



Animal: The Bloody Rise and Fall of the Mob's Most Feared Assassin

By Casey Sherman



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From the author of *Boston Strong: A City's Triumph Over Tragedy*.

"Joseph Barboza is the most dangerous individual known."—FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, 1965

Joe Barboza knew that there were two requirements for getting inducted into the Mafia. You had to be Sicilian. And you had to commit a contract killing. The New Bedford–born mobster was a proud Portuguese, not Sicilian, but his dream to be part of La Cosa Nostra proved so strong that he thought he could create a loophole. If he killed enough men, if he did enough of the Mafia's dirtiest biddings, then they would have no choice but to make him a Made Man.

Barboza's brutal rise during one of the deadliest mob wars in U.S. history became the stuff of legend, both on the bloodied streets of Boston and in the offices of the FBI and the U.S. Attorney General. He took sick joy in his crimes, and it became increasingly difficult for the mob to keep the Animal on his leash. But soon the hunter became the hunted. Betrayed by the mob and now on the run, Boston's most notorious contract killer forged a Faustian bargain with two unscrupulous FBI agents—a pact that would transform the U.S. criminal justice system. From false testimony and manipulated evidence that sent mob leaders to death row, to the creation of the Witness Protection Program so the feds could protect their prized, cold-blooded witness, this was the horrific, dramatic first act in a story of murder and FBI corruption still being played out today in the news and the courtroom with the capture and trial of Whitey Bulger. Barboza's legacy, buried for years thanks to the murders or deaths of its participants, is finally coming to light and being told in its unvarnished brutality by one of America's most respected true crime writers.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[A] fascinating biography. . . [Sherman] details the role of crooked FBI agents in the Animal's story, compromised court cases, infighting among Irish mob groups, and myriad grisly murders. Fans of mafia history will relish this portrait of a forgotten figure from the heyday of organized crime."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Boston-based journalist Casey Sherman takes us deep into the origins of the FBI's infamously corrupt Top-Echelon Informant program, whose poster child remains Whitey Bulger, and shows that Bulger wasn't the first FBI informant to use his bureau connections to get away with murder: Joe Barboza would create the horrific template. . . . Animal is a compelling account of the life and death of the legendary New Bedford psychopath."—*Boston Globe*

"The ghost of Joe "The Animal" Barboza has returned, so you might want to put your hands on your cheeks and scream. . . . Fascinating!"—*San Francisco Examiner*

"Drawing on interviews with [Joe 'The Animal'] Barboza's family and former associates, as well as troves of government documents, Sherman describes a life that started on the rough streets of 1930s New Bedford. Sherman tells the story of Barboza, whose ambition to join the Mafia despite his Portuguese heritage led him to allegedly kill more than two dozen people. It also describes how FBI agents used him for their own, at times, extralegal, purposes."—*Cape Cod Times*

Review

"I couldn't put down award-winning journalist Casey Sherman's riveting account of the life and death of Joe Barboza, one of the most feared killers in the history of the Mob. Animal is a fascinating tale of murder, brutality, and betrayal on both sides of the law; for fans of the gangster genre, it's a must-read." (Terence Winter, creator and executive producer of Boardwalk Empire)

"With Animal, author Casey Sherman takes you into the belly of the beast. You ride along with Joe Barboza, one of the most brutal gangsters in the history of American organized crime, during unspeakable acts of murder. Equally important, Sherman reveals how Barboza became a covert FBI informant and played the System until the System was indistinguishable from the criminal underground. An important book written by a skilled storyteller, Animal belongs on a shelf alongside The Valachi Papers, Wiseguy, and other essential works of Mob history." (T. J. English, New York Times best-selling author of The Westies, Havana Nocturne, and The Savage City)

"In Animal, author Casey Sherman serves up Joe Barboza, a mob killer of Portuguese descent that even the Italian Mafia feared and respected. In clear prose Sherman breathes life into a wild and dangerous era in New England's organized crime heyday. As the story unfolds, the ending will both surprise and shock." (Charles Brandt, author of "I Heard You Paint Houses": Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran and the Inside Story of the Mafia, the Teamsters, and the Last Ride of Jimmy Hoffa)

About the Author

CASEY SHERMAN is a Boston-based journalist and the author of *A Rose for Mary: The Hunt for the Real Boston Strangler* and *Bad Blood: Freedom and Death in the White Mountains*, among others. He is the coauthor of *The Finest Hours: The True Story of the Coast Guard's Most Daring Rescue*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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