

# **PRAISE for THE PEOPLE SMUGGLER**

## **THE TRUE STORY OF ALI AL JENABI, THE 'OSKAR SCHINDLER OF ASIA'**

### **by author & filmmaker ROBIN de CRESPIGNY**

'The cover describes the book as 'a nonfiction thriller and a moral maze'. It lives up to this promise (and) is a gripping and thought-provoking read. It also contributes to unease about the effectiveness of the Refugee Convention, and about the conceptual validity of universal human rights in general.' **Paul Morgan, *Australian Book Review***

'It is to writer and filmmaker de Crespigny's credit that while giving us the details of Al Jenabi's plight, the dramatic narrative holds strong... Compelling.' **Dianne Dempsey, *The Age***

'Robin de Crespigny's *The People Smuggler* is a must-read for anyone who wonders what this demonising term might really mean. After torture in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, her hero, Ali Al Jenabi, escapes and becomes a kind of Oskar Schindler for others who seek refuge. It's an illuminating tale in the context of the asylum-seeker debate, when what is often missing is information and empathy... De Crespigny uses the techniques of narrative journalism to bring us a thriller and an inspirational story.' **Jane Sullivan, *The Saturday Age***

'This is one of the most immensely readable and most deeply thought-provoking books I have read in some time. The People Smuggler is a reminder of the power of literature to capture stories that not only change the world but also change the way we think.' **Byron Shire *Echo***

'Tight, powerful and extraordinarily well written... This is a book which highlights the provincialism, the meanness, fear and navel gazing of the Australian ruling class. It is a book which glories in the strength, courage and compassion of the human spirit. It is a book which says as much about Australia as it does about Iraq.' **Bruce Haigh, *The Canberra Times***

'(The People Smuggler) is an amazing book. It reads like an adventure story, telling the harrowing and heartbreaking story of Ali's journey to Australia and eventual prosecution as a people smuggler...No one who reads The People Smuggler could be left with any illusion that there is anything resembling a queue. Taken together, Globalization and Borders, The People Smuggler and Reluctant Rescuers paint a picture of a border protection regime that is itself directly responsible for making boat journeys more dangerous and alarmingly nonchalant about rescuing their passengers when they encounter trouble.' ***Current issues in Criminal Justice, Volume 24, Number 2***

'All this and a lot more is contained in a tight, powerful and extraordinarily well written book, *The People Smuggler*, by author and filmmaker Robin De Crespigny. It might have been called 'The Enabler' or 'A Compassionate Man'. This is a book which highlights the provincialism, the meanness, fear and navel gazing of the Australian ruling class. It is a book which glories in the strength, courage and compassion of the human spirit. It is a book which says as much about Australia as it does about Iraq.' **Bruce Haigh, ABC's *The Drum***

'Australian writer Robin de Crespigny's new book, *The People Smuggler* aptly described as a non-fiction thriller and a moral maze is thus a considered, timely and insightful account of one man's incredible experience on both sides of the issue: as an asylum seeker and a people smuggler.' **Michael Jacobsen, *Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin***

'Nothing more clearly demonstrates the sad state of our current political debate and the media coverage of it [than] Jenabi's case... Ali's story is absolutely riveting and deserves a wide readership. Read it and be angry. And then maybe write a letter to your MP.' **Grant Hansen, *Good Reading***

‘With enormous power and insight, *The People Smuggler* tells a story of daily heroism, bringing to life the forces that drive so many people to put their lives in unscrupulous hands.’ ***Imagine***

‘A gripping account of one man’s determination to free himself, his family and his people from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. De Crespigny spent three years working with refugee Ali Al Jenabi crafting his story of endurance, loss and unyielding hope for the future that led him to Australia. This is a fascinating insider’s perspective of the underbelly of a global crisis.’ ***Instyle***

‘It is an utterly gripping portrait of a man cut loose from the protections of civilisation, attempting to retain his dignity and humanity while taking whatever path he can out of an impossible situation.’ ***Mid-West Times (WA)***

‘Sometimes, when you are so lucky, it seems the unlucky ones just fell to earth, without a story, nothing to define them as fellow human beings. They simply become illegal aliens. *The People Smuggler* changed that for me.’ **Gail Forrer, *Noosa News***

‘This book should be compulsory reading to those concerned about asylum seekers, which seems to be a great many of us.’ ***Pittwater Life***

‘Al Jenabi’s is a lonely voice from the flipside of an argument far more complex than the tabloids’ ‘turn back the boats’. His story . . . is just mind-blowing. This moving saga of endurance and bravery could well compel a stone to cry.’ **Paul Robinson, *QANTAS The Australian Way***

‘Originally conceived as a film, Robin de Crespigny’s wonderfully written book projects Ali’s brave and authentic voice in a way that is captivating and compelling.’ **Mark Goudkamp, *refugeeaction.org.au***

‘Robin de Crespigny has pieced together a remarkable tale of one man’s odyssey to escape Saddam Hussein’s oppressive regime to bring his family to Australia. Along the way, we experience the shadowy world of fake passports, illegal border crossings and unscrupulous individuals. De Crespigny says by travelling with him, we can understand the bigger picture of why people make the choice to get on leaky boats, and how none of it is black and white.’ ***Sunday Mail (QLD)***

‘This is a story every Australian should read . . . a complex mixture of love of family and a hard-edged determination to survive in a brutal, unforgiving world.’ **Bruce Elder, *Sydney Morning Herald***

‘The People Smuggler is a book that squarely challenges the notion that all those who organise the asylum-seeker boats represent the face of evil. The story of Ali is one of extraordinary courage which contrasts the human capacity for brutality and cruelty with that of compassion and genuine kindness.’ ***Toowoomba Chronicle***

‘Throughout this important book, Ali emerges as an unlikely hero . . . It’s also a book that reveals the strength of the human spirit.’ ***The Week***

‘An epic story full of dramatic reversals and cinematic cliffhangers . . . Ali emerges as an unlikely but true-blue hero: resilient, loyal to his mates and protective of those weaker than himself, canny, resourceful, unafraid of sacrifice, a man of honour . . . This is a story that had to be told.’ **Jose Borghino, *The Australian***

‘It’s gripping, thrilling, humorous and epic. Such is the power of this story that the entire way through, the reader is willing Ali to survive and miraculously save his family . . . This book is compulsive reading and a story of our times.’ **Helen Crompton, *The West Australian***

‘An incredible tale . . . Utterly gripping and fascinating’ ***Yen***