



Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras

By Jeff Henderson

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Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras By Jeff Henderson

Jeff Henderson was just another inner-city black kid born into a world of poverty and limited options, where crime seemed to provide the only way to get out. Raised mostly by his single mother, who struggled just to keep food on the table, Jeff dreamed big. He had to get out and he soon did by turning to what so many in his community did: dealing drugs. But Jeff was no ordinary drug dealer; by twenty-one, he was one of the top cocaine dealers in San Diego, making up to \$35,000 a week. Two years later he was indicted on federal drug trafficking charges and sentenced to almost twenty years in prison. Before he knew what had hit him, he was looking at spending most of his life behind bars. The street life had been the only one he'd ever known and even incarcerated he was too hardheaded to realize that no good would come of it.

That is, until he was assigned to one of the least desirable prison jobs: washing dishes. That job helped turn his whole life around. It gave him access to the prison kitchen and he became fascinated watching his fellow prisoners cook for the thousands of other inmates and prison officials. Henderson learned to cook in prison. Not cocaine, but food. And his dream was born: Once outside, he would become a chef.

It was a tough, seemingly impossible journey for an ex-con. Few chefs would give him the opportunity to cook in their restaurants. And once hired, he endured racism and sabotage in the kitchen. But Henderson refused to accept rejection. Driven by a dream and an unshakable will to succeed, Chef Jeff worked hard to overcome unimaginable adversity and eventually reached the top of his profession, becoming executive chef at Café Bellagio in Las Vegas.

Alive with the energy of the streets, the sober reality of prison, and the visceral thrill of being inside the fast-paced kitchens of great restaurants, *Cooked* is an intense, intimate tale of crime, punishment, and redemption—a deeply poignant story of how the worst wrong can lead to the most extraordinary right.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

How one of San Diego's most successful cocaine dealers became an award-winning chef [...] is the question that drives this sporadically inspired memoir. Henderson got his start dealing when his family moved to San Diego and he fell in with two street thugs. At age 25, after amassing a small fortune in drug money, Henderson was arrested, convicted and sentenced to 19 years in prison; once there, he discovered a love for cooking that gave him much-needed direction. After serving nine years, Henderson got an early release and began a series of grueling, occasionally demeaning jobs in kitchens, eventually working his way up to leading roles in Caesars Palace Hotel and elsewhere. Unfortunately, Henderson's story rings truest before he turns to the culinary; the fascinating level of detail in his description of the drug trade dissipates when it comes to the intricacies of working in and running a kitchen, lending his redemption a hollow feel. In addition, Henderson's casual reference to methods and equipment particular to the industry may leave amateur foodies nonplussed. While Henderson's achievements deserve recognition, this rushed retelling makes it difficult to fully appreciate his hard work.

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From [Booklist](#)

Juggling coarsest street talk with purest narrative prose, Henderson relates his near-miraculous transformation from a thuggish Los Angeles drug dealer to an acclaimed Las Vegas chef--the Food Network meets *Trainspotting*. Introduced to a world of crime by his larcenous grandfather, Henderson descends from petty theft to big-time drug dealing, generating a cash flow that nets him fast cars and fancy houses. The law finally catches up with him, and he finds himself facing a long term in grim federal prison. Almost inadvertently, he starts working in the prison kitchen and discovers both a talent and a passion for making good food. Early release lets him pursue his dream and reconnect with a loving family. This tale of hard-won redemption juxtaposes the worlds of haute cuisine and illicit drugs, slyly exploring the parallels between manufacturing a batch of crack cocaine and sauteing foie gras. *Mark Knoblauch*

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Review

“A really remarkable success story” (Oprah Winfrey, The Oprah Winfrey Show)

“A well-told redemptive story ... Henderson’s book details one brother’s determination to beat the odds and live his dream.” (Essence)

“[A] harrowing journey toward a life as a high-profile Las Vegas chef.” (USA Today)

“From hustler to high cuisine. . . . a gritty memoir.” (People)

“[A] raw, behind-the-scenes look at life in commercial kitchens [and] a personal story of redemption.” (Flint Journal)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Edward Baca:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a book. Beside you can solve your problem; you can add your knowledge by the e-book entitled Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras. Try to face the book Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras as your good friend. It means that it can to become your friend when you sense alone and beside those of course make you smarter than before. Yeah, it is very fortuned for you personally. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know almost everything by the book. So , let me make new experience in addition to knowledge with this book.

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Melody Grissom:

This Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras is great reserve for you because the content that is full of information for you who have always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This kind of book reveal it data accurately using great arrange word or we can claim no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only gives you straight forward sentences but challenging core information with attractive delivering sentences. Having Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no guide that offer you world in ten or fifteen small right but this guide already do that. So , this really is good reading book. Hey Mr. and Mrs. occupied do you still doubt this?

Agatha Draper:

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