

The Hells Angels

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Entertainment

Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

(Note: transcript consists of
episode outline)

Duncan, you own a motorcycle... would you describe yourself as a motorcycle guy? You fit the image in a lot of ways: husky, bald, tattoos, leather. Basically a bear. When I think of motorcycle guys, "unwashed" is the word that comes to mind, but that's not you, that's a stereotype, your hygiene is just fine; there are different types of motorcycle people just like there are different types of motorcycles. A person who buys a Ducati is very different from a person who buys a Harley...Ducati guy's jeans are much tighter for one thing, probably some highlights in their hair. They own crypto.

I used to be a motorcycle guy. I had a Honda Twinstar 200 CC chopper... or hog, as it's called. A very manly bike. I believe it *was* freeway legal, but I did not drive it on the freeway because I don't have a death wish. I mostly drove it the five blocks from Bison Brewery in Berkeley to Metal

Mike's apartment, where I was living at the time...I dropped the bike quite frequently, and would just lay there giggling. The discord knows all about this. Metal Mike is a favorite topic in the discord, he's like our second mascot after Kittenbee.

So this episode is not specifically about motorcycles, but they do feature prominently. We are talking today about the Hells Angels. If you're not familiar with that esteemed organization, it is a highly respected coalition of dignified and refined motorized bicycle enthusiasts. I believe they wear smoking jackets and sip on snifters of brandy, when they are not trafficking narcotics and disemboweling each other and engaging in rape and extortion.

No, everyone knows the Hells Angels. The group was once described by its president as "a bunch of fun loving guys who just ride motorcycles," but is in fact a violent hang of mostly overweight, bearded white men who enjoy riding motorcycles and committing crimes, not necessarily in that order. In fact, just a couple days ago, two prominent members of the Hells Angels, Raymond "Ray Ray" Foakes— he was the president of the Sonoma chapter — and Christopher "Rain Man" Ranieri, were both convicted on

racketeering charges and then individually on a grab bag of other charges that included murder conspiracy, intimidation, and assault with a deadly weapon. This marked just the latest convictions in a series of cases stemming from a crackdown on the gang. From a San Jose mercury news article:

"The charges have been active since 2017, when the FBI conducted a series of raids that resulted in the arrests of a dozen Hells Angels members. Last year, three others — Jonathan "Jon Jon" Nelson, Brian Wendt, and Russel "Rusty" Ott were convicted of playing different roles in [fellow Hells Angel Joel] Silva's murder." I like how Brian didn't get a nickname. These are my buddies Rusty and Jon Jon and Pooky... Brian. "Nelson [was convicted] of helping plan [the murder], Ott of luring him to Fresno, and Wendt of shooting Silva in the back of the head after he bent down to look at some marijuana inside the Fresno Hells Angels clubhouse." Don't ever let anyone lure you to Fresno, that was your first mistake. It's a terrible place, and they have ghost pants, the Fresno nightcrawler, a haunted pair of trousers from our third tier Cryptids host swap. One of my absolute favorite episodes. The article also states that the victim, Joel Silva, was illegally cremated, so add that to the list of heinous

Hells Angels crimes. They incinerated a body without any type of permit whatsoever...that doesn't seem like it needed to be mentioned along with the other crimes. I don't think what you do with the body is the part that matters after you commit a murder. Unless you have sex with it. That's pretty bad... should probably be illegal. I'm assuming it is. I hope it is.

The Hells angels have long been classified as an organized crime syndicate by the United States Justice Department. From a linked article on the DOJ

Website: "Research data show that the Hell's Angels are involved in murder; the manufacturing and distribution of methamphetamine; the distribution of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana; the purchase and sale of firearms; and other criminal activities." File under "Y" for yeah, we know.

