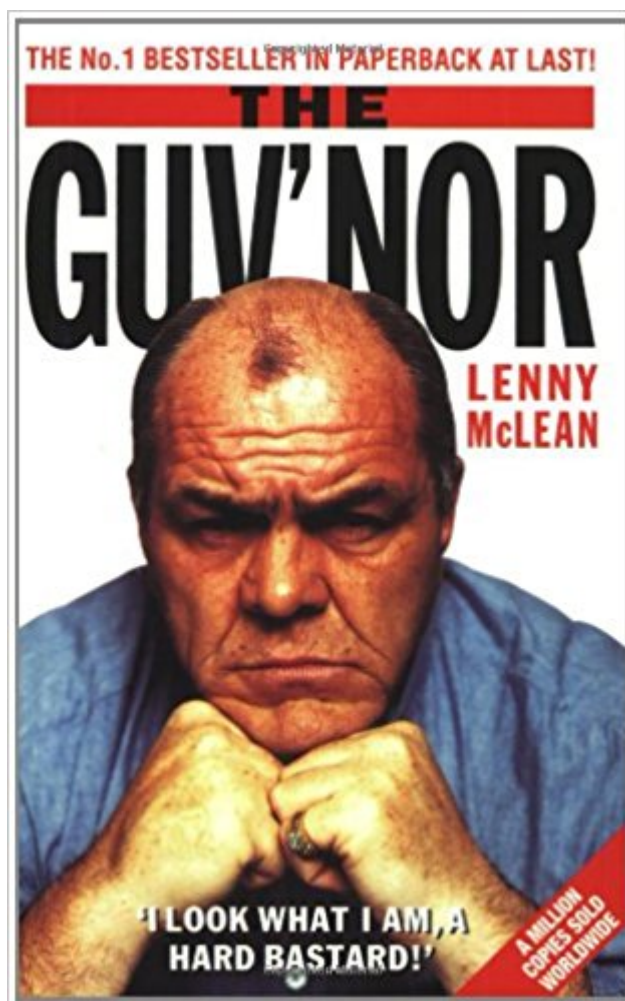




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# The Guv'nor



## Synopsis

Lenny McLean was one of the deadliest bare-knuckle fighters Britain has ever seen. He had dear, powerful friends, but he also had terrible enemies. So much so that he has two bullet wounds in his back, and has been stabbed repeatedly&#151;always from behind. Lenny, however, is also a warm, grizzly bear of a man, whose main weakness is an overwhelming desire to put the welfare of his mates ahead of his own well-being. In this autobiography he tells of how the mafia flew him to New York to take on their greatest bare-knuckle boxer in a multi-million pound illicit challenge bout. The Mafia's man lasted less than three minutes. When the IRA fronted up a London gang in a money-laundering scam, Lenny was brought in to intimidate the terrorists. The IRA, not surprisingly, backed off. Lenny's most serious trial came when he was accused of murder. Fighting to prove his innocence against a minimum sentence of 25 years, Lenny never gave up, and went on to be found not guilty. After deciding to retire from the violent life, Len turned his hand to acting, having parts in *The Fifth Element* and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'He was a man amongst men. His life was extraordinary.' Vinnie Jones

Lenny McLean was born in Hoxton, East London. Viciously abused by his step father from the age of five, Lenny turned to street fighting, determined that no man would ever take such liberties again. After a bloody career as The Guv'nor, Lenny turned to acting appearing in acclaimed TV series and

films including *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. Lenny McLean died of cancer on Tuesday 28th July 1998 - one day before his book went to No 1 in the bestseller list. Peter Gerrard is a crime writer and biographer. He lives near Boston in rural Lincolnshire with his wife and son. Amongst others he has worked with Reggie Kray and is co-author of Ronnie Knight's best-selling autobiography *Memoirs and Confessions*

Don't mistake this book - which has the same front cover and title - for his earlier biography. In that bio, McLean manages to merge his fairness into the fact that he equally happily ripped people off when they fully trusted him. His own Robin Hood view of himself is wholly mislaid. Only losing ONE fight in his career - AND only by points? Who is he kidding? I've met and worked with enough people from the South London area in which McLean worked later in life, Bexley, Sidcup, Eltham, etc. who were only too happy to put the record straight. McLean was only flesh and blood and he fought a few people who were a bit harder and meaner than him. In turn, they, too, will find similar beings. McLean was a character who you didn't want to disappoint. He made a film career, cut tragically short by illness. There WILL be more like him.

