



Angels of Death: Inside the Biker Gangs' Crime Empire

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Two of today's top investigative journalists discovered the reality of the world's most foremost biker gang — The Hells Angels. With an estimated 2,500 members in 25 countries, the Hells Angels have inspired a global subculture of violence and fear. Sher and Marsden unflinching look at how law enforcement agencies worldwide are trying to stop — with little success — the biker gangs from spreading their violent outlaw creed around the world.

Angels of Death: Inside the Biker Gangs' Crime Empire Details

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From Reader Review Angels of Death: Inside the Biker Gangs' Crime Empire for online ebook

Jevron McCrory says

I knew absolutely nothing about the Hell's Angels going into this book. It was quite an education.

They (the HA) did a GREAT job in convincing the world they are only 'innocent' hell raisers enjoying motorcycles. I had NO IDEA they were so powerful, so influential, so utterly brutal!

I found the prose easy to absorb and very enlightening. It's a heavy book, and intentionally so.

I'm glad I read it.

Kent says

This thing was tough to get into...then an entertaining read for about 300 pages or so even though the language was pretty much an America's Most Wanted type of cliché. I have a hundred pages left and I may toss it. The authors have begun to list facts most likely taken from every newspaper clipping they ever found in an attempt to demonstrate the international nature of the club. No story line just arrest reports more or less over and over. They prove there are HAMC's everywhere, but it gets extremely tedious and the book becomes annoying. They also make having tattoos seem like a crime....lame.

Luke Kondor says

Doesn't feel right to say I read this because I only managed 100 pages and even that was too much. I just wasn't feeling the narrator's voice. Felt like listening to one of those dodgy US America's Most Wanted sorta deals.

There are too many amazing books out there to stick with something you just aren't feeling.

My rule of thumb is to give a book 100 pages minus your age. Which means I gave this book 29 pages too many.

But... that's not to say you won't like it.

Sam says

I quite enjoyed this book, it was interesting and easy to read did provide a good introduction to the criminal side of the Hells Angels organisation. Obviously, as the authors are Canadian journalists, it does have a lot of bias to the HA in America and Canada with only brief introductions to the HA Charters elsewhere around the world. It also quite bias with the authors obviously against the HA as a whole. The stories are presented well

and make a very good read but do come across a bit sensationalised but this is to be expected from journalists if I'm honest. It does come across that they have picked the biggest most attention grabbing crimes that the HA have been involved in for the book without giving much thought to the other activities the HA are part of, but given that the book is looking at the criminal side of the Angels this is also hardly surprising. As long as it is taken with a pinch of salt and read in the knowledge that it does focus on the supposed criminal Mafia-style side of the HA (which neither the authors or the American Government were able to prove beyond doubt), it is an enjoyable read and a good introduction to the bad side of the Hells Angels.

Bro_Pair ???? says

Pretty decent, serviceable book about the Hells Angels. Don't expect to find much new insight about biker culture - the two authors don't even mention Hunter S. Thompson's unrivaled study. In fact, they hate the Angels. Hate them, hate them, hate them. The high-toned animosity may preclude any insights into the allure of the life, but it at least clear and borne of a simple, irrefutable belief: the Hells Angels are ultimately unromantic thugs - "bullies with stickers on their backs," as a tough Canadian cop puts it. And Marsden and Sher have the rap sheet to back it up, a list of people killed and maimed by these monstrous assholes, just for getting in their way. The stuff about the ATF sting in Arizona will be a good movie some day, but for sheer comedy, the Great Nordic Biker War, where the Hells Angels were literally looting armories and firing bazookas into clubhouses, is the stuff deserving of a more wry treatment by a more subversive author

Goran K says

In-depth depiction of Hells Angels, focusing mostly on a police side of story, and trying to prove that HA are organized crime gang that has profit from trafficking drugs, racketeering and smuggling on first place, along with their love for motorcycles.

Whole book is written in a way a TV crime series would go, so it's an interesting read, although biased, as we get to see the story only from one side. There are still too many *coincidences* that show Hells Angels aren't as innocent as they're trying to pose. Whole world is basically covered in this book, from US and Canada, over Europe to Australia (OK, not whole world, but half of it). You have to give credit to authors, there's a lot of investigative journalism here, but they personally haven't spoken with many bikers, but instead relied on police reports.

That's about only minus for this book, they have done a great deal of research, connecting cases all over the world, speaking with police investigators and going through trial documentation. Overall, very solid book, and for other point of view there are always Sonny Barger books to get the full picture.

Nial says

A very in depth breakdown of how they run their criminal enterprise. Had me reading non-stop!

Lisa says

Hmmm.....

Whilst this book was informative on the organisation and structure of the Hells Angels, especially as they branched out to become a world-wide (rather than solely American) club, something with this book just didn't sit right with me.

A sensational account of the activities of the Hells Angels as an international criminal organisation, given the title it shouldn't be surprising that this is extremely one-sided. Much of the 'evidence' presented is taken from interviews with the police and prosecutors, or taken from police transcripts and affidavits, but with the vast majority of cases yet to be proven via court trial I have an extremely hard time taking this as 'fact'. An early incident in the book possibly set me on guard for the rest - when describing the murder of Cynthia Garcia, who was last seen alive on CCTV with a couple of bikers, the authors state that on entering the Angels clubhouse and seeing the situation within Cynthia was 'horrified'. Now, unless the authors have psychic powers I have no idea how in the hell they would know how she felt and this made me leery of totally accepting anything else written within.

