

You'll Never Take Me Alive

The Life and Death of Bushranger Ben Hall

by Nick Bleszynski

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***You'll Never Take Me Alive* will be launched at Forbes, NSW on December 1, to coincide with the unveiling of a Ben Hall statue at Forbes Railway station.**

“A ripper yarn” Bryce Courtenay

From the author of the controversial bestselling Breaker Morant book *Shoot Straight You Bastards!: the truth behind the killing of Breaker Morant* comes a fictional account of the man Ned Kelly idolised, gentleman bushranger Ben Hall.

A powerful tale of betrayal and vengeance, ***You'll Never Take Me Alive*** tells the story of Ben Hall, a hero in the great outlaw tradition. After his wife left him for a policeman, Hall was falsely imprisoned for bushranging in 1862 - his property burned down and his stock left to perish. On release Ben Hall declared, 'I might as well have the game as the blame'. He held up the town of Bathurst, bailed up more banks, stations, squatters and towns than any other bushranger and masterminded the Eugowra escort robbery netting the biggest haul in the colony's short history.

Known as 'the gentleman bushranger', Ben Hall never killed anyone and avoided bloodshed if possible. A chivalrous champion of the people, he told police, 'You'll never take me alive!' They took him at his word.

With an illiterate hero and no 'Glenrowan' letter Nick Bleszynski uses an inspired mix of archival research, folklore and the power of imagination to bring Ben Hall out of Ned Kelly's shadow. He vividly re-creates the life and struggles of this landowner – the son of convicts - who became an Australian bushranging legend.

With an author's postscript that accuses New South Wales police of murdering Ben Hall five days before the Felon's Apprehension Act became law, this book is set to reignite debate about Hall, 140 years after his death.

“I'm not a criminal. I've been driven to this life...I was held for a month in gaol, an innocent man. While I was away me wife ran away with a policeman...Then I was arrested for the mail coach robbery and held another month before I was let out on bail. When I came home, I found my house burned down and cattle perished of thirst, left locked in yards...By Gawd, Mr Norton, it's your mob have driven me to it and, I tell you straight, you'll never take me alive!”

Nick Bleszynski is the author of the bestselling *SHOOT STRAIGHT, YOU BASTARDS!: the truth behind the killing of Breaker Morant*. Nick was born in Scotland and grew up in central and eastern Africa. After returning to the UK and graduating from Anglia University, he worked in television as a writer, producer and director. His films include: *Bronzed Aussie Gods*, a documentary on Australian beach culture for ABC TV; *In the Tracks of the Hunter* for Channel 7 and National Geographic and *Animal Face Off* series for the Discovery Channel. Nick was also featured on ABC's historical *Rewind* series and on a recent Radio National *Hindsight* special on Ben Hall.

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