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# THE COALITION

THE NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS ASSOCIATIONS COALITION

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

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# President's Report

By Bob Bushman

## 2018 Half Time Report

While the Trump Administration brought along a renewed respect for law enforcement, there has been little happening in the political arena to support drug enforcement. Deaths due to drug poisonings and opioid abuse continue to plague many of our communities; record quantities of methamphetamine are being seized; supplies of cocaine are increasing; and distribution of domestically produced marijuana is expanding exponentially. Along with that, many areas of our country have experienced an increase in violent crime.

There have been a few bright spots. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has worked tirelessly to refocus the Department of Justice in the fight against drug trafficking and violent crime. Newly appointed United States Attorneys and Judges, along with new Justices on the US Supreme Court, will help us in our efforts to enforce laws that will protect our citizens.

Unfortunately, other events have overshadowed that progress.



President Bob Bushman

The continuous calls for “criminal justice reform” have many members of Congress believing it is time to dismantle policies and laws that have proven to be effective in the fight against violent crime. As a result, the FIRST STEP Act moved through the US House and has landed in the Senate. Included in that bill are provisions that will result in the release of more repeat offenders and sentence reductions for fentanyl and carfentanil dealers, and it has many more provisions that will provide relief to those convicted of crimes. Your NNOAC Board has weighed in against the FIRST STEP Act, and we encouraged many of you to contact your members of the Senate to urge them to keep this flawed bill from becoming law.

The heralded release of the Cocaine Grandma, Alice Johnson, was another example of how the priority of some is to focus efforts on those who do not respect our laws, rather than the good, law-abiding citizens. Many involved in her release, along with the media, mischaracterized Alice Johnson’s case, portraying her as a “first time, non-violent offender”, even though she was convicted of trafficking thousands of kilos of cocaine and other crimes for her role in a large conspiracy. I urge you to read her indictment and the Appeals Court decision affirming her convictions. Even more alarming, some are urging the President to consider commutations for thousands of other offenders like Alice Johnson.

The NNOAC and many of our law enforcement partners oppose such commutations and we are proactively working to bring attention to the realities of drug abuse and violent

crime. We have provided many examples of the problems caused by poor policy decisions and ineffective legislation. That is our expertise. It is time for our policy makers to take some advice from us.

To that end, I invite you to consider participating in two upcoming events. **On September 12th, 2018, NNOAC will again host a Drug Enforcement Forum at the ATF Headquarters in Washington, DC.**

We will invite many of our law enforcement and criminal justice partners, along with some advocacy groups, to discuss what is really working to help curb the current opioid crisis. We will have some subject matter experts, panel discussions and a group roundtable during the one-day event. **Please look for the announcement on pages 50-51 in this issue of *The Coalition*.**

And, it is not too early to start thinking about the annual **NNOAC DC Delegates Conference, which will be held February 3-6, 2019, at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC.** That is where the NNOAC really does our heavy lifting. Our agenda will include speakers and updates from Federal Agencies and our partner organizations, as well as members of Congress. Anyone who has attended our prior NNOAC DC Conferences will tell you that we provide one of the most powerful and impressive conference agendas in Washington, DC.

On Tuesday, February 5th, 2019, we will make our annual Hill visits, during which our NNOAC members meet with their elected representatives and staff to discuss our priorities and to educate them about our concerns. If

## Half Time cont.

you haven't attended our DC Delegates Conference before, I urge you to consider doing so. It gives you an inside view of how our government works that you will find in few other places in this profession. We have the registration announcement through-out this issue of *The Coalition*, and it will also be posted on our webpage at [www.nnoac.com](http://www.nnoac.com).

I want all of you to know, although you may not see it, that I, your NNOAC Board, and our friends at Brooks Bawden Moore are working daily on behalf of all of you, fighting (literally) for the policies, laws, and resources that you need to protect our communities from the drug scourge that is devastating so many families and claiming so many American lives. ➤

*Please keep in mind that, while our leaders are spinning their wheels trying to decide how to remedy our nation's drug problems, you – the NNOAC members – are actually doing something about it. You do the work that no one else wants to do. You are making a difference. I thank you for that.*

**Register & pay for 2019**

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**Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

We will make our annual Hill visits, during which our NNOAC members meet with their elected representatives and staff to discuss our priorities and to educate them about our concerns.

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# A Case of Undeserved Clemency

By Bob Bushman

\*This is an "op-ed" and is solely the opinion of the author.

While many consider Alice Johnson, the Cocaine Grandma, a "first time, non-violent offender", nothing could be further from the truth. Alice Johnson and her co-conspirators distributed several thousand kilograms of cocaine, worth millions of dollars, to countless victims over several years. While she may have had a change of heart during her time in prison, that only occurred after she was caught and incarcerated. It took her arrest, conviction and finally imprisonment to bring her to that realization.

## **No, Alice Johnson was not a first time offender.**

When she was finally convicted, that was not for her first crime. The truth is, Alice Johnson committed hundreds of crimes during her drug dealing career. I know this because I have read her indictment and the Appeals Court decision that affirmed her convictions. I would encourage you to do the same before forming an opinion as to the level of her criminal behavior.

Alice Johnson describes herself as "a telephone mule", probably in reference to the thousands of calls that went to her phones during the course of the drug trafficking conspiracy for which she was convicted. The Appeals Court review of her case cites specific instances where she provided leadership and substantial assistance to the conspiracy - thousands of phone calls, renting properties to assist with the trafficking operation, purchasing vehicles for transporting drugs, warning other co-conspirators to help them avoid arrest, taking delivery of cocaine and making payments for it to the Columbian Cali Cartel. And then there's the money laundering - millions of dollars.

**There were no honest mistakes made.** Alice Johnson committed those crimes willingly. She justified her involvement in drug trafficking because of a broken marriage, a death in the family and hard financial times. Millions of Americans experience those same tragedies, yet they do not turn to criminal activity or prey on their neighbors and community the way Alice Johnson did. It is not right to absolve her of the responsibility for consciously, carelessly and callously peddling poison to so many people, seeking their ruin for her personal benefit and gain. How many lives will we let a drug dealer destroy before they are considered to be deserving of a life sentence in prison?

I understand the broad scope of Alice Johnson's criminal activity, but why can't the media or the pundits that have lauded her release? Their mischaracterization and acceptance of her criminal activity is shameful. Why won't

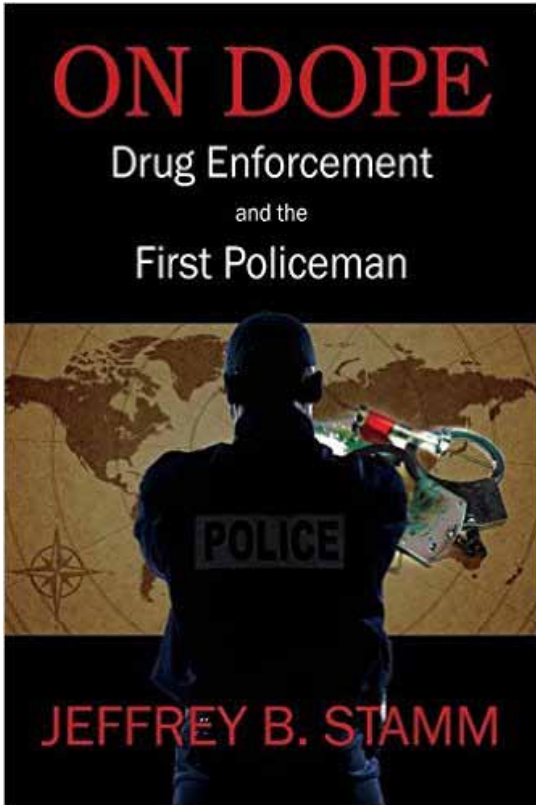
they take a close look at the facts of this case before they parade Alice Johnson out onto the podium as one who has fallen victim to our justice system? To downplay or excuse her criminal conduct is a hard slap in the face to those who became addicted to her poison, who lost their physical and mental health, financial security and the love of family.

**We should all be demanding justice for the people who lost their lives to drug abuse and addiction because of the selfish greed of Alice Johnson and her drug dealing cohorts.** While Alice Johnson now gets a "second chance" to live a life of freedom and to be reunited with her family, her victims' families have nothing to rejoice about. None of them will get a second chance or any reunification. Though many of them never committed any crimes, they are serving life sentences for which there is no commutation because Alice Johnson's drugs ruined their lives.

**I cannot judge Alice Johnson's heart. That is up to a higher power. But I can demand, as should you, that people like her, who bring so much death, destruction and misery upon our society be held fully accountable for their crimes.** I do not accept for a minute that Alice Johnson deserves anything less than to serve every day of the life sentence she earned for destroying so many lives and robbing those people of their futures, while also devastating their families and communities. **A sentence of life in prison comes nowhere close to paying the debt she owes to the families of all of those who became addicted to her drugs or who died in the wake of her drug dealing business.**

Elected officials need to do more to protect our communities from the tragic consequences of drug abuse and violent crime. Granting sentence commutations, reducing penalties for drug and violent crimes and prohibiting enforcement of drug laws have only made drug abuse and crime problems worse. Rather than caving to the demands of convicted criminals and their sympathizers who do not respect our laws, a higher priority should be to support law enforcement's efforts to protect our law-abiding citizens and their families from becoming the next victims of the drug epidemic that is devastating our country and killing so many Americans.

**Bob Bushman** is the President of the National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC). The NNOAC represents 60,000 members from State Narcotic Officers' Associations and several partner organizations as they monitor and engage in policy issues regarding drug law enforcement and other criminal justice and public safety initiatives. [bbushman@nnoac.com](mailto:bbushman@nnoac.com) or 202-417-3931



*On Dope: Drug Enforcement and The First Policeman* Paperback – March 31, 2016  
by Jeffrey B Stamm (Author)

5.0 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

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## On Dope: Book Review

# On Dope: Drug Enforcement and the First Policeman

By Jeffrey B. Stamm  
Outskirts Press (2016)

Reviewed by:  
Patrick Arata, Chief of Police  
City of Trophy Club, Texas

In this age of expanding drug use and constant attacks against our nation's law enforcers – both rhetorically and physically – a new book powerfully pushes back against the reckless and illegitimate accusations that the so-called war on drugs has not only “failed,” but that it has been “racist” and “oppressive.” Jeffrey Stamm, a 31-year veteran of the Drug Enforcement Administration, provides an articulate and highly compelling argument in defense of our current efforts to control the use and trafficking of illegal drugs. With blistering evidence drawn from considerable research, he unflinchingly indicts both a polluted pop culture that glorifies and mainstreams drug use, as well as particular segments of our political leadership for their astonishingly mute and feckless leadership on the issue.

***On Dope is an essential book for any law enforcement officer or drug policy professional seeking to understand the history and scope of this problem.***

The insights in the book passionately marshal the bold arguments necessary to counter the unceasing deceptions and propaganda of misguided “experts” who seek, either purposely or naïvely, to dangerously mislead the public.

For many of those who believe that drugs ought to be legalized, *On Dope* will change their minds. And for those who already understand that drugs should remain controlled, this book provides a comprehensive and indispensable set of facts that illustrate the complexities of the problem; complexities that do not lend themselves to clever, superficial, external fixes that, usually rooted in preexisting ideologies, reflect theories that many simply want to believe in. With abundant examples from the real world, *On Dope* is a “radical” defense of our current drug control paradigm that Stamm calls, in paraphrasing Churchill, “the worst system ever devised by the wit of man – except for all the others.”

This book is a “must read” for anyone working in the arena of drug law enforcement!

## Dope, Character and Culture

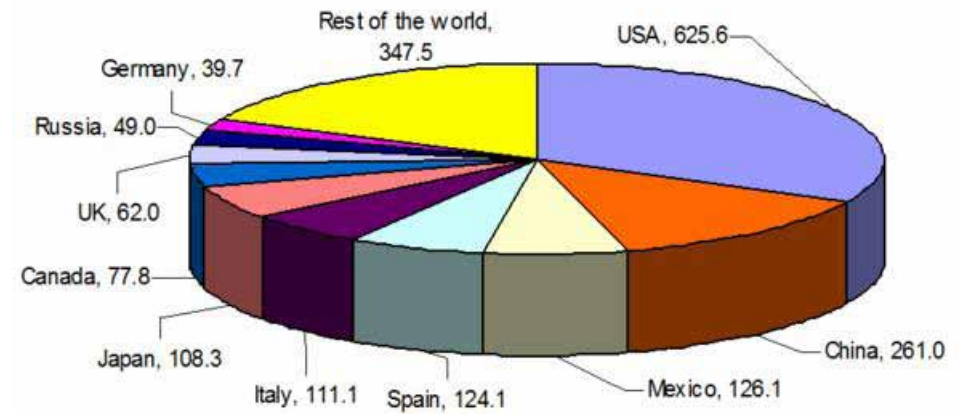
*By Jeffrey B. Stamm*

**If you can't  
behave  
yourself, you  
can't live  
here.**

*Motto of the Mesquite, Texas  
Police Department*

Culture is not something we merely consume, it is something we create and continuously re-create. It is the collective expression of our shared social and political structures that reflect our values and beliefs. It is how we define ourselves and conform to the behaviors that we regard as normal and acceptable. Our culture springs directly from the habits and conventions of many preceding generations that have sought to maximize our ability to live together under the rule of law, as well as standards of decency and responsibility that uphold the duty to preserve society. The purpose of civil society, according to Aristotle, is not merely to guarantee “men’s rights against one another” but, rather, to form good citizens and to cultivate good character. Any true government, he declared, “must devote itself to the end of encouraging goodness.”<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that, in democratic societies, you “get the government you deserve.” We have apparently grown so politically and morally lazy that not only have we lost the will and the capacity to confront the problems



that threaten to sweep over us all, we have allowed a pernicious kind of nonjudgmentalism and self-indulgence to infect and poison the very marrow of our traditional culture. Instead of electing officials who call upon us to commit to society’s shared purposes and small but necessary accommodations, we have increasingly entrusted much of our government to those who simply attempt to satisfy the immediate desires of every selfish faction. Many of us take our government and our culture—painstakingly created by the inestimable exertions and untold sacrifices of many who have come before us—entirely for granted.

Former Attorney General Eric Holder was right when he called his countrymen “a nation of cowards,” although not in the way he intended. It is not the topic of race that we hide from and bury, but individual accountability and the social requirement to take responsibility and control over one’s own actions. We have grown afraid to criticize reckless, destructive, and predatory behaviors lest we be labeled intolerant or bigoted or narrow-minded. Both “sophisticated” liberals and “advanced” libertarians, alike, who advocate ending the nation’s supposed “war on drugs” not only excuse

irresponsible and parasitic behaviors, they undermine the rule of law. To submit to the offensively dishonest argument that drug enforcement, not drugs, is the problem not only emboldens the gifted demagogues who peddle a deceitful panacea, but enables the wicked traffickers who pollute and destroy our society and our young citizens by peddling dope; that is, illegal or illicit drugs.

Government should, by policy and by law, encourage the highest values and ethical behavior of the people in order to preserve the glues that bind our fragile society together. It should elevate the people’s character and seek to advance justice and prosperity. Alexis de Tocqueville worried that the greatest threat to our democratic state would one day come in the form of a type of mediocrity that would not only be encouraged but enforced. By excusing individual actions that are destructive not only of the self but of the social order, and then providing seemingly endless “therapeutic” and “compassionate” sanctuary from the consequences of one’s actions, we not only encourage parasitically reckless behaviors, we incentivize them. By focusing on perceived or imagined inequalities in the application of our

drug laws in an imperfect democratic society, instead of upon the unlawful, detrimental and predatory activities of individual actors, much of our leadership has undermined its own laws and facilitated the expansion of drug use in our country, as well as of those who furnish it.

