

### the crime business

John Palumbo isn't your average businessman, Palumbo, owner of the Sterling Group, calls himself the "Donald Trump of the South" and likes to invest in property rights-like Johnny Cash songs and royalties from the "Autobiography of Malcom X" (co-written by "Roots" author Alex Haley). One of his latest investments is "America's Dumbest Criminals", a TV show he plans to produce in Jacksonville. Folio Weekly talked with the eccentric entrepreneur about a wise investment in dumb criminals.



John Palumbo

that highlights the stupidity that goes on in the real world.

I told somebody I got the only TV show that you don't want to be on.

**F.W.:** Could "Dumbest Criminals" put Jacksonville on the map?

J.P.: The production of this show is just one of the small things that goes into the mix to make Jacksonville what it is, and I'm glad to be a Jacksonvillian.

**F.W.:** What about "The Autobiography of Malcolm X"?

J.P.: After 35 years, it's still one of the top-selling autobiographies in the world....This book has continued to sell tens of thousands of copies for years...Working with [Alex Haley's widow, Myran] Haley, whom I have become affiliated with, has been an enjoyable experience....Understanding her role with her husband, just that whole time of African-American experience, learning it through her. And I'm working on a couple of extremely big projects with her right now that will make their way to national TV.

**F.W.:** You're a businessman. Does that make you a smart criminal?

J.P.: Hmmmm, I don't know how to answer that one. I prefer to think that I'm a businessman that does his homework.

**Folio Weekly:** Why did you pick up "America's Dumbest Criminals"?

**John Palumbo:** This is just one of the many things I have acquired over the past few years in the way of literary and intellectual properties....just another one of the anomalies that came across my desk...It was an extremely good opportunity.

**F.W.:** How's the show doing so far?

J.P.: There are 104 episodes that have already been produced. We're in syndication now, just like "Seinfeld" or "I Love Lucy," and we've now opened up our international distribution which is going extremely well...We just did a big contract with Sky One in the U.K. Now those guys love American stuff like this. It's a show