

MANUFACTURING SCOTT TORCED CO TWIST & SMOKE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE COALITION

THE NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS ASSOCIATIONS COALITION



*“Upon the conduct
of each depends
the fate of all.”*

*Free will
is not
an option.*

SPRING, 2021 VOL. 23, NO. 1

nnoac.com

2020/2021 NNOAC EXECUTIVE BOARD



The Coalition

Volume 23, No. 1 - Spring, 2021

Editor-in-Chief
William Butka
wbutka@nnoac.com



Ron Brooks
Executive Director
California Narcotics Officers' Association (Retired)
rbrooks@nnoac.com



Bob Bushman
President
Minnesota State Association of Narcotics Investigators
(202) 664-9244
bbushman@nnoac.com



Eric Brown
Vice President
Ohio HIDTA
(614) 255-4195 - Office
(740) 808-4189 - Cell
ebrown@nnoac.com



Phil Little
Treasurer
North Carolina Narcotic Officers Association
(910) 876-7871
plittle@nnoac.com



Tony Kestner
Secretary
Illinois Drug Enforcement Officers Association
tkestner@nnoac.com



Ernie Martinez
Member At Large
Colorado Drug Investigators Association
(303) 471-8100
emartinez@nnoac.com



Peter F. Boyce
General Counsel
NNOAC
(770) 921-7048
pboyce@nnoac.com

United We Stand!

Engage in the dialog.

Image Credits in the Issue:

Front Cover: Police officer roll call by Bowling Green Kentucky Police Department and back cover by Kentucky State Police

ID 172871596 © Cristabern | Dreamstime.com

ID 139281885 © Tinnakorn Jorruang | Dreamstime.com

ID 84803573 © Sanchai Rattakunchorn | Dreamstime.com

ID 37344553 © Mycteria | Dreamstime.com

Article editor
Patricia Kohl

Publication Design
jessica.manley@jmpublishing.us

Inside this Issue

Table listing contents: President's Message (3), 2021 Virtual Meeting Invitations (4), Brooks, Bawden, Moore (6), AKA Callahan's Corner (8), Ever-Evolving Opioid Threat (12), Regional News (14), MW HIDTA - Mailing Meth (28), BOYCE: Another Tool for Officers (33), STAMM: The Other Pandemic (35), ThermoScientific (37), MW HIDTA - Executive Summary (40), The Swedish Section (43), Fatalities Report NLEOMF (47), RISS Article (48)



The Coalition is published twice per year. Submit articles, photos, region reports, kudos, busts and other items of interest to: wbutka@nnoac.com

ARCHIVES

of past issues are available online
www.nnoac.com

President's Message

By Bob Bushman



February, 2021

The year 2020 will not be soon forgotten. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest fraught with violent protests, and a contentious election, the new year starts with a lot of uncertainty about how our Country will move ahead under a new Administration. I do not remember a time when there have been so many critical issues at the forefront, with people so divided about how to resolve them.

For our NNOAC members and partners, the challenges are many – and difficult. On both the federal and state levels, legislative initiatives regarding drug decriminalization and legalization; criminal justice reform debate, laced with anti-police rhetoric; pressure to “defund the police”; and indecision about the use of emerging technology for public safety purposes

will keep the NNOAC and many of our law enforcement partners busy, looking for ways to have a positive impact on those policy discussions. And, in each of those high-profile issues, some leaders have shown their preference to follow emotions and misguided perceptions, rather than the facts, in forming their policy decisions.

While COVID has certainly taken the national stage, the unrelenting and rapidly expanding drug abuse epidemic has all but been ignored. While the daily focus is on the number of COVID-related deaths, the increasing annual death toll caused by drug abuse (over 80,000 Americans in 2020) goes relatively unnoticed and rarely gets any mention in the news. Yet, as bad as it has become, some leaders and policy experts still want to legalize and normalize drug use. One only needs to look at the recent legislation in Oregon to see how far the drug sympathizer lobby is willing to go.

Criminal Justice Reform will also be a prevalent issue in national and state policy debates. It is alarming and disheartening to hear people in leadership positions saying that law enforcement and our justice system are systemically racist and biased. They are not. Many reform advocates want to hold law enforcement accountable for all the failures and inequities that they perceive in the criminal justice system, while turning a blind eye and deaf ears to prosecutors who will not

prosecute law breakers; courts that will not hold offenders accountable; and the treatment, reentry, and social programs that are failing and ineffective.

Ignoring criminal behavior is not a solution. It does not make our communities safer. Making excuses for those that break our laws, not holding offenders accountable, and promoting criminal entitlement have had a devastating effect, as evidenced by the surge in violent crime in several cities. And, while some vocal critics of the police and the media are laser-focused on deaths during encounters with law enforcement, many of those same people are absent and say nothing about the alarming increase in homicides throughout the country that are caused by violent criminals and repeat offenders that some reform advocates seek to protect. It is not the police who are responsible for rising crime rates.

Despite what some will have you believe, the whole criminal justice system is not broken. Can the system be improved? Sure, it can. That is something that the NNOAC and our partners have always been advocates for. While it is no secret that law enforcement agencies are often stretched beyond their capacities, we know that there are things that can be done to make policing more effective and that will increase public safety.

Training for law enforcement is critical, and there is always the need



President Bob Bushman

Many challenges, cont.

to develop and fund new programs that will help to keep our citizens and communities safe. Access to innovative equipment and vital services is an important part of effective policing, too, but many law enforcement agency budgets struggle to keep up with the costs, especially when it comes to technology. And as always, grant programs like Byrne JAG and COPS, and other programs like RISS and HIDTA, require constant efforts to ensure that they are funded adequately so that they can continue to provide the important services and resources that law enforcement depends upon.

Given the current environment, I see us playing more defense than offense, trying to keep what we have. Anything new is likely to come with requirements by the progressive criminal justice reform folks aimed at trying to mold law enforcement into their version of “public safety”.

It has been disappointing to watch many of the events that unfolded during the past year. Violent protests and riots, the political discourse, unabashed media bias, and finally, the assault on our Nation’s Capitol did nothing to make our country better or stronger. One of the biggest disappointments has been the failure of some of our leaders to work for most of the American people who respect the law, work hard, and pay taxes to help make our country

better. Instead, they seem more intent on catering to a few vocal, special interest groups that seek to change history and the upward course of our great country that has provided so much opportunity, safety, and security to so many people all around the world.

As we always have, the NNOAC will work with the new Administration and our elected leaders to find effective solutions to some complicated problems. As we do, I can assure you that we will stick to our principles. We will speak up for the citizens and communities that we protect. We cannot and will not support policies and laws that will expose more of our good citizens or their families to harm. They have suffered enough of that already.

And a parting note: In the place of our annual 2021 NNOAC DC Delegate’s Conference, which we canceled due to the uncertainty about COVID restrictions, we will be hosting a virtual NNOAC Delegate’s Meeting on March 18, 2021. An announcement and tentative agenda are included in the current issue of our NNOAC magazine, *The Coalition*, and the meeting information can also be found on our NNOAC Website at www.nnoac.com. Please join us at the virtual meeting.

NNOAC Winter Virtual Meeting

The National Narcotic Officers’ Associations’ Coalition invites you to attend its 2021 Virtual Business Meeting and Conference to update state narcotic associations, partner organizations, and others on the activities of the Coalition, Congress and the Administration. Additionally, we will hear from key Federal partners on important initiatives and issues affecting the law enforcement community.

IMPORTANT: Please RSVP for **each** of the meetings you plan on attending. You **must** RSVP separately for the Business Meeting and for the Conference. If you plan on attending both meetings, you must RSVP for each separately as you will receive separate login information for each meeting.

March 18, 2021

NNOAC Annual Delegates Business Meeting Registration

1:00 – 2:00 pm (EST)

Please RSVP here

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMucuCtqjwH9H-fzhfLQQ0Vcr9L7g6YnnV>

*Business meeting intended for NNOAC members and Associate members

NNOAC Annual Conference Registration

2:00 – 4:30 pm (EST)

Please RSVP here

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_z2s0BmLwTMeXj3Vo88hpmw



NNOAC Winter Virtual Meeting

Agenda: **Subject to change*

Annual NNOAC Delegates Business Meeting: 1:00 – 2:00 pm (EST)

- Approval of Minutes & Agenda
- Old Business
- New Business
 - o Nominations for NNOAC Vice President and Treasurer - 2-year terms
 - o Appointment of Regional Directors
 - o State Association Roundtable Discussion
 - o 2022 Meeting location and dates

Annual NNOAC Conference: 2:00 – 4:30 pm (EST)

• **Bob Bushman**, President, NNOAC
President's Report

• **Ron Brooks**, Executive Director, NNOAC
Executive Director's Report

• **Ben Bawden**, Brooks Bawden Moore, LLC
Legislative Report

• **Drug Enforcement Administration** (Invited)
Emerging Trends and Drug Trafficking Issues

• **Office of National Drug Control Policy** (Invited)
ONDCP Policy Updates

• **Department of Homeland Security** (Invited)
Update from DHS

• **Department of Justice** (Invited)
Update from DOJ

• **Kevin Sabet**, President, Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)
Marijuana Legalization Efforts

• **Regional Information Sharing Systems**
RISS Projects and Resources

• **National HIDTA Directors Association**
HIDTA Update



For questions or comments, please email NNOAC President Bob Bushman at bbushman@nnoac.com.

About NNOAC: *The National Narcotic Officers Associations Coalition (www.nnoac.com) represents 40 state narcotic officer associations and over 60,000 law enforcement officers advocating for America's narcotic officers on national*



BROOKS BAWDEN MOORE

LLC

A new year has ushered in a new Congress, new Administration, and new priorities. What exactly the 117th Congress will bring to the law enforcement community is anyone's guess, but we do know that the energy that pushed policing and criminal justice reform proposals to the forefront has not gone away. These issues will once again be among the top priorities for consideration in Washington. With Democrats controlling the White House, Senate, and House, even by the slimmest margins in Congress, the tone has changed, and many criminal justice reform ideas enjoy bipartisan support.

In the previous edition of *The Coalition*, we wrote about the leading policing reform proposal that moved its way through the House of Representatives in 2020, called the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. This expansive bill addressed a number of policing reforms, including mandatory independent investigations for officer involved shootings, mandatory use-of-force reporting to the federal government, transparency in officer misconduct records, specific training requirements, accreditation standards, a ban on no-knock warrants, restrictions to the 1033 program, and the elimination of qualified immunity for law enforcement officers. Some of the provisions Under the Justice in Policing Act directly affect narcotic enforcement, included a prohibition of no-knock warrants in drug cases and rescinding approved transfers of surplus military equipment under the Department of Defense 1033 program

for counterdrug activities. Additionally, the legislation ties the receipt of Byrne JAG and COPS grants to compliance with certain use- of-force and other policies. Jurisdictions that fail to comply would either lose grant eligibility altogether or would lose a percentage of their grant funds.

This legislation failed to move in the Senate last year, but it will be the starting point for discussions on policing in Congress this year. One difference from last year will be the rhetoric on “defunding the police.” Many observers cited that type of rhetoric as a cause for Democrats losing seats in the House during the 2020 elections. So while overt discussions of reducing funding for police may dissipate, funding for law enforcement through the grant programs are the main leverage the Federal government has to affect state and local decision making and will continue to be targeted during these debates.

With COVID-19, deep partisan divisions, and the 2020 elections, the fiscal year 2021 appropriations process was slow to get started and got bogged down over disagreements on funding priorities and policy riders. In the end, both sides were able to come together to pass an omnibus appropriations bill to fund all aspects of the Federal government. The final spending bill did not include the policing reform proposals that were in the House-passed funding bill, but it did include report language blessing the creation of a policing reform task force at the Justice Department. Details on this task force have not been clarified yet, but we anticipate it will



pick up on many of the themes from the Task Force on 21st Century Policing that published a comprehensive report during President Obama's Administration.

Funding for key programs such as Byrne JAG, RISS, and HIDTA continues to be an advocacy focus for NNOAC. The FY 2021 Omnibus Appropriations bill included a slight increase for the Byrne JAG program (minus carveouts), a \$2 million increase for the RISS program, and a \$5 million increase for the HIDTA program. Most significantly, Congress continues to recognize the importance of keeping the HIDTA program within ONDCP.

Marijuana policy will be a priority in the new Congress. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) announced in early February that it will be a priority to pass legislation that ends the prohibition of marijuana and assist those who have been affected by the "War on Drugs." Legislation to permit the marijuana industry access to banking services, to remove marijuana from the federal Controlled Substances Act, and to provide for the expungement of certain marijuana-related offenses from people's records will likely be included in a single marijuana reform bill.

Tragically, over the past year with COVID 19 raging and lockdowns occurring, we saw a dramatic spike in overdose deaths. With over 81,000 individuals losing their lives to overdoses just last year, addressing this will continue to be a priority in Congress. We anticipate the new Administration will focus less on drug enforcement and more on treatment and recovery programs, while Congress is expected to consider CARA 2.0 legislation that follows-up on previous legislation by providing further resources to address the opioid epidemic by focusing resources on addiction recovery. Additionally, we anticipate legislation to be introduced addressing the methamphetamine problem that continues to be a major scourge in many areas of the country. These bills will declare meth to be an emerging threat, bringing additional federal resources to tackle the problem, and will also target the market for precursor chemicals.

Intense scrutiny of law enforcement use of certain investigative technologies will continue, especially given the spotlight on policing actions and techniques. We anticipate legislation that will target facial recognition technology, including legislation that would outright ban its use by Federal agencies and prohibit the use of grant funds for its purchase by state and local law enforcement. The debate on this technology that is occurring in multiple states and cities highlights a significant misunderstanding of how the technology is actually being used by law enforcement to produce positive investigative outcomes. The NNOAC continues to play an active role in pushing back against

proposals like these, and it is important for each state association to play an active role at the state and local levels.

We expect to see proposals in Congress and the new administration to reform civil asset forfeiture and the 1033 program. With leadership changes at the Senate Judiciary Committee, we anticipate Congress will once again explore significant changes to the asset forfeiture program. Despite greater accountability measures implemented by President Trump's administration, there are many who see this as an opportunity to make further fundamental changes to the program. Additionally, we have already seen the new Administration reimpose limits on the 1033 program that were put in place during the Obama Administration but abandoned by the Trump Administration.

The next couple of years will have the potential to shape the law enforcement profession and the criminal justice system in dramatic ways. Drug enforcement will be a top target of many reformers, with some blaming the so-called "War on Drugs" as a key source of the injustices facing our society. It will be crucial for you to become engaged and share your input and experience with local, state, and Federal policy makers as key reform discussions take place. We encourage you to write to your local, state, and Federal representatives to express the importance of the programs that are important for your work and for your safety. ***Please reach out to us if you would like more information on messaging or key contacts.***

The Objectively Reasonable Officer

AKA Callahan's Corner

By John M. "Mike" Callahan, Jr.

Originally published on Policeone.com

With permission to reprint given to NNOAC

by Policeone.com

[Link to article online](#)

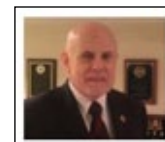
[Mike Callahan](#)

WHEN SUPERVISION OF CRIMINAL INFORMANTS GOES SOUTH

Failure to manage confidential criminal informants can lead to personal and municipal civil liability, and even criminal prosecution of officers

Sep 24, 2019

Each informant should have his or her file that contains mandated suitability and criminal background checks. (Photo/Pixabay)



Jonathan Santiago, Nel Sothy and Mihran Mosko sued the Lowell Police Department (LPD), Detective Thomas Lafferty and the City of Lowell, Massachusetts, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (federal civil rights statute).^[1]

The plaintiffs alleged that the City of Lowell, through its superintendent of police, adopted a “custom” of failing to supervise the operation of criminal informants. Moreover, this failure to supervise amounted to “deliberate indifference” to the “known and obvious consequences” (i.e., violations of constitutional rights) suffered by the plaintiffs to the suit.^[2]

The LPD had a special unit of detectives, known as the special investigations section (SIS), dedicated to combating narcotics and vice-related offenses. The SIS often utilized confidential informants (CI) to assist in investigations. The LPD created an official policy in 1989 to protect against potential abuses concerning the use and operation of CIs. The policy, known as the “1989 Informant Policy,” required detective informant handlers to run background checks on potential informants to ensure their reliability and suitability for use. Moreover, the informant policy required handlers to maintain a documentation system (informant file) of information relevant to the operation, use and background of the CI.

The court observed that SIS detectives did not follow the written requirements outlined in the informant policy. Several SIS detectives testified to their persistent failure to adhere to the policy mandates. These failures included:

- Systematic failure to document in writing the information received from informants;
- Systematic failure to vet informants, i.e., conduct appropriate suitability/reliability informant background investigations;
- Systematic failure to supervise detective use and operation of informants.

In fact, Detective Lafferty, who worked in SIS from 2005-2013, and several other SIS officers, were not even aware of the existence of the informant policy.

The court’s opinion provided multiple examples of how Detective Lafferty and other officers failed to properly supervise, control, manage, operate and vet confidential

continued on next page

When Supervision Goes South, cont.

informants in narcotics investigations. For example:

- The SIS began to operate a confidential informant known as “FA” in 2001 or 2002. There was no evidence that a suitability/reliability background investigation was done on him by any SIS officer.
- In 2003, FA was involved in the arrest of a person for cocaine found in his car. A trial resulted in a hung jury. The purity of the recovered cocaine was low, and the prosecutor suspected that FA planted the drugs.
- In 2004 and 2005, FA was arrested for cocaine trafficking and the sale of counterfeit goods. An LPD sergeant determined that FA was unreliable for future use by SIS, but there was no documentation of this decision.
- In 2006, an assistant district attorney decided that FA was unreliable and believed that FA lied to him and arranged for misinformation to be supplied to the police.
- In 2008, FA was arrested for assaulting an LPD officer. At that time, he had pending charges for cocaine trafficking and was on probation for cocaine distribution. Detective Lafferty decided to use him as an informant without vetting him, checking his criminal history or speaking with former SIS officers who used him in the past.^[3]
- Lafferty asked his sergeant supervisor for permission to operate FA as a CI, telling the sergeant that FA was reliable, and SIS had used him in the past. There was nothing in FA’s file questioning FA’s reliability.
- Lafferty’s sergeant told him to seek permission to operate FA from the same assistant DA who previously found FA unreliable. Lafferty claimed he secured the assistant DA’s permission, but the assistant DA had no recollection of the request and said he would have denied use.
- In 2009, FA was the target of a drug investigation by other SIS detectives. Through a separate CI, they made two narcotics purchases from FA. Undaunted or challenged by superiors, Lafferty continued to operate FA as his CI.
- In 2010, Lafferty developed a second CI known as “FB.” Other SIS officers made three controlled narcotics buys from FB and executed a search warrant at his home. Lafferty, without supervisory objection, continued to use FB as a source.

In 2012, FB informed Massachusetts State Police (MSP) detectives that FA was a large-scale narcotics dealer who was involved in planting drugs on people and that he was a CI of

the LPD.

