# The Tiger of Saigon: A Price of Blood



#### LE VAN VIEN: The Tiger of Saigon (At The Price of

**Blood Book 2)** by Charles Bracelen Flood

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In the turbulent history of Saigon, Vietnam, a notorious figure emerged from the underworld: Trịnh Minh Thế, known as the "Tiger of Saigon." His name sent shivers down the spines of both criminals and civilians alike. This article delves into the life and reign of this legendary gangster, exploring his rise to power, alliances, conflicts, and the ultimate price he paid.

## **Early Life and Criminal Beginnings**

Trịnh Minh Thế was born into poverty in 1906 in the Mekong Delta. At a young age, he witnessed the brutality of French colonial rule and the rampant corruption that plagued Vietnamese society. These experiences shaped his worldview, leading him to seek power through violence and crime.

In his early 20s, Thế joined the Bến Ngự gang, a notorious criminal organization based in Saigon. His charisma and ruthlessness quickly caught the attention of the gang's leaders. By the late 1920s, he had become one of the most feared gangsters in the city.

#### **Rise to Power**

In 1932, Thế founded his own gang, the Bình Xuyên, which quickly became one of the most powerful organized crime syndicates in Saigon. Under his iron-fisted rule, the Bình Xuyên controlled illegal gambling, prostitution, and opium trafficking. Thế himself became known for his lavish lifestyle and personal army of loyal followers.

During World War II, Thế allied himself with the Japanese occupiers, hoping to gain influence in post-war Vietnam. However, this alliance would prove costly. As the war progressed, Thế became entangled in conflicts with rival gangs and Vietnamese nationalists.

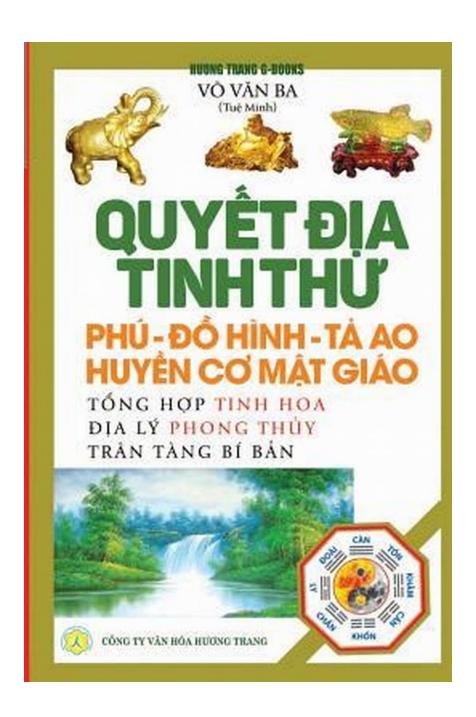
### **Post-War Struggles and Alliances**

After the war, Vietnam gained independence from France. Thế saw this as an opportunity to consolidate his power and forge alliances with political leaders. He supported the government of President Ngô Đình Diệm, providing funding and manpower in exchange for protection and influence.

However, the relationship between Thế and Diệm soured as the government sought to crack down on organized crime. In 1955, Diệm ordered a raid on Bình Xuyên headquarters, resulting in a bloody battle. Thế survived the raid but was forced to flee Saigon.

#### **Exile and Death**

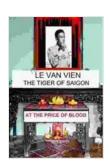
Thế sought refuge in Cambodia, where he remained in exile for several years. In 1965, he was lured back to Vietnam by false promises of amnesty. Upon his arrival, he was arrested and executed by Diệm's government. He was 59 years old.



**Legacy and Impact** 

Trịnh Minh Thế remains a controversial figure in Vietnamese history. Some view him as a ruthless gangster, while others see him as a victim of circumstance who fought against colonialism and government oppression. Regardless of his legacy, the "Tiger of Saigon" had a profound impact on the underworld of his time and left an enduring mark on the history of organized crime in Vietnam.

The life and reign of Trinh Minh Thế is a tale of power, violence, and betrayal. He rose from poverty to become one of the most powerful gangsters in Saigon, but his ambition ultimately led to his downfall. The "Tiger of Saigon" paid a heavy price for his blood-soaked reign, leaving behind a legacy that continues to fascinate and intrigue.



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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.7 out of 5

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