I suspect that like many readers I bought this because of Lenny Maclean's really compelling performance on the movie *'Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels'* in which he played what he was in real life, a minder. He made up a large part of what 'made' that movie for me. As such, I was interested to read about his real life as a minder. Other reviews here have told you the gist of the story and accurately stated that the book holds one's attention from beginning to end (well, the first 2/3's anyway, after that it gets to be a bit of a drone). Overall, it is a readable book and pretty entertaining too, what with its slang-packed dialogue and pretty much non-stop action. In truth, it's not much of an autobiography though. Mr. Maclean was too concerned with telling how "I bashed this guy and I bashed that guy and then I bashed another three guys" (or I did this dodge, and that scheme, another scheme) to engage in any meaningful self-reflection. Don't laugh, Mr. Maclean tells the reader throughout that he is a thinking man's villain and not your run of the mill bone breaker, yet we get nothing more than a litany of fights, capers, crimes and prison stays. I was curious to know more about his family life and friends. Based entirely on the book, Mr. Maclean had no intimate friends, his wife's family was non-existent, and he seemed to actually enjoy all aspects of fighting (hurting people and getting hurt). It would have been interesting to know why he didn't form friendships (did people fear he'd violently turn on them at the drop of a hat?), and his thoughts on why he was so compelled to violence (his excuse that he was put upon by his stepfather is a weak

one). I suppose it would have been painful to just come out and say about oneself that I am simply a criminal. It is far easier to attempt to justify one's criminality. I believe this is what Mr. Maclean has done. It's too bad, because what he does by doing this is create a world where Law and Order is always or almost always wrong/crooked and villains live in a self-created world of perfect justice if only they were left alone to do so. This is wrong-headed, not to say self-serving and rather vicious, and it doesn't make me think very highly of Mr. Maclean. This, and the fact that he seems to gloss over certain stuff, such as his career ending fight with Cliff Field for instance, and even details of the first fight against Roy Shaw. It's the little stuff like that one feels is missing from the book to make it truly autobiographical, know what I mean? There is a book by a similar character, albeit Australian, called 'Chopper' by Mark Reade (actually, I guess he's written many books by now). I would suggest you read him. I think you'll find the lack of self-pity refreshing. I'm sorry that Mr. Maclean died just at the point where he seemed to have matured out of what might best be described as an adolescent world view. It would have been interesting to see what became of him.

I was looking forward to this read on the steamy side of the east end and the hard and gracious Guv'nor. The kindle version is just cobbled together and not a fluid read at all. I kept reading thinking I'd eventually get to the actual biographical part, sadly it never appeared. There are elements that must be drawn from the physical book but mostly it's the fond memories of family and friends and it reads like a fan club. I am sure the Guv'nor was worthy of all the praise but I thought I was buying a biography not a fan mail compilation. I only gave three stars because the man himself was not around. A real shame, I guess I will need to buy the actual book to see if that's what I had hoped for. To quote the man himself from LSATSB this book is an "expletive" liability.

Great book about one of the strongest man just great

Great first-person account of Lenny's life. It is a shame this bare-knuckle boxer succumbed to cancer after the filming of Guy Ritchie's 'Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels.' No doubt he would have gone far in the movie biz.

Very good read

A Walk Through Life The Guv'nor is a great autobiography about a tough man who comes from the East end of London and gives you some good insight into the underworld of unlicensed boxing. One

of the stories inside is how Lenny McLean was flown to New York to fight the mafia's top man, he beat him in less than three minutes! If you like your tough men like Kimbo Slice, Mike Tyson and many others this book is for you to read!

I am a casual fan of biographies of hardcore criminals. The last book I read on the genre was *Underboss: Sammy the Bull Gravano's Story of Life in the Mafia*, and this book pales in comparison. Prior to reading "The Guv'nor", I knew nothing about Lenny McLean. I found "The Guv'nor" on during my search for a book on some of Britain's "hardest bastards". Mr. McLean's life is indeed worth a book or two, but I wouldn't recommend this particular book unless you're a fan of his, and have read Mr. McLean's autobiography first. "The Guv'nor" is too disjointed with friends, acquaintances, and anyone who may or may not have ever met Mr. McLean recounting stories. As a result, there is little progression of Mr. McLean's life. The book reads like a compilation of blog entries on an uber-fan's web site and should've best left to that forum. Supplemental material at best to the autobiographical version.

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