The MSP informed an assistant DA of several LPD drug cases that FB claimed were compromised by illegal actions taken by FA. The assistant DA independently recalled a separate case in which FA was accused of planting evidence. Another assistant DA initiated a review of several cases involving both FA and FB. He concluded that there was insufficient evidence to bring criminal charges against FA or FB but found “that SIS had failed to adhere to officially-promulgated policies” regarding the use of informants.

As a result of the assistant DA’s investigation, at least 16 pending cases, including that of the three plaintiffs in this matter, were dismissed by the district attorney and two convictions were vacated.

Result of Litigation

The court refused to dismiss the case against Detective Lafferty, denied his request for qualified immunity and set the case for trial.

The court observed that based upon the information alleged, “a reasonable jury may infer that Defendant Lafferty ... turned a blind eye to what may very well have been the informants’ planting evidence ... and failed to make any determination that the information provided by FA and FB had any indicia of reliability.”

In respect to municipal liability, the court likewise rejected a dismissal motion and observed that the LPD’s consistent failure to enforce its “1989 Informant Policy” may result in a jury finding that it amounted to a municipal “custom.”^[4] Moreover, such consistent failure to enforce the policy requirements “may demonstrate deliberate indifference to the very risks that policy was intended to mitigate.” Finally, the court opined, “a jury could further conclude that refusing to supervise the use of confidential informants ... causes ... the officers’ blindness to the possible planting of evidence.”

Recommendations for Supervising CIs

Law enforcement failure to properly supervise, manage and control confidential criminal informants can lead to serious problems including personal and municipal civil liability and even criminal prosecution of law enforcement officers. Here are several recommendations to help prevent or ameliorate some of these problems:

Create a policy

Establishing and adhering to a well-crafted informant policy will help to reduce the impact of the most egregious of informant problems. All department personnel who

are involved in operating or supervising the operation of confidential informants must be familiar with all policy rules, regulations and requirements and follow them to the letter.

Maintain a separate file for each informant

Each informant should have his or her file that contains mandated suitability and criminal background checks;^[5] and all required informant admonishments (i.e., the operational restrictions and limitations that each source is made aware of). It must include written copies of all substantive operational reports provided by each source and records of monetary payments to the source, if applicable. Likewise, records of how the informant's information was used and who received that information should be located in the file. Files should be maintained in a secure area separate from regular department/agency investigative files with access restricted to specified personnel.

Carefully monitor informant payments

To protect informant handlers from allegations that they pocketed informant payments, at least two officers/agents must be present and observe all informant payments. Each source should be required to sign and date a receipt that reflects the actual amount of the payment received. The officers present at the time the payment was delivered must also sign and date the receipt.

When an informant agrees to testify in a criminal case, the source's payment history must be disclosed to the prosecutor before the informant testifies because monetary payments to witnesses are grounds for impeachment by defense counsel. The prosecutor has a constitutional duty to disclose the payments to defense counsel pursuant to *Brady v. Maryland*.

Recognize that informants belong to the department/agency

Departmental policy must make clear that informants are not the personal property of the officer/agent. Instead, it must be clear that these sources belong to the department and/or agency. No officer/agent should be permitted to develop and

operate an informant outside of the rules, regulations and procedures created for informants by department policy. So-called "hip-pocket" informants should never be allowed because when things go south with a hip-pocket source the department shoulders the blame.

Prohibit tip-offs to informants

Law enforcement officers who operate informants or supervise their operation must never become involved in "tipping" informants to investigative efforts being directed against them. Officers handling informants must be regularly reminded of the consequences that will befall them if conduct of this nature is revealed. Supervisors of informant handlers must be vigilant and constantly alert to take appropriate action in case information of this nature comes to their attention. Alerting the informant to watch out for or be wary of investigators trying to target them so that they can take precautions to subvert the investigation is a serious criminal matter. At a minimum, it involves obstruction of justice, a felony crime in all jurisdictions.

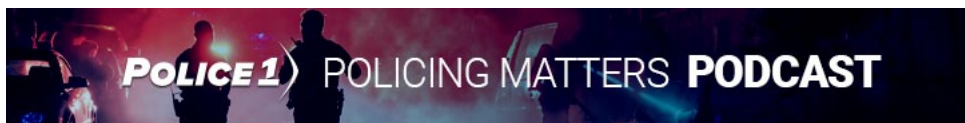
Even more damning is the practice of alerting an informant to the fact that someone in his circle of friends, acquaintances, or criminal associates is providing information that could be used against him in a criminal prosecution. Tips like this can result in the murder of the cooperating individual and may lead to murder charges against the law enforcement officer who leaks the information.^[6]

Authorize informant participation in non-violent criminal activity

The 2006 Attorney General FBI Informant Guidelines^[7] requires that the participation by an informant in non-violent criminal activity must be authorized by an FBI Special Agent in Charge and the chief federal prosecutor of the region. The Guidelines also state that the FBI is never permitted to authorize an informant to participate in an act of violence except in self-defense or the defense of others.

The 2006 Informant Guidelines for the FBI provide quality direction and guidance for all law enforcement agencies and departments. No authorization should be given

*The NNOAC is proud to partner
with www.policeone.com
in the timely dissemination of relevant news to the law enforcement community.
This article is reprinted with permission.*



to an informant to engage in non-violent crime unless the department head, such as the police chief and the chief prosecutor for the district, approves the authorization in writing. The authorization must be specific as to the time frame, type and level of the crime/crimes authorized.

Take action when an informant participates in unauthorized criminal activity

Once a law enforcement officer develops information amounting to probable cause that an informant is engaging in unauthorized criminal activity, the officer must take appropriate action to properly handle the problem. Departmental policy must be clear on this issue. Under no circumstance should a law enforcement officer alert an informant that law enforcement is aware of his criminal conduct. The informant handler's superiors must be notified in writing of what the handler has learned. The department/agency head must make a written notification to the appropriate district prosecutor of what has been revealed. At that time a joint decision between the department head and the district prosecutor should be made regarding the legally appropriate steps to take going forward.

Once it has been established that an informant has engaged in unauthorized criminal activity, the use of that person as an informant should cease unless the department head and district prosecutor agree the relationship may continue with tighter controls in place. Continued use of the informant may be required because of the magnitude and importance of the case the informant is reporting on or the fact that the lives and safety of undercover officers or others might be placed at risk if the informant is suddenly removed from the operation.

Never accept anything of value from an informant

Nothing places informant handlers or their supervisors at more personal risk or jeopardy than accepting something of value from an informant. Once the informant has given something of value to a law enforcement officer, that source will always be able to hold that gift or series of gifts over the head of the officer and be able to extract more information and favors from the officer.

The 2006 FBI Informant Guidelines recognize the negative potential of this slippery slope and consequently forbid the exchange or giving/receiving of gifts or anything of value with an informant except for something of nominal value. The 2006 Informant Guidelines also forbid FBI personnel from engaging in any business or financial relationships with informants. ☆

References

1. Santiago v. Lafferty and the City of Lowell (CA No. 13-12172) (U.S.D.C. MA. 2017).
2. The Lowell Sun Newspaper reported on 7/11/19 that the City of Lowell, Massachusetts, settled this lawsuit with the three plaintiffs for \$750,000.
3. Lafferty was told by FA's lawyer that FA was a CI for SIS in the past.
4. In Monell v. Dept of Social Services of N.Y. 436 U.S. 658 (1978), the Supreme Court ruled that municipal corporations could be found liable for constitutional rights violations pursuant to the unlawful execution of a formal policy or custom. The standard of liability in such matters is "deliberate indifference" and there must be proof of a "direct causal link" between the municipal misconduct and the injuries sustained by the plaintiff. See Bd. Of Cty Com'rs of Bryan Cty. V. Brown 520 U.S. 397 (1997).
5. We have seen the consequences of the Lowell Police Department's failure to follow LPD policy and conduct a serious background and suitability investigation on a potential informant before operating the individual as a criminal informant.
6. For more direct substantive information on this particular admonition see, Donahue v. United States, 634 F.3d 615 (1st Cir. 2011).
7. The Attorney General's Guidelines Regarding the Use of FBI Confidential Human Sources, 2006.

About the author

John Michael Callahan served in law enforcement for 44 years. His career began as a special agent with NCIS. He became an FBI agent and served in the FBI for 30 years, retiring in the position of supervisory special agent/chief division counsel. He taught criminal law/procedure at the FBI Academy. After the FBI, he served as a Massachusetts Deputy Inspector General and is currently a deputy sheriff for Plymouth County, Massachusetts. He is the author of two published books on deadly force and an upcoming book on supervisory and municipal liability in law enforcement.

RELATED ARTICLES/Original Link

- Using confidential informants? Prepare to be scrutinized and regulated
- What is it like to work with police informants?
- The consequences of false statements and deliberate omissions in warrant affidavits
- 9 steps to keeping your cop ethics in check

<https://www.police1.com/law-enforcement-policies/articles/when-supervision-of-criminal-informants-goes-south-EoVb5eMREPagzxr5/>

THE EVER-EVOLVING THREAT

of Synthetic Opioids By Drug-Free America Foundation

Deaths from synthetic opioids such as fentanyl have increased tenfold since 2013.¹ Last year, reported deaths from drug overdoses in the USA reached an all-time high of almost 72,000, with synthetic opioids involved in most of those deaths.² According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), synthetic opioids are one of the fastest growing groups of new psychoactive substances (NPS), which are defined as “substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation, that are not subject to national or international drug controls.”³ In 2009, the UNODC Early Warning Advisory received only a single report of a newly developed illicit synthetic opioid; by 2018 that number had grown to 55.⁴ While national and international bodies have increased the number of substances placed under control in response to the NPS threat, drug traffickers continuously circumvent such controls and navigate around loopholes by developing chemically similar but structurally distinct new substances.

The vast majority of synthetic opioids found in North America are manufactured in China or are synthesized in Mexican labs using precursors sourced from China. Although the Chinese government introduced legislation in 2019 that designated more than 1,400 fentanyl analogs and precursors as controlled substances, the flow of illicit fentanyl into the USA continued unabated. In fact, the amount of fentanyl seized by the US Customs and Border Protection Agency reached an all-time high in 2020 despite pandemic-imposed border closures.⁵ This was due in part to many illicit fentanyl operations in China moving to more remote provinces where they could continue to churn out their poison beyond the reach of regulators. Chemical manufacturers in other countries also stepped up to fill the gap in the market created by the imposition of stricter controls in China. And thousands of grams of deadly fentanyl analogues continued to pour into the USA through the international postal system.

Thus, as the global flow of fentanyl continued largely unimpeded, overdose deaths in the USA soared amidst a backdrop of lockdowns, forced isolation, and economic turmoil arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the US Overdose Detection Mapping Application (ODMAP) Program, suspected overdoses increased by 18% nationwide from March to May of this year compared to the same time period last year.⁶ However, many regions of the country reported increases as high as 300% since the pandemic began.⁷ Furthermore, since the beginning of the national



emergency in March, use of synthetic opioids in combination with powerful stimulants such as methamphetamine skyrocketed. In a nationwide analysis of drug screen samples undertaken by Department of Health and Human Services, researchers detected a 67% rise in fentanyl positivity, 23% increase in methamphetamine positivity, 19% increase in cocaine positivity, and a significant rise in positivity for a combination of the preceding three illicit drugs.⁸ The nationwide surge in polysubstance use (consisting mostly of fentanyl and stimulants) has prompted health officials to label this phenomenon as the cresting fourth wave of the opioid epidemic.

To make matters worse, a new synthetic drug threat has reared its ugly head in response to the Chinese crackdown on fentanyl: benzimidazole opioids. These substances, which include bromphine, isotonitazene, and etonitazene, are even more potent than the fentanyl and have already caused hundreds (possibly thousands) of deaths in the United States and Canada.⁹ The emergence of this new, lethal class of opioids has initiated the latest round of chemical whack-a-mole in which authorities ban one substance or precursor only for chemists to tweak the formula to produce another analogue not subject to international controls; or they develop a new class of compounds entirely, as was the case with benzimidazole opioids which are not yet subject to controls in China.

We have departed the age of labor, land, time, and resource intensive plant-based drugs and entered into the age of the new psychoactive compound, where millions of doses of lethal synthetic opioids can be manufactured in a fraction of the time at a fraction of the cost; where circumventing and sidestepping drug controls is as simple as changing a single molecule. It is more critical than ever that governments make drug demand reduction a national priority while eliciting

participation from all sectors of society. The three pillars of drug demand reduction--primary prevention, treatment, and long-term recovery-- are the most cost-effective, practical, and sustainable strategies to decrease use of synthetic opioids and prevent tens of thousands of needless deaths. It is certainly more appealing than the alternative: a never-ending game of chemical whack-a-mole. ☆

Resources:

1 Ten-Fold Rise in Deaths from Fentanyl, Other Synthetic Opioids - Medscape - Sep 05, 2019.

2 National Center for Health Statistics. (2020). Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

3 United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. (2012). New Psychoactive Substances. Retrieved from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/NPS_leaflet_E.pdf

4 UNODC Early Warning Advisory (EWA) on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Home/NPS>

5 U.S. Customs and Border Protection. (n.d.). CBP enforcement statistics fiscal year 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics>

6 Alter, A. (2020). COVID-19 Impact on US national overdose crisis. Retrieved from <http://www.odmap.org/Content/docs/news/2020/ODMAP-Report-June-2020.pdf>

7 American Medical Association. (2020). Reports of increases in opioid- and other drug-related overdose and other concerns during COVID pandemic. Retrieved from: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-11/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>

8 Volkow, N. (2020). Rising stimulant deaths show that we face more than just an opioid crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/noras-blog/2020/11/rising-stimulant-deaths-show-we-face-more-than-just-opioid-crisis>

9 World Health Organization. (2020). Critical Review Report: ISOTONITAZENE. Retrieved from: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/controlled-substances/43rd-ecdd/isonitazene-43rd-final-complete-a.pdf?sfvrsn=c98d9c9_2



2020/2021 NNOAC REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Northwest Region - Rich Wiley

Alaska, Washington, Montana, Oregon, Idaho and Wyoming

509/342-0427

rwiley@nnoac.com



Great Lakes Region - Gary Ashenfelter

Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York

800/558-6620

gashenfelter@nnoac.com



Southwest Region - Bob Cooke

California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Hawaii

408/472-8409

bcooke@nnoac.com



Northeast Region - William Butka

Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts

203/627-2644

wbutka@nnoac.com



Midwest Region - Brian Marquart

North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois

651/201-7338

bmarquart@nnoac.com



East Central Region - Tommy Loving

Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey

270/843-5343

tloving@nnoac.com



South Central Region - Leland Sykes

Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana

225/268-4360

lsykes@nnoac.com

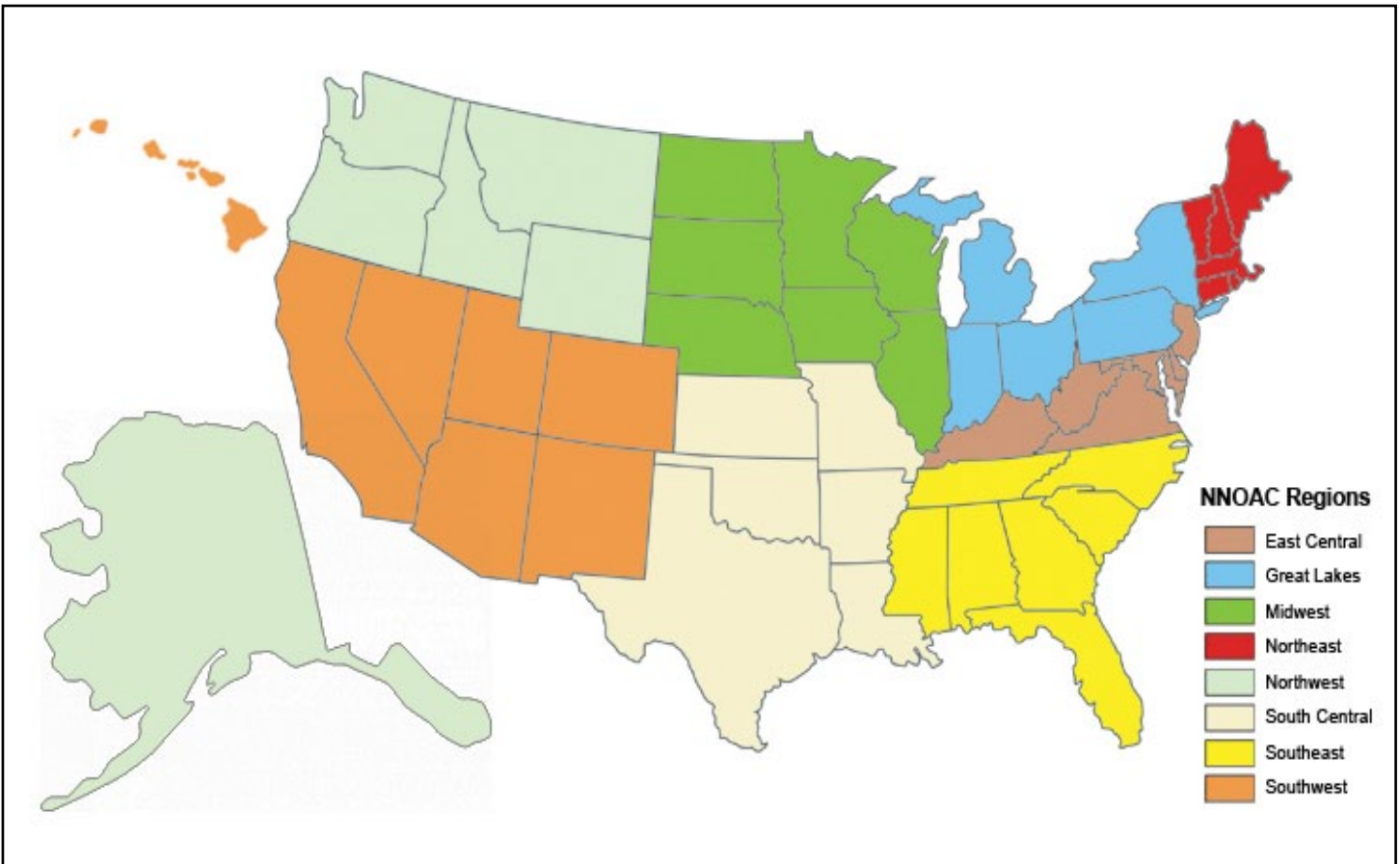


Southeast Region - T. Gene Donegan

Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida

615/509-3738

tdonegan@nnoac.com





NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Northeast Region - William Butka, Jr.
Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont,
Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts
203/671-9841
wbutka@nnoac.com

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut's problems are like those in the rest of the country. Statistics from the Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner report that overdose deaths are up. In 2012, only 4% of intoxication deaths involved opioids; in 2020, the percentage was 93%. In 2017, Connecticut reached over 1,000 overdose deaths and has maintained over 1,000 deaths every year since. Additional statistics are projecting accidental drug Intoxication Deaths for 2020 at 1,362. Cocaine and methamphetamine show a steady increase in overdose deaths.



In New England, HIDTA intel indicates that, due to overdose deaths, the number-one drug is fentanyl, and number two is stimulants, of which Cocaine & Crack are by far the main drug in Connecticut.

