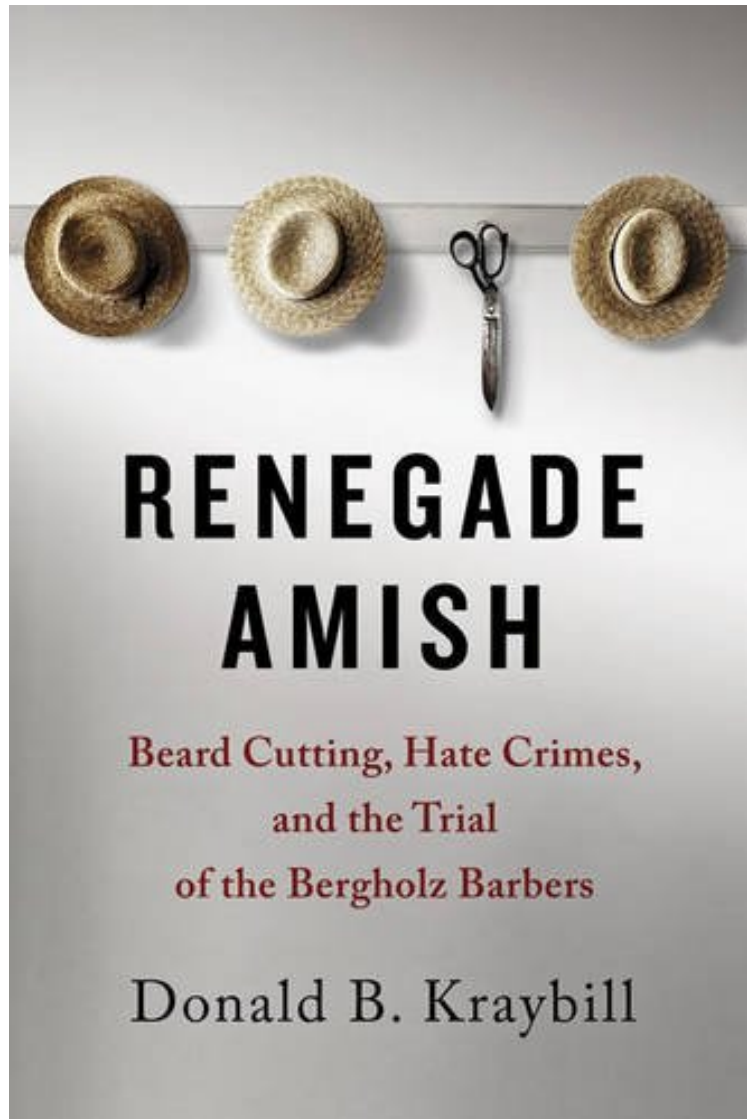


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Renegade Amish: Beard Cutting, Hate Crimes, and the Trial of the Bergholz Barbers

Donald B. Kraybill

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Renegade Amish:
Beard Cutting, Hate Crimes, and the Trial of the Bergholz Barbers:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An extremely important investigative book about Sam Mullet and his Amish cult.By OhioInvestigatorThis is a very important historical book about a very unique situation: an Amish

