**Billy Corben**

**VRP**



**Biography:**

<http://www.rakontur.com/journal/2008/7/1/billy-corben.html>

Billy Corben was born in Florida and graduated with honors from the University of Miami where he majored in political science, screenwriting, and theater. As a young actor, Corben worked with Ron Howard, Roger Corman, Steve Martin, Hilary Swank, Cloris Leachman, Judd Hirsch, Corey Feldman, Alan Thicke, Joe Pantoliano and Christopher Meloni. He retired from acting at age 15 and began work on the other side of the camera. His feature documentary directorial debut, Raw Deal: A Question of Consent, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2001, making him one of the youngest directors in Sundance history. Examining the alleged rape of an exotic dancer at a fraternity house at the University of Florida, the film utilized extensive clips from videotape footage of the alleged assault. Considered by critics to be “one of the most controversial films of the modern day” and “one of the most compelling pieces of non-fiction ever produced,” (Film Threat Magazine), Raw Deal has been seen all over the world.

Following that success, Corben and producing partner Alfred Spellman founded rakontur, a Miami Beach-based content creation company, and took on another Florida true-crime story, this one closer to home. The New York Times called Cocaine Cowboys, “a hyperventilating account of the blood-drenched Miami drug culture in the 1970s and 1980s.” The film tells the story of how the drug trade built Corben's native city of Miami through firsthand accounts of some of the most successful smugglers of the era and the deadliest hitman of the cocaine wars.

After a limited theatrical release in 2006, Cocaine Cowboys became a worldwide success on DVD and the highest-rated documentary ever on the Showtime cable network. The sequel, Cocaine Cowboys 2: Hustling with the Godmother, was released in 2008.

The U, a Peabody Award-winning feature documentary about the championship history of the University of Miami football program, produced by rakontur for ESPN's 30 for 30 series, became the highest-rated documentary in the network's 30 year history, when it debuted on December 12th, 2009, following the Heisman Trophy presentation.

In 10 years, rakontur has become one of the influential non-fiction production companies in the world. In 2007 and again in 2010, rakontur was selected for the RealScreen Global 100, “an annual list of the most exciting and influential production companies working in non-fiction film and television." Also in 2007, Corben and Spellman were listed among of "The 50 Most Influential People in Miami."

"They've created a whole new audience: an alternative, youth-leaning, nonfiction-seeking core," Tom Quinn, senior vice-president of Magnolia Pictures, told BusinessWeek in a 2008 profile on rakontur.

Since its humble beginnings, rakontur has evolved into a bona fide movie studio, with four non-fiction features scheduled for release in 2011:

In March, Square Grouper, examining the free-wheeling pot smuggling era of South Florida in the 1970s, premieres at the South By Southwest Film Festival; in April, Limelight, about the rise and fall of Peter Gatien, New York City's biggest nightclub owner; this Summer rakontur debuts, Cocaine Cowboys Remix, a wholesale re-edit of the original cult classic; and in the Fall, Dawg Fight, a brutal exposé on underground backyard MMA fighting in one of Miami's toughest neighborhoods, will debut.

2012 will see the release of another new installment of their hit documentary series, Cocaine Cowboys: Los Muchachos, about the sensational Miami-based federal trials of Sal Magluta and Willy Falcone, the most successful Cuban drug traffickers in history, and new feature documentary projects for ESPN and Bloomberg Television.

rakontur's development slate includes a Cocaine Cowboys dramatic series for HBO with executive producers Jerry Bruckheimer and Michael Bay and the animated comedy series Miami Cowboys with executive producer Pharrell Williams.

Corben oversees the soundtracks for all of rakontur's productions, assembling the ideal artists for each project and working hands-on throughout the music production process. For Cocaine Cowboys, legendary Grammy-winner Jan Hammer (Miami Vice) composed and performed the original score; hip-hop icon Luther Campbell performed the opening titles song for The U; Miami music fixture DJ Le Spam wrote his first ever film score for Square Grouper; on Limelight, Corben consulted with Grammy-winning electronic music pioneer Moby, while the original score was written by Fast of the Fun Lovin' Criminals, a band that was actually formed among Limelight nightclub employees in the 1990s and signed by an A&R man from EMI who discovered them performing at the club. In addition, Corben has contributed his own original songs to the soundtracks of Raw Deal: A Question of Consent, The U and Square Grouper.

