



## Running with the Firm

*James Bannon*

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*'Of course I'm a f\*\*\*king hooligan, you pr\*\*\*k. I am a hooligan...there I've said it...I'm a hooligan. And, do you know why? Because that's my f\*\*\*king job.'*

In 1995, a film called *I.D.*, about an ambitious young copper who was sent undercover to track down the 'generals' of a football hooligan gang, achieved cult status for its sheer brutality and unsettling insight into the dark and often bloody side of the so-called beautiful game.

The film was so shocking it was hard to believe the mindless events that took place could ever happen in the real world. Well, believe it now...

Almost twenty years on, the man behind the film has explosively revealed that the script was largely a true story. That man, James Bannon, was the ambitious undercover cop. The football club was Millwall F.C. and the gang that he infiltrated was The Bushwackers, among the most brutal and fearless in English football.

In *Running with the Firm*, Bannon shares his intense and dangerous journey into the underworld of football hooliganism where sickening levels of violence prevail over anything else. He introduces you to the hardest thugs from football's most notorious gangs, tells all about the secret and almost comical police operations that were meant to bring them down, and, how once you're on the inside, getting out from the mob proves to be the biggest mission of all.

A disturbing but compelling read, this is the book that proves fact really is stranger than fiction.

## Running with the Firm Details

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Author : James Bannon

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## **From Reader Review Running with the Firm for online ebook**

### **Alanmoorenz says**

A walk down memory (Cold Blow?) lane. Never ran with the firm but watched the Wall with them. A world of self interest but good description of the thin line walked in surveillance.....and what a bunch of cocks the uniform cops are! But we knew that eh?

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### **Matthew Andrus says**

Jim is a painter and decorator from Wandsworth London who's passion is Millwall FC, along with his mate Chris they both infiltrate the hooligan element of Millwall gaining acceptance among fellow hooligans but Jim and Chris aren't who they say they are intact they are undercover coppers who's mission was to infiltrate and build up enough evidence to convict the leaders of the hooligan firms.

James Bannon wrote the screen play of what went on to become the movie I.D but since the films anniversary he set upon writing this book to tell the REAL story of the operation.

This is a really addictive book that acts like an emotional roller coaster as Jim gets drawn into the operation more and more, at time this is funny and sad as Jim struggles with the consequences of the operations actions as he starts to build up friendships with the people he's trying to convict.

I really wanted to HATE this book but I can honestly say that it's brilliant and I for one will definitely be reading this again.

This is being made into a film shortly and providing the movie follows the book I certainly an anticipating its release.

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### **Gonzaga Escauriaza says**

Is interesting the way the police fights against the football hooligans.

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### **David Savage says**

Running with the Firm: My Double Life as an Undercover Hooligan by James Bannon is the shocking true story of how policeman James Bannon (the author) spent 2 years undercover and infiltrated "The Bushwackers", the notorious and violent football hooligans associated with Millwall football club in the 1980s. In 1995 a film called I.D. was released telling the story but was so shocking and violent no one was sure if it was fact or fiction. James Bannon, the man behind the film based on the true story has written his account of the true events of his life as an undercover football hooligan.

In the 1980s football hooliganism was rife and Millwall were notorious for its violent gang of supporters “The Bushwackers”. The government and police decided on a crackdown and the young, ambitious probationer policeman was selected for undercover duty to infiltrate and find the “generals” involved in football violence.

James Bannon has entered a very dangerous world of football violence where newcomers were not welcomed lightly. Running with the Firm is his story of how he painstakingly got in with the gang eventually working his way up the ladder to meet the top boys and become one of them.

The story tells of his intense and dangerous journey where the violence at times was more important than the football and how he was starting to enjoy his job a little too much in his hunt for evidence to bring down the gangs. He was making friends with the hooligans and while outside of football they may have been decent people, on match days the need for extreme and unnecessary violence took over making Millwall one of the most feared football gangs in English football history.

The book also shows how police actions up and down the country actually contributed and made the violence worse and at times either started it themselves with their over the top tactics or by allowing the violence to happen without stopping it.

Overall, a well-written read showing the devastating impact of football hooligans and their extreme violence all for the fact someone supported a different football team. The inabilities, inactions and actions of the police forces making the trouble worse and the effect undercover police work has with the stress on friendships and relationships at home and how it can take over your life. A disturbing look into the violent lives of the hooligans and the policeman charged with preventing it and the effect it has on the people around them.

Whether you have any interest in football or not this book is definitely worth a read. It is filled with violence, friendships, sadness and some humour.

I grew up 5 minutes walk from The Boleyn Ground, home of West Ham United - fierce rivals of Millwall and have seen the damage caused by football violence so I found this to be a very insightful book and interesting read.

Would highly recommend!