Prior to the pandemic, Connecticut was suffering from widespread personnel shortages, and the pandemic has exasperated this issue. As a result, we have seen a massive decrease in interdiction and overall narcotic issues.

In December 2020, the West Haven (CT) Police seized 1,700 pounds of marijuana in a "large scale international marijuana trafficking operation" that distributed large quantities of marijuana in the tri-state area.

Connecticut has seen a massive increase in violence, robberies and overall thefts, including stolen vehicles mostly involving juveniles, that has pulled resources from narcotic enforcement efforts.

VERMONT

Heroin and Cocaine continue to be the primary illicit drugs available throughout Vermont.

Vermont is experiencing increased drug overdoses and deaths. After a decline at the beginning of 2020, the best available data indicates that there has been an increase in opioid overdose deaths that began shortly after the beginning

of the pandemic, around April 2020.

Has the pandemic affected drug enforcement? The threat of COVID infection has caused law enforcement personnel to consider additional risks when interacting with the public and planning enforcement operations. Interruption to international supply routes forced Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) to seek alternatives to their normal means of transportation. This has led to investigative opportunities for the agencies that target TCOs.

Drug overdoses are up throughout the New England area. What alarms most police officers is the trend of politicians to legalize recreational marijuana -- despite all of the warnings from medical and treatment professionals, as well as state impact reports that point to the dangers of legalized marijuana. Even more damning is the actual, documented fact that any income received from taxable marijuana has cost taxpayers five times the money collected due to health and social cost. The state of Oregon has now decriminalized the use of methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin. Other states are sure to follow. This may have been the plan all along. It is pure insanity.

MAINE

Roy E. McKinney, Director of the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency states that Maine's drugs of choice are opioids (heroin, non-pharmaceutical fentanyl), followed by cocaine and methamphetamine.

The first three quarters (January-September) of 2020 revealed a 24% increase in overdose deaths over the previous three-quarter period (April-December 2019). Of those deaths, 83% were caused by at least one opioid, frequently non-pharmaceutical fentanyl (65% of deaths), and 81% of deaths were caused by two or more drugs. Heroin/morphine caused 12% of deaths, usually in combination with other drugs; cocaine or crack were responsible for 25% of deaths, usually in combination with other drugs; 16% of deaths were caused by methamphetamine, usually in combination with other drugs; and pharmaceutical opioids caused 26% of deaths, almost all in combination with other drugs.

The pandemic has resulted in lower revenue for the state, resulting in a budget curtailment that is impacting drug enforcement budgets. Despite the impact of the pandemic on enforcement efforts, drug law enforcement has regained

its footing through the implementation of operational procedures to ensure the safety of the officer and public. Offenders are summonsed, when appropriate, to lessen the burden on the jails.

As has happened in other states subsequent to high-profile cases across the country, Maine legislators have proposed legislation affecting law enforcement, such as: eliminating qualified immunity for police; prohibiting no-knock warrants; defunding drug enforcement agency budgets by 50% in order to redirect those funds to treatment and recovery services; and decriminalizing possession of drugs.

Northwest Region - Richard Wiley

Alaska, Washington, Montana, Oregon,
Idaho and Wyoming

509/342-0427

rwiley@nnoac.com

Oregon: The State is still filled with marijuana/marijuana grows, which are now competing for space from the hemp growers. Methamphetamine is readily available, as is heroin. Fentanyl is making a huge surge and is anticipated to get worse. Several seizures of pills are currently awaiting analysis at the Oregon State Crime Laboratory; there is a strong likelihood that the results will come back as fentanyl.

The Oregon Health Authority recently published a press release (link below) regarding the increase in overdose deaths. Here is an excerpt: “Oregon Health Authority saw an alarming spike in drug overdose deaths in Oregon this past spring compared to last year, and public health experts believe use of illicit fentanyl and methamphetamine is driving the increase.

Analysts in the Injury and Violence Prevention Section at the OHA Public Health Division found that Oregon saw a nearly 70% increase in the number of overdose deaths during April and May 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. There also was a nearly 8% increase in the number of overdose deaths during the first quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

The preliminary data come from the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS), which includes combined and abstracted data from medical examiners and death certificates.

Additionally, the analysis found, between April and May 2020 there was a 28% increase in overdose deaths, and a more than 15% increase in overdose deaths between March and April. Opioid-involved deaths increased nearly 70% in April and May compared to the previous two months. And opioid-involved deaths accounted for almost 73% of total

overdose deaths in May 2020.

Of opioid-involved deaths, the data show, fentanyl and heroin continue to be the drugs most frequently involved, and fentanyl-involved deaths accounted for almost 40% of total overdose deaths in May 2020.



The analysis also uncovered a continuing alarming trend in methamphetamine use: Methamphetamine/amphetamine-involved deaths accounted for more than 40% of all overdose deaths in May 2020.” <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ERD/Pages/OHA-sees-70-percent-increase-in-Oregon-opioid-deaths-during-April-May.aspx> (NOTE: The press release headline was subsequently corrected to reflect 70% increase in all overdose deaths, not opioid overdose deaths)

In the November 2020 election, Oregon voters approved Measure 109 (Psilocybin Mushroom Services Program Initiative) and Measure 110 (Drug Decriminalization and Addiction Treatment Initiative). There is concern that Oregon will very quickly see increases in overdoses and in mental health calls for service. There is currently no legislative effort to overturn or amend either Measure 109 or 110.

Rioting continues in Portland, but has been confined to an area referred to as the “Red House”. This is similar to last summer’s autonomous zone “Chaz” in Seattle. Law enforcement is pushed out of the area on a regular basis.

Washington State: Large, illicit, indoor marijuana grows are being operated by Chinese and Vietnamese nationals throughout the state. These grow operations are being directed from the East Coast and have no nexus to the legal grow operations licensed by the state. Rural plots of land are being purchased, a large barn is quickly built, and then grow operations are begun. The entire finished product is being shipped to the East Coast. Interestingly, they are paying for power and are not working hard to hide their operations. There is little or no threat of prosecution in our state, which is why they are here. In one case, over 240 million in wire transfers to China were documented.

We are seeing a significant uptick in the supply of methamphetamine, cocaine and imitation prescription drugs made with fentanyl. Multi-hundred-pound loads of methamphetamine and cocaine have been documented en route to Canada, where the price is much higher. The price of methamphetamine is coming back down due to the increase in supply.

We are very concerned that year-to-date overdose deaths are up over 15%, according to the CDC in Washington.



NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Nationally, overdose deaths are up over 13%. Unfortunately, this issue has received almost no attention in Washington this year due to the virus.

“**Treatment First Washington**” is a group that’s been formed by members of the ACLU in Seattle. It’s their intent to promote a ballot measure to legalize user quantities of all drugs, following in the footsteps of Oregon. Their premise is that enforcement doesn’t work and that treatment should be expanded with the resources currently utilized for enforcement. The fact is that the majority of individuals getting help in Washington are there because they have opted for treatment in lieu of prosecution! Our drug courts work phenomenally well, allowing anyone with an addiction issue to receive treatment should they choose, and receive consideration on their criminal case for successfully completing a program.

The lack of support for law enforcement by a small percentage of the population and many politicians has made it very difficult for agencies to keep the citizens safe. Officers are fleeing large metropolitan agencies in the Puget Sound region due to untenable working conditions and lack of support. Officers are leaving the profession or transferring to other parts of the state or nation where they are appreciated and supported. This has caused significant staffing issues at many agencies. Specialty units are being disbanded in an effort to keep patrol staffed. This has significantly impacted narcotics and gang units.

The Washington State legislature has over 134 bills being proposed to change the rules of engagement for law enforcement. Just to name a few: defunding police, legalizing all drug possession below 3 grams, requiring that police attempt de-escalation in all situations before force is used, body cameras required for all police officers (regardless of their assignment, including undercover), elimination of the use of informants, and reduction or elimination of incarceration.

Seattle Update: Seattle has no law and order, and police admit they cannot protect their citizens. There are open-air drug markets everywhere, with no enforcement. The criminal justice system has collapsed, with cases not being filed. Major crimes – including major assaults, sexual assault and rape, human trafficking, trafficking minors,

arson, and the list goes on – are not enforced. Judges who try to enforce the criminal code are publicly attacked. Citizens reporting for jury duty are assaulted. There is no incentive to stop committing crime or to stop drug use. They have driven out their great police chief, Carmen Best. Police are not supported by elected officials in their community. What has happened to Seattle is beyond description, or anything you would believe could occur in the United States. I highly recommend that you watch the documentary by KOMO TV reporter Eric Johnson, called “Fighting For the Soul of Seattle.” It is an outstanding hour-and-a-half documentary on all aspects of Seattle’s collapse.

Idaho: Methamphetamines, marijuana and heroin are the substances causing most of our issues. COVID-19 has changed the normal transit patterns coming from Mexico. We have seen increases in prices and available quantities due to border closures. The newest threat to Idaho is the popularity of counterfeit Oxycontin pills, made with fentanyl. Investigations have revealed that these pills are being imported from Washington, Utah, and Oregon.

The counterfeit pills have resulted in an uptick in overdose deaths. Drug-related deaths in 2019 rose 37% from previous years, and Idaho reports 21,519 drug crimes/arrests, a decrease of 4.39% from 2018 (22,506). Current data from the United Health Foundation reflect that drug-related deaths in 2020 are up 14.9%. It is reported that some 69,000 Idahoans, age 12 years and older, misused pain medication within the past 30 days. Idaho typically hovers 24th in the nation when it comes to marijuana use (6.34% ages 12-17 in last 30 days). Methamphetamine use is above average (0.33% ages 12-17 used meth in last 30 days).

Southwest Region - Bob Cooke

California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Hawai'i

408/472-8409

bcooke@nnoac.com

Increased exposures to Covid-19. Serious increases in violent crime. Drug overdoses. Suicide. It is dangerous to be locked down and watch the world around you crumble.

During this past year we have seen the drug and violence threat increase. We have seen a resurgence in methamphetamine and fentanyl. Somehow these deadly poisons are able to cross international borders and reach our communities. As we continue to adapt to seize drugs and investigate criminal organizations, they counter our moves.

A record number of law enforcement officers have been shot in the line of duty this year, according to the National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

A total of 283 officers have been wounded in the line of duty in 2020 thus far, with one month of the year still remaining, the FOP said in an [Instagram](#) post on December first of this year.

**Forty-four of those officers died
as a result of their wounds.**

It is for them that I proudly wear the Thin Blue Line.

Most of our state professional organizations have had to cancel their annual training conferences due to the Covid restrictions. But we don't wonder what happened or watch what happens. We are people who take action and make things happen. Our good friend Bruce Gentner, Nevada Narcotic Officers' Association's Executive Director, makes things happen. Bruce worked with the Western Regional Counterdrug Center (WRCTC) to put together a State Narcotic Associations Executive Summit last month. Without

Bruce Gentner's company, LE-TAC, and the WRCTC, we would not have been able to accomplish this training and meeting. Our training agenda included new and current drug trends, national marijuana update, and a Mexican Cartel overview of a major investigation. Then we discussed associations' legal representation and contracts, websites, post-Covid 19 training, insurance, funding mechanisms, survivor's benefits, state legislatures, member benefits, social media, HIDTA, and the National Guard Counterdrug Training Centers. We had participation from the following state associations: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, California, Texas, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Washington, Hawaii, and Oklahoma. We observed all Covid restrictions, protocols, and social distancing during this summit. Hopefully, we will be able to repeat this summit next year. My thanks again to Bruce Gentner for making this happen.

In early December, our friends at Brooks-Bawden-Moore sent out the draft report (November 2020) of the U.S. Department of Justice, President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. I have copied two of the paragraphs and included them below:

"1.1.1 Prosecutorial authorities who adopt non-enforcement policies should publish such policies in the interests of transparency. Prosecutors should have discretion in prosecuting cases to account for case strengths and weaknesses and to accommodate the pursuit of successful criminal justice objectives. However, the public deserves to



continued on next page



NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS



know if and when prosecutors forego that discretion completely by refusing to enforce valid laws enacted by the people. Given that categorical non-enforcement of a law is tantamount to its abolition, transparency and accountability demand that prosecutor's offices

publicly share written guidelines for non-enforcement priorities that correspond with community crime data and proven strategies for reducing crime.

1.1.2 State officials should provide oversight of prosecutors who have blanket policies not to prosecute certain categories of crimes. When a prosecutor unilaterally decides to not prosecute an entire category of crimes (i.e., deems it a low-level offense that does not warrant prosecution or otherwise fails to prosecute a case where probable cause for an arrest is present), that prosecutor is usurping legislative authority and ultimately the authority of the citizens of that community. These laws have been duly enacted by an elected legislative body, and the public has a reasonable expectation that breaking these laws will result in prosecution. State governments, through legislative committees and executive actions, should oversee local prosecutors who refuse to prosecute crimes by conducting hearings and issuing reports to the public about the impact of those policies. Where necessary, legislators should take legal action to prevent such policies from harming public safety."

Any prosecutor, whether elected or not, should not make decisions not to prosecute laws that he/she may disagree with, without including input from the community and from law enforcement professionals who are charged with the responsibility of keeping their communities safe. We cannot let our country develop into Autonomous Zones. We work with our U.S. Congress, state legislatures, and local prosecutors to ensure sound public safety and policy.

Please stay involved and be healthy.

The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it. – Albert Einstein

Southeast Region - T. Gene Donegan
Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina,
Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Florida
615/509-3738
tdonegan@nnoac.com

The majority of the areas in our region are being plagued with the same drug issues, although some areas are being hit harder with specific drug problems than other areas.

I don't believe that we can get as accurate an account of the ongoing drug trends found around the country in the same manner as we have in the past. Due to the COVID pandemic, many of the narcotic investigations have fallen by the wayside. Law enforcement has been dealing with this issue since the pandemic hit nearly a year ago. Although there was a slowdown during the summer months, we are seeing more fatalities due to COVID than we have in the past. The pandemic continues to affect narcotic investigations, especially in larger departments due to a shift in manpower. These officers are being pulled to assist in "mask" patrol enforcement. But regardless, we will continue the fight to slow drugs flowing into our country, taking lives and further infecting our society.

We continue to see a large increase in methamphetamine in rural areas of the Southeast and a steady increase in heroin in larger cities. This has been prevalent for the past couple of years, and we haven't seen much of a shift this year.

Crystal Methamphetamine

The Southeastern region continues to see a steady flow of crystal methamphetamine into this area. The cheaper price has led to a surge of new dealers who have previously sold cocaine and other illicit drugs. Due to the extremely cheap price, it is easier for dealers to obtain larger amounts and conduct larger deals that they would not ordinarily have been able to conduct previously. The ease of obtaining crystal meth, along with its cheaper price, has led to this area and many other areas around the United States to see more crystal methamphetamine than ever before.

Marijuana

We continue to see high-grade marijuana being shipped in from source states, such as California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. I believe we will see more of the illegal shipments and illegal grow operations as the result of the future push to decriminalize and federal legalization that I believe is inevitable with the new administration. Many people believe that legalization of drugs will cure the problems associated with drug use. Unfortunately, the reality is that we will continue to see illegal grows and illegal transportation and shipping due to those who are unwilling to pay any type of taxes.

Within the last couple of years, middle Tennessee and the Southeastern region have seen a significant influx of prescription medications distributed illegally through Internet pill mills. They appear to be legitimate websites that offer to provide the prescription medications, such as Tramadol and Carisoprodol (Soma), Schedule IV drugs, and Butalbital (Fioricet), which is a Schedule III Drug. Individuals from India and other foreign countries operate these sites.

The prospective buyer believes that they are talking to legitimate medical practitioners that have the authority to prescribe/dispense such medications to them without being seen, in person, by a doctor as required by law. When these individuals place their order(s) online, they are required to pay by credit card or, as an alternative method, have the medication sent to them by collect on delivery (COD) through the United States Postal Service (USPS). Then, the foreign nationals operating these sites send the order to a third party in the United States (US) to fill. That party supplies the pharmaceutical drugs by the foreign national who sends packages through the International Mail Routes (IMR) to the individuals that package the scripts for them in the US. Once the parcel clears customs in the United States, it ultimately ends up in the hands of the shipper. The shipper then breaks down the pills into packages and delivers them through the USPS to the ultimate buyer.

The shipper in the United States receives about 30% of the profits earned by the foreign national(s) involved in this illegal scheme. In one case alone, the shipper in middle Tennessee sent out hundreds of thousands of these unlawful prescriptions to customers in the United States. When customers in the United States pay by COD, the funds are collected by the shipper and ultimately transferred back to the foreign national supplier. The shippers typically use International Money Wire Transfers (IMWT) back to the source in India. This modus operandi is used widely by Indian nationals who have access to these pharmaceutical drugs from major pharmacies based in their country. The drugs usually are illegally diverted from these pharmaceutical

companies by foreign nationals and then sent into the United States by IMR. Customs and Border patrol agents routinely seize these packages as they are in-bound into the United States, but will typically wall off those packages. They then send out a notice of seizure to the alleged recipient (the shipper), telling them that it is illegal to import controlled substances into the US. The shippers track those packages and usually know when they have been removed or pulled out of the system. The US shippers typically use multiple post office boxes and their residential address to receive such packages.



The above-described methods are utilized by so-called Internet Pharmacies operating illegally from foreign countries and illegally importing hundreds of thousands of pharmaceutical drugs into the US. These foreign nationals normally rent post office boxes in Germany and then use shipping labels that indicate that the packages were mailed from Germany. During the investigation in middle Tennessee, law enforcement authorities determined that those packages were actually placed into DHL delivery in India and then appeared shipped from Germany. The international mail routes (IMR) allow for cross-border shipping, allowing the supplier to use it to mask their packages' original location. Therefore, any attempt by law enforcement to track the package(s) back to the original sender is usually an exercise in futility.

Suppose your agency comes across such activity. It would help if you made every effort to locate mailing list(s), phone logs, and bank statements; seize all computer equipment; and dump all cellular phones associated with this activity. Also, immediately request the assistance of a US Postal Inspector to have him pull the mailing activities from the shipper's residence for all incoming and outgoing mail parcels. Their agency can pull such records for up to a year prior. They can get images of packages sent through the USPS, which can be valuable when working on such investigations.

The previous case was conducted by the 17th Judicial Drug Task Force, covering several small cities and county jurisdiction. It is a prime example of the magnitude of drugs that are being shipped via USPS. Unfortunately, we only catch a very small number of suppliers and distributors using these types of operations.



Region Reports continued on next page



NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS

East Central Region - Tommy Loving

Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey

270/843-5343

tloving@nnoac.com

KENTUCKY

Fatal overdoses in Kentucky had been increasing from year to year until 2018, when a 15% decrease was noted. Statistics from 2019 show that the downward trend continued – 1,255 overdose deaths, compared to 1,268 in 2018. During the first nine (9) months of 2020, we saw a dramatic increase to 1,493 overdose deaths.

The Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy attributes the rise in deaths in part to an increase of fentanyl and its analogues in the illicit drug supply. The widespread availability of inexpensive methamphetamine of high purity also significantly drives the number of deaths, the report said.

