

STREET STORIES

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THE BOOBIE

By Soul Man

Mike "Chico" Harper

The amount of money produced by Miami's coke industry in the Eighties was unlike anything ever seen in the nation's history. So much cash was pouring into town from the wholesale and retail sectors of the trade that its sheer bulk presented logistical problems for the banks enthusiastically and unquestioningly accepting it. Bank officials quickly learned that a full-size suitcase stuffed with twenty-dollar bills could hold roughly a half-million dollars, and many millions were being deposited every day.

The events going on in Miami defied the imagination. If you missed this era you can quickly recapture the era by watching the movie Scarface or a few episodes of the TV series Miami Vice, both of which were enormous pop culture events because they depicted real life events that were happening in Miami and the world at the time. The "Miami Vice" series finale in 1989, "Freefall," was loosely based on the Manuel Noriega case. Crockett and Tubbs are recruited by the CIA to bring a Latin American dictator to the US to stand trial, only to be double-crossed by the CIA, who smuggle the dictator (an ally of the White House) to safety.

As depicted in Hollywood scripts, with the staggering amounts of money came flamboyant displays of wealth, and brazen violence spawned by greed, public corruption, and bloody drug wars over Miami's lucrative turf. By 1980, Miami had the highest rates of drug traffic and murder in the nation.

The first notable wave of violence in the MIA came from the

BOOBY BOYS

Colombian Cocaine Cowboys in the 1980s. With cocaine queens like Griselda Blanco, kingpins like Pablo Escobar, smugglers like Carlos Lehder, hitmen called Sicarios, boatloads of yayo and the federal reserve already full to capacity with billions of dollars generated from the drug trade, the Colombians put Miami officially on the map as the epicenter of the international drug trade. The streets of Miami were infamous for their slick hustlers and South American drug lords. The city was the distribution capital with tons of cocaine coming across the ocean and traversing the streets. Miami was the Mecca for drug deal-

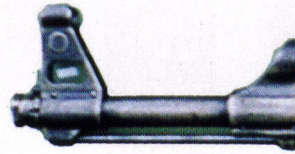
ers. And the Colombians ruled the city through intimidation and violence, politics and power, finesse and cunning. Everything was fair play and nothing was out of bounds.

In the mid 1980s the drug game was infiltrated by the natives; the young inner-city youth of Black, Cuban, Haitian and Jamaican heritage. According to law enforcement and the media, they played the game violently with vicious tactics as did their Columbian predecessors. These groups had pipelines that reached all sectors of the United States. The coke that wasn't destined for out of town acted as fertilizer for a growing number of this new breed of hustlers in Miami's ghettos. And with the emergence of crack, also came the violence, territories were brutally and violently carved out and established. Human life was just a small price to pay for notoriety and wealth. AK47's sprayed death in spades and blood literally soaked the sidewalk.

Among the various groups of alleged street gangs that emerged in the urban communities of Miami at this time was one group that became known as the Boobie Boys. The Boobie Boys reached national attention shortly after their incarceration via the hip hop industry. Rapper Rick Ross sprang onto the scene in the new millennium with "Everyday I'm Hustlin" and the Miami MC introduced the world to Miami's underworld culture including, the Boobie Boys, by wearing a T-shirt glorifying them in his video and by dropping the crew's names in his rhymes. He also big upped the Boobie Boys in seemingly every media interview he did. Giving them props for who they were and what they did. The myth took hold and the legend grew. Rick Ross boasted about the Boobie Boys exploits that put Miami in a chokehold. He told magazines how their cocaine enterprise generated \$80 million in currency, involved two tons of coke, over one hundred shootings and over 35 murders. The infamy of the Boobie Boys was well known in Miami but Rick Ross took them national and generated a notoriety beyond imagination for the Boobie Boys. But what most people don't know is that the alleged members of the Boobie Boys adamantly claim that the Boobie Boys are a government and media creation based on propaganda in order to strip them their freedom.

It is alleged by Law Enforcement that the Boobie Boys were responsible for building a \$89 million drug empire that smuggled over 5 tons of cocaine from Panama and Bahamas and they distributed their narcotics to over 25 Florida cities and 12 states. Law enforcement and media dubbed them the Boobie Boys after Kenneth "Boobie" Williams, who they alleged was the groups leader and then called them one of Miami's most savage drug gangs. Law enforcement and media sources have alleged that the Boobie Boys killed to establish its turf and to retaliate against rivals. Execution and gangland style killing were commonplace during this era. According to newspaper reports Miami police linked as many as 35 murders and 100 shootings to the Boobie Boys who they claim unleashed an eight-year barrage of murder and mayhem in the city with drive-by shootings allegedly being their favorite method of attack.

