

The Pilkington Agency

Translation Rights Catalogue 2026

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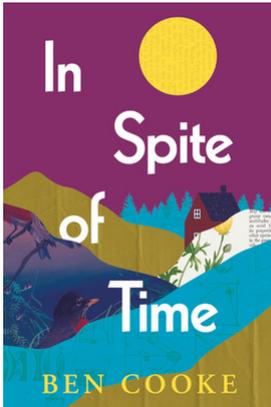
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FICTION

In Spite of Time

Ben Cooke

SPECULATIVE FICTION



Early 2027
85,000 words
Edited MS available March
2026

A high-concept, character-driven time travel narrative with an emotional throughline and a bittersweet resolution.

Set in the US and told across two timelines, one past and one present, *In Spite of Time* follows retired physicist, Arthur Wells, as he cares for his terminally ill wife, Lucy. Due to the unforeseen costs of her treatment, they are only days away from having the mountain home he promised they would retire to repossessed. A dilemma that Arthur has reluctantly kept a secret from his wife.

When Arthur unearths a strangely familiar device in the forest behind his home, one that grants him the ability to rewind a little less than five minutes per day, he decides to act in the hopes of keeping his promise to Lucy. This decision will thrust him into a web of moral ambiguity and disastrous unforeseen consequences, before eventually returning him to Lucy to discover that all throughout their life together, she too was keeping a secret. One that will completely rewrite his understanding of their enduring love for one another.

'Ben Cooke has masterfully crafted a spellbinding debut novel of hope, choice and love across time, perfect for readers of Gabrielle Zevin.' - Alex Lloyd, Publisher at Pan Macmillan Australia

Ben Cooke is a freelance journalist and photographer from Melbourne, now based in Tokyo. He has writing and photography credits with several international publications including the BBC, *Escape*, and *Tokyo Weekender*. *In Spite of Time* is his debut novel.

Rights held: Film, World All Languages
Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand (Pan Macmillan Australia)

Hot Ink

Matthew Denby

COMMERCIAL FICTION



Publication TBC
100,000 words
Unedited MS available now

The comedy and chaos of Jilly Cooper's *Rivals* meets the sharp insider exposé of *Industry*, from a former editor in the 90s and 00s gossip magazine industry.

HOT INK: Don't Get Burnt.

When teen soap star Katie-Ann Wilkins melts down on the set of Sunshine Cove, the scandal hits Sydney's celebrity-magazine world at the worst possible moment. Print is collapsing, budgets are sliced to the bone, and the women who've kept the industry afloat for decades are being asked to do the impossible - again.

Katrina Malone at *Your Way* and Tanya Davenport at *Today's Woman* both know the story could restore their magazines' glory days, but this isn't a catfight; it's a scramble to hold together careers, identities, and teams in an industry undergoing seismic change.

Meanwhile, deputy editor Ginny Markovic and her colleagues navigate the daily madness: impossible deadlines, fragile egos, celebrity chaos, office politics, and the quiet dread of the next corporate restructure.

What unfolds is a sharp, funny, glamorous, and deeply human story about the people behind the headlines, women who have shaped culture, survived every storm, and now must reinvent themselves one last time.

Hot Ink is an unmissable insider novel, rich with scandal, humour and heart; from someone who witnessed it all.

Matthew Denby worked across celebrity titles including *Fresh*, *Star*, and *Famous* before becoming Associate Editor of *Woman's Day*. He went on to become Managing Editor of *New Idea*, then Executive Editor (Digital) across *New Idea*, *Who* and *That's Life* for Seven West Media.

Rights held: World All Languages, Film & TV

Pillar of Ink

Claire Benson

ROMANTASY



Publication February 2027
95,000 words
Edited MS available Feb 26

The first book in the Sigils of Starlight trilogy

In a world ruled by the Truthseeker Order, magic is tightly bound, every spell sanctioned, every power controlled. The Eight Pillar Sigils are sacred, bestowed only upon the worthy to preserve order.

