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TRACING APPALACHIAN ARCHETYPES 2010 TO 2020: THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD TO TODAY

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Abstract:

This is the final piece in a six-part series of studies on the cultural archetypes associated with the Appalachian Region and the Appalachian people. The analysis focuses primarily on the portrayal of the archetypal Appalachian Man and the archetypal Appalachian Woman. Intertwined with this are the historical events and economic trends which greatly influenced the Appalachian Region, e.g., the Civil War, the Great Depression, moonshining, coal mining, and the arrival of opioid drug use. The study proposes that the most empowered and empowering archetype used to characterize the Region in recent decades has been that of the Appalachian Woman -- embodied most forcefully in the character of Katniss Everdeen of *The Hunger Games*.

Keywords: Appalachia, Hatfields and McCoys, *Lawless* Motion Picture, *Hunger Games*, *Justified* Series

INTRODUCTION

We have now reached the final installment in this set of studies – traveling over a century in time from 1908 to the present day. The journey has taken us past the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, two World Wars, the rise and fall of coal mining, the Great Depression, and the opioid epidemic. The happy news, as we reach the end of our journey, is that the contemporary view of Appalachia and Appalachian people has evolved into recognition of the innate strength, courage and rock-hard determination of those who dwell in the Appalachian Region. It is therefore quite fitting in our final chapter that the heroic qualities of the Appalachian Woman take center stage on the powerful wings of a young actress from Kentucky – Jennifer Lawrence.

2012: A Very Good Year for Appalachia

Three outstanding stories about Appalachia were presented in the year 2012. The first, *Hatfields and McCoys*, relates the post-Civil War history of two large families living in Kentucky and West Virginia (Hatfields and McCoys IMDb). The second, *Lawless*, is based on the 1930s moonshining activities of the Bondurant family of Franklin County, Virginia (Lawless IMDb), and the third, *The Hunger Games*, (Hunger Games IMDb) presents the culmination of over 100 years development for the Appalachian Woman archetype. Let's take a look.

Hatfields and McCoys (2012) In 2012 the History Channel broadcast a three part mini-series it had produced titled "*Hatfields and McCoys*", The series featured a strong cast, including Kevin Costner, Bill Paxton, Powers Booth and Mare Winningham. The narrative was filmed in Appalachia and tells of the relationships between these two families from the middle of the Civil War to the early 1900s. It is remarkable not only for the quality of the performances, but also for the visual and auditory verisimilitude to the locale and culture. To my ear, the language and intonations are amazingly accurate; the houses, towns and apparel are realistically presented. (And to my joy and amazement, no one in the series was shown wearing bib overalls, which were not invented until 1911).

The Hatfield family lived on the eastern side of the Tug River in southern West Virginia – very near the coal mining town of Matewan. (This is why we encountered Sheriff Sid Hatfield in the motion picture *Matewan* set during the 1920s (see Hirschman 2021c)). Anderson (Anse) Hatfield was the patriarch of the large extended Hatfield family. His older brother, Wall, was the Justice of the Peace in this same section of West Virginia (Dotson 2013, Jones 1948, King 2013, Rice 1982, Waller 1988).

The Hatfield family, as a whole, was well-off and well-educated for the time period. Anse and his family owned thousands of acres of prime timberland which they harvested and sold for lumber (recall the John Fox, jr. tale *Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* in which the men of the town also harvested timber and floated it downriver to Louisville, KY (Hirschman 2021b)).

Anse would have been viewed today as an entrepreneur and innovator; he was one of the first in the Appalachian Region to envision the railroad as a viable transport for his lumber to distant US cities and also one of the first to bring in petroleum-powered machinery for his logging business. A family photo of the Hatfields is shown below. Anse is the tall, dark bearded man seated to the far left in the photograph. (Notably, the Hatfield DNA lineage indicates Sephardic Jewish ancestry (Hirschman 2021)).



Caption: Map of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud Area

The map above provides an overview of the area in which the several disputes took place. Note that it also shows the location of Wise, VA, where John Fox, jr.s *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* is located and Welch, West Virginia mentioned in the film *October Sky* (Hirschman 2021a, 2022b).

The Hatfield family lived in a two-story homestead crafted from timber, which was enlarged over the decades. In the photo below, the family is standing in front of their house. Also take note of the several firearms and the hound dog in the photo.

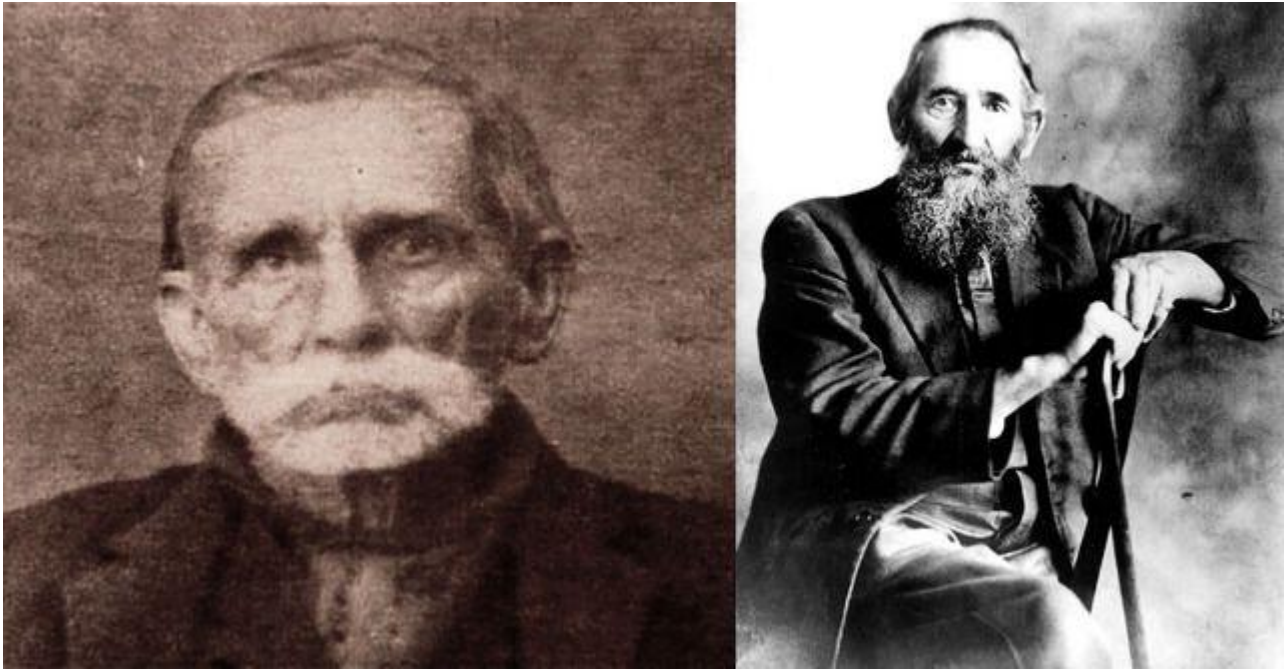


Caption: The Hatfield family in West Virginia. Anse Hatfield is the bearded man, seated and holding a rifle, on the far left.

The McCoy family lived on the western side of the Tug River in Mingo County, Kentucky.