Corben also serves as film critic on the Paul and Young Ron Show, South Florida's highest-rated English-language radio morning show, doing live segments every Friday. Corben and rakontur are regular supporters of Miami-based Hope For Vision, a not-for-profit organization that donates virtually 100% of the money it raises to fund scientific research to develop cures for blindness, the Borscht Film Festival, a group that supports and showcases Miami's independent filmmakers, and The 200 Club, an organization that gives financial support to the families of law enforcement officers and fire fighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

**Filmography:**

<http://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0179117/filmoprof>

<http://www.rakontur.com/>

**Director (9 titles)**

*Dawg Fight* (2012 documentary)

West Perrine, Florida is a suburban ghetto in Southwest Miami-Dade County.  Over 73% of its residents are African-American and more than a third of them are unemployed.  Violent crimes occur on a daily basis in this neighborhood of less than two square miles, where much of its adult male population winds up dead or in prison before their 30th birthday.  
  
But there is hope in the hood...  
  
Dhafir "Dada 5000" Harris (6'3", 270lbs., bench presses 670lbs) grew up blocks away from Perrine's MMA sensation, Kimbo Slice, and spent a year traveling the world as Kimbo’s bodyguard.  When Kimbo's manager buried video of Dada's spectacular backyard fight debut, for fear of Dada overshadowing his rising superstar, Dada leaves Kimbo's crew and makes a life-changing decision:  
  
Dada builds a ring in his momma's backyard and transforms himself into the Don King of illegal backyard fights in Perrine.    
  
No doctors, no ambulance.  Just two men in a 12'x12' ring battling in a savage bare-knuckle fight to the finish. Dada's gladiators give everything in the the backyard to feed their families and to try to fight their way out of hood. Meanwhile Dada returns to the ring, is discovered by professional scouts and gets his shot at turning pro in the octagon at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.

*Broke* (2012 documentary)

More money, more problems. Sucked into bad investments, stalked by freeloaders, saddled with medical issues, and naturally prone to showing off, most pro athletes end up broke within a few years of retirement. Drawing surprisingly vulnerable confessions from retired stars like Marvin Miller, Jamal Mashburn, Bernie Kosar, and Andre Rison, this fascinating documentary digs into the psychology of men whose competitive nature carries them to victory on the field and ruin off it.

*Limelight* (2011 documentary)

As the owner of legendary hotspots like Limelight, Tunnel, Palladium, and Club USA, Peter Gatien was the undisputed king of the 1980s New York City club scene. The eye-patch-sporting Ontario native built and oversaw a Manhattan empire that counted tens of thousands of patrons per night in its peak years, acting as a conduit for a culture that, for many, defined the image of an era in New York. Then years of legal battles and police pressure spearheaded by Mayor Giuliani's determined crackdown on nightlife in the mid-'90s led to Gatien's eventual deportation to Canada, and the shuttering of his glitzy kingdom. Featuring insider interviews with famous players in the club scene as well as key informants in Gatien's high-profile trial, Billy Corben's (Cocaine Cowboys) exuberant documentary aims to set the record straight about Gatien's life as it charts his rise and fall against the transformation of New York, offering a wild ride through a now-closed chapter in the history of the city's nightlife.

*Square Grouper* (2011 documentary)

In 1979, the US Customs Service reported that 87% of all marijuana seizures in the US were made in the South Florida area. Due to the region's 5,000 miles of coast and coastal waterways and close proximity to the Caribbean and Latin America, South Florida was a pot smuggler's paradise. In sharp contrast to the brazenly violent cocaine cowboys of the 1980's, Miami's marijuana smugglers were cooler, calmer, and for the most part, nonviolent. SQUARE GROUPER paints a vivid portrait of Miami's pot smuggling culture in the 1970s and 1980s through three of the city's most colorful stories.