Those who delude themselves with the notion that the “war on drugs” has “failed” or is “racist” or “futile,” either are terribly blinded by ideology or have succumbed to the fraudulent propaganda of those who seek, with the zealous devotion of a fanatic, the complete transformation of our culture and nation. The likes of George Soros and Ethan Nadelmann and their countless dupes continue to deceive an increasingly uninformed and uninvolved nation into thinking that, in the name of tolerance, not only is unlimited recreational drug use is acceptable but those who stand in its way are the very enemies of personal freedom. The message of these pro-dope charlatans has not only accelerated our decay but also empowered the transnational criminal organizations that work to feed the global appetites for neurochemical pleasure. Like the strands of an intertwined rope, the drug apologists and drug traffickers, in concert with our self-absorbed users of dope, reinforce each other as they slowly strangle society.

Aside from terrorism, there is no



greater threat to the security of this nation than from drug trafficking organizations. They thrive where police and judicial institutions are weak and have the ability in many areas of the world to challenge the very sovereignty of nations through corruption and territorial control. They do not seek to supplant the state but to undermine it and leach from it while using its weakened, remaining husk as a base from which to operate. They are single-minded, zealous, highly-ethnocentric, and shockingly violent. It should come as no surprise that they take our compassionate progressivism, utopian multiculturalism, and moral and cultural relativism as weakness. And as they increasingly link up, either directly or indirectly, with terrorist groups, the problem will grow more threatening and more acute. Roughly half of the U.S. Department of State's fifty-nine officially-designated foreign terrorist organizations have been linked to the global drug trade. The \$400 billion that the dope trade generates is no longer simply a crime problem or a health and safety issue, it is now an existential threat to our civilization.

As we continue to allow the pro-drug zealots to dominate the debate by convincing a naïve populace that limitless self-gratification and anti-authoritarianism is the answer, transnational organized crime is relentlessly plotting and producing new ways to penetrate cities and markets. Mexican cartels, learning from the Colombians, who, in turn, learned from the Chinese, are now producing pure, white heroin—often laced with fentanyl—and vastly expanding the cultivation of opium in an attempt to completely dominate the entire North American market. Many of our liberal governors and mayors have already declared heroin “states of emergency” due to exploding use and trafficking in the drug, even as they advocate the

legalization of “medical” or recreational marijuana, seemingly oblivious to the connection. Mexican organizations have also transplanted coca plants from South America onto the slopes of Mexican mountain ranges in the hopes of doing the same thing with the entire cocaine market, thereby reducing their dependence upon the Andean producers of cocaine base. Further, not satisfied with completely overtaking the American methamphetamine trade by producing pure methamphetamine on an industrial scale, they have also expanded their distribution across the planet. And completely disregarding the foolishly hopeful assertion from the pot legalization lobby that domestically produced marijuana would undercut the foreign criminal cartels, Mexican gangs continue to send multi-ton loads of weed into the United States in order to capitalize on the thriving black market to minors and to those who find it inconvenient or intolerable to pay taxes on their precious dope.

When they aren't cashing in on the drug trade, Mexican organized crime makes just as much money—or more—from extortion, illegal logging and mining, piracy, theft of every kind, and human trafficking. All along the way, they torture, behead, rape, dismember, bathe in acid, or otherwise remove anyone in grimly ingenious and barbaric ways who comes between the criminal enterprise and their ability to make money. The practice of terror, we know, serves not only to cow and crush opponents but to invigorate and intensify faith among the members of a group.<sup>2</sup> Sicarios, or “hit men,” as young as 11 years old are routinely employed for such “mundane” tasks, who are then welcomed, with naïve generosity, into the United States, where, we are to believe, they, ipso facto, benefit the nation simply owing to their contribution to diversity<sup>3</sup>

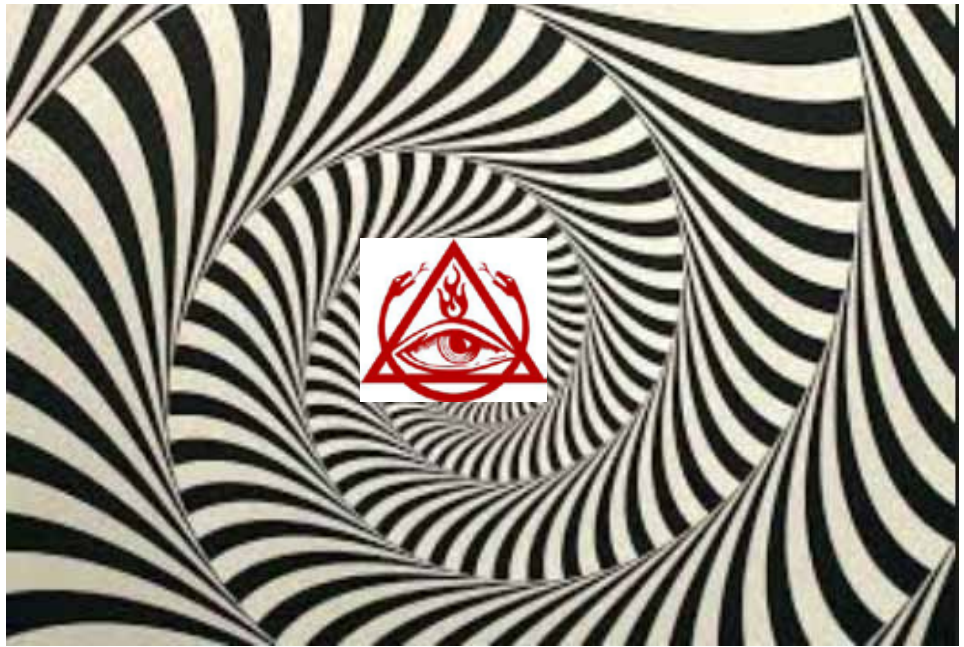
The major Mexican cartels have

*continued on page 9*



successfully embedded distributors in every state and in every medium and large-size city throughout the country. It is estimated that they have a presence in over 3,000 American towns solely for the distribution of drugs.<sup>4</sup> Can there be no greater illustration of Cicero's warning of an enemy within the gates? Of a formidable traitor who "appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men"? Of an enemy that "rots the soul of a nation," working "secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city" and to "infect the body politic so that it can no longer resist"? Cicero's lucid and prescient admonition was plainly not intended for only the Romans.

Unmistakably, the major drug threat to the United States continues to be the Mexican criminal organizations. Yet, they are not the only ones. Cuban, Dominican and Jamaican gangs continue to control cocaine distribution in many of America's East Coast cities. Israeli and Russian networks have increased the production of MDMA in Europe in recent years and have expanded its export to the United States. West Africans have developed sophisticated transportation groups to transship drugs of every kind throughout the world. Afghan and Pakistani nationals are continuing to hold a small market share of Southwest Asian heroin sales in the United States, utilizing the secretive hawala system to launder drug proceeds and other illegitimate forms of income throughout the Middle East. Ethnic Wa warlords in the remote mountains of Myanmar and Laos continue to produce both Southeast Asian heroin and various forms of amphetamines for export to, among other locales, the Los Angeles basin, where they have formed a nefarious alliance with the countless Asian gangs that infect the Southern California landscape. And, of course, Italian, Colombian, Peruvian, Lebanese, and Turkish drug traffickers,



among others, never really went away.

Yet perhaps the most potentially dangerous of all, Chinese transnational criminal organizations have capitalized upon America's open trade and seemingly voracious customer base by escalating their production of synthetic opioids, cannabinoids and methcathinones in an international game of chemical cat and mouse designed to endlessly stay just one molecular analogue away from American and international drug scheduling laws. If, one wonders, organic cannabis is legal in many parts of the United States, what's to stop the Chinese from flooding the American market with synthetic cannabis in the name of free trade? Or synthetic opioids? The question is even more poignant, ironic even, given China's own history of having to go to war with Britain to prevent Asian enslavement through opium in the name of open markets.

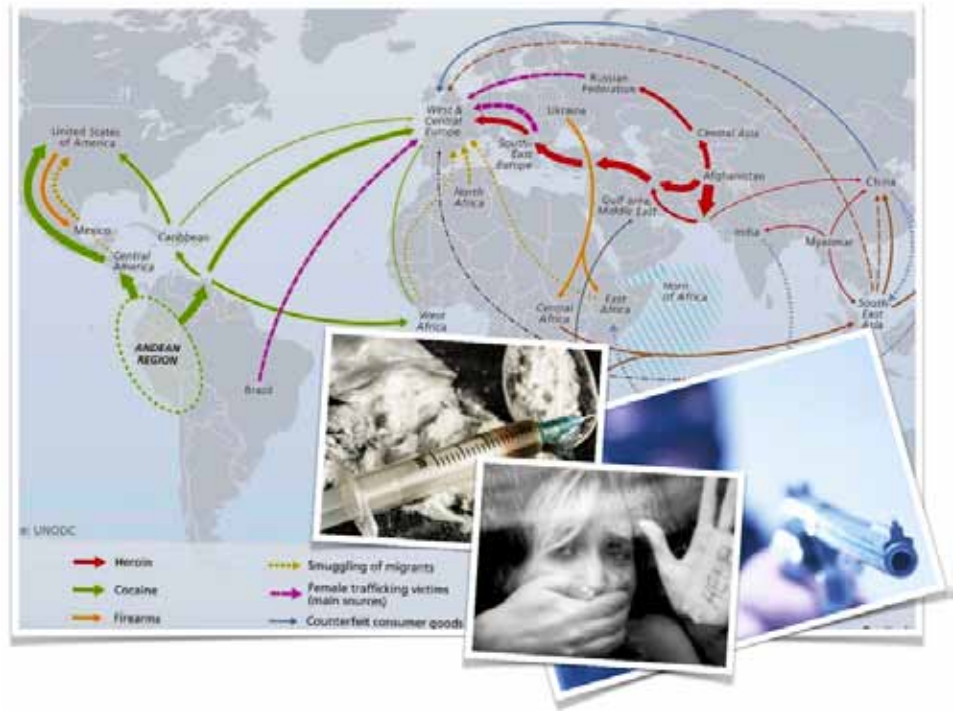
Of course, home-grown drug trafficking organizations also pose a significant threat. No single ethnic group has a lock on criminal or unethical behavior and, as we know, America is an equal opportunity employer. Just as our counterterrorism

mechanisms must deal with threats such as Timothy McVeigh and the Brothers Tsarnaev, as well as ISIS and Al Qaeda, so, too, must our counterdrug apparatus respond to the menace posed by domestic organized crime from the Aryan Brotherhood to the Zetas. Despite the superficially commercial necessity to reach outside of one's own tribe in order to make money, the dope trade is remarkably insular in terms of race and nationality, not only making it difficult for law enforcement to pierce but coarsening and deteriorating society overall by dividing and atomizing our culture. All drug trafficking groups, whether foreign-based or internal, have one thing in common: they are the unmistakable enemies of civilization. They are the usurpers of ordered liberty by continuously preying upon the unguarded and impressionable in order to profit from affliction disguised as pleasure. They cannot be appeased; they can only be stopped.

Most purveyors of the theory that the drug "war" is at the heart of all that is wrong with our inability to completely solve the problem display with striking clarity this countercultural bent to simultaneously excuse the behavior of drug users while

condemning any government efforts at drug control or enforcement as extreme. The liberal tendency to allow, unimpeded, all manner of lifestyles and forms of self-gratification, no matter how destructive, and then deal with the consequences with ever more “caring” and “sensitive” programs from a paternalistic and comforting regime becomes their expression of moral worth.<sup>5</sup> Their “compassion” displaces considerations of justice and responsibility as they remain blind to the pathologies that they have engendered. Such confused, emotionally based judgments tend to produce policies like we see in Berkeley, California, where city government mandates that all “medical marijuana dispensaries” donate a percentage of their “product” to the poor who cannot afford their chosen “remedy.” Seemingly, Huxley’s brave new world has arrived and, instead of a pill, our “soma” comes in the form of a joint.

Obviously, there is nothing wrong, per se, with compassion and sensitivity. They are, like pleasure, part of what makes us fully human. Yet they must never be the sole motivators of our actions and they cannot replace our requirement for justice. Sociologist James Q. Wilson understood, as we must, that a heedless sense of compassion and benevolence cannot always dominate our actions.<sup>6</sup> What is necessary is balance, something Aristotle referred to as “the golden mean.” Personal liberation and endless tolerance must be tempered with the obligation of ensuring the well-being of the entire social order. In the case of drug enforcement, that balance is the application of both the gentle and sympathetic policies of treatment and education and the assertive and fair policing of predators. In a democratic society, the proportions of each will always quite properly be debated. But, without any doubt, neither one alone can be effective without its complement.



It cannot be all carrot and no stick, or vice versa. 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 scourge of dope cannot be contained without them. Furthermore, just as with resource allocation, we should not fear the fine tuning of our laws, policies, tactics, sentencing guidelines, and foreign deployments, as long as this is accomplished democratically and rationally, not dogmatically and emotionally.

The demagogues and cultural swindlers who attempt to deceive the citizens by repeating the lie that Nixon’s ongoing “war on drugs” has been not only an engagement that we have failed to “win” but one that has been a militaristic assault upon both Americans at home and poor, innocent, drug-producing peasants abroad is an offensive straw-man designed to impugn any employment of the stick. Aside from its stale unoriginality, this tactic is offensively simpleminded and insults everyone, including drug educators and treatment specialists,

who are engaged in the noble pursuit of reducing drug use and distribution in our communities. Whether expressed maliciously and dishonestly, or parroted mindlessly by those who misapprehend the original intent of the metaphor, it is time that such mocking condescension is checked and corrected.

At the very least, these people should be reminded that when Nixon sought to inspire and rally his nation against a new kind of contagion, he dedicated more federal dollars to drug treatment and education programs than to all the law enforcement, interdiction, and eradication programs combined. Thus, the question to be posed to the anti-drug enforcement crowd is that, if the “drug war” is a “failure” or is “futile,” shouldn’t we discontinue all of our ongoing benevolent programs and policies of demand reduction as well? Especially since the overall effectiveness of drug treatment is so dismal for first time inductees and the rate of recidivism continues to be astronomical? Or because the majority of drug education programs in our schools are ultimately so ineffective as to be, according to some drug experts,

“a scandal?”<sup>7</sup> No, one may not criticize the efficacy, durability or cost of just one facet of our current drug control paradigm while ignoring or excusing the others. Besides, as Wilson pointed out years ago, should our leaders ignore and fail to go after the sources and importers of drugs, they will no doubt be accused of actively helping the traffickers wage what some would call “chemical warfare” against America’s ghetto poor.<sup>8</sup>

We are not engaged in a war. We are in the midst of a struggle, one that that will unquestionably be with us forever and one that demands we choose sides. The alluring pleasures of an endless variety of dope available through modern chemistry, combined with the most expansive liberties that have ever been enjoyed by a free and prosperous people, guarantee that there will always be some among us who are either unable or unwilling, as Burke stated, “to put moral chains upon their own appetites.” And part of our struggle will be constantly determining where and how to initiate an outer controlling power against those actors who exhibit insufficient internal control. Although our laws and restrictions against illegal drugs create their own set of law enforcement and national security problems, given the alternative, they have proven to be extraordinarily effective at preventing the massive abuse of substances dangerous to both our citizens and our society.

The majority of Americans understand that laws controlling the unrestricted availability of dangerous and addictive drugs are necessary and that the ones we ask to enforce those controls are not the bad guys. They recognize that drugs spawn and intensify violent crime, degrade families and communities, and undermine the rule of law. They also deeply comprehend that our police, freely choosing to bear the public trust and, if necessary, standing ready to give their “last full



measure of devotion,” continue to be the “unsleeping sentinels who guard the outposts of society,” who bravely stand between us and the “children of chaos.” As Chesterton discerned, the romance of police work is merely a reflection of the “whole romance of man.” It reminds us of the fact that “civilization itself is the most sensational of departures and the most romantic of rebellions,” for it is morality that is truly “the most dark and daring of conspiracies.” In other words, civilization must be defended and it must have defenders who enforce the boundaries of conduct in order for all of us to live safe and be free.

Government—that extension of civil society—cannot create good character and virtuous behavior, but it must, through policy and law, support the familial and social structures that do. The arrangement of governmental force and threat—police, courts, and prisons—is a key means by which society restrains illegal or disreputable behavior, but it isn’t the principal means. It is the internal inhibition, that self-activating inner control, or conscience, that society builds into each person’s character that is mostly responsible

for ensuring that we police ourselves.<sup>9</sup> Yet conscience and character are not enough. They must be fortified by laws and regulations that, in turn, reinforce the moral obligations and codes of a just and fair society. They must be strengthened by a culture that values duty over rights, self-mastery over self-indulgence, and standards over relativism and unqualified tolerance.

