

(Free and download) Blood Relation

Blood Relation

Eric Konigsberg

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My uncle was a mobster,
a killer and a con artist.
F.B.I. agents called him
the smartest hit man
they'd ever met. None of
my relatives ever spoke
of him. One day, I got a
phone call, and a family
secret began to unravel.



"Absorbing and marvelously told [in] graceful, perfectly pitched prose. . . .

A mesmerizing expedition." —New York Times Book Review

ERIC KONIGSBERG

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Eric Konigsberg : Blood Relation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blood Relation:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good read about a bad manBy Joe Bruno Sr.Blood Relation is a commendable book, written in 2004, about a really bad guy - Harold "Kayo" Konigsberg - a stone killer - doing life imprisonment at the time of the book's writing. Blood Relation was written Kayo's grandnephew, Eric Konigsberg,

over the objection of everyone in Eric's family, with the possible exception of Kayo himself, who granted his grandnephew several interviews for the book, but was not too happy with the end result. In *Blood Relation*, Eric tells of how Kayo threatened his life because of Kayo's dissatisfaction at his portrayal in a *New Yorker* magazine article Eric wrote, and how the nephew took this threat seriously, as well he should, since Kayo was said to have killed as many as 20 people for the Italian mob; and more just for fun. Sadism to Kayo was like candy to a kid and some of Kayo's murders were exceptionally brutal. To show Kayo's influence even when he was behind bars, he was able to pull enough strings to get favors from the prison personnel other cons could only dream about. In *Blood Relation*, Eric Konigsberg also wrote, "He (Kayo) had a private apartment done over for him in the jail library, with his own TV, telephone, radio, refrigerator, hot plate, desk and sofa." To add spice to his plate, Kayo did the unimaginable in prison. He got himself a chippy and a knockout to boot. The *New York Daily News* wrote, "A shapely young blond, Marilyn Jane Fraser, was smuggled into his (Kayo's) cell in 1965 to provide him female companionship." Accompanying the *New York Daily News* was a seductive photo of Miss Fraser. I've seen less skin in *Playboy Magazine*. Retired NYPD detective and veteran mob aficionado, Joe Coffey, told the *New York Daily News* it's a scandal that Konigsberg is now out from behind bars. "I knew him well and he was the worst of the worst," Coffey said. "He enjoyed killing and enjoyed getting paid for it. He was a nasty bastard and he should have gotten the electric chair." Kayo's sadism was also evident in the courtroom. Coffey said that Kayo represented himself at an extortion trial in Manhattan Supreme Court and he emphatically told the court he was insane. Kayo then demonstrated how insane. "He sat in a wheelchair and defecated in his pants right in front of the judge," Coffey said. "I was there and he grossed out everyone and cleared the courtroom, but he was convicted anyway. I remember it like it was yesterday." In 2008 parole hearing, Kayo said the only reason he was still in prison was because in 1963 Attorney General Robert Kennedy offered him a doozy of a deal in return for information on his pals and Kayo turned RFK down flat. "There was no way he could break me," Kayo told the parole board. "The Nazis, the Germans, those people that were not hanged at Nuremberg didn't do 20 years." But alas, all good things must come to an end. In August, 2012, Kayo, at the age of 86, was inexplicably released on parole from the Mohawk Prison in Rome, NY, after being denied parole seven times. Kayo did 49 years behind bars for several murders, and is now living the good life in a \$750,000 house in sunny Weston, Florida, with his daughter Edie. New York State Parole Commissioners Sally Thompson and Michael Hagler gave no reason for granting Konigsberg's release, which is not surprising since they could be no sane motive for them letting a killer like Kayo out of the can in anything other than in a pine box. One of the men Kayo was convicted of killing was Anthony "Three Fingers" Castellito, who was whacked by Kayo at the urging of Castellito's rival union rival, Anthony (Tony Pro) Provenzano. Jennie Castellito was just 13 when her dad was killed and she was incensed Kayo had been released from prison. "When 'Tony Pro' died in prison -- he had cancer -- that was the greatest news I ever heard," she told the *New York Daily News*. "My father's dead and he didn't have the last 49 years to spend alive with his children and grandchildren. I don't think he should have been released. I don't understand it." The question is - does Eric Konigsberg have to fear for his life now that his granduncle is a free man? I wish I knew the answer, and I wish when I read *Blood Relation* I had known Kayo was soon to be sprung from the can and still a danger to anyone he believed had wronged him. It would have made reading the book all the more compelling. Sadly, if I were Eric Konigsberg, I'd be looking over both my shoulders for Uncle Kayo or, more likely, for someone hired by Uncle Kayo. A man isn't born with spots then dies with stripes. Or is it the other way around? [...]

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sounds like a family tale rather than a real life biography ...

