



Original Gangster: The Real Life Story of One of America's Most Notorious Drug Lords

Frank Lucas , Frank Lucas

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A suspenseful memoir from the real life American gangster, Frank Lucas

In his own words, Frank Lucas recounts his life as the former heroin dealer and organized crime boss who ran Harlem during the late 1960s and early 1970s. From being taken under the wing of old time gangster Bumpy Johnson, through one of the most successful drug smuggling operations, to being sentenced to seventy years in prison, *Original Gangster* is a chilling look at the rise and fall of a modern legacy.

Frank Lucas realized that in order to gain the kind of success he craved he would have to break the monopoly that the Italian mafia held in New York. So Frank cut out middlemen and began smuggling heroin into the United States directly from his source in the Golden Triangle by using coffins. Making a million dollars per day selling "Blue Magic"--what was known as the purest heroin on the street--Frank Lucas became one of the most powerful crime lords of his time, while rubbing shoulders with the elite in entertainment, politics, and crime. After his arrest, Federal Judge Sterling Johnson, the special narcotics prosecutor in New York at the time of Lucas' crimes, called Lucas and his operation "one of the most outrageous international dope-smuggling gangs ever, an innovator who got his own connections outside the U.S. and then sold the narcotics himself in the street."

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his powerful memoir reveals what really happened to the man whose career was dramatized in the 2007 feature film *American Gangster*, exposing a startling look at the world of organized crime.

Original Gangster: The Real Life Story of One of America's Most Notorious Drug Lords Details

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Author : Frank Lucas , Frank Lucas

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Kelly says

It was a good book, kept my full attention throughout. I enjoyed that the story took us all the way from childhood to present, which really helps to shape more emotions than would have been triggered without all the background. When I literally want to slap him, like a mother with a child that needs to wake up and get their shit together, I feel like the book has done a good job bringing me in. I love a good gangster story, so I am probably going easy on the review of this book... but I dug it regardless.

theron smith says

Excellent

More in depth story and a lot different than the movie. Very entertaining read. Recommend to anyone hooked the movie, you will like this better.

Janeil Cabrera says

Real life notorious drug lord, Frank Lucas tells his own story in a great amount of detail. From a one-room shack in North Carolina to the mean streets of Harlem in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He constantly moves up the latter to becoming the most powerful drug lord of his time. He fights with the Italian mafia to gain control. Then importing the purest of heroin into the states in such a unique way. His "Blue Magic" was constantly craved, making him \$1 million per day. Grabbing the attention of the law, things quickly made a turn. This is a insightful look into the rise and fall of one of Americas most notorious drug lords.

Bronwen says

If the identity of every pivotal character in your life's story needs to be hidden then maybe your story isn't ready to be told yet. No matter how badly you need the money.

I have to say, though, that I really enjoyed the first few chapters of the book in which Lucas describes the events in his childhood that led to him moving to Harlem and his early crimes.

Winter Sophia Rose says

Eye Opener & Brilliant! Powerful Book!

Lara says

I found this book entertaining, and educational. (About some history of drug crime in NYC, 1970s) Also listened to it on audiobook, I believe it's read by the author. The voice really adds to the character of the story, which I appreciated. I think it was a good read

Dave says

I loved 'American Gangster' starring Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe and after hearing a radio interview with Frank Lucas, I became interested in the "real story."

Well, the film played it close to the vest for the most part. Of course, this being Lucas's autobio, it doesn't talk much about Richie Roberts' side of the story, but I'm sure he'll write his own book someday too (he's still working a criminal defense attorney to this day).

This book fills in some of the missing pieces in Lucas' back story on his childhood and how Lucas became Bumpy Johnson's right-hand man. A witness to his cousin's murder by the KKK in North Carolina at the age of 6, by 13 he was on his own and eventually made his way to Harlem. It's an incredibly story (if it's true, he made some of it up, at least according to his Wikipedia page) that is sort of the American Dream gone wrong. He DID make his way from nothing to an incredibly rich man, but he did all through crime. It's hard to forget while reading this, no matter how well Lucas tries to paint himself, that he sold highly addictive heroin to poor neighborhoods, ruining the lives of millions of people by his account.

Overall it's an entertaining and quick read (big type, small pages).

Robert says

The crux of the problem I had with this book is that Lucas doesn't seem at all contrite. He starts out by framing why and how he got to be the biggest and baddest. Many people could benefit from doing more acting and having less fear, and in that respect Lucas does become a model. I do not blame him.

Notwithstanding, trying to draw a distinction between himself and Nicky Barnes as that of an entrepreneur versus just a drug dealer is pathetic. Stealing seed money and pushing drugs with the resulting business does not make it his money. It was society's money. The fact that New York cops are crooked does not elevate the criminal. The fact that he was hassled is not in any way comparable to the damage he caused.

Kurt says

Started this as a book-on-CD for a roadie, but finished the trip before I finished the story and I just can't bring myself to finish it in print: crappy writing and WAY too much self-justification and humble-bragging,

which is fine, so long as it's not paired with regret and mock humiliation.

Chris Treadwell says

Outstanding book and couldn't put it down!

A few differences compared to the movie but equally as interesting & entertaining.

Jamie Whitehead-Smith says

Despite all the terrible things he did in his life, you have to appreciate how he had the determination to achieve anything based on where he came from.

David Ward says

Original Gangster: The Real Life Story of One of America's Most Notorious Drug Lords by Frank Lucas, Aliya S. King (St. Martin's Press 2010) (364.1). Frank Lucas confirms in this book that his original pipeline for shipping heroin into the US from Southeast Asia was by stuffing the drug into the coffins of dead GIs coming back to the US from Viet Nam. That, my friends, is sick. My rating: 3/10, finished 2011.

thomas stubbs says

On par with Mike Tysons autobiography. 10/10. Fantastic book.

Some pictures or even a photo of Frank at the end would have made it even better.

Highly recommend this book. Really enjoyed it

Headlines And says

If you're a fan of "Breaking Bad" and its mythical Blue Sky meth, you might want to pull up a chair and dive into the story of real life drug lord Frank Lucas and his legendary Blue Magic heroin. It's all within the pages of "Original Gangster: The Real Life Story of One of America's Most Notorious Drug Lords" (\$6.00) by Lucas himself, and Aliya S. King. The basis of the 2007 movie "American Gangster," Lucas' memoirs start in 1936 with his childhood in North Carolina, where he witnessed his own cousin being murdered by the Ku Klux Klan. A young, 6-year-old Lucas then started stealing food for his family, after which he graduated to assault and robbery. At age 14, in 1944, Lucas moved to Harlem, where he eventually became the ruthless protege of Bumpy Johnson, the gangster who ran numbers.

When Bumpy died in 1968, Lucas started his massive drug empire, which brilliantly managed to skirt the

middle man and go around the Italian mafia that controlled New York. Lucas achieved this by setting up his own contact in Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle and smuggling highly pure-grade heroin—nicknamed Blue Magic—into the United States by using coffins. His Blue Magic made him a million dollars a day, making Lucas not only one of the most powerful crime lords of his era, but also helping him reach rockstar status with the elite in entertainment, politics and crime, until he was finally caught in 1975. Good reading? You betcha.

Andrial Durant says

Usually the books give more detail than the actual movie and although this was a good read - listen, I didn't get any extra information in the book. I am left with a few questions about Billie Mays, tried googling her and can't find nothing, even Wiki for Willie Mays doesn't even mention her. Then the wife of bumpy Johnson says this book is a lie. I don't know if it is but I did enjoy it.