“We continue to see heroin decline, and that’s not necessarily a user’s choice but a cartel choice of replacing the opioid of heroin with fentanyl, which is 10 times more potent than heroin,” said Van Ingram, director of the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy. In Kentucky, the regional drug trafficking issue really depends on the County where you are located, as the drug of choice varies by County and Region.

It is my opinion that, in all probability, the Covid-19 pandemic also impacted the 2020 increase. The isolation, layoffs from employment, and many other social issues related to the pandemic may have had an impact.

While heroin is present in the South-Central Kentucky illicit drug supply, meth is being seized more and more significant amounts. It is posing more of a danger to users than it did a decade earlier. The meth that agents and detectives are seizing is largely coming from Mexican sources that have manufactured a stimulant high in purity, compared to the meth seen coming out of the small meth labs that inundated the region at the beginning of the previous decade, or even five years ago.

Seven people were recently charged in U.S. District Court with crimes relating to a conspiracy to deal a large quantity of methamphetamine. This investigation, which originated in Bowling Green, Kentucky, resulted in the



largest crystal meth seizure in Warren County history. On August 30, 2020, detectives with the Bowling Green-Warren County Drug Task Force and Special Agents from the FBI, with assistance from the Kentucky State Police, seized 44 pounds of methamphetamine from a car involved in the investigation. Previously, Texas DPS had searched another vehicle that was also tied to this investigation, and they uncovered approximately 40 pounds of suspected crystal methamphetamine. (story on page ??)

These cases are not possible without a team effort of state, local and federal partners. This case involved a partnership of the FBI, Bowling Green Police, ATF, HSI, Kentucky State Police, Warren County Sheriff’s Office, and Western Kentucky University Police, all led by the Appalachia HIDTA Task Force in Bowling Green. This is yet another example of how well the HIDTA partnerships produce major results.

I believe meth and fentanyl are the primary drivers behind the increase in overdose deaths in our region of Kentucky. For the most part, we have adequate state criminal laws to deal with drug traffickers; but, due to the lack of political support, many of these traffickers are released from prison much too early and often return to selling death and destruction (Drugs) in our communities.

Many of these drug traffickers need to be in prison as sentenced and not be given so many chances on the front end when they’re dealing significant amounts of meth, heroin and fentanyl. At times, it seems our state justice system has turned into a revolving door.



The Kentucky Narcotic Officers' Association is planning for a 2021 conference. Last year's conference was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the ongoing civil

unrest, riots, and property destruction in Louisville. We are looking forward to an early fall date this year. The conference will probably be moved to Lexington from Louisville, due to the anti-police sentiment and continuing civil unrest in Louisville. A final decision about the locations should be made by early March.

WEST VIRGINIA

Executive Director Chad Napier of the West Virginia Narcotic Officers' Association (WVNOA) reports that, due to COVID, the WVNOA Board of Directors cancelled the 2020 WVNOA Conference. Mandatory CE Training requirements for West Virginia Law Enforcement Officers were waived until June 30, 2021. Departments will be utilizing online training to obtain CE requirements for the upcoming year, along with the minimal in-person training courses that will be available. Hopefully, the Board can begin planning soon for the 2021 Conference.

West Virginia continues to be inundated with Mexican crystal methamphetamine pouring into the state. At the same time, the leading cause of overdose deaths in WV is opiate based. In 2019, 66% of overdose deaths involved fentanyl.

NEW JERSEY

Nitin Daniels, 1st Vice President of the New Jersey Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association (NJNEOA), reports that the NJNEOA Board had been discussing what to do with the 2020 Annual Conference, which was rescheduled from June to the week of August 31, 2020. Five days of training topics included the following: Current Drug Trends; Current Gang Update; Criminal Interdiction; Hotel Motel Interdiction; Vehicle Infotainment system in your investigations; Working Undercover and Stress and Reintegration; and Patrol Tactics and Roadside Interview.

As COVID-19 data fluctuated, the Board Members struggled with the option of canceling the Conference for 2020. After speaking to some other law enforcement agencies, we realized that the LEOs needed to be out and to take a break from the long hours every day dealing with the pandemic and the protests.

We usually have anywhere from 175 to 260 Conference attendees and between 500 to 800 people for the Annual Awards Luncheon. We had to scale back and figure out a better option. We decided to have the Conference and the

Awards Luncheon outdoors under a huge, 10,000-square-foot tent, and we limited our Conference to 100 attendees and the Awards Luncheon to 308 attendees. We took all the necessary precautions to keep each other safe. We supplied masks throughout the week. This Conference atmosphere was very strict as far as social distancing and we took temperatures every morning and after lunch. Every year we hire a professional photographer to take group and individual photos of the recipients, but this year we did not hire a photographer to avoid putting groups together. Our Conference Chairman Sgt. Al Camisa (Retired Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office) organized this event with the assistance of the Conference Committee and pulled off a successful COVID-FREE EVENT.

The Conference is free to the NJNEOA members and \$40.00 for non-members. I don't think there is any Conference out there that does this type of event. Yes, we took a huge monetary loss. But the Board decided that law enforcement needed a break from all the stress and that we were going to do our best to support our law enforcement officers who have been subject to the effects of the pandemic and the so-called peaceful protests.

Now, there has been an attack on our NATION. The so-called peaceful protestors gained entry to the Capitol either by being let in and/or forcing their way in. As a result, five people have died. So as much as we all complained about all the protests that had looting and arson and other crimes, let's stand together as law enforcement officers and raise our voice against this evil act. Shameful! We must stand united – not as Left or Right but as a person in the middle – and do the right thing. As law enforcement officers, we are obligated and have a duty to be lawful and protect the public and each other. We are NOT above the law! We lost a brother officer in this senseless crime! We extend our condolences to the family of Officer Brian D. Sicknick of the United States Capitol Police (and Staff Sergeant of the New Jersey National Guard), formerly of South River, New Jersey.

At the end of the day, I would like to see 'ALL LIVES MATTER' and RESPECT for law enforcement and RESPECT for ALL PEOPLE. Please stay SAFE!

Seven charged in largest meth seizure in Warren County history

December 14, 2020

WNKY Staff

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Seven people have been charged in a conspiracy to deal a large quantity of methamphetamine in the Bowling Green area, announced

United States Attorney Russell Coleman.

“Relationships matter especially in law enforcement, when collaboration is needed to defend our families from the volume of poison that traffickers are pouring into West Kentucky,” said U.S. Attorney Russell Coleman. “That is exactly why we opened a fully-staffed office of federal prosecutors in Bowling Green earlier this year, to work with some of the finest lawmen and women in our Commonwealth to better protect Southcentral Kentucky.”

“This case resulted in the largest crystal meth seizure in Warren County history. These cases are not possible without a team effort of our state, local and federal partners,” said Tommy Loving, the Executive Director of the Bowling Green/Warren County Dug Task Force.

“Our local detectives partnering with the FBI shut down a major supplier of crystal meth and his drug trafficking organization. The US Attorney’s office worked with us from the early stages of this case to help bring it to fruition. The Bowling Green Police, Kentucky State Police, Warren County Sheriff’s Office, and WKU Police all participated in the joint investigation with the FBI,” Loving said.

According to the indictment, beginning June 11 and continuing to on or about Aug. 30, the seven defendants: Tyrecus J. Crowe, George Sanchez, Andre M. Graham, Michael D. Padilla, Raymond Drouse Jr., Jeremy Quezada, and Brandon Cherry, conspired to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine. Drouse, Quezada, and Cherry all face additional counts for possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance: methamphetamine.

An accompanying affidavit in support of a federal criminal complaint gives more details surrounding the alleged conduct. According to the document, on July 24, the Texas Department of Public Safety stopped a white Chevrolet Tahoe on a speeding allegation. A driver and two passengers occupied the Tahoe.

The driver consented to have the DPS search the vehicle. That consent search uncovered approximately 40 pounds of suspected crystal methamphetamine hidden in a black bag, according to court records. The search also revealed a rental agreement between the rental company and Tyrecus Crowe.

The DPS detained the driver and contacted the Drug Enforcement Administration. A special agent with the DEA met the driver and advised the driver of his rights. After receiving his Miranda warnings, the driver agreed to speak with the DEA special agent.

The driver explained he was driving the rented car from California to Bowling Green to deliver the crystal methamphetamine to Crowe, according to the affidavit. The driver stated Crowe rented the vehicle and let the driver use it for this trip. The driver further stated this was his second trip to California to pick up crystal methamphetamine for Crowe. The first trip occurred approximately one week

prior. At the end of that trip, the driver successfully delivered approximately 25 pounds of crystal methamphetamine to Crowe’s residence in Bowling Green.

During a July 26, interview, the driver stated that during both trips, Crowe provided the driver with cash to deliver in California.

Once in California, the driver met George Sanchez at a pre-determined location in Los Angeles, California. Sanchez met the driver, then the two traveled together in Sanchez’s vehicle to a residence relatively close to the initial meeting location. Sanchez and the driver hand counted the money, then Sanchez weighed the money on a scale. The driver did not remember how much money he transported the first trip, but Crowe gave the driver \$105,000 in cash during this second trip. The driver gave Sanchez the \$105,000 and Sanchez then gave the driver the crystal methamphetamine and drove him back to the driver’s vehicle.

If convicted at trial, the defendants face no less than 10 years and no more than life in federal custody. The United States has also filed notice to seek forfeiture from the defendants named to include: \$57,000 in cash, a residence in Bowling Green, 2008 Ford Mustang, 2012 Nissan Altima, 2001 Impala and a 2015 Maserati Ghibli.

A federal complaint is a written statement of the essential facts of the offense charged and must be made under oath before a United States Magistrate Judge.

On the night of Aug. 30, detectives with the Bowling Green-Warren County Drug Task Force seized 44 pounds of methamphetamine from a car involved in the investigation, task force director Tommy Loving said. The meth has a street value of \$352,000.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark Yurchisin of the U.S. Attorney’s Bowling Green Branch Office. The case is being investigated by the Warren County Drug Task Force, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Louisville Field Office.



Connect with WNKY 40 News

WNKY 40 News - Weekdays at 6a, 12p, 5p and 6p
<https://www.wnky.com/seven-charged-in-largest-meth-seizure-in-warren-county-history/>



NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Midwest Region - Brian Marquart
North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska,
Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois
651/201-7338
bmarquart@nnoac.com



COVID-19 continues to limit the overall ability to proactively target larger-scale DTO's. Many agencies continue to limit investigators coming into government buildings, and social-distance requirements have caused pro-active units to experience difficulties in conducting operations.

Methamphetamine continues to rule most of the region as the number one drug of choice. Transportation methods are primarily via personal motor vehicle; however, there is a noted increase in the use of commercial transportation, including, but not limited to, over-the-road semi-tractor trailers. We continue to see a moderate increase in the use of parcel services, with a substantial increase in the quantities of methamphetamine being shipped in a single package via mail service from source states.

Mexican DTOs control the majority of the delivery and distribution of meth that arrives in the region. COVID-19 and the closures at the Southwest border temporarily caused a decrease in the overall availability of methamphetamine to the region, which in turn caused a substantial increase – in some areas, to more than double – in the local methamphetamine prices. However, the availability of methamphetamine has returned closer to normal, so the prices are now declining and are in the ballpark of the pre-COVID prices. Partnerships and cross-state investigations by federal, state, and local law enforcement continue to identify and investigate mid-to upper-level dealers and importers of methamphetamine coming into the region.

The region has once again seen a small decrease in the overdose death rates from heroin over the past year – but an increasing number involving synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. During the pandemic, however, we have seen an increase in overdoses across the region, many involving fentanyl. Law enforcement agencies throughout the region

have reported large seizures of synthetically produced fentanyl in blue pill form, which is being sold on the street as Oxycodone 30 mg pills. The pills are frequently referred to as “M Box” pills due to the imprints on the pills. The counterfeit pills have caused a number of overdose deaths; local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies continue to work collaboratively to identify the sources of supply. Some areas in the region that had seen little to no heroin or fentanyl are now seeing dramatic increases. Minnesota law enforcement agencies that report their statistics to the ODMAP program reported the deployment of Narcan/Naloxone 299 times since January 1, 2021. ODMAP reported 753 total overdoses, of which 84 were fatal, since January 1, 2021.

South Central Region - Leland Sykes
Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma,
Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana
225/268-4360
lwsykes@nnoac.com



This report for this region, and more broadly for the country, is not a positive one. The majority of the region is encountering similar illicit drug issues. The large cities and suburban areas are continuing to see significant amounts of heroin mixed with fentanyl, which is continuing to contribute to drug overdose deaths. Crack cocaine, after being almost eradicated in some areas, is making a comeback, and the resurgence of powder cocaine is continuing. The rural areas of the South-Central region are also seeing tremendous increases in the amounts of methamphetamine and powder cocaine.

Methamphetamine, which is being shipped by Mexican DTO's, is at epidemic proportions in many areas. Coming across the porous Mexican border, the methamphetamine is being shipped in both powder form as well as liquid form, which is then being converted back to powder within the region. There has been a significant uptick in

methamphetamine drug overdose deaths; and with the new administration's enforcement efforts (or lack of) on the border, this problem is expected to significantly worsen. In addition, the price of methamphetamine continues to be extremely cheap.

The unsecured Mexican border with the United States, along with the ability of Mexican DTO's to traffic illicit drugs at will, is perhaps of greater concern than ever. Their ability to flood the illicit drug market in the United States with heroin, methamphetamine, and fentanyl – and at cheap prices – should be gravely concerning to all Americans.

We are continuing to see large amounts of high-grade marijuana being trafficked in the region. This marijuana comes from the usual suspects of states – such as Colorado, Washington, and Oregon – which have legalized marijuana.

In addition to the above, we are witnessing a crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has fostered domestic violence, mental health issues, teen suicide, and drug overdose deaths. The lockdowns in many areas are believed to be contributing to this crisis.

We, in law enforcement, have suffered through one of the more difficult years in recent memory. With the signals being sent by this administration and the majority in Congress, this may be the most challenging era ever for law enforcement in general – and drug law enforcement in particular. The legalizers have advocates, the likes of which have never been present before.

This is a time when all of us in our association must roll up our sleeves to fight like we have never fought before. We must continue to stand for our founding principles, even if we are severely in the minority. It is the right thing to do.

Great Lakes Region - Gary Ashenfelter

Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania,
New York

800/558-6620

gashenfelter@nnoac.com

In today's world many priorities are changing. Covid-19 has brought us a whole new set of challenges and priorities; masks, social distancing, Covid testing, and now getting vaccinated. Social changes over the past few years related to what is "normal" in our everyday lives have set many of our heads spinning.

The same is true with drug enforcement and the strategies which we apply to reduce the use, sale and supply of illegal drugs. Do we arrest? Do we treat? Do we do both? What drugs do we concentrate on? How much is too much for personal use? These are just a few questions you may have fielded in the recent past.

In all this confusion and change one very common drug,

marijuana, is getting pushed to the side of the road and in many situations viewed as an insignificant problem. Nothing could be farther from the truth, especially in states such as Indiana in the Midwest where pot is still illegal and surrounding states have legalized in some form.



One example is southeastern Indiana, where a large part of the marijuana seized over the past 3-4 years has come from states such as Colorado, California, and Oregon in addition to sources near and across the Mexican border. One recent case was initiated by a Highway Interdiction Team in SE Indiana when a traffic stop yielded \$80,000.00 in cash and several pounds of marijuana. The suspect, already under investigation was found to be involved in trafficking of high-grade marijuana after a search warrant executed at his residence yielded another 100 pounds of marijuana, over 120 pounds of pre-packaged marijuana edibles and a large sum of cash. Information gathered at the scene of the search warrant's execution revealed a connection to both the Cincinnati, Ohio and Florence, Kentucky areas. Investigators located a storage facility in Kentucky where an additional 500 pounds of marijuana and nearly a half-million dollars in US currency were discovered. The source of this marijuana is believed to be south Texas. Investigators then apprehended a male courier from Cincinnati, Ohio arriving at the suspect's residence and seized an additional \$16,000.00 from his vehicle which was destined to pay for marijuana already delivered in Cincinnati.

One additional such case involved profits from marijuana related products, (vapes) being used to support the suspect's floundering legal grow operation in the State of Oregon, which was then in turn shipping raw THC liquid back into Indiana to be used to produce more vapes.

Several other cases have involved shipments of marijuana and edibles from Oregon and California as well as cases involving mules who transport money to and marijuana from Colorado.

Considering that information, marijuana is NOT going away! However, the prosecution of marijuana related offenders is becoming more and more difficult as

many jurisdictions see it as a "minor" problem when compared to everything else. It is nearly impossible to get any federal involvement in a marijuana trafficking prosecution or asset seizure at this point.

The truth is marijuana is still a huge problem. As a gateway drug it is becoming more easily available to our youth which leads to other drugs. Marijuana traffickers are making huge amounts of profit and laundering those dollars back into their illegal ventures.



NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Traffickers often use their illegal gain to acquire real estate and other physical assets through shell companies, investments and other methods, making seizure of the asset more and more difficult, especially for prosecutors at the local level. The identification and seizure of assets, often in other states is a complicated and time-consuming process. These investigations are further curtailed by the lack of federal interest in prosecution and asset seizure in marijuana cases.

The bottom line is marijuana is still a huge problem, which generates complaints requiring the investment of many manhours to investigate and often leads to little jail time regardless of the amount of the drug that is seized. Traffickers are making millions from the sale of illegal marijuana and related products. These investigations can

lead to the seizure of assets which may help to off-set the cost of the investigation. Marijuana is still a dangerous drug with THC levels reaching as much as 80-90 percent in some cases involving “shatter” “butter” and other marijuana related products. Even smokable marijuana from indoor grows can reach very high THC levels. This is NOT your Grandfather’s pot and it is NOT a minor problem. Investigations can be complex, but they are important.

Be vigilant don’t overlook these cases. You may have to “re-educate” your prosecutors and judges, but it is well worth the effort.

Thanks to the Dearborn-Ohio County Prosecutor’s Special Crimes Unit for the information contained in this article.



SMOKE SCREEN

"The industry is really dangerous," Anne now insists. "I never knew it was all about a commodity. I thought it was a plant. I was wrong."

I am thrilled to share with you news that Simon and Schuster will be distributing my new book — an exposé on the marijuana industry — *Smokescreen: What the Marijuana Industry Doesn't Want You to Know*.

For a limited time only, you can pre-order Smokescreen for 30% off the regular purchase price. And if you pre-buy now, you will get some freebies including a PDF of my previous book, Reeper Sanity: Seven Great Myths About Marijuana.

In the book, you will read stories like Jan’s — a former regulator in Colorado’s weed business — who tells me how corrupt and mismanaged legal pot really is.

This book is not about whether legalization is good or bad, but rather, through exclusive interviews, documents,

and stories, you will learn new insights about the policy’s devastating consequences.

What I see coming should shock us all — imagine Big Tobacco and Big Pharma rolled into one, advocating for a drug they call harmless and funding our politicians to give them even more leeway.

Here’s where YOU come in. I need your help to spread the word about this public health danger.

The book will be officially released on 4/20, but you can pre-order a copy of the book today at a 30% discount. You’ll also receive some free incentives!

Click Here to Pre-Order Smokescreen Today!

