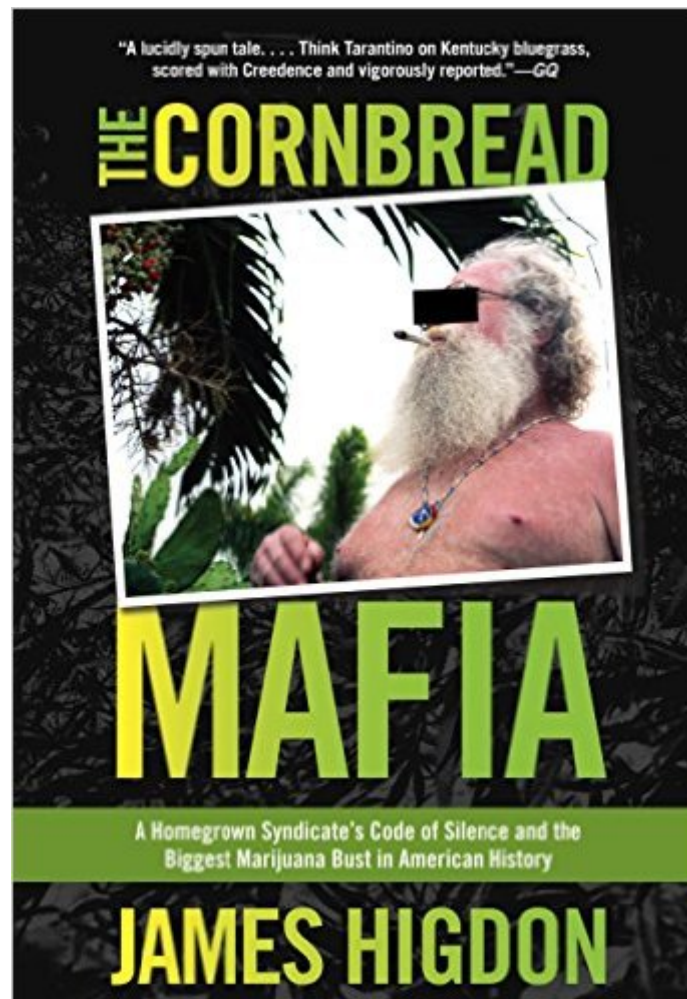


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Cornbread Mafia: A Homegrown Syndicate's Code Of Silence And The Biggest Marijuana Bust In American History



Synopsis

In the summer of 1987, Johnny Boone set out to grow and harvest one of the greatest outdoor marijuana crops in modern times. In doing so, he set into motion a series of events that defined him and his associates as the largest homegrown marijuana syndicate in American history, also known as the Cornbread Mafia. Author James Higdon "whose relationship with Johnny Boone, currently a federal fugitive, made him the first journalist subpoenaed under the Obama administration" takes readers back to the 1970s and '80s and the clash between federal and local law enforcement and a band of Kentucky farmers with moonshine and pride in their bloodlines. By 1989 the task force assigned to take down men like Johnny Boone had arrested sixty-nine men and one woman from busts on twenty-nine farms in ten states, and seized two hundred tons of pot. Of the seventy individuals arrested, zero talked. How it all went down is a tale of Mafia-style storylines emanating from the Bluegrass State, and populated by Vietnam veterans and weed-loving characters caught up in Tarantino-level violence and heart-breaking altruism. Accompanied by a soundtrack of rock-and-roll and rhythm-and-blues, this work of dogged investigative journalism and history is told by Higdon in action-packed, colorful and riveting detail.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book based on the number of 5-star reviews, and came away disappointed. When I went back, I noticed that most of those reviews seemed to be written by people with ties to the area, and that makes sense. A book that touches on familiar subjects is almost always a fun read-sort of like listening to people tell "funny" stories about their family. They are great fun if you know the

people, but can get tedious otherwise.--The Good Stuff-- *The cast of characters is a pretty intense group of people. Capable of breaking any law they didn't agree with, their handshake was good enough to seal some very large deals. *The core story, how a group of high-school dropouts created a marijuana growing operation that was capable of generating 7 and 8 figure incomes, is incredible. As an example, their successes in breeding new marijuana strains would make any plant geneticist smile in admiration. And yet I doubt if any one of them ever took a high-school biology course. *The story of how they built a multi-state business, resisted the efforts of law enforcement, and ultimately went on to long terms in federal prison is spellbinding. As with many "successful" criminals, you can't help but wonder what they could have accomplished had they gone legit.---The Not-So-Good Stuff--- *This work is really two books in one. The first is a wonderful true-crime story about a group of Kentucky marijuana barons. The second is a look at life in rural Kentucky in the 1970's. The readership appeal of these two stories is different, and to be honest I was not at all enamored with the latter. It is full of mundane details, somewhat unorganized, and at times tedious to read.

A good read about the history of the marijuana drug growing and trading industry in America, and how Marion County in central Kentucky became the home of the largest domestic marijuana distribution center in America. The author with his Marion County roots and his sometimes self-aggrandizing relationship with one of the local marijuana kingpins (Johnny Boone); gives the history of how this predominately Catholic community, and its penchant for alcohol and history of alcohol distilleries, came to wink at the illegal moonshine trade during Prohibition, and bred a community of corrupt local government officials and lawyers that could get you off the hook in a pinch if caught. The author gives the history of this march to debauchery with the early settlement of Catholics in the area and their distillation of alcohol. Then the Prohibition area which allowed moonshiners and gangsters to flourish in the area. This included John Dillinger's stay in Marion County in 1933, and robbing the bank in Gravel Switch in Marion County with two local thugs, upon his departure on August 8, 1933. The author also includes the history of the infamous local moonshiner and gangster Charlie Stiles who became a local Robin Hood in the area and was supposedly gunned down by Kentucky State Troopers when they could not get anything to stick to him in the legal system. All of this centers around the rough and rowdy town of Raywick in Marion County in which laxity in observing the legalities of the law of the land would birth the marijuana industry after the death of Stiles and the end of Prohibition. The local attorney's and mayor's collusion with these individuals, allowed a fertile ground for the birth of an anything goes mentality.

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