

# ADRIAN McKINTY



We catch up with the author of the Sean Duffy thriller series, set in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. The latest in the series, *Rain Dogs*, was shortlisted for the 2016 Theakston's Crime Novel of the Year Prize.

**Hi, Adrian! First of all – congratulations on *Rain Dogs* being shortlisted for the Theakston's Crime Novel of the Year. You were in incredible company with Robert Galbraith, Mark Billingham, Ann Cleeves and Val McDermid all on the longlist. Have you met any of your fellow shortlisted authors out on the crime writer circuit?**

I've met Ann and Val and I saw Val interview Jo Rowling at Harrogate. I wanted to hate Jo Rowling because of, you know, the success, the talent, the good looks, the Scrooge McDuck-like swimming through the gold coins in her vault amount of money, but she seemed like a super nice lady too so that plan was thwarted.

**You're based in Melbourne, Australia, and recently lived in New York for a few months. How do you get into the mind-set to write about 1980s Northern Ireland – with its 'apocalyptic, cold, cleansing rain from the Irish Sea' – when you're in these lively, exciting, modern cities?**

This can actually be a problem in Melbourne in the summer when it's fucking roasting. It's hard to think of Belfast in the rainy cold miserable dank 1980s when it's 46 degrees Celsius outside. Sometimes I close the curtains, crank up the air-conditioning and find a YouTube video that plays rain falling on a tin roof or something and that helps.

**In *Rain Dogs*, Duffy ventured to Finland to ask awkward questions of grumpy businessmen. Have you got plans for him to travel elsewhere? What inspires you when you choose settings outside Ireland?**

I only have Duffy go to places I've actually been to. So I'd actually been to that crazy island in northern Finland for reasons I don't want to get into here. I noticed also that Nordic Noir books sell really well. Ken Bruen had this idea of having a Swedish detective come to Ireland and he got a TV series out of it, which is annoying because he's already got a TV series. My idea of having a Northern Irish detective go to Finland clearly was not as brilliant as his idea because my phone hasn't been ringing off the hook except for people calling from 'Microsoft' who tell me that my 'computer is infected with a virus' but who then mysteriously hang up when I tell them I have a Mac.

Duffy has encountered a colourful cast of real-life characters – in *Rain Dogs* this included Muhammad Ali and Jimmy Savile. Why do you choose to have him interact with real people in this way? Is it hard to capture their voices?

I met Savile and Ali in real life (at different times) and both meetings made a big impression on me and I decided to use those meetings in the book. Savile I met at a Radio 1 Roadshow in Carrickfergus when I was about 11. I thought he was incredibly creepy even back then. One little girl burst into tears when he shook her hand which sounds about right. Muhammad Ali I met in Blackwells in Oxford in 1992 and he was an amazing presence even then when he was clearly suffering from Parkinson's disease.

I read in a recent interview with the *Wall Street Journal* that you'd planned to kill Sean Duffy off at the end of book three, *In the Morning I'll be Gone*. What made you keep him alive?

Rebecca Gray, my editor, talked me out of it. She said, "You're finally starting to sell some books after 10 years in this racket and you want to kill your lead character in the Brighton Bombing? Is that really a good idea?"

Finally, we hear that there's a new Sean Duffy in the works – *Police at the Station and They Don't Look Friendly*. What do we have to look forward to? No spoilers, please!

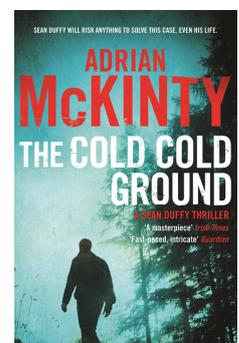
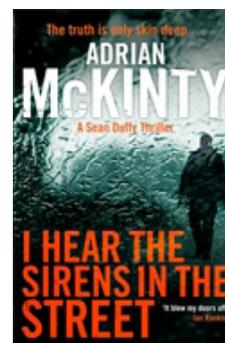
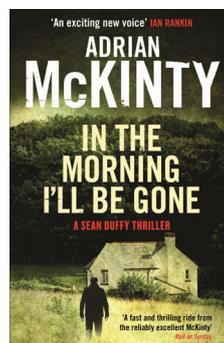
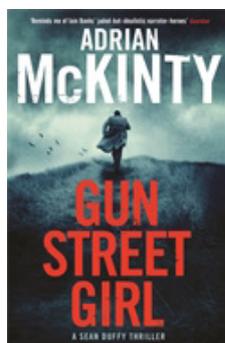
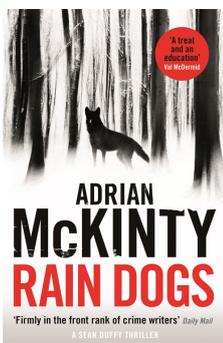
Bit of a change of pace. It's an adult colouring book. I hear those are quite the thing now too.

A routine murder investigation sucks Duffy into the most dangerous operation of his entire career and this time there is really a question mark whether he will survive with pretty much every faction in Northern Ireland out to kill him.

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