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### **Saul says**

I am a huge fan of football hooliganism as a sub culture. Having lived through the ‘dark days’ of UK football of 80’s and early 90’s and I look back with nostalgic sighs when I watch the ‘The Big Match’ on Sky where the corporate ‘prawn sandwich’ has now taken over the sport and the expectations of its audience. Therefore, I often indulge in reading and watching documents of what it was like when going to games was more than just a passive pursuit and when social problems were channelled in the most obvious arena, the football ground. I watched ID, the film, a long time ago and liked its amateurish and grainy format which added value to an interesting chapter of football hooliganism. I have to admit, the film is far superior than this book! James Bannon does not appear to have enough prosaic skills to turn the story into something enjoyable.

The book feels like an unarranged LP whose individual tracks sound interesting but that are still at home-recording stage. There's a difference between a 'strip down' report-style, perhaps necessary for this type novel, and a badly written story; the former omits the unnecessary poetry and metaphors but still providing variety and depth of expression, the latter has a limited vocabulary, and lazy, over-simplified sentence structure. 'Running with the Firm' falls definitely under the second type of writing. Shame!

With a bit more work the book might have deserved a 3 and ½ stars, but in its current form, 2 stars is fair.

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### **Richard Steer says**

If you are looking for 'lashings and lashings of ultraviolence' then this is not the book for you. There's less graphic violence than you might expect, but the point is that the possibility is always there, just simmering beneath the surface of every pub visit, every chat with a target, every away day and big match. The real story here is about the tension and adrenaline of being an undercover police officer in a subculture where the police are hated more than just about anyone else (apart, possibly, from West Ham). Part of what makes this so compelling is the way in which the undercover operation became more successful the more it careered crazily and dangerously out of control. Totally gripping and unputdownable and a 'must read' for anyone who attended football matches during the late 80s.

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### **Radek Gabinek says**

Osinskipoludzku.blogspot.com

Praca tajniaka budzi wiele kontrowersji, przede wszystkim w?tliwe moralnie wydaj? si? by? kwestie manipulowania osobami co do których podj?te s? dia?ania tajnych funkcjonariuszy. Nie inaczej sprawa wygl?da je?li chodzi o policjantów, którzy dia?aj? pod przykrywk?. Oni r?wnie? przy d?ugim okresie obcowania ?e swoimi celami nara?aj? si? na ryzyko zaanga?owania emocjonalnego. Kiedy czyta si? wspomnienia Jamesa Bannon kontrowersje te urastaj? do pokazanych rozmiarów i szczerze mówi?c bli?ej mi do tych osób, które sprzeciwiaj? si? takim praktykom. Mieli?my zreszt? na naszym polskim podwórku wystarczaj?co du?o g?o?nych przypadków, które dotyczy?y osób ze ?wiecznika.

James Bannon opisuje swoj? histori? pracy pod przykrywk? jako pseudokibic, a akcja w której bra? udzia? pod koniec ubieg?ego ju? stulecia mia?a s?u?y? rozbiciu przest?pczego ?rodowiska jakie zebra?o si? przy fanklubach pi?karskich w Anglii i szerzy?o postrach nie tylko w Anglii, ale i ca?ej Europy. Bohater tej ksi?ki przybra? fa?szyw? to?samo?? i wtopi? si? w grup? najniebezpieczniejszych chuliganów, którzy zwi?zani byli z klubem Millwall. Na pocz?tku podszed? do sprawy zadaniowo, ale ju? wkrótce mia?o si? okaza?, i? kiedy w gr? wchodzi sport i ogromne emocje z nim zwi?zane, kiedy zmienia si? perspektywa z jak? patrzymy na dan? sytuacj?, to wtedy zaciera si? r?wnie? granica pomi?dzy tym co powinni?my, a tym co czujemy. Dla Jamesa ju? na samym pocz?tku sprawy przesta?y mie? barwy czarno-bia?e i mia? on stan?? przed dylematem jak przeprowadzi? akcj?, aby jak najmniej ludzi ucierpia?o.

Grupy kibiców ju? od d?u?szego czasu skupiaj? na sobie uwag? nie tylko s?u?b porz?dkowych i mediów, ale stanowi? obiekt zainteresowania wielu socjologów. Bierze si? to z uwagi na multum powi?za? i zale?no?ci jakie tworz? si? w tych grupach jak r?wnie? sprzeczno?ci w podstawach osób zaanga?owanych w ruch

kibicowski. Osoby te wymykaj? si? bowiem wszelkim stereotypom i uogólnieniom, wywodz? si? bowiem z ró?nych grup spo?ecznych, ?rodowisk, ró?ni ich tak?e status spo?eczny i finansowy, a wspólny cel, to jest ró?nie poj?te dobro ukochanego klubu jest wystarczaj?cy ?eby po??czy? tak zró?nicowane jednostki. Pomimo nagromadzenia w tych uk?adach sporych dawek testosteronu, agresji, a czasem i zwyk?ej bezmy?lno?ci, znajdzie si? tutaj miejsce na empati? i postawy opieku?cze, a czasem wr?cz altruistyczne. Ten fenomen rozpatrywano ju? pod ró?nymi wzgl?dami, ale czytaj?c ksi??k? b?dziemy mieli okazj? popatrze? na to wszystko od wewn?trz, co przynajmniej dla mnie by?o nie lada gratk?.