cult. Professor Krabill is a world expert on the Amish and this book certainly proves it. When you start reading this book, you won't be able to put it down. Professor Krabill has written many books about the Amish. Check out "Amish Grace", available on .0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... ancestry myself I must say this author has an amazing grasp of Amish life and culture. By Kindle Customer Having Amish ancestry myself I must say this author has an amazing grasp of Amish life and culture. Seldom have I found such an accurate narrative especially by an "outsider". He does a great job of explaining the differences of these "Renegade Amish" and the mainstream Old Order groups. He has also done an excellent job of weaving a lot of potentially boring detail surrounding this account and the subsequent court trials into a readable format. If you want to know what really happened or just wish to understand the Amish better this is a must read! 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Kraybill is a slick salesman selling a product. By easyEZ Krabill does the ultimate hack job here. It isn't that he doesn't know his subject, but that he is so brazen in promoting his agenda. Kraybill's agenda is to promote Amish culture. The conventional Amish narrative is ninety five percent his creation. The issues emanating from Bergholz threaten the carefully crafted image Kraybill has created. The Amish are like a product to him. Not unlike a fortune five hundred company's media spokesperson, Kraybill's job is to protect his product. In this book, whenever he is referring to the Bergholz Amish there is no innuendo he abstains from. No biased, unsubstantiated and prejudiced hearsay he doesn't trot out. But aside from that, he uses reason and logic based on conventional mores to describe the flaws and foibles of the Bergholz Amish. What is so revealing in this is that, in all of his other works on the Amish, he never does that. Moral relativism rules the day when he is writing about the "good" Amish. He even literally uses the term "good Amish" in the book. What makes his work so dangerous is, when it comes to the "good" Amish, there is no contradiction he won't obscure or obfuscate. The "good" Amish forgive at Nickel Mines, but they also write the judge in the beard cutting case asking him to give Sam Mullet a life sentence, and to Kraybill, this presents no conflict. I specifically asked him how he reconciles this dichotomy at a public meeting and he didn't engage the question at all. Kraybill's bias makes it impossible to engage Amish issues. All of the issues related to the Bergholz beard cutting incidents are inextricably Amish issues. Sam's power as bishop. His followers gullible acquiescence. The quest for a pure church. The us against them mentality. The ignorance and superstition that both enabled the malaise at Bergholz and hampers a solution, these issues didn't exclusively arise at Bergholz, but are inherently issues in the larger Amish culture as well. The terror Kraybill portrays the Amish experiencing wasn't exclusively about physically being harmed. This is evidenced in the teenaged girl running onto the scene of the crime and making demands of the perpetrators. If the perps would've been wreaking true terror on the community that girl would've more likely been quaking in fear at the furthest corner of her closet. The terror, shame and embarrassment wasn't exclusively about having ones hair shorn, but the understanding that these incidents revealed something was terribly wrong in the Amish world. What made the beard cutting incidents so terrifying was that they arose out of the fertile soil of the Amish communities most revered ideals. A strong authoritarian leader. A docile subservient laity. An emphasis on "holding back" and adhering to the old ways. Moving to an isolated rural local and trying to get things right this time. These ideals are sacred in the Amish world. At least they were prior to the beard cutting incidents. The Amish tend to see the non Amish world as being where the danger lies. At Bergholz the danger arose from a strong exemplar of their most cherished ideals. That is what the terror, shame, and embarrassment were about. And to make it all worse, the Amish were at a loss to address the issues at Bergholz. Bergholz was their Achilles Heel. The disease was arising out of what they think of as the antidote. This is where Kraybill got his cue. The Amish needed to be saved. From themselves. But scapegoating the bad Amish may not be the solution. Cutting out the cancer may not cure the patient. Just like the war on drugs didn't deter drug use, a heavy handed prosecution of the Bergholz barbers may just entrench the malaise at Bergholz. Using the government to fix, save, or solve this intrinsically Amish problem, may be a far greater deviation from Amish norms and of much greater consequence to the rest of the Amish, than anything that happened at Bergholz. Kraybill though, isn't plagued with doubts on where to draw the line at Bergholz. He knows who the good Amish are and who the bad ones are. He actually does his job well. He would make a very good corporate media spokesperson. I just don't think his efforts are serving the Amish well.

On the night of September 6, 2011, terror called at the Amish home of the Millers. Answering a late-night knock from what appeared to be an Amish neighbor, Mrs. Miller opened the door to her five estranged adult sons, a daughter, and their spouses. It wasn't a friendly visit. Within moments, the men, wearing headlamps, had pulled their frightened father out of bed, pinned him into a chair, and ignoring his tearful protests sheared his hair and beard, leaving him razor-burned and dripping with blood. The women then turned on Mrs. Miller, yanking her prayer cap from her head and shredding it before cutting off her waist-long hair. About twenty minutes later, the attackers fled into the darkness, taking their parents hair as a trophy. Four similar beard-cutting attacks followed, disfiguring nine victims and generating a tsunami of media coverage. While pundits and late-night talk shows made light of the attacks and poked fun at the Amish way of life, FBI investigators gathered evidence about troubling activities in a maverick Amish community near Bergholz, Ohio and the volatile behavior of its leader, Bishop Samuel Mullet. Ten men and six women from the Bergholz community were arrested and found guilty a year later of 87 felony charges involving conspiracy,

lying, and obstructing justice. In a precedent-setting decision, all of the defendants, including Bishop Mullet and his two ministers, were convicted of federal hate crimes. It was the first time since the 2009 passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act that assailants had been found guilty for religiously motivated hate crimes within the same faith community. *Renegade Amish* goes behind the scenes to tell the full story of the Bergholz barbers: the attacks, the investigation, the trial, and the aftermath. In a riveting narrative reminiscent of a true crime classic, scholar Donald B. Kraybill weaves a dark and troubling story in which a series of violent Amish-on-Amish attacks shattered the peace of these traditionally nonviolent people, compelling some of them to install locks on their doors and arm themselves with pepper spray. The country's foremost authority on Amish society, Kraybill spent six months assisting federal prosecutors with the case against the Bergholz defendants and served as an expert witness during the trial. Informed by trial transcripts and his interviews of ex-Bergholz Amish, relatives of Bishop Mullet, victims of the attacks, Amish leaders, and the jury foreman, *Renegade Amish* delves into the factors that transformed the Bergholz Amish from a typical Amish community into one embracing revenge and retaliation. Kraybill gives voice to the terror and pain experienced by the victims, along with the deep shame that accompanied their disfigurement, a factor that figured prominently in the decision to apply the federal hate crime law. Built on Kraybill's deep knowledge of Amish life and his contacts within many Amish communities, *Renegade Amish* highlights one of the strangest and most publicized sagas in contemporary Amish history.

