

Country Comfort: Vice and Corruption in Rural Settings

by

Gary W. Potter
and
Larry K. Gaines

ABSTRACT

This article provides an in-depth examination of rural organized crime. Organized crime studies traditionally have focused on urban criminality; this study discusses its rural form. Types of participants, patterns of criminality, and relationships with political and law enforcement corruption are detailed. Although there are differences between urban and rural organized crime, it tends to exhibit some similarities regardless of setting.

Introduction

It is virtually axiomatic in the organized crime literature that the continual delivery of illicit goods and services by organized crime groups could not continue without some level of accommodation and cooperation from government officials and police. Studies, such as Chambliss' (1978) description of organized crime in Seattle and Gardiner's (1970) inquiry into organized crime and corruption in "Wincanton," among others, have stressed the symbiotic relationship between official power and organized crime (see also, Gardiner and Lyman, 1978; Lupsha, 1987; Chambliss, 1986; Naylor, 1987; Lernoux, 1984). Furthermore, the national war on drugs has resulted in a series of revelations which have identified widespread corruption at all levels of law enforcement and government in general.

There is a distinct urban bias in the study of corruption and crime. Scholarly studies and major criminal justice agency inquiries into the delivery of illicit goods and services are exclusively focused on urban settings. This reflects, no doubt, the spatial concentration of such illicit activity in major urban settings and the tendency of investigative bodies to

focus on urban areas. In addition, the largest police departments are obviously urban and tend to draw the greatest attention in the criminal justice literature.

This concentration of attention on urban areas has tended to obscure an important truth in both the study of corruption and the study of organized crime. The truth is that rural areas have drug dealers, bootleggers, prostitutes, gamblers, loansharks, auto thieves, fences, and the like. These criminals provide illicit goods and services on a continual basis and in order to do so, they have reached some kind of accommodation with the social control bureaucracy. While this activity in rural settings has not received the same level of attention as its urban counterpart, it is nonetheless quite real and is becoming more public. For example, literally dozens of sheriffs in rural counties of Tennessee and Georgia have been charged with involvement in drug trafficking (Shenon, 1988). In 1989, the sheriff of Henry County Georgia was sentenced to thirty-five years in prison for his assistance to drug smugglers. In Dawson County Georgia the sheriff was sentenced to thirty years for providing protection to drug smugglers (Coppola, 1989). The sheriff of Morgan County Kentucky along with the county judge and several local businessmen were convicted on charges of protecting drug dealers and cocaine distribution in 1988 (Licking Valley Courier, 1989). In 1982, Sheriff Paul L. Browning, Jr. of Harlan County Kentucky was convicted of plotting the murder of two political enemies (Estep, 1991.) And in August, 1991, the sheriffs of Wolfe County, Lee County, and Owsley County, all in Kentucky, along with a deputy sheriff and a police chief were convicted of bribery, extortion and conspiracy to distribute cocaine and marijuana (Estep and Poore, 1991). The fact is that corruption is as critical a determinant of rural law enforcement and politics as it is to social control in our big cities. The purpose of this study is to describe the types and modes of corruption in rural settings and to explore the relationship between organizations providing illicit goods and services in rural settings and public officials.

Stereotypes of Rural Organized Crime

Rural organized crime, when discussed at all, is usually presented in terms of disorganized bands of fences, con-men, strip-joint owners, and auto thieves. Occasionally reference is made to the "Dixie Mafia" as a typical rural organized crime group (Hunter, 1983; St. George, 1991). This group is described as "a confederation of crooks who helped each other steal, murder and swindle in towns and cities across the South" (St. George, 1991). A member of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement is quoted as saying of the Dixie Mafia, "they remind me of Jesse James, cowboys riding up and down the roads looking for someone to steal from or kill" (St. George, 1991).

So, while their urban brethren are depicted as suave, highly organized, intelligent and cunning illicit businessmen in silk suits and shoes of fine Italian leather, rural organized criminals are presented as beer-guzzling rednecks, moving to and fro from stockcar races to strip-joints, stealing cars, swindling widows, and murdering innocent victims or each other. The paucity of research on rural organized makes it impossible to evaluate the utility of this view of the rural organized criminals.

This study explores criminal enterprises operating in an area of rural eastern Kentucky. The research documents the prevalence of organized criminal activity in the area, the shape of illicit markets, the means of coordination and management used by criminal entrepreneurs, and relations between criminal syndicates and political and law enforcement officials. For purposes of this study, organized crime is defined as the "management and coordination of illegal enterprises connected with vice (gambling, prostitution, high-interest loans, pornography, and drug trafficking), and racketeering (labor and business extortion)" (Block and Chambliss, 1981). This definition is appropriate since it both delineates the market in which organized crime groups operate and recognizes management and coordination concepts as important for criminal organization.

Methodology

The data for this study were gathered in a relatively simple manner. In order to make the area covered by our study manageable, one economic development area in eastern Kentucky was selected for study. Kentucky has designated fifteen economic development areas, five of which fall within the Appalachian region of eastern Kentucky (Department of Economic Development, 1986). Economic development regions contain counties which are similar in demographic characteristics and are proximate to one another. The development area chosen for this study contains five counties, all rural, all lightly populated, and all with significant economic problems. For purposes of this study, these counties are designated as "Clapper," "Loam," "Mountain," "Valley," and "Coal" counties. The five counties cover slightly more than 3,200 square miles and have a population slightly in excess of 231,000 people. Per capita income in the area is about \$6,800, and the official unemployment rate is 10.7%, although the real unemployment rate as calculated by University of Kentucky economists is around 33.8%. In addition, to being similar in demographics these counties are also similar in geography, with rugged, mountainous terrain predominating. The major industries, all of which are in decline, are coal mining, timber, and agriculture.