Maintaining prohibitions against mind-altering drugs does more than simply reduce availability, it buttresses society’s message that drug use is wrong. The subjective sense of wrongdoing that it engenders weakens the demand for drugs by inculcating disapproval. Even children understand that what is not disapproved of is, consequently, acceptable. As the philosopher Immanuel Kant observed, “If a man be allowed to follow his own will in his youth, without opposition, a certain lawlessness will cling to him throughout his life.”<sup>10</sup> If we are to successfully develop our perpetual crop of little barbarians into responsible, ethical citizens, we can no longer remain indifferent to the potent forces arrayed against them. We must not cede

the playing field to those who ignore history and the nature of man solely for their own immediate pleasures or utopian fantasies. Furthermore, we must not be afraid to be “intolerant” or appear “judgmental” about drug users and traffickers, for, as we know, judgment and stigma are essential social forces that serve to correct and prevent socially destructive behaviors. So, too, on the flip side, we should publicly display our admiration for those individual actions we endorse and wish to see emulated.

Americans face a set of existential choices. We can continue to allow a polluted pop culture to accelerate our decay and raise our kids or we can push back and fight for our families, our communities and our society. We

can continue to be unchallenging of our nation’s leaders—at all levels—in their pandering to proliferating groups of selfish and mercenary factions or we can demand accountability and their recognition of government’s role in the formation of character. We can maintain our gutless silence against the peddlers of a limitless and lawless democracy whose arguments are based in intellectual preening and self-applauding compassion, or we can confidently employ a thoughtful appreciation for traditions, laws, and a kind of collective human wisdom developed throughout time that man cannot indulge his every want and appetite, especially those that involve substances and ingestion methods never seen before modern times.

Finally, in our long, hard struggle against dope, we can either allow growing numbers of people to put into their bodies whatever they wish and then police up the socially-damaging consequences of them doing so or we can work to develop strong and durable “First Policemen” in the character of our citizens.

The freedoms that we enjoy in our civilization today have taken centuries to establish, but they can be destroyed in just a few generations. And once the tree of liberty is pulled down, it is not easily regenerated. What we decide as a nation to make of ourselves and our future matters greatly. In order to maintain a decent, just, tranquil, and prosperous nation, it is time that we all take a stand against dope. ➤

**Jeff Stamm** is a 34-year law enforcement veteran, having served as a Deputy Sheriff in Sacramento County 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.”

**What people are saying about the book:** *Excellent piece of literary work by author Jeffrey B. Stamm. He clearly defines the issues surrounding the arguments for drug legalization/ decriminalization and offers real world reasons as to why all Americans should take a strong informed stand against the current epidemic of a "pro-drug" movement. "On Dope" would make an outstanding text book for any college criminal justice course dealing with drug law enforcement and drug legalization.*

*Excellent book. Well written! Our politicians would be wise to use this as a guide in their ongoing fight against illicit drugs in our nation.*

*Very detailed, but an outstanding book on drugs. Highly recommended.*

*Interesting history. Well-researched, an excellent accounting of drug enforcements history in the USA.*

**Incredibly insightful!  
As it really is.**

------(Endnotes)-----

1 Endnotes

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# ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF SESSIONS RECEIVES THE NNOAC LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*Bob Bushman Presenting  
the Award to Attorney  
General Jeff Sessions*



*Kevin McAlleenan, Acting  
Commissioner, U.S. Customs  
and Border Protection,  
briefed us on the many  
problems they are facing and  
the challenges ahead.*



**T**he NNOAC held its annual delegate meeting in Washington, DC, from Sunday, February 4, 2018, to Wednesday, February 7, 2018. This meeting set a record for highest attendance. Speakers who presented to our delegates – and their level of influence – speak volumes to the respect the NNOAC has garnered.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who had partnered with NNOAC to host the first national drug crisis forum on September 12-13, 2017, attended our 2018 meeting and provided an update on issues affecting our membership. NNOAC President Bob Bushman presented Attorney General Jeff Sessions with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Tom Brandon, Acting  
Director, Bureau of  
Alcohol, Tobacco,  
Firearms and Explosives,  
spoke of ATF priorities  
and partnerships with  
law enforcement and the  
successful operations  
around the country. We  
thank the acting director  
for his hospitality in  
hosting our first national  
drug summit in September  
2017 in Washington, DC.*





*Alice Mead, Ph.D., from Greenwich Biosciences, briefed us on the research, successful medical trials and possible FDA approval for their CBD oil. (FDA approval was given in June 2018).*



*Kevin Sabet, of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM), updated delegates regarding the pro-marijuana forces and their tactics in America.*



*NNOAC attendees were honored to have updates from Elaine Duke, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.*



*Bob Bushman presents the Presidential Award to Steve Cook, Associate Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice.*



*Rob Patterson, Acting Director of the Drug Enforcement Administration*



*Congressman Eric Swalwell (D – California) provided a policy update from the Hill.*



*Don Kennedy and Matt McDonald, for Regional Information Sharing Systems.*

*Mike Sina,  
President of  
the National  
Fusion Center  
Association*



*Richard  
Baum, Acting  
Director of  
the Office of  
National Drug  
Control Policy*



*Jon Adler, Director of  
the Bureau of Justice  
Assistance at the  
Department of Justice*



*Bob Bushman presented Director Patricia Borelli and the staff of MAGLOCLN the President's Award for their continued assistance with attendee registrations, audio-visual equipment, registration desk, and printing for the annual Washington, DC, meetings. To all at MAGLOCLN, thank you for your dedication and assistance.*



*Alice Dery, Chief of Program Management and Training Unit and Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section at the Department of Justice, updated our delegates to law enforcement partnerships and changes in policy.*

*President Bob Bushman made a presentation to our long-time NNOAC Secretary, Al Katcher, for his years of service to our Association.*





*Some of the original founders of the National Narcotics Officers' Associations' Coalition attend the 2018 delegate meeting.*

During 1994, funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial Program was removed from the Administration's budget request. This funding was crucial for the continuation of many local and state drug enforcement programs. This proposed budget cut was the catalyst for the foundation of the National Narcotic Officers' Associations Coalition (NNOAC). Seventeen state narcotic officers' associations got together in July 1994 in Chicago, Illinois; and the NNOAC was created when the leadership of many of the nation's state narcotic officers' associations came together as part of an effort to re-establish the Edward R. Byrne Memorial Fund. As a direct result of the NNOAC's efforts and the efforts of many other concerned groups, funding was restored to this vital program.

The NNOAC thanks our corporate sponsors, who provide needed support and make technological products available to our delegate members. ➤

*The Capitol Police honor guard and Sergeant Charlotte Djossoujg during the singing of the National Anthem at opening ceremonies at the 2018 delegate meeting in Washington, DC.*



*Chris Wray, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, provided an update on law enforcement issues and cooperative efforts with state and local law enforcement.*





# NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

## REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

### Southeast Region - T. Gene Donegan

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The Southeastern region, unfortunately, is seeing the same issues as many of the other areas across the United States. We do see a change based on the size of the cities and counties in each of the states.

The Southeastern region continually deals with large amounts of heroin spreading throughout the region. These areas continue to see heroin use on the rise, as well as the mixture of fentanyl/carfentanyl. In recent months, we have seen several large seizures, such as 18 pounds of heroin, destined for Nashville. Interdiction officers also seized 23 pounds of fentanyl on I-40 Eastbound during the month of July. Originally, we only saw “fentanyl-laced” heroin coming from the Northeast, but we are now seeing it being distributed by the Hispanic organizations, as well. This region is seeing many of the “pill mills” being closed, due to recent legislation, but we expect to see a further increase in heroin and fentanyl use. This is a problem that crosses all socioeconomic groups and affects much of the population in one way or another. This region also continues to see fentanyl being sold as heroin or synthetic pills being manufactured containing fentanyl. Everyone knows someone who has been affected by the opiate epidemic.

The Southeastern region has been very fortunate to obtain training from the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy (RCTA) in Meridian, Mississippi. This organization has provided – and continues to provide – intense training on the handling of fentanyl and other opiates. This class is the first of its kind in the United States, and I feel certain this training will save the lives of many law enforcement officers handling and dealing with these deadly drugs. These classes are offered in Meridian, Mississippi, at RCTA, as well as other states throughout the Southeastern region. This organization has trained thousands of officers and provided equipment to handle these dangerous and unknown drugs.

The Southeastern region continues to see a decrease in local meth labs being seized. The decrease has been consistent over the past three years. We are, however, seeing an increase of crystal methamphetamine in the rural areas of most of the states. These areas are seeing a decrease in price, making it advantageous for users to obtain crystal methamphetamine. Crystal methamphetamine is becoming the drug of choice, due to the combination of availability and low price. The crystal methamphetamine that is produced and distributed by the Hispanic cartels from Mexico has far surpassed that of local organizations. The southern states are seeing an increase in both quality and quantity; the increase in the crystal methamphetamine is being distributed by Hispanic DTO groups that are transporting the drugs into the Atlanta, Georgia, area and then from there being distributed out to other states. We have seen a trend of disguising the crystal form into liquid or paste forms, then finalizing the product in production labs in rural areas.

We consistently have a steady supply of cocaine being distributed into the Southeastern region. We have not seen a significant change in cocaine distribution, even with the increase of crystal methamphetamine.

The trend of shipping marijuana from states that have legalized marijuana continues to plague most of the areas in this region. It is rare to see the milder Mexican strain of marijuana from previous years. The overwhelming amount of parcels that are shipped into the region continues to grow. It is rare that the unit that I am in charge of doesn't seize between three to five parcels each week, and they are all coming from other states that have legalized marijuana. We do see the continued trend of shipping the packages through the United States Postal Service. After interviewing arrested suspects, we found out this was due to the necessity of a federal search warrant for those packages versus a state search warrant for the other parcel services. The illegal shippers are aware of the increased difficulty in obtaining a search warrant for the postal service. The process for obtaining a federal search warrant is much longer than on the state side, therefore making it more difficult to deliver the package in a timely manner. When a package is delayed for the federal search warrant, the senders are alerted that something is wrong, and often the package will not be

picked up. We have also seen the surge of tracking devices put inside the packages to locate that exact time and location that the package is delivered. This also alerts the sender to law enforcement picking up the package and obtaining a search warrant for the contents.

### *Parcels seized in Nashville destined for New Jersey.*



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**A**s a young cop, and for many years thereafter, I thought that the best way to keep people away from the harmful effects of drugs was to arrest everyone I could. Enforcement does work, but we learned to work together with drug prevention and education, too. We are in a serious situation with increased drug use and addiction, and increases in crimes committed by people making unsafe, unhealthy, and dangerous decisions to either use drugs or sell drugs.

Many city streets are covered with human excrement, used hypodermic syringes and homeless drug users/addicts. The city of San Francisco gives away hundreds of thousands of clean syringes to intravenous drug users annually. In appreciation of that act of kindness, the people accepting those clean needles dispose of more than 200,000 of them on city streets and public spaces – areas that residents, tourists, their pets, and workers are exposed to every day. To make

matters worse, the city is hiring workers to clean up those feces and needles. I suppose it would be too much to make those people accountable for the messes they create. When is the last time you had to sidestep human waste when you walked down your city sidewalks?

A recent NBC Bay Area investigation went viral after exposing an alarming amount of trash, drug needles, and feces scattered across San Francisco. The report centered around a 153-block survey of downtown San Francisco, which revealed trash on every block, 100 needles, and more than 300 piles of feces along the 20-mile stretch of streets and sidewalks.

San Francisco's latest budget proposal, which is expected to be approved by the end of July, adds \$12.8 million over the next two years to the city's street-cleaning budget, which has nearly doubled in the past five years from \$33.4 million to \$65.4 million.

Throughout San Francisco, homeless people are seen daily shooting up heroin and smoking methamphetamine in broad daylight on downtown streets. According to reports from the city's Department of Public Works, 10,000 needles were collected off the streets in March of 2017, compared with just 3,000 during the same time period the previous year. But it isn't just one city that has this problem. Every western state has had an increase in homeless people and drug addiction.

Some state and local jurisdictions are looking for ways to address this problem by creating safe injection zones. Isn't that what a hospital or medical clinic is for? Hiding the problem by creating "safe" drug use locations will get the users out of public view when they ingest/inject their drugs. But let's face it, those people will walk out, or drive away, under the influence. Do we really want THAT? They won't be leaving to head to work. And they WILL be a hazard – whether they walk, bike, skateboard or drive away. A great number of them will be looking for a way to purchase more drugs to use within 4-6 hours. That's right – every 4-6 hours. Because opioids will only keep you high for that long. That means they will start having withdrawals 4-6 hours after ingestion. If they are sleeping, they'll wake up. If they're at work... well, they probably won't be at work. But if they are at work they will become ill and appear to have a case of the flu.

On top of the Opioid Crisis in America we have politicians creating new ways to reduce dangerous crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, thereby reducing the opportunity for drug-addicted criminals to complete drug rehab programs while incarcerated.

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## REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

*continued on next page*

# Relationships with Public Health Forged

On July 9, 2018, Todd Spitzer, Orange County (CA) supervisor, submitted an article to the Orange County Register addressing the discussion about MediCal and diabetes prevention on how to saturate our communities with felons who have had mental health problems. This radical new CA law is contained in the omnibus health trailer budget bill, Assembly Bill 1810, but it has little to do with health. The little-known bill was signed June 27, inserted into unrelated legislation at the last minute by an unknown author. That gives even more felons a get-out-of-jail-free card.

It works like this: while awaiting trial, defendants claim that their crimes were committed because of a mental health issue and they get an agreement from the judge that they can go through diversion. Diversion is normally a way of working off a sentence. But in this case, the criminal would presumably receive counseling; and if it was deemed “successful,” his or her record would be sealed as if the crime never happened. The criminal would walk out of court free and clear.

No victim protection, no restitution, no justice. I can’t agree with that.

The only caveat is that diversion has to be less than two years so a mass murderer won’t likely be cured in two years. However, because the bill doesn’t limit the type of crime involved, in theory, this could apply to a killer who claimed he or she was mentally unstable at the time. There are plenty of felonies that qualify for this program, because charges often get downgraded in the court process – and murders are no exception.

All of this is done without any input by prosecutors, who would have no chance to cross-examine the psychiatrist to determine whether the report is valid.

Under the law, defendants who fall within the category of “mental disorder” include those who have the following illnesses: male hypoactive desire sexual disorder; sexual sadism; voyeurism; pyromania; oppositional defiant disorder; and kleptomania.

Currently, defendants undergoing diversion — which can occur pre-trial or after a guilty plea — still have their charges publicly displayed. Now, due to this law, the public is not protected, as a whole new class of mentally ill criminals will enjoy a life where no one will learn about their sordid past.

The language in the bill only stipulates that the defendant “substantially comply” with diversion to earn a dismissal. What is the standard for “substantial”? You will never know, as his or her record was expunged by a judge who gave this person an incredible break by allowing this two-year diversion program.

The Northern California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (NCHIDTA) continues to forge relationships with public health counterparts and professionals within the prevention and treatment sectors. The leadership understands that an effective drug-control policy must include both a law enforcement and a drug-demand reduction strategy. Their team is continuing to connect with drug-demand reduction-minded individuals through the efforts of a newly assigned prevention specialist.

In May, the NCHIDTA planned and organized the region’s first-ever opioid prevention summit. What separated this event from previous training seminars was the inclusion of our public health partners. To have both the law enforcement and public health sector come together to learn about our nation’s opioid crisis as well as learning effective ways to combat this public health crisis is critical in the development of our own regional heroin response strategy.

