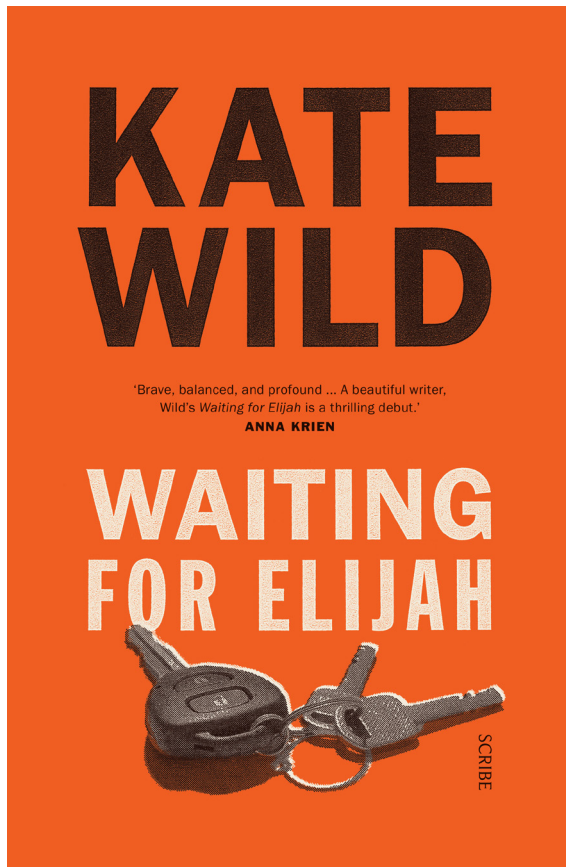


# Waiting for Elijah

KATE WILD



## BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback  
 ISBN: 9781925322736  
 RRP: \$35.00



## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Kate Wild is an investigative journalist whose work with distinguished teams at the ABC has been recognised with three Walkley Awards and a Logie. Her reports from Darwin, where she lived from 2010 to 2016, laid the groundwork for a Four Corners story on juvenile detention that prompted the calling of a Royal Commission. Like Elijah Holcombe, Kate grew up in country New South Wales; she now lives and works in Sydney. *Waiting for Elijah* is her first book.

In 2009, in the NSW country town of Armidale, a mentally ill young man is shot dead by a police officer. Senior Constable Andrew Rich claims he 'had no choice' other than to shoot 24-year-old Elijah Holcombe — Elijah had run at him roaring with a knife, he tells police.

Some witnesses to the shooting say otherwise, though, and this act of aggression doesn't fit with the sweet, sensitive, but troubled young man that Elijah's family and friends knew him to be. The shooting devastates Elijah's family and the police officer alike.

So what happened in that Armidale laneway — and how could it have been avoided? *Waiting for Elijah* is the culmination of journalist Kate Wild's six-year investigation — an investigation that not only seeks to answer these questions, but also poses some vitally important ones of its own: Why is it still taboo to talk about mental illness in our society? Is it fair to expect police to be first responders in mental health crises? If the community insists this job belongs to police, how can these interactions be improved?

Written with clear-eyed compassion and a compelling narrative drive, *Waiting for Elijah* is an account of a tragedy that didn't have to happen. It is also an intense, forensic deconstruction of the extended legal proceedings that followed, and a heartbreaking portrait of a family's grief.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Which character in *Waiting for Elijah* do you relate to the most? Why?
2. Which scene has stayed with you most strongly?
3. Who do you believe bears responsibility for Elijah Holcombe's death?
4. Are police the right people to respond to someone in psychiatric crisis? Why or why not?
5. What if the person in crisis is armed or threatening another person's safety?

### PRAISE FOR WAITING FOR ELIJAH

'Kate Wild's *Waiting for Elijah* is brave, balanced, and profound; wrestling with the fatal police shooting of a young mentally ill man, Wild reveals a compelling investigation into mental illness and the police on the frontline of psychosis. A beautiful writer, Wild's *Waiting for Elijah* is a thrilling debut.'

– ANNA KRIEN

'[*Waiting for Elijah*] will appeal to readers of Helen Garner and Chloe Hooper ... [Wild] explores her subject with great depth, compassion, and sensitivity ... Essential reading.'

– BOOKS+PUBLISHING

6. Do you believe the legal system can deliver justice?
7. What is your opinion of the right to silence? Do you believe this right should be available to everyone?
8. Does mental illness frighten you?



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