

Damien Linnane

Activist. Artist. Author.

Damien Linnane was born in Sydney, Australia. His debut novel, *Scarred*, was written by hand while he was in prison serving a two-year sentence for crimes the sentencing magistrate described as 'vigilante action'.

Since his release from prison he has become editor of the prison magazine *Paper Chained*, and is completing a PhD. In 2023, he released a memoir, titled *Raw*. He is also an illustrator and activist for incarcerated persons.



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Published works

Scarred

Publisher: Tenth Street Press

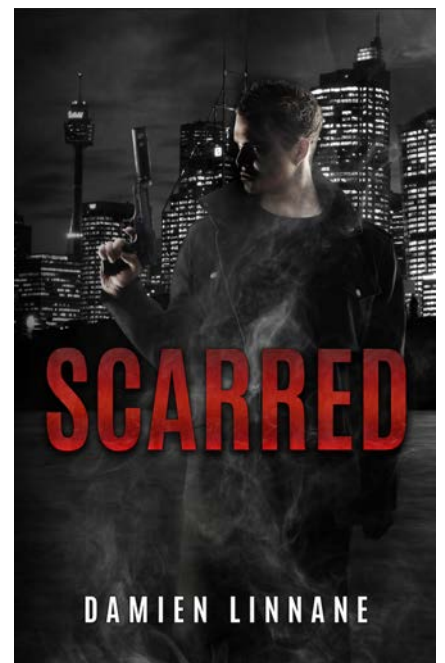
Released: 28 November 2019

ISBN: 978-0-6484802-4-2

Genre: Crime/thriller, vigilante justice, serial killer

Print length: 462 pages

"...a brilliant fiction debut. There is never a dull moment in the 400-plus pages." – Jim Kellar, editor of the Newcastle Herald Weekender



Published works

Raw

Publisher: Brolga Publishing

Released: 1 November 2023

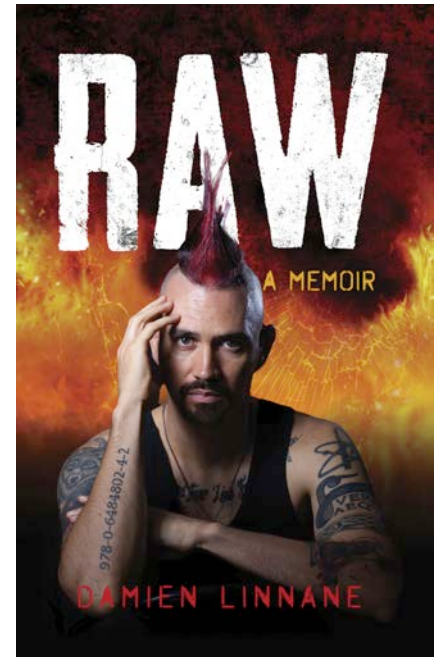
ISBN: 978-0-6458158-2-5

Genre: Memoir, Adult child abuse victims

Print length: 275 pages

“pithy, engaging, moving and amusing” – Mark Dapin,
The Australian

“Childhood trauma. Unanswered cries for help. Coming to terms with sex, love and abuse. Damien Linnane’s memoir is written with the gritty truth of real life.” – Jim Kellar, Newcastle Herald



Art

Self-taught while in prison, Damien specialises in graphite photorealistic portraits. He has held seven solo art exhibitions and his artwork has been discussed on [The Conversation](#) and in [The Sydney Morning Herald](#).

In 2021, he illustrated the book [This is Ear Hustle](#) under a contract with Random House. His illustrations from the book were exhibited at the San Francisco Public Library. In 2024, he curated Australia’s first international prison art exhibition, which was featured in [The Saturday Paper](#) and on [The Art Show](#). You can view his art on [Instagram](#).