<https://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1948677873?tag=simonsayscom>

Lastly, consider pre-ordering a copy of the book at a discounted rate to have it delivered to your elected officials, on 4/20, in your name.

Stand with us AGAINST an addiction-for-profit industry that values greed and cash over families and communities. I so appreciate your support.



Lilly W.
Actual Patient



YESTERDAY

A legacy rooted in unlocking the potential of cannabinoid medicines to address rare conditions with limited treatment options.

TODAY

An enduring commitment to scientific rigor and bringing forward plant-derived cannabinoid prescription medicines for patients.

TOMORROW

A promise to continue advancing cannabinoid science and providing medications that have the potential to address the unmet needs of patients.

GREENWICH Biosciences is proud to support the National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition in their efforts to protect and advance public health and safety.

To learn more, visit www.GreenwichBiosciences.com.

©2019 Greenwich Biosciences, Inc. All rights reserved. GBS-04360-0119

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE



(U) Increased Use of Mailing Services to Traffic Methamphetamine

Date: November 2020

(U) Executive Summary

(U) Law enforcement agencies across the Midwest HIDTA have documented an increase in the number of seized parcels containing methamphetamine that were shipped using public and private mailing services.

(U//LES) The number of parcels seized has risen since 2017, as has the total amount of methamphetamine shipped. The vast majority of parcels containing methamphetamine intercepted within the Midwest HIDTA originated from California, Arizona, and Nevada. The Kansas City, St. Louis, and Omaha metropolitan areas were the most common destination cities listed on the seized packages.

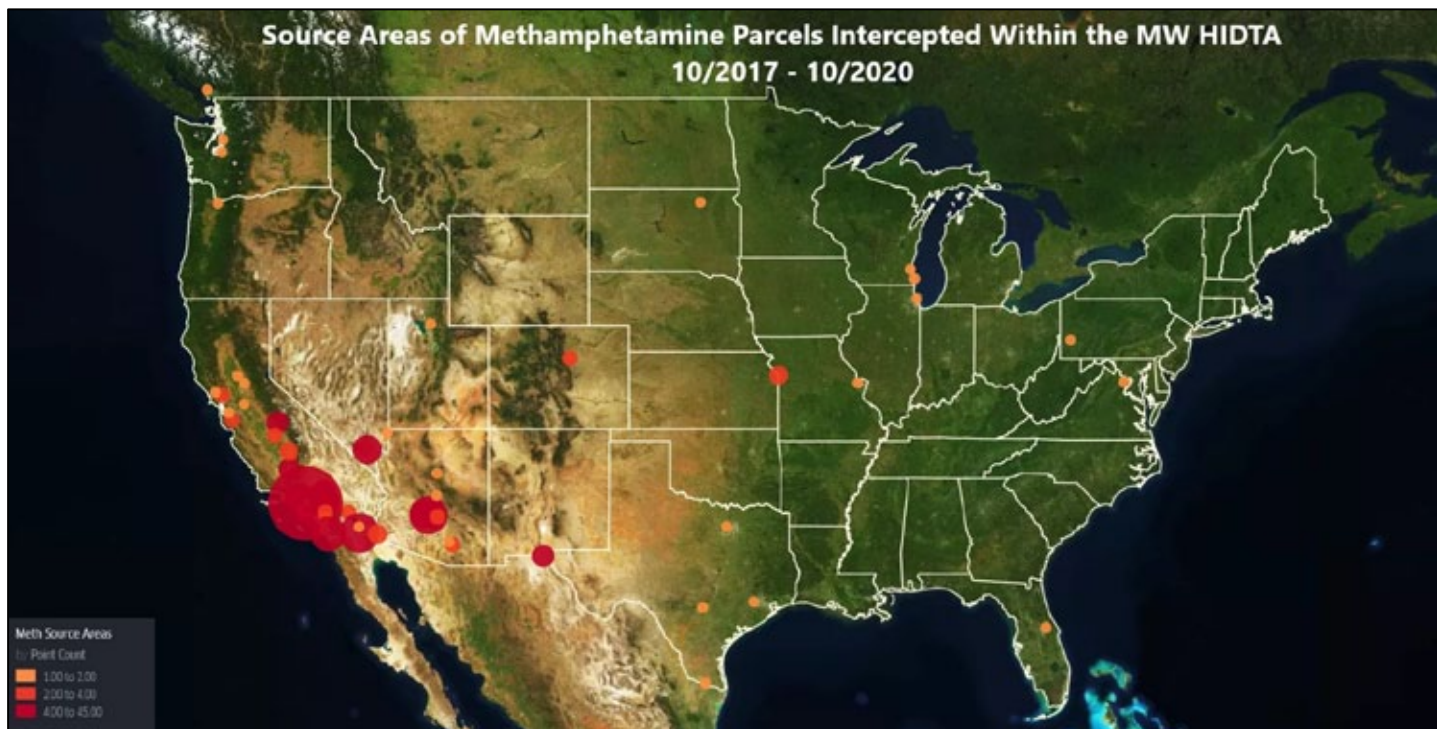
(U) The purpose of this document is to highlight the increasing use of mailing services to traffic methamphetamine into the Midwest HIDTA, as well as detail the most common shipping and smuggling methods used by traffickers. It is our hope that this document will aid other law enforcement agencies in identifying and intercepting parcels containing methamphetamine within their AOR.

(U) Details

(U//LES) Law enforcement agencies across the Midwest HIDTA have reported an increase in the number of parcels containing methamphetamine shipped via public and private postal services since late 2017. Data from the Midwest HIDTA's Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) program demonstrates that the frequency in which parcels containing methamphetamine are shipped into the Midwest HIDTA have increased every year since 2017. Additionally, both the total amount of methamphetamine seized and the average amount of methamphetamine per parcel from the seizure of these illicit parcels have also increased since 2017.

(U//LES) Methamphetamine Parcel Seizure Data - Midwest HIDTA DHE				
Year	2017	2018	2019	Jan - October 2020
Number of Seized Parcels Containing Meth	5	9	13	18
Avg. Amount of Meth per Parcel (lbs.)	3.2	9.6	4.5	6.9
Total Amount of Meth Seized (lbs.)	16	87	59	125

(U//LES) Utilizing data from other law enforcement agencies in addition to that of the DHE program, the Midwest HIDTA determined that the majority (69 percent) of parcels containing methamphetamine intercepted within the Midwest HIDTA originated from California (most commonly Southern California). Arizona and Nevada were the second- and third-most frequently identified source states. The Kansas City, St. Louis, and Omaha metropolitan areas were the most common destinations listed on the parcels containing methamphetamine.



(U//LES) Significant Source Areas of Methamphetamine Parcels Seized Within Midwest HIDTA October 2017 - October 2020	
Area Name	# of Seizures
Los Angeles Metro, CA	81
Phoenix Metro, AZ	29
Riverside Metro, CA	23
San Diego Metro, CA	12
Calexico, CA	8
Las Vegas, NV	9
El Paso, TX	4
Bakersfield, CA	4
El Centro, CA	3
Kansas City, MO	3
San Francisco Metro, CA	3
Tucson, AZ	3
Yuma, AZ	3
Denver, CO	2
Fresno, CA	2
Imperial, CA	2
Mecca, CA	2
Porterville, CA	2
San Jose, CA	2

(U//LES) Significant Destination Areas of Methamphetamine Parcels Seized Within Midwest HIDTA October 2017 - October 2020	
Area Name	# of Seizures
Kansas City Metro, KS-MO	36
St. Louis Metro, MO	29
Omaha, NE	15
Des Moines Metro, IA	9
Sioux City, IA	8
Sioux Falls, SD	8
Bismarck, ND	7
Independence, MO	7
Wichita Metro, KS	7
Springfield, MO	6
Perry, IA	5
Rapid City, SD	5
Fargo, ND	4
Topeka, KS	4
Cedar Rapids, IA	3
Garden City, MO	3
Salina, KS	3
St. Joseph, MO	3
Bonne Terre, MO	2
Davenport, IA	2

(U) Common Shipping Methods

(U) While the United Parcel Service (UPS) and Federal Express (FedEx) are highly utilized by drug traffickers, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is the primary mailing service used to ship illicit drugs across the Midwest HIDTA.^A This is corroborated by a 2018 report by the Postal Service Office of Inspector General, which found that, out of 104 drug marketplace websites searched by the USPS, 92 percent confirmed use of the USPS to deliver drugs.¹ The report suggested that, because of the USPS' limited ability to search packages and its high volume of mail, traffickers preferred USPS to other services.¹

(U//LES) Feedback from several law enforcement agencies within the Midwest HIDTA suggest that methamphetamine traffickers favor faster delivery methods over standard methods. For the USPS, this translates to their *Priority* (1 - 3 business days) and *Priority Mail Express* (overnight - 2 days) delivery methods. For the United Parcel Service (UPS), this usually involves their *Next Day Air Shipping* and *Next Day Air Early* delivery methods, which guarantee overnight delivery and overnight early morning delivery, respectively. For FedEx, the *First/Priority/Standard Overnight* delivery options offer the fastest shipping. FedEx's *2Day* and *Express Saver* services are also common services used by traffickers.

(U//LES) Information provided to the Midwest HIDTA also stated that many of the parcels containing methamphetamine that were intercepted by law enforcement were shipped in customer-supplied boxes rather than those supplied by the mailing services. Home Depot-branded boxes and standard "moving" boxes were reported to be commonly used.

(U//LES) Methamphetamine traffickers may also use third-party approved shipping businesses in an effort to conceal their identities. Third-party shipping businesses may have shipper identification and security processes that are less strict than that of the USPS, FedEx, and UPS. Less stringent policies shield the shipper from identification and offer increased levels of anonymity.

(U//LES) Although not specific to methamphetamine shipments, traffickers often mail their parcels with a "waiver of signature" so that the packages may be left at an address without requiring a signature. This method is favored by those who ship parcels to addresses that either belong to an unsuspecting individual or are vacant.

(U//LES) As for the packages themselves, drug traffickers and methamphetamine traffickers alike have been known to use several common techniques when preparing their package for shipment. Whether done in an effort to prevent the escape of odor or to ensure the package does not accidentally open during transit, the excessive taping of a package is one of the most common features of an illicit package. Glued edges and restrictive markings, such as "Do Not X-ray", "Confidential", and "Personal", are two other characteristics associated with illicit packages.



(U) Package displaying multiple layers of tape along each edge.
Photo courtesy KCPD MOWIN Task Force



(U) Package displaying glued-down edges.
Photo courtesy: KCPD MOWIN Task Force

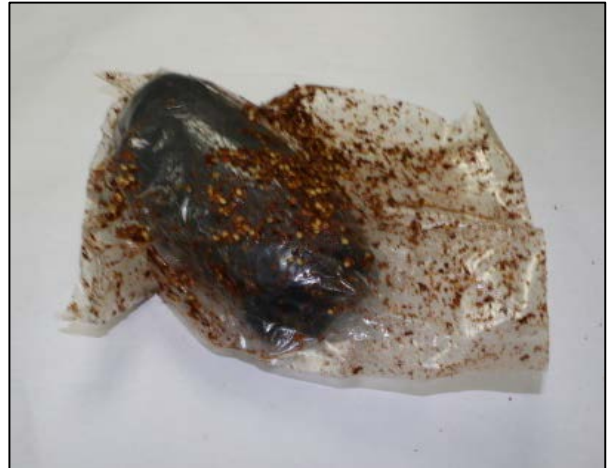
(U) Smuggling Methods

(U//LES) Methamphetamine traffickers exploiting the USPS and other commercial mailing services utilize a variety of smuggling methods to conceal their shipments and avoid detection. The following methods include some of the most common efforts used by traffickers to disguise their packages when shipping into the Midwest HIDTA:

- (U//LES) Enclosing the drugs in vacuum-sealed food-saver bags;
- (U//LES) Coating the drugs/drug packaging in spray foam to mask odors;
- (U//LES) Coating the drugs/drug packaging in food, spices, liquid detergents, or herbal mixtures;
- (U//LES) Wrapping the contents in aluminum foil; and
- (U//LES) Using multi-layered packaging (e.g. boxes inside of boxes).



(U) Package of methamphetamine wrapped in aluminum foil.
Photo courtesy KCPD MOWIN Task Force



(U) Shipment of methamphetamine coated in red pepper flakes.
Photo Courtesy KCPD MOWIN Task Force



(U) Seized shipment of methamphetamine utilizing multi-layered packaging.
Photo courtesy KCPD MOWIN Task Force

(U) Law Enforcement Tips for Identifying Suspicious Parcels

(U) FedEx-Specific Information

(U//LES) If a suspicious package is intercepted and was shipped via FedEx's *First Overnight* delivery option, law enforcement should be aware that the package likely contains a real-time GPS sensor that the customer has access to. These sensors, dubbed by FedEx as *SenseAware ID*, now accompany all packages shipped via *First Overnight*.² Law enforcement should be aware of this new service when working sensitive investigations as the sensors will notify a customer if their shipment has been opened or damaged, and will also broadcast its location should it be brought to a police station or other agency location.



(U) A FedEx *SenseAware ID* placed on the exterior of a package.

(U) Source: <https://tinyurl.com/y3k6vx4o>

(U) Visual Indicators

(U//LES) The following list contains visual characteristics associated with packages containing illicit drugs which were not previously mentioned in this document that may be of use to law enforcement in future investigations:

- (U//LES) Discolorations or stains on the parcel's exterior;
- (U//LES) Strange odors;
- (U//LES) Excessive postage;
- (U//LES) Postmarks that do not match return addresses;
- (U//LES) No return address or strange return address;
- (U//LES) Misspelled common words; and/or
- (U//LES) Unusual addressing (e.g. not addressed to a specific person or business, incorrect use of titles).

(U) Intelligence Gaps

- (U//FOUO) Are these packages being sent by mid-level distributors or are they operatives of larger DTOs/cartels?
- (U//FOUO) What payment methods are the parties using to purchase the methamphetamine shipments (bulk cash, money wire, crypto, etc.)?

(U) Contact

(U//FOUO) This document was produced by the Midwest HIDTA. Please direct any questions or comments to Mmurphy@Midwest-HIDTA.org.

(U) Sources

¹ (U) United States, U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General. (2018, September 28). *Use of Postal Service Network to Facilitate Illicit Drug Distribution* (Vol. Report Number SAT-AR-18-002 |, p. 10). U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General. UNCLASSIFIED.

² (U) Federal Express, FedEx Newsroom. (2020, September 14). *FedEx to Transform Package Tracking with SenseAware ID, the Latest Innovation in FedEx Sensor Technology* [Press release]. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://newsroom.fedex.com/newsroom/senseaware-id/>. UNCLASSIFIED.

POLICE OFFICERS NEED ANOTHER TOOL IN THEIR BELTS

by

Peter F. Boyce

General Counsel, NNOAC

Emergency telepsychiatry can improve safety for officers, first responders, and the public. On-Demand access to psychiatric expertise can reduce call outs, reduce potential liability of officers, and result in better outcomes for the individuals in crisis, who very often do not need to be taken to jail but need expert help to resolve the crisis.

There is no real consensus of the percentage of police calls that involve people with either a mental health or substance abuse crisis. Some studies suggest that police believe it is close to 33%. There is no question that these calls involve a substantial amount of time and resources and are often especially dangerous because behavior is often frantic and unpredictable. When the person in crisis has a weapon, encounters can become deadly.

Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are a great resource for many big departments, as is training. But how readily available are these teams, how long does it take for them to arrive on the scene, and how many departments have any access to that resource? According to an article in the Washington Post fatal police shootings are more likely to occur in small and mid-size areas. Smaller departments generally do not have the funding to support CITs, and so many officers face inadequate resources to deal with increasingly prevalent and challenging situations involving mental health and substance abuse issues.

The growing challenges are exacerbated by an inadequate supply of qualified professionals to intervene. While substance abuse and mental health issues have grown in prevalence, the US simultaneously suffers from a severe shortage of psychiatrists. It is not unusual to find entire counties without a single licensed psychiatrist.

Changes to federal law have recently made telehealth much more readily accessible, and its application to psychiatric crisis and law enforcement has the potential to be transformative. With advances in connectivity, mobile



video, and telehealth, access to a qualified psychiatric professional can now be much more readily available in the field to law enforcement officers who encounter a person in crisis. Telepsychiatry brings a state-licensed professionals via audio or video to your phone, tablet, or laptop for evaluation, consultation, and de-escalation support of complex psychiatric cases in the field.

Some departments use telehealth mental health as a way to reduce call outs by training the dispatchers to help connect an individual in crisis with a telehealth professional. That connection can be made immediately if needed through telepsychiatry. Some cities have even gone as far to train paramedics to help the person in crisis interact with a telehealth expert. With additional support to mental health expertise, call outs are avoided, resources saved, and more officer time is made available to do critical police work. Officers need not be in the position of being the savior of a deficient mental health and substance abuse system that has failed to address a national crisis.

The National Association of Chiefs of Police launched an Open Mind Campaign asking all 18 thousand police departments to commit to forge partnerships with

"Preferring to thoughtlessly parrot false slogans and myths, many of today's commentators—from both the progressive left and the libertarian right—fail to understand that illegal drugs is, too, a global scourge that threatens not only our public health and safety, but our very national security. It is also a social and biological (dare I add moral?) problem that requires the understanding and involvement of every American."

Police Officers Need Another Tool, cont.

local mental health providers. So far less than 5% have done so. Why? Money and access. How are these services funded, and importantly does the community even have qualified psychiatric professionals available to commit to services 24/7/365 days per year?

If departments would do a cost analysis related to resources they now use to react to the mental health/substance abuse issue in their communities, I strongly suspect they might see the wisdom in adopting a telehealth program to support mental health crises. If that analysis also includes risk mitigation, it would seem even more compelling. How many \$10 or \$20 million settlements do departments need to pay out before they understand that in a mental health or substance abuse crisis, they need professional advice immediately. If the situation turns violent or deadly, the fact they brought a trained, licensed professional to assist certainly helps mitigate liability for the officers and their departments.

Currently, virtually every department now trains some if not all of their officers in de-escalation tactics. Some of that training is good and some is subpar. An effective intervention program, with or without telepsychiatry support, must include appropriate training for officers on how to recognize the need for escalation and intervention in crisis they encounter on a regular basis.

A real issue for officers first on the scene of a seemingly critical incident is to analyze whether what the officer sees and hears is a real mental health or substance abuse issue or just the pretense used by the individual. Officers hate to waste time transporting someone to the hospital only to have the revolving door release them hours later when they likely will soon again encounter the police in a similar way. State and local governments must provide funding to not only allow departments to provide emergency mental health intervention in crisis but on a continuing basis. Some departments have been fortunate to receive grants to help fund some of the costs. Government authorities must realize that they need to pay the costs associated with either treatment or jail. It has been far too easy in the last 20 years to opt for jail, and now is the time to advocate

for professional intervention, evaluation, and treatment to change the narrative. Telehealth creates new options for how departments think about timely intervention for crises, and it can create more options for communities to offer meaningful ongoing care to break the revolving door.