"Ja kibic" b?dzie si? pewno?ci? podoba? kibicom pi?karskim, bo bez wzgl?du na to komu kibicujecie to legendarne wyczyny ch?opaków z Millwall ?ledzi si? z wypiekami na twarzy. Momentami s? to historie zabawne, czasem wywo?uj? u czytelnika politowanie, a najcz??ciej niepokój b?d? wr?cz przera?enie. Nie mo?na im natomiast odmówić tego, ?e s? one zwyczajnie interesuj?ce. Nie tylko jednak kibic pi?karski znajdzie tu co? dla siebie, bo ksi??k? czyta si? na zasadzie pami?tnika, a jak wiemy osobiste wspomnienia zawsze stanowi? gratk? dla mola ksi??kowego. W ko?cu nie od dzi? funkcjonuje znane powiedzenie, ?e najlepsze historie pisze samo ?ycie i historia tajniaka w szeregach chuliganów z Millwall jest na to ?wietnym dowodem. Ten kto ogl?da? ?wietny film "Hooligans" o kibicach West Ham United, który równie? jest oparty na faktach, b?d? kultowe ju? w niektórych kr?gach "The Firm" z Garym Oldmanem ten nie potrzebuje dodatkowej rekomendacji do si?gni?cia po t? ksi??k?.

Podsumowuj?c, "Ja kibic" to ?wietna ksi??ka typowo rozrywkowa, po??czenie ksi??ki sportowej z krymina?em. Nie jest to ?adna literatura g?rnych lotów, ale te? do takiej nie pretenduje. Dla mnie stanowi?am?y przerywnik pomi?dzy bardziej wymagaj?cymi tytu?ami i spe?ni?a swoje zadanie doskonale. Polecam!

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### **Nathan Caress says**

It's an easy read, and that's not a great thing. Look elsewhere for good story telling, but at least some of the details context around hooliganism are worthwhile.

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### **Book Addict Shaun says**

I was excited to read this however upon finishing it I didn't enjoy it quite as much as I expected to. The best football hooligan book I have read is Scally by Andy Nicholls. This book however particularly interested me as it is told by a police officer rather than a hooligan and this police officer went undercover to try and infiltrate a gang of Millwall hooligans. It's also really a book of times gone by and a fantastic portrayal of football in itself. Older football fans today often remark about how different the game was 'back in the day' and that is definitely true here.

It was a good read. You don't need to be a football fan to enjoy the book and it isn't all doom and gloom and hooliganism there are some humorous elements and stories throughout. The author is also very honest throughout the book about his feelings and struggles with working undercover. Perhaps the film I.D. would be better for me and I will definitely be buying from Amazon in the near future. Having not watched the film or read much about this case before it did mean that all of the stories were 'new' to me and there was a gripping element to the book with me wanting to find out what was going to happen, and whether the cover of the police would be blown. At times it I forgot this was actually a factual book and not fiction.

I do reccommend this to football fans, or to people with an interest in football hooliganism.

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### **Steve Parcell says**

What a fantastic book and my best of the year and indeed the best in this genre. If only the film ID was as good as it. The guys has balls the size of the planet and it was so compelling that I found myself thinking about how he was going to extricate himself from the next dodgy situation. It also hints at why many similar undercover operations failed in the same period as the other coppers are nowhere near as believable as James. YOU MUST READ THIS. FASCINATING.

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### **Marcus says**

Ripping yarn about undercover police infiltrating the notorious Millwall supporters in south London. The story tears along as he describes the danger and excitement of the hooligan culture and his work to collect evidence without being exposed. Gets a bit repetitive as he describes every home and away game for two years but overall a great read.

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### **Annet Teplitskaya says**

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### **Cora says**

The memoir was interesting at first but it gets repetitive towards the end. It was quite frustrating to read at times, especially the bits about his relationship with Chris and Dawn.

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### **Nick Lebon says**

A bit sparse and repetitive in my opinion. Still trying to finish it if I'm honest . . .

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### **Felinus Chidus says**

Best part of the book: pages 1-3

After these three pages it is all downhill with painful repetition, self indulgence and pointless justification for something did not achieve fruition at all as a book. He badly finishes the book in a couple of pages, I am glad

it is from the library and I did not spent a penny on this.

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