Activism

Damien lobbies for better access to mental health and rehabilitation services for incarcerated persons and involuntary mental health patients. He is available to give talks on topics including the criminal legal system. In 2021, Damien was commissioned by the City of Newcastle to make a podcast on issues people face in custody. You can listen to it [here](#). You can read a 2023 academic article he wrote on the need for Medicare in prisons [here](#).

Press interviews

The following is a sample of interviews Damien has given in print, radio, podcast and video format. A full list can be found at his website by [clicking here](#).

Romensky, Larissa. '[Legal group urges Victoria to overturn ban on prison pen pal program](#)' in *ABC News*, 31 May 2018.

Hunt, Richelle; Linnane, Damien. '[Afternoons](#)' on *ABC Radio Melbourne*, June 4, 2018.

Lattouf, Antoinette. '[What Drives People to Become Pen Pals with Criminals?](#)' in *10 daily*, 3 May 2019.

Rorke, Mark; Linnane, Damien. '[The Morning Show](#)' on *2NUR FM*, November 11, 2019.

Kellar, Jim. '[Newcastle writer Damien Linnane's ... brilliant debut fiction](#)' in *Newcastle Herald*, 17 November 2019.

Gregoire, Paul. '[Prisoners Lives Are Still at Risk: An Interview With Ex-Inmate Damien Linnane](#)', in *Sydney Criminal Lawyers*, 8 May, 2020.

Tisdell, Lisa. '[Author Damien Linnane to talk about novel Scarred](#)' in *Port Macquarie News*, 29 August 2020.

Rae, Daizy; Berry, April; Linnane, Damien. '[Scarred – Damien Linnane](#)' in *Bare Books Podcast*, 29 September 2020.

'[Meet the Convenor: Damien Linnane](#)' in *INCITE* magazine, Volume 41, November 2020.

Gregoire, Paul. '[Prisoners Lives Are Still at Risk: An Interview With Ex-Inmate Damien Linnane](#)', in *Sydney Criminal Lawyers*, 8 May, 2020.

Senduala, Stephanie. '[Q&A: Damien Linnane, Illustrator of This is Ear Hustle](#)' in *Library Journal*, 16 December 2021

Pitt, Helen. '[From a NSW prison to NYC Billboard: How art transformed an inmate's life](#)' in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 October 2022

Kellar, Jim. '[Damien Linnane fights a lonely battle on behalf of prison inmates](#)', in *The Newcastle Herald*, 15 July 2023.

Dapin, Mark. '[Inmates find artistic freedom](#)', in *The Saturday Paper*, 18 May 2024



Sample interview questions

No questions are off limits. Damien's only request for interviews is that if you choose to mention what he was incarcerated for, there needs to be context. I.e., 'Mr Linnane was imprisoned for arson, with the sentencing magistrate finding his motivation was vigilante action'. Damien can provide court documents to verify this aspect of his sentencing on request.

- Did prison live up the expectations you may have had about it due to its portrayal in popular culture?
- What was the catalyst that made you want to write in prison?
- You were arrested for 'vigilante action', and the main character in your novel is a vigilante. How much of your novel is inspired by real events?
- You had to hide your novel from the guards in prison as it would have been confiscated because it contained violence. Can you tell us more about that? What other challenges were there writing in prison?
- Did writing your novel offer some form of escapism for you?
- You wrote an article for Network Ten about the lack of education and therapy for incarcerated persons. Do you think this lack of rehabilitation affects recidivism rates?
- Why lobby for better rights for prisoners? What do you say to people who think we shouldn't bother educating incarcerated people, and that prisons should focus entirely on punishment?
- You taught yourself to draw in prison, and now you've illustrated a book for Penguin Random House. How did you get started as an artist?
- You're now employed as editor of the prison magazine Paper Chained, which is read by over 30,000 incarcerated people in Australia and the United States. What made you get involved with that project?
- Your memoir focuses on the importance of speaking about childhood trauma. How much was your trauma linked to the crime you committed?
- Your PhD focused on the history and politics of prison literature in NSW. What motivated you to research this topic?