To be clear, I do not suggest that any officer when confronted with a mental health or substance abuse crisis that puts the officer or the public in imminent peril not react as the officer has been trained to do. But do we need to kick in the door of someone threatening suicide and then have to use deadly force because the officer confronts a shotgun pointed at them by a suicidal person? Would it not be more prudent to get immediate professional help to try and defuse the crisis? And if the guy with a gun does choose suicide, at the very least we can have mitigated risks by seeking professional help. ☆

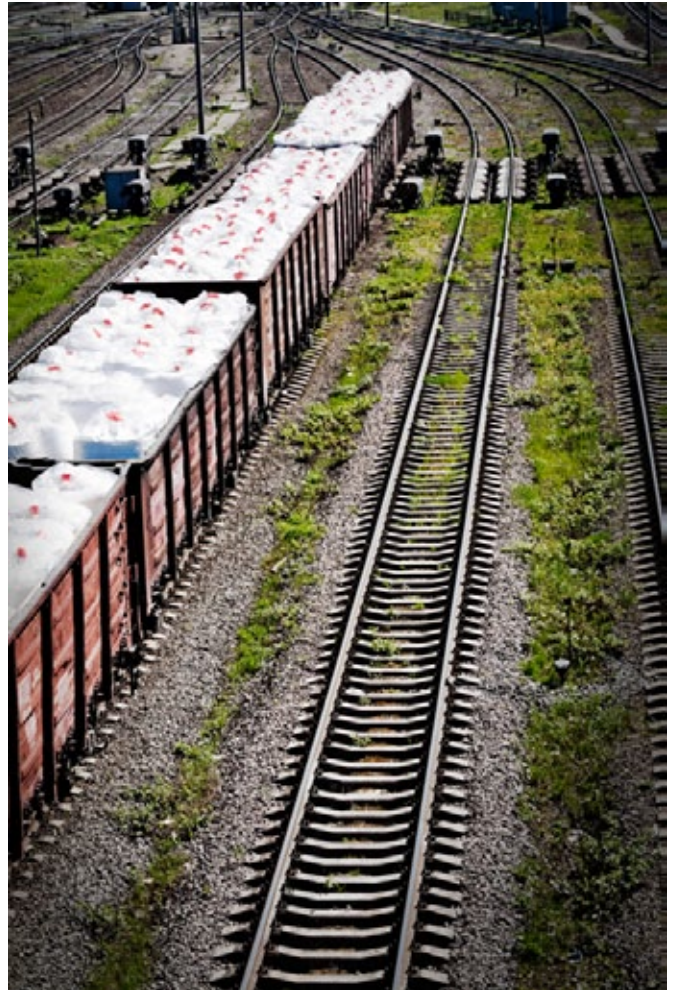
** In full disclosure my son is the CEO of Array Behavioral Care, a leading telehealth company, and my daughter is one of the VPs of the same company, so I do have a pro telehealth prospective. As someone who trains officers throughout the country on de-escalation, I also see where that training can be merely a band aid on a gaping wound that must eventually be fixed.*



"It is altogether curious that those who incessantly complain against government's interfering in one's "right to put into one's body whatever one wishes," or to be able to "do your own thing" with psychoactive drugs are seemingly the ones who are now most officious in demanding that we follow every authoritarian decree concerning individual behaviors that might spread a viral infection."

THE OTHER PANDEMIC

By Jeffrey B. Stamm



As our nation, indeed the world, continues to struggle against the coronavirus and the secondary problems caused by our collective responses to the threat, it's worth remembering that we're also still in the midst of another pandemic, one we've been fighting for decades—illegal drugs. Both

COVID-19 and illicit drugs are deadly contagions killing scores of people across our communities, nation, and world. Both can be considered lethal “pathogens” spread throughout society by their “vectors” or “carriers.” And both are on track to kill tens of thousands of Americans this year.

The parallels do not stop there. We are reminded on a daily basis that “every American must do their part” in battling against this viral infectious disease, as we adapt our lives and lifestyles to help “defeat the enemy” in a new “war” on behalf of our society. Yet, somehow, this civic solidarity and necessary engagement in our nation’s other “war on drugs,” has been lost, even vilified, by our modern culture. While we rightly praise our health care professionals, those “warriors” on the front lines valiantly fighting against the viral scourge every day across the nation, many of our “sophisticated” and “enlightened” elites continue to assail our law enforcement professionals for waging a supposed war against their fellow citizens, while, at the same time, absurdly insisting that the cops enforce ever more capricious and unreasonable lockdown decrees from our most progressive mayors and governors in the name of public health.

Preferring to thoughtlessly parrot false slogans and myths, many of today’s commentators—from both the progressive left and the libertarian right—fail to understand that illegal drugs is, too, a global scourge that threatens not only our public health and safety, but our very national security. It is also a social and biological (dare I add moral?) problem that requires the understanding and involvement of every American.

It is altogether curious that those who incessantly complain against government’s interfering in one’s “right to put into one’s body whatever one wishes,” or to be able to “do your own thing” with psychoactive drugs are seemingly the ones who are now most officious in demanding that we

follow every authoritarian decree concerning individual behaviors that might spread a viral infection. Those who stridently demand an end to the so-called war on drugs exhibit remarkable ignorance. They also reveal an arrogant and casual disregard for both drug users and our society to pander to a temporary and specious desire by a selfish minority intent on exercising “rights” divorced from any corresponding duties.

Unlike the emerging good news about turning the tide against COVID-19 through new vaccines and responsible behavior by our citizens, the trajectory of drug use and addiction in our society is quite the opposite. Overall drug use and trafficking across the nation continues to increase at alarming rates. Across the heartland of America, in the six states (MO, KS, IA, NE, SD, ND) that constitute the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), drug poisoning deaths continue to soar, and not just from opioids. As we continue to make progress against prescription opioid abuse, Mexican drug cartels continue to flood the nation with



heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, marijuana, and, most alarmingly, ton quantities of cheap, pure methamphetamine. In fact, Midwest HIDTA law enforcement organizations at the local, state, and federal levels across the Midwest have nearly quadrupled their seizures of methamphetamine in the past four years. Clearly, Americans do not just have an opioid problem, we have a drug problem.

Just like viral and bacterial diseases, the “pathogen” of drugs is spread by their “vectors,” i.e., the drug traffickers, through conscious and illegal actions to profit from human misery and addiction. Currently, the single-greatest criminal threat to our country comes from the proliferating Mexican drug cartels. These transnational criminal organizations are single-minded, zealous, highly ethnocentric, and shockingly violent. It should come as no surprise to anyone that they take our compassionate progressivism, utopian multiculturalism, and moral and cultural relativism as weakness. It has been estimated that they have an imbedded presence in over 3,000 American cities and towns. They are here solely to sell drugs to Americans. In the Midwest alone, narcotics agents and officers are tracking and targeting over 638 drug trafficking organizations comprised of over six thousand members actively engaged in drug importation and distribution. They

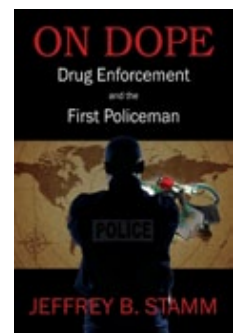


not only enslave and kill our fellow citizens but undermine the rule of law by engaging in money laundering and other criminal acts. They foment gang activity and engage in barbaric and terroristic acts—not only in their own country, but increasingly in ours.

Every ‘narc’ and every cop in every city and state across the land knows that we cannot police our way out of the drug problem. Yet so, too, do they understand better than anyone that the pandemic of illegal drugs cannot be contained without the law enforcement component. Just as with our struggle against the corona virus, controlling illegal drug trafficking and use demands a clear-eyed application of treatment, prevention, and enforcement tools. The late sociologist James Q. Wilson eloquently instructed that “sanctioning an individual drug addict may seem unjust or uncompassionate but failing to do anything about an epidemic of drug addicts leads to social catastrophe.” So, as we continue to seek and debate the best path forward in our current crisis—or “war”—with a viral pandemic, we should understand that any global contagion requires the discouraging, and sometimes sanctioning, of individual actions that are destructive not only to the self but to society.

The question of illegal drugs—like that of COVID-19—is not one that simply and timidly requires a distinction between acceptable and unacceptable personal behavior; it is a struggle that demands the engagement of every American, for it’s nothing less than an existential threat to the citizenry. Every night, in every community, in every state across this great nation, there are parents praying that their children do not get exposed to the contagion of drugs. You, we, together, can help be the answer to those prayers. ☆

Jeff Stamm is a 34-year law enforcement veteran, having served as a Deputy Sheriff in Sacramento County, California and a Special Agent in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. He is currently the Director of the Midwest HIDTA based in Kansas City, Missouri and is also the author of “On Dope: Drug Enforcement and The First Policeman.”



*On Dope: Drug Enforcement and The First Policeman -
By Jeff Stamm*

Learn more: https://smile.amazon.com/dp/1478751452/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_W144Fb82HDB8D



Safer Narcotics Identification

Field-based presumptive narcotics, precursor and cutting agent testing

The use of illicit narcotics and opioids continues to skyrocket. Emerging lethal drugs like fentanyl and carfentanil threaten public safety.

To save lives and protect law enforcement officers, banned substances need to be identified quickly, safely and accurately. The Thermo Scientific™ TruNarc™ Analyzer rapidly identifies drugs and can reduce the backlog of cases at crime labs while decreasing costs. This leads to quicker case resolution and helps drug offenders access treatment faster.

Find out more at thermofisher.com/trunarc

Thermo Scientific is a preferred advertiser fully endorsed by the Executive Board members of the NNOAC.

ThermoFisher
SCIENTIFIC

thermoscientific

Case Study

Raman Spectroscopy: Seeing drugs in a whole new light

In Kentucky, law enforcement officers and the Kentucky State Police Forensic Laboratories have gained a new ally in their battle against the proliferation of illicit and dangerous drugs in their state. It's called the Thermo Scientific™ TruNarc™ Narcotics Analyzer, and more than a dozen drug task force agencies across Kentucky are currently using it, with nearly 40 units in use throughout the state. It's a portable, hand-held electronic device, and it has become popular with its users because it can analyze and identify a multitude of drugs and other substances in the field in a matter of seconds and do so with high accuracy and precision. Best of all, it doesn't require actual contact with the substances themselves, because it is able to identify most of them even through their packaging. Also, it does not consume or destroy any of the substance being tested in the process. In addition, and perhaps even more critically, it also helps keep officers safe. According to Todd Young, the deputy director of the Bowling Green-Warren County Drug Task Force, "A lot of times when you had to do a field test, you had to take the substance out of its package. Now we don't have to do that, so that limits our officers'

exposure to potentially harmful substances."

Kentucky's problems with illicit drugs aren't terribly different from those of other states. Currently, the primary drugs encountered include Fentanyl, Heroin, Cocaine, Methamphetamines,



TuNarc Handheld Narcotics Analyzer

and Marijuana. These make up 95% of the total volume of illicit drugs interdicted, according to Jeremy Triplett, Drug Section Supervisor with the Kentucky State Police Forensic Laboratories. But by far the biggest and fastest-growing problem he says is 'Crystal Meth' (methamphetamine).

Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant. 'Crystal Meth' is a form of the drug that resembles glass fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks. It is chemically similar to amphetamine, a drug used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy. Other common names for methamphetamine include blue, crystal, ice, meth, and speed. The drug can be easily made in small clandestine laboratories, with relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients such as pseudoephedrine, a common ingredient in cold medications. Methamphetamine production also involves a number of other very dangerous chemicals.



"TruNarc Narcotics Analyzer, is used by more than a dozen drug task force agencies across Kentucky. "

ThermoFisher
SCIENTIFIC

The interception of Crystal Meth and other illegal drugs has become a severe policing problem worldwide. It is difficult for law enforcement personnel in the field to at least initially identify any particular substance as likely being a prohibited one. This can lead to false arrests or releasing suspects who are indeed carrying illegal drugs. While a properly equipped lab can make a definitive analysis, typical lab equipment does not lend itself to use by law enforcement personnel in the field because it is either too heavy, cumbersome, difficult to operate, or too expensive to distribute widely to large numbers of law enforcement personnel.



Colorimetric Analysis Methods

Prior to the availability of the TruNarc, law enforcement in Kentucky utilized common wet-chemistry test kits to identify narcotics in the field. Relatively easy to use, these kits call for a series of dilutions, where officers must interpret color changes in order to correctly identify a substance. This is known as Colorimetric Analysis. Colorimetric analysis is a method of determining the concentration of a chemical element or chemical compound in a solution with the aid of a color reagent. It is applicable to both organic compounds and inorganic compounds and may be used with or without an enzymatic stage. The method is widely used in medical laboratories and for industrial purposes, e.g. the analysis of water samples in connection with industrial water treatment. But colorimetric testing is not very specific; it is not always reliable, and only effective for a very narrow range of certain known drugs and not for other chemicals or substances such as newer synthetic drug compounds. More importantly, test results from the colorimetric do not always support probable cause in charging a drug suspect. Instead, all suspect samples collected from alleged offenders often must be transported considerable distances to a properly-equipped laboratory facility. Colorimetric test kits can often identify 'classes' of compounds rather than specific substances, so it is an imperfect field analysis method; but that was before the TruNarc narcotics analyzer and Raman spectroscopy.

Raman Spectroscopy: A Better Way

The TruNarc narcotics analyzer uses Raman spectroscopy – essentially a laser light beam – to analyze substances, and it does not need to be in direct contact with them; it can 'see' through the packaging material generally if it is translucent. Raman spectroscopy is a technique used to determine vibrational modes of molecules, and thus accurately and precisely identify specific substances that these molecules comprise. Raman Spectroscopy is based upon the interaction of light with the chemical bonds within a material.

Raman spectroscopy relies on inelastic scattering of monochromatic light (e.g., laser) which changes the excitation states of the molecules, which will then emit light. Each material emits its own specific Raman spectrum. As each specimen 'fluoresces' in the Raman range, it emits a unique 'Raman signature' that permits the specimen to be identified and characterized. This spectrum of light is analyzed with a spectrometer and then this wavelength signature is compared with a library of known Raman signatures in order to identify the precise identity of the specimen. This is why a TruNarc narcotics analyzer can accurately identify hundreds of individual substances.

Using Raman technology, the TruNarc narcotics analyzer quickly identifies a wide range of illegal drugs including narcotics, synthetic drugs including methamphetamine, cutting agents, and precursor materials. Analysis is performed in a single test, portable, hand-held, on the spot, in 30 seconds or less per sample, and it is capable of identifying up to 324 prohibited substances and can scan for up to 500 total substances in a single, definitive test.

Most drug samples can be quickly identified by simply pressing the sample—contained in a plastic bag, for example—against the nose cone and then pressing the 'scan' button. Typically, samples are identified in less than 30 seconds.

Conclusion

"The TruNarc technique is highly sensitive, but it is likewise robust, a much stronger and safer technique than the old Colorimetric system," Triplett says, "And because it is so much faster, it's also a powerful forensic backlog management tool. Its high throughput capability makes it very effective in the reduction of such backlogs in the labs."



Marijuana Legalization in the Midwest: The Potential Impact

Executive Summary

Marijuana is the most widely available and commonly abused illicit drug in the United States. The legalization of marijuana invokes consequences that are both extensive and underreported, and its impacts on public health, safety, and the economy are observable in many states with legalized access. The Midwest is not immune to the adverse effects of marijuana legalization. This report will examine those and other potential effects in the following sections.

Chapter 1: Diversion, Crime, and Traffic Fatalities

- ▶ In 2018, more than 53,350 pounds of marijuana were removed from illicit markets in the Midwest HIDTA.
 - Marijuana represented 90 percent of the total drug weight confiscated by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in 2018.
- ▶ Ninety-two percent of the 1,491.8 pounds of marijuana and marijuana products mailed to Iowa, Missouri, and North Dakota in 2018 originated from California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington.
 - ▶ Colorado, Oregon, and Washington all experienced increases in violent crime and property crime in the years following legalization.¹
 - ▶ The number of fatalities involving a driver testing positive for marijuana in California increased by 34 percent between 2005 (n=273) and 2015 (n=366).¹
 - ▶ After “recreational” marijuana was legalized in Colorado, marijuana-related traffic deaths increased 151 percent while overall Colorado traffic deaths increased by 35 percent.²
 - ▶ The total number of Drug Recognition Expert investigations between 2014 and 2016 that resulted in a marijuana-impaired driving outcome increased by 66 percent in Oregon.³

- ▶ Fifty-one percent of drug-related fatal crashes in Iowa involved marijuana in 2016, compared to 41 percent nationwide.⁴

Chapter 2: Accessibility and Use

- ▶ As California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington saw a proliferation of “medical” marijuana dispensaries, they also saw a corresponding increase in marijuana use among all ages, as well as a decrease in the perception of risk, in the years following legalization.^{5,6}
 - ▶ In 2017, past month marijuana use among youth aged 12-17 was:
 - Seven percent higher in California than the U.S. average;⁷
 - Forty percent higher in Colorado than the U.S. average;⁸
 - Sixty percent higher in Oregon than the U.S. average;⁹
 - Thirty-nine percent higher in Washington than the U.S. average.¹⁰
 - ▶ In 2017, past year marijuana use among youth aged 12-17 was:
 - Nine percent higher in California than the national average;¹¹
 - Thirty-nine percent higher in Colorado than the national average;¹²
 - Forty percent higher in Oregon than the national average;¹³
 - Twenty-three percent higher in Washington than the national average.¹⁴
 - ▶ An Emory University study observed increases in current marijuana use, frequency of marijuana use, and marijuana dependence among those aged 21 or older after the implementation of “medical” marijuana laws across seven states.¹⁵

1 All NIBRS data for California is unavailable during this time period.

▶ Alaska’s experiment with legalized marijuana in the 1970s demonstrated that an increase in access led to an increase in use. During the 15 year experiment, marijuana use among Alaskan adolescents was double (51.6 percent) the national average (23.7 percent) for the same age group.¹⁶

Chapter 3: Impact to Health

▶ California, Colorado, and Oregon all experienced increases in marijuana-related emergency department visits after the commercialization and/or legalization of marijuana.

▶ THC extraction labs present their own risks to public health. The process, which carries a significant risk of explosion, yields highly potent marijuana concentrates. In 2016, 79 percent of nationally reported clandestine THC extraction labs occurred in California.¹⁷

▶ There is limited information available from state agencies regarding pesticide testing. This is worrisome in regards to health risks to consumers, as it makes it difficult to calculate rates of marijuana contamination.

Chapter 4: Potency

▶ According to the University of Mississippi’s Potency Monitoring Program, the average percentage of THC found in samples of marijuana seized by the DEA increased 199 percent between 1995 and 2014.¹⁸ THC levels were measured at approximately 3.96 percent in 1995 and increased to approximately 11.84 percent in 2014.¹⁹

▶ During that same period, the average percentage of CBD decreased 48 percent.

▶ Beginning in 2001, the average level of CBD steadily declines while the average level of THC steadily increases.

▶ The levels of THC within edibles can vary across a single product or across entire batches. This makes it difficult for users to estimate how much THC they consume, increasing the risk of overdose and adverse reactions.²⁰

Chapter 5: Marijuana as an Opioid Alternative

▶ Unlike drugs approved by the FDA, “medical” marijuana has no standard in quality control or production measures, nor are there high-quality studies of its effectiveness or long-term safety.

