

New Australian Author Book Release

DEEP DOWN

COLINKING

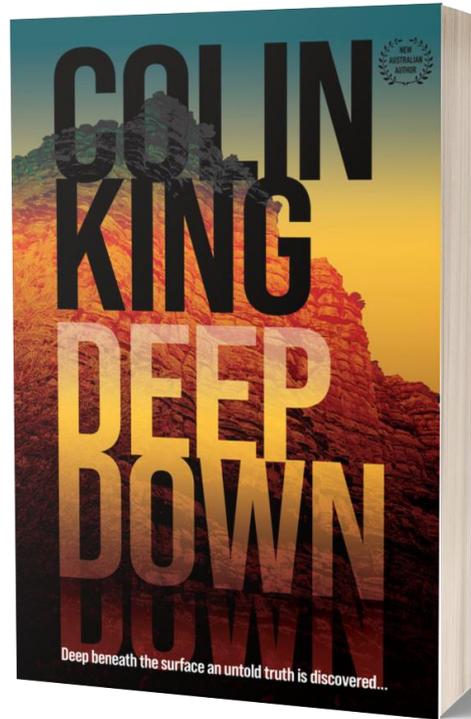
A GRAMPAINS MURDER INVESTIGATION REVEALS AN INDIGENOUS MASSACRE...

Archaeologist, young Aboriginal Tahlia Lock, accompanies Detective Sergeant Rory James to investigate bones uncovered in a gemstone fossicking site near the Grampians mountains in Victoria. Tahlia hopes to persuade Rory to revisit the cold case of her missing brother, Ricky.

The remains found are confirmed as the wife of a Sydney mining-exploration geologist, Travis Vella. He had been working in the area at the time she disappeared, and although a suspect, there is more to 'Travis' story, including another possible suspect in blueblood grazier, Elliot Claymore, who made no secret of disliking Travis.

When Tahlia and Rory attend a meeting at Brambuk Aboriginal Centre, they learn of an historical, and unrecorded, local Aboriginal massacre. Tahlia's brother, Ricky, had been investigating the massacre when he had disappeared, one that took place on the Claymore's land. Suddenly, both cases are at Claymore's doorstep.

Tahlia and Rory hunt for a truth buried far beneath the civilised world and shadowed by the range of mountains that whisper secrets; secrets deep down in the crevices of evil. When the truth is dug up, it will undo lives ... but above all, it will create answers that are sought by everyone involved.



Visit shawlinepublishing.com.au for more details on the author,
Colin King

Price available on our site

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A Conversation with Colin

Why did you write ‘Deep Down’? What were your inspirations?

The opening scene is at a smoky-quartz crystal fossicking site which is actually near the bushland property we have owned for over 45 years. I am not a fossicker, but we do visit the site from time to time. Often there are fossickers present who are more than happy to chat and show off their finds. Some of the holes— which are only permitted to be dug by hand— are astonishingly deep. Even more amazingly, when they have finished digging the massive hole, they are required to turn around and fill it in before they leave. Of course, the filled hole is no longer “un-worked” ground, so it is guaranteed never to be dug up again. The perfect place to hide a dead body — so thought my writer’s mind.

Before I wrote Deep Down, I spent a year writing an unpublished history of the local area. During my research, I learnt that in recent years, as good crystals became scarcer, deep-hole fossickers began tunnelling from the base of their shafts. This provided a perfect opportunity to accidentally encounter a body buried in an adjacent shaft. The revelation gave me a credible basis for someone to unearth the murdered body intended never to be seen again.

The history I wrote of the local area also included pioneer-war massacres that happened nearby on squatters’ holdings and in the Grampians. I knew this could be a sensitive matter for squatters’ descendants who still farmed those original holdings (recently there have been calls to strip perpetrators names from places named in those pioneers’ honour). I seized on this as motive for my present-day murder.

These were the elements around which I decided to craft a novel.

How had you decided on the best characters for the book?

‘Deep Down’ is the third Detective Sergeant Rory James story I have written, so he chose himself. For an archaeologist, I went young because I have a young Scottish male friend who works in Aboriginal archaeology. However, I made my fictional young archaeologist Indigenous, to be more relevant to the historic Aboriginal massacres in the story ... and I opted for him to be a female, named Tahlia Lock. The pioneer-wars massacre also required the bad guy to be a squatter descendant. Apparently, there aren’t that many remaining on their original family properties, but I found one. I named him Elliot Claymore.

How do you create or model your characters to fit the requirements of the story and the expectations of the readers?

I was influenced to make the young Indigenous archaeologist a female by the impressive young Indigenous women I was seeing on the ABC’s “The Drum” news analysis tv program at the time, particularly during NAIDOC week. There are good Indigenous bloke advocates about, but the young females stood out as having sharp minds more capable/likely of bringing about much needed change. There was no question that my young Indigenous archaeologist would be female.

Did you have any interesting experiences while writing, editing or publishing ‘Deep Down’?

The most satisfying experience was trekking to the summit of Mount William, the highest point of the Grampians. I haven’t been there for over twenty years, but I included it in the book from memory and I wanted to check the accuracy of my recall. The summit lacks the “wilderness” impact evident in other parts of the Grampians (because of its massive communication towers), but there is nevertheless something inspiring about being at the absolute top, observing the rest of the range and surrounding plains. Everything seems so close up despite the scale. I must have been similarly inspired on my previous visits because I didn’t change a word of what I’d written.

When did you first realize you wanted to write?

It was in the back of my mind for decades. All the while I was honing the craft in my day job with Government. It included writing Cabinet papers, Treasury submissions, business cases, ministerial letters and briefings. As dry as that sounds, the standard and discipline required was high. Also, when writing for politicians, you need to be compelling and grab their attention early — they don’t have a long attention span. Now I use my power for good. I also had a revelation after our second trip to Europe (around the time of my retirement). Photos from our first trip didn’t re-live it well enough for me, so as an alternative, I decided to maintain a brief diary and write it up on my return. I failed miserably at keeping a diary but wrote the trip up in any case from memory. I found I couldn’t tear myself away from the keyboard. Suddenly writing was more than just part of my job, albeit a part I was proud of. I had discovered the joy of writing for my own pleasure.