In 1998 The Miami-Dade law enforcement and federal government formed a task force called "Operation Boobie Trap" to address the staggering number of drive-by shootings inflating the county's homicide rate. Police say that the Boobie Boys and members of rival drug gang the Vonda's Gang killed each other for control of the Liberty City crack, marijuana and heroin trade. The gang allegedly also warred with "the Thomas Family" and "the John Does" drug gangs.



The acts of violence that law enforcement attributed to them were audacious and brutal many happening in public places in broad daylight. On February 11, Tryone Tarver, a civilian not involved in the drug game, was getting gas at NW 62nd Street and 22nd Avenue when an acquaintance Roger Davis, stepped up to say hello. Seconds later two ski-masked gunmen wearing bulletproof vests and gloves pulled up in a stolen car and let loose a barrage of gun fire from two AK-47s. Police say Davis was the target but Tarver died with him. Police counted 43 bullet casing.

It's alleged by law enforcement, that the street gangs violently killed dozens of their rival gang members with innocents being caught in the cross fire. They claim to have linked about 35 murders and over a dozen shootings to the gangs. Law enforcement states that murder cases stayed open because witnesses did not dare come forward, and those who did were allegedly killed for it.

Miami-Dade Police were having so much difficulty taking the gangs off the street that in May 1998 they had to seek assistance from the federal government. They collaborated with the U.S. attorney's office so that suspects in unsolved murder cases could be tried federally on weapons charges. This collaboration now made it possible to indict suspects that state law enforcement may have not had enough evi-

"The acts of violence that law enforcement attributed to them were audacious and brutal many happening in public places in broad daylight."

dence on in a state murder case. Since the firearm charges were brought by the federal government, it would mean longer prison sentences and a quicker trial process due to laxer federal trial procedures. On conviction, the firearm charge carries a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years and can be made even longer for violent career criminals.

Using federal firearms and other charges prosecutors took about 25 alleged gang members off the streets throughout 1998 while they were putting together a federal drug and murder case against them. Kenneth "Boobie" Williams was one of the individuals indicted on these gun charges on April 23, 1998, but he managed to escape arrest for almost a year by going on the run.

Seven months after appearing on America's Most Wanted, the alleged leader of the Boobie Boys drug gang was captured on May 17, 1999 in a Suburb of Atlanta. The \$56,000 bounty on William's head went unclaimed because the feds caught him on their own.

The government accused fifteen defendants of drug trafficking offenses in a seventeen-count indictment: Kenneth Williams, Efrain Casado, Leonard Brown, Lenard Brown, Susan Hall Gibson, Bernard Shaw, Marvin Baker, Malcolm Shaw, Ronald Raye, Wayne Baptiste, Michael Harper, Arthur Pless, Ben Johnson, Jonathon

L to R Fresh, Arther "Plex" Pless, Efrain "E-4" Casado, E





Hawthorne, and Charlton Darces. Three defendants, Bernard Shaw, Ronald Raye, and Charlton Darces, pled guilty before the start of trial. Lenard Brown died of a congenital heart defect before trial.

The centerpiece of the government's case-in-chief was its evidence implicating the remaining eleven defendants in the conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute cocaine. That evidence, part of a thirty-one day trial featuring over one hundred witnesses, accused them of being part of a gang that the media, riffing on Williams' nickname "Boobie," had dubbed the "Boobie Boys." However, the government's witnesses, many of them incarcerated former associates of Williams or his co-defendants, described the "Boobie Boys" not as a stereotypical "gang" with colors, hand signals, or other visible signs of membership, but rather as an informal association of people from the Miami area.

The overall thrust of the hundreds of hours of witness testimony was that Williams and Casado, who had been operating their own, independent drug distribution networks with their friends in the Miami area, met in prison in 1992 and combined forces to create a massive drug distribution operation based in South Florida, in which the remaining thirteen defendants played a part.