▶ Both the CDC and FDA state that there is not enough evidence that supports marijuana as an opioid alternative at this time.

▶ Every state with an operational “medical” marijuana program in 2015 that reported overdose death data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also

experienced an increase in drug overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids between 2015 and 2017.²¹

▶ Studies that demonstrate a cannabinoid’s beneficial effect on an illness are for that specific cannabinoid and not the entire marijuana plant.



A single mature marijuana plant as seen during a Washington State Patrol compliance check.

Chapter 6: The Inadequacies of Marijuana Reporting Systems

▶ Iowa’s, Missouri’s, and North Dakota’s marijuana programs require the implementation of either a seed-to-sale or barcode tracking system.

▶ Self-reporting systems have proven to be ineffective in preventing diversion as there are no ways to ensure that dispensaries publish accurate or truthful data.²²

▶ The potential for diversion exists within every state of marijuana cultivation, regardless of the technologies used in the process.

Chapter 7: Marijuana Revenue

▶ The total expected revenue for Iowa’s mCBD program is not known at this time.

All patient, primary caregiver, dispensary, and manufacturer licensing and registration fees are collected by the IDPH.²³ Manufacturers must reimburse the Iowa Department of Public Safety for the full cost of the background investigations required for licensing.²⁴

▶ Missouri’s “medical” marijuana program is expected to bring an unsubstantiated \$24 million in taxes and fees to state and local governments.

▶ North Dakota’s “medical” marijuana program does not levy an excise tax on marijuana sales. As a result, marijuana sales will be subject only to state and local sales taxes.

▶ For every dollar Colorado gained in tax revenue from marijuana sales, Coloradans spent over \$4.50 to mitigate the social costs of legalization.²⁵

▶ The long term environmental, economical, mental and physical health, and societal impacts of marijuana cultivation and consumption are not fully understood. Legalized marijuana is likely to have consequences that scientists may not discover for decades.

Chapter 8: Regulatory Overview

▶ Iowa’s, Missouri’s, and North Dakota’s marijuana measures all fail to establish safe and effective dosage guidelines for physicians, while simultaneously promoting marijuana’s purported effectiveness in treating illness without offering substantial evidence.

▶ Iowa’s mCBD program limits a patient to a 90-day supply of authorized CBD containing no more than three percent THC.

▶ If limitations are enacted by the Missouri DHSS, “medical” marijuana patients must be able to possess up to eight ounces and cultivate up to six flowering plants.

▶ The North Dakota Department of Health has limited dispensaries from supplying more than three ounces of marijuana to a patient every 14 days. Patients residing more than 40 miles from a dispensary may cultivate up to eight plants.

Chapter 9: Terminology

▶ There are significant differences between the “medical” and “recreational” marijuana movements and their respective products. There are also significant differences between mCBD and CBD.

▶ Extensive scientific research has only been performed on two of the more than 480 chemical components in marijuana, which is why it has yet to receive approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

▶ The marijuana industry increasingly uses the term “cannabis” in an effort to rebrand marijuana and distance itself from the stigmatization and negative connotations associated with the term over the past century.

Read the full article Here:

https://www.nnoac.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MW-HIDTA_Marijuana-Impact-Report_March2019.pdf

Figure 20: Monetary Costs and Benefits of Marijuana in Colorado

Costs			
Amount		Sector	Notes
\$ 381,915,043		Health	Hospitalizations
\$ 31,448,906		Health	Treatment for cannabis use disorder
\$ 593,924		Health	Burn treatments
\$ 697,036		Health	Low weight babies
\$ 54,833,218		Health	Cost of physical inactivity
\$ 3,782,625		Productivity	Cost of businesses for policy development
\$ 3,401,300		Productivity	Cost to employer for rehabilitation
\$ 481,600		Productivity	Employees costs for rehabilitation
\$ 423,362,337		Productivity	K-12 drop-outs
\$ 7,194,600		Crime	Arrests
\$ 18,565,226		Crime	DUI court-costs
\$ 1,170,126		Crime	Juvenile court filings
\$ 3,484,282		Crime	Adult court filings
\$ 3,111,114		Crime	Denver-only marijuana-related crime
\$ 87,014,326		Crime	Probationers going back for THC violation
\$ 5,362,620		Traffic	Fatal car accidents
\$ 18,565,226		Traffic	DUIs
\$ 83,732,717		Traffic	Car accidents from impaired drivers
\$ 1,837,500			Evictions due to cannabis, cost to landlord
\$ 130,500			Arrests crossing the border to Colorado
\$ 1,130,684,226			Total Costs
Benefits			
\$ 247,368,473		Tax Revenue	CY 2017 only
\$ 127,452,000		Housing	Increased value of homes in areas with legalized marijuana
\$ 374,820,473			Total Benefits
Difference			
\$ 1,130,684,226			Total Costs
\$ 374,820,473			Total Benefits
\$ -755,863,753			Resulting Total

Source: Centennial Institute, Colorado Christian University, 2018

*We thank
the Swedish
Narcotics Officers
Association for
the use of their
articles in this
issue.*

Photo Lennart Karlsson
Chair of the Swedish Narcotic Officers' Association (SNPF)

Article and Translation by Jonas Hartelius,
Member of the Swedish Narcotics Officers Association



The Swedish Section - News from Abroad

The Gothenburg, Sweden, Steroid Factory

Nobody could have imagined that drugs were being illegally produced in a warehouse near the Göta River in the center of Gothenburg, Sweden. Three men were recently convicted and sentenced by the Gothenburg District Court for serious doping offenses to several years in prison for having manufactured and distributed anabolic steroids and certain other preparations.

The Gothenburg Police made their largest seizure of anabolic steroids (AAS) and other doping agents after having conducted surveillance on a 34-year-old Gothenburg man. According to information the police had received, he was involved in dealing illegal drugs. The man, whom we will call Emil, was living in Mölnlycke [a suburb of Gothenburg], ran a small woodworking shop, and did bodybuilding in a gym.

The surveillance team saw Emil visiting a property in an industrial area at Stenkolsgatan Street at Hisingen [a borough in the City of Gothenburg] on October 15th, 2019. He came out of the building with some padded envelopes and drove off in his company car. In Mölnlycke he put them in a mailbox at Hemköp [grocery store] and after that drove to a gym.

The next day, he visited Stenkolsgatan Street again, and came out of the house with another man. They drove off in different directions. Later in the afternoon, Emil drove to a tobacco store and bought a standard postal parcel box for 20 kilograms. After a quick visit to his workplace, he went to ICA Maxi, a grocery store in Mölndal, where he purchased something and then remained in his car for quite a while, likely to pack the postal parcel. After that, he took the parcel,

which seemed to be heavy, to the postal intake desk. He drove off, and the surveillance team seized the parcel, which was addressed to a person in Laholm [a town in Southwestern Sweden]. The parcel contained a large amount of anabolic steroids and some other illicit doping substances.

The surveillance continued for some days without anything in particular happening, until October 21st, when two other men, who were suspected of being involved, arrived at Stenkolsgatan. One of the men later mailed a number of blue padded [prepaid] envelopes in a mailbox some blocks away. There were 15 envelopes in all, 14 with addresses in Sweden and one with an address in Norway.

The man, a 25-year-old whom we will call Peter, was arrested later in the evening. A house search was made at Stenkolsgatan. The building had a number of soundproofed rooms, which were being used by musicians for rehearsals. The police were able to identify two rooms that were connected to the three men. Emil was renting room 28, and the man who had been at Stenkolsgatan with Peter earlier in the day – Carl, age 42 – rented number 22. Both rooms contained equipment for the production of anabolic steroids in both tablet form and as injectable liquid. A large number of preparations were seized here.

Emil and Carl were arrested the following day, and the police in Gothenburg began an extensive investigation.

Securing evidence

The three men, who all shared an interest in weightlifting, could be linked to the premises and the seized items by, among other things, a number of fingerprints and DNA traces that were found in several places. The police also secured evidence that, for more than a year, the men had been selling primarily the anabolic steroids which they themselves had been producing on the premises. Conversations between Emil and Carl on the digital platform wickr revealed details about the buying of material, the production and sale of

preparations, and the exchange of large sums of money. Their customers included, among others, people with whom they had established contact on the closed Internet bodybuilder forum, Hushboard.

Johan Ekström, the officer in charge of the case in the surveillance section of the Gothenburg Police District, says that, after the men had established contact with interested buyers on the Hushboard, the deals were made through encrypted apps such as Wickr. Hundreds of thousands of SEK [equivalent to tens of thousands of USD] had been sent to Emil through Swish [a Swedish mobile phone-based bank transfer system]. Several of the people making those payments had been previously convicted of doping offenses and narcotic drug offenses.

Production of preparations and analyses

The AAS preparations for injection were being produced in room number 28. There were hotplates, pots, various measures and graduated cylinders, along with various mixtures of unknown liquids. A worktable holding a dosing machine/pump, empty and filled 10-ml vials, bottle caps, pliers for sealing packages, and a large number of labels with the name Gorilla Labs completed the picture.

In room number 22, all surfaces were covered by a layer of white powder dust. On a pile of cargo pallets in the room, there were a number of diverse plastic casks containing powder, a dosing machine/pump, a set of scales, and a

mixer. This room was used for the production of tablets, which were found in various bags. There was also packaging material, including blue pre-paid postal envelopes from PostNord, Sweden's National Postal Service.

All of the necessary laboratory equipment had been bought from a small company in Kista [a suburb of Stockholm]. Filling powder for tablets and oils for the production of preparations for injection – all of which are legal trade – are sold on the open market. However, it is illegal to buy the active AAS's from Chinese chemical companies.

Analyses by the Swedish National Forensic Center (NFC) of the very large quantity of AAS preparations revealed – as is always the case with this type of primitive manufacture – that both the content of active substance and the amount of substance can deviate from the label. In most cases, the type of active substances in the vials – e.g., testosterone enanthate or nandrolone decanoate – corresponded with the content stated on the label. However, the amount of substance was either lower or higher – sometimes considerably higher – than the level stated on the label. This may subject the user to additional risks.

The analyses of the tablets, on the other hand, showed lower amounts of substance than usual. Some tablets contained an entirely different substance than the one promised.



The room used for the production of tablets was covered by a thin layer of powder dust.



Left: In the production of AAS's for injection, the active AAS substances is being mixed with vegetable oils, e.g. sesame oil from Coop [a retail company], which was found on the premises, or is being dissolved through being heated on a hotplate.

*Below: Mid pump and plastic bag with preparations
On a table, a pump was found.
It was used for dosing the AAS oil into 10 ml vials.*

Quantity Calculations

When calculating the amounts of seized AAS preparations, which is important in estimating the seriousness of the crime, the starting point is the total amount of seized AAS preparations in tablet and liquid form. Thus, an exact calculation cannot be made until the Swedish National Forensic Center has analyzed the preparations and measured the concentrations.

When Johan Ekström, who had previously investigated and made quantity calculations in other major doping cases, computed the quantities in this case based on the results of the analysis reports, it was clear that this was the largest AAS seizure that the Gothenburg Police Department had ever made. According to the long-established calculation method, the total amount of active substance is converted into 5-mg units (the amount of substance is divided by 5). The final result was 2,171,283 units of 5 mg each. According to Swedish sentencing practice, an amount greater than 50,000 units is regarded as a serious doping crime.

Trials and verdicts

Emil, Carl and Peter were indicted mid-April 2020, and the trial was scheduled to last a couple of weeks. Emil confessed to some of his involvement, while the two other men denied everything and tried to explain away circumstances pointing to them. One disputed issue was the accuracy of quantity calculation of the seized preparations, which they and their defense counsel put a lot of effort into questioning. The Gothenburg District Court, however, rejected the objections and referred to a 2016 ruling by the Swedish Supreme Court in which the above-mentioned calculation method had been approved.

Emil and Carl were considered to have had prominent roles in the dealing of steroids. They were sentenced for serious doping offenses on May 28, 2020, to four-and-a-half years in prison. Peter, who had had a more unqualified involvement, was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison.



Gunnar Hermansson

Translated From Svenska Narkotikapolisföreningens Tidskrift (The Journal of the Swedish Narcotic Officers' Association), No. 3, pp. 10 – 11. (www.snppf.org)

A large number of adhesive labels with the specific trademark Cobra Pharma, belonging to the producers, was found on the premises.



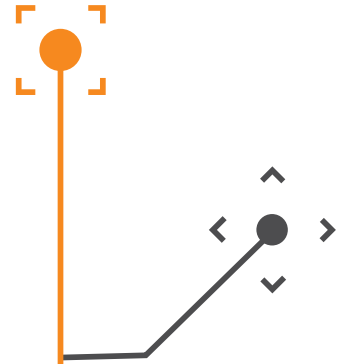
All photos: Swedish Police.

Uncover critical details with CLEAR[®].

When speed and accuracy count the most, identify persons of interest and make critical connections with investigative technology from Thomson Reuters.

Thomson Reuters is proud to be a 2020 Sponsor of the
National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition.

Request a demo at tr.com/clear



The intelligence, technology and human expertise
you need to find trusted answers.



Request a Demo Today

264

Law Enforcement Officer Fatalities

According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), **as of December 31, 2020, 264 federal, state, military, tribal, and local law enforcement officers died in the line-of-duty in 2020**, an increase of 96% from the 135 officers killed during the same period. In 2020, officer fatalities ranged from automobile crashes to heart attacks and from gunshots to being beaten to death. Of these tragic deaths, Covid-19 related fatalities were the single highest cause of officer line-of-duty deaths in 2020.

Of the 264 officers who have died in the line of duty, there were 145 confirmed Covid-19 cases. It must be noted however, as the pandemic rages on, NLEOMF has already identified a significant number of additional Covid-19-related fatalities. Once these cases are confirmed, NLEOMF projects that the total number of Covid-19 fatalities and the total number of line-of-duty deaths will grow significantly. Unfortunately, even with the preliminary Covid-19 fatalities, 2020 had the highest number of law enforcement line-of-duty deaths since 1974.

Firearms-related fatalities were the second most common cause of officer deaths, with 48 officers killed in 2020. This represents a 6% decrease from the 51 officers killed in firearms-related incidents during the same period in 2019. The leading circumstance of firearms-related fatalities was officers investigating suspicious persons or activities, followed by attempting an arrest. Ambush attacks leading to officers' deaths remained constant compared to the same period the previous year.

Forty-four officers have been killed in traffic-related fatalities in 2020, a two percent increase, compared to 43 deaths during the same period the previous year. Automobiles were the single leading cause of death, with 18 of those incidents being a collision with another vehicle, and 8 single vehicle crashes. Throughout the year, there were also 15 struck-by fatalities and 3 motorcycle fatalities.

During 2020, 172 officers died of other causes. Of these deaths, 10 were physical-related, such as a heart attack or stroke suffered on duty, and 12 succumbed to injuries sustained in the 9/11 terrorists attacks. Additionally, three officers drowned, one perished in a helicopter crash, and one was beaten to death. The largest single cause of death in this category and in the entire report are the 145 Covid-19 deaths where officers were confirmed by their agency to have engaged in a line-of-duty action or activity and the officer was diagnosed or evidence indicated that the officer had Covid-19 or complications at the time of the officer's death.

↑ 300%

increase in **Other line-of-duty deaths** due to Covid-19 pandemic

Reprinted with permission from page

2 | 2020 **Law Enforcement Officers Fatalities Report**

Supporting Our Nation's Narcotics Officers Through Information Sharing, Investigative Support, and Officer Safety

By Donna K. Williams

Chair, Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) National Policy Group and
Executive Director, Regional Organized Crime Information Center (ROCIC), a RISS Center

Narcotics officers risk their lives every day to help remove dangerous drugs, contraband, and offenders from our streets. Often agencies, especially small and rural agencies, do not have a dedicated narcotics unit or the appropriate equipment, analytical capabilities, or investigative support units to assist in large-scale operations. The Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Program helps bridge this gap by supporting law enforcement efforts by providing information and intelligence sharing solutions, investigative research and analysis, and lifesaving tools that help keep our officers and our citizens safe.

RISS has served law enforcement entities for more than 47 years. More than **9,400 law enforcement agencies** are members of RISS and rely on RISS for its full range of diverse and far-reaching services and programs. RISS assists agencies from the beginning of an investigation through the prosecution and conviction of criminals. For example, a narcotics officer can query multiple intelligence databases, retrieve information from investigative systems, solicit assistance from research staff, utilize surveillance equipment, receive essential training, access specialized publications, and use analytical staff to help develop products that aid in the apprehension, prosecution, and conviction of criminals. In 2020, officers across the nation accessed RISS's technology resources or requested assistance millions of times. Officers reported that last year alone, by using RISS services, they were able to recover more than **\$89 million in narcotics, currency, and property**.

RISS consists of six regional centers (see listing and map below) and the RISS Technology Support Center (RTSC). RISS was built by law enforcement for law enforcement with the support of many law enforcement leaders and associations. RISS is proud of its partnership with the NNOAC and is honored to support narcotics officers in the field.

In each of the six RISS regions, law enforcement professionals serve as policy board members and volunteer their time and expertise to provide guidance and support to each RISS Center. Policy board members serve as a voice, representing the field's needs. The RISS Centers also work collectively to address nationwide initiatives and to support the nation's criminal justice strategy.

RISS Facilitates Multijurisdictional Information Sharing

RISS facilitates and fosters communication and information sharing among law enforcement entities. To accomplish this goal, RISS developed and maintains the RISS Secure Cloud (RISSNET), which connects disparate systems; provides bidirectional sharing; offers a single simultaneous search of connected systems; and houses hundreds of resources (many owned by partners), collaboration tools, and databases.

Within RISSNET, RISS has developed and operates several critical law enforcement resources, including the RISS Criminal Intelligence Database (RISSIntel). RISSIntel provides for the real-time, online federated search of more than **60** state, regional, and federal intelligence systems containing millions of records. RISSIntel has proven to be a vital resource in identifying information and supporting case resolution. For example, while conducting law enforcement checks of known heroin users on a reservation, a tribal

The Six RISS Centers

**Middle Atlantic-Great Lakes Organized
Crime Law Enforcement Network
(MAGLOCLEN)**

**Mid-States Organized Crime Information
Center (MOCIC)**

**New England State Police Information
Network (NESPIN)**

**Regional Organized Crime Information
Center (ROCIC)**

**Rocky Mountain Information Network
(RMIN)**

**Western States Information Network
(WSIN)**



police department connected several known users to a specific individual with no ties to the reservation. After additional querying and entering various subjects into RISSIntel, detectives connected the individual to a narcotics investigation in Oregon. According to the detectives from Oregon, the

subject bragged about smuggling heroin into the United States using several couriers who would “body carry” the drugs across the border. The detective then notified various law enforcement agencies to flag the known associates from the reservation. As a result, thus far, two reservation residents have been arrested for smuggling heroin and fentanyl across the U.S.-Mexican border upon their reentry. The investigation continues and now has involved collaboration with local, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies. This is just one example of how RISSIntel helps connect information and officers.

