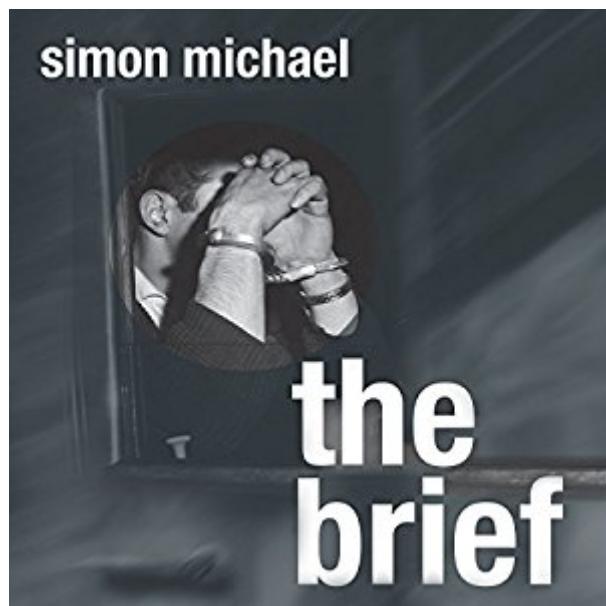


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# The Brief: Charles Holborne, Book 1



## Synopsis

London in the 1960s: gang wars, corrupt police, vice and pornography. Ex-boxer Charles Holborne has plenty of opportunities to build his reputation with the criminal classes as a barrister who delivers. But Charles, an East End boy made good, is not all he seems, and his past is snapping at his heels. When his philandering wife has her throat slashed, Holborne finds himself on the wrong side of the law and on the run. Can he discover the truth of the brutal slaying and escape the hangman's noose? Based upon real Old Bailey cases and genuine court documents, *The Brief* is the first in barrister Simon Michael's series of compelling criminal dramas, an evocative slice of sleazy glamour from the swinging '60s. Simon Michael delivers an authentic and addictive listen for any crime fan.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you're a lover of criminal mysteries, especially English ones, then you'll quickly fall in love with this well written novel. I could tell the writer had insights in law, courts, and police work. Honestly, if you don't read this book, you'll miss a great one.

Simon Michael's "The Brief" has been described as 'BritCrime at its best' and I would wholeheartedly agree, it's so impressive! It had me hooked from the very first page till the tense gripping end. This is so much more than a legal thriller - intense, riveting, compelling and with plenty of action to keep you turning the pages . "The Brief" gives you a brilliant insight into the criminal

justice system in the 1960's and the legal goings-on behind the scenes, with the frightening realisation that criminals could still hang for certain crimes committed back then. This wasn't some boring courtroom drama that dragged out but a very exciting and intriguing thriller incorporating the courtroom through court transcripts and police documents which I found a very original and novel way of portraying the facts of the trial. I loved the ambience of the book - London during the swinging 60's, the clubs and pubs, the criminals and the gang wars. The final part of the book was a race against time and had me holding my breath - I hate injustices in stories and I desperately wanted a favourable outcome, you'll need to read the book to find out if Charles finally escapes his false charge of murder! The author's attention to detail using his own personal experience as a barrister for many years is second to none and stunningly authentic. There's no over the top legal jargon or complex terminology. The brilliant writing style was easy to follow and understand, a captivating plot that has you screaming for justice and a list of characters that are very believable even the corrupt police officers - there's just nothing not to like in this book. I loved Charles (who is quite the anti-hero) with his honourable morals and hardworking intentions whilst struggling to come to terms with his background and family rejection. I've been told that the sequel "An Honest Man" is even better still and I really can't wait to read more about Charles Holborn and the 1960's!! A huge 5 stars for "The Brief" and to the author Simon Michael and Urbane Publications.

1960s London - gang wars, corrupt police, vice, and pornography - ex-boxer, Charles Holborne, has plenty of opportunities to build his reputation with the criminal classes as a barrister who delivers. But Charles, an East End boy made good, is not all he seems, and his past is snapping at his heels. When his philandering wife has her throat slashed, Holborne finds himself on the wrong side of the law and on the run. Can he discover the truth of the brutal slaying and escape the hangman's noose? Brilliant. This is a very well executed crime/thriller novel. Before reading this book I expected it to be concentrating on courtroom dramas. Yes, there is some involvement with this, but this book is much more than that. The research is extensive and the author has delivered a stunning piece of writing with tremendous authenticity. This is a pure gem and kept me turning the pages constantly. Brilliant characters, excellent plotting and overall an indulgent, absorbing and enjoyable read. I couldn't give less than 5\* - This book deserves to be in the spotlight and I highly commend Simon Michael & Urbane Publications for this outstanding piece of work. I'm very much looking forward to the continuation of this series with, An Honest Man, next on the agenda!

I'm not usually a big fan of court room dramas but believe me the actual court side of it is only a

smallish section and even then I was well and truly gripped by the questioning of Charles' client. The story starts off with events leading up to Charles' first court case as well as the court case itself. After that things start to spiral out of control for poor Charles when he is set up for murdering his wife. Things actually get quite tense as it's a race against time for Charles to prove his innocence before he is found and arrested, worst of all if he is found guilty, it is at a time when the death penalty is still around. Even though Charles knows he is in the wrong for going on the run, with a police sergeant in charge of the case who doesn't do things by the book, he really doesn't have any other choice. The Brief was such an entertaining read. It starts off at a steady pace then picks up speed as it progresses. My heart was literally in my mouth many a time as Charles uncovers information leading him towards the person who has tried framing him and it certainly made for some edge of your seat reading. A highly enjoyable read that will appeal to all fans of crime thrillers. My thanks to the author and Urbane Publications for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

As an American, I find the British legal system is an elaborate mystery all on its own. Here the author has offered a primer--with insider's lingo, a thorough understanding of procedure, and all bewigged and eccentric players in their places--in the form of a tense tale of 1960's crime and punishment and good old whodunit elaboration. But we certainly don't spend the whole book in the courtroom, as we get a taste of London's underbelly, middle class suburbia and an ethnic mix not often addressed in English fiction. I'd like to see more development of the female characters, but I suppose one could see the depictions here as keeping with the mid-Century setting. Overall, a good read, and I look forward to the author's next publication.

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