After selecting the site for the study, data were gathered in the following manner. Local newspapers which serve the five counties were searched

over a twenty-four month period for all stories dealing with illicit activities involving the goods and services traditionally associated with organized crime (i.e., drug trafficking, gambling, prostitution, organized auto theft, organized fencing of stolen property, and bootlegging). In addition, published reports from the Kentucky Justice Cabinet and U.S. Attorney's office in Lexington, Kentucky, were searched for similar information (Drug Enforcement Strategy Committee, 1987; Kentucky Justice Cabinet, 1988; DeFalaise and Whittle, 1989). Specific criminal actions noted in these newspapers, such as indictments and convictions, were recorded to create a database of organized crime networks involved in the provision of illicit and goods and services in the counties under study for the period 1988-1990. Those enterprises identified in at least two sources and having at least five individuals in positions of management and coordination (a rather arbitrary number selected to differentiate between organized crime groups and simple partnerships or individual entrepreneurs) were selected and designated as rural organized crime networks. In total eighty-eight rural organized crime networks were identified. Those eighty-eight crime networks were then reduced to a database of twenty-eight crime networks through additional observational research.

Following the accumulation of documentary information, a field research design was initiated in order to become acquainted with the methods and means of illicit entrepreneurship in the counties under study. Using a participant-as-observer role (Gold, 1958) in which the researchers posed as customers, observations were conducted at roadhouses, game rooms, restaurants, food stores, gas stations, truck stops, and illegal retail liquor outlets. In the course of these observations primary informant relationships were developed with sixteen participants in the rural organized crime networks under study. Data was recorded for each rural criminal enterprise observed and observational notes were recorded immediately following observations.

Following the accumulation of observational data, specific validity and reliability tests were undertaken. The observational notes were checked for contaminating influences using McCall's data quality index (McCall, 1968: 120-125). Contaminated and incomplete data were excluded from the database, and only instances in which complete information on a specific crime network had been obtained were included in the final database. Analysis of the data was undertaken using both Glazer's (1965: 44) constant comparative method and Becker's (1961: 43) tabular model for hypothesis evaluation.

Twenty-eight rural organized crime networks were identified for the five counties under study. Complete observational, informant, and documentary data had to be present to be included in the database. Those crime networks for which complete records could not be accumulated were

excluded. These twenty-eight rural crime networks became a criminal enterprise data for the five counties. The data was then analyzed for specific network characteristics including number of enterprise participants in management and coordination positions, gender of participants, extended family relationships among those participants, types of criminal activity engaged in as primary income generators by the crime network, number of criminal enterprises engaged in as primary income generators by the crime network, the existence of corrupt relations with public officials and the mode of these corrupt relations, and legitimate businesses utilized by the crime network in the conduct of their illicit activities.

The Rural Market Illicit Goods and Services

Criminal enterprises engaged in as primary income generators by rural organized crime groups in eastern Kentucky can be divided into two major categories: (1) wholesale production and supply, and (2) retail sales and service. The most profitable aspect of the rural crime industry is in the wholesale trade. This includes the growing and processing of high-grade marijuana crops, and the transshipment of cocaine from its point of embarkation, through eastern Kentucky, to some ultimate sales destination. The retail crime industry revolves around the provision of illicit goods and services to residents of eastern Kentucky and to transient customers passing through the area, and includes the illegal sale of liquor, drugs, prostitution services, and gambling services.

While there is no systematic and reliable estimate available from any official source, there is widespread intersubjective agreement among both law enforcers and criminal activists that the marijuana industry is the cornerstone of eastern Kentucky's agricultural economy. Local law enforcement officers have estimated that as many of 40% of the residents in the area under study are employed in the marijuana industry (Kelley, 1989). It is easy to understand the attractiveness of marijuana cultivation. First, and most importantly, marijuana is a highly profitable crop. Local growers estimate that two high-grade marijuana plants will yield as great a return as an entire burley tobacco crop for the average farmer. Second, marijuana is a crop uniquely conducive to the topology and farming conditions in the mountainous areas of eastern Kentucky. Most marijuana is planted in small plots of about 60 square feet. These marijuana gardens, if properly tended, will yield about \$60,000 worth of high-grade marijuana.

The marijuana cultivation industry works very much like a truck farmers' cooperative. Buyers oftentimes contract in advance with growers and simply pick up the marijuana after harvesting or processing. Alternatively, some buyers come into eastern Kentucky during the three marijuana harvests, visit growers, evaluate their product, and bid for it in much the

same manner as the major tobacco companies bid for the burley crop. Kentucky State Police intelligence indicate that local marijuana is now commonly shipped to at least 15 states outside of Kentucky for sale (Drug Enforcement Strategy Committee, 1987; Kentucky Justice Cabinet, 1988).

Marijuana, however, is not the sole wholesale drug business in eastern Kentucky. In the past few years the transshipment of cocaine has also become big business. As cocaine importing has become logistically more complex in order to avoid law enforcement interdiction, and as the quantities of cocaine entering the U.S. have reached prodigious proportions in the last five years, moving the drug has become a sizable cottage industry in eastern Kentucky (DeFalaise and Whittle, 1989; Drug Enforcement Strategy Committee, 1987; Kentucky Justice Cabinet, 1988; National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee, 1986-86). Most transshipment operations are relatively simple. A load of cocaine is brought into remote, abandoned, or temporary landing strips scattered throughout the eastern Kentucky mountains from initial embarkation points in Florida, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas. The cocaine is then off-loaded and shipped by car or pickup truck to destinations such as Chicago, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. While the police are busy stopping Porsches with Florida license plates and hispanic or black drivers, large amounts of cocaine are being moved by good-ole' country boys far from the prying eyes of law enforcement.

Rural organized crime's retail market is centered on the same basic human vices as their urban cousins: liquor, sex, and gambling.