So the DOJ is not a fan the H.A., but the Hells Angels (H.A. if you're nasty) aren't confined to *America's* naughty list. In 2019 a Dutch Court was the first to ever ban the Hells Angels motorcycle club from an entire country. The Hells Angels are *personas non gratas* in Holland. That was the same year btw that Portuguese authorities rounded up 89 members and variously charged them with

drug trafficking, robbery, and attempted murder. And keep in mind that this is not a large organization. The Department of justice estimated in 2017 that total worldwide membership was around 2500, with only about 800 in the United States. They have an incredibly outsized influence on culture and an extremely recognizable brand for being significantly smaller than the midnight masses. Our listenership dwarfs the entire Hells angels organization, but somehow they are much better known than we are. We need to start racketeering, commit a few murders. Traffic a narcotic or two. The problem is they have a significant head start. In fact as you probably knew or have gathered via this introduction, the Hells angels are the most notorious motorcycle gang in history. Their winged death's-head logo is iconic, as is their rebellious outlaw reputation. They have historically refused to submit to any form of authority, including the grammar police. In fact, by far the worst thing about the Hells angels is their flagrant flouting of punctuation: their name is trademarked as "Hells angels" with no apostrophe, indicating that there are multiple hells? My research minion Lama trauma directed me to the Hells angels website, and specifically the part where they acknowledge that there

is an apostrophe missing in "Hells", responding "... it is you who miss it. We don't." And they are right...it bugs me. This is 100% the most vile and transgressive act in which the Hells Angels have engaged. Murdering other humans is bad, but nothing is worse than murdering the English language.

So I had no idea that the Hells angels have been around since the 1940s. This is a motorcycle club that is older than washing machines and credit cards, transistor radio and diet soda. I also didn't know that they originated right here in California. They were founded on March 17, 1948 in the city of Fontana, in San Bernardino County (Southern California), in 1949. So not really near *here*. We're in northern CA. I think non-Americans and even some Americans don't understand how big California is. You can start at the top of California and drive for 12 hours and still be in California. So the home of the Hells angels is about six hours from us, but still a lot closer than I had imagined, for some reason I thought it was like a Texas thing. All biker gangs are from Texas, spiritually.

There are a few conflicting origin stories for the H.A., but the most popular is that the club was founded by a World War II veteran named Otto Friedly, who had

defected from another biker gang called the "pissed off bastards." No idea why he wanted to leave. They sound like a jolly, fun, supportive group. The name of the Hells Angels club itself has a murky origin as well, but seems to have also been related to the war..."Hells Angels" may have been a tribute to any of the multiple fighter squadrons with that name... and I didn't know this but there was a 1930 movie about warplanes called the Hells Angels that was directed by Howard Hughes, and many fighter squadrons took their names from that film, so the name could have referred to a specific squadron or the Howard Hughes movie or could simply have been chosen as a nod to the tradition of badass fighter squadron nicknames. The Hells angels claim that their death's head insignia—a skull wearing a red helmet with giant yellow wings attached on each side and trailing behind it—was designed by the one time head of the San Francisco chapter, Frank Sadilek, who drew inspiration from the logo of the 85th fighter squadron. I looked that up and it is significantly less cool. It's just a skull with two tiny golden wings, one on each side, like those stunted little wings on the feet of the Roman god mercury. So Frank did a good job of making the logo more intimidating and less comical, which was probably a good way to

go if the reactions you're looking for are respect and fear rather than pointing and mocking. The official colors of the H.A. are red and yellow, reflected in the logo and of course we're all familiar with the iconic red lettering of the arched text "Hells angels" in the western style cowboy font.

Now in order to operate as an official Hells angels organization, each club or chapter needs to adopt a charter. Basically they have to adopt an organizational agreement that dictates the standards and practices of the club, it's like setting up a franchise. And you definitely wouldn't want to try to claim you're a Hells Angels chapter if you're not officially chartered. Anyone Falsely claiming to be a Hells Angel is going to be... Dealt with. Probably at least a light spanking and a stern talking to. However, in the very beginning, pretty much any group of fat guys with motorcycles could declare themselves Hells angels. Remember that this was happening in the 1950s... There was no Internet, there was no Hells angels weekly magazine to keep track of the other clubs, so many of these organizations were unaware of each other's existence. A Hells angels group might spring up in Southern California and have no idea that Northern California clubs even

existed. Until the 1950s the HA was just a California phenomenon; according to the Hells angels website, the first charter outside of California was in New Zealand, weirdly enough.