The nearest town was Pikeville in Pike County, KY. Randall (Ran'l) McCoy and his wife also had a large extended family in the area. They were also related to a man named Perry Cline; the Cline family is spread across Central Appalachia. Perry Cline was an attorney in eastern Kentucky, whose primary practice was in Pikeville. Perry played a key role in several of the legal battles between the two families.

The McCoy family was not as prosperous as the Hatfield family. They farmed 300 acres, raising corn and livestock. In the History Channel series, Randall Hatfield is portrayed as a deeply religious man – though in a “fire and brimstone” sense, not a “peacemaker” sense. Perry Cline is portrayed as a conniver and swindler, though his descendants have challenged this portrayal.



Caption: Randall McCoy is pictured on the left; Anderson Hatfield on the right.



Caption: The Randall McCoy family.

The *Hatfields & McCoy's* narrative begins in 1863 during the Civil War. Ran'l McCoy and Anse Hatfield are friends and are fighting for the Confederacy. Both show courage under fire. The battles are horrific, bloody and, in Anse's view, pointless, since the Confederacy has clearly lost. Anse tells Ran'l he is 'done fightin' and leaves for home.

Ran'l threatens to shoot him in the back for deserting, but does not.

Anse arrives home and tells his wife, "I'm done with the war", but it continues to infect their lives. A Hatfield relative, James Vance, threatens to kill Harmon McCoy, because Harmon fought for the Union. Harmon has recently deserted the Union army and returned home.. To escape from Vance, Harmon hides out at his moonshine still in the woods; but Vance succeeds in tracking him down and killing him. When the Civil War finally ends, Ran'l McCoy walks back home to his wife and family.

The next confrontation occurs when attorney Perry Cline, a McCoy relative, crosses the Tug River from Kentucky to West Virginia with a contract he claims gives him 'timber rights' to 1,000 acres of Hatfield property. Anse doubts the validity of the contract Perry shows him, but Perry persists and takes him to court in Pikeville, KY. Several male Hatfields then show up at the courthouse with a tombstone documenting that the man Perry claimed to have purchased the land from was dead before the contract was signed, i.e., it is a forgery. This cements the on-going enmity between the two families based on a mixture of politics, economics and pride.

Remarkably, despite their deep personal differences, the McCoy and Hatfields both attend the Tug Fork Church of Christ, a white clapboard building with a tall bell tower. Congregants attend services dressed in handsome apparel; the men in suits, the women in long dresses with bonnets. Anse is happy to see Ran'l there, and the two wives talk in a friendly manner. At this point the two patriarchs and their wives seem to be happy and cordial to one another.

Unfortunately, Floyd Hatfield drives by the McCoy farm a few days later taking a load of pigs to market. In his wagon-load of pigs, the McCoy's spot one which has its ear marked with the McCoy sign. (Pigs were often allowed to roam free in the general vicinity of one's farm during this time period; they foraged for roots and acorns among the trees). Floyd, however, insists that the pig is his, and the McCoy's let him continue on to market. Later, Ran'l tells his uncle, Perry Cline, about the suspicious pig and Perry offers to take Floyd Hatfield to court. (Although stealing a pig may seem somewhat trivial, it would be equivalent today to stealing your neighbor's riding lawnmower —i.e., not something one would be willing to overlook.)

The trial is held at the Logan County, West VA courthouse with Judge Wall Hatfield presiding. (Wall is Anse Hatfield's older brother). The courthouse is a large, well-constructed building and is packed with members of both families. A witness, Bill Staton, claims the pig was a Hatfield pig belonging to Floyd. Though an alcoholic, Staton is deemed a reliable non-family witness. The jury consists of 6 Hatfields and 6 McCoy's. Selkirk McCoy actually votes with the Hatfields, believing Staton is a credible witness. Floyd Hatfield is acquitted.

When the trial ends, Bill Staton is stabbed and shot multiple times in the nearby forest by three McCoy's. To avenge Staton's murder, Anse and several Hatfields cross the Tug Fork River to Kentucky and kidnap the McCoy's who killed Staton, bringing them to West Virginia for trial on charges of capital murder; Perry Cline represents the three McCoy's and claims they killed Staton in self-defense (Staton was drunk and unarmed at the time of his murder). Judge Wall Hatfield declares them guilty and then suspends their sentences. He then tells both sides that their behaviors are "wasteful and foolish".

It is around this time that Roseanna McCoy and Johnson (Johnsy) Hatfield begin a romantic relationship; they are the daughter and son of Ran'l McCoy and Anse Hatfield, respectively. Roseanna is blonde and very beautiful; Johnsy is blonde and very handsome. (Notably, actual photos of Roseanna and Johnsy indicate that this is accurate). When Roseanna misses her ride home from the county fair, she must spend the night at the Hatfield household, an event both of Johnsy's parents are very upset about – not to mention Roseanna's parents when they find out the next day. (We must note here that the Hatfields and McCoy's did intermarry frequently—but through collateral lines, not directly between the children of Ran'l and Anse.)

At first, Roseanna's brothers attempt to kill Johnsy suspecting he has seduced their sister, but after being convinced by Johnsy that he really does love Roseanna and "wants to ask for her hand proper" from their father, they let him go. Ran'l McCoy, however, does not forget or forgive. He sends Roseanna back across the river to live with the Hatfields. Anse's wife agrees to let Roseanna stay with them. However, when Roseanna becomes pregnant by Johnsy, Mrs. Hatfield sends her back across the river to Kentucky. Roseanna's father, Ran'l, continues to reject her.

The narrative then shifts to events in Pikeville, KY. The Pikeville Hotel serves not only as a rooming house, but also as a bar, casino and brothel. It is run by a former member of the Frank and Jesse James outlaw gang named Frank Phillips. Frank Phillips is an ally of the McCoy family. Later in the narrative he will be designated a Special Legal Agent by the Kentucky Governor and ordered to take a posse to West Virginia to arrest Anse Hatfield. However at this point Anse visits the Pikeville Hotel and offers Phillips \$100 to leave town “so I don’t have to kill you later”. Phillips refuses the offer.



Caption: Bad Jim Vance

In Blackberry Creek, KY, the annual county fair is again being held. Johnsy and Roseanna meet again; he has learned that Roseanna is pregnant and asks her to marry him. However, both sets of parents oppose the union; Roseanna instead becomes engaged to Perry Cline. As usual, a fight breaks out at the gathering with blood shed on both sides. Judge Wall Hatfield tells all involved to “let the law handle this”. Three McCoys are arrested for killing a Hatfield at the fair and taken to West Virginia for trial. The three are condemned and die by firing squad in early spring. Their bodies are returned to Kentucky and buried in the McCoy family cemetery.

Ran’l McCoy is extremely angered by the death of his relatives. With the Kentucky governor’s permission, he asks Frank Phillips to form a posse and offers rewards for the capture or slaying of the Hatfields involved in the firing squad. The bounty hunters begin killing Hatfields on the list. In a Shakespearean twist in the midst of all this internecine violence, Johnsy Hatfield marries a McCoy cousin of Roseanna’s.

