

**THE BIG FEAR by Andrew Case**  
*Published by Thomas & Mercer*

Taking place in New York, a city in the grip of a sweltering summer and with a population unsettled by a series of recent disasters, *The Big Fear* is an exciting crime story set against a background of corruption and manipulation, involving high finance, politics and bent police officers.

When veteran detective, Ralph Mulino, is called out to investigate a murder on board a container ship, he is unaware that the suspect he ends up chasing, and finally shooting, is another cop.

After being placed under investigation by the Firearms Discharge Control Board, Mulino maintains his response was self defence, as the other officer – Brian Rowson – had drawn a gun and was about to shoot. However, when no gun is recovered from the scene, the NYPD suspends Mulino until the case is resolved.

Finding himself promoted, after his boss, Christine Davenport, resigns, civilian investigator, Leonard Mitchell, is charged with interviewing Mulino. Initially not convinced by Mulino's story, Mitchell starts to delve deeper. However, he has no idea how deadly the assignment will prove to be... especially after Christine Davenport is found dead in the harbour, a supposed suicide case.

Unable to believe the verdict – as he knows she was devoted to her young child and husband – Mitchell sets out to discover the truth, forming a tenuous alliance with Mulino, who he now suspects is being set up.

As the pair begin to uncover an emerging conspiracy of business sabotage for financial gain – ultimately bringing the integrity of the police force into question – it becomes increasingly difficult to separate the lies from the truth.

As Mitchell observes: “The truly innocent people, the ones who don't even know they are under suspicion, are the ones who look guilty as hell.”

Gradually closing in on the prime conspirator, Mitchell soon realises his own life is in danger. Not knowing who he can trust, he desperately enters a race against time to prevent another fatal disaster... without getting killed himself.

This is a clever, rollercoaster of a novel, as it keeps you guessing right until the end. Just when you think the case is solved, there is a further twist, disproving all your suspicions.

Throughout the novel, Andrew Case paints a vivid picture of New York, illustrating the sights and smells of a city in crisis. A city where the Small Fears are those of being mugged or burgled, while the Big Fears are those of financial chaos or terrorist attacks.

The action is fast paced and the author has created a diverse cast of believable and well-drawn characters. All the protagonists are driven by individual motivations and agendas, which are skilfully woven into a struggle with a criminal enterprise that has the potential to undermine the fabric of the city itself.

If you are a fan of crime novels, you will not be disappointed with this one.

Already a seasoned playwright, this is Andrew Case's debut novel. For nearly a decade, he served as an investigator, spokesman, and policy director at the Civilian Complaint Review Board, which investigates allegations of misconduct against New York City Police Department officers. His background has served to bring authenticity to his novel.

Andrew lives in Flatbush, Brooklyn, with his wife and two children.