30 for 30 (TV series) - (1 episode, 2009)

The U (2009)

*The U* (2009 documentary)

Throughout the 1980s, Miami, Florida, was at the center of a racial and cultural shift taking place throughout the country. Overwhelmed by riots and tensions, Miami was a city in flux, and the University of Miami football team served as a microcosm for this evolution. The image of the predominantly white university was forever changed when coach Howard Schnellenberger scoured some of the toughest ghettos in Florida to recruit mostly black players for his team. With a newly branded swagger, inspired and fueled by the quickly growing local Miami hip hop culture, these Hurricanes took on larger-than-life personalities and won four national titles between 1983 and 1991. Filmmaker Billy Corben, a Miami native and University of Miami alum, will tell the story of how these "Bad Boys" of football changed the attitude of the game they played, and how this serene campus was transformed into "The U."

Cocaine Cowboys 2 (2008 documentary)

*Cocaine Cowboys* (2006 documentary)

The cocaine trade of the 70s and 80s had an indelible impact on contemporary Miami. Smugglers and distributors forever changed a once sleepy retirement community into one of the world’s most glamorous hot spots, the epicenter of a $20 billion annual business fed by Colombia’s Medellin cartel. By the early 80s, Miami’s tripled homicide rate had made it the murder capital of the country, for which a Time cover story dubbed the city “Paradise Lost.”

With Cocaine Cowboys, filmmaker Billy Corben – whose first feature Raw Deal: A Question Of Consent, caused a sensation at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival – paints a dazzling portrait of a cultural explosion that still echoes as Hollywood myth. Composer of the original “Miami Vice” theme, Jan Hammer, provides the score.

*Raw Deal: A Question of Consent* (2001 documentary)

Raw Deal is one of the most exposing and controversial documentaries about rape and fraternity life today. Billy Corben's remarkable exposé on the contested rape of 27-year-old Lisa Gier King in Gainesville, Florida, is sure to provoke heated discussions everywhere about rape, women's rights, and male privilege.

On Friday, February 26, 1999, Delta Chi frat brothers at the University of Florida held a party at their fraternity house and hired exotic dancer Lisa Gier King to perform. The following morning, a half-naked and distraught King ran from the house, claiming that Michael Yarhaus had raped her. Her most startling allegation was that frat brother Tony Marzullo had videotaped the crime.

Two days later, King herself was arrested for filing a false police report after authorities claimed the rape showed "clearly willing and consensual sex." The community was stunned by King's arrest after it was discovered that the videotape showed Marzullo himself repeatedly addressing the camera to gleefully describe that what he was witnessing was a rape.

Under pressure from the media and Campus NOW to charge the frat brothers with rape, State Attorney Rod Smith arrogantly responded by making the tape available to the public so people could "make up their own minds."

Filmmaker Billy Corben takes Smith's challenge and presents the scandalizing, sexually explicit footage alongside interviews of participants involved with the case to conduct an investigation the police never did. The result is a shocking insight on fraternity life and the politically constructed nature of "the truth."

**Producer (9 titles)**

Dawg Fight (2012 documentary) - producer

Broke (2012 documentary) - producer

Limelight (2011 documentary) - producer

Square Grouper (2011 documentary) - producer

30 for 30 (TV series) - Producer (1 episode, 2009)

The U (2009) - producer

The U (2009 documentary) - producer

Cocaine Cowboys 2 (2008 documentary) - producer

Cocaine Cowboys (2006 documentary) - producer

Raw Deal: A Question of Consent (2001 documentary) - producer

**Actor (4 titles)**

Stepmonster (1993 video) - Todd Dougherty

L.A. Law (TV series) - Alexander Brackman (2 episodes, 1992)

Love in Bloom (1992) - Alexander Brackman

P.S. Your Shrink Is Dead (1992) - Alexander Brackman

Shanghai 1920 (1991) - Young Dawson

Archie: To Riverdale and Back Again (1990 TV movie) - Jordan 'Jughead Junior' Jones

**Editor (4 titles)**

The U (2009 documentary)

Cocaine Cowboys 2 (2008 documentary)

Cocaine Cowboys (2006 documentary)

Raw Deal: A Question of Consent (2001 documentary)

**Composer (1 title)**

Raw Deal: A Question of Consent (2001 documentary)

**Awards:**

<http://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0179117/awards>

Florida Film Critics Circle Awards

2006

Won, Golden Orange Award

Shared With: Alfred Spellman

Director and producer of the Florida-centric documentaries Cocaine Cowboys and Raw Deal: A Question of Consent, for their continued dedication to South Florida's film industry.