Now just to be clear I'm not going to be basing much of the history and/or facts in this episode on the Hells Angels website, because this biker group is notoriously secretive and dishonest. It's kind of wild that they even exist online at all, the fact that they have a website is kind of surreal, it would be like going to themafia.com and learning all about how Cosa Nostra was just a fraternal organization of law-abiding buddies who have been the target of a media smear campaign. But the website claims that there are 475 chapters or charters in 62 countries on 5 continents. I'm not sure if they're still counting the Netherlands. the Hells angels is not just a renegade outlaw motorcycle club, it's also a business, they have been incorporated since 1966 as the Hells angels motorcycle corporation. Because what's more outlaw and bad ass than having shareholder meetings and a CEO. Of course the death's head insignia is trademarked, and they have sued to protect their intellectual property. Outlaws! Renegades! We are a group of litigious bad asses.

So how do you become a Hells

angel? It's not easy, and it shouldn't be, remember you're becoming an angel of multiple Hells, at least according to grammar and the English language. So that's a lot of territory to angel around in. Get your angel on. Seriously, joining the HA is an ordeal. There's no official application process, the Hells angels aren't taking resumes. There are however a couple official requirements to becoming a so-called prospect: you have to have a valid drivers license, and a motorcycle with an engine size—or displacement—of over 750 cc. My little 200 cc Honda twinstar from right after high school probably wouldn't have qualified. The Hells Angels endorse only Harley Davidson motorcycles, the most overpriced and overhyped motorcycles on earth. I never really wondered why Hells Angels only drive Harleys, but it turns out that Harley Davidson was a major supplier to the military in WWII and many of the early members of the H.A. were veterans, so they were familiar with the bikes, plus Harleys were created and manufactured in America, so there was a patriotic element as well. Harleys were initially very affordable, and easy to customize...which, not so much these days with either of those things. According to a Hells Angel named Lorne Campbell quoted by the Toronto Star, "I've been riding

them all of my life, even when they were s**t bikes in the '60s and '70s. Harley riders are loyal — even when they leaked oil." so it's kind of an abusive relationship. Owning a Harley Davidson is basically domestic violence. It wasn't just the 60s and 70s, they still kind of suck and are exorbitantly expensive. And the company is still raking in profits, must be nice to have a giant motorcycle club that requires their members to buy your shitty bikes. So in addition to requiring that members have a valid license and make bad purchasing choices, there are a couple other criteria if you want to become a member of the Hells Angels. You can't be a convicted child molester, so apparently H.A.s pick and choose the crimes that they endorse, and you can't have ever applied to be a member of law-enforcement or a prison officer. No child molesters or the people who catch child molesters. Sure. Also, no junkies. They do not like intravenous drug use. Just up the nose; you know, classy style. Unlike us they have a non-heroin pact.

A prospective member starts as a "hang around," I'm sure you can't figure out what that indicates. This is when you get invited to some events and get to meet some of the members, and hang around, then hopefully move to the next phase which is to become a so-called

associate, which lasts a couple years, and then finally become an official prospect. At that point you can actually wear half of the Hells angels patch on your sleeveless denim jacket: the letters "MC" for "motorcycle club" and your claimed state or city location. And this is why becoming a member is also known as "full patch," referring to receipt of the full four-piece official insignia: you already had the bottom rocker, which was the MC and your location, and now you can add the so-called top rocker which consists of the words Hells angels, and between the two rockers the deaths head. Patches are alternately known as colors, so you are earning your full patch or earning your colors. To achieve full patch status you have to be confirmed by literally every member of that chapter, they take a vote, and you have to have met everyone within nearby chapters as well, so it's a lengthy process of traveling around and attending events and meeting members and kissing babies, and mostly kissing a lot of ass. If you get through all of that and are voted in, the top rocker patch is awarded during an initiation ceremony. Sounds like the Grammys mixed with the Boy Scouts or something, "you just won a top rocker patch!" Another patch you will see frequently is the "one percenter" patch which supposedly