At this point, the governors of both West Virginia and Kentucky become involved in the conflict; deputizing Hatfields and McCoys to enforce state laws. On New Year’s Eve, the Hatfields attack the home of Ran’l McCoy, burning it to the ground; Ran’l escapes the fire, but his wife is badly injured and one of his daughters is unintentionally killed by a Hatfield boy, Cotton, who is of borderline intelligence. In retaliation, the McCoys ambush Hatfield relative Jim Vance and his son in the woods and kill them.

By now “the whole world is watching”; newspaper reporters and photographers from across the country journey to Appalachia to take photographs of the feud participants and conduct interviews. (Many of the surviving photographs of the families and towns are from this time period.) Judge Wall Hatfield goes to Kentucky voluntarily and turns himself in for trial. Cotton is captured and hung for the shooting of Randall McCoy’s daughter. Mrs. McCoy, who has had a mental and physical collapse as a result of the house fire, is sent to a sanitarium in Louisville. Ran’l McCoy becomes an alcoholic and ultimately dies in another house fire. All of his sons pre-decease him. At an advanced age, Anse Hatfield receives baptism at the Tug Fork Church; he passes away in 1921.

What is important to understand about the Hatfield-McCoy struggle over this decades-long period is that such disputes were **not** unusual for central Appalachia during this time. There were several such “feuds” among groups of related families living in close proximity during the late 1800s (Pearce 1994). This behavior sprang from at least three root sources. First, was the rapidly shifting socio-economic scene after the Civil War. As we saw earlier in *Cold Mountain* (Hirschman 2022a), the war disrupted legal, social and financial systems throughout the Appalachian Region, leaving a vacuum in which strong-willed persons, acting with like-minded associates, could engage in attacks on other residents.

The same types of events were spurred by Prohibition and the Great Depression in large cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Boston during the 1920s through the 1950s(Marc 2013, Nate 2010,Raab 2006,Repetto 2004).

Organized crime ‘families’ successfully corrupted politicians, law enforcement personnel, courts and judges. Anyone who has seen the historically-grounded *Godfather* series of films is aware of this (see e.g., . Corruption based on criminal profiteering continues to the present day – although not with the epidemic of violence of New York and Chicago in the 1930s or Appalachia in the 1870s to 1890s.

A second factor was the very limited set of options for making money in Central Appalachia during this time. Coal had not yet been industrialized, and the railroads had not yet fully penetrated the mountains – this began in the late 1880s and continued into the twentieth century (see Hirschman 2021a). Thus, lumbering and small scale farming were the ‘only games in town’, with lumber being much more profitable. Recall that Perry Cline’s first effort at swindling the Hatfields concerned a 1,000 acre tract of timber land in West Virginia. Cline was educated and prosperous and knew that the Hatfield land was the most valuable resource he could acquire – legally or illegally.

The third factor is simply the personalities of the two primary protagonists: Anderson Hatfield and Randall McCoy. The general impression given by commentaries at the time is that Anse was a shrewd pragmatist. His main desire was to indoctrinate his sons to be businessmen – not farmers. “We’re going to put a railroad through here as soon as we can, so we can ship our lumber all over the country...” , he tells his children after returning from the war. He saw entrepreneurship as the route to upward mobility and economic dominance in the region. Conversely, Randall McCoy was marked by a strong belief that the will of God would manifest itself in his favor, if he honored his commitments to religion and the law. That is why he remained in the failing Confederate Army for an additional two years, losing out on the opportunity to manipulate the period of Reconstruction to his family’s advantage, as Anse Hatfield did.

We next examine a Depression and Prohibition-era narrative grounded in the time-honored Appalachian profession of moonshining.

Lawless (2012)

Lawless provides keen insights into Appalachian culture during the early 1930s, when Prohibition was in force and moonshining was in full flower. Apparel, houses, towns and automobiles are depicted with period accuracy. As with *Hatfields and McCoys*, the narrative is based on actual events in Franklin County, Virginia, a rural mid-state county in the Appalachians. Three brothers from the Bondurant family are running a successful moonshine business – as are many of their neighbors.

The Bondurants are descended from early Huguenot settlers in Virginia circa the 1700s and have many relatives still present in the area today. The three Bondurant brothers, Howard, Forrest and Jack were raised on a farm and now operate a gas station and restaurant in Blackwater, VA, as well as operating a high-volume illegal liquor business. Generally, Howard minds the still, while Forrest minds the store and warehouse where the liquor (in glass Ball jars) is kept under lock and key. The youngest brother, Jack, and a friend, Cricket, have a small moonshining operation of their own in Cricket’s basement. The law enforcement community is completely complicit in the county’s moonshining operations, happy to look the other way in exchange for wooden cases of brandy and liquor. Everything is peaceful and profitable.

However, in the late 1920s the Chicago mafia begins moving into the Appalachian Region, including Franklin County (Raab 2006, Sifakis 2005). The county’s Commonwealth Attorney collaborates with the mob (in exchange for large bribes) and the moonshiners are told that they must now ship all their product through the mafia network. This will result in a loss of independence for the local producers, as well as lower revenue, since the ‘mob’ will take a share of the profit.

A sadistic mob enforcer, Charlie Rakes, is brought in from Chicago, to organize the local producers; he wastes no time beating the local moonshiners into submission, with the sole exception of the Bondurant family. Forrest tells Rakes, “We’re Bondurants and we don’t lie down for nobody”. Additionally, as the area’s largest producer of high quality liquor, the Bondurants have the most to lose by the new arrangement. The Bondurants continue to deliver their liquor to customers. Forrest and Howard are both large and violent men who can usually intimidate local those who try to shake them down. But Jack, the youngest brother, is weak and often has to be rescued by his older siblings.

One Saturday night, Howard and Jack are selling jars of their liquor at a weekend dance in Franklin County. Several of the attendees and musicians are from the local Mennonite Church. One young Mennonite woman, Bertha Minnix, catches Jack’s eye and he decides to court her, despite her father, the Mennonite minister, objecting to her dating non-Mennonites. Concurrently, another young – but more worldly – woman,

Maggie, arrives in town and seeks work at Forrest's gas station/restaurant. Maggie is seeking to escape her past life in Chicago as a gang moll. She wears fashionable clothes, has an urban hair style, and is like no woman anybody in Franklin County has seen before. Forrest grudgingly gives her the job and over the course of the film they fall in love.

Things soon begin to heat up in Franklin County. A non-Mafia mobster named Floyd Banner arrives in town and uses a tommy gun to shoot members of a rival gang in the middle of town. Floyd then drives off in a fancy sedan. All of this greatly impresses Jack Bondurant. He and Cricket fantasize about becoming rich gangsters themselves. However, Charlie Rakes puts a quick end to their plans when he locates their small moonshining operation and badly injures Jack, intending to intimidate Forrest and Howard into joining the Chicago mob organization. Forrest tells Jack, "You have to learn to defend yourself. We are survivors. You have to control the fear, otherwise you're dead."

Upping the ante, Rakes sends two local bad men in his employ to the Bondurant's Blackwater gas station one evening. They harass Maggie, causing Forrest to throw both of them out. But it is a ruse; when Forrest comes out later to check his car, the two men attack him and slit his throat. Maggie drives the unconscious Forrest to the hospital where, miraculously, he survives the grotesque wound. However Forrest will be incapacitated for some months; what will happen to their business in the meantime?