For Estella Vestas, stepdaughter of a ruthless Mindswayer matriarch, that order is nothing but a cage. Born to charm the elite, groomed for obedience, she yearns for freedom - and for the chance to create. On the eve of her twenty-first birthday, she dares the ultimate defiance: she carves a forbidden sigil into her skin. But the mark she claims does not glow with sanctioned silver. It burns crimson. Bloodfire. A volatile magic tied to the nine exiled goddesses, wild and hungry, bending to her rage, her longing, her heart.

Branded a heretic, Estella is suddenly the most hunted fugitive in the realm. The Council's sinister head believes she is the key to an ancient prophecy. A rebel faction hails her as their messiah. And shadowing her every step is Captain Grey Astrophel - an Orion enforcer sworn to capture her, even as a pull he cannot fight threatens to unravel his oath.

Forced into an uneasy alliance with a rebel whose secrets could undo her, Estella must navigate a world of treachery, passion, and shifting loyalties. Her magic could save everything - or ignite a fire that consumes it all.

Pillar of Ink is set to be the breakout Romantasy debut of 2027.

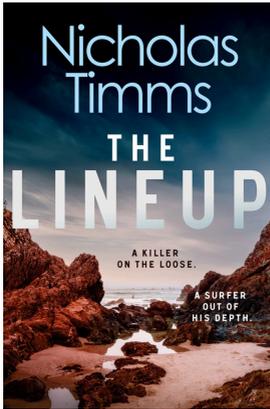
Claire Benson is a Sydney-based fine-line tattoo artist, author, and founder of Everywhere Studios, the city's first dedicated fine-line tattoo and art space. Raised in the North West of England, she began tattooing at nineteen. You can find her at [@claire.everywhere](https://www.instagram.com/claire.everywhere).

Rights held: Film, World All Languages
Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand (Allen & Unwin - 3-book deal)

The Line-Up

Nicholas Timms

CRIME AND THRILLER



August 2026
85,000 words
Page proofs available

Point Break meets *Rear Window* in this heart-pounding, suspenseful thriller set in Byron Bay.

A killer on the loose. A surfer out of his depth...

Bo Curren was once a champion surfer. Now, at twenty-eight, he's all washed up – unable even to set foot near the ocean.

Instead, he spends his days alone in his apartment, drowning his sorrows in whiskey and watching surfers on his laptop via the 24-hour surf webcam.

Then one day he sees something he shouldn't. A camera trained on a deserted Byron Bay beach picks up a murder right there on the sand.

The police dismiss his report, and no bodies are found. Yet Bo knows what he saw.

And he has a clue: the murderer's distinctive surfboard. If he can track that down, he'll catch the killer.

But is he ready to dive back into a world where the rules are unspoken, outsiders aren't welcome, and where secrets can be as dangerous as the waves?

'Crashes into the Australian crime scene with the force of a perfect wave – a tense debut that drags you under and doesn't let you surface until it's done.' R.W.R. McDonald

'The Lineup reads like a riptide. Once you're in it it won't let you go.' Michael Brissenden, author of *Dust*

Nicholas Timms is a writer and former competitive surfer based in Sydney. Now working as a copywriter for a globally recognised advertising agency, he has been the creative mind behind several award-winning campaigns for the likes of AAMI, Arnott's Biscuits and Bundaberg Rum.

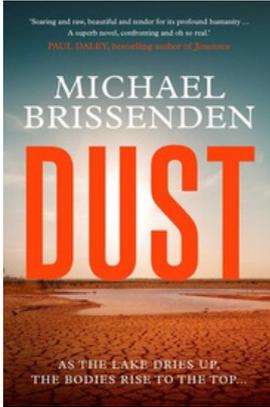
Rights held: World All Languages

Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand (Penguin Random House Australia), German (Heyne - sold at auction), TV option (Universal Studio Group).

Dust

Michael Brissenden

CRIME AND THRILLER



September 2025
320pp
Final PDF available

The #1 Bestseller

As the lake dries up, the bodies rise to the top.

Lake Herrod, a once-thriving community, now lies in the shadow of a nearly dry lake. The town, like the water, is evaporating and its residents are left clinging to what little remains.

When Aaron Love discovers a fresh corpse near the cracked lakebed – along with evidence his missing father is alive and linked to a web of organised crime – he is thrust into a world of deception, injustice and betrayal. With the town on the brink of collapse, Aaron and a haunted detective, Martyn Kravets, uncover a web of conspiracy that reaches far beyond the small community.