Miami Film Festival

2002

Won, Special Jury Award

for Raw Deal: A Question of Consent (2001).

Shared With: Alfred Spellman

Young Artist Awards

1991

Nominated, Young Artist Award

Best Young Actor Supporting or Re-Occurring Role for a TV Series for Dear John (1988)

**Contact:**

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Rakontur Website: <http://www.rakontur.com/>

**News:**

**25 FILMS I’M LOOKING FORWARD TO AT THE TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL**

<http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/news/2012/04/25-films-im-looking-forward-to/>

At last year’s Tribeca Film Festival I discovered two of my favorite films of the year, Alma Har’el’s *Bombay Beach* and Panos Cosmatos’s *Beyond the Black Rainbow*. I’m hoping for at least as good a track record this year, and in surveying the schedule I see more than enough potential candidates. Assuming I can successfully surmount my usual Tribeca challenge — getting into a film-festival headspace while working at home in New York — here are 25 films I’m interested in checking out. As befitting the mission of this magazine, there’s a heavy American independent focus, and I’ve also avoided films that aren’t at least receiving their U.S. premiere at Tribeca. There are also several IFP Narrative Lab films and *Filmmaker* “25 New Face” directors below as we always keep a close eye on our alumni.

4. Broke. We’re entering the second wave of financial-crisis documentaries, with stories rippling outwards

from the obvious tales of banking malfeasance. Billy Corben’s Broke looks at destitute pro athletes, those

whose competitive psychologies may have had something to do with their own post-game financial collapses.

**Limelight Review**

<http://www.justpressplay.net/reviews/9226-limelight.html>

Peter Gatien, a striking man made slightly more intimidating by an eye patch he sports after losing an eye playing hockey in his youth, is the subject of Billy Corben's (Square Grouper) warts-and-all documentary Limelight, produced in part by Gatien's daughter Jen. Gatien masterminded several famous nightclubs, though the doc takes a look at Limelight, built on the site of a former Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion. Sold off to a drug rehab program and then to Gatien, Limelight blossomed into one of the hottest spots in town. The founder overlooked the introduction of new musical styles into the mainstream and the rise of the club kids, one whom happened to be Michael Alig. Alig's murder of Andre Melendez cast media attention on the club and certainly aided its final shuttering, one of several attempts to close down the spot in the 1990s.

It doesn't hurt to mention the claim that recreational drugs were so ever-present at Limelight that it became an equal conduit for those looking to score. This arguably led to Gatien's persecution by the Giuliani administration looking to reform the New York nightlife. Corben's film approaches this witch hunt by doubling down on interviews, which are fascinating since the subjects that giving them are frequently off-kilter. This aspect of the doc works so well that the nuts and bolts history behind the club and Gatien's rise to power comes off as a bit of a letdown. Included are interviews with former club goers as well as the lawmen that raided the clubs, aided by stylistic touches that are suitable considering the subject matter, but frequently superfluous.

Gatien, and his former dominion, remains largely masked even as the film devotes considerable time to presenting the day and age to us. It trumpets the era plenty well, but can't possibly capture the whirlwind nightlife that grew to mythical proportions, certainly enough to inspire a film like this.

**Mark Wahlberg Says ‘Cocaine Cowboys’ Could Shoot This Year, Jennifer Lopez “Chasing” a Major Role**

<http://www.slashfilm.com/mark-wahlberg-cocaine-cowboys-shoot-summer-fall-jennifer-lopez-gunning-role/>

It was back in 2008 that we first heard about Cocaine Cowboys, the feature film adaptation of Billy Corben‘s 2006 documentary. But development on that project’s been slow and erratic, and at this point it’s been nearly a year since we’ve heard any significant updates on the project.

As Mark Wahlberg does the press rounds for Contraband, however, he’s been chatting up a lot of the movies on his upcoming slate. And according to him, Cocaine Cowboys is not only still alive, it could get going as early as this summer — with Jennifer Lopez as a possibility for one of the juiciest parts. More details after the jump.

