

Gay hate crime novel launched

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This week marks the first anniversary of the August 1, 2009 shooting by an unidentified masked gunman in a Tel Aviv gay youth centre that left two dead and eight injured. It also marks the release of Australian writer Marc Andrews' semi-fictional novel inspired by the case, *Revelations*.

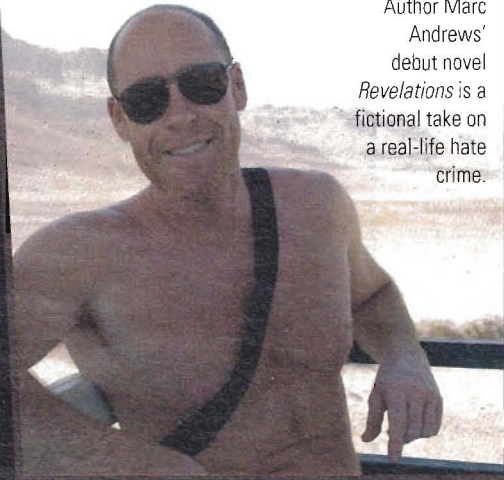
For Andrews, the seeds of the story were planted when he was holidaying in Tel Aviv at the same time as the shooting.

"I was out in Tel Aviv the night it happened, at a gay club. It sounds a bit trite to say this, but it had a real effect on me. I thought, whoever went in to this gay youth centre and plastered the place with bullets could've just as easily walked into the club I was in and done the same thing," he told *Sydney Star Observer*.

"When I came home I kept following the story, because it just seemed so odd that there were no leads — in Israel, there's a police or security presence on every street corner, so it does seem so bizarre that this gunman has never been found. Although it does seem everyone in Tel Aviv has a theory about who was behind it."

Andrews' book weaves together the fictional characters of David, an Australian man who visits Tel Aviv to make plans with his Israeli boyfriend, and Yaniv, an ex-gay fundamentalist Christian convinced he is on a mission from God.

It seems that for Andrews, a big part of



Author Marc Andrews' debut novel *Revelations* is a fictional take on a real-life hate crime.

writing the book was trying to make some sense of the tragedy for himself.

"I kept thinking, how was going into this building and killing young gay people 'right' in this person's eyes? How can he possibly think this is what his god wants? That's where the idea for this parallel character, Yaniv, comes from."

Andrews has no intention of profiting from the real-life tragedy; all proceeds from *Revelations* will be donated to ORAM International, an organisation which advocates for refugees fleeing sexual or gender-based

violence.

Andrews returned to Tel Aviv in January to further research the case and said it was heartening to see the city's gay and lesbian population had not bowed to fear.

"There's this real sense of resilience in Israel — almost every family there has been touched by tragedy at one time or another, so it's a remarkably strong country. That was particularly evident with the gay community; they really fought back after the shooting and said 'we're not going to stand for this.'"

info: *Revelations* is available from www.marcandrewsblog.blogspot.com and at the Bookshop in Darlington.