Kentucky, for reasons known only to local sheriffs, bootleggers, and Baptist preachers, maintains a local option with regard to alcohol. All of the counties in our study have exercised their option to keep the counties legally "dry." In fact, these counties sit in the middle of "dry belt" that extends an hour's drive down the interstate to the south and an hour and half's drive up the interstate to the north. As a direct result the procurement, smuggling and sale of "white liquor" is a big illicit business.

Organized crime's retail liquor trade takes place in two formats. Some organized crime groups have established chains of illegal liquor stores throughout rural areas of eastern Kentucky. Most often these are private residences, country stores, or gas stations in which liquor is always available. The crime networks buy liquor in large quantities from legal retailers in wet areas at pre-arranged discount prices. It is then transported to the "dry" counties and sold at an immense markup, usually between 33% and 50%. The other venue in which illegal liquor is made available by organized crime groups is through a series of roadhouses and jenny barns. Jenny barns are small establishments, once again usually located in a private residence, in which liquor is sold by the drink. Ancillary services, such as prostitution and limited gambling services, are also usually pro-

vided. Rural organized crime networks may operate as many as two dozen jenny barns on their turf. Roadhouses, on the other hand, tend to be larger establishments, with a few rivaling the small nightclubs of the "wet" cities. Roadhouses are often converted barns, warehouses, or old farmhouses. They feature a full-service bar, often a live band, dancing, "strippers," casino type games of chance (blackjack, craps, slot machines, poker machines), and usually a stable of prostitutes.

Much like the liquor trade, illegal gambling occurs in several formats in the eastern Kentucky counties. Most commonly, rural organized crime networks place illegal machines in businesses where a tourist, trucker, or other transient might stop. The second most common venue is the "game room," an establishment which features legal entertainment, such as pinball machines and pool tables, but which will also offer gambling devices, small scale bookmaking and small stakes table games. At the roadhouses, gambling services also involve illegal machines and table games.

Prostitution is surprisingly easy to find in these five rural counties. Organized crime groups place women in truck stops, restaurants, and other establishments serving tourists and truckers on the interstate; local "tanning salons," which are the rural version of the urban massage parlor; and, of course, the jenny barns and roadhouses. The interstate trade is the least sophisticated of the prostitution services, the rough rural equivalent of urban streetwalkers. The "tanning salon" trade, however, is better organized. Customers come to the establishment and pay for a tanning session during which they are assisted by a female employee. During the session a massage might be suggested by the attendant or the customer might inquire about other sexual services. Prices in these establishments range from \$40 to \$120 depending on the service requested. The prostitution services in roadhouses and jenny barns are quite variable. In the small jenny barns the service is crude with little attention to preliminaries or ambience. In the larger roadhouses, however, prostitutes receive a commission for the number of drinks they sell to the customer (much like the traditional b-girl). They socialize with the customer, dance with him, and engage in conversation. When that conversation turns to sexual services the exchange is discreet and usually occurs either in a private room made available for such liaisons or in a trailer out back.

Rural Organized Crime and Modes of Official Corruption

Twenty-five of the twenty-eight crime networks operating in the five rural counties of eastern Kentucky under study make use of some form of corrupt relationships with public officials and law enforcement officers in the conduct of their illicit business.

How corrupt relationships actually occur and how they are utilized in the delivery of illicit goods and services depends largely on the mode of corruption. In the police literature various typologies have been created to identify modes of corruption. The Knapp Commission (Knapp Commission, 1973: 1-34) classified corrupt police officers as either "meat eaters" or "grass eaters." "Meat eaters" were those officers who actively misused their police powers by seeking opportunities for bribes or actively participating in criminal endeavors, while "grass eaters" were those officers who merely accepted that graft that came their way. Michael Johnston (1982: 75) categorized corruption in four ways: (1) internal corruption, (2) selective enforcement or nonenforcement, (3) active criminality, and (4) bribery and extortion.

Groups involved in the delivery of illicit goods and services can make use of a wide range of corrupt contacts to insure the uninterrupted delivery of their products. Corrupt law enforcement officers can overlook illegal activity, "lose" evidence, give inadequate testimony, or make improper arrests. Corrupt judges can dismiss cases or steer the course of trials in favor of the defendants. Corrupt prosecutors can choose not to prosecute certain cases.

In eastern Kentucky's rural counties, making these corrupt contacts is far easier than in urban settings. First of all, government is considerably less complex than in a major city (Ireland, 1977; Lee, 1981). County government is supervised by a "Judge Executive" who acts as the chief administrative officer of the county. Law enforcement usually involves the county sheriff and his deputies and a very small number of local police officers if there is a city located in the county. There is one county attorney and usually only one or two judicial officers serving the county. Unlike New York or Philadelphia with hundreds of judges, thousands of police officers, dozens of district attorneys and assistant district attorneys and thousands of municipal officials, rural organized crime groups require only minimal contacts to guarantee protection of their illicit activities. For this study a typology was created of the modes of corruption occurring in rural settings. This typology identifies four primary modes of corruption: (1) official acquiescence; (2) familial relations; (3) bribery and extortion, and (4) active participation in organized criminal ventures.

Official Acquiescence: Official acquiescence occurs when law enforcement officers and political figures in the county know of the activities of criminal organizations and choose not to intervene. It is, in essence a policy of nonenforcement or selective enforcement of the law. Of the criminal networks surveyed for this study eleven of the twenty-eight networks were the beneficiaries of official acquiescence. In this mode of corruption no bribes are exchanged nor do public officials personally profit from the activities of criminal networks. Official acquiescence merely

represents a decision by officials not to intervene in criminal activity, a decision to not enforce the law.