Corben’s film centered around the rising cocaine trade and subsequent crime wave in ’70s and ’80s Miami. Sometime around 2008, Wahlberg, Leonardo DiCaprio, and filmmaker Peter Berg attached themselves to a feature version of the story, but Berg and DiCaprio have since departed the project. Director David O. Russell was circling the film last year, but The Playlist notes that with the growing rift between Russell and Wahlberg (which they also name as the reason Russell won’t be doing The Fighter 2), it’s now unlikely Russell will be involved in any capacity.

Despite all the previous stops and starts, Wahlberg said during his appearance on Sirius radio’s “Sway in the Morning” show that he expected Cocaine Cowboys to begin shooting this year. “We’re waiting on the script. It’s going to be sooner rather than later,” he told host Devi Dev. “We’re going to shoot that in Miami, hopefully in the summer or the fall.” Although Berg is no longer set to direct, Wahlberg revealed to Coming Soon that Berg is currently at work on the latest draft of the script.

Wahlberg remains the only star committed at this point, but if Lopez has her way, that could be changing soon. The singer/actress apparently has her eye on one particular major character, crime family matriarch Griselda Blanco. “Jennifer Lopez is chasing that [role] like crazy,” he said. Not that he blames her: “It’s one of those characters that will go down in history… It’s the role — if I could play Griselda, I would. That’s Academy Award [bait] right there.”

Lopez doesn’t have the most impressive track record as an actress — her last film was The Back-Up Plan, and she’s next set to appear in What to Expect When You’re Expecting — but she’s shown promise in the past, most notably in Steven Soderbergh’s Out of Sight. If she lands the part of Blanco, which Wahlberg noted would require her to go ugly a la Charlize Theron in Monster, it could signal a big step forward for her.

**Miami filmmaker’s tweets won’t result in new robbery trial, judge rules**

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/06/13/2847354/miami-filmakers-tweets-wont-result.html>

Miami filmmaker Billy Corben’s penchant for posting on Twitter and Facebook didn’t doom the conviction he helped deliver as a juror in an armed robbery trial, a judge ruled Wednesday. The judge did find that Corben violated a court order against using social media while on jury duty. But he said it wasn’t enough to hold him in contempt of court, or to overturn the conviction of a Florida City man who claimed the filmmaker’s Tweets tainted his trial.

In fact, Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Jose Fernandez called Corben “a model juror, but for this.”

“I would ask that if you can, you have a big soapbox, you have a lot of followers,” Fernandez told Corben. “I would ask that you help us in the judiciary communicate the importance of jury service.” Corben, maker of the Miami-based documentaries Cocaine Cowboys and The U, promptly delivered. “I would encourage everyone to show for jury duty — despite the excess of Sandra Bullock movies in the jury pool room,” Corben told reporters after Wednesday’s hearing.

The proceeding culminated an episode of legal theater becoming more common in the age of social media and instant communication. Judges have long warned jurors to avoid newspapers and television news coverage to avoid being influenced by publicity. But with the rise of social media, judges now also warn jurors against using Twitter and Facebook, or using the Internet to conduct independent research about their case.

Several high-profile convictions have been thrown out in recent years across the country because of jurors’ use of the Internet and social media. In this case, Corben was called to jury duty in February at Miami’s Richard Gerstein Justice Building. A prolific tweeter, news junkie and commentator, Corben Tweeted away while waiting to be called into a courtroom. “You get bored easily?” the judge asked Corben as he reviewed a printout of his frequent posts. “This is like every five minutes.” “In the morning, I post a lot of news, your honor,” Corben said. “That’s mostly what it is.”

Corben’s messages mostly lampooned the Bullock movies in the jury waiting room and the lack of working elevators. Before he was called to a jury panel, Corben also joked about a judge holding him in contempt for “live Tweeting,’’ and about asking lawyer David O. Markus, a follower on Twitter, to defend him in court.

Defense lawyer Sara Yousuf, on Wednesday, asked Corben: “Even before jury service, you had an understanding that Tweeting could lead to contempt charges?” “I just imagined that, from watching Law & Order, I guess,” Corben replied.

