

***Bluegrass, Blackmarket.* By Hans Luxemberg (director). 28 minutes, VHS, colour. Purchase price \$150. Appalshop Film & Video (306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Kentucky 41858, USA)**

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de suites littéraires. Aussi y-t-il au moins cela de positif dans cette histoire scabreuse qui, aboutissant aux textes savoureux qui nous sont offerts ici, n'a certes pas fini de nous fasciner. Une compilation fort adroite, résultat de plusieurs années d'investigation, qui relance et renouvelle notre compréhension de la légende. À cause de *La Corriveau*, nous nous avisons de ce que la littérature n'a pas toujours besoin de tempérance et de fidélité pour atteindre son but. Convenons que cela est loin d'être un défaut! et puisque personne ne pourra plus jamais lui faire de mal, il se trouve ici une excellente opportunité de reconsidérer et d'apprécier l'une de nos grandes figures mythiques.

CLAUDE ALBERT

Bluegrass, Blackmarket. By Hans Luxemberg (director). 28 minutes, VHS, colour. Purchase price \$150. Appalshop Film & Video (306 Madison St., Whitesburg, Kentucky 41858, USA)

Blackmarket marijuana is custom for many Appalachian farmers, and as this video depicts, such marijuana production is culturally continuous with the earlier tradition of bootlegging alcohol. The Kentucky countryside's rolling hills and deep, almost hidden, "hollows" provide one of the world's most perfect landscapes for marijuana cultivation. The growers have improved upon techniques learned in part from federal agricultural programs introduced during the 1940s. A short black-and-white segment of historic government footage extols the people for growing hemp, much needed for rope and line in the WWII war effort. While this footage points out that every grower must apply for a federal license, there is no mention of the drug's consciousness-altering properties or of its potential cash value. Towards the end of the video there is a closeup of the hands of one grower holding a mature bushy plant; he says, "One pound of good dope will sell for \$1,000 to \$3,000 dollars, and that's just around here."

Significant sections interweave interviews of upstanding citizens lamenting how unfortunate it is that the poor have to grow marijuana, with footage of militia tracking down "patches of dope" from helicopters. Other portions intercut statements by local sheriffs, who are in the uncomfortable position of upholding the law while their sympathies are with the people, with the advice of an anonymous farmer who narrates the many techniques a successful grower must employ in order to elude the law and harvest a bountiful crop.

While it is often difficult for the viewer to determine the ideological position of the director, he seems to favour the explicit messages of the local elite, who recognize poverty in their counties, but deplore the behaviour of illegal marijuana growers.

On the other side are the county sheriffs; six are arrested by undercover FBI agents posing as mafiosi. One of them, Sheriff Johnny Mann, the alleged ringleader, lived on the wild side before being sponsored by his county's elite to run for sheriff. He is shown in segment after segment trying to make sense of what has happened to his once idyllic county. Mann's sympathies are clearly with the hill growers. He comments that he never went looking for people's "pot patches," but whenever he found one, he was required by law to destroy it.

This video succeeds in demonstrating how nearly impossible it is to impose laws on impoverished peoples when local customs have defined the benefits of struggling against the combined might of the military and political state. It could be successfully used in classes to dramatize the extra-legal and illicit dimensions of tradition.

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