Table 1:
Modes of Corruption Utilized by
Rural Organized Crime Networks

<u>Mode of Corruption</u>	<u>Number of Crime Networks</u>	<u>Percent of all Crime Networks</u>
No evidence of corruption	3	10.71%
Officials know of network's activities	11	39.29%
Officials are related to network participants	5	17.86%
Officials receive payoffs from network	4	14.29%
Officials are active participants in the network	5	17.86%

Familial Relations: A second mode of corruption revolves around the existence of familial relations. In studies of organized crime networks operating in rural settings it has been found that one of the principle organizing criteria for these groups is the recruitment of relatives (either through blood or marriage) to the criminal group (Potter and Gaines, 1990). Of the twenty-eight groups surveyed for this study, sixteen had individuals related to one another in management and coordination roles. In Kentucky's rural counties the strength of the extended family is well recognized in all aspects of community life. It is therefore not at all surprising that the family should play a major role in the organization of criminal activity and corruption. Five of the twenty-eight criminal networks studied had relatives among county office-holders and law enforcement officials in their counties of operation. Familial relations as a mode of corruption, once again, entails a form of selective enforcement or nonenforcement. That

nonenforcement policy is simply strengthened by the existence of familial ties.

Bribery and Extortion: When we think of corruption we usually think of public officials and law enforcement officers who take bribes from criminal actors to either ignore their criminal activities or to somehow protect those activities. While corruption is often far more subtle than crass bribery, bribery is nonetheless present among rural organized crime networks, with four of the crime networks surveyed directly bribing law enforcement officials in return for crime-committing licenses.

Active Participation: Finally, there are instances in which political office-holders and law enforcement officials are active participants in organized crime networks. William Chambliss (1978) has suggested that the strongest and best organized crime groups are actually cabals in which public officials and businessmen play a major coordinating role and criminals are more or less employees or managers of the organized crime enterprises. Certainly having a law enforcement officer or a political figure as an active participant in the crime group, particularly a rural crime network where a single official can have an enormous impact, offers a wide range of opportunities to criminal entrepreneurs. Five of the crime networks operating in the area covered by this study have office-holders or law enforcement officials as active participants in the network.

Participant Characteristics and Official Corruption

In looking at the characteristics of the participants in these organized crime networks, several factors stand out as impacting on both the incidence and modalities of corrupt relations in the organizing of crime. The first of these is the gender of those involved in managing and coordinating rural organized crime activities.

Table 2:
Relationships Between the Number of Females
in Management and Coordination Positions in Rural Crime
Networks and the Use of Official Corruption by that Network

<u>Females in</u> <u>Management</u> <u>Positions in</u> <u>Crime Networks</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Crime</u> <u>Networks</u>	<u>Crime Network</u> <u>does not make</u> <u>use of Official</u> <u>Corruption</u>	<u>Crime Network</u> <u>does make</u> <u>use of Official</u> <u>Corruption</u>
0	5 / 17.86%	0 / 0.00%	5 / 100.00%
1	7 / 25.00%	0 / 0.00%	7 / 100.00%
2	8 / 28.57%	1 / 12.50%	7 / 87.50%
3	3 / 10.71%	1 / 33.33%	2 / 66.67%
4	4 / 14.29%	1 / 25.00%	3 / 75.00%
5	1 / 3.57%	0 / 0.00%	1 / 100.00%
MEAN	1.89	3.00	1.76

The vast majority (82.14%) of rural organized crime networks in this study had females in positions of management and coordination within the network. The number of females in such positions ranged from a low of one to a high of five, with a mean of 1.89 females per network.

Rural crime networks making use of official corruption have significantly fewer females in management and coordination positions that do not make use of official corruption. There may be several reasons for this relationship. First, the appearance of females in leadership roles in organized crime is a peculiarly rural phenomenon (Potter and Gaines, 1990). The prevailing assumption about organized crime in general is that it is a male dominated social entity. The intensified role of females in rural crime networks appears to derive from the role of women in rural society in general and in the life of eastern Kentucky, in particular (Weller, 1965). In rural, agricultural communities women have traditionally played an important role in the running and management of farms, taking responsibility not just for crop production, but also for many of the commercial transactions and activities attendant to farming. In addition, the rural extended family in eastern Kentucky has traditionally reserved a strong leadership for women. While certainly not a matriarchy, these families have deferred considerable decision-making authority to mothers and grandmothers, both in terms of family discipline and organization and in terms of the family business. It is therefore not surprising to find women carrying these responsibilities beyond the maintenance functions of the family into the world of crime. In terms of criminal organization this implies

that women bring with them to leadership roles considerable expertise, authority, and family-based power. We can at least speculate that organizations with females in leadership roles may have a higher degree of internal discipline, better day-to-day coordination of activities, and a tighter, better defined structure than other crime networks, therefore obviating some of the need for corrupt relationships to protect the activities of the network.

Most rural organized crime networks in this study have participants in management positions who are related to each other (57.14%). On average 1.82 network managers are related.

Table 3:
Relationships Between the Number of Individuals Related by Blood or Marriage in Management Positions in Rural Crime Networks and the Modes of Corruption Used by that Network

Related Individuals in Management Positions in the Crime Network	No Official Collusion with the Crime Network	Officials know of Crime Network	Officials Related to Crime Network	Officials Take Payoffs from Crime Network	Officials Participate in Crime Network
0	1 / 8.3%	4 / 33.3%	1 / 8.3%	2 / 25.0%	4 / 33.3%
2	0 / 0.0%	4 / 44.4%	3 / 33.3%	2 / 22.2%	0 / 0.0%
3	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	1 / 100.0%
4	0 / 0.0%	2 / 66.7%	1 / 33.3%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%
5	0 / 0.0%	1 / 100.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%
6	1 / 100.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%
7	1 / 100.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%
MEAN	4.33	1.91	2.00	1.00	0.60

