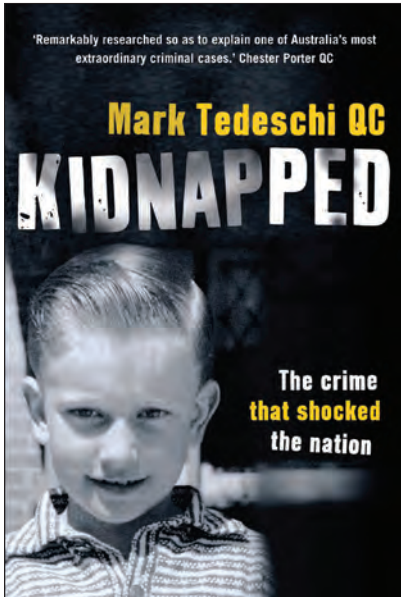


Kidnapped

By Mark Tedeschi QC | Simon & Schuster Australia | 2015



We have all probably heard about this famous case. It might very well be one of the most famous cases in Australian history and it truly must have been 'the crime that shocked the nation'. On 7 July 1960 an eight year old schoolboy named Graeme Thorne was kidnapped in Bondi on his way to school. About a month earlier, Graeme Thorne's father had won the tenth draw of the Opera House lottery, 100,000 pounds prize (equivalent to about \$4 million today-p.290). There was much publicity about this. However, for the Thorne family there was a shocking consequence: the kidnapping of their son and subsequent ransom demands. But that of course was not the end of the matter. On 16 August 1960, five weeks and five days after Graeme Thorne's disappearance, police found his body, still fully dressed in his Scots College uniform, on a bush covered vacant block, in Grandview Grove, Seaforth.

What followed was of course an intense police investigation and the subsequent arrest and trial of the accused - Stephen Bradley. The author, given his experience as a Crown prosecutor, has tremendous insight into police

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investigations, the analysis of evidence in a criminal trial as well as the mind of a killer. And this is what we have in this book.

The research is thorough and extremely interesting. We learn of Stephen Bradley's background, in Budapest, and his life there during World War II. He migrated to Australia in 1950 and had a life initially in Melbourne. He changed his name and moved to Sydney in 1957 with his third wife. We learn of the marriage that Stephen Bradley had and what he did, how he lived in Sydney and importantly, the financial pressure the family was under. But what the author does so well, is highlight the type of person Bradley must have been in order to have committed this terrible crime. He writes at page 37 '... beneath the surface, Stephen harboured an undercurrent of intense envy and greed, fuelled by a desperate need for social acceptance, a readiness to undertake appalling risks, an unrealistic sense of his own perspicacity, and a perverse thrill in the face of great danger.'

The book is fascinating because it is part of Australia's recent history, and not only because we have descriptions of what life was like in the suburbs of Sydney at this time, but also because we learn of the detailed, intense and thorough police investigation which eventually led to Stephen Bradley. Looking 'backwards' at what police did, i.e. analysing what they did after we all know the end result, is always a fantastic tale. What they did

well is contrasted with what could have been done better and leads not taken could very well have resulted in an earlier capture. We also have a great summary of the trial with the author having access to the court records and speaking to several relatives of key players. Yet, we have the author's perspective on what Bradley must have been doing at the critical times and what he was thinking. As the author writes in the Preface:

Over many years, I have prosecuted a number of such people for murder. The feature I have observed that they most commonly share is an ingrained, almost unshakeable, belief that they are owed something by the universe. The man I describe in this book was so gripped by his desires and so intent on achieving his ends that he lost the ability to see what most other sane people would have realized in an instant: that he was hell bent on a path of inevitable self-destruction. His downfall was almost assured by the brazenness of his covetous pursuits and the risks inherent in his chosen methods.

This is a fascinating book and every lawyer in Sydney should read it.

Reviewed by Caroline Dobraszcyk