For a book that sought to expose the criminal activity of the club it's probably a surprising side-effect that, to me, it seemed more a damning indictment of the law enforcement side. With corruption (in the form of individuals leaking information to the people who were being investigated, or taking bribes), incompetence and in-fighting ruining long-standing, extremely expensive investigations and then with those cases that did get to trial usually being thrown out, I felt that the only people who came out not looking like complete arses were the undercover officers who were put into extremely stressful situations, often for years at a time, only for their hard work to be completely undermined by the time the investigations were closed. Probably not the intended aim, but so it goes...

John Branney says

This book has some interesting stories about the history of the 81 and expands the coverage of the club to worldwide. It is an unflattering view of the club that portrays most of the members as hopped up, homicidal psychopathic maniacs that would do anything or kill anyone for money and drugs.

The book is very difficult to follow because the authors jump around the world and write about the 81 in California and then Arizona then Denmark and then Holland and then the UK and then Canada, etc. Since the authors obviously wanted to cover the 81 from this worldwide perspective, I am not sure how they would have reorganized this book much differently so that the book was more consistent from chapter to chapter. But the way the book was written, I found myself leafing through the countries I was less interested in. Perhaps, the authors bit off more than they could chew on.

The book was average reading I enjoyed Dobyn's and Sonny Barger's book much better, probably because they were writing first hand accounts.

I agree with one of the other reviewers who brought up that books like Angels of Death are more interesting when they are written from a first person perspective and not a police blotter perspective.

One shaky thumb up for this book. Valiant effort, but pretty slow reading. If you can get the book on the cheap or at the library, it may be worth a look.

Carrie says

I knew when I picked this up that it was going to be fluffy and sensational, so I'm not mad about it or anything...

Imagine the quality journalism and feats of editorial genius involved in the preparation of a Fox News report on some godawful shenanigans, mostly involving murder and drugs, perpetrated by biker gangs. Now imagine all of that applied to a 300+ page book.

The authors don't want you to forget that they have written a supposedly gripping true-crime narrative. They set the scene with statements about what cops and bikers say they were thinking at time. And feeling. In sentence fragments. Bad grammar. For dramatic effect.

They also include photos of still-undercover cops and blur out their faces but show their full sleeve tattoos clearly.

That about sums it up. I couldn't finish it.

Claire says

I picked this book up from a charity shop and thought I would give it a chance.

I quite enjoyed reading this book and learning maybe a slightly bias account of The Hells Angels. It was informative regarding cases and murders and it was tied nicely together. I knew of The Hells Angels but not nothing about them as a 'club'. Would be nice to read either sides stories now from their perspective.

Phillipa says

Well my boyfriend and I both read this book ... well let's be honest, only I finished it. And that's just because no matter how bad a book is, I usually can't not finish it - I'm the same with movies. I envy those people who have the gumption to get up and walk out midway. I can never be certain that it won't get any better, so I stay. Oddly enough, the owner of the book (it was a book club book), raced thru it and declared it un-put-downable. Curious what piques different people's interest!

This book was interesting, but dragged ... a lot. And as my boyfriend said, kept re-telling pretty much the same story just changing the characters and countries. It's interesting to have read since I've never put much thought into "biker gangs" nor have I ever thought of them as a mafia-type organisation. And even tho the South African Hells Angels get a mention here and there, I still can't quite picture them ... clearly they are not in my sphere of focus. I mean you see bikers riding about on Sundays, but I would never say "Oh, there go the Hells Angels".

This book also highlighted for me that I just don't get gang-culture. It makes no sense to me, but then again

I've never been a very peer-influenced type of girl. Still, if bikers are your thing, then you should probably give this a read :)

Steven Day says

In depth look into the Hells Angels firstly across the US but venturing into other parts of the world, most notably UK, Holland and the Nordic countries.

They have a tried and tested formula of beginning a chapter with one murder committed by the Angels in a different country and then tying it back to their criminal activities in the country. Some quite horrific stories in there, particularly the one regarding the murder of the five year old, and shows them up as some brutal criminals up there with the worst of the well known syndicates in the world.

Interesting and concise without being over detailed.

Helen Lawrence says

I only managed half of this book before I had to throw it down in anger. It shouldn't be read as a first time foray into the Hell's Angel world - it hardly contains any background information and is instead a one sided account of their crime fuelled ways. This would be ok if it came from both sides, the American Police as well as the Hells Angels themselves. But alas, this reads like one of those cop car chase programmes channel 5 show late at night. Everything is about how amazing the American police are, how their undercover missions broke down the Hell's Angels ways. It rarely shows any mistakes the police made, and instead is always from the point of view of a self-obsessed investigations officer.

I'm going to read the Hell's Angel founder's account - Sonny Barger's autobiography and see what he's got to say. I doubt he's going to say that every single Hell's Angel member is a raping, drug dealing murderous drain on society.

x

Jane says

The Angels have a better corporate network than some very well-known companies. Their product (drugs) has effected almost everyone and although most companies don't use murder and intimidation they are business savvy. Starting with the history of the club and working through the establishing of the brand through out the world (and it is almost everywhere). Also describing the police work or lack of police work in different countries and what they are up against. Very disturbing - I had the Angels come through my town many many years ago. They were escorted from city limits to city limits and believe me the ground shook ---