By Andrew Stergiou Sounds like a family tale rather than a real life biography where I did not get the feeling of meeting the real person as it was written

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed it because I'm fascinated by Mafia

By Customer I enjoyed it because I'm fascinated by Mafia. I know someone who is related to "Kayo" Konigsberg so was particularly interested.

A *New Yorker* writer investigates the life and career of his hit-man great-uncle and the impact on his family. Growing up in a household as generic as Midwestern Jews get, author Eric Konigsberg always wished there was something different about his family, something exotic and mysterious, even shocking. When he was sent off to boarding school, he learned from an ex-cop security guard that there was: His great-uncle Harold, in prison in upstate New York, was a legendary Mafia enforcer, suspected by the FBI of upwards of twenty murders. Konigsberg had uncovered a shameful, long-hidden family secret. His grandfather, a Jewish Horatio Alger story who had become a respected merchant through honesty and hard work, never spoke of his baby brother. When other relatives could be coaxed into talking about him, he wasn't "Kayo" Konigsberg, the "smartest hit man" and "toughest Jew" described by cops and associates; he was Uncle Heshy, the loudmouth nogoodnik and smalltime con, long since written off as dead. Intrigued, Konigsberg ignored his family's protests and arranged a meeting, which inspired the acclaimed *New Yorker* piece this book is based on. In *Blood Relation*, Konigsberg portrays Harold as a fascinating, paradoxical character: both brutal and winning, a cold-blooded killer and a larger-than-life charmer who taught himself to read as an adult and served as his own lawyer in two major trials, to riotous effect. Functioning by turns as Kayo's pursuer, jailhouse scribe, pawn, and antagonist, Konigsberg traces his great-uncle's checkered and outlandish life and investigates his impact on his family and others who crossed his path, weaving together strands of family, Jewish identity, justice, and post-war

American history.

From Publishers Weekly Journalist Konigsberg embarks on a lengthy odyssey when he discovers, by chance, a dark secret that has haunted his respectable Midwestern Jewish family: his great-uncle has spent most of the past four decades in jail for a series of brutal crimes. Great-uncle Heshy "Kayo" Konigsberg eventually calls the author from prison (he wants to fictionalize his life) and sets in motion a series of bizarre visits during which the criminal attempts to manipulate the younger man's sympathies. Despite the author's clear-eyed awareness of his relative's misdeeds, which include vicious gangland murders that will remind many of the career of Sammy "The Bull" Gravano, he has a hard time staying away from the prison. Though "nasty, brutish, and short-tempered," Kayo is also oddly "ingratiating." But while Konigsberg succeeds at introducing touches of humor and deftly brings his family members to life, too much remains cryptic particularly what led Kayo to his career path to make the narrative fully satisfying. The author's determination to continue his quest becomes even more puzzling when Kayo's reaction to his planned piece for the New Yorker leads him to fear for his life. Nonetheless, this debut, with its atypical perspective on organized crime, will intrigue many readers. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In 1985, while writing an article for his school newspaper, the author learned something extraordinary. His granduncle, his grandfather's brother, was an infamous criminal. Harold "Kayo" Konigsberg was in prison for murder, and, as a Mob hit man, he was suspected of committing as many as 20 murders for hire. So began a quest to learn all about the relative he never knew he had and about the family who had disowned its black sheep. There are two Kayo Konigsbergs in this book: the young, tough, hardened criminal the author learned about from interviews and historical records, and the elderly man who was like "an apparition of Harold Konigsberg," whom the author got to know during his prison visits. True-crime memoirs are a dime a dozen, but this one is different: a chronicle of criminal behavior, yes, but also a moving story of coming to terms with one's roots. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A deeply weird, terrific story ... scrupulously reported and wonderfully told, with wiseguys as vivid as any in Elmore Leonard. (William Finnegan) Terrifying, moral, and funny... affirms our faith in the power of the best nonfiction to move and delight us. (Walter Kirn) Written so well, with such care and emotional precision. (Geoffrey Wolff) A portrait of evil that is never banal, Blood Relation plays out like Hitchcock's Shadow of a Doubt in reverse. (Edward Conlon) Konigsberg's inspired reporting cracks a window on the bedlam of post-war organized crime ... vivid, haunting, funny, magnificently original. (Katherine Boo) The most personal and affecting account of Mob violence you're going to get until The Sopranos returns (whenever that is). (GQ) Skillful ... Readers get to enjoy the creepy thrills without actually having to meet [Konigsberg's gangster uncle] face-to-face. (Kirkus s) A chronicle of criminal behavior ... but also a moving story of coming to terms with one's roots. (Booklist) A picture of the classic gangster, an excellent study not only of crime but of family and Jewish identity. (Library Journal) One of the 20 best books coming out this fall. (GQ) Absorbing and marvelously told [in] graceful, perfectly pitched prose . . . a mesmerizing expedition. (New York Times Book)