Howard, the second oldest brother, is big and strong, but pretty much an alcoholic, Jack realizes he will have to step-up and become the family entrepreneur. Jack and Cricket drive a load of their own, highly pure, liquor to Floyd Banner. Floyd is a gangster, but also a savvy businessman. After first threatening to kill both Jack and Cricket, he samples their liquor and finds it to be "impressive". (The liquor ignites when touched with a lighted match!) He buys their entire load at Jack's asking price and contracts for additional deliveries. Jack and Cricket are elated. Floyd also gives Jack the name and address of the men who attacked Forrest; noting that they did not work for him, but for Charlie Rakes.



Caption: The Bondurant brothers in their country station

While Howard and Forrest take revenge on Rakes' hit men, Jack goes to see Bertha, the young Mennonite woman he met earlier. He is now financially well-off, with a new roadster, a new suit of clothes and a new overcoat. He, Howard and Cricket have built a very large, multi-boiler distillery deep in the woods. They ship more moonshine out of Franklin County with Floyd Banner than any other local operation. This, of course, upsets the Chicago gangsters whom Charlie Rakes works with – as well as the corrupt Commonwealth Attorney.

In the spring, Jack foolishly takes Bertha to see the enlarged stills. He has bought her a new, fashionable dress and takes her picture with his new camera. Unfortunately, Rakes has followed them to the moonshine facility along with a dozen hired guns. A shoot-out ensues. Jack and Bertha escape, but Rakes murders Cricket, and his men blow-up the entire moonshine operation with dynamite.

Cricket's funeral the next day becomes a turning point for the entire county. The residents commit themselves to fighting back against Rakes and the Chicago gangsters. There is a large-scale shoot-out between the Appalachian men and the 'outsiders' on a covered bridge in which all three Bondurants participate. Forrest is wounded, but Jack and Howard manage to kill Rakes.

The narrative then shifts to several years later. Prohibition has ended, and the Bondurants are now all engaged in legitimate businesses. Howard has married a woman he met in North Carolina and they have several children; Jack and Bertha are married with many children; Jack is a prosperous landowner raising cattle and tobacco. And Forrest and Maggie are married, but have no children. All are happy.

This moonshine narrative presents a much happier ending than that of, say, *Thunder Road*, in which the moonshine runner dies in a fiery crash (Hirschman 2021c). But in several ways it tells the same story about Appalachian men -- they are independent, occasionally violent, and tend to follow their own instincts, rightly or wrongly. Jack is reminiscent of Anse Hatfield. Like Anse, Jack is fascinated by new technologies and embraces them if they make business sense. He is not a sentimentalist, but a rationalist and an entrepreneur.

Howard and Forrest represent the two sides of Lucas Doolan (Robert Mitchum) we saw in *Thunder Road* (Hirschman 2021c). Howard is prone to risk taking and violence; Forrest, despite viewing himself as the family 'anchor', is unwilling, out of pride or stubbornness, to accept the superiority of new ways of conducting his business. Forrest, also like Doolan, wants to keep his operation small and family-run and take the responsibility of transporting the product himself. This latter type of behavior is very typical of Appalachia, generally, and Appalachian men, specifically. It is rooted in the belief that **family is one's central identity**. Making alliances with non-kin is viewed as not only risky, but disloyal.

This is also a key reason why unionization has generally failed in the Appalachian Region, whereas it was successful in urban areas such as Detroit, Chicago, Akron, New York, Boston and Philadelphia. The worker population in these cities consisted of multiple ethnicities recently arrived in the United States and was "rootless" in a sense. Belonging to a union provided these displaced men a sense of common purpose and a locus of loyalty. In Appalachia, however, this same sense of belonging originates from the family.

The Hunger Games (2012)

We have now arrived at the motion picture that launched the career of Louisville, KY actress Jennifer Lawrence, saved Lions Gate Films from bankruptcy, and informed the world that when everything goes to hell and predatory capitalism runs rampant across America, an Appalachian Woman (due to our long tradition of resisting authority, celebrating self-sufficiency and sheer ornery-ness) will come to the rescue!

Author Suzanne Collins wrote three novels featuring a young Appalachian heroine, Katniss Everdeen, which soon became international best sellers. Katniss lives in "District 12: Appalachia" in the brave new world called Panem. Panem was created after a violent rebellion against the United States government 18 years earlier was quashed. The revolution -- instead of creating more social equality -- resulted in the installation of a harsh totalitarian regime.

The Panem government operates from The Capital, a large metropolis located in the Rocky Mountains and serviced by speed-rail trains. The country, itself, has been divided into 12 Districts, each with its own economic responsibilities to the Capital. President-for-Life Snow, played by actor Donald Sutherland in the film series, is a shrewd, ruthless dictator who has arranged a series of annual events, the Hunger Games, which selects pairs of 12 to 18 year old 'tributes' from each of the twelve Districts. The tributes must fight to the death in a televised, multi-day event. Each year's 'winner' is rewarded with a lifetime of wealth. The citizens of the Capital are, themselves, exempted from competing in the Hunger Games and live their lives engaged in superficial pleasures, marked by vanity and narcissism. (Yes, this does sound a lot like present day New York City and the global 1%).

There are many, many layers of meaning in Collin's narratives; one could approach them from a post-modern, post-Marxist, libertarian, socialist or any of many theoretical "-isms", but we are going to consider them from an Appalachian perspective. This is because Collins presents us with **the most fully developed and inspiring version of the Appalachian Woman yet put forward**. We are going to 'go deep' into the first motion picture installment of the series and closely examine this nouveau Appalachian Woman.



Caption: Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) of District 12 volunteering to take her younger sister's place in the Hunger Games.

In the image above we see young Katniss Everdeen volunteering to take her younger sister's place in the Hunger Games. What we have learned about Katniss up to this point in Collin's story is that she is the 'head' of her family in Appalachia; her father was killed in a coal mining accident, her mother has become emotionally despondent and unable to function, and she has a younger sister, Primrose, who is quiet and weak.

It has fallen to Katniss, therefore, to become the family's provider and protector. She has taught herself to make a bow and arrows and goes hunting in the forest for food by sneaking under the electric fence that the Panem "Peacekeepers" have erected around their town. To accomplish this, she must be willing to take great physical risks, break the official rules and learn new skills – notably, these are all Appalachian traits honed in the centuries-long moonshining business.



Caption: Katniss Everdeen – the Appalachian Woman as Warrior and Savior.

After returning from a hunt, Katniss learns that the Capital ‘reapers’ have arrived in District 12 to select the boy and girl Tributes for the Hunger Games. Residents are required to attend the ceremony and are rounded up by the white-armor clad ‘Peacekeepers’ (reminiscent of the Empire soldiers in *Star Wars*). They must then stand before enormous televised monitors and watch as two of their children are selected for virtually certain death in the Hunger Games. When Katniss’s young sister, Primrose, is called as the female Tribute, Katniss rushes forward and volunteers in her stead. A male Tribute her own age, Peeta Millar, is also chosen.

Katniss and Peeta are whisked toward the Capital on a sleek, stainless steel train filled with luxurious appointments, delicious foods, wines, waters and desserts – all in stark contrast to their wretched, impoverished living conditions in District 12. Accompanying them is a female Capital Representative dressed in pink and burgundy crinolines, bows, sashes and an elaborate coiffure. She chatters on mindlessly about various inane topics, e.g., “Oh, just wait till you see the architecture and the parties at the Capital!”, seemingly oblivious to the fact that her two companions are on their way to die.

