

## 'POPCORN' SUTTON DIES

**PARROTTSVILLE, Tenn.** — Legendary Haywood County moonshiner Marvin “Popcorn” Sutton took his own life because he couldn’t stand the thought of going to prison, his wife said today.



Pam Sutton said she found her husband Monday afternoon dead of carbon monoxide poisoning outside their home in Coker County, Tenn.

“He got his letter to report Friday, and he just couldn’t handle it,” she said. “We tried everything we could to leave him on house arrest, and they wouldn’t do it. So I thank the federal court for this.

“And he was really sick. He was depressed. I didn’t know he was that depressed.”

Sutton, 62, spent much of his life making moonshine, a craft that brought him fame and a string of criminal convictions dating back to the 1970s. He was facing 18 months in federal prison on moonshining and weapons charges and had told a judge at his sentencing he was in poor health and would rather die at home than in jail.

Pam Sutton said she went into town to run errands and couldn’t find her husband at their house when she returned. She found him at the rear of their property inside his beloved old Ford Fairlane, which was running, she said.

“He called it his three-jug car because he gave three jugs of liquor for it,” she said. “He had painted it John Deere green and it had yellow wheels. He had drove it to California and back.

“He was a good man, he really was.”

Federal authorities arrested Sutton a year ago on charges of running a moonshine operation that produced hundreds of gallons of liquor.

A judge in January sentenced him to 18 months in prison, rejecting arguments that Sutton had learned his lesson and was too ill to serve time.

“I’d like to die at home instead of in a penitentiary,” Sutton said in court at the sentencing.

Nearly 1,500 people had signed petitions asking for leniency in his sentence.

Born near Maggie Valley, N.C., Sutton was revered by some for preserving a dying piece of mountain history.

His reputation grew beyond the mountains through a book and film he produced about his craft and Internet and cable TV documentaries in which he demonstrated how to make his famous liquor.

Sutton evoked curiosity from people around the world, drawing tourists to places like the Misty Mountain Ranch Bed and Breakfast in Maggie Valley, which has a suite dedicated to the moonshiner.

“He made a very big impact on the whole world because people have called me from all different countries, all over the U.S., asking for his books and tapes and anything you could tell him about Popcorn,” said Misty Mountain co-owner Karen Hession.

Hession and her husband had been friends of Sutton for more than 10 years.

Hession said he captured the spirit of the mountains, but there was also a gentle side to the man that those close to him knew well.

“He was a very kind, thoughtful person,” she said. “I wish everybody knew him like we did.”

## MOONSHINER 'POPCORN' SUTTON GIVEN A QUIET MOUNTAIN FUNERAL

***Wife: Moonshiner depressed over jail time***

By [Clarke Morrison](#) • March 19, 2009 09:58 AM

**PARROTTSVILLE, Tenn.** — Legendary Haywood County moonshiner Marvin “Popcorn” Sutton was laid to rest Wednesday morning in a private burial service. His body was placed in a grave next to his mother and father in a small cemetery in the mountains.



Sutton took his own life because he couldn't stand the thought of going to prison, his wife said Tuesday.

Pam Sutton said she found her husband Monday afternoon dead of carbon monoxide poisoning outside their home in Cocke County, Tenn.

“He got his letter to report Friday, and he just couldn't handle it,” she said. “We tried everything we could to leave him on house arrest, and they wouldn't do it. So I thank the federal court for this.

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Costner-Maloy Funeral Home in Newport, Tenn., is in charge of burial arrangements.

Pam Sutton said there won't be a funeral for her husband because that's the way he wanted it. "He said that's the way his family had done it for years, just growing up in the mountains," she said. "I'm going to respect his wishes. I'm just going to take him and bury him."

Born near Maggie Valley, N.C., Sutton was revered by some for preserving a dying piece of mountain history. His reputation grew beyond the mountains through a book and film he produced about his craft and Internet and cable TV documentaries in which he demonstrated how to make his liquor.

Federal authorities arrested Sutton a year ago on charges of running a moonshine operation that produced hundreds of gallons of liquor. A judge in January sentenced him to 18 months.

Sutton's daughter, Sky Sutton, wrote a book titled, "Daddy Moonshine: The Story of Marvin 'Popcorn' Sutton." Sutton, who lives in Massachusetts, called the book a "souvenir of my explorations into my own family, traditions and land." She finished the book the day her father died.

"My father was a pirate, a patriot and a randy philosopher all rolled into one," Sutton said in an e-mail.

Plans for a memorial service have not been completed, according to Costner-Maloy Funeral Home, which is located in Newport, Tenn. Online condolences for the family may be sent to [cstnrmlly@charterinternet.com](mailto:cstnrmlly@charterinternet.com).

<http://popcornsutton.blogspot.com/>

## **POPCORN SUTTON**

Everything you ever wanted to know about moonshiner Popcorn Sutton compliments of his daughter Sky Sutton.

***Wednesday, April 01, 2009***

### **to order "Daddy Moonshine"**

"Daddy Moonshine" IS AVAILABLE. Books are \$27/per copy- this includes shipping and handling. So far I'm doing it old-school via snail mail. Paypal makes me nervous.

Please make check payable to Sky Sutton and mail to:  
P. O. Box 331  
Northampton, MA  
01060

Please include your address so I know where to send it and allow up to 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Cheers,  
Sky Sutton

<http://www.ajlambert.com>