the meaning of the novel's title, *Clear to the Horizon*?
12. Is there something quintessentially Australian about this novel? Can you imagine it being set elsewhere?



INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

What was your motivation in telling this story? What is the relationship of your work of fiction to the actual Claremont serial killings?

Ever since *City of Light* I had been looking for a vehicle that could bring Snowy Lane back. Initially I thought *Before It Breaks* might be that vehicle but it soon became obvious that that novel was very much about a small group of police solving an intricate case. To bring back Snowy, the story needed to make a statement about Perth and Western Australia as much as about the characters. It needed to be a big, big story. For a long time I had resisted the idea of doing anything that used the Claremont serial killings as a touchstone, although it was clear that no case since Eric Cooke had so affected the psyche of the city. However, a few years ago I was visited in Sydney by cold-case detectives on that case who said some people had actually nominated me as a suspect! This made the case personal, and with twenty years passed and still no apparent progress, I thought it a good time to dive into a novel that could use that emotional connection I had with the case, and that resonated with the city where I grew up. I was looking to write about the effect that such a terrible case has on those connected to the victims and those who investigate, and those who live in the city. As I have done before (*City of Light*, *Big Bad Blood*) I began to make up a fictional story that grabbed bits and pieces of known real events. Remarkably, it appears that one of the earlier crimes I chose to make the cornerstone of Snowy's case in this novel, actually may well be a factor in the real case. Snowy's detective nose was correct. That being said, I have no more knowledge of anything about the real case than anybody else who has read news reports. This is not a book about the Claremont serial killings and I hope that it will be read by many, many people who have no knowledge of the real events. This is a fictional novel with a focus on how a terrible crime affects us all and what it makes us consider about our own humanity and the world in which we live.

What were the challenges in using as a springboard a story that has such a strong connection to one aspect of this state's identity?

The biggest challenge is to write a novel that communicates the intensity of the effect of this crime on anybody touched by it, without it being *about* that crime, to transfer the visceral reaction we have to something that is real into a work of fiction.

At what stage did you decide to pair Snowy Lane up with Daniel Clement?

I felt that a novel purely from Snowy's point of view ran the risk of being simply a *City of Light* sequel. I thought I would try and use Dan Clement as well – because I love writing his character, and also because it would make this a very different book to *City of Light*. Also, I love the challenge of trying to improve my writing, to take risks, and – to be honest – I wasn't sure for a long time if the two different styles of narrative would blend. Only when I was almost through the first draft did I feel it was really going to deliver what I had intended.

What's next for Dave Warner?

Well this year I released my first album in twenty-five years but right now I am back at the keyboard working on a new crime novel.



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