Leveraging HIDTA’s influence, speakers were invited nationwide to come and present at our regional summit. Our friend and ally, Bishop Ron Allen, Chairman of the International Faith-Based Coalition, opened the day with an inspiring prayer and story about his personal experience dealing with the devil of addiction. John Eadie from the National Emerging Threats Initiative discussed the history and some of the warning signs that we, as a nation, initially missed during the onset of the opioid epidemic. He shared insight of a possible new emerging threat with the return of cocaine and stimulants. Jeff Besson, Executive Director of the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA, gave a personal demonstration of the Overdose Mapping Application (ODMAP) as a way for our counties to use technology to effectively and aggressively respond to overdoses as they occur in real time. Robert Kerr from the Heroin Response Strategy Task Force briefed the east coast’s model with how a partnership between law enforcement and public health is supposed to function, as he gave insights with best practices. These were just a few of many guest speakers that day who share the same level of passion in working to curb this national health public crisis.

We had one goal with our regional opioid prevention summit, which is one component of the NCHIDTA overall mission strategies: to promote the sharing of information and

intelligence to reduce drug use and its intended consequences.

I want to thank and recognize NCHIDTA Director Mike Sena; Deputy Director Karen Sherwood; and Mark Karandang, NCHIDTA Prevention Specialist, for their leadership in coordinating and organizing this forum. There were about 200 attendees from local, state and federal law enforcement, first responders, mental health, public health, pharmaceutical companies, National Guard Counterdrug, religious leaders, private citizens and corporate sponsors.

*Alameda County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services*

Never Give Up  
We are all in this together.

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## INDIANA COURT REJECTS RELIGIOUS- LIBERTY PREMISE FOR SMOKING POT

*By Gary Ashenfelter, Training Director,  
Indiana Drug Enforcement Association*

As those in law enforcement know all too well, individuals interested in smoking marijuana find myriad ways to try to justify and support their desires.

In Indianapolis, a group of marijuana enthusiasts began calling themselves a church in 2015 in order to poke fun at Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which they opposed, and to argue for the right to smoke pot as a matter of religious liberty. On this basis, the group then filed a lawsuit against state and local officials seeking relief from Indiana's anti-marijuana statutes.

Following various phases of legal maneuverings by both sides, the Marion County (Indianapolis) Superior Court



in July ruled in the State's favor -- concluding that the "church" and its members cannot use "marijuana as a holy sacrament" or sell marijuana in their gift shop.



"It is compelling and appropriate to treat the illicit drug market in a unitary way," the court stated in its ruling. "It would be impossible to combat illicit drug use and trade in a piecemeal fashion that allowed for a religious exception that would become ripe for abuse."

Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill said the court's finding should bring closure to a pro-marijuana political crusade that turned into a legal stunt. "I appreciate the court's fidelity to both the law and to common sense," Attorney General Hill said. "Indiana's laws against the possession, sale and use of marijuana protect the health, safety and well-being of Hoosiers statewide. When the state has justifiable and compelling interests at stake, no one can evade the law simply by describing their illegal conduct as an exercise of religious faith."

Throughout many years as a county prosecutor and now in his statewide role, Attorney General Hill has consistently opposed legalizing marijuana in Indiana. In an op-ed last year, he wrote, "Those who understand marijuana's dangers must speak the truth. Marijuana is a harmful drug that poses long-term risks to health, safety, education and employment -- especially among those who start young." While many

have tried to cast the use of marijuana in a better light by touting the supposed promise of “medical marijuana,” fewer have alluded to “religious marijuana.”

In its decision, the Marion County Superior Court acknowledged many findings long referenced by law enforcement and others fighting the proliferation of illegal drugs – such as the fact it “ranks second (26.9%) only to alcohol (30.6%), in a study on the presence of drugs in accidents involving seriously injured drivers.”

If people were permitted to cite religious convictions as justification for possessing and/or using otherwise illegal substances, the court indicated, a whole new challenge would face police. “Indeed,” the court acknowledged, “there is currently no other situation in which law enforcement officers would have to evaluate the sincerity of a suspect’s religious faith in this fashion.”

Those seeking the legal right to use marijuana did nothing, the court stated, to refute the reality that “there is a compelling government public-safety interest in forbidding the use of marijuana.” Therefore, the court stated, “permitting a religious exemption to laws that prohibit the use and possession of marijuana would hinder drug enforcement efforts statewide and negatively impact public health and safety.”

Certainly, those claiming a First Amendment right to smoke marijuana as part of their religious belief and practices might very well continue to press their case. For now, however, those high hopes appear to have gone up in smoke.

*NOTE: The author of this article -- Gary Ashenfelter, Training Director, Indiana Drug Enforcement Association – is among the experts whose testimony is cited by the Marion County Superior Court in the aforementioned case.*

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### Northwest Region - Erik Fisher

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**M**ethamphetamine availability and trafficking continue to occur at a high level in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho; it remains the area’s greatest drug threat, followed by heroin, fentanyl, and synthetic opioids.

Over the past several years, the drug threat environment has shifted primarily from methamphetamine trafficking and abuse to a dual threat that includes high availability and use of opioid-based drugs. Production of heroin in Mexico has

expanded, leading to greater access to low-cost product in Oregon and Idaho. In addition, high availability and misuse of prescription opioids have contributed to crossover abuse with heroin -- people who are addicted to prescription opioids have increasingly switched to heroin because it is easier to obtain, cheaper, and provides a more intense high than prescription opioids.



Marijuana use, cultivation, and trafficking are pervasive in Oregon. Oregon’s Medical Marijuana Act and recreational marijuana, which allow for specified quantities of marijuana to be grown, continue to be exploited for profit. In addition, illicit manufacture and distribution of cannabis extracts, such as hash oil and marijuana wax, have increased in the region and have led to a higher number of extraction labs and production-related fires and explosions.

Both Washington and Oregon have recreational use of marijuana by users over the age of 21. This has led to increased controlled substance DUI incidents and motor vehicle crashes, as well as increases in emergency room visits due to marijuana toxicity issues, extraction lab explosions, and an abundance of marijuana entering the black market for illicit distribution.

The 2017 Oregon Legislature reduced Schedule I and II felony “personal use” possession crimes to misdemeanors to reduce incarceration rates and ease prison populations. There are still felony possession crimes in instances where there were at least two previous drug convictions or the drug amounts are over “personal use” limits. (e.g., 2 grams of methamphetamine or cocaine, 1 gram of heroin, or more than 40 Oxycontin pills.)

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### Northeast Region - William Butka, Jr.

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## Legal Pot: It’s About Money and Greed, Not Human Health

I am writing a different report than usual because of the insane legalization movement across the nation. Narcotic officers continue their fight against legalization based on first-hand interaction with the public. All too often, officers witness the loss of life, broken families, people with no real goal in life other than to get high on drugs – people who had a bright future that was lost to drug abuse. Police officers in the drug enforcement area realize that people who think they can control their drug habit come to the realization that the drug really controls them, and the cycle begins.

***It is clear that the marijuana issue is about money and greed, with no concern for human health risks. It's about Wall Street investors, new Big Marijuana companies, and get-rich-quick-scheme entrepreneurs. Former California AG Bill Lockyer formed a company that sells marijuana and edibles to stores in Los Angeles.***

We are experiencing an opiate crisis in the Northeast that spread across America, and apparently some politicians could not care less. Since marijuana was approved for recreational use in Colorado and Washington State (the original legalizing states), studies and data have shown that marijuana use does lead to opiate usage. It is common sense: Marijuana is a drug that gets you high. Marijuana edibles have a 90%+ THC content and marijuana now averages 28%+. If recreational marijuana is approved, most marijuana sales will still be illegal. Street sales will still be widespread to avoid paying sales tax or any other taxes. Illegal cultivation will increase, causing environmental damage like what has occurred in California, Colorado, and Washington State.

Since 2014, California alone has seized 2.7 million poisoned marijuana plants; removed 399 tons of grow-site waste, trash and pollutants; confiscated 50 tons of fertilizers; seized 465 gallons of legal and illegal toxic chemicals; and eliminated 709 water diversions/dams from drought-stricken areas (In fact, drug trafficking organizations stole 1.3 billion gallons of water in 2014 and 2015!).

A recent Bloomberg article by Jack Kaskey (6/28/18, “California’s Weed Black Market Ramps Back Up”), quoted Kenny Morrison, president of the California Cannabis Manufacturers Association: “The illicit market outnumbers us by five to one ... You can go to a random city and find four legal stores and 20 illegal stores. What’s worse, those four legal stores are charging two and three times the price of the illegal stores.” Kaskey’s article continues, “Local authorities can now opt to ban cannabis businesses if they wish – even those that operated legally under the old rules. Alex Traverso, spokesman for the state Bureau of Cannabis Control, said 70 percent of jurisdictions have done exactly that.”

In November 2017, on legalized marijuana’s five-year anniversary, the Colorado Springs Gazette published an editorial, titled “The sad anniversary of Big Commercial Pot in Colorado”. Here are just a few highlights:



Residential neighborhoods throughout Colorado Springs reek of marijuana (producers are filling rental homes with plants). Five years of retail pot coincide with five years of one of the highest homelessness growth rates in the country. Research by the (pro-legalization) Denver Post revealed a doubling in the number of drivers involved in fatal crashes who tested positive for marijuana. There is more marijuana in schools than teachers and administrators ever feared. A report on escalating pot use in schools, aired in late 2016 by Rocky Mountain PBS, revealed a 45-percent increase in drug violations in K-12 schools; an increase of 71 percent in high school drug violations; and 45-percent increase in suspensions for drugs. Colorado leads the nation in marijuana use among teens, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. (The full Gazette editorial can be found at: <https://gazette.com/editorial-the-sad-anniversary-of-big-commercial-pot-in-colorado/article/1614900>.)

Nora D. Volkow, M.D., Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, has written that, “It [marijuana] also affects brain systems that are still maturing through young adulthood, so regular use by teens may have negative and long-lasting effects on their cognitive development, putting them at a competitive disadvantage and possibly interfering with their well-being in other ways. Also, contrary to popular belief, marijuana can be addictive, and its use during adolescence may make other forms of problem use or addiction more likely.”

The number-one reason cited for legalizing recreational pot in the states is money. For every dollar Colorado collects, ten dollars is spent on problems in the education system, medical consequences, and psychological treatments, along with the increase in motor vehicle deaths since legalization. Colorado’s annual tax revenue from the sale of recreational and medical marijuana was 0.8 percent of Colorado’s total statewide budget (FY 2016). Legalization would add to our fiscal woes, not solve them – not to mention the detrimental effects on public health, education, and traffic safety.

Yet, with all this available information on Colorado’s experience with legalized marijuana, three New England states (Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) have recently legalized recreational pot. And Connecticut politicians and others still think we should jump on the

bandwagon, too. Ask yourself: Why is that? And whose interests would legalized recreational marijuana really serve?

## Midwest Region - Brian Marquart

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Law enforcement conducts investigations on drug dealers to protect public safety and keep our communities safe. During one such case, a suspect told an undercover officer, “be careful, because this stuff is really strong.” What does that mean in today’s society? What does it mean for public safety and officer safety? Is it just a way for the drug dealer to get more money for their “strong” product or is it a warning? Does it mean the substance is dangerous? What is in it? Law enforcement now has to take additional precautions, like



ensuring that personnel wear personal protective equipment when handling and processing controlled substances. Street officers, investigators, evidence technicians, and laboratory personnel may be put at risk if the substance contains something dangerous – like one of the many variations of fentanyl-laced substances being sold on the street. It has become more dangerous for officers to seize, handle, and process substances in a bag, because the bag isn’t labelled with an ingredient list. Additional precautions and, possibly, expensive field-testing equipment are now needed to test substances in order to provide investigative leads and help protect public safety.

Officers and investigators are also finding a large number of substances being ordered over the internet. Almost-pure fentanyl is being ordered over the “dark web” in smaller quantities and then cut to be sold on the street. This is the new reality that law enforcement faces; they now require additional training and equipment in order to protect themselves. State and local crime labs are being inundated with unknown powders that require testing in order for them to determine what is actually being sold on the street. The lab technicians must also take additional precautions and safeguards when handling all of these dangerous substances.



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### ***Methamphetamine***

Methamphetamine continues to plague the region and is becoming more prevalent in areas that typically did not see a lot of the drug, such as Chicago and rural South Dakota. New to Illinois is the fact that methamphetamine is being sold in the city of Chicago, causing violence and other turf issues with gang members protecting their crack cocaine business. South Dakota methamphetamine arrests have doubled since 2014; in 2017 alone, there were more than 3,000 arrests and meth seizures totaling more than 140 pounds. Minnesota has seen another record year, with seizures of over 620 pounds. Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO's) control a majority of the delivery and distribution of meth that arrives in the region, and wholesale methamphetamine is readily available – at very cheap prices and at very high quality. Seizures of 30-50 pounds and larger are becoming common across the Midwest, with wholesale prices continuing to drop to all-time lows. Because there is so much methamphetamine, upper-level dealers are fronting pounds of methamphetamine where the money is paid at a later time. 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.

### ***Heroin, Fentanyl and Prescription Opioids***

Mexican DTO's source most of the heroin in the region, and we continue to see large, multiple-kilogram seizures of heroin, which is most often in the form of an off-white powder that can be snorted, smoked, or injected. The new population of heroin and opioid abusers is more diverse – users represent a wider range of economic status, age



a more pure heroin, and dealers are putting out more potent heroin with larger amounts of fentanyl in it. Alarmingly, we are seeing a higher number of users switching to needle injection of the drug – which, in turn, causes higher disease transmission. Law enforcement, medical personnel, and, in many cases, the general public are using Naloxone (Narcan) on a more frequent basis to save someone from an opioid overdose. There are reports of first responders having to use Narcan on an individual, multiple times on the same day. First responders also report that they have to use multiple doses of Narcan on an individual to counteract some of the heroin/fentanyl overdoses.

### ***Marijuana and Marijuana concentrates***

Several thousand pounds of marijuana and marijuana concentrates have been seized coming from those states that have state legalized marijuana. Many of these concentrates have 30-90% percent of THC, which is the active ingredient that gets people high. Emergency rooms and doctors are reporting that people who come into the hospitals exhibit extreme paranoia symptoms after smoking very high levels of THC. Law enforcement has discovered, through interdiction stops on the highways, that many of these concentrates are being transported in personal vehicles, as well as by package delivery services. Treatment centers across the region are seeing high numbers of people entering treatment, with marijuana as their number-one drug of choice. Those who say that marijuana is not addictive need only to look at treatment entrance numbers to see that they are mistaken. ➤





