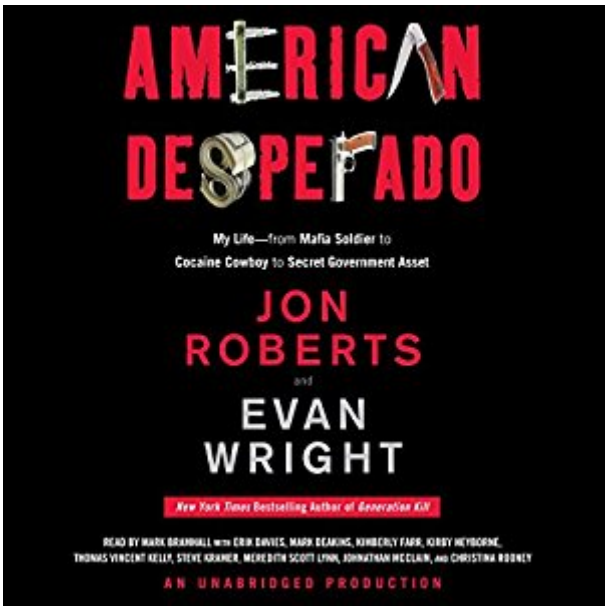
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American Desperado: My Life - From Mafia Soldier To Cocaine Cowboy To Secret Government Asset



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Synopsis

In 2008 veteran journalist Evan Wright, acclaimed for his New York Times best-selling book Generation Kill and co-writer of the Emmy-winning HBO series it spawned, began a series of conversations with super-criminal Jon Roberts, star of the fabulously successful documentary Cocaine Cowboys. Those conversations would last three years, during which time Wright came to realize that Roberts was much more than the de-facto "transportation chief" of the Medellin Cartel during the 1980s, much more than a facilitator of a national drug epidemic. As Wright's tape recorder whirred and Roberts unburdened himself of hundreds of jaw-dropping tales, it became clear that perhaps no one in history had broken so many laws with such willful abandon. Roberts, in fact, seemed to be a prodigy of criminality - but one with a remarkable self-awareness and a fierce desire to protect his son from following the same path. American Desperado is Roberts' no-holds-barred account of being born into Mafia royalty, witnessing his first murder at the age of seven, becoming a hunter-assassin in Vietnam, returning to New York to become -- at age 22 -- one of the city's leading nightclub impresarios, then journeying to Miami where in a few short years he would rise to become the Medellin Cartel's most effective smuggler. But that's just half the tale. The roster of Roberts' friends and acquaintances reads like a Who's Who of the latter half of the 20th century and includes everyone from Jimi Hendrix, Richard Pryor, and O.J. Simpson to Carlo Gambino, Meyer Lansky, and Manuel Noriega. Nothing if not colorful, Roberts surrounded himself with beautiful women, drove his souped-up street car at a top speed of 180 miles per hour, shared his bed with a 200-pound cougar, and employed a 6"6" professional wrestler called "The Thing" as his bodyguard. Ultimately, Roberts became so powerful that he attracted the attention of the Republican Party's leadership, was wooed by them, and even was co-opted by the CIA for which he carried out its secret agenda. Scrupulously documented and relentlessly propulsive, this collaboration between a bloodhound journalist and one of the most audacious criminals ever is like no other crime book you've ever read. Jon Roberts may be the only criminal who changed the course of American history.

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Customer Reviews

If you like to read about organized crime then it doesn't get much better than this book. The footnotes are even fascinating. Evan Wright let's Jon Roberts tell his story and it's fascinating as hell. Hard to believe he lived it, but it's well sourced. These are some of the people and events Jon Roberts talks about: his evil father, the Gambino family, a standoff with John Gotti in a basement, kidnapping Jimi Hendrix, Vietnam and assassinations, the C.I.A., Pablo Escobar, the godmother, killing Gators, a dog with specially made gold teeth, etc. That's just the tip of the iceberg.

Mixing in with my more 'serious' reading interests, occasionally its just fun to read a rip-roaring adventure story. Especially if it's true as I believe this one mostly is. The hero is not my kind of guy [I admit I could never do what he's done and wouldn't want to] but he is an unusual blend of outrageous attitudes and activities and abilities--kind of a dark-side James Bond. Agent 666? Most guys would never have survived through it all to a comfortable Florida retirement but Jon Pernell Roberts did. He survived a crazy juvenile delinquent childhood, survived lifelong mobster affiliations, survived atrocities in the Vietnam war, survived petty crimes, frauds, and armed robberies committed for 'fun and profit', survived a wild and crazy nightlife of the wildest women and craziest drugs, survived the 70s and 80s Miami cocaine wars...survived and thrived he did; and it's quite the tale! Nearly unbelievable I would say but a good bit of it is documented from other independent sources and I can accept it is mostly true.It's a fun book if you want to give the 'shadow side' of the psyche a go at kicking up its heels. Don't give it to grandma or the kids but doggone its an exciting fascinating story for an old rascal like me. I would say it's the best true-crime/mafia book I've read, with the possible exception of "The Iceman."

A great Book, the Jon Roberts that Jon Himself tells about is a different one than what one would think from seeing the mpvie Cocaine Cowboys. Jon has passed away recently from Cancer.Let me put it straight to you, I know people that knew him personally and was under his employ from

working with Horses. Jon is very unapologetic he was one of the meanest sons of bitches to walk the streets of South Florida and New York City. He had the capacity to kill and maim and go to lunch like it never happened. A sociopath with a big heart but also had a dark side that one would be best to have respected and feared if they crossed him .The book is good, funnt at times and is the most in depth look at what was going on in the 80s in Miami.He does not blow his own horn at how big a player he was he does not need to.

I am a little surprised this book is not rated higher. It is maybe the best true crime book/biography I have ever read. It reads like a movie, and Jon Roberts has so many stories to tell in this book - and most of them are white-knuckle type reading. I don’t feel he is glamorized much at all. Usually the subject of a book like this tries to make themselves seem more sympathetic or more of a hero figure - but the brutality and the admission of choosing evil comes up so many time in the book. It is a chilling book - and I don’t look at the book as one where, after reading it, a person would choose to live that life unless they already had that in them. I think the story is told in more of a: This is how it was, this is the horrible things that were done - and I should have had a conscious about it - but I didn’t.Also, the people who are supporting characters are almost as interesting as Jon Roberts. Mickey Munday especially and the cartel people Jon Roberts meets and partners or works with have their own interesting back stories and takes on things. His bodyguard was a wrestler who went by the wrestling name "The Thing". I will be surprised if this book is not made into a movie at some point in the future. There were so many interesting facets to it.I can’t recommend this book enough. I am surprised it would not be universally reviewed as 4 or 5 stars, unless the reader is one that doesn’t have the stomach for violence and disturbing situations - then I would understand completely giving this book a lower rating. If that is you, stay away from this book.

It’s been a while since I haven’t been able to put a book down, but this one had me riveted from the first page.If you came here after seeing any of the Cocaine Cowboy films, you will surely not be disappointed!For me, having grown up in the area during this time frame, I was amazed and fascinated by the goings-on in my neighborhood. I especially liked reading this book on my Kindle app, where I could do additional research on names and locations as I came across them on the book.Holy cow, there are too many incredible and yes -- despicable stories, an overwhelming number in fact -- yet I found myself completely absorbed and glued to what was going to happen next.Kudos to Evan Wright, who did not take anything at face value and put in the time and research to get things right and into perspective.I can’t wait for the movie!

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