



Smuggler's Blues: A True Story of the Hippie Mafia

By Richard Stratton

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***Goodfellas* meets *Savages* meets *Catch Me If You Can* in this true tale of high-stakes smuggling from pot's outlaw years.**

Richard Stratton was the unlikeliest of kingpins. A clean-cut Wellesley boy who entered outlaw culture on a trip to Mexico, he saw his search for a joint morph into a thrill-filled dope run smuggling two kilos across the border in his car door. He became a member of the Hippie Mafia, traveling the world to keep America high, living the underground life while embracing the hippie credo, rejecting hard drugs in favor of marijuana and hashish. With cameos by Whitey Bulger and Norman Mailer, *Smuggler's Blues* tells Stratton's adventure while centering on his last years as he travels from New York to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley to source and smuggle high-grade hash in the midst of civil war, from the Caribbean to the backwoods of Maine, and from the Chelsea Hotel to the Plaza as his fortunes rise and fall. All the while he is being pursued by his nemesis, a philosophical DEA agent who respects him for his good business practices.

A true-crime story that reads like fiction, *Smuggler's Blues* is a psychedelic road trip through international drug smuggling, the hippie underground, and the war on weed. As Big Marijuana emerges, it brings to vivid life an important chapter in pot's cultural history.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Many of the tales of his real-life adventures in search of a massive high and the ultimate payday are absorbing in the same zany way as his fiction . . . [f]eaturing encounters with the late David Bowie and Norman Mailer, plus Mick Jagger and convicted murderer and mob boss Whitey Bulger." —*Publisher's Weekly*

"A wild, entertaining ride . . . A compulsively interesting story with the requisite drama and suspense that will keep the pages turning. . . . Stratton and his crew pulled off a surprising number of impressive smuggles while Wolfshein tried to pin them down, and Stratton throws in a lot of extra color by way of lavish spending, sex, and glittering parties that make heads spin. Near misses abound and offer great fun for readers." —*Kirkus*

"*Smuggler's Blues* is an adrenaline rush, a high-stakes ride from Maine to Lebanon to the Caribbean. . . . This book will get under your skin, enter your blood stream, and mess with your head." —T. J. English, *New York Times*, best-selling author *The Savage City* and *Havana Nocturne*

"There is no one who both knows the deadly world of international drug trafficking and who can tell the tale in such a stylishly compelling way, than Richard Stratton, a man who walked the walk and lived to tell about it." —Michael Levine, former undercover DEA agent and author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Deep Cover* and *The Big White Lie*

"No wonder Norman Mailer liked hanging out with Richard Stratton. His drug-fueled early years read like the stuff of great fiction. Crazy drug cowboys, daredevil pilots, Lebanese hashish lords, a DEA nemesis who's half Javert, half Columbo . . . plus, cameo appearances by Jagger, Bowie, and Whitey Bulger. *Smuggler's Blues* is not only a mad romp, it's a brilliant indictment of the flaming absurdity of America's war on drugs." —David Talbot, founder of Salon and author of *The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA and the Rise of America's Secret Government*

"Beneath the story of drug smuggling and risk . . . Stratton offers a blistering indictment of the Drug War and a call for Americans to be actively engaged in the political process." —*The Stoner's Cookbook*

"*Smuggler's Blues* is a must-read for those enticed by nonstop adventure and outlaw books. It's definitely one for the handy bookshelf." —*Provincetown Banner*

"In 1982, Richard Stratton, one of the last great hippie marijuana smugglers, was hit with a long stretch of hard time all because he wouldn't give the feds his buddy, Norman Mailer. Yes, that Norman Mailer, the literary lion with the roaring ego. Sure, the Drug Enforcement Administration had Stratton dead to rights on the crime. In his new book, *Smuggler's Blues*, he details exactly how he managed to get a ton and a half of Lebanese hash through customs in New Jersey in a \$15 million deal." --*New York Daily News*

On Richard Stratton:

"Richard Stratton, the former editor of High Times magazine, knows a thing or two about marijuana. Not

only has he written in depth about the subject, he also spent years as a drug smuggler, moving millions of dollars of the product—a path that ultimately landed him a 25-year sentence, of which he served eight. Since his release two decades ago, Stratton has become one of the most successful and prolific ex-cons, writing novels, producing award-winning films and running a TV series not so loosely based on his life." --*City and State*

"Not everyone thought Stratton was leading a terrifically exciting life. Before prison, his mother says, 'he was a real asshole.' Stratton, too, wasn't always contented. 'Sometimes, I'd take walks early in the morning and ask myself, Why am I doing this? I'm going to get caught,' he says. 'Well, okay, I thought. Then I'll go to prison and write.'" --*New York Magazine*

About the Author

Richard Stratton was arrested in 1982 and convicted under the kingpin statute for importation of marijuana and hashish. Originally sentenced to twenty-five years without parole, Stratton became a jailhouse lawyer and had his sentence vacated. He was released in 1990 after serving eight years in federal prison. His novel, "Smack Goddess," written while he was in prison, was published in 1990. Stratton is now an acclaimed filmmaker and screenwriter whose films have won prizes at Cannes and the Berlin Film Festival. A writer and consultant for HBO's *Oz*, he was the creator, writer, and executive producer of Showtime's "Street Time." He is the founder of "Prison Life," the former editor and publisher of "High Times," and a contributor to "Rolling Stone," "Esquire," "GQ," "Details," "Newsweek," and "Playboy." He lives with his wife and children in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Flora Young:

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Chris Moore:

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Kerry Maye:

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