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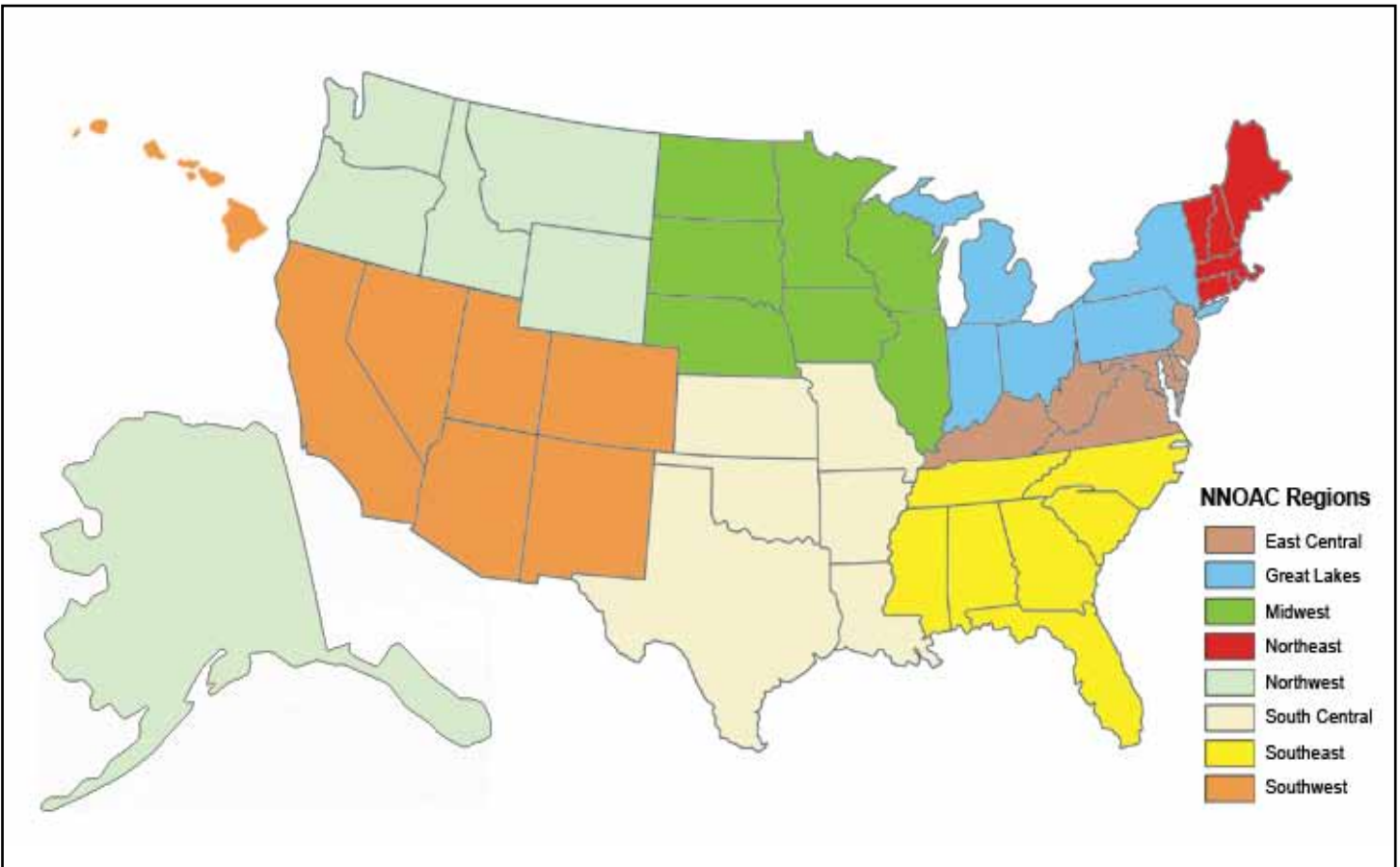


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## A Tale of Two Officer Involved Shootings/*Circuits Matter*

The legal paradigm that provides the fundamental principles for evaluating officer involved shootings and use of deadly force is found in the Supreme Court opinions of *Tennessee v. Garner*<sup>1</sup> and *Graham v. Connor*.<sup>2</sup> Taken together, these rulings set forth the constitutional standard for law enforcement use of lethal force in America. That standard, simply put, authorizes law enforcement officers to use deadly force when they have “probable cause”<sup>3</sup>, i.e. an “objectively reasonable belief,”<sup>4</sup> that the suspect poses a significant threat of death or serious bodily harm to the officer or others.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the fact that the Supreme Court made this standard quite clear and unequivocal, it has been nonetheless applied unequally among the federal circuit courts of appeal. Two very recent federal appellate decisions from different federal circuits illustrate the unequal application of the constitutional standard. In both cases, law enforcement officers were confronted with very dangerous suspects who presented a serious threat to their lives and the lives of others. Nevertheless, the judicial outcome of the two cases for the involved officers was decidedly different.

### An Appellate Court Win for the Good Guys

The United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit decided *Horton v. Pobjecky* on 2/28/18.<sup>6</sup> Pobjecky was an unarmed off-duty deputy sheriff, dressed in plain clothes, making a pizza purchase at Marie’s Pizzeria in Rockford, Illinois, during the late evening of 10/1/11. He was talking with Tarara, the store manager and another employee, in a room adjacent to the main entrance when four men entered the store dressed in sweatshirts with hoods covering their heads. Coates, the first to enter, held a revolver and immediately entered the room where Pobjecky and Tarara were, followed by Brandon Sago, another one of the robbers. Coates pointed his gun at each of them and demanded money. Tarara verbally rejected the demand and immediately engaged Coates in a physical struggle. Meanwhile, Bellmon, the third robber, went for the cash register in the main lobby, while the fourth robber, Michael Sago, remained as a lookout at the front door.

During the struggle between Tarara and Coates, both men had their hands on Coates’ revolver. While the struggle was ongoing, Bellmon joined the melee. Michael Sago left his position at the front door and approached the location of

the struggle but did not intervene. Tarara was able to gain control of Coates’ revolver and Deputy Pobjecky grabbed another handgun that was on Tarara’s person. Coates turned and headed for the exit. Pobjecky shot him in the back without a warning. Pobjecky then shot Brandon Sago as he headed for the exit and Bellmon in quick succession. He did not identify himself as a police officer or give any warning of his intention to fire.

The court described a video of Pobjecky’s shooting the final robber Michael Sago. The video disclosed that Michael Sago crawled past Pobjecky from behind in the direction of the front door. Pobjecky fired his first shot into Sago’s back, after he crawled past him. He subsequently shot Sago twice more in the back as he continued to crawl to the exit. Michael Sago was able to exit the store and died outside on the sidewalk. Pobjecky locked the front door from the inside and waited until police arrived because he feared for his life. The entire incident from initial entry to the final shot took 36 seconds.

Pobjecky told Tarara to call 911 but he had trouble making the call. Another witness made the 911 call which was received about 7 minutes after Pobjecky locked the door. Paramedics arrived about 11 minutes after Michael Sago was shot.

Sago’s Estate sued Deputy Pobjecky, the County Sheriff, and Winnebago County, Illinois pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983 alleging excessive force and lack of appropriate medical care. The Federal District Court dismissed the lawsuit and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed, finding that Deputy Pobjecky’s conduct was constitutional in all respects. The Seventh Circuit’s findings are valuable and relevant to law enforcement officers in all jurisdictions.

- The court ruled that when an officer has **probable cause (not absolute certainty)** that a suspect poses a threat of serious physical harm **by threatening the officer with a weapon**, the officer may use deadly force in **self-defense or defense of another**.

- The court ruled that when an officer has **probable cause** that a suspect poses a threat of serious physical harm to an officer or others, an officer may use deadly force to **prevent the escape of that suspect**.

- The court set out the legal test as follows: “**The test is objective reasonableness.**” “A plaintiff must show the officer’s use of force was objectively excessive from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene under the totality of circumstances.”

- The court explained that the **officer’s subjective state of mind is not relevant to the “objective test.”** Instead, the court will examine the actual objective facts and

1 471 U.S. 1 (1985).

2 490 U.S. 386 (1989).

3 *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1, 3.

4 *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 397.

5 *Garner*, 471 U.S. 3.

6 No. 17-1757 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2018).

circumstances known to the officer at the time of the shooting, including **“pressures of time and duress, and the need to make split second decisions under intense, dangerous, uncertain, and rapidly changing circumstances.”**

- The court stated that officers are not required to “use ... the least or even a less deadly alternative so long as the use of deadly force is reasonable under [ Garner and Graham].”

- The court ruled that once Deputy Pobjecky saw a handgun in the possession of Coates, it was **reasonable for him to believe that all the other participants may likewise be armed**. All the suspects were dressed in a manner that could conceal the presence of a firearm.

- The court ruled that it was immaterial that Michael Sago was later determined to be unarmed. He participated in an armed robbery and wore clothing that could conceal a firearm. **The court found that he represented an imminent threat of death or serious injury to the officer and others.**

- The court ruled that Michael Sago presented a serious threat to Deputy Pobjecky at the time the Deputy shot him in the back while attempting to crawl out of the store. The court ruled that Pobjecky’s shooting of Sago was constitutionally justified on **both self-defense and preventing escape grounds.**

- **The court explained,** “Even if Michael had already crawled passed Pobjecky, it was still reasonable ... to shoot him in the back **to prevent escape**. Moreover, **the goals of self-defense and defense of others remained valid** even after Michael crawled past Pobjecky because for all a reasonable officer could have known Michael could have turned and produced a gun in a flash.”

- The court ruled that Pobjecky was not required to warn Michael Sago before shooting him in the back because warnings are constitutionally required only if feasible. “Given the desperate circumstances Pobjecky faced, and the limited time he had, no reasonable juror could conclude he should have stopped to identify his office or warn the assailants.”

- The court refused to find against the deputy for failure to provide appropriate medical care. The court stated, “It was objectively reasonable for Pobjecky to stay inside the locked pizzeria awaiting help. It is objectively unreasonable to demand him to venture into the night with an empty gun, risking further onslaught, braving the hazards that Michael and the other assailants created to administer treatment to Michael.”

- **In this case a unanimous three judge federal appellate court exonerated a brave deputy who took decisive action in the face of grave and immediate danger. Even though he shot an unarmed robbery suspect in**

**the back three times, the court correctly ruled that this shooting was constitutionally justified.**

#### **An Appellate Court Loss for the Good Guys**

In recent years the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has repeatedly ruled against law enforcement in use of deadly force cases. Conversely, the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly reversed the Ninth Circuit in a number of those cases.<sup>7</sup> The Ninth Circuit never seems to learn its lesson, or more likely, many of its judges appear to hold an innate bias against law enforcement officers when they are required to use lethal force.

The most recent glaring example of this anti law enforcement bias is found in the matter of Vos v. City of Newport Beach decided by the Ninth Circuit on June 11, 2018.<sup>8</sup> Officers from the City of Newport Beach Police Department (NBPD) responded to a 911 call from a local 7-Eleven store about a man (Vos) behaving erratically and brandishing a pair of scissors. Prior to the arrival of the police, Vos ran around the store cursing at people and shouting for people to kill him. Vos chased a customer from inside the store to outside, while holding a screwdriver. He threw it at the customer and missed before returning to the store.<sup>9</sup> Vos armed himself with scissors, grabbed a store employee and shouted “I’ve got a hostage.” A second store employee attempted to help by disarming Vos and in the ensuing struggle, the employee received a laceration to the palm of his hand. Vos was able to break free and retain the scissors.

The first officer to respond saw Vos inside the store, yelling, screaming and pretending to have a gun. This officer instructed the store employees to exit the store and called for assistance. Vos told the officer to shoot him and then entered a back room in the store and closed the door. Other officers arrived and placed two police vehicles in a “V” position directly in front of the main entrance to the store. They next propped open the front door to the store. One officer was armed with a less lethal 40 mm projectile launcher, two officers had AR-15 rifles and the remainder had their sidearms. A total of eight officers were present and they were positioned just behind the open doors of the police vehicles. **The police were getting ready to attempt to speak**

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Kinsela v. Hughes, 554 U.S. \_\_\_ (2018). Here the Supreme Court reversed and chastised the Ninth Circuit by stating, “This Court has repeatedly told courts, the Ninth Circuit in particular, not to define clearly established law at a high level of generality.” See also, City and County of San Francisco v. Sheehan, 135 S.Ct. 1765 (2015) and Brosseau v. Haugen, 543 U.S. 194 (2004).

<sup>8</sup> (No. 16-56791) (D.C. No. 8: 15-cv-00768-JVS-DFM).

<sup>9</sup> See, the letter from the Orange County California District Attorney’s Office to the Orange County Police Chief, dated 12/8/14, in which the District Attorney’s Office found no criminal culpability for the involved officers.

to Vos with a bullhorn when Vos suddenly opened the door of store's back room and proceeded to charge in the direction of the front door. He held a metal object above his head and one officer shouted that Vos was armed with scissors (later determined to be a pronged metal hook).

An officer yelled for Vos to drop the weapon. Vos declined and continued to charge full speed forward. The officer then yelled "shoot him." The less lethal weapon was fired first with no effect.<sup>10</sup> Vos continued to within 3 – 4 feet from the front door and about 10 feet from the police position outside the store.<sup>11</sup> At that point, two officers fired four shots each from AR-15 rifles.<sup>12</sup> Vos was shot four times and died. Vos fell on the sidewalk in front of the store right in front of the police vehicles.

Survivors sued the involved officers and the City of Newport Beach in federal court pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983. The presiding judge ruled for the officers without a trial and the survivors appealed to the Ninth Circuit which reversed. Two Ninth Circuit Judges ruled that a reasonable jury on these facts could conclude that **the involved officers were not facing an immediate threat to their lives when they opted to fire lethal rounds at Vos**. The Judges supported their decision by making the following points:

- The officers surrounded the store's front door; took cover behind the open doors of the two police vehicles; and outnumbered Vos eight to one.
- They did not believe Vos was armed with a firearm and were in possession of a less lethal weapon.
- A police dog was on scene and some officers had Tasers.
- The two-judge majority determined that Vos was 20 feet away from the officers when shot which was sufficient distance for use of the less lethal weapon, Tasers and the police dog.<sup>13</sup>
- The two-judge majority found that Vos was mentally unstable, acting out and inviting the police to shoot him. They concluded, "These indications of mental illness create a genuine issue of material fact about whether the government's interest in using deadly force was diminished."<sup>14</sup>

Judge Bea filed a dissenting opinion in which he made the following points:

- Before Vos charged the police, they knew that he
- 10 Id.  
11 Id.  
12 Id.  
13 Id. The legal analysis of the District Attorney contradicts the 20 foot distance finding of the judges and indicates that it was instead 10 feet between officers and Vos when he was shot with bullets.  
14 The two-judge majority ruled that the individual officers should nonetheless be dismissed from the case despite a finding that they did not face immediate danger because they were entitled to qualified immunity. They remanded the case back to the lower court so that a determination could be made on the liability of the City and other matters not discussed herein.

stabbed a store employee with scissors.

- Vos refused to drop his weapon when police ordered him to do so.
- Vos raised a metal weapon over his head and from slightly more than 40 feet away charged full speed at the police.
- Based upon expert analysis it was determined that had Vos not been shot, he would have traversed the 41.1 feet between him and the officers in 3.4 seconds.
- The video of the incident revealed that if officers had not shot Vos, from the time he was ordered to drop the weapon, he would have reached the officers in 2 seconds.
- It was entirely reasonable for officers, with only two seconds to react, to conclude that Vos, charging at them with what looks like a knife, would be able to do serious harm to at least one of them.
- Mental illness demonstrated by a dangerous subject does not obligate officers to put themselves in danger when the person attacks them.
- "whether the person who charges the officer does so ... to kill, or does so because, in the midst of a psychotic episode, he thinks the officer is a monster ... the danger to the officer is the same."

The officers involved in this shooting acted reasonably and correctly within the parameters of *Tennessee v. Garner* and *Graham v. Connor*. Nonetheless, because of the Ninth Circuit's continued expectation that police officers should be required to unreasonably expose their personal safety to extraordinary threats to life, this case was wrongly decided. It is hoped that the case will be appealed and reversed by the Supreme Court. In the meantime, officers in the Ninth Circuit are cautioned to take particular care when confronting a mentally ill subject because it appears that the Ninth Circuit will expect extra and unreasonable deference from police in those cases.

### **Biography of John Michael "Mike" Callahan**

*John M. "Mike" Callahan Jr. was a law enforcement officer for 44 years. He became a Special Agent with the United States Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) in 1968. In 1969, Mr. Callahan was appointed as a Special Agent with the FBI and served until retirement in 1999. During his tenure as FBI Boston Division Chief Counsel, Mr. Callahan served for three years as a Special Assistant United States Attorney. He taught constitutional criminal procedure at the FBI Academy, Quantico, VA. for several years and wrote numerous legal articles for the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. At retirement, Mr. Callahan held the position of Supervisory Special Agent and Chief Division Counsel for the Boston FBI Division.*

*Mr. Callahan served as a Deputy Inspector General in charge of the Investigations Division for the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General and retired in 2012. Mr. Callahan has made numerous presentations on law enforcement use of deadly force for the New England State Police Information Network (NESPIN) and in 2008 was selected as the NESPIN Trainer of the Year.*

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# Special Report

## Report on the World Forum Against Drugs

### Gothenburg, Sweden

by Peter F. Boyce,  
General Counsel  
National Narcotics  
Officers Association  
Coalition



At the gracious invitation of our good friends, Lennart Karlsson and Anders Stolpe of the Swedish Narcotics Officers Association, I had the opportunity to attend the International World Forum Against Drugs in Gothenburg, Sweden on behalf of the NNOAC and the NNOAC Foundation.

Due to a last-minute issue, Bob Bushman could not attend so I filled in for him leading a panel discussion on supply reduction and making a closing statement about the NNOAC and our staunch opposition to legalization or decriminalization of marijuana. I also spoke about the opioid crisis we face here in the United States.