Dust is a dark, gripping thriller that explores the complexities of identity, a search for truth, and the unyielding forces of corruption in a world where lives are lived on the fringe and nothing is as it seems.

'Atmospheric, dark. Brissenden takes us to dangerous worlds we never want to escape.' - Candice Fox

'Masterful. A new classic of Australian crime fiction.' - Chris Hammer

'Dust is a story about what we leave behind, how far we'll go, and what it takes to rise up. Brissenden always reaches for just the right detail. This is smart, thoughtful, raw: rural crime done right. Brissenden is a must-read!' - Hayley Scrivener

Michael Brissenden is an author and journalist. He has covered politics, national security issues and spent many years working as a foreign correspondent. He now writes fiction and has published four novels: *The List*, *Dead Letters*, *Smoke* and *Dust*.

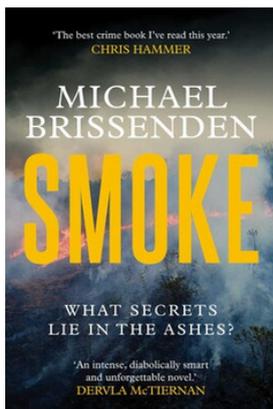
Rights held: Film, World All Languages

Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand (Affirm Press, Simon & Schuster), Russian (Azbooka-Atticus)

Smoke

Michael Brissenden

CRIME AND THRILLER



June 2024

320pp

Final PDF available

What secrets lie in the ashes?

After a brutal wildfire tears through the town of Jasper in the Californian sierras, a body is discovered in a shed. It looks like an open-and-shut case of accidental death - until further investigation reveals that the victim was locked in from the outside.

Years after leaving Jasper, Detective Alex Markov has been sent back under the shadow of an LAPD corruption investigation. She is convinced that the man, a family friend, was murdered opportunistically under the cover of the fire. As the smoke clears, Alex reveals a town corrupt to its core - but exposing that corruption could destroy her and the people she loves. Will she ignore the crookedness and deceit, or face the consequences of pursuing an inconvenient truth?

'Trenchant, vivid and densely plotted, this is Brissenden's best book so far'. - The Age/The Sydney Morning Herald

'An engrossing read that I just could not put down....intense, diabolically smart and unforgettable' - Dervla McTiernan

'Powerful, haunting and exceptionally well written' - Don Winslow

'Atmospheric, fast-paced, and almost unbearably tense - I was deeply immersed in Alex Markov's dangerous, unpredictable world. Brissenden has created characters you'll care about and a page-turner that'll keep you guessing. This is a cracking crime novel and his best book yet.' - Mark Brandi

Michael Brissenden is an author and journalist. He has covered politics, national security issues and spent many years working as a foreign correspondent. He now writes fiction and has published four novels: *The List*, *Dead Letters*, *Smoke* and *Dust*.

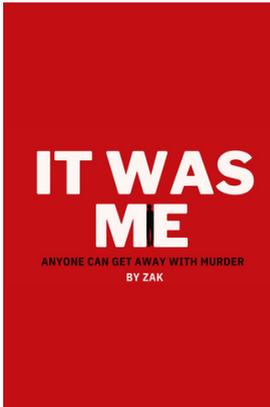
Rights held: Film, World All Languages

Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand (Affirm Press, Simon & Schuster)

It Was Me

Zak

CRIME AND THRILLER



Publication late 2026

55,000 words

Edited MS available April 2026

American Psycho for the Tik-Tok generation

It was Me has all the hallmarks of a cult sensation. It's a hugely fun and original crime novel written for the digital age:

- Chapters are all approx. 4 pages long
- It's written in the first person
- There are no full stops
- It's a short and punchy 60,000 words long

Zak is a profoundly disturbed individual with a sophisticated facade. He is narcissistic, charming, and manipulative - and capable of extreme violence. He is a bored advertising executive who sets himself the challenge of getting away with murder.

But murder in itself is pretty easy. After all, you could easily get away with killing some random person in the street, because there's nothing to connect you to them. It's much harder when you actually know the victim.

So, let's make this really difficult...

Can you get away with killing your best friend?