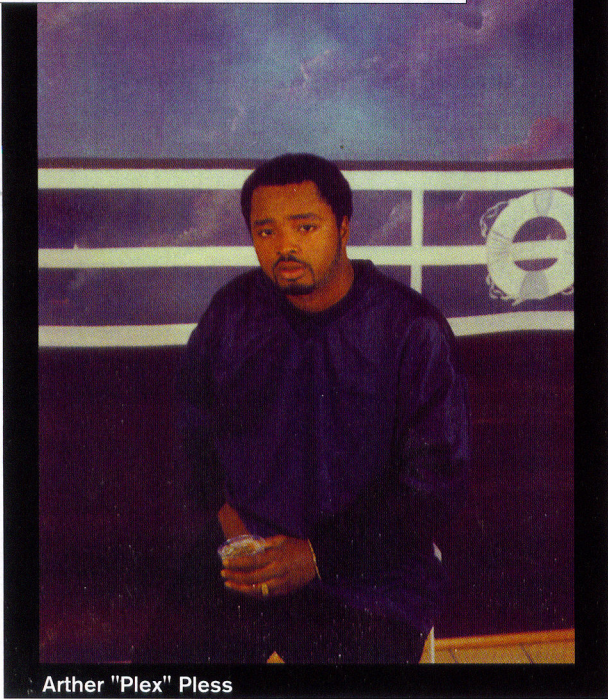
According to the defendants, Raye, Bernard and Malcolm Shaw, Harper, the Brown twins, and their mother Susan Hall Gibson were all friends of Williams from the Miami neighborhoods of Carol City, Overtown, and Liberty City. Baptiste was Casado's close friend and business partner. Pless and Johnson, themselves friends, knew both Casado and Williams. Hawthorne, a paid lookout for a small-time drug dealer who did business with Williams, allegedly started to deal drugs directly with the "Boobie Boys." Charlton Darces was a Port of Miami longshoreman who, according to the evidence, helped the "Boobie Boys" import cocaine.

After hearing six weeks of testimony from nearly 100

witnesses, including 34 felons, a Miami-Dade County federal jury began sentencing seven members of the Carol City drug gang called "Boobie Boys" to LIFE in prison for a decade long conspiracy that allegedly included 15 murders and the distribution of two tons of cocaine. Included in the sentencing was a former Miami-Dade Officer Marvin Baker, who was convicted of using his patrol car to pull over rival drug dealers and steal their drugs and cash received a 15-year sentence.

The government would have you believe that the Boobie Boys killed and killed and killed some more. However the defendants were never charged with any of the murders that they were allegedly tied to. The Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Clark even said during trial, "This is not a murder case." But in their case, a drug conspiracy case, over 15 murders were mentioned and used as relevant conduct for purposes of

"...the defendants were never charged with any murders... [at trial] 15 murders were mentioned and used as relevant conduct for purposes of sentencing"



Arthur "Plex" Pless

sentencing. So here it is straight from inside the belly of the beast, the interview with the so-called Boobie Boys- Arthur "Plex" Pless, Mike "Chico" Harper and Efrain "E-4" Casado. All three of these men stood up, blew trial and were sentenced to life. They took their time and kept it moving. But still they are fighting to get their sentences overturned. Despite the notoriety they have garnered there is a reality to all this. And here is their take on it all in their own words.

DD: How did your case come about?

Efrain "E-4" Casado: It was taken to a grand jury on testimony of people who "heard" what we had supposed to have done. The entire case was fucking hearsay.

Mike "Chico" Harper: The government snatched up 14 people from all different hoods in Miami- Lil' River, Liberty City, Carol City and Overtown. Threw us in a huge murder and drug conspiracy and only two reduced themselves to agents for the government. The government contracted 123 more. All to be used on the witness stand.

Arthur "Plex" Pless: They threw us together like the usual suspects and prayed that we would flip on each other. The only problem was there was nothing to flip on. Because we didn't do business together.

DD: How did they talk about all the murders in your case and you all weren't convicted of none of them?

Plex: They talk about the murders to upset the jury, knowing that they couldn't prove 'em, cause they know we didn't do 'em. They threw a bunch of dirt on the wall and prayed that some would stick. The shit is illegal for real. I was convicted of drugs. My sentence should've been 151 months max. Yet they sentenced me to acts of murder that me nor any of my co-d's were never charged with. It's crazy.

DD: What happened when you all blew trial?

E-4: The real ball game began.

Plex: What always happens? Hoes ran off and niggas changed their numbers, straight up. But looking around I see a lot of change and growth in us all. We were cool with each other before this, but now we're super tight. I know there's a lot of regrets. I was just young and ignorant as far as the choices I made. And whether they openly express it or not I know Black, E4, Chico, Fats and Bo feel the same way.

Chico: One of our co-defendants died in the SHU prior to trial (Lenard "Nard" Brown). The remaining 11 of us stood on what we believed was right. That's rare in the federal system. Most of these niggas turn agent as soon as the handcuffs hit their wrist. Let alone run trial with a band of mothafuckas who you really weren't fucking with like that. I think that's a worthy topic when our case is discussed.

DD: Explain the chronology of the superceding indictments and give us a breakdown of you all fighting the case?