The conference was attended by law enforcement, health care, social science professionals, and many politicians and academics from throughout the world. Since the World Forum took place in conjunction with the ECAD, European Unconvention on Drugs, and Mayors' Meeting, there were many high-powered leaders from throughout the world. The theme of the conference was Preventing, Protecting and Policing to confront the many critical issues related to drug abuse throughout the world.

All presenters were clear in their message that illicit drug markets negatively impact public safety enabling organized criminal groups that pose significant challenges to the rule of law and the integrity of free world political systems.

It was reported that in 2017 the cities of St. Petersburg and Stockholm were both affected by deadly terrorist attacks. Many in law enforcement believe there is an interconnectivity between acts of terrorism and organized criminal groups involved in the drug trade. According to one speaker, many of the perpetrators involved in recent acts of terrorism in Europe have been low level drug traffickers and/or users themselves.

The Icelandic model to drastically reduce substance abuse was of keen interest to many at the conference. Prevention best summarizes what Iceland has done to drastically reduce illicit drug use, particularly with its youth. Several speakers emphasized

the importance of a well-planned, comprehensive program to deliver a strongly worded message to pre-teens and their parents to prevent drug use before it starts. Iceland's programs emphasize family involvement in order to educate preteens before they are exposed to illicit drugs. By all reports that model has resulted in a significant reduction of drug problems in this small country. The experts from a group known as Prevent Don't Promote, contend that "waiting until adolescence to intervene is too late to impact substance abuse because by then the impact on drug use on the developing brain can be very challenging and, in some cases, impossible to reverse."

Several speakers addressed that pot legalization has become a global movement by well-funded "global elitists" who ultimately seek to commercialize drug sales just like alcohol and tobacco. The elitists see a huge potential market for high potency cannabis in both edible and concentrated forms. These elitists and criminal enterprises believe that promoting pot legalization will open the door to other innovative illegal drugs and other deadly substances like heroin and cocaine. Each speaker strongly disagrees with proposals to legalize pot or any other illegal substance. Many cited the United States and the alarming increase in the number of users and addicts. They theorize this U.S. problem will soon spread worldwide because of the U.S. "Experiment" with pot legalization.

One speaker expressed growing concern about the higher addiction rates among under age marijuana users and stated that those seeking legalization know from experience with the tobacco industry that if they target minors and encourage use at an early age when dependence is more likely to develop, they can reap huge profits. This position makes sense given the kid-friendly edible pot products made to look like candy, gummy bears and sodas which already account for a large segment of the Colorado market. The World Health Organization has expressed concern about edibles and concentrates which at times have a potency rate of





nearly 90%. According to this organization, the pot industry has opposed recent attempts to cap potency at 15% in Colorado.

In my presentations to the conference I strongly indicated that the NNOAC is, has been, and will be opposed to the legalization of pot and the decriminalization of any controlled substances including pot. I stressed that we oppose medical marijuana and believe and support our FDA which

bases its approval of any drug on strict medical guidelines, not on heart wrenching stories of kids with rare medical conditions. I stressed that legalization has been a disaster and that a thriving black market has developed to ship high potency pot into states that have not legalized its sale. I emphasized supply reduction and agreed that all must work with law enforcement, the courts, social services, and the medical community to stem this crisis.

Because of the substantial number of speakers who highlighted the opioid crisis in the U.S. I chose to also address this issue in my closing remarks. All in attendance (about 400) seem to understand that the opioid crisis is presently a mostly U.S. issue, but most agree it is just a

matter of time before our crisis becomes their crisis. All seem to understand that the violent crime they hear about in the U.S. is to a large extent caused by the rise of ruthless trans-national drug organizations who are making billions of dollars each year distributing drugs throughout the U.S. and the world.

The conference had a large number of participants from the health care and rehab professions. I acknowledged their role in working with law enforcement to address the worldwide drug problem and that in the U.S., like in many of the countries represented at this conference, our drug problem was in reality a social problem stemming from the collapse of the family unit, a failure to properly treat those with medical and mental health issues, and a general softening by many of our political leaders. I indicated that unfortunately, some of our elected representatives seem to find it easier to succumb to pressure from a minority who believe that police are too concerned with arresting drug users, and the courts too concerned with filling our prisons with drug users. I suggested as Bob Bushman often says, “some of our leaders have lost their moral courage.” From a law enforcement perspective, I indicated what is most effective in combating illicit drug sales is arresting and locking up those in the criminal organizations who supply the illegal drugs.

I pledged that the NNOAC would continue to work with the World Federation Against Drugs, and the Swedish Networks of NGO'S to do all we can to be certain the facts about the international drug crisis are given to all who will listen and that our organization will continue its fight to combat illegal drug sales and distribution of illegal drugs not only in the U.S. but throughout the world.➤



## HIGH TAXES & OVER REGULATION

*POSTED March 26, 2018 1:02 a.m. Manteca Bulletin*

**Democrats and Republicans  
in Sacramento finally agree on  
something — high taxes and over  
regulation are killing business.  
You might be asking yourself what  
are they smoking? Try marijuana.**

**T**here is a move afoot backed by members of both parties to reduce the state excise tax on pot from the voter approved 15 percent down to 11 percent and suspend the \$148 per pound cultivation tax for three years.

It's because only a very few growers are going the legal route. The California Growers Association reports as of February not even 1% of the Golden State's 68,150 known marijuana cultivators have obtained licenses.

They blame it on bureaucratic red tape and regulation on top of regulation plus California taxing legitimate businesses to the fifth dimension.

Let's start with lie No. 1 that the majority of Californians inhaled in voting for Proposition 64 that legalizing pot would raise \$1 billion a year. Governor Jerry Brown thought that was a bit too optimistic and inserted the figure of \$643 million into the state budget for the upcoming fiscal year starting July 1.

If the pot growers are correct, \$100 million may be wildly optimistic.

Fitch, a credit rating agency that rates the financial health of institutions including government agencies, puts the effective tax rate on legally grown marijuana in California at 45 percent. That's because after you take the state excise tax and the cultivation tax there's a sales tax that can run as high as 9.2 percent.

Now for lie No. 2 that marijuana is no different than alcohol.

There might be an argument for that point in terms of consuming both items but there is a big difference between booze and pot.

Prior to 1919 taxes on alcohol accounted for 30 to 40 percent of the federal budget. Federal revenue agent

positions were not created to enforce health standards breaking up illegal stills. They were put in place way before 1919 to make sure anybody who made booze paid the \$1.10 per gallon excise tax. Among of the biggest proponents of the income tax were backers that wanted to implement Prohibition. They needed a source of revenue for the federal government to get support to ban booze. Just like today, no self-respecting politician after the turn of the 20th century is about to cut taxes without finding a way to not just replace lost revenue but to generate even more.

It wasn't just a coincidence Prohibition was repealed in 1933 when we in in the throes of the Great Recession. The booze tax was set at \$2 in 1933.

Unlike booze marijuana was never taxed before California became the second state to ban it in 1913 two years after Massachusetts became the first to do so. The federal government didn't get around to outlawing it until 1937.

The bottom line is people were used to paying higher prices for booze. Bootleggers did not lower the price during Prohibition as those that drank were used to the \$1.10 per gallon price being absorbed into the price of a drink. That is not the case with pot.

Lie No. 3 was the argument most growers would jump at the chance to be legitimate.

Calaveras County proved the fallacy of that assumption. It was one of the few counties that allowed legal commercial medical marijuana grows. Then hundreds of illegal grows popped up with the approach of legalization that brought crime, water and soil pollution, and other woes.

Growers also whine they have to answer to no less than six state agencies to try and get a permit. You won't see very many dairy farmers, other agricultural operations, or businesses shed too many tears over the plight of the struggling pot grower who also has a nasty tendency to skirt compliance with state labor laws.

Then there is a fear the soon to be imposed \$1,000 state licensing fee will be too high of a barrier for a mom and pop grower to go legit.

But then again to be a barber you need 1,500 hours of classes in California plus pass an exam and pay \$50 for a license every two years to make sure the public's health and safety is protected.

Which brings us to Lie No. 4: Legalizing marijuana would reduce environmental damage on watersheds. At least barbers have to demonstrate a proficiency in best practices. All the state wants is the money with pot growers.

Environmentalists that promoted legalized marijuana as

*continued on page 33*



## LIES, CONT.

a way to stop pot growers from poisoning the soil, killing off critters as collateral damage to protect their plants from disease and bugs, plus end toxic pollution of streams from fertilizers must feel pretty good the passage of Proposition 64 unleashed a torrent of even more growers that aren't monitored by the state. It's ironic after years of slamming farmers for not being environmentalists even though almost all are good stewards of the land or else they'd be out of business in a few growing cycles, environmentalists supporting the legalization of pot have helped set in motion moves that are likely increasing pollution significantly.

And now for the whooper — lie No. 5: Legalizing marijuana will reduce the black market and the baggage it comes with.

Just who do you think is benefiting from the surge in pot demand now that it has been decriminalized? It is doubtful those among the 39.8 million Californians who smoke pot are buying it from proprietors who are only supplied by 60 legally licensed marijuana growers out of 68,150 plus cultivators.➤

*This column is the opinion of executive editor, Dennis Wyatt, and does not necessarily represent the opinion of The Bulletin or Morris Newspaper Corp. of CA. He can be contacted at [dwyatt@mantecabulletin.com](mailto:dwyatt@mantecabulletin.com) or 209.249.3519.*

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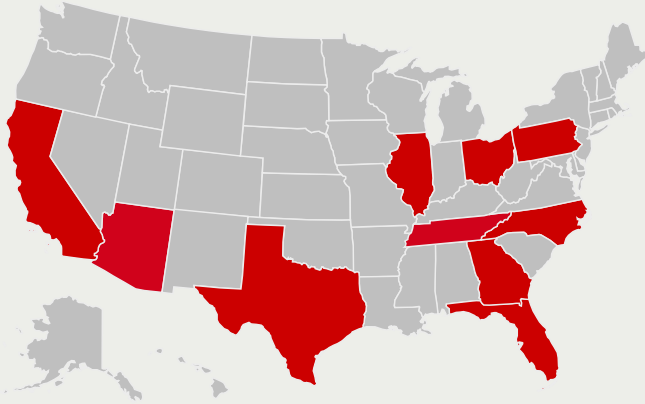
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# ATF 2016 Firearms Trace Data

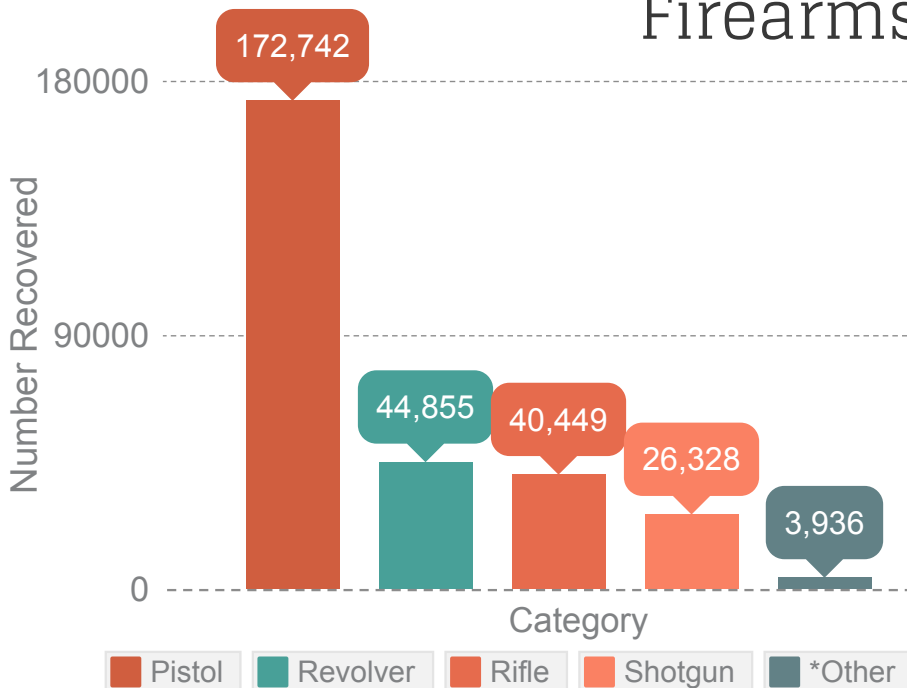


The top 10 states with the most recoveries and traces are:

1. California
2. Texas
3. Florida
4. Georgia
5. North Carolina
6. Illinois
7. Ohio
8. Tennessee
9. Pennsylvania
10. Arizona

In 2016, the number of firearms recovered and traced = **289,223**

## Top Categories of Recovered Firearms



\*Other - Derringer (2,094); Receiver/Frame (966); Machinegun (876)



The average age of a crime gun possessor is 35.



In 2016, pistols & revolvers accounted for the majority of traced firearms.



National time-to-crime average is 9.79 years.



All data is from ATF's 2016 Firearms Trace Data Report

As of December 2017

**FEATURE: By Tony Mecia**

*Click to view this article as originally published in The Weekly Standard*

**REEFER MADNESS**

**Colorado legalized marijuana in 2014 and the Pot Rush is on—but the ERs are filling up and a generation of kids is at risk.**

*Pueblo, Colo.*

Colorado is the national pioneer of legalized marijuana. In 2014, it became the first state to allow any adult over 21 to buy weed or grow it without fear of prosecution. Since then, eight others and the District of Columbia have legalized the drug, and, with a momentum that feels irreversible, more are heading that direction. Public opinion is rapidly shifting in favor of legalization. Coloradans approved marijuana sales in a referendum, with state leaders musing that it would be a grand experiment and an exercise in federalism that could be instructive for the rest of the country.

Nowhere are the results of this experiment being felt more than in Pueblo, a small city of 108,000 about two hours south of Denver. Pueblo is an old working-class steel town largely left out of the prosperity of Denver and the state's famous ski resorts. With nearly 200 legal marijuana farms, Pueblo is at the forefront of the state's rapidly expanding pot industry. Marijuana has become big business. It is creating jobs, harnessing the energies of young

entrepreneurs, raising millions in new tax revenues, attracting visitors to town, and giving residents more personal freedom.

But that's not the end of the story. Some residents here believe these achievements are coming at too high a cost. Legalization, they say, has attracted vagrants and cartels from out-of-state, contributed to spikes in crime, and endangered the health of a generation of kids raised to believe the drug is harmless. A new study from Colorado State University-Pueblo's Institute of Cannabis Research portrays the effects of legalization as mixed at best—far from the unqualified success that marijuana boosters like to project.

*The 404 sells about 40 different strains of marijuana buds, or "flower." The cheapest sell for \$6 a gram. Top-shelf buds cost double. © Dougal Brownlie for the Weekly Standard*

**Get to know your Budtender**

It's a frantic Thursday morning at The 404, a rock-'n'-roll-themed marijuana store located a few blocks north of downtown. Pueblo has eight such "dispensaries," and everyone is preparing for the following day, April 20, or "4/20" as it is known to marijuana enthusiasts. It is the high holy day for marijuana users. The 404's manager, Will Swift, says it is "a combination of Black Friday and the Super Bowl."

Swift is talking about the challenges of running a marijuana business—chiefly, keeping inventory on the shelves—but he keeps getting interrupted as suppliers and customers stream in. Karina, a short-haired young woman, is dropping off a cardboard box filled with "caviar." But it's not fish eggs. Rather, caviar here is a highly



## FEATURE: madness, cont.

© Dougal Brownlie for the Weekly Standard

potent and expensive marijuana delicacy consisting of plant buds soaked in hash oil and dusted with kief, or marijuana-flower resin. Swift excuses himself to “go take care of Shaggy,” an employee’s husband who has just walked in and needs assistance, and leaves one of his experienced sales clerks, Nicole Lucier, to explain how the business runs.

Lucier, 35, says she got her start selling marijuana in 2014 when her children’s father was a security guard at another dispensary in town. She’s what is known as a “budtender,” and as she explains the different strains of marijuana and the dozens upon dozens of cannabis-infused products for sale, it becomes clear that if you believe pot is just pot, you’ve greatly underestimated the ingenuity of American capitalism. Marijuana has come a long way since the days of Cheech & Chong.

