



# The Bobbed Haired Bandit: A Story of Crime and Celebrity in 1920s New York (Mortalis)

*Stephen Duncombe, Andrew Mattson*

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On January 5, 1924, a well-dressed young woman, accompanied by a male companion, walked into a Brooklyn grocery, pulled a “baby automatic” from the pocket of her fur coat, emptied the cash register, and escaped into the night. Dubbed “the Bobbed Haired Bandit” by the press, the petite thief continued her escapades in the months that followed, pulling off increasingly spectacular robberies, writing taunting notes to police officials, and eluding the biggest manhunt in New York City history. When laundress Celia Cooney was finally caught in Florida and brought back to New York, media attention grew to a fever pitch. Crowds gathered at the courts and jails where she appeared, the public clamored to know her story, and newspapers and magazines nationwide obliged by publishing sensational front-page articles.

Celia Cooney was a celebrity, a symbol of the lawlessness of Prohibition-era New York City, a cultural icon of the Jazz Age. *The Bobbed Haired Bandit* captures what William Randolph Hearst’s newspaper called “the strangest, weirdest, most dramatic, most tragic human interest story ever told.”

A wild ride . . . a thumping good read . . . It’s true crime, it’s top-notch American history, it’s flat-out fun—grab it.”

—Caleb Carr, author of *The Alienist*

“Riveting . . . an absolute winner.”

—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“With crisp prose and a lively selection of newspaper photographs, headlines, cartoons, and excerpts, authors Stephen Duncombe and Andrew Mattson tell a story of an outlaw couple and, through them, the story of an era.”

—*The Boston Globe*

“A phenomenally complete work of historical literature: gripping, suspenseful, fast-moving, kaleidoscopic, gimlet-eyed, analytic, penetrating, sympathetic, and oddly tender.”

—Luc Sante, author of *Low Life*

“Fascinating . . . [a] historical account that reads like Doctorow.”

—*Crimespree Magazine*

“Brings alive the darker side of flapper-era Manhattan.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*



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