refers to a comment made by the American motorcycle association, claiming that 99% of motorcycle riders are law-abiding citizens, and only 1% are degenerate dickheads. That was not the exact quote. So the patch is a fabric middle finger, it's a statement that Hells angels are proud to be among the degenerate dickhead 1%. From Hunter S Thompson's first book, the non-fiction expose called "the Hells Angels: a strange and terrible saga." which was what put him on the map and which we will cover in more detail shortly: ""We condemn them," says an AMA director. "They'd be condemned if they rode horses, mules, surfboards, bicycles or skateboards. Regretfully, they picked motorcycles."" But Hells angels wear the 1% patch as a literal badge of honor. Another badge you might see—or at least a common element of H.A. logo designs and tattoos etc.—is the number 81. It has special significance, because H is the eighth letter of the alphabet and A is the first. It's not rocket science, this is some pretty basic numerology nonsense, I think most people could've crack that code. The number 88 has special significance in skinhead circles, I bet you can figure out why. HH "heil Hitler." Any group substituting numbers for letters is immediately suspect.

Now once you've officially been patched you have voting status in the organization and access to all of the clubhouses and clubhouse meetings (attending a meeting is ironically referred to as going to "church") and now that you're a member you can officially start calling your girlfriend mama and commence with the heavy drug use and domestic violence. New members have to pay monthly dues, around 50 bucks or so, and those dues are split between the local chapters and the state chapter and presumably pay for snacks at meetings and office supplies and narcotics and prostitutes.

So for anyone who isn't familiar, it's a little tough to describe the culture of the organization. They are a bit of an enigma and a contradiction. They are culturally conservative, patriotic, anti-immigrant, pro military, anti-communist, they overwhelmingly support Republicans and the conservative "family values" platform while at the same time trafficking drugs, clashing with police officers and flouting America's laws. during the 1960s they were staunchly in support of the Vietnam war, even attacking protesters in Berkeley in 1965.

One thing you might notice about

Hells angels is that they tend to be demographically similar. They're fat, bearded white guys. Looking at pictures of Hells Angels gatherings, you would be hard-pressed to find a non-white guy who isn't also fat and bearded. But mostly white. I don't think there's any official requirement to be fat or bearded, but the white thing for many years was non-negotiable.

"Satan's Angels MC in [Vancouver](#) had a black member when it merged with the Hells Angels in 1983. The San Francisco and [Anchorage](#) chapters threatened to have the Vancouver chapter expelled from the club when they learned of the situation; the matter was ultimately solved when the man changed his nationality to "[Hawaiian](#)." so they're only racist if you admit to being black. Just pretend you have a really deep tan and you're fine.

[Sonny Barger](#), who served as a spokesperson for the Hells Angels for many years and we will get to him shortly, said in a 2000 [BBC](#) interview, "The club, as a whole, is not racist but we probably have enough racist members that no black guy is going to get in it." I love that. "This is not a cup of urine. There is urine in it, you will absolutely regret drinking from this cup, it's like 90%

urine, but it's not technically a cup of pure urine."

Almost every member of the Hells angels has a nickname, like a fighter pilot callsign. This is from Hunter S Thompson's book, a passage in which he lists the roster of a fleet of bikers on their way to a gathering in Monterey:

"Little Jesus, the Gimp, Chocolate George, Buzzard, Zorro, Hambone, Clean Cut, Tiny, Terry the Tramp, Frenchy, Mouldy Marvin, Mother Miles, Dirty Ed, Chuck the Duck, Fat Freddy, Filthy Phil, Charger Charley the Child Molester, Crazy Cross, Puff, Magoo, Animal and at least a hundred more ..."