It is apparent that rural crime networks with fewer related individuals in management and coordination positions, make more use of opportunities for official corruption than those with larger numbers of related individuals in management. Organizing crime with the assistance of relatives is a common phenomenon in rural areas. To a large degree the family takes the place of affiliatory groups identified in sociological studies of urban organized crime, groups such as street gangs, prison acquaintances, and the like (see, for example, Abadinsky, 1981: 30-32; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1965; Miller, 1958; Shaw and McKay, 1972; Sutherland, 1973; Suttles, 1968). The extended family in eastern Kentucky is the major social institution in the community (Weller, 1965: 58). Families collaborate

regularly, stay in close contact, recreate, work, and organize their lives together. Because all organized crime groups face as their greatest problem recruiting individuals who are trustworthy, loyal and committed to the continuation of the enterprise, it is not surprising that the extended family becomes one of the principle areas of recruitment for such groups in rural settings. What this means in terms of corruption is that criminal organizations with a large number of related individuals in management and coordination positions exhibit tighter organization, better security, and a stronger defense against defections or infiltrations than other groups. This tighter structure obviates the need for corrupt relationships as a means of protection from official interference.

As pointed out above, networks which have achieved a high degree of integration because of organization predicated on familial relationships tend to have less use for official corruption than other networks. Also, it appears that networks with higher numbers of related individuals are more likely to rely either on nonenforcement by officials, or corrupt relationships because they are related to public officials.

Organizational Characteristics and Official Corruption

In addition to influences emanating from the characteristics of participants in rural crime networks, the probability that such a crime network will make use of corrupt relationships with public officials and the form those relationships take is affected by several organizational considerations, including the number of criminal enterprises the network is engaged in as a primary income generator; the specific type of enterprises which are engaged in by the crime network; and the number of legitimate businesses utilized by the crime network in its criminal operations.

The majority of rural organized crime networks engage in multiple criminal enterprises as primary income generators with the average number of criminal enterprises engaged in being 2.25.

The more criminal enterprises a crime network engages in as a primary income generator for the network, the more likely it is that the crime network will make use of corrupt relationships. There are two good reasons for this. First of all, the more illicit businesses a crime network engages in the more likely it is that its activities will come to the attention of law enforcement. Therefore, the more active a crime network is, the greater is the need for official protection of its activities.

Table 4:
Relationships Between the Number of Criminal Enterprises
Engaged in by Rural Crime Networks as Primary Income
Generators and the Modes of Corruption Used by that Network

Number of Criminal Enterprises Engaged in	No Official Collusion with the Crime Network	Officials know of Crime Network	Officials Related to Crime Network	Officials Take Payoffs from Crime Network	Officials Participate in Crime Network
1	2 / 18.2%	7 / 63.6%	1 / 9.1%	0 / 0.0%	1 / 9.1%
2	0 / 0.0%	2 / 50.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	2 / 50.0%
3	1 / 11.1%	2 / 22.2%	3 / 33.3%	2 / 22.2%	1 / 11.1%
4	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	1 / 33.3%	2 / 66.7%	0 / 0.0%
5	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	1 / 100.0%
MEAN	1.67	1.55	2.80	3.50	2.60

Second, the nature of multiple enterprise crime networks impacts on the likelihood that the network will make use of official corruption. Bootlegging enterprises, for example, often operate ancillary businesses in gambling and prostitution. Therefore, the nature of the illicit business spawns additional enterprises. As we shall see below, bootlegging, gambling and prostitution invariably occurs within the context of corrupt relations with government officials. On the other hand, drug networks are far less likely to engage in multiple enterprises. While it is true that drug networks may occasionally add weapons sales to their portfolio, and while it is true that some bootleggers, particularly those operating roadhouses and jenny barns may also provide customers access to marijuana and cocaine, it is equally true that drug trafficking can exist on its own without ancillary enterprises, and particularly in the case of marijuana cultivation and processing, this is likely to be the case. Because drug networks have a smaller incidence of the use of official corruption, and fewer ancillary enterprises, they reinforce the idea that the fewer the criminal enterprises, the less likely the existence of corrupt relationships.

In addition to affecting the incidence of corrupt relationships, there is a clear relationship between the number of criminal enterprises and the modes of corruption used. Those networks engaged in the fewest number of criminal enterprises either have no corrupt relationships with public officials or rely on official tolerance. Those networks engaged in the highest number of criminal activities, tend to rely on familial relations with officials, outright bribery, or the creation of crime cabals which include

office-holders in the management and coordination of the crime network. This is the result of a two-edged sword of corruption. First, as detailed above, networks with multiple criminal enterprises, particularly those which have combined bootlegging, gambling and prostitution, have a greater need for official protection and therefore must seek stronger bonds with public officials. On the other hand, this relationship also reflects the fact that crime networks which are operating with secure bonds of corruption in place may feel that they can safely expand their criminal enterprises because the necessary protection is already in place.

The type of criminal enterprise engaged by a rural crime network also affects the probability that the network will be involved in official corruption. Far and away the most common criminal enterprise engaged in by rural crime networks in eastern Kentucky is drug trafficking, particularly marijuana cultivation and the transshipment of cocaine (Gaines, Potter, and Falkenberg, 1990; Kentucky Justice Cabinet, 1988). Second in incidence is weapons sales, a trade closely related to drug trafficking. Gambling, bootlegging, and prostitution, representing the basic human vices are engaged in by about one-third of the networks, with fencing and auto theft, often thought of as being intimately connected to rural criminal organizations, being the least frequent.

The type of criminal enterprise engaged in by a rural crime network plays a key role in explaining the probability that the network will make use of official corruption as part of its ongoing business. While it is important to note that all types of criminal activity make use of official corruption more times than not, it is equally important to note that gambling, prostitution and bootlegging invariably, and without exception, make use of official corruption. There are several obvious reasons for this relationship.

