

= Donkey Punch (novel) =

Donkey Punch (also referred to as Donkey Punch : A Cal Innes book and Sucker Punch) is a crime novel by Scottish author Ray Banks . It was first published in the United Kingdom by Edinburgh @-@ based company Birlinn Ltd in 2007 , and again by the same publisher in 2008 . In the United States it was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2009 , titled Sucker Punch , and was reprinted in 2011 .

Donkey Punch is part of a series following protagonist Cal Innes , a former convict and private investigator . Innes agrees to accompany a novice boxer from England to a fight in Los Angeles , California . While there , Innes must investigate the subsequent kidnapping of the boxer , while battling his own internal struggles and avoiding trouble with the Los Angeles Police Department .

The Skinny said , " Donkey Punch is as terse and macho as Saturday 's Child , although his hardboiled writing style has become more poised and confident . " Scotland on Sunday said , " Vivid and realistic , with an appealingly flawed hero and an interesting setting amid the underside of modern LA , this is a knockout . " The Plain Dealer said , " Banks ' tough @-@ guy prose is irresistible . " Associated Press said of the author 's writing style , " Innes , for all his faults and problems , is an engaging character with a sharp sense of humor and a ton of turmoil in his life . And Banks , a member of the so @-@ called ' Brit grit ' movement , has an easy , breezy style that keeps you flipping the pages . "

= = Author = =

Ray Banks was born in Kirkcaldy , Scotland , and spent two years studying performance art and theatre at Warwick University . Banks said in an interview with the Newcastle Evening Chronicle that leaving Warwick University led him to become a published writer . Banks said , " If I 'd stayed on , I probably would have gone down the acting route instead of writing . University isn 't for everyone and I discovered that the other writers I know didn 't finish their courses either . It was certainly the best thing that happened to me . "

Banks ' first novel was released in 2004 , titled The Big Blind . The Big Blind was inspired by Banks ' prior employment as a croupier . His work Saturday 's Child was published in 2006 in the UK by Polygon , and in the US by Harcourt . Protagonist character , private investigator Callum Innes , first appeared in Saturday 's Child , and was the focus of Donkey Punch . Subsequent books include No More Heroes (2008) , Gun (2008) , Beast of Burden (2009) , California (2011) , and Dead Money (2011) . Banks has also contributed short stories for collected works and to a website called Noir Originals .

= = Publication history = =

Donkey Punch was first published in Edinburgh by Polygon Books , an imprint of Birlinn Ltd which publishes fiction , in 2007 , and again by Birlinn Ltd on 1 February 2008 . It was published in the US under the title Sucker Punch by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2009 , and again by the same publisher in 2011 .

= = Plot = =

The book follows protagonist Cal Innes , a private investigator and former convict whose parole after being released from HM Prison Manchester is finished . He is employed as a caretaker of a boxing gym called the Lads ' Club managed by Paulo Gray in Manchester . Innes has allegiance to an influential criminal figure named Morris Tiernan , also known as Uncle . Innes agrees to a request from Uncle to accompany a novice 17 @-@ year @-@ old boxer named Liam Wooley to a significant boxing match in Los Angeles .

Once there , Innes becomes acquainted over drinks with a former boxer named Nelson Byrne . The job , originally intended to be looking after Wooley , becomes a sinister operation as Innes learns

there may be impropriety related to the fight . Innes deals with his dependence on codeine and alcohol along with Wooley 's anger management problems . Innes finds himself in a difficult situation in an unfamiliar city , suffers a gunshot wound and his charge Wooley is involuntarily subdued with medication and kidnapped . Innes becomes the suspect in a murder investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department , finds and rescues Wooley and learns that his supposed friend Byrne was the culprit . After being exonerated by the police , Innes escorts Wooley back to England .

= = Reception = =

Reviewer Gareth K. Vile of *The Skinny* gave the book three out of five stars , and commented , " By transplanting his thuggish noir from Manchester to LA , Ray Banks ' second Cal Innes novel has two sets of mean streets to pace . Not that his grasp of characterisation has gotten any stronger : *Donkey Punch* is as terse and macho as *Saturday 's Child* , although his hardboiled writing style has become more poised and confident . " Andrea Mullaney reviewed the book for *Scotland on Sunday* and wrote , " Vivid and realistic , with an appealingly flawed hero and an interesting setting amid the underside of modern LA , this is a knockout . "

Les Roberts gave the book a favourable review for *The Plain Dealer* and wrote , " Much of Innes ' narration is East London slang , generously laced with profanities and hard for Americans to grasp . But Banks ' tough @-@ guy prose is irresistible . " Writing for *Electric City* , James Crane suggested readers read *The Maltese Falcon* before beginning Banks ' book , and said the story is a step @-@ down from *Guy Noir* and *Sin City* . Crane wrote , " I enjoy the hard @-@ boiled style ... It certainly isn 't a new formula , though Ray Banks does follow it well . "

Chris Talbott gave *Donkey Punch* a mixed assessment for the *Associated Press* and wrote , " Innes , for all his faults and problems , is an engaging character with a sharp sense of humor and a ton of turmoil in his life . And Banks , a member of the so @-@ called ' Brit grit ' movement , has an easy , breezy style that keeps you flipping the pages . " Talbott concluded , " Pretty standard stuff , but done with enough style and wit to make us pick up the next book in the series . "