This was Hunter S Thompson's first book, and pioneered his distinctive brand of "gonzo" journalism...

Thompson embedded himself with the angels for months, riding choppers and indulging in narcotics and participating in crime along with his interview subjects like any good professional journalist. A few months after completing the first draft of the book he was savagely assaulted by a group of angels when "An Angel named Junkie George started beating his wife to a pulp on the rocks. When Junkie George laid into his dog as well, Thompson spoke up. That was all it took for several Angels to start pounding on Thompson's skull and ribs." There's a lot to cover here,

first off the fact that we only know of this because Hunter S Thompson reported on it, so it's kind of interesting that he just happen to be the hero who was only attacked because he was trying to save an innocent woman and a dog. Feels a little... narratively convenient. Like something an author might come up with. Also interesting that he didn't speak up until the abuser got to the dog. Beating your wife? Carry-on. Abusing a dog? I must intervene. I mean I kind of feel him on the dogs are better than people thing, but dude.

Regardless, you kind have to respect his commitment to the craft; he made sure to get a full authentic Hells Angels beatdown experience. I read a good chunk of Thompson's book, there's a lot of low-key apologist content, he seemed to feel that the Hells angels were misunderstood and there was also a weird element of starstruck fawning; Thompson was a skinny nerd and I get the feeling he was living out his wild Conan the barbarian fantasies vicariously through these meaty, hairy savages. But when you're idolizing guys named junkie George and Chester the child molester you might want to reevaluate your personality radar, maybe you're not a great judge of character. And you're eventually going to get a reality check.

The Hells angels have their own internal justice system that involves kangaroo courts and dispenses unconventional punishments. A member named Paul "German" Ingles is believed to have been the first Hells Angel convicted by the organization and executed. He was found guilty in 1968 of pilfering valuable coins from the coin collection of the aforementioned Sonny Barger, and was forced to ingest barbiturates to simulate an accidental overdose.

I've brought him up a few times so let's finally get around to the best known and most flamboyant of the Hells angels, Ralph Hubert "Sonny" Barger. He was the de facto president of the organization for more than 40 years and was the primary subject of Hunter Thompson's book. Barger was even inaccurately reported as the founder after his death in 2022, there's still an NBC news article linked in the show notes that boldly makes this claim: "Barger was born Ralph Hubert Barger Jr. in Modesto, California. He formed the Hells Angels in 1957 in Oakland." Which is not true; he did however found the Oakland chapter, and helped unify all of the California clubs under a common set of bylaws; he was the face of the entire Hells Angels organization for years. Law-enforcement insisted that the

Oakland chapter was the preeminent Hells angels club and that Barger served as the international president of the organization before his death, but it was a claim that he always disputed, insisting, "There's no charter that's the boss. That's all cops and newspapers." He also disputed the idea that the Hells angels collectively engaged in any criminal activity, instead placing the blame on individual rogue members. The good old "a few bad apples" defense. He himself was charged with murder and racketeering, but never convicted. He was also responsible for changing the club's rules to exclude women; in the beginning there was no gender requirement and the Hells angels did have a few female members, but in 1966 Barger put a stop to all of that horribly *equality* nonsense, and his justification was pretty amazing: members of biker gangs would often try to steal the patches off of the jackets of rival club members, and Barger was worried that women simply wouldn't be able to fend them off and other clubs would end up with a bunch of Hells angels patches, which would be humiliating. You can't have a bunch of your patches end up in another clubhouse, and that's the only way it could possibly happen...luckily it would be completely impossible for another club to simply have

duplicate Hells Angels patches made. That's crazy talk.

Barger would end up penning five books about his life as a hells angel and appear in numerous movies and television shows. The man definitely enjoyed the limelight. He was front and center for all of the most infamous craziness, he was even present at Altamont when the shit went down.

of course we have to address the Altamont incident, because it's probably the best known and most notorious example of the Hells angels being massive dicks. Although as it turns out, the primary incident itself is mostly misunderstood.