Hilarious and shocking, fast-paced and insightful, inventive and accessible, *It Was Me* is a perfect read for fans of *The Talented Mr Ripley* and *Saltburn*.

Damien Horner worked at some of the biggest advertising agencies in Europe before co-founding a creative hotshop where he won multiple awards. He has worked in the book industry on strategies for authors including JK Rowling, Lee Child, Jodie Picoult and Stephen King.

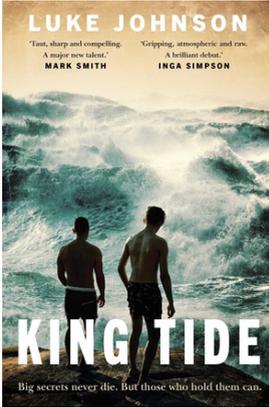
Rights held: Film, World All Languages

Rights sold: World English Audio
(Wavesound/W.F. Howes)

King Tide

Luke Johnson

CRIME AND THRILLER



August 2025
320pp
Final PDF available

A storm batters the seaside town of Lagunes Bay, unleashing a king tide across the wintry beach. As the water recedes, it reveals a long-buried secret: a body, framed and exposed in the sand.

When the body is identified as a young woman who vanished years ago - with little effort ever made to find her - the entire community comes under suspicion. How did she meet such a gruesome end? What did those closest to her know? Was Tate, the town's golden boy, her final boyfriend? And why has the return of an Anglican priest and his daughter left everyone so tense?

This isn't the first disappearance to rock this small town, but the local families aren't giving much away. As Detective Harper Lewis investigates this insular world, the mystery deepens with every uncovered clue. In Lagunes Bay, everyone has something to hide and every shadow tells a story.

King Tide is a stunning, exhilarating debut: a beautifully crafted, intricately plotted tale that is as emotionally raw as it is gripping.

'Dark and powerful' - Mark Brandi

'Gripping, atmospheric and raw. Friendship, love and loyalty drive this brilliant debut set in a small-town coastal community where secrets are tightly held, but eventually find their way to the surface.' - Inga Simpson

'Taut, sharp and compelling, King Tide announces the arrival of a major new talent in crime fiction.' - Mark Smith

Luke Johnson is from Ocean Grove, Victoria and is a Senior Physiotherapist. He won the 2021 Bellarine Short Story Competition and was the equal Second Prize Winner of the Sorrento Creative Writer Prize.

Rights held: Film, World All Languages

Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand
(Affirm Press, Simon & Schuster)

NON-FICTION

The Buried Teachests

Annika Blau

NARRATIVE NON-FICTION



Late 2027
Extent TBC
Proposal available now

An extraordinary true story of family secrets, scandal, and survival.

The Buried Teachests follows journalist Annika Blau's journey after she stumbles upon a secret family legacy. What follows is a remarkable investigation into a family who rose to prominence as purveyors of the famous 4711 cologne, only to be brought down by scandal, internment, and erasure.

A few years ago, Annika discovered that two teachests of mail collected by her great-grandfather had been found during a demolition and auctioned off for a small fortune by strangers. They were lauded as one of the most significant hauls of military mail in Commonwealth history, containing rare correspondence from Sydney's WW1 prisoner of war camp. But for Annika, they revealed family secrets, silences and shame.

Using the mail as clues, Annika uncovers the riches to rags tale of the relatives who collected it. Charting a path through two world wars and the Great Depression, it's a story about the family's rise to Sydney's high society and their fall to years behind bars as British "war trophies". At the heart of the story is a mystery: why did Annika's great-grandfather collect this historic haul only to hide it under some floorboards? Ultimately, she discovers he buried not just the teachests, but the truth of who the family were and where they came from.

At once memoir and investigation, *The Buried Teachests* sits alongside *Wifedom* by Anna Funder and *The Hare with Amber Eyes* as a powerful exploration of identity, loss, and the truths families bury to endure.

Annika Blau is an award-winning journalist, editor and podcaster. She is a reporter for ABC Radio National's flagship investigative program, Background Briefing. In 2023, she wrote, produced and presented *The Buried Teachests*: a two-part podcast series for RN's History Listen program.

Rights held: Film, World All Languages
Rights sold: Australia & New Zealand
(HarperCollins Australia)

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