Corben was empaneled in the case of Angelo Williams, 24, accused of robbing a Florida City convenience store in October.

Once Corben was sworn in on the jury, he continued to post, though he never wrote anything during the proceedings or deliberations. He did joke about the view from the courthouse of the new Marlins stadium. He also pointed out that jury instructions did not mention rules against “flasking it,” a reference to booze.Nor did Corben send messages identifying Williams or details of the case, although one follower wrote back, “We’ll make sure you put the bad guy away!”

After three hours of deliberations, Corben and five other jurors convicted Williams, who has yet to be sentenced and faces up to 30 years in prison. Yousuf, his lawyer, discovered the Tweets after the conviction and asked for a new trial, saying Corben “flouted the repeated and clear command of this court by openly inviting input and commentary about Mr. Williams’ trial.”Last month, Judge Fernandez ordered Corben to appear in court to explain why he should not be held in contempt. Corben — flanked by Markus, his Twitter pal — apologized for wasting the court’s time and resources.

“He never intended to violate the court’s order,” Markus told the judge. “He didn’t undermine the administration of justice.” The judge agreed. Afterward Markus praised Fernandez for his decision. “If we were allowed to friend judges on Facebook, Judge Fernandez would be the first one.”

**BILLY CORBEN JOINS GREENPOINT PICTURES**

<http://lbbonline.com/news/billy-corben-joins-greenpoint-pictures/>

With credits that include a Peabody-awarded documentary, ‘The U’ and the distinction of being one of the youngest directors to have a film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival (‘Raw Deal: A Question of Consent’), documentary filmmaker Billy Corben has enjoyed an incredibly diverse career that has included turns as a producer, director, actor and writer. Now, with his Greenpoint Pictures relationship, Corben is turning his storytelling sights on commercial directing for the first time.

Billy Corben’s life in film started early, first as a young actor and then as a director. His acting career, which he retired from at the ripe age of 15, saw him work with film greats such as Ron Howard, Roger Corman, Steve Martin, Hilary Swank, Cloris Leachman, Judd Hirsch, Corey Feldman, Alan Thicke, Joe Pantoliano and Christopher Meloni. Then, while still in high school, he began working on the other side of the camera, forming his first production company with producing partner Alfred Spellman.

Corben has a track record of creating highly commercially successful documentaries. ‘Cocaine Cowboys’), which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2006, explores the rise of cocaine and resulting crime epidemic that swept the American city of Miami, Florida in the 1970s and 1980s. After a limited theatrical release in 2006, ‘Cocaine Cowboys’ became a worldwide success on DVD and is the highest-rated documentary ever on the Showtime cable network.

‘The U’, his Peabody Award-winning feature documentary about the championship history of the University of Miami football program, produced for ESPN's 30 for 30 series, became the highest-rated documentary in the network's 30 year history, when it debuted on December 12th, 2009, following the Heisman Trophy presentation.

His feature documentary directorial debut, ‘Raw Deal: A Question of Consent’, which examines the alleged rape of an exotic dancer at a fraternity house at the University of Florida, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2001, making him one of the youngest directors to have their film shown in Sundance history.

"Since he burst onto the scene at a young age, Billy has been a very respected documentary filmmaker,” explains Michael Kuhn, Founder, Greenpoint Pictures. “We're excited and honoured to have such a vivid storyteller and artist join the Greenpoint Pictures family. We believe his unique style of work will quickly impact the commercial world."

Corben’s documentary filmography also includes ‘Square Grouper’, ‘Limelight’ and ‘Dawg Fight’

‘Square Grouper’, which premiered at the 2012 South By Southwest Film Festival, examines the freewheeling pot smuggling era of South Florida in the 1970s. ‘Limelight’, is about the rise and fall of Peter Gatien, New York City's biggest nightclub owner. Jen Gatien, Peter Gatien’s daughter, produced the film. Dawg Fight, a brutal exposé on underground backyard MMA fighting in one of Miami's toughest neighbourhoods, is having its debut this fall.

Billy Corben was born and currently resides in Florida. He graduated with honours from the University of Miami where he majored in political science, screenwriting, and theatre.