Also on board the train is their drunken mentor, Hamitch, who is the only prior inhabitant of District 12 to have actually ‘won’ the Hunger Games. Now a complete cynic, as well as an alcoholic, Hamitch tells them, “There’s nothing I can do to save you...” As they continue their ride, Hamitch does try to make the best of their hopeless situation; he coaches them about appearing “attractive” so they can obtain sponsors during the Games. The sponsors are wealthy Capital citizens who can pay to send their favorite Tributes extra food, medicine and weapons during the contest. (Thus begins the ‘self-marketing’ phase of their education...)

Upon arriving at the Capital, each Tribute is washed, groomed, made-up and outfitted in attractive costumes to make them interesting to the television audience. A young man named Cenna is the ‘outfitter’ for Katniss and Peeta. He does a remarkable job of dressing them in fiery costumes which attract a large set of fans/sponsors to their cause. The Tributes must next appear on a live televised interview; here two very gaudy announcers ask them shallow questions and make clever quips for the cameras, much as in a beauty pageant.. As this promotional programming unfolds, President Snow watches carefully, attentive to any persons or activities that might undermine his authority. Katniss does catch his attention.

The contestants now enter the training phase of the Hunger Games. They are placed in an enclosed facility and taught how to use various weapons – knives, bows with metal arrows, ropes, nets -- most of which require hand-to-hand combat, thus ensuring violent, bloody deaths for all but one of the combatants. Here Katniss shows skill with the bow and arrow, and again draws the attention of President Snow.

Now the Hunger Games begin. The tributes are loaded into individual metal canisters and whisked through pneumatic tubes to the playing field. This is a large circular area surrounded by forest with a tent at the center filled with food, water and weapons, called the Cornucopia. Hamitch has warned Katniss and Peeta not to run to the cornucopia for supplies at the outset, because “it is a bloodbath” of fighting.

Following his advice, Katniss grabs a backpack from the edge of the field, while she and Peeta head to the woods separately. At their media studio in the Capital, the game-runners – dressed in identical white shirts and trousers – operate the special effects of lighting, temperature, rain, and wild animals that can be introduced onto the playing field at their whim. (Note, this portion of the narrative mimics several other previous films, especially *The Running Man* and *Gladiator*).

An alliance forms among an especially predatory group of contestants who come from affluent districts with professional training programs. Peeta joins this group intending to secretly help Katniss. At first, Katniss fears he is leading them to kill her, but soon realizes Peeta is trying to assist her.

While escaping from this group, Katniss climbs a tree and injures her leg. Fortunately, a sponsor sends her a tiny parachute with medicinal salve which heals it. In the tree next to her, Katniss sees a young black girl, Roo, who is perhaps 12 years old. Roo points out a hornets’ nest in Katniss’s tree which Katniss drops on the pursuers below. Katniss escapes from the tree, collecting a bow and arrows from a dead combatant. Peeta urges her to run. (We now realize clearly that Peeta is protecting Katniss; he believes his chances of surviving are nil, but that she may be able to make it through).

Katniss and Roo form a bond similar to the one Katniss has with her own younger sister. But terribly, Roo is killed by another Tribute. Katniss risks her own life to carefully bury Roo’s body and cover the grave in flowers – all of which is shown on live television broadcast across the country. This act of love, kindness and basic humanity re-kindles these same feelings in the viewers – both in the Capital and across the Districts.

Uprisings against the State break out in some districts. President Snow recognizes this as a significant threat and orders his game-master to send a pack of wolves to attack Katniss and Peeta.

Peeta is badly injured by the wolves, and he and Katniss take shelter in a cave. Again, a caring sponsor sends healing medicine, but the pair are also out of water and food. Katniss realizes she must approach the Cornucopia, which is guarded by the predatory Tributes, and get supplies. She does so, but is attacked by an especially violent young woman. A young black man, who was Roo's partner, comes to help her, saying, "This is for Roo". (This also is seen by the viewing audience as a direct threat to Snow's hegemony, since it depicts cross-District and cross-race cooperation). Katniss returns to Peeta and tends to his injuries – again televised on the national network. That evening, Snow orders the game-runners to kill-off the young man who helped Katniss, signaling to the audience his power to crush dissent.

The next morning, Katniss and Peeta awake to find they are the only Tributes remaining alive – therefore, one must kill the other, according to the rules. However, there now is enormous popular sentiment across Panem for their survival. The pair threatens to 'die together' by eating poison berries on live television, but due to the massive volume of incoming messages from viewers, Snow grants them a 'one-time' reprieve. No fool, Snow realizes he has been manipulated by the trio of Hamitch, Katniss and Peeta from District 12 and over the next two novels – and next 3 films in the series -- he makes every effort to squash them.

Now let's take a closer look at Katniss Everdeen. Katniss does not possess any super-powers; she is not beautiful; she does not dress in designer clothing; she did not attend an Ivy League university – in fact she has not even graduated from high school, if indeed there is a high school in District 12. She does not view herself as a leader, and she did not expect to be alive at the end of the Hunger Games. But she went anyway, because she did not want her younger sister to die. And once she got there, she did not want Roo or Peeta to die either. And so she did everything she could to keep them alive, but failed in Roo's case.

In the later stories in the series, Katniss consistently opposes efforts to publicize her as a hero or savior—and it is because of her rejection of power and adulation that she ultimately enables a population that had been enslaved to an authoritarian government to free itself. By the end of the series, Katniss and Peeta have married and live in District 12 with their children.

Katniss Everdeen represents both the modern presence of the Feminist Movement and the resurrection of Appalachia as the source of America's Pioneer Spirit. She is a brilliant replacement for the prior century's media portrayals of women – especially Appalachian women – as scantily clad girl-seductresses of limited intellectual ability and weak morals. We wish her well.

Justified

We turn now to a landmark narrative on Appalachia; the television series *Justified* (Justified IMDb). The series appeared from March 2010 to April 2015 on F/X channel, running for 78 episodes, and was nominated for 8 Emmy awards. *Justified* is set in Eastern Kentucky, focusing primarily on the coal mining town of Harlan, but also extending to Corbin, Frankfort and Lexington. Before we examine the storylines it conveyed, let's first take a look at Harlan, itself.

Harlan, Kentucky is the county seat of Harlan County; its most recent population figures hover around 1,500 persons (HarlanCountyKentucky.com). The Harlan County Coal War was a series of coal mining-related skirmishes, murders, bombings, and strikes during the 1930s (HarlandCountyTrails.com). These incidents involved coal miners and union organizers on one side, and coal companies and law enforcement officials on the other. In essence, this was a continuation of the mining labor disputes we examined in *Matewan* (Hirschman 2021c).

The Coal War lasted from 1931 to 1939 – paralleling the Great Depression, which as we saw in *Night of the Hunter* (Hirschman 2021b)) was a desperate time in Appalachia. Before its conclusion, dozens of miners, deputies, and union organizers were killed, state and federal troops occupied the county more than half a dozen times, and workers in the nation's most anti-labor coal county ultimately joined a union (HarlanCountyKentucky.com).