Table 5:
Relationships Between the Types of Criminal Enterprise
Engaged in by Rural Crime Networks and the
Modes of Corruption Used by that Network

Type of Criminal Enterprise <u>Engaged in</u>	No Official Collusion with the Crime <u>Network</u>	Officials know of Crime <u>Network</u>	Officials Related to Crime <u>Network</u>	Officials Take Payoffs from Crime <u>Network</u>	Officials Participate in Crime <u>Network</u>
Bootlegging	0 / 0.0%	2 / 22.2%	4 / 44.4%	1 / 11.1%	2 / 22.2%
Fencing	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	0 / 0.0%	1 / 33.3%	2 / 66.7%
Prostitution	0 / 0.0%	3 / 37.5%	1 / 12.5%	2 / 25.0%	2 / 25.0%
Gambling	0 / 0.0%	5 / 55.6%	1 / 11.1%	1 / 11.1%	2 / 22.2%
Drugs	3 / 15.0%	5 / 25.0%	5 / 25.0%	4 / 20.0%	3 / 15.0%
Auto Theft	1 / 25.0%	0 / 0.0%	1 / 25.0%	2 / 50.0%	0 / 0.0%
Weapons Sales	1 / 10.0%	2 / 20.0%	2 / 20.0%	3 / 30.0%	2 / 20.0%

First of all, bootleggers, gamblers, and purveyors of prostitution operate from fixed locations, on a predictable schedule. These are volume businesses, requiring a large number of customers to insure profitability. They therefore operate much like any retail business. They have an established location (so that customers know where to find them) and they are open on a regular schedule (so that customers know when to go there). To operate in any other manner would so seriously disrupt their business that they would scarcely be able to function or realize a reasonable profit. Obviously, a retail vice establishment, operating in a permanent location, and open regular hours, in counties with small populations and no urban centers can scarcely evade the attention of political officials and law enforcement officers. Therefore, some kind of accommodation is vital.

In addition, gambling, bootlegging and prostitution, because they are volume businesses, draw considerable patronage from the residents of the counties in which they operate. While there exists no reliable data upon which to base an estimate, experience would seem to tell us that a minimum of 25% and quite probably considerably more people in dry counties patronize illegal liquor establishments (Davis and Potter, 1992). Observational research would also lend the impression that an even higher number of county residents gamble. With so many people knowing of these businesses it is similarly inconceivable that authorities do not share that knowledge.

Drug trafficking, auto theft and weapons sales operate in a different manner. First of all, volume is not required in these enterprises. A single

purchase may bring with it a considerable profit. Marijuana cultivators sell in quantity. They make as few as a half-dozen actual sales a year. Obviously, chop shops have no need to deal in volume. Selling two or three hot cars, or a quantity of parts does not require daily transactions. In addition, these enterprises have no need for regular hours or permanent locations. While a customer no doubt knows where he or she might find his drug dealer and when that contact is most likely to be made, contacts remain serendipitous rather than scheduled. Contact may be made by phone or in person and most often the transaction is future oriented, with the buyer and seller agreeing to meet to consummate the sale at a later time. Drug dealers, auto thieves, and dealers in illicit weapons do not need to be open for business from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursday through Saturday at a permanent place of business to conduct their commercial activities. So, while official corruption may be convenient and may make life much easier, it is not as essential to these enterprises as they are to bootlegging, gambling, and prostitution.

The mode of corruption utilized by rural crime networks is affected by the type of criminal activity the network engages in as a primary source of income. Six of the nine networks engaged in bootlegging are beneficiaries of a nonenforcement policy (four as a result of familial relations). Similarly, six of the nine gambling networks were able to utilize nonenforcement as a primary mode of corruption. The ability of gambling and bootlegging networks to rely on nonenforcement, as opposed to outright bribery or active criminal participation by officials, no doubt reflects some political and social truths about the "crimes" of drinking and gambling. While these activities are illegal they are also pervasive. This creates an opportunity for a policy of nonenforcement in that it is unlikely that a great deal of public pressure will be applied for the enforcement of the laws. In addition, the active enforcement of the laws creates some serious political dangers. These counties are small, a few hundred votes can easily swing an election. The arrest of a bootlegger or a gambler has the potential to result in a considerable block of votes against an office-holder. The extended family of the arrestee may control a hundred votes or so itself. Add to this the many customers that have been inconvenienced or annoyed by the arrest and the potential for major political trouble at the polls becomes quite real. A policy of nonenforcement walks a thin line between angering potential voters and engaging in blatant corruption.

The other criminal activities engaged in by crime networks pose more of a problem for officials and the mode of corruption tends to be more blatant. For example, only half of the prostitution networks can rely on a nonenforcement policy and that nonenforcement policy is almost always tied to prostitution conducted in roadhouses and jenny barns, retail outlets for gambling and bootlegging. In those cases where prostitution activities

stand on their own, outright bribery or active participation in the crime network by officials is far more likely. With regard to drug trafficking, an even more delicate balance must be struck. In the case of marijuana cultivating and processing in some eastern Kentucky counties, there is considerable social support for a nonenforcement policy (Kelley, 1989). Reports of local resentment directed toward marijuana eradication campaigns by the Kentucky State Police are common. In one case, a police officer had to move out of his home county because of local hostility toward anti-marijuana efforts. In other cases, police officers have reported that local stores have refused to sell them food, beverages and gasoline during anti-marijuana campaigns. Marijuana is seen as an important cash crop in impoverished rural areas of eastern Kentucky. It not only supplies income to a large number of residents, but it also results in significant infusions of cash into local businesses and commerce. The other major drug-related industry in eastern Kentucky is the transshipment of cocaine. Because cocaine does not play as significant a role as marijuana in the local economy and because cocaine has a higher level of social disapproval attendant to it, cocaine-related corruption tends to operate from a more direct mode, principally involving bribery or active participation by officials in cocaine transshipment networks.