"An insiders perspective into how a small community of Amish people, nurtured in a religious tradition of nonviolence and forgiveness, transformed into a culture of revenge and retaliation." (Publishers Weekly)"Digs deep into a story that, for all its seeming quaintness, has the power to both rock the underpinnings of hate crime legislation and to break the human heart." (Salon)"Kraybill tells this fascinating story clearly, and has the knowledge and contacts to penetrate a tight-lipped community." (The Times)"An acknowledged expert on Amish life and culture, [Kraybill] explains the religious and social background of the people involved and successfully explains the legal tangle that has not yet completely played out. This book will be of interest to those who study the intersection of law and religion or the sociology of closed groups like the Amish." (Journal of Church and State)"A thorough, evenhanded, and accessible volume that provides keen insight on Amish culture." (Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies)"Captures a fascinating chapter of legal history and Amish history... [This] is a tale begging to be told, and Kraybill proves worthy of the task." (The Mennonite Quarterly)"Whether you want to learn more about the Amish in general, the Bergholz Amish in particular, are interested in the formation and maintenance of NRMs, interactions between religious groups and the law, or just want to read an informative book that is exceedingly well researched and written, balanced, and engaging, *Renegade Amish* is most definitely worth reading." (Nova Religio)"The apparent dissonance in these opening narratives and the peculiar nature of Amish acting violently to shear helpless victims sets the scene for Kraybill's fascinating exploration of the Bergholz Amish... The case has taken on new significance as the court system works to decide how people will be prosecuted under the Shepherd Byrd act and how broadly hate crimes can be defined." (Mennonite World)"By shedding light on the ways in which the Bergholz group perverted Amishness, Donald Kraybill, the leading scholar of Amish society, demonstrates his ability to sensitively analyze and explain Anabaptist culture to a broad audience. There are no other books that tackle this subject. As enthralling as true crime, *Renegade Amish* will also appeal to Anabaptist, religious, and legal studies scholars." (Karen M. Johnson-Weiner, coauthor of *The Amish*)"In his deeply researched and vividly written account, Donald Kraybill not only chillingly reconstructs what happened during a series of Amish-on-Amish beard-cutting attacks that culminated in a precedent-setting federal criminal trial, he also tackles the how and why one group of Amish was transformed into a band of renegades." (Dick Lehr, author of *Black Mass: Whitey Bulger, the FBI, and a Devil's Deal*)"Donald Kraybill's book is a lively, beautifully written account of the beard-cutting attacks in the Amish community of eastern Ohio. With sensitivity and impeccable scholarship, Kraybill sheds light on why this happened and what lessons about religious freedom this strange case holds for the Amish and for us all." (Charles C. Haynes, Director, Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute)From the Back CoverOn the night of September 6, 2011, terror called at the Amish home of the Millers. Answering a late-night knock from what appeared to be an Amish neighbor, Mrs. Miller opened the door to her five estranged adult sons, a daughter, and their spouses. It wasn't a friendly visit. Within moments, the men, wearing headlamps, had pulled their frightened father out of bed, pinned him into a chair, and ignoring his tearful protests sheared his hair and beard, leaving him razor-burned and dripping with blood. The women then turned on Mrs. Miller, yanking her prayer cap from her head and shredding it before cutting off her waist-long hair. About twenty minutes later, the attackers fled into the darkness, taking their parents' hair as a trophy. Four similar beard-cutting attacks followed, disfiguring nine victims and generating a tsunami of media coverage. While pundits and late-night talk shows made light of the attacks and poked fun at the Amish way of life, FBI investigators gathered evidence about troubling activities in a maverick Amish community near Bergholz, Ohio and the volatile behavior of its leader, Bishop Samuel Mullet. Ten men and six women from the Bergholz community were arrested and found guilty a year later of 87 felony charges involving conspiracy, lying, and obstructing justice. In a precedent-setting decision, all of the defendants, including Bishop Mullet and his two ministers, were convicted of federal hate crimes. It was the first time

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About the Author Donald B. Kraybill is a Distinguished College Professor and senior fellow emeritus at Elizabethtown College's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of more than a dozen books on Amish culture, including *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, *The Amish*, and *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*.