The 404 sells about 40 different strains of marijuana buds, or “flower.” The cheapest sell for \$6 a gram. Top-shelf buds cost double. With names like Acapulco Gold, Blue Dream, and Critical Skunk, each has a different smell and potency. They fall into three categories: sativas, viewed as better for cerebral daytime highs; indicas, preferable for evening relaxation; and hybrids that combine qualities of both. In recent decades, pot has become stronger, thanks largely to improved growing methods. Studies have shown that the average level of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active chemical in marijuana responsible for getting users intoxicated, rose in federally seized cannabis from 4 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2014. Dispensaries like The 404 sell buds with THC levels of 20 percent or more.

Customers buy the weed, grind it at home, and roll it into joints or smoke it in a pipe. A gram can usually make three joints. (Colorado law limits purchases to 1 ounce, or about 28 grams, per day.) If grinding and rolling sounds like too much work, stores also sell “pre-rolls.” But that’s not all. The 404 carries a wide range of other marijuana products, Lucier explains. There are cannabis-laced chocolate bars, granola bars, turtle brownies, hard candies, red-velvet cookies, waffle cones, fruit punch, and root beer. There’s cannabis-infused honey and sugar, plus artificial sweeteners for diabetics—all suitable, she says, for putting in coffee or tea. She opens a box of hand-painted cannabis-chocolate truffles. “Aren’t they gorgeous?”

Lucier shows off some multicolored marijuana gummy candies: “These are fun. They’re cool because it’s Americana. They’re shaped like little leaves, and they are red, white, and blue.” The dispensary also sells all manner of topical creams, lotions, and body oils, as well as high-potency oils and extracts that can be smoked. They also sell tinctures, liquid extracts placed directly under the tongue.



Some extract products, known as “dabs” or “shatter,” have THC concentrations of more than 80 percent.

Most customers come in for buds. Some swear by marijuana’s curative effects, like those listed alongside a Vitruvian-like “Cannabis Man” poster that hangs on The 404’s wall: “promotes bone growth,” “reduces inflammation,” and “inhibits cell growth in tumors and cancer cells.” Other patrons, like Otello Ganni, 59, are just looking for a high. He shows his ID to the security guard in the store’s entry hall and walks up to Lucier, who greets him enthusiastically.

“I’d just like some of your good stuff,” he says.

Since it’s the middle of the day, she recommends a sativa—so as not to make Ganni sleepy—and brings over two foot-high glass jars filled with buds: Pink Sherbet and Lost Coast OG. He puts his nose to the top of each jar and inhales. He settles on Lost Coast OG, which clocks in at 26.18 percent THC.

“It’s gonna get you uplifted and energized!” Lucier tells him, as she takes his two \$5 bills and puts four buds into a vial. She adds that she has logged his purchase into The 404’s loyalty rewards program.

Ganni, who moved to Pueblo from California two years ago to live closer to his grandchildren, has a full-time job as a cook, but also cuts stones and makes jewelry. Sativas, he says, “really get me going.”

The 404 is a “recreational” marijuana dispensary. Colorado licenses and regulates medical marijuana separately from recreational marijuana. Medical marijuana has been available in the state since 2001, and sales have been flat in recent years, even dropping in 2017. The recreational side, though, has boomed. Recreational dispensaries sold \$1.1 billion of marijuana in 2017, more than triple the amount sold in 2014. Some Colorado cities don’t allow dispensaries, and others, including Pueblo, cap their numbers. Despite those restrictions, there are now 533 recreational dispensaries in

Colorado—about as many as Starbucks and McDonald’s locations combined. Residents also have the option to grow their own marijuana, up to a maximum of 12 plants per household.

Lucier thinks her customers enjoy the camaraderie of the dispensary. They build relationships with her just as they might with a bartender or a hairdresser. “It’s amazing to see all the changes in life that come through here,” she says. “You hear people’s joys in life as well as their sorrows. I had a guy in here who still had the bracelet on his wrist from the hospital, who came in and said, ‘My baby was just born!’ It’s amazing.”

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## Scromiting at the ER

**B**rad Roberts won’t soon forget a 24-hour stretch in late 2017 at Parkview Medical Center, Pueblo’s main hospital. An emergency room physician, he’s used to seeing crazy things. But three patients he saw then reinforced in his mind the dangers of Colorado’s marijuana laws.

The first patient, a woman in her 30s, came in on a stretcher wearing only a bathrobe. Medics had picked her up at the Loaf ’N Jug, a nearby convenience store, with blood on her face and head. She had severed three of the toes on her left foot and had a gash on her hand. She had been to the Parkview ER before—police had found her throwing furniture off an overpass—and tested positive then only for cannabis. On this visit, she tested positive for both cannabis and meth. She wouldn’t reply to Roberts’s questions and just kept repeating the Lord’s Prayer.

The second patient was a teenager brought in by the police. He had cut himself more than 100 times between his right elbow and wrist and required nearly 50 stitches. He stared blankly ahead, never acknowledging Roberts. His

urine tested positive only for cannabis.

The third patient, a man in his late 40s or early 50s, came to the ER and said he had smoked pure cannabis oil. He told Roberts he had an out-of-body experience in which he knew the rapture had taken place. He had met the Antichrist, heard the trumpets of Revelation, and believed it was his job to warn everybody, he said.

“I saw them back to back to back,” Roberts recalls. “I said, ‘Holy cow! These are horrible cuts, and you severed off your toes, and you aren’t even responding to me! You’re psychotic!’”

Most people know that marijuana has at least some documented medical benefits—such as reducing eye pressure in glaucoma patients, stimulating the appetites of people suffering from AIDS, combatting seizures, and reducing nerve pain. But far less publicized is that marijuana is increasingly being found to have side effects, too. In 2016, when Pueblo voted on whether to allow dispensaries, 237 local physicians signed a statement of opposition.

One of the most dangerous effects, doctors say, is psychosis. Of course, not everybody who uses weed experiences psychotic episodes. But studies suggest that the risk is especially acute among adolescents, whose brains are still developing. Regular marijuana use while young has been linked to schizophrenia.

In 2017, after reviewing the scientific literature, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) concluded that “teens who use marijuana regularly may develop serious mental health disorders, including addiction, depression, and psychosis.” Also upending conventional wisdom, the country’s leading organization of pediatricians found that “evidence clearly shows that marijuana is an addictive substance,” with 9 percent of those trying the drug developing an addiction. The consequences of marijuana use, the AAP statement concluded, include “impaired short-term memory and decreased concentration, attention span, and problem-solving skills . . . alterations in motor control, coordination, judgment, reaction time, and tracking ability.” Those effects can contribute to poor and dangerous decisions.

More people under the influence of marijuana are certainly streaming into Colorado’s emergency rooms. An analysis of five years of hospital drug-screening data by a nursing professor at CSU-Pueblo found “unmistakable evidence” of an increase of positive drug tests in ER patients. Similar results were found in a study in Denver of ER visits by adolescents and young adults since 2014.

Marijuana can also be a gateway to other, harder drugs, says Libby Stuyt, a board-certified addiction psychiatrist in Pueblo. In the last few years, she has seen more patients whose primary addiction is to marijuana—though many of them also use meth, cocaine, alcohol, or opiates. With

**FEATURE: madness, cont.**

*Aubree Adams and pictures of her two sons, now in their teens. She sees legalized marijuana as America's Trojan horse. © Dougal Brownlie for the Weekly Standard*

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marijuana widely available, she says, it's harder for clients to complete her 90-day inpatient drug rehab program.

"I have many arguments with patients," Stuyt says. "I tell them they will have to stay away from everything when they leave here. They say, 'No, there's nothing wrong with marijuana. It's green. It's natural.' They really believe there's nothing wrong with this drug."

Doctors are also seeing more pregnant women using marijuana, perhaps because they believe it helps with morning sickness and sciatica. The percentage of newborns at Pueblo's Parkview Hospital testing positive for marijuana has surged since 2014, to nearly 6 percent of all births last year. So has the share of expectant mothers testing positive for marijuana; last year they accounted for nearly 4 percent of Pueblo's maternity patients. Those increases seem to be aided by the dispensaries, too: A study published last month by the University of Colorado School of Medicine found that nearly 70 percent of 400 Colorado dispensaries surveyed recommended cannabis use for first-trimester morning sickness. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that all pregnant women, women contemplating pregnancy, and breastfeeding mothers avoid marijuana. Use during pregnancy has been linked to low birth weights and an increased risk of stillbirths, the organization says.

There are other effects, too. On Colorado's roads, marijuana-related traffic fatalities have doubled since legalization. The American Lung Association warns that smoking marijuana can lead to bronchitis. Other studies have linked it to depression and suicide.

***Doctors in Colorado are also reporting a newer affliction, called cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome; it is known colloquially as "scromiting," because its symptoms consist of simultaneous screaming and vomiting.***

The condition is little understood but seems to be most prevalent among long-term marijuana users. Roberts

estimates he sees a case of it in Pueblo every week.

Proponents of legalization say there's no irrefutable proof of marijuana's negative effects, which they say are merely "anecdotal" and more likely linked to other causes. Federal prohibitions on marijuana have restricted the number of scientific studies gauging its benefits and consequences. And, with some justification, proponents note that any effects in Colorado might seem amplified because the state did a poor job of collecting data prior to legalization—a point that even Colorado's governor acknowledges.

To Roberts and other doctors in Pueblo, though, a lack of scientific certainty should have led Colorado to adopt a more careful approach. Instead, the state implemented regulations and adjusts them as problems arise.

"We've taken something that probably has some medical benefit, and instead of doing like we've done with any other medicine, we have this free-for-all where now you can have a dispensary on every corner giving medical advice," Roberts says. "We are building the plane while flying it. We're just throwing it out there and figuring out after the fact what's going on."

## A Mother and a Son

Aubree Adams moved to Pueblo 15 years ago. She figured it would be her forever home. Now, she's planning to get out. She's tired of the drug dealers and the drifters. The effects of the pervasive marijuana presence have taken a toll on her historic North Side neighborhood—and on her own family.

On a driving tour of the area around her house, she turns onto 19th Street. She points to a small house that she says grew marijuana and sold it out back: "There were people coming in and out of here all night long. They had to gut the whole thing because the smell was so bad."

Pulling into a nearby alley, she drives past a nicely

maintained yard owned by a couple with three young children. Their misfortune is to live across an alleyway from a popular gathering spot for marijuana users: “All the smoke comes into the backyard, and they have to go inside.”

Turning onto 23rd Street, she drives by the spot of a 2016 marijuana deal where a 46-year-old Pueblo man was shot on a Friday morning: “He lay dead right here, right in the driveway right there.”

Driving around Pueblo with Adams, you hear a range of emotions. Sometimes she’s matter-of-fact, pointing out the Sam’s Club where the marijuana smell wafts across the street from a legal greenhouse. Sometimes she’s angry, blaming marijuana-industry profiteers, irresponsible media, and shortsighted politicians. And sometimes, she sounds frustrated that her message of marijuana’s dangers is falling on deaf ears. She has heard legalization called the Trojan horse that’s going to implode America, and she agrees.

Adams, 44, acknowledges some people view her as a scold plucked straight out of Reefer Madness, the overwrought 1936 film that warned of marijuana’s dangers. Pueblo’s local theater troupe presented a staged version of the film in April in part to poke fun at activists like her.

She’s a regular at public meetings, proselytizing about marijuana’s dangers. She cheerfully records interviews with community leaders and drug users for her YouTube channel. Trying to get people to sign an anti-marijuana petition, she says, she’s had hecklers blow pot smoke in her face.

If she sounds like a busybody who is ruining marijuana’s good vibes, it’s because she has experienced the fear and anguish of marijuana’s effects up close.

She and her husband moved to Pueblo with their two young sons in 2005. She took a job as an assistant to a physical therapist. The family’s troubles began in 2014, just after Colorado legalized marijuana, when her older son was in eighth grade.

He started getting in fights at school and skipping class. He’d cut himself. Adams later learned he was experimenting with edibles, marijuana-laced food products that were newly legal for adults. He moved on to more potent forms of marijuana—the concentrates known as “dabs.” Adams calls these “crack weed.” He became increasingly irrational, paranoid, inconsolable, and angry.

One morning in February 2015, Adams walked by his room and smelled vomit. She found her son passed out. He had taken 250 ibuprofen tablets in a suicide attempt. It marked the start of a painful period in which he was in and out of hospitals, drug treatment, and counseling. Nothing worked. He started taking meth and heroin. He disappeared for days at a time, and Adams would drive around town looking for him. Passing the Loaf ’N Jug a few blocks from the hospital, she says, her voice cracking: “I came down here



© Dougal Brownlie for the Weekly Standard

one time. He was begging for food and water, right here. He was standing there with homeless people.”

It is a tragic story, one that is familiar to too many American families. Teen drug addiction has been with us for years, long before Colorado legalized weed, and teens struggle with addiction in all the states where marijuana is still banned. Why blame legalization?

“He wouldn’t have had access to this high-potency crack weed that we have just completely made accessible all throughout our community,” she says. “He wouldn’t have been exposed to all this normalization, glorification, commercialization. . . . I know people don’t give a crap about my kid. It’s all my fault, they say. I’m like, ‘You have no idea how our children are being preyed upon and how impressionable they are.’”

The data on teen drug use in Colorado is open to interpretation. A Healthy Kids Colorado survey shows that the number of teens saying they had used marijuana in the last 30 days increased to 21.2 percent in 2015 from 19.7 percent in 2013. Colorado media and state government officials say that’s an increase of 1.5 percentage points, which they characterize as “flat” and “not statistically significant.” Opponents say it is an increase of nearly 8 percent, which might be understated because the survey did not include three of the largest school districts in the state. Both interpretations are valid. And asking teens to self-report their illegal drug use, even anonymously, might be a poor way to track actual behavior changes. In Pueblo, 30 percent of students said they had used marijuana in the last month, the highest rate in the state.

People who work with teens in Pueblo say drug use seems to be up and attitudes more accepting. A 2017 survey of Colorado school-resource officers found that 86 percent believe legalization led to increases in marijuana-related incidents, as did 68 percent of school counselors in a 2015 survey.

**FEATURE: madness, cont.**

“They see it like, ‘If my parents do it and it’s legal, why can’t I?’ ” says police officer Heather Smith, who worked as a resource officer at a Pueblo middle school from 2014 to 2017. “It’s viewed as acceptable now. They feel like there is not harm that could happen to their brain and brain development. . . . It’s hard to tell a kid it’s bad for them when they see their parents doing it.”

*Most students whom she busted for marijuana at her school had joints or pipes they had taken from their parents, she says. The youngest she caught with the drug was in fourth grade.*

Pueblo police discontinued D.A.R.E., the drug education program, in city schools in 2012 to be able to put more officers on the streets. Today, there is little attempt to teach kids about the dangers of drugs, police say. A school spokesman said he had no information about any anti-drug education in Pueblo.

Adams plans to keep talking about marijuana to anyone who will listen. She has traveled to Maryland, Georgia, and Vermont at the invitation of activists working to defeat legalization in their states. “People are like, ‘Oh, you need to keep out of my business.’ I’m not here to tell you what to do, but your personal use is affecting us all,” she says. “Yeah, there will be some kids who experiment and get through it. But what about those who don’t? Those are the ones I stand up for.”

**The Marijuana Agri-Boom**

Walking through a greenhouse filled with dozens of six-foot-tall marijuana plants, Jarrod Mason says he has always enjoyed trying new things. That’s how he wound up here, at Los Sueños Farms, 15 minutes east of Pueblo. Running the farm, believed to be the nation’s largest legal outdoor marijuana-growing operation, is a daunting task: There’s no instruction manual on how to cultivate marijuana on this scale. The site is licensed for 36,000 plants on nearly 40 acres.

“Every day is a learning experience, trying to figure out how you can grow cannabis in a field this size,” Mason, 27, says. The farm has 50 workers, with 25 to 40 more added seasonally. It doesn’t test them for drugs, but has a strict policy banning drug use at work.