The years following the Depression and leading up to the present day have not been kind to Harlan. With the decline of the coal-mining industry across central Appalachia, Harlan became one of the poorest counties and towns in the United States (HarlanCountyKentucky.com).

It also became emblematic of the scourge of locally and externally made illegal drugs in Appalachia during the 1990s and continuing across the Appalachian Region to the present day (HarlanCountyKentucky.com). *Justified* addresses this epidemic in a remarkably moving, jolting, and direct manner. It is to that narrative we now turn.



Caption: Current Harlan, Kentucky residential area.



Caption: Downtown Harlan, Kentucky present day

The Justified Series (2010 – 2016) – the Appalachian narrative that finally gets it right (mostly)

Shown below is the photograph of present day Harlan, KY that opens each episode of *Justified*. In it we see a small, Appalachian town nestled between large forested mountains. There are red-brick buildings dating mostly from the 1950s to the 1970s. But as the photos shown above of present-day Harlan illustrate, there is now deep poverty on the outskirts of town.



Caption: View of Harlan, Kentucky used in the series Justified

The series opens in Miami, Florida with a confrontation between US Marshall Raylan Givens, who is originally from Harlan, and a Miami drug dealer. Raylan had given the drug dealer 24 hours to “get out of town”, but he and the drug dealer are now seated (23 hours and 59 minutes later) at a patio table outside a sea side restaurant. The drug dealer attempts to out-draw Raylan, but Raylan shoots him first. Raylan, incidentally, is wearing a white Stetson hat and is very good with guns. He takes his job as a US Marshall seriously.

Unfortunately, the US Marshall Service does not smile favorably on Raylan’s unorthodox way of dealing with recalcitrant drug dealers and, as punishment, orders him back to the Harlan, KY office from whence he originally came. Now we let’s look at the song which closes each episode in the *Justified* series:
In the deep dark hills of Eastern Kentucky, that’s the place where I trace my blood-line, and it’s there I read on a hillside gravestone, “You will never leave Harlan alive”.

Raylan was hoping he would be one of the few who did make it out of Harlan alive, but now finds himself “back in”. His new boss, Chief US Marshall Art Mullens (Mullens is a ubiquitous Appalachian surname) is happy to have Raylan back, as he is chronically short-staffed and the area he supervises is notorious for violence of several kinds. Raylan’s colleagues include a young local agent and a Black female agent, Rachel, from ‘outside’ the area.

Raylan’s prior history in Harlan includes his ex-wife, Winona Hamilton, who is now a court reporter, Raylan’s father, Arlo, a former thief and current illegal drug distributor, a beautiful former girlfriend, Ava, who is now married to a violent criminal, Bowman Crowder, Jr., and a man the same age as Raylan who has become leader of the local White Nationalist/Neo-Nazi group -- as well as also being a drug distributor -- Boyd Crowder. Chief Mullens tells Raylan that Boyd Crowder is to be his central investigative target and asks if he knew Boyd before he left town. Raylan replies, “Yep, we dug coal together when we were 19”. This simple statement, we will see, heralds an enduring bond between the two men, despite their operating on opposite sides of the law.

Boyd Crowder is what could be termed a ‘criminal entrepreneur’ – somewhat akin to Lucas Doolan in *Thunder Road* and Anse Hatfield. He is a violent, brilliant risk-taker who chose to stay in Harlan because of his large, extended family. Under different circumstances, Boyd could have become El Chappo in Colombia or Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*.

Boyd Crowder is the cultural result when very intelligent, very ambitious men are born into impoverished conditions and decide to “better themselves” by any means necessary. His first act in the series is to use a stolen rocket launcher to blow up a Black church in Lexington, yelling: “Fire in the hole”, as he does so. On the surface, it seems that this was an act of pure racism, but Raylan soon learns that the Black pastor – who is from Jamaica – had his own large-scale marijuana distribution business going in what Boyd considered “his territory”.

Boyd’s prior behavioral history includes: 1. joining the army, 2. leaving the army, 3. refusing to pay taxes, 4. founding a White Aryan Nation’s group, and 5. blowing up banks to get money to help fund his drug business. He currently lives in a rural trailer crammed with Nazi and White Supremacist flags, literature and posters.

We next learn that Ava Crowder, Boyd’s very beautiful, blonde sister-in-law, has shot her husband, Bowman Crowder, jr., in the chest with a shotgun, killing him. Ava and Bowman had a long history of domestic violence. When Raylan goes to investigate the shooting, she explains to him exactly how it happened, “I was tired of him beating me, and so I made him his favorite dinner – fried chicken, okra, sweet corn – and when he sat down to eat I got the shotgun and aimed for his chest”.

Next to arrive at the house/crime scene is a White Supremacist named Dewey Crowe who tells Raylan he is there to get Ava and take her to Boyd’s trailer. (Boyd has decided he wants to marry the beautiful Ava, “because it’s in the Bible, I’m supposed to look after my slain brother’s wife.”) Dewey points a short-nosed scattergun at Raylan, but Raylan asks him, “Did you cock and load it?” Dewey’s worried face reveals he did not, so Raylan arrests him.

Raylan then goes to chat with Boyd about the blown-up Black church at Boyd’s Aryan Nation headquarters, located in a vacant white clapboard church just outside of Harlan. They share a jar of moonshine and toast “to old times”. Boyd wants to know why Raylan decided to become a US Marshall, “Your daddy was a wild man, everything from stealing mining equipment to selling cocaine”. Raylan tells Boyd he wanted to get a job on “the right side of the law”.

Boyd agrees to come to a police line-up the next day, but the Black preacher refuses to identify him as the church bomber, knowing that Boyd’s men would then kill him. That evening Ava is forced by Boyd to prepare another delicious dinner and invite Raylan over, so Boyd can then kill Raylan. Sensing a trap, Raylan shows up and finds Boyd eating the dinner. Raylan sits down and starts eating, as well (delicious fried chicken!).

Boyd asks him, “Should we just do us a shot of Jim Beam?” Ava then emerges from the kitchen with a shotgun, but before she can fire at Boyd, Raylan shoots Boyd in the chest (sparing Ava a double-homicide charge; her first one (yesterday) was reduced to manslaughter). Raylan purposely shoots Boyd above the heart, sparing his life but sending him to the hospital – and prison. When Raylan visits Boyd in the prison hospital, Boyd tells him, “You could’ve killed me and you didn’t; this was an act of God to get my attention, to set me on a new course. I am Born Again; I am at peace”. Boyd declares himself a minister of the gospel and decides to gather a flock when he is released.

Dewey Crowe, Boyd’s hapless lackey, is convinced of Boyd’s sincerity. He decides to “clean-up my act” noting that “all my relatives are dead or in prison”. Dewey and Raylan take a drive up to Big Sandy Prison near Inez, KY to visit Dewey’s kin and Raylan’s father, who are all serving time there. Along the way they view the Kentucky landscape -- beautiful rolling mountains interrupted by narrow valleys in which small, almost vacant towns, trailer parks, fast food restaurants and convenience stores are deposited. The towns usually feature a beauty salon, a local bank, a supermarket, some gas stations and discount stores, such as Dollar General and Family Dollar. Raylan now realizes how far things have fallen in his home state.

