

## SUMMER OF BLOOD

DAVE WARNER

### ABOUT THE BOOK

May, 1967. DS John Gordon and CI Ray Shearer are handpicked to find a young Australian man who has gone missing in California. Neck-deep in the incense-infused counterculture, their minds blown by the new sounds pouring out of the States, Gordon and Shearer start poking around. Pretty soon, what seems like a straightforward case takes on another dimension. From love-ins to music festivals, the two officers are swept up in a world of peace and free love, anti-war protests and psychedelic music, searching for a missing hippie – and maybe a serial killer – in a place where love is free and danger bountiful.

To enjoy the soundtrack as you read, head to the playlist here:  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1TpvX33jsEaB2XhMsJtibm>

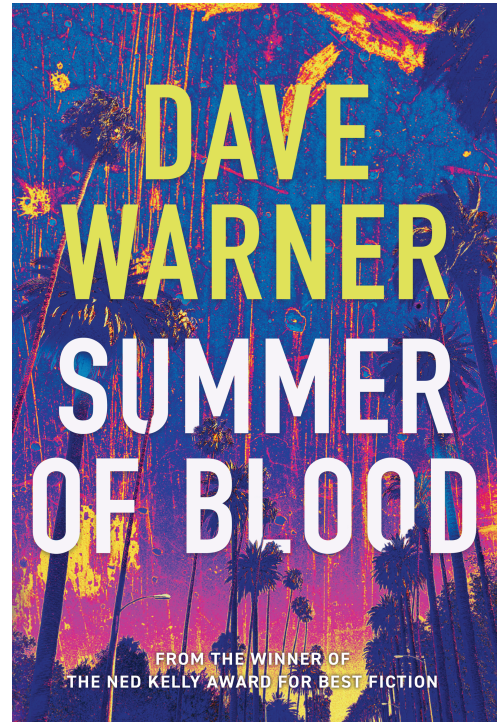
### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Warner is an author, musician and screenwriter. *Summer of Blood* is his twelfth adult novel, with previous novels winning the Western Australian Premier's Book Award for Fiction and the Ned Kelly Award for Best Australian Crime Fiction. Set in 1967, *Summer of Blood* is a stand-alone novel that features detectives Ray Shearer and John Gordon from *Big Bad Blood*, set in 1965.

Dave first came to national prominence in 1978 with his gold album *Mug's Game* and his band, Dave Warner's From the Suburbs. *Summer of Blood* pays tribute to many of Dave's musical heroes of his youth. Dave continues to write and record music, 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 are the early clues that this novel is set in the late 1960s?
2. What historical factors were in play that led to the Summer of Love?
3. In what ways do you think the America of 1967 was different to the Australia of 1967?
4. How does Warner use Gordon and Shearer to express or explore these differences?
5. How does Warner get around the problem of having two Australian cops investigating murders in the US?
6. What do you think they learn about themselves and their connection to home in the time they are away?
7. Based on the gigs Warner describes, which one would you have most liked to attend?
8. Why do you think the author has started every chapter with a song title?
9. Who is your favourite character and why?
10. How does the era and setting determine the kind of investigating that can be done?
11. Who do you think are the potential killers our attention is directed to along the way?
12. Why do you think Warner includes the real-life character of Janis Joplin?
13. Why does he include the cameo with Elvis Presley?
14. And what do you think is the meaning of the novel's final line on p.314?



## INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

### ***Where did the idea for this novel come from?***

There were really two separate ideas that merged into one for this story. Firstly, I loved Ray and John from my 1999 novel, *Big Bad Blood*, and I wanted to bring them back. That novel is set in 1965 in Kings Cross. For twenty years I kicked around ideas that might be big enough to justify their return, and then, on holiday in Greece six years ago, I had the idea that maybe they could solve the holy grail of crime, The Black Dahlia murder – the murder of Elizabeth Short in Los Angeles in the 1940s. But how to get them operating in the USA? I had long been wanting to do a crime novel that was set against the backdrop of the Summer of Love – my favourite musical era – and that was the spark: why not bring Ray and John back two years after their last adventure and place these two very Aussie cops in a completely strange world?

### ***How much planning and research did it require to execute the plot?***

I let the idea simmer for about a year or so, and then started in earnest. First, I needed to assess where Ray and John were in their private lives since we left them. How scarred were they by what had happened in *Big Bad Blood*? Next, I set about asking what sort of case would carry them to California. A serial murderer was too big right off, but a missing person could do it. Then I could escalate the missing person case into a serial killer case and have them on the spot in a credible way. The plotting from then on became intricate as I wanted every event to be a real event that took place. This required a deal of research, but it was fun. The plot continued to evolve as I wrote.

### ***Do you think there is something special about the music from this era?***

Personally, this era was incredibly significant to me. I was thirteen and going to a Christian Brothers school where you got expelled for having your hair touch your collar. For the first time, music was being taken out of the hands of the classic big music companies and the power was in the hands of the young consumer. The music was idealist but also sexy, and the distorted guitars and whining keyboards spoke to me. I still believe this era is the most explosive – Hendrix, Joplin, the Doors, Country Joe, Zappa, Dylan, Beach Boys, et al. An era where social, political and personal concerns all got a go in the theatre of popular music.

### ***What was your favourite musical gig to write about?***

I was a huge Country Joe and the Fish fan, and so the first gig the boys attend at the original Fillmore – the launch of Country Joe and the Fish's first album, supported by Big Brother and the Holding Company – is my fave. I just imagined these two suburban cops walking into the psychedelic light show and meeting Janis. What a blast.

### ***What's next for Dave Warner?***

Book-wise, I am well into the next Dan Clement novel. So, more fun games and death in Australia's North West. But I have also started work on an Agatha Christie-style whodunnit set in 1929. I like to explore every sub-genre of crime writing. I think it keeps me fresh.

Music-wise, I have been recording new tracks all year and have enough for two new albums. The first of these should be ready around mid-late November. And just for fun I have recorded a single, 'Summer of Blood', to go with the book. With my great friend Tony Durant, we have concocted a song that is in keeping with the book, but also sounds as if it might have been written and recorded in 1967. Hope you love it.



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