Los Sueños (Spanish for dreams) resembles most any farming operation you might see, with acres of loose dirt, John Deere tractors, and agribusiness magazines in the

office lobby—except for the barbed wire. Los Sueños is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence that encircles a taller chain-link fence. It also has some 300 surveillance cameras.

Mason’s connection to marijuana has a personal element. His older brother was a heroin addict. Mason started taking neuroscience courses at CSU-Pueblo to understand addiction. He worked with the professors who were launching CSU-Pueblo’s Institute for Cannabis Studies. After graduating in 2016, Mason landed a job here and rose quickly through the ranks. Today, he is Los Sueños’s director of sales and business development. He’s wearing a blue blazer at work.

Because the last frost hasn’t passed, the plants are inside a series of greenhouses kept between 69 and 80 degrees. This greenhouse is known as the “mother bay,” where the farm grows the original marijuana plants and then clones them for planting outside when the weather turns warmer.

In the far corner of the mother bay are five workers, dressed in T-shirts, caps, and sunglasses. They are talking and laughing as they clip branches of a mother plant, dip the end of each stem in a hormone compound, and place it in soil in a tray. The farm plans to grow 35 strains of marijuana this season, and the one this group is working on is known as Queen Mother Goji. Los Sueños is working deliberately to increase plant yields and make the crop more durable. It recently hired a Ph.D. in molecular biochemistry.

Before the plants can be harvested in September, though, the farm will have to overcome the pests. Two years ago, it brought in more than a million ladybugs to eat aphids and mites. Then it added 8,000 praying mantises as reinforcements. Last year, the farm deployed 100 chickens to combat grasshoppers—“public enemy number one,” Mason says—who like to munch on cannabis leaves. But only about 20 of the chickens survived the season. Hawks grabbed the rest. “It’s nature at work,” he says. This year, Los Sueños is contemplating doubling the number of chickens.

Even if the pests are held at bay, Mason says the marijuana







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*In the greenhouses at Los Sueños Farms, marijuana plants are cloned for planting outside when the frosts pass. Los Sueños, the largest outdoor marijuana farm in the country, expects to produce 20 tons of the drug in 2018.*

business remains a hassle because of burdensome state regulation. Colorado requires growers to meticulously track each plant and keep detailed records subject to inspection. They must have security cameras rolling 24 hours a day and store the video footage for 45 days. The list goes on and on, with every regulation adding to costs and cutting into profits.

Lauren Davis, a Denver lawyer who specializes in business formation and legal compliance for the cannabis industry, says companies must follow 222 pages of state regulations on top of any local ordinances. She says some, like the security procedures, make sense, but others, like the packaging and labeling rules, are excessive. “The regulations are pretty overwhelming,” she says. And there’s no way Colorado bureaucrats can keep up with the paperwork they’re requiring cannabis companies to generate. “Even the question of who’s an owner and what it means to be an owner would make your head spin,” Davis says.

The marijuana business is further complicated by legal uncertainty. Under federal law, growing and selling marijuana are felonies. The federal government does not generally prosecute cases in which state law permits those activities. But the law grows murkier when it involves federal regulatory agencies and courts. On the one hand, the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration are not policing the advertisements and medical claims made by Colorado’s marijuana businesses. On the other, companies can’t trademark their cannabis products, file for bankruptcy protection, or use most banks because of federal prohibitions. Federal tax rules also prohibit marijuana companies from claiming many business deductions, which drives up their taxes.

One local couple, Phillis and Michael Reilly, even sued

a Pueblo marijuana farm under federal racketeering laws, which permit private lawsuits against criminal enterprises. According to the suit, the couple owns 105 acres of rolling pastures with a view of Pike’s Peak and uses the land for riding horses and hiking. But a marijuana company called Rocky Mountain Organics, which operates two dispensaries west of Denver, started building a marijuana farm to grow 600 plants on an adjacent lot. “Marijuana plants are highly odorous, and their offensive smell travels long distances,” the complaint says. The suit is making its way through the federal courts.

“The cost of doing business is too unpredictable to make money,” says Bob DeGabrielle, Los Sueños’s managing partner. “I’ve never been in an industry where the rules change every two-and-a-half days.”

Los Sueños is one of 190 licensed marijuana cultivation facilities in Pueblo County, about a quarter of the state’s total. The area is popular among growers because land is cheap, the weather is favorable, and it is one of the few counties in Colorado that allows outdoor commercial marijuana cultivation. Local leaders have embraced the industry, citing its economic benefits. Driving around Pueblo County, marijuana-growing operations are easy to spot. Just look for a greenhouse or metal building in the middle of an open field surrounded by a tall barbed-wire fence.

***An economic-impact study by CSU-Pueblo found that the cannabis industry boosted the local economy by \$36 million in 2016—a figure expected to double this year.***

The benefits have trickled down, especially to construction businesses. Statewide, the marijuana industry remains small but fast-growing. It employs an estimated 18,000 people, or less than 1 percent of the Colorado’s total employment, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. It is also creating niche jobs in fields including law, accounting, consulting, media, and advertising, to say nothing of the people in associated fields who create custom glass pipes, design marijuana jewelry, and run shops selling T-shirts with puns (“Rocky Mountain High” and the “Mile High Club” are popular).

***DeGabrielle believes Pueblo County has a shot to become to marijuana what Napa Valley is to wine and Silicon Valley is to technology.***

State and local governments share in the tax revenues, which are used for a variety of purposes. In 2018, Pueblo



*Some of the new arrivals for Pueblo's 'Pot Rush' have ended up homeless in shantytowns.*  
© Dougal Brownlie for the Weekly Standard

County plans to spend \$6 million of marijuana tax money on 20 community projects, including college scholarships, road work, and replacing the golf carts at a public course west of town.

Los Sueños is profitable, says DeGabrielle, 69. But he didn't get into the business just to make money. He was a retired real-estate developer enjoying the good life in North Carolina. He had houses in Florida, Virginia, and the Outer Banks, and he'd go fishing in Costa Rica with buddies every few weeks. After a couple of friends were diagnosed with cancer and told him marijuana helped with their symptoms, he started researching the drug and how it interacts with the human body. His "whole attitude changed," and he moved to Colorado as legalization was taking off. He built a dispensary in Vail, but then saw the chance to grow marijuana in Pueblo.

***Los Sueños opened in 2015. Its first harvest yielded 7 tons of marijuana. This year, the farm is hoping for 20 tons.***

DeGabrielle believes Pueblo County has a shot to become to marijuana what Napa Valley is to wine and Silicon Valley is to technology. While the arguments of marijuana opponents are "based in fear," DeGabrielle says Los Sueños offers hope. With his Southern drawl, he can sound like an evangelist for marijuana's therapeutic benefits: He says it can help with cancer, post-traumatic stress disorder, Parkinson's disease, Crohn's disease, Tourette syndrome, and many other ailments. A review of medical research last year by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that cannabis can be modestly beneficial in treating chronic pain and seizures and helping reduce nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy but concluded more research is needed on other health effects.

## The Pot Rush

Anne Stattelmann has seen the scene play out time and again in recent years: People from other states in loaded-up cars, sometimes with mattresses on top, arriving in Pueblo looking for a new life. They'll stay at a campground or a by-the-week motel while looking for housing and a job. When they don't find either one and burn through their meager savings, they wind up in her office seeking help.

"You remember the Gold Rush? We call it the Pot Rush," says Stattelmann, the director of Posada, a nonprofit that provides housing assistance to Pueblo's homeless. "Not only do people think they'll be able to smoke marijuana, but people think they can get jobs working in the marijuana fields."

Those green dreams rarely materialize. Rents are rising as people move to town, and a lot of the new arrivals are unable to pass employer background checks or drug tests. Many wind up in shantytowns filled with tents, tires, and garbage along Fountain Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River that cuts through the middle of town.

***In 2013, Posada helped about 2,400 homeless people with housing and other services. In 2016, the number more than tripled, to 7,800.***

Other Pueblo nonprofits, like the city's soup kitchen, have experienced similar surges. Last year, Posada changed its approach. It placed a notice on its website discouraging people of limited means from moving to town and adopted a philosophy of helping Pueblo residents first, ahead of newcomers. Posada still steers the most desperate toward help, but it won't assist out-of-towners in applying for

## FEATURE: madness, cont.

government benefits. Because of that approach, in 2017, the number of those receiving services fell back to pre-legalization numbers.

Stattelman doesn't know precisely how many come here because of marijuana, but she estimates from interviews that it's about one-third. "Can you smell that?" she asks, as homeless people start filing into Posada's downtown case-management center. "I have a nose for it."

The new crop of homeless is rougher than Stattelman and her case manager, LaTanya Yarbrough, are used to. Stattelman founded Posada 31 years ago. Yarbrough has been there for 20.

"These new people, they'll fight you," Yarbrough says. Posada employees have been harassed, shoved, hit, and kicked. Yarbrough, who is black, has been called racist. She reminisces about some of the more bizarre encounters they've had in recent years.

"What about the girl who came in with no pants on?" Yarbrough asks.

"Hmm. Memories," Stattelman replies. She is retiring at the end of June.

Everybody in town acknowledges that the number of homeless has increased. But there is fierce debate, playing out on the letters page of the local newspaper, about whether marijuana is the lure. Skeptics say cities outside Colorado are seeing more homeless, too. The state has also expanded Medicaid benefits, unlike its neighbors to the east. But people who work with the homeless say the connection is clear. "We are observing from talking to people that many people who are homeless came here so that they could get marijuana legally," Pueblo's police chief told the local paper. A CSU-Pueblo study, based on interviews with 20 local police officers, found that most believed "the pull of legal marijuana has brought in a new population to the state who then commit property crimes to get money to buy drugs."

Any link between legalized marijuana and crime is harder to establish. The subject has barely been studied in Colorado or anywhere else. But in Pueblo, violent crime is up about 20 percent since 2013. Property crime overall is about the same as it was before marijuana legalization, though vehicle thefts have more than doubled. Throughout Colorado, the crime rate has also risen since 2013, even as crime has fallen nationally. State officials are reluctant to link that increase to legalized marijuana and say more study is needed.

One of the goals of marijuana legalization is to eliminate the black market for weed by regulating it and bringing it under government control. In Pueblo, police say that has not happened. People are moving to the area, growing marijuana, and either shipping it out of state or selling it on the street



*Marijuana wax can have THC concentrations of over 80 percent. © Dougal Brownlie for the Weekly Standard*

locally for less than the price at dispensaries. In the murder a few blocks from Adams's house, police arrested three men from Oklahoma City who they say had come to Pueblo to buy marijuana. Their purchase turned into a robbery, and Pueblo native Brad Fowler was shot and killed. The three suspects are awaiting trial.

Pueblo police last year investigated 95 code-enforcement cases involving marijuana violations. About 80 percent of those involved people who were growing marijuana outdoors for personal use, in violation of city codes that require personal grows to be indoors. But there were also some examples of outsiders converting existing structures into illegal grow houses. In one case described by police, a group of Cubans paid cash for a house in south Pueblo. They stripped out the inside, redirected air ducts, and installed a new electrical box without a permit. They then put in \$10,000 worth of fans, lamps, and heavy-duty electronics. The house racked up \$4,600 a month in electrical bills.

In a separate incident in late April, the county sheriff raided a house west of town and found 72 marijuana plants. Deputies charged two people "with ties to Cuba" with felonies and confiscated all but 12 of the plants—the number allowed for personal use under Colorado law. "Before legalization, we didn't have Cubans coming to grow marijuana in Pueblo," notes Sgt. Daniel Anderson, who oversees the police department's narcotics division.

Anderson says that with so much marijuana being grown around town, illegal marijuana sales are thriving. An ounce of marijuana at a dispensary costs around \$120, he says. He asks a narcotics officer in a nearby cubicle how much marijuana is going for on the street, and within 30 seconds, the officer has printed out three ads from Craigslist Pueblo's "health and beauty" section. They indicate buds are selling for about one-third the price they go for at dispensaries.

## FEATURE: madness, cont.

“If I want my high, why would I spend \$120 if I could get it for \$40?” Anderson says.

*Asked what he would say to communities considering legalizing marijuana, Anderson says: “Tell people to stop legalizing it. It will do more damage than you can understand.”*

Anne Stattelmann’s advice is simpler: “Don’t. It’s changed our city. It’s changed everything about our community.”

## 4/20 and Beyond

The push to legalize marijuana rolls on. It is no longer just a libertarian pipe dream. Politicians from both major parties are increasingly declaring themselves open to legalization as polls indicate a public shift. Gallup last year found that 64 percent of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, back legalizing recreational use of the drug. Senator Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) says he’s working with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) to craft a “states’ rights” bill that would offer protections to marijuana companies in states that opt to allow those businesses. Democratic senators calling for more lenient marijuana laws include Chuck Schumer, Kamala Harris, Kirsten Gillibrand, Cory Booker, and Bernie Sanders. Former Republican speaker of the House John Boehner joined the board of a cannabis company in April.

Michigan will have a referendum in November that could make it the first Midwestern state to legalize. Connecticut lawmakers are considering a bill that would move their state toward legalization. Recreational sales in Vermont are scheduled to start in July.

Marijuana advocates are anticipating national victory, but in Colorado, they’re already celebrating. No more so than on 4/20 itself. The term “420” is said to have originated in the 1970s from a group of California high school students who would meet after school at a designated time—4:20 p.m.—to smoke pot. The term became synonymous with marijuana and, decades later, led to annual extravaganzas in U.S. cities on April 20.

On that day in Colorado, Pueblo’s dispensaries are all offering 4/20 sales events, and nearby Colorado Springs has a festival. But the real party is in Denver. Celebrations are being held throughout the week and include a cannabis film festival, panel discussions, parties, and concerts headlined by rappers Snoop Dogg and Lil Wayne.

It is a festive (if smoky) atmosphere that morning aboard

a packed bus on the \$49 “Complete Cannabis Tour.” As reggae music blares and the bus hits the road toward a local growing company, most of the 20 passengers pull out joints or pipes. Smoking is encouraged on a bus billed as “420-friendly transportation.”

The group are largely in their 20s and 30s, but from all around the country: New York, New Jersey, Texas, Florida. Some offer puffs to those around them and compare notes on marijuana. The tour guide encourages drinking lots of water to “stay level”: “We want you to enjoy your day and smoke up, definitely,” he says.

At the tour of an indoor-grow operation, participants learn about marijuana cultivation and snap photos of the plants and their distinctive leaves. They take turns posing for selfies with a one-pound bag of buds, valued at more than \$1,200. They buy goodies at the on-site dispensary and re-board the bus to enjoy their new purchases. One participant has tickets to Snoop Dogg that night. Others are headed to the big Mile High 420 Festival at Civic Center Park. Most are happily smoking as the bus heads back to the city center.

Then there’s Aubree Adams back in Pueblo. Her son, now 18, has been in Houston at an intensive outpatient drug-treatment program since 2016. He’s been sober for 22 months. She says he seems mature, aware of his mistakes. He has a peer-support network there. “I have my son back,” she says joyfully.

There’s no way she’ll bring him back to Colorado, she says. There are too many temptations, too many painful memories. The family is planning to move to Houston this summer.

Adams says she’s heard that pro-legalization forces are active in Texas. She will keep fighting—fighting for her son, her family, her country. She plans to keep spreading the message: “Legalization means promotion. It means more future users. That’s the most uncool thing ever.” ➤

## TONY MECIA

is a senior writer at

The Weekly Standard  
[www.weeklystandard.com](http://www.weeklystandard.com)

From the editor:

*Thank you for permission to reprint.*



# UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S HEROIN AND OPIOIDS

by Terry Lemming, Chief of Police, Lockport, Illinois  
Past President,  
Illinois Drug Enforcement Officers Association

## A lot has changed in twenty-five years.

Today, heroin is much more plentiful and it has greater purity than the heroin of a quarter century ago. Back then, users had to boil the impurities out of the heroin and inject it with a needle; because it was so impure, few people introduced heroin into their bodies in other ways. The purity of today's heroin allows users to snort, ingest, smoke, or use a needle to introduce this poison into their bodies.

Twenty-five years ago and beyond, addicts were outcasts from society. Acquiring heroin was their only mission in life, and most developed