Raylan’s father, Arlo, is released from Big Sandy prison a few weeks later and returns to Harlan. Here he soon picks up his old, bad ways, but tries to con Raylan into believing he has gone straight. Arlo takes him by “the old home place” which is the farm house the Givens have lived in for several generations. Like many such houses in Appalachia, it is white frame with two-stories and a “settin’ porch” with rockers.

The Givens family cemetery is right next to it. (The homestead in *The River* is virtually identical to this one (Hirschman 2021).)

With Boyd locked up and his father seeming to behave himself, Raylan is assigned to go undercover in a trailer park to investigate drug dealing (recall Steven Seagal in *Fire Down Below*, Hirschman 2022a). He discovers a fugitive drug dealer hiding out in a trailer with his wife and their two young children. After befriending the wife, Raylan manages to enter the trailer. There he is attacked by the husband and has to shoot him in the leg; Raylan then handcuffs the man. The wife threatens Raylan with a shotgun as her two young children watch the grotesque scene. Raylan tells the woman, "Put your gun down and at least your children will grow up with a mother". She does so. (Unfortunately, this sort of event continues to be a common occurrence in Appalachia).

Another incident also accurately portrays the Appalachian ability to find 'common ground' with one's opponents. Outside a bar in Harlan, Raylan meets up with Johnny Crowder, Boyd's younger brother. Johnny is in the parking lot with two young prostitutes he pimps sitting in the back of his pick-up truck. Raylan asks him for information on some local drug distributors and Johnny says, "Didn't you play baseball in high school here?" Raylan replies, "Yes". Johnny says he will answer the questions, if Raylan can get a hit off his pitching. Raylan swings and misses the first two pitches, but hits a solid run on the third. Now that the two men have "sized each other up", Johnny tells him about a drug dealer to whom Raylan's father owes money. He also informs Raylan that his dad, Arlo, is currently selling the highly addictive OxyContin in town. Raylan now realizes his own father has been 'conning' him.

In another instance of cooperation among enemies, Raylan and Ava have become sexually involved with each other. Raylan is spending the night at her house when a local man breaks in and shoots at them in the bedroom. Raylan, believing the 'hit' was aimed at Ava by the Crowders, visits Boyd in prison. Boyd denies any involvement by himself or his family; he tells Raylan, "My Dad (Bowman Crowder, sr.) will likely kill her for shooting Bowman jr. (her now deceased husband) once he gets out of prison, unless she leaves Harlan, but there's no 'hit' on her by us now." Boyd has a religious discussion with Raylan and then tells him that Raylan, not Ava, was likely the target of the hit man. Raylan realizes this is correct and thanks Boyd for helping him.

We learn that the hitman was actually hired by the Miami drug cartel in retaliation for Raylan's earlier killing of their top man there. Further, the Miami mob has 'turned' one of the local Harlan sheriff's deputies who is now giving them information on Raylan's activities. To get to Raylan, the 'turned' deputy kidnaps Ava; she successfully wrecks the van in which she is being held by the deputy and concurrently saves Raylan's life. The FBI then arrests the crooked deputy. The theme of police corruption is repeated on multiple occasions throughout the series; sheriffs, cops and even US Marshals are relatively easy to purchase in impoverished areas where the money made by selling drugs is many, many times larger than the salaries these officers-of-the-law receive.

A few weeks later, Bowman Crowder, sr. is released from prison. He quickly enlists his nephew Johnny to help him begin a methamphetamine production and distribution business in Eastern Kentucky. Boyd – genuinely sincere in his religious conversion – refuses to go along with their scheme. Shortly thereafter Boyd is also released from prison and goes by to apologize to Ava, "I held you hostage in your own home and messed up your dining room" (This occurred when Raylan had to shoot Boyd at dinner). He also tells Ava, "I have always lusted after you, even when you were my brother's wife; I am sorry he abused you while you were married." He then departs, promising to leave Ava alone.



Caption: Boyd Crowder is the brilliant, somewhat insane, entrepreneur/gangster/preacher version of the Appalachian Man.



Caption: Raylon Givens is the moral, heroic, stand-your-ground sheriff version of the Appalachian Man

Once he is released from prison, Boyd establishes a religious camp in the woods where he preaches to former drug addicts and convicts. Boyd is genuinely sincere in his ministry, and his followers are adhering to their 12-step addiction recovery programs. To atone for their prior drug-related crimes, Boyd and his 'born-again' gang begin blowing up incoming shipments of amphetamines. This angers not only the multiple cartels servicing the area, but also his father and his cousin Johnny, who are very active in the drug trade. They arrive at his religious camp and beat Boyd badly, holding his congregants at gun-point. His father "casts him into the wilderness" and tells him to stay away from Harlan.

When Boyd returns a few hours later, he finds that his father and cousin Johnny have murdered all his congregants and hung them from trees. Boyd buries each of them and says to God, "All these men trusted me and now they are dead." Boyd visits Raylan and tells him, "I sent my lambs to slaughter". (What is truly remarkable about the *Justified* series is its ability to harness the current devastated state of the Appalachian economy to the genuine emotional and religious anchors of the inhabitants. Far from being depraved, unthinking monsters (à la *Wrong Turn* (Hirschman 2022)) Appalachian people are portrayed as fully human beings living under hopelessly distorted conditions).

Later in the series, Boyd's father kidnaps Ava, intending to use her to lure Raylan and then kill both Ava and Raylan. However, Boyd and Raylan, now working together, sneak up on the cabin where his father is keeping Ava. Boyd fully intends to kill his father for murdering his religious group members, telling him, "you killed my spirit", but is spared this act of patricide when the father is slain by members of the Miami cartel who followed them to the cabin.

Next comes one of the most genuinely Appalachian of all conversations in the entire series: Raylan tells Boyd to leave the cabin and save himself, because the Miami cartel is after Raylan, not Boyd. But Boyd refuses, saying, "I ain't leaving, they killed my Daddy". To which Raylan replies, "**You** came here to kill your Daddy". To which Boyd replies, "That's different!" (Readers, if you are from Appalachia, this reasoning makes perfect sense; if you are not, it won't. Here is the answer: If an outsider kills one of your family members, you are 'justified' in killing the outsider; however if a family member attempts to kill you or someone you love deeply (in this case Boyd's congregation and Ava), you are 'justified' in killing them)

The series continues in this same vein for the next five seasons. Throughout the journey, the narrative – while sometimes veering in Quentin Tarantino-esque violence -- remains true to its central focus: the struggle between Good and Evil during the on-going drug epidemic in Appalachia. An instructive contrast is created between Raylan and Boyd along the way. We learn that although Raylan is a law enforcement officer, he periodically abandons enforcing the legal code and instead undertakes actions that he believes are **morally correct**, given the specific set of circumstances.

This gets him reprimanded and/or put on probation on multiple occasions. In fact, in the final episode he is even arrested for a short time. Boyd, over time, becomes something of a 'brother' to Raylan, but in a mirror-image sense. Boyd is willing to kill almost anyone who he believes is betraying him, but never finds the emotional wherewithal to destroy the two people he holds most dear – Ava and Raylan. It is as if he senses that without them in his life, gaining any amount of money or power would never be adequate compensation.

In the final year of the series, two wealthy 'outsiders' arrive with a plan to swindle not only each other, but also most of the remaining population in Harlan County. Ava and Boyd have become wary lovers at this point, with the shared intent of escaping Harlan while they still can.

