

How will a new film ever deal with bloody past of this murderer?

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At age 15, **Milton "Butch" Jones** sometimes drove a powder-blue, two-door Cadillac Eldorado up and down Dexter, the top down and his tapes booming. The teen-ager already led a high-speed life of dangerous curves and head-on collisions.

He broke into houses, stole everything from Michelin tires to artificial grass and took assignments to torch buildings and kill people, shooting one victim 15 times in the back. And after serving three years in prison for manslaughter, he founded one of America's most notorious heroin peddling gangs.

It was called Young Boys Inc., and it sold \$100,000 worth of heroin a day on Detroit streets. Founded in 1978, the gang pioneered using preteens as drug runners -- a practice that spread across the country.

Eventually, it all came apart as more and more YBI lieutenants marched off to federal prisons or wound up in funeral homes. In 1983, **Jones** pleaded guilty to drug conspiracy charges. In 1989, officials brought him to Michigan from a federal Arizona prison to face trial on two murder charges. The charges are dismissed, re-instated and then dismissed again, freeing **Jones** in 1992.

I can only wonder how an upcoming Detroit-made movie about YBI will portray the terror of **Jones** ' life and times. Police attributed at least 68 homicides to YBI.

Filming of this movie is set to begin in Detroit next month, according to producer Marc Cayce. Cayce is looking for local people, black and white, to play college students, hustlers, strippers, pimps, hookers and dealers. (For more information call (313) 867-1805)

When Cayce was struggling to become an actor, he resented being constantly sent on casting calls for young men wearing stocking caps and waving guns around.

That was one reason he switched to film making, working as an unpaid intern at Orion Pictures for nine months and sleeping under his desk. His struggles paid off when he became an independent producer for Orion.

So why make a film about somebody who waved guns around and might even have worn stocking caps?

Cayce insists his movie will have "redeeming parts" showing **Jones** leading a crime-free life today.

He also says, and I must agree, that the YBI story helps explain why Detroit went from Motor City to Murder City during the job-scarce, heroin-saturated 1970s and early 1980s.

"Being bred on the streets of Detroit in the '80s, I know how young people, especially black boys, get caught up in the drug whirlwind," he says. "Without the knowledge of the past, the future will surely repeat itself."

True enough.

Still, when I think of Butch **Jones** I don't picture him as a middle-aged ex-con now reportedly involved in landscaping and real estate.

Or as the man who claimed he experienced "spiritual growth" behind bars.

I think of the Butch **Jones** who signed his name with dollar signs and could gun down people in an eye-blink.

And of the Butch **Jones** whose 1996 autobiography ends with these heart-stopping words: "Hell, somebody had to take over this city. Why not me?"

Caption: Betty DeRamus

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