Table 6:
Relationships Between the Number of Legitimate
Businesses Utilized by Rural Crime Networks
and the Use of Official Corruption by that Network

<u>Number of Legitimate Businesses Utilized by the Crime Network</u>	<u>Number of Crime Networks</u>	<u>Crime Network does not make use of Official Corruption</u>	<u>Crime Network does make use of Official Corruption</u>
0	18 / 64.29%	2 / 11.11%	16 / 88.89%
1	4 / 14.29%	0 / 0.00%	4 / 100.00%
2	2 / 7.14%	1 / 50.00%	1 / 50.00%
3	2 / 7.14%	0 / 0.00%	2 / 100.00%
6	1 / 3.57%	0 / 0.00%	1 / 100.00%
8	1 / 3.57%	0 / 0.00%	1 / 100.00%
MEAN	1.00	0.67	1.04

Most rural organized crime networks do not make use of legitimate businesses in the conduct of their criminal activities. There appears to be a slight relationship between the propensity of a rural organized crime network to use legitimate businesses as part of their criminal enterprises and their use of official corruption. This relationship no doubt reflects three basic characteristics of these crime networks. First, the networks which use legitimate business fronts, either for money laundering purposes or directly in the conduct of their illicit business, are obviously among the more sophisticated of the crime networks. If they have gone to the trouble of establishing complex business links to protect their activities, it is logical that they would also make use of the protection afforded them by opportunities in the marketplace for corrupt services as well. Second, as was discussed above, the incidence of corrupt relationships is higher among those crime networks engaged in bootlegging, gambling and prostitution. These are also the types of criminal enterprise most amenable to the use of businesses as part of their criminal activities. Retail stores, service stations, restaurants, truck stops, tanning salons, and game rooms are all otherwise legitimate businesses used by vice purveyors for these illicit business activities. Therefore, we would expect both the incidence of corruption and the incidence of business infiltration to be higher among such crime networks. Finally, crime networks dealing in drugs, while still showing a high incidence of corruption, are less likely than other crime networks to make use of corrupt services. They are also less likely to make use of legitimate business fronts. This seems to contradict the highly held view of drug trafficking as being dependent upon businesses to launder money. This would no doubt be true for urban crime networks. But in rural eastern Kentucky, drug traffickers do not have the same problems with cleaning their ill-gotten gains. To a large extent, these counties operate on a cash economy basis (Weller, 1965). Credit cards, loans, even bank accounts are less common than in more urban settings. Major purchases such as appliances, cars, and the like are often made with cash, not credit. Therefore, no paper trail exists. Marijuana cultivators will often take their cash yield and simply convert it to needed purchases. A dozen or so individuals in a crime network purchasing trucks, cars and major appliances can dispose of a great deal of cash in a hurry.

Corruption and the Organizing of Rural Crime

It is basic to the definition of organized crime that illicit goods and services are delivered to the public on a continual and uninterrupted basis. It does not require great insight to understand that this requires accommodation with those social institutions whose purpose is to prevent the delivery of those illicit goods and services. Every empirical study of organized crime

published in the past two decades has stressed the importance of this relationship, arguing that organized crime simply could not exist without political and law enforcement corruption (Harring, 1983; Haller, 1972; Albin, 1971; Dorsett, 1968; Bayor, 1978; Chambliss, 1978; Gardiner, 1970; Potter and Jenkins, 1985). The data in this study confirms that. It is inconceivable that in these rural counties illicit gambling, prostitution, alcohol, and drugs could be delivered on a regular and continual basis without the knowledge of government officials, law enforcers, and "legitimate" businessmen in the community. But the question remains, why do "respectable" citizens in positions of public trust tolerate this type of activity and even cooperate with it? The data strongly suggests that these corrupt relationships are far more complex than simple bribes and other venal considerations. In fact the data suggests that corruption may be quite functional, not just for organized crime, which finds it necessary, but also for the institutions of social control themselves. The data suggests that official corruption not only exists, but is unavoidable for two primary reasons. First, the laws which govern the delivery of illicit goods and services are virtually unenforceable, and create serious political contradictions in the community, contradictions which criminal organizations help to resolve. Second, the organizational structure of law enforcement, particularly in rural counties, makes effective law enforcement impossible, and makes attempts at effective law enforcement dysfunctional.

The laws which proscribe those goods and services provided by criminal networks encourage corruption. The fact is that selective enforcement of these laws is inevitable (Schur, 1965). Due to cooperation between consumer and supplier, those involved in drugs, gambling, liquor, and prostitution transactions do not perceive themselves as victims and consequently are highly unlikely to initiate a complaint. In the absence of a complainant or victim, law enforcement officials are faced with a difficult problem in successfully uncovering offenders (McCaghy and Cernkovich, 1987). In those few cases that enforcement does occur, its selective nature invariably serves to strengthen organized crime groups at the expense of less organized entrepreneurs (McCaghy and Cernkovich, 1987).

On the other side of this arrangement, selective enforcement serves a vital control function. The reduction of competition by the criminal justice system limits organizational strain and reduces the potential for violence, thereby facilitating law and order in the community. In the rural counties of eastern Kentucky, where the drug trade has grown so quickly and become so important, selective enforcement allows those charged with social control functions to select allies in the underworld who in turn fashion and enforce a set of norms in the illicit market which serve to enhance social control. The "Cornbread Mafia," arguably Kentucky's largest marijuana producing syndicate, is a prime example of a syndicate assisting in the

maintenance of order. The "Cornbread Mafia", quite literally, passes out mimeographed sets of instructions for its minions in the marijuana trade. These instructions range from controls on cultivation and processing, to controls on prices, means of transport and proper security. In so doing, the "Cornbread Mafia" has provided structure and stability in a highly volatile market. In return, for many years, prior to federal intervention, the "Cornbread Mafia" was left alone by local law enforcement. In those few instances where arrests did occur, usually because of serendipitous activity by the state police, the charges were dismissed in county courts.

