

# **DARK VICTORY**

## **DAVID MARR & MARIAN WILKINSON**

*Dark Victory* is not the *Tampa* story people think they know—but a vivid account of Canberra’s radical campaign against boat people that began well before the *Tampa* rescue and continued until John Howard’s election victory in November 2001.

*Dark Victory* tells for the first time of—

- Philip Ruddock’s strange enquiries about pirates at a secret Jakarta meeting to review the campaign against the boat people,
- Max Moore-Wilton’s ruthless scheme to leave asylum seekers without food, water or rescue on Ashmore Reef as a lesson to people smugglers,
- how Australia put at risk 438 lives on the *Palapa* by leaving their disabled boat to weather a violent storm,
- a full account of how they were then rescued from the point of view of the *Tampa*, the asylum seekers, Canberra, Oslo and Jakarta,
- how John Howard took the decision to ban the *Tampa* from Australian waters,
- how Captain Arne Rinnan was threatened with imprisonment by Canberra on at least three occasions,
- how John Howard knew there were seriously ill people on the *Tampa* while ridiculing the Norwegians for making that claim,
- how Canberra unlawfully used the intelligence services to eavesdrop on the lawyers working for the shipping line and the asylum seekers,
- astonishing details of the pleading, angry conversations between John Howard and his Norwegian counterpart Jens Stoltenberg and Alexander Downer and his Oslo counterpart Thorbjørn Jagland,
- the grave diplomatic incident sparked by the SAS on the *Tampa*,
- the difficult life of the asylum seekers under military control on the Norwegian ship, and
- how Canberra kept trying to force the *Tampa* to sail unconcerned that no other country would allow the asylum seekers ashore.

*Dark Victory* is an account of how the Scandinavians, in the end, outwitted Canberra. It is also a deeply troubling account of the legal manoeuvring that surrounded the *Tampa*. The book tells—

- how John Howard personally designed the first Border Protection Bill to try to crush any court challenge to his *Tampa* tactics,
- the inside story of the Melbourne lawyers who worked to bring the asylum seekers ashore,
- the predicament of the Federal Court judges hearing the case surrounded by death threats,
- how the shipping line moved to thwart the lawyers, and
- how the government made multi-million dollar threats to the lawyers then killed the case by special legislation while it was still being fought before the courts.

**DAVID MARR & MARIAN WILKINSON ARE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW**  
**STRICT EMBARGO DATE 10 MARCH 2003**  
**Allen & Unwin \$29.95 pb ISBN 1865089397**

**<<< PTO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND AUTHOR DETAILS >>>**

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## **DAVID MARR & MARIAN WILKINSON**

*Dark Victory* gives a full, behind the scenes account of the brutal politics of 'border protection' in which John Howard completely out-manoeuvred his opponent Kim Beazley. *Dark Victory* gives the first account—drawing on official and unofficial sources—of how the government used the armed forces in the election campaign of 2001. *Dark Victory* tells—

- how Peter Reith gagged the military,
- how the military was used to feed information to ministers on the campaign trail,
- how the military helped the government keep the public from seeing the human cost of the blockade of boat people, but also
- the battles that raged between gung ho civilian bureaucrats and the military over the preservation of life during the blockade of the people smuggling boats.

With remarkable clarity and detail, *Dark Victory* tells the story of children overboard, one of the great political scandals in Australian history. *Dark Victory* gives a lucid and even-handed account of the appalling loss of life in the sinking of SIEV X. *Dark Victory* tells for the first time from both sides—the navy's and the asylum seekers'—the story of the often-violent interception of people-smuggling boats, the suffering of the asylum seekers in the boats forced back to Indonesia and below decks on the navy transports on the long voyages to detention in Nauru.

*Dark Victory* gives the most complete account to date of the generosity and humanity of New Zealand and the squalid negotiations that to the detention of asylum seekers on Nauru and in remote Papua New Guinea. *Dark Victory* catalogues their fate—essentially abandoned by the rest of the world.

*Dark Victory* is about the governing of Australia as much as the fate of the boat people. The authors identify the failures of the Opposition, the military, the public service, the judiciary and the press in the weeks leading up to the election of 2001. But *Dark Victory* also acknowledges and investigates the great popularity of the blockade that stopped boat people setting out for Australia—at a cost of \$500 million and incalculable damage to the nation's reputation.

Looming over *Dark Victory* is the figure of John Howard. This is his book: the master politician, a genius of spin, driving his government to a third triumph at the polls.

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**MARIAN WILKINSON** is one of Australia's leading journalists and the author of *The Fixer* a revealing account of the life and career of Labor's Graham Richardson. She has worked as a senior reporter for the *Australian*, deputy editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and executive producer of *Four Corners*. She is currently the Washington correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*. **DAVID MARR** is the award-winning author of *Patrick White: A Life*, *Barwick* and *The High Price of Heaven*. In a career spanning thirty years, he has written for *The Bulletin* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, edited the *National Times* and reported for *Four Corners*. He is now presenter of ABC-TV's *Media Watch*.

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