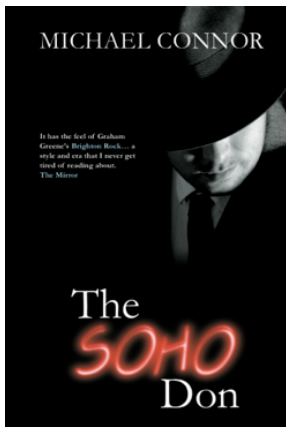


BOOK REVIEW



The Soho Don by Michael Connor

What readers have said

"It has the feel of Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* ... a style and era that I never get tired of reading about" **The Mirror, newspaper**

"Great read ..."

Chris Tarrant, TV personality

" I have never started a book that made such an impact... we were innocents in a wicked world. " **Barry Cryer, writer and comedian**

"A good read... not in the normal true crime genre ... this is a love story written in the third person." **Steve Allen, producer LBC radio**

Overview

The story of a shy south London boy from a respectable family who became a shadowy but powerful figure in the Soho, Mayfair and Brighton underworlds.

Smartly dressed and well spoken, Billy Howard dominated the London crime scene for 30 years, a reign punctuated only by short stays in prison. The Krays said he feared no one and that Howard was the one man they truly respected.

The protection business drew him into a lucrative world of nightclubs and gambling, on the back of the black-market trade that had flourished during the Second World War. Unlike many of the notorious figures that have emerged from this era he was in many ways a loner, preferring to control his own operations and eschewing the leadership of a gang. In contrast to the Krays, he did not court publicity but on the occasions his name did hit the headlines, it was often with the tag 'Laughing Boy'.

A boxer in the army, a powerful street fighter and utterly fearless with a knife, Howard was ruthless in meting out punishment to villains who stepped out of line and instilled terror in witnesses who were prepared to testify against him. His power and influence were so great that even now, almost two decades after his death, close friends and casual acquaintances are still wary of speaking out.

THE SOHO DON is a gripping account of Howard's violent life and it exposes the links between the vicious gangland bosses, the police, the celebrity hothouses of Mayfair clubs, high class prostitution and international gambling. It portrays his slide from power and, finally, his pathetic death in 1984.



For further details of the author – see www.michael-connor.co.uk

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