Plex: We got superceded three times. I was not on the first indictment. The second indictment included me. Obviously we blew trial. Immediately after we all filed notices of appeal. But we couldn't proceed because the government lost portions of our trial transcripts. Without the complete record of our trial we couldn't do shit. So we remained on direct appeal for five years until that finally got resolved. A new trial should've been ordered then, but without any of our consent the lawyers stipulated that they had enough of the record to prepare the appeals. That was crazy, but anyway, in 2005, the direct appeals were denied. With the exception of Moose (Hawthorne) and Bush (Johnson). We fought that decision through motions for rehearing en banc, which

"All three of these men stood up, blew trial and were sentenced to life."

were denied. And we fought that decision to the Supreme Court. We were all denied, and appealed to the 11th Circuit District Court. We all filed 2255's, but so far Black (Boobie) and Chico are the only ones that struck jewelry. If it bang through we all get a piece.

DD: I read the December 13, 2005 Eleventh Circuit Appeals decision (151 pages) and I saw that Johnson and Hawthorne got their case overturned. What happened?

Plex: The courts overturned their conviction on some evidence that was admitted at trial that wasn't proper. The courts decided that the mistake was very damaging and minus the evidence they wouldn't have been convicted, so they went home in 2006. It was love.

DD: With Boobie back in Miami for an evidentiary hearing do you think that will lead to your cases getting overturned?



Plex: I hope so. Black Boy got the heat on 'em. Brady. He used to always holla that Brady shit to me. Now I see that he was right. The crackas held (withheld) a lot of evidence that would've cleared us. I won't get into specifics but it looks good.

DD: Where did the name the Boobie Boys come from?

E-4: From Kenneth Williams, (Boobie), who the feds named the case after.

Plex: The name Boobie Boys was something the media came up with to identify the case. That's all it is. Boobie was who the crackas really wanted, so that's what they labeled their files or whatever. Nobody ever went by that name or considered Black Boy (Boobie) no muthafucking leader. Black was the homie, niggas respected him because he was 100 percent real, but he ain't had no boys and we wasn't no gang.

Chico: Referring to that Boobie Boys shit it's hard for me to respond to any question that implies we were in fact a violent street gang under the call of one man. It's actually insulting. And it sort of substantiates the governments claim. I'm not disillusioned though. I know the streets have ate it all up. Even the people who know better.

DD: What were the streets in Miami like when you all were out there?

E-4: Rough, but you actually created your own path on how you dealt with people.

Plex: Probably like the streets everywhere else, people just doing what they think they need to do to get by. Hustling wherever and however. It wasn't nothing you couldn't get on the streets of Badland (Miami), from a raw dime (powder) to a raw dime (chick).

Chico: The streets definitely weren't what they are now. There was a strict policy. Real recognized real and clowns got stepped on. G's didn't fraternize with rats and neither did the broads. There was honor and respect. Not like today. Where broads fuck with a rat just to claim a man and hustlers scramble just to stay high on "E", syrup and all this other new designer dope. Things were just a lot more serious.

DD: What kind of whips were you all rocking?

E-4: From Benz, Lexus, BMW, about any whip that was hot. But later we started driving undercover whips with the tinted window to stay out

of the police and robber's way.

Plex: You had dudes coming through in dunks and big boys Benz's or whatever. It was just a constant grind. Everybody, including broads, chasing what they thought was happiness.

DD: What do you think of the rapper Rick Ross name dropping you all?

E-4: It's all entertainment. I am just glad to see someone from where I used to be reach stardom. I wish Rick Ross all my blessings. I send him all my shout outs.

Chico: Ross is the homie. He was unconscious of the full effect behind his actions. I know his intentions were good, but it was bad PR for our case. You have niggas still fighting to overturn this shit. It's not a good look when we're arguing the allegations were hyped, distortions and straight up fabricated. But then a nigga with nationwide exposure is constantly trying to validate it with glory. Hip-hop/rap music and its content is so powerful. It travels beyond the realm of our ghetto.

DD: What projects are you working on?

Chico: We're writing books. Real street classics. Peep the business in *Street Raised: The Beginning* and *Boo Baby*. Available through badlandpub.com

Plex: I got BOO BABY and STREET RAISED 2 that lightweight touches on the whole demo. You can get it on www.badlandpub.com.

Eleven members of the so-called Boobie Boys were convicted in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida after a federal jury deliberated for eight days of participating in a cocaine distribution conspiracy. Kenneth "Boobie" Williams, Efrain "E-4" Casado, Arthur "Plex" Pless, Michael "Chico" Harper and Leonard "Bo" Brown, all of whom the jury found were involved in murder to further the drug trafficking conspiracy, received life sentences. Wayne "Fats" Bapiste, Malcolm "Rat" Shaw and Miss Sue Gibson all were convicted of drug conspiracy and received 30 years. Two of their co-defendants got their convictions overturned on appeal while the rest are still fighting to overturn their convictions. 