

THE INDIE BOOK AWARD 2009



CATEGORY WINNER
NON-FICTION

The Tall Man by Chloe Hooper
Published by Penguin Books



What the judging panel said:

- *The Tall Man* explores many themes but at the heart of the book is a compelling human story and a thoughtful, perceptive examination of an important Australian tragedy.
- Chloe Hooper manages to be balanced and measured, she does not preach, pontificate or otherwise pretend to be an authority on the fraught area of indigenous/white relations.
- This is a challenging and powerful book that makes compelling reading for anyone interested in Australian society, Aboriginal issues and the complex factors that influence human nature and behaviour.

About the book:

The Tall Man is the story of the death of Cameron Doomadgee, who one morning swore at a policeman and forty-five minutes later lay dead in a watchhouse cell. It is the story of that policeman, the tall, enigmatic Christopher Hurley who chose to work in some of the toughest and wildest places in Australia, and of the struggle that brought him to trial. And it is the story of a place. To understand what happened, one needs to understand where it happened - Palm Island, in the far north. People there have a relationship with the land like no others, have a history and culture and catastrophic present like no others. It is Australia, but an Australia very few of us have seen.

About the author:

Chloe Hooper's reports from the inquest into Doomadgee's death won her a *Walkley Award* and were published around the world. *The Tall Man* won the Non-Fiction Book of the Year award at the ABIA awards in June this year. Her first novel *A Child's Book of True Crime* was published in many languages. It was a *New York Times Notable Book* and short-listed for the *Orange Prize for Fiction* (UK). She lives in Melbourne.

The author's comments about the Indie Book Award:

"It is a tremendous honour and thrill to win an Indie Award. *The Tall Man* is a challenging, confronting book for many Australians to read, and without the stunning support of the country's independent bookstores far fewer people would have even opened its pages."