A young Appalachian woman. Loretta MacCready, has been incorporated into the show for the past few seasons. She has had a disastrous personal history during her short life, but has none the less succeeded in founding and holding onto a thriving marijuana business outside of town. Loretta represents the mirror-image of the young Appalachian woman we met earlier, Katniss Everdeen. She is the sole support of her remaining family, all of whom were/are criminals; she is not a physically powerful warrior as Katniss is, but she is a remarkably savvy businesswoman and has nerves of granite. In her short life, she has experienced so many scenes of violence that she flinches only slightly when confronted with the immediate threat of her own death and – as always – is able to talk her way out of it. As with Boyd Crowder, had she been born to an affluent family "in the outside world", she would likely have become a successful entrepreneur by age 30.

The final episodes center around Ava and Boyd's theft of \$10,000,000 in cash from the 'outside' swindler character, Markum. Their plan is to take the money, escape from Harlan and spend the rest of their lives far, far away. This is foiled when Boyd is arrested and Ava decides to double-cross him by taking half the money and fleeing to the mountains. Her uncle has agreed to help her escape. Ava and her uncle make their way to another relative's cabin, but find he has died, and they have no knowledge of which mountain trail to follow out. Raylan goes into the mountains after Ava and the stolen money. Along the way he finds several out-of-work coal miners who have lost their homes and are now reduced to camping in the forest. He gives them the deed to his family homestead (his own father, Arlo, has recently died) and tells them it is the least he can do to atone for his father's misdeeds to miners decades ago.

Boyd and Raylan encounter each other once more searching for Ava and the stolen money, but manage not to kill one another. Ava is captured by a crooked deputy, but escapes. She is picked up along the road by Raylan who intends to take her to jail. But before he can take her there, there is a final, fabulous shoot-out between Raylan and a crazed assassin sent by 'outsider' Markum to kill him. Raylan's white hat is shot off his head, but the bullet misses his skull; the black-hatted assassin is killed, and Ava escapes in the car. She has finally, finally made it out of Harlan alive.

The series closing episode informs us that four years have passed. We find Raylan back at his earlier job in Miami as a US Marshall. His former wife, Winona, and their daughter live there, as well, but Winona has married a nice businessman from Miami. Raylan has a cordial relationship with the couple and visitation with his child.

In the next scenes, Raylan drives to a small town in Northern California and knocks on the door of a charming house in the countryside. Ava answers the door. She is at first terrified he has come to arrest her, but Raylan assures her that is not his intention. They walk and talk; she takes Raylan to the backyard to meet her four year-old dark-haired boy. His name is Zachariah and he is Boyd's son. Raylan promises Ava he will never tell anyone about her or her child. Raylan next travels back to Big Sandy Prison in Kentucky where he finds Boyd once again leading a congregation in search of forgiveness – they are all clad in orange jumpsuits with the word PRISONER printed on the back.

Raylan and Boyd talk kindly to each other across the glass partition. In order to protect Ava, Raylan tells Boyd that Ava was killed in a car crash three years ago and shows him a (fake) newspaper clipping as evidence. Boyd breaks down and sobs. He did love her dearly. Raylan and Boyd part their ways by saying, "We dug coal together" – an Appalachian bond that was strained, but never broken.

How "Authentic" is *Justified*?

The stories and characters portrayed in the *Justified* series are hyperbolic – e.g., there are no actual Stetson-wearing lawmen in Harlan – or anywhere in Appalachia, for that matter. Analogously, there are no manic, utterly over-the-top, drug-dealing, white supremacist preachers such as Boyd Crowder. But there are actual persons who evoke these characters really living here. Certainly the *Justified* characters are recognizable to other Appalachian-folk as representing traits, both good and bad, existing in the region. The other, background characters are also very similar to those who live here. Indeed, the hairstyles, apparel, vehicles, dwellings, and dialect are highly accurate: the trailer parks, discount supermarkets, white-frame churches, non-matching replacement car doors and truck backs, body physiques, food, beverages and home décor are eerily authentic.

But the most penetrating – and emotionally resonant -- theme running through the 78 episodes of the show is its depiction of the friction between the seeking of personal gain (i.e., money, wealth, power) versus loyalty to family. Indeed, the characteristic that most distinguishes Appalachian culture from that found elsewhere in the United States is the extraordinary grip – sometimes uplifting, sometimes strangling -- of family ties. Appalachian people will continue to support their 'kin' even when these very same people do wrong to them; they will stand by and stand with their relatives 'til Hell freezes over. As the series depicts so movingly, tragically, comically and authentically, loyalty to family is the source of the best and worst behavior in Appalachia.

Despite its strong verisimilitude, however, *Justified* does have some significant deficiencies in representation. First, the show is centered upon law enforcement and law-breaking, so most of its characters are either 'good guys' or 'bad guys'.

Although there are law-breakers in the Appalachian Region, the vast majority of folks who live here are ‘just plain folks’; they go about their lives as teachers, fast food workers, farmers, mechanics, insurance agents, nurses, attorneys, and technicians. They don’t use drugs, don’t sell drugs and don’t want drugs in their communities.

A second inaccuracy is that – although impoverished towns like Harlan, Kentucky are present throughout central Appalachia -- most towns and cities in the region are economically middle class; people live in modern, well-kept homes, and drive modern, well-kept vehicles. Third, most of the landscapes shown in the series are actually from Northern California, where the series was filmed.

Over the past 100 years, motion pictures and television shows have often substituted rural Northern California for Appalachia. (Maybe they were too scared to actually **come here**). The two areas do not look alike! The Rocky Mountains are high, dry, sharp-edged and barren. Conversely, the Appalachian Mountains are low-to-medium in height, rounded softly on the top and flow in green forested waves. They look -- and are -- fertile, healthy and welcoming.

Finally, missing from *Justified* almost entirely is the agricultural soul of Appalachia. Central Appalachia is filled with small and large farms; Hereford and Angus cattle graze in green fields across the entire region. There are acres and acres of rolling, grassy pastures that are harvested two to three times every summer -- resulting in huge, round hay bales lying in wait for winter. There are miles and miles of green fields bursting with sweet and feed corn. There are thousands of wonderfully weathered barns strewn across these same green fields. Sadly, these are absent from *Justified*. The result is an impoverished impression of our land that belies its wonderful fertility both in Spirit and Nature. But those whose families have lived here for generations know the truth.



Caption: A young Appalachian Woman: *Justified*

CLOSING COMMENTS

The mountains of Appalachia are several million years old. They have been occupied by humans for only the past 15,000 years or so. Put into this time frame, the present series of studies is but a miniscule atom in the universe of Appalachian history. But perhaps it will help those who dwell outside the Region to better understand the culture and history of those who live here. We have been both represented and misrepresented over the past century in a wide set of cultural media – novels, motion pictures, cartoons, and television shows. Some have been flattering, e.g., the courage and strength of character found in *Sargent York* (Hirschman 2021a). Others have been humiliating and debasing, e.g., the mountain monsters of *Deliverance* and *Wrong Turn* (Hirschman 2022b). But as we continue our journey through the Twenty-first Century, it is my fervent hope that those who read this set of studies will come away with a deeper appreciation for the **women** of Appalachia.

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