December 1969 in Tracy California. The free concert was envisioned as a West Coast version of Woodstock, and the lineup featured heavy hitters like Santana, Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, and the Rolling Stones. It was a big deal. According to members of Jefferson airplane, who claimed to have had the initial idea and gotten the ball rolling, the concert promoters had been negotiating with San Francisco to hold the concert in Golden Gate Park, but that deal fell through and the concert was only saved at the last minute by Dick Carter, who offered his race track outside of Tracy California, the

Altamont Speedway, as an alternate venue. Grace Slick, singer of Jefferson Airplane, would later claim that no one liked the idea, that it was a decision made out of desperation and that trouble was inevitable. "The vibes were bad. Something was very peculiar, not particularly bad, just real peculiar. It was that kind of hazy, abrasive and unsure day. I had expected the loving vibes of Woodstock but that wasn't coming at me. This was a whole different thing." Of course, hindsight is 2020. This feels a little like Monday morning quarterbacking but who knows.

Incidentally, management for the Rolling Stones has disputed some of these details, claiming that they themselves were behind the initial idea and that the first choice of venue was in San Jose, but whatever, I don't know why anyone is arguing about this. Do you really want to lay claim to one of the most notorious musical tragedies in American history? Personally I would let anyone else take the credit but that's just me.

Regardless, here are some facts on which everyone agrees: the organizers knew attendance would be off the charts—300,000 people eventually showed up— and they were trying to figure out an affordable way to provide crowd control. What they came up with

was offering the Hells angels \$500 worth of free beer to act as bouncers. Fox, meet henhouse. Wolves, allow me to introduce you to flock of sheep. Let's get a biker gang drunk and turn them loose on a bunch of pacifist hippies. What could possibly go wrong. One of the biggest problems was logistics: the stage at Altamont was literally just 1 meter tall, and located at the bottom of a hill. I guess that makes for good viewing angles, but it also makes it really easy for anyone to charge the stage. You could *accidentally* charge the stage, you could roll down the hill and *fall* on the stage. And this is why the hells angels were recruited to surround the stage and basically play the role of a fat bearded drunken fence. A fence that can punch you in your nose.

There are conflicting accounts as to how the hells angels ended up being hired, but it seems to have been basically just a handshake deal between the management of the Rolling Stones and hells angels higher-ups including Sonny Barger. As far as I can tell the meeting went something like this: the concert promoters said, "do you guys want some free beer?" End of reenactment. There was a handshake, that was all it took.

Barger says of the incident, "I ain't

no cop, I ain't never going to ever pretend to be no cop. I didn't go there to police nothing, man. They told me if I could sit on the edge of the stage so nobody could climb over me, I could drink beer until the show was over. And that's what I went there to do."

Over the course of the first few acts—including Santana and the flying burrito Brothers—the situation deteriorated quickly. The crowd was getting rowdy, and the Hells angels were getting progressively more drunk on their free beer. Witnesses reported multiple fist fights near the stage, with Hells angels members at the center of all of them. Lead singer of San Francisco band the ace of cups, a woman named Denise Jewkes who was pregnant at the time, was hit in the head with a beer bottle with such force that it fractured her skull. Luckily, Members of the Hells angels were prepared...it turns out they had thoughtfully come equipped with sawed-off pool cues and motorcycle chains...you know, standard concert Security stuff. Another escalation occurred when members of the crowd knocked over a motorcycle that belonged to one of the hells angels, it might've been an accident but on the other hand it definitely wasn't an accident.

As the scene got uglier one of the members of Jefferson airplane tried

to restrain some of the Hells angels who were beating crowd members and got punched in the head. When word of the incident reached the Grateful Dead, they refused to play, which further escalated the tension among the crowd and the motorcycle gang.

The Rolling Stones took the stage around sunset. Mick Jagger was already spooked and tense, at one point admonishing the crowd to "just be cool..." Telling someone to be cool has never resulted in anyone being cool, in any context. Like it doesn't matter whether we're talking about being calm and collected or popular or even advising them to somehow lower their physical temperature, none of those things are going to happen just because you tell someone to be cool.