An equally important consideration is that such an accommodation serves to reduce tensions emanating from the laws themselves. Law enforcement agencies are confronted with the enforcement of morality legislation on which differential consensus levels exist. Groups offended by these behaviors often engage in moral entrepreneurship (Gusfield, 1963). These groups are assisted by law enforcement agencies pursuing their own organizational agenda, specifically desires for greater enforcement powers, additional personnel and supplemental funding. Likewise, criminalization efforts are often supported by community elites seeking an expansion of their base of support. As these groups converge, a powerful impetus is created resulting in legal proscription against certain behaviors.

However, this process creates social contradictions. Since the powerful community forces, who assisted in the criminalization processes, often are involved in illegal activities and, more importantly, profit directly or indirectly from illicit activities, there is pressure placed upon law enforcement to permit them to occur. Once again, the marijuana industry in eastern Kentucky serves as a perfect example. Even those community members who do not participate directly in marijuana cultivating and processing benefit from the influx of capital into the community. Disposable income is produced and spent locally. Shopkeepers and merchants are the indirect beneficiaries of organized crime, and while they may deplore drug trafficking, they are less sanguine about giving up the business which accompanies it. Hills (1969) argues that "tolerance policies" are adopted as an effort to accommodate these competing interests. Community members choosing to participate in certain illegal activities do so under restricted conditions. Those who are offended by these behaviors are given the impression that the law is being enforced, albeit selectively.

Law enforcement agencies are often faced with organizational conditions and constraints that make the enforcement of laws against organized crime networks difficult or impractical. As we have seen, twenty-five of the twenty-eight criminal networks operating in the area under study have ongoing relationships with elected political office-holders and law enforcement officials in their home counties. This fact alone places considerable strain on the ability of local enforcement agents to control these groups.

Elected officials not only exercise considerable political influence but also control the purse strings for local sheriffs and police departments. They are clearly in a position to influence what types of enforcement activity will occur and the success of those activities. If elected officials decide that it is not a major priority in their county to fund programs designed to control marijuana cultivation, they have only to withhold funds for such projects. If those officials decide that the sheriff's department makes a greater contribution to public safety by enforcing traffic laws, patrolling county highways, and answering complaints, then it is likely that proactive enforcement efforts against bootleggers, gamblers and prostitutes will have a very low priority. If elected officials decide that pursuing vice purveyors carries with it a distinct political liability they are likely to recommend that the sheriff and local police collect taxes and respond to complaints.

In addition, these counties are poor. They are barely able to fund public education, let alone aggressive law enforcement campaigns against vice. Local sheriffs must collect taxes, undertake patrol services, provide staffing for the courts, transport prisoners and respond to calls for service. They must do this within the parameters of very tightly constrained budgets. In fact, up until a few years ago many of these sheriffs found that the only way they could run their offices was on a fee system where they actually charged for services rendered. This fact, combined with the fact that investigating the delivery of illicit goods and services is an expensive proposition, makes a tolerance policy most attractive for most rural law enforcement agencies. These small police departments and sheriffs offices cannot afford undercover investigations, stings, or the use of electronic surveillance devices. They cannot afford the aircraft and equipment needed to find marijuana plots. Therefore a policy which allows a certain amount of vice activity, or tolerates that activity until there is a complaint upon which to base a prosecution becomes almost a fiscal necessity.

Finally, there is some community pressure to continue a tolerance policy. Alcohol is a prime case. A majority of the community may well favor "dry" laws. But that does not mean that a significant portion of the community does not desire a drink now and again. Bootlegging involves the transportation and distribution of a bulky commodity, not easily concealed. Therefore, in most places illegal liquor sales are easy to detect, conducted more or less in the open, operated during regular hours and in permanent locations. Law enforcement entities know about most bootleggers, certainly the largest of them are well known. But there is a political danger in pursuing them. Unless there is a complaint about traffic problems, drunks, or a complaint from a dedicated "dry," there is little percentage in pursuing an investigation and arrest. Gambling represents a similar scenario. While gambling may be illegal, it is not always illegal in Kentucky. Support and official encouragement of wagering on thorough-

breeds is an important source of tax revenue, jobs, and income in Kentucky. The distinction between betting at the track and off the track is often hard to understand. Similarly the distinction between betting on a horse and a roll of the dice or a turn of the card is seen as semantic. Many people gamble. Few people are likely to complain. The political cost of enforcement often exceeds the benefits.

Finally, some government and law enforcement officials often benefit directly from the presence of organized crime networks. High demands for illicit services generate huge profits sufficient to offer substantial inducements capable of encouraging nonenforcement of these laws. Some community members benefit directly in the form of campaign funds, investment opportunities, assistance in negotiations relative to public service, etc. In fact, several studies of organized crime show that the organizers of crime are indeed those who occupy positions of public trust (Gardiner, 1970; Chambliss, 1978; Potter and Jenkins, 1985; Gardiner and Lyman, 1978; Lupsha, 1987). Forming a cabal, they seek office for the opportunities that arise from collaboration with the underworld.

To argue, as most traditional accounts of organized crime have, that it cannot exist long without corrupting trusted officials is to tell only half the story. Many social contradictions are resolved by, and many "legitimate" social functions are in fact sustained by, organized crime groups. Organized criminals and public officials form a close, symbiotic bond that usually places the latter in the center of the illicit enterprise. Public officials are not just the minions of organized crime; they are part of its fabric, albeit the part found in society's legitimate and respected institutions.

About the Authors

Gary W. Potter is an Associate Professor of Police Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. He has written several books and journal articles on organized crime, the pornography industry and drug trafficking.

Larry K. Gaines is a professor of Police Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. He has published books and articles in the areas of police administration and drug enforcement.

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