

## Former gang leader comes to event to pedal his new book

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A former top motorcycle gang leader who wrote a book about his group's dealings with the Hells Angels will be traveling to the Lakes Region during Bike Week.

Edward Winterhalder or "Connecticut Ed" as he was known when he helped head the "Bandidos Motorcycle Club", will be appearing in Laconia at the Sundial Shop for signings of his newest book, "The Assimilation: Rock Machine Becomes Bandidos — Bikers United Against the Hells Angels."

Winterhalder, 52, was once a top leader of the worldwide "Bandidos" gang and has since taken up a life dedicated to chronicling the history of biker gangs and promoting the positive aspects of motorcycle clubs.

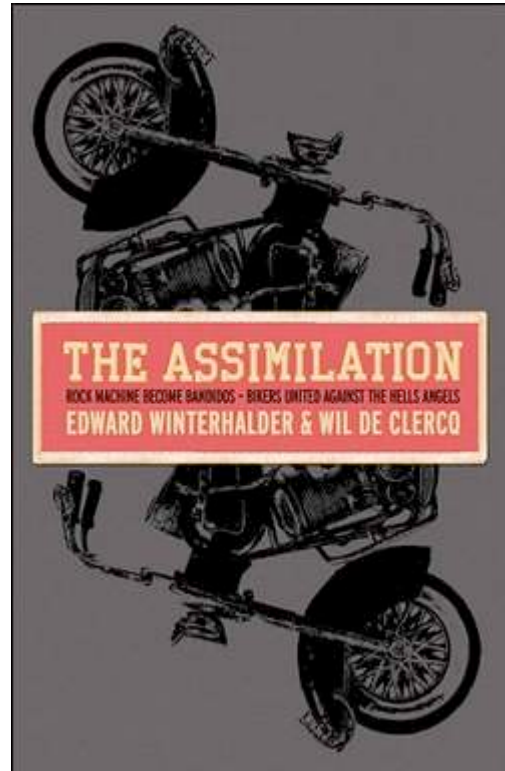
The longtime biker is promoting "The Assimilation" — a book that takes readers through a turbulent time in biker gang history in the 1990s when the Montreal branch of the Hells Angels declared war on all competing biker gangs in an attempt to secure drug territory in the Canadian province of Quebec.

It was a time of great violence and after seven years of bloodshed that left upward of 160 people dead and many more injured, it was only the "tough as nails" Rock Machine that avoided being destroyed by a particularly rough group of Hells Angels.

Winterhalder, 52, has an inside knowledge of the situation, having been a recruiting leader for a "Bandidos" clan that merged with the Rock Machine in an effort to ward off being taken down by the Hells Angels in Montreal led by then-leader Maurice "Mom" Boucher.

In the early 1990s, after seven years of bloody conflict with Montreal's Hells Angels, Quebec's Rock Machine motorcycle club appealed to the Bandidos for help. Winterhalder, a born diplomat with an extensive knowledge of law acquired while incarcerated in the early 1980s, was dispatched to Canada in 2001 to coordinate the transition (or "patchover").

*The Assimilation* takes readers behind the scenes of Winterhalder's arrest and unsuccessful deportation proceedings by the Canadian authorities, Bandido politics, double-crosses and assassinations. The book also contains a glossary of biker terms and seven appendices citing club bylaws, projects and job assignments and a worldwide listing of active chapters and support



(Courtesy Photo) The former leader of "The Bandidos Motorcycle Club" will be signing copies of his newest piece at bookshops in Laconia and Meredith this week.

clubs

The author has since left the biker gang culture and has raised a young daughter.

He is the subject matter of upcoming television shows on the biker lifestyle "Sons of Anarchy" on the cable network FX and is creating a more positive documentary on the biker clubs focusing on a Vietnam Veteran riding group in Pennsylvania.

His next book "Biker Chicks: The Magnetic Attraction of Women to Bad Boys" is due out in May of 2009, but he is making his way to New Hampshire to take in Bike Week.

He said his most recent book is something any biking enthusiast will want to pick up.

"The Assimilation was a major piece of history in the biker world and it needed to be portrayed as accurately as possible for historical reasons," explained Winterhalder.

Winterhalder was among the top brass in the Bandidos, only reporting to one senior club member.

"My assignments were to grow the club and increase communications between the chapters," he explained.



Courtesy Photo FORMER MOTORCYCLE GANG leader turned author Edward Winterhalder will be heading to Bike Week this year to sign copies of his newest book, pictured above. "The Assimilation: Rock Machine Become Bandidos - Bikers United Against the Hells Angels" details how two motorcycle gangs joined forces to combat the infamous Hells Angels motorcycle gang.

The author said he has seen his share of bad bikers, though he assured that most members are law-abiding citizens, and he is working on documenting their true nature in books and movies.

"That (criminal) element is the only one that comes in contact with law enforcement. The majority of club members have regular jobs and families. It's a very small population (of criminal bikers) that you read 90 percent of the articles about," said Winterhalder.

The former club leader said bikers in such organizations are secretive by nature, like members of groups like the Masons or those in the Elks Club.

He said he spent a long time avoiding the criminal element while serving with the Bandidos and he described himself as a big advocate for motorcycle clubs.

Winterhalder lives in Oklahoma now, but has strong ties to New England and the Lakes Region.

His grandfather Leon Draper — a noted construction contractor in his day — is buried in Laconia's Bayside Cemetery and helped "build Laconia," according to Winterhalder.

He said Draper helped construct Laconia's fire station and the penny arcade in Weirs Beach before dying in 1981.

When asked about Laconia Bike Week, he said "I've always had a lot of fun up there. I love the area and it has some of the most scenic and beautiful riding in the country. I can't wait to come back up."

Winterhalder rides a 2006 Harley Davidson "Street Bob" and will be motoring to the following bookshops for signings of his most recently published book:

Sundial Shop, 1458 Lakeshore No. 9. Gilford, Thursday, 1-4 p.m. Info: 603-524-3322. Borders, 76 Fort Eddy Road. Concord, Friday, 5-8 p.m. and Saturday, 1-4 p.m. Info: 603-224-1255.