At this point one concert goer in particular became a problem, clashing multiple times with various members of the Hells angels. He was an African-American man in a bright lime colored suit named Meredith Hunter, I don't have a good explanation for why he was named after an old white woman, but it would later be determined that Meredith was high on methamphetamine. I've watched the footage, it's kind of fascinating. Mick Jagger is singing "I pray that it's all right" I'm not sure which song this is from, but he keeps

repeating it over and over again, fully unaware of how ironic these lyrics will turn out to be and the fact that God apparently does not listen to the prayers of rock 'n' roll singers because his prayer was not answered, and nothing would be alright. This was when Meredith Hunter surged through the crowd and yanked a gun out of his jacket, at which point a member of the Hells angels named Alan Passaro pounced on Meredith and began stabbing him with a knife, I had always thought that it was an unprovoked stabbing but this particular situation was more nuanced than I had been led to believe. The man was brandishing a very large pistol in the middle of a crowd. Passaro would later be acquitted of murder, which did not get nearly as much publicity as the original incident, most people still believe the prevailing narrative that a bunch of Hells Angels went rogue and started stabbing people. They definitely beat up a bunch of hippies and acted super shitty and are basically terrible people but the circumstances around the staffing are completely different than most people probably believe. To their credit the Rolling Stones did not pull an Axel Rose, they didn't up and bail when it seemed like a riot was brewing, and the fact that they kept playing and finished the concert has been credited with keeping the

situation from escalating even further into a full-blown riot.

The Altamont debacle is in many ways considered the end of the freelove hippie era, it stood as a stark contrast to the peace and love Woodstock concert that had taken place just a few months before. the Hells angels were blamed by many in the media for having ushered in the end of an era; they came to represent a fascist, violent response to a loving and peaceful movement that never really existed. I mean look, some hippies were cool, some weren't, a lot of people had a lot of terrible experiences in 60s and got murdered hitchhiking and all I'm saying is it wasn't some glorious Kumbaya utopian love fest, it was a bunch of dirty weirdos trying to change the world and it turns out that you can't make humans not fundamentally suck just by smoking a bunch of pot. Altamont was supposed to be a beautiful free gift to the people, but the people sometimes don't deserve or appreciate free shit. In fact, I hate doing free comedy shows for one simple reason: very few people are going to pay for the opportunity to be a dick and heckle, so if you charge a few bucks you typically keep those people out, but plenty of people will be dicks and heckle for free.

So the Hells Angels spent the next few decades stubbornly not evolving nor learning anything from their mistakes nor becoming better people, but they did stay slightly under the radar and also managed to not be involved in any more riots, at least until the year 2002.

Harrah's hotel and casino, Laughlin Nevada. The premier city for high-class casino gambling, good old Laughlin Nevada. Seems about right for a Hells Angels riot. That's white trash Vegas. Actually Reno is white trash Vegas. Maybe Laughlin is white trash Reno. How low does the bar go? Driving to Vegas one time I decided there's nothing between Los Angeles and Las Vegas other than dirt and snakes.

But there was a reason the riot happened in the lovely and scenic dirt-and-snakes sanctuary of Laughlin Nevada: for over 20 years Laughlin has apparently hosted an annual motorcycle show and rally called the River Run, billed as the largest ride-in motorcycle show in the west. It attracts motorcycle enthusiasts from all over the country which means that you have members of rival gangs constantly rubbing elbows and potentially butting heads. And that is exactly what happened when members of the H.A. ran into members of a rival gang called the Mongols. A gunfight broke out resulting in three deaths and a dozen injuries.

In the aftermath, the FBI opened an undercover 21-month infiltration operation, and then another one that was specifically focused on Phoenix AZ. called Black Biscuit. From the justice department website, "Based on the evidence obtained through this operation, 16 high-ranking Hell's Angels were indicted on charges that ranged from murder, murder for hire, violation of the Federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) laws, and drug trafficking." None were convicted. At least on the RICO charges. All of those charges resulted in a total of around 5 years of actual prison time and a bunch of plea deals. So nice job, FBI. Really strong stuff.