In 2020, the RTSC, working with RISS leadership, committees, officers, and other subject-matter experts, designed and developed the **next generation of RISSIntel**. The new RISSIntel is housed in the secure government cloud, provides user-friendly features, and contains new functionality grounded in the latest technology. It includes new infrastructure, a new user interface, and industry-leading security and reliability methods. The new RISSIntel is a modern, more efficient system that is easier to access and use. It has been designed with the officer in mind and includes features such as a dark mode for use at night in patrol vehicles and links to notifications, reports, advanced search, submittal, help, and feedback. The new RISSIntel is accessible on various devices, such as desktops, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices, and will function across multiple operating systems. The new RISSIntel will start being available to RISS member agencies in mid-2021.

Another resource developed by RISS and housed on RISSNET is the RISSLeads Investigative Website (RISSLeads). RISSLeads helps officers generate investigative leads and facilitate multijurisdictional information sharing. RISS also provides access to the RISS Property and Recovery Tracking System (RISSProp), the RISS Master Telephone Index (MTI), the RISS Money Counter Program (MCP),

and the RISS Drug Pricing Reference Guide. These various resources directly support investigative efforts including those targeting drug traffickers, narcotics offenders, and related crimes. These and other RISS resources represent more than **60.8 million** records. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, authorized RISSNET users inquired RISS resources more than **4.5 million** times. RISSProp alone has helped recover more than **\$8 million** in property since its inception.

RISS Provides Investigative Case Support

RISS provides a full-service delivery model to law enforcement agencies and officers through comprehensive investigative case support. RISS intelligence research staff develop, review, and compile information from various data sources, which can help identify suspects, victims, and witnesses and provide other critical information to aid investigative efforts. RISS helps find the needle in the haystack—an address, a witness, or a family member; a small nugget of information may be all an officer needs to locate a suspect. RISS’s intelligence research staff respond to thousands of requests for research and technical assistance each year. As an example, a drug interdiction team requested intelligence research staff support regarding criminal investigations of suspected drug traffickers traveling through the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport in Arizona. The suspects were carrying more currency than the allotted travel amount. The RISS intelligence research staff identified and compiled information on the suspects, which aided in the suspects’ prosecution.

RISS analysts develop thousands of specialized analytical products each year for investigators and prosecutors to increase their abilities to identify, detect, and apprehend suspects and enhance prosecutorial success in court. Examples include cell tower mapping, 2D and 3D crime scene diagrams, and audio/video enhancements. Recently, a Pennsylvania District Attorney’s Office requested assistance with a pending homicide trial to convey to a jury a complex timeline of events that preceded the homicide. The RISS analytical staff reviewed the investigative reports and available surveillance footage and met with investigators and prosecutors to discuss the case. The RISS analytical staff secured high-resolution aerial imagery and coupled it with crime scene photos and sketches to accurately portray the relevant scenes. Demonstrative elements introduced at trial included a scaled crime scene diagram of the murder location, a photo array illustrating recovered ballistics evidence, and a detailed map highlighting the escape route. Following a jury trial, the defendant was convicted of third-degree homicide and sentenced to 17 to 34 years in prison. Once sentencing was completed, the lead prosecutor



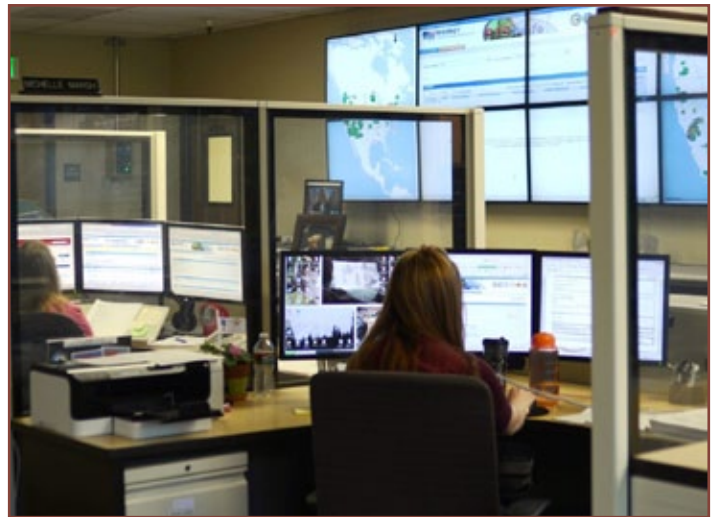
commented that the RISS exhibits were so crucial to his case that the jury members specifically requested them during their deliberations.

Some RISS Centers also offer equipment loans to law enforcement entities for surveillance or other investigative activities. This specialized equipment can make a substantial difference in building cases and investigating and apprehending criminals. A Kansas police department borrowed RISS specialized investigative equipment for use in a narcotics investigation. Authorities were investigating a drug trafficker involved in distributing large quantities of cocaine and crack cocaine. The equipment was used to document evidence of criminal activity and reveal the target source of supply. As a result of the investigation, authorities arrested two suspects and seized narcotics, valued at more than \$23,000; vehicles, valued at \$40,000; weapons, valued at \$5,000; and more than \$25,000 in currency. The investigating officer said the equipment was instrumental to the investigation.

The RISS Center publications staff also develop law enforcement-sensitive briefings and publications on topics such as sovereign citizens, police ambush, human trafficking, and synthetic drugs. Recently, a police officer in Texas made a felony arrest and narcotics seizure during a traffic stop after reading a RISS bulletin that outlined a new concealment technique involving the dangerous opioid fentanyl being disguised as candy and children's toys.

RISS Helps Save Lives and Solve Cases

RISS recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety of law enforcement officers. To further enhance officer safety, RISS developed and operates the RISS Officer Safety and Deconfliction System (RISSafe), a comprehensive and nationwide event deconfliction system accessible and monitored on a 24/7/365 basis and available at no cost to all law enforcement agencies. Since its inception, more than **2.3 million operations** have been entered into RISSafe, with more than **500,000 conflicts identified**. RISSafe Watch Centers monitor events and notify officers of potential conflicts and respond to other law enforcement officer requests. RISSafe enables officers to access the program any time on any device, via RISSafe Mobile. Through



RISSafe, RISS helps agencies maintain the integrity of their investigations, maximize and safeguard their assets, and connect officers across jurisdictions, while saving lives.

RISSafe also provides subject (target) deconfliction through RISSIntel. RISS has connected RISSafe with the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas' (HIDTA) SAFETNet and Case Explorer event deconfliction systems to enhance nationwide event deconfliction coverage. Along with RISSafe, RISS operates the RISS Officer Safety Website, which provides secure access to vetted, trusted information and materials on topics, including armed and dangerous individuals and situations, concealments, officer safety videos, and training. To enhance the resources provided through RISSafe and the RISS Officer Safety Website, RISS delivers online training for the use of RISSafe and general officer safety training. Each RISS Center develops and distributes officer safety-related educational materials, publications, and bulletins that are sent to its membership. RISSafe is particularly critical for narcotics officers who may be working undercover, engaging in drug buys, issuing search warrants, and participating in high-risk operations.

Last year, a local police department contacted its RISSafe Watch Center regarding a search warrant operation involving an ongoing narcotics investigation. The detectives served a search warrant, which resulted in the seizure of \$12,161 in U.S. currency; 2 firearms; 1 vehicle; tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) oil laboratory equipment, valued at \$10,000; 3 pounds of marijuana, valued at \$5,000; 11 pounds of raw



*"I don't need RISS every day,
but I know it's there when I need
it. And when I need it, it matters."*

cannabis oil concentrate, valued at \$432,000; and several thousand THC-filled vaping cartridges, valued at \$80,760. One suspect was arrested and booked on multiple felony drug charges.

RISS Makes a Difference

Recently, an officer said, “The value of RISS cannot be put into words.” But it can be put like this: law enforcement agencies reported that, over the last ten years, officers leveraging RISS’s services arrested nearly **34,000** offenders and seized more than **\$2.3 billion in narcotics, property, and currency**. The RISS Centers supported more than **1.4 million** requests for investigative services between FY2018 and FY2020. RISS services and resources impact investigative efforts and operations daily. This is evident in the hundreds of shared success stories that agencies and officers submit to RISS each year. To read more success stories and learn more about how RISS can impact your

agency, please visit www.riss.net/impact.

Law enforcement plus RISS equals results; one significant reason for RISS’s success is TRUST. RISS is a trusted partner and resource that law enforcement agencies and officers utilize to solve cases and stay safe. Recently, an officer said, “I don’t need RISS every day, but I know it’s there when I need it. And when I need it, it matters.” ○

Agencies and officers are encouraged to contact their in-region RISS Center (map and contact information below) to learn more about how RISS can help support their efforts. Additional information can also be accessed at www.riss.net.



Regional Information Sharing Systems® Program

MOCIC
Established: 1980
Executive Director:
David A. Hall
(800) 846-6242
info@mocic.riss.net

NESPIN
Established: 1979
Executive Director:
Curtis M. McKenzie
(508) 528-8200
info@nespin.riss.net

Nationwide Contact
Chief Information Officer:
Matt McDonald
(215) 208-2702
mmcdonald@riss.net

WSIN
Established: 1980
Executive Director:
Kent A. Shaw
(800) 952-5258
info@wsin.riss.net

MAGLOCLEN
Established: 1981
Executive Director:
Douglas J. Burig
(800) 345-1322
info@magloclen.riss.net

RMIN
Established: 1977
Executive Director:
Jeff L. Pierce
(800) 821-0640
info@rmin.riss.net

ROCIC
Established: 1973
Executive Director:
Donna K. Williams
(800) 238-7985
info@rocic.riss.net

RISS Technology Support Center
Chief Technology Officer:
Julie K. Humphrey
(615) 849-2560
jhumphrey@risstech.riss.net

By Aaron Tucker, Major
For “The Coalition”

COCAINE SEIZURES IN THE TIME OF COVID - AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE



Cocaine bricks seized aboard the Australian fishing vessel Coralynne, August 2020 - Image source: <https://newsroom.abf.gov.au/>

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in border closures, unprecedented international travel restrictions and public health emergencies being declared in all corners of the world. The pandemic and the subsequent border security responses have not deterred transnational criminal organisations (TCOs) seeking to supply the growing demand for cocaine in Australia. To service the illicit market, TCOs have adapted smuggling methods to increase the volume of cocaine being trafficked from source and transshipment countries to Australian shores and 2020 has seen new national records set for the interdiction of this drug.

Brief history of cocaine use in Australia

Introduced to Australia in 1885 as an anaesthetic for use during medical procedures, cocaine as a commodity

quickly gathered momentum in broader Australian society. Returning soldiers from the Western Front and Dardanelles campaigns were exposed to the pharmaceutical use of cocaine in military dispensaries and on the streets of London during travel to the frontlines of Europe and military leave furloughs¹, and the use of cocaine in Australia increased following the conclusion of the First World War of 1914-18.

By the 1920s, cocaine was widely available through chemist shops, and regulation of dispensaries was complicated by the large states of Victoria and New South Wales adopting different approaches to enforcement and compliance. Drug laws varied in their application, and while the state of Victoria implemented Dangerous Drug Regulations in 1922, police in the state of New South Wales did not acquire legislative power to enforce narcotics laws until 1927.²

Fast-forward to the current day, and the illicit cocaine market is again expanding rapidly. Australia has in place a National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program (NWDMP), which started in 2016³. This program provides analytic feedback around the consumption of drugs in metropolitan and rural Australia. Since 2020, this program and the analytic tools and techniques associated with it have been applied to sampling and detection of the COVID-19 virus to inform public health responses to the pandemic.⁴

In relation to cocaine use in Australia, in 2020 the NWDMP established that average cocaine consumption in Australian capital cities reached a record high point, with national consumption rates at their highest points since the commencement of the NWDMP. In raw figures, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) estimates that annual consumption is around 4600kgs (10141lbs), with recorded total seizures of 1638kg (3611lbs) of cocaine in 2018-19 representing approximately 35% of the total estimated consumption volume seized by authorities.⁵

Increase in blue-water seizures

As an island nation surrounded on all points of the compass by the Southern, Indian and Pacific Oceans, Australia's international borders can only be crossed via air and sea. The methodologies adopted by TCOs to smuggle commodities and people reflect the constraints and opportunities presented by these two domains. By weight, the most recent seizure information reflects the preferred mediums of maritime cargo streams (72%), international postage and mail services (12%), air cargo (12%) and human passenger/couriers (4%)⁶.

In recent years, however, a trend of ‘blue-water’ interdictions have pointed towards a larger-scale, more sophisticated model being adopted by TCOs to bring significantly higher loads of cocaine across the seas, exploiting traditional freedom-of-navigation conventions

and the vastness of the oceans surrounding Australia. In 2017, a three year investigation by Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force, New Zealand Customs Service, New Zealand Police, the Fijian Transnational Crime Unit and French Polynesian agencies resulted in the interception of a sailing ship, the Elakha on 02 February 2017 by the Royal Australian Navy⁷. When Australian civil authorities boarded and searched the Elakha, 1400kg (3086lbs) of cocaine with an estimated value of AUD\$300 million was located. At this time, the operation represented the largest seizure of cocaine in Australian law enforcement history and this seizure alone represented over 30% of the total cocaine seized by Australian authorities in 2017.

Details released by Australian and New Zealand agencies outlined that the Elakha made a rendezvous at sea in the southern Pacific Ocean with a larger ‘mothership’, where the cocaine was transferred aboard prior to the Elakha being detained and searched, with the crew being arrested and charged with a variety of drug-related offences.

Despite the closure of Australia’s international borders to non-resident travellers in March 2020, the capacity of Australian naval and border protection units to track, identify and interdict illegal shipping does not seem to have deterred the reinvigoration of ‘mothership’ operations. In an operation that eclipsed the boarding of the Elakha, on 15 August 2020, the Australian commercial fishing vessel Coralynne was intercepted by a New South Wales Police vessel off the coast of Newcastle. The Coralynne had been observed approaching a foreign vessel that had been detected enroute to Australian waters, resulting in the Coralynne being boarded by law enforcement. Onboard, approximately 1890kg (4167lbs) of what authorities will allege is cocaine was seized and the crew of three arrested. The potential value of the amount of cocaine has been estimated at AUD\$850.5 million⁸.

Mothers and daughters

The utilisation of ‘mothership’ operations is significant on a number of levels. These operations are resource-intensive – as an option to the more traditional investment in multiple concealments in maritime shipping containers inside the cargo stream, TCOs are procuring vessels and crews that are capable of navigating oceanic trade and fisheries routes. Collusion or coercion has to occur with both master of the vessel and the crew aboard in order to lodge, account for and transfer the illicit drug cargo. In addition to the costs and overheads involved in this type of trafficking, TCOs must also incorporate the costs of provisioning, fuelling and supplying crews for smaller sailing or fishing vessels to complete the last leg of the smuggling route from the mothership location into Australian littoral zones.

The larger drug payloads represent the acceptance of higher levels of risk by TCOs who are now repeatedly using this method to continue to attempt to service increasing consumption rate of the illicit cocaine market in Australia.

Notable 2020 seizures

In addition to the ‘blue-water’ smuggling approach, 2020 has seen a number of other disrupted attempts to supply Australia’s cocaine market, including:

- the seizure of 6kg (13lbs) of cocaine in April 2020 following taskforce investigations into cocaine smuggling through international mail and cargo systems
- the seizure of 20kg (44lbs) of cocaine concealed in welding machines imported through air cargo from Greece in August 2020 (estimated street value AUD\$20 million)
- the seizure of 552kg (1217lbs) of cocaine smuggled inside refrigerated banana pulp from Brazil in Sydney



Australian authorities board the fishing vessel Coralynne, allegedly carrying Australia’s largest cocaine seizure to date in August 2020

- Image source: <https://newsroom.abf.gov.au>

COCAINE SEIZURES IN THE TIME OF COVID - AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE, CONTINUED

in September 2020 (estimated street value AUD\$248 million)

- the seizure of 144kg (317lbs) of cocaine concealed in hydraulic cylinders from South Africa in October 2020 (estimated street value AUD\$64.8 million)
- the seizure of 11kgs (24lbs) of cocaine concealed in an alternator from Chile in October 2020
- the offshore seizure in Papua New Guinea (Australia's closest Pacific Island neighbour) of more than 500kg (1102lbs) of cocaine (estimated street value AUD\$80 million) in August 2020, which authorities will allege an organised crime syndicate had conspired to smuggle into Australia. An aircraft used by the syndicate crashed while attempting take-off from a remote airstrip in Papua New Guinea.

Trends and technology options

With the above-mentioned major seizure/disruption activity accounting for an attempted import volume of approximately 3123kgs (6885lbs) in 2020, the indication of the potential market growth for cocaine can be extrapolated. Using the ACIC seizure-to-consumption calculation of 35%, and assuming consumption maintained a steady state, it could be estimated that Australian cocaine consumption has the capacity to expand in the coming year to around 9000kgs (19842lbs) – almost doubling current consumption estimates.

This indicates that that the market for cocaine in Australia has grown drastically throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. With these indicators all pointing to further significant growth in demand, despite tighter border controls being in place, it would be timely for Australian authorities to consider boosting maritime surveillance and response capabilities. TCOs are likely to have already identified the booming market for cocaine in Australia, and are clearly adapting their approach to deliver multi-tonne shipments by direct maritime approach through the oceans surrounding Australia. With over 34,000kms of coastline⁹, Australia's maritime border domain is vast and the resources required for surveillance and security response are significant. Current options being considered to augment existing naval and national security capabilities are unmanned surface vessels, which use renewable energy sources (eg solar and wind power) and can remain at sea for extended periods. Providing effective surveillance, constant international engagement with our Pacific Island neighbours and generating rapid and decisive regional responses will be the keys to countering the evolving tactics of maritime cocaine imports as the nation-wide effects of the pandemic continue into their second year in 2021.

Notes

1. McCoy, A, 1980, *Drug Traffic: Narcotics and Organized Crime in Australia*, Harper and Row, pp 84-85.
2. *ibid*, p88
3. Commonwealth of Australia, 2020, *National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program – Report 10*, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, p 12
4. Commonwealth of Australia, 2020, *National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program – Report 11*, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, p 1
5. Commonwealth of Australia, 2020, *Illicit Drug Data Report 2018 – 2019*, Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, p 12
6. *Ibid*, p 77
7. Australian Border Force, 2020, viewed 22 Dec 2020, <<https://newsroom.abf.gov.au/releases/australia-s-biggest-cocaine-interception-1-4-tonnes-seized-six-charged-2>>
8. Australian Federal Police, 2020, viewed 22 Dec 20, <<https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/mediareleases/trio-arrested-authorities-make-large-scale-drug-seizure-nsw-coast>>
9. Commonwealth of Australia, 2020, *Australia's Coasts and Estuaries*, Geoscience Australia, viewed 22 Dec 2020, <https://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/marine/coasts-estuaries>

About the Author:

Aaron Tucker

is a serving law enforcement officer with the Australian Border Force and visited the NNOAC Annual Conference in Washington, DC in 2019 as a Sir Winston Churchill Fellow for countering Organised Crime. He has also served with the Australian Defence Force in the Southwest Pacific, Iraq and Afghanistan as a full-time and reserve officer and currently holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Australian Corps of Military Police.



*What ever is worth living for
is worth dying to protect.*