So as we learned in the beginning of this episode, the Hells Angels are *still* a menace to society; they are the Caucasian equivalent of inner city street gangs, they're like if the crips and bloods were fat and white. They're a triumph of gangster diversity, really; it's funny: they undermine their own racist beliefs by proving via their mere existence that white people are capable of doing all of the awful things that racists believe only minorities do. So the Hells angels are doing the Lord's work, if you think about it... defying stereotypes. Doing the Lord's work from Hell. One of the many hells of which they are the

unlikely angels.

We have new menaces!

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PATREON



Donna Dixon just became a £4.50 patron!

Email: dixon.donna81@gmail.com

I like the alliteration. Ryan Roman, Donna Dixon, we need a John Johnson and a Steve Stevens. My best friend in high school was named John Johnson. One time we got searched by the police, we were illegally jumping off a rock into a lake, that was a thing you were not supposed to do, and we all gave fake names and only John Johnson gave his real name and the cop was like, come on man, you could do better than that." And John Mulaney has a very similar story and his most recent comedy special, and that's fine, I wasn't planning to use that story on stage regardless, but it's true. I'm not accusing him of theft, I'm just saying, similar things happen. John Mulaney didn't steal it from my brain.

And also I believe we have another upgrade, she has become a menace,

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Amy Bade just became a \$5.00 patron!

Email: amybade21@gmail.com

We've mentioned Amy before. She's in the discord and the most recent live stream and I believe was a minion?

We also have another new menace,

New \$5.00 patron! 🎉 Meet Jason P

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Email: mugfinside@gmail.com

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Didn't give us his full name, just the initial. Makes me think he's hiding an embarrassing last name. I can only assume this is "Jason pirouette." if you don't give us your last name we're going to give you one. New policy. And look, there's nothing wrong with having a weird ass last name. Embrace your p, whatever it is. that's a good goal for all of the male identifying insomniacs. Embrace your p.

We also have a new minion who you

might recognize...Abbie from last episode, who asked how she could access full after midnight episodes. She went ahead and joined the Patreon, which is awesome. Welcome, Abby. Abbie laverick, like limerick but less dirty. There once was an Abbey from Nantucket. Why do I antagonize our supporters? It's compulsive. I feel like they know I mean well.

New £3.00 patron! 🎉 Meet Abbie Laverick

PATREON



Abbie Laverick just became a £3.00 patron!

Email: abbielaverick@gmail.com

And finally, another new minion,

New \$3.00 patron! 🎉 Meet Leeann Fields

PATREON



Leeann Fields just became a \$3.00 patron!

Email: leeanntrebtham15@gmail.com

No relation to strawberry. Or forever. That was the worst one so far. Worse than Fraggles. I officially apologize.

<https://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1914201,00.html>

<https://hells-angels.com/our-club/history/>

Recent crimes:

<https://news3lv.com/amp/news/local/trial-scheduled-for-hells-angels-two-years-after-shooting-on-henderson-freeway-las-vegas-valley-vagos-motorcycle-hpd-southern-nevada>

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2023/05/17/two-hells-angels-guilty-of-racketeering-crimes-including-murder-and-beatdown-third-member-found-not-guilty/amp/>

<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/29/hells-angels-banned-by-dutch-court-in-strike-against-biker-gangs>

— Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga by Hunter S. Thompson

<https://a.co/j9E9sq8>

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/hells-angels-criminal-enterprise>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/rcna36126>

https://www.sfweekly.com/archives/yesterday-s-crimes-hunter-s-thompson-gets-beaten/article_38c84625-6874-5186-a36a-3596400a8ad6.html

[A Brawl Between Motorcycle Gangs Turns Fatal at a Nevada Casino - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\).](#)

<https://www.grunge.com/480587/the-real-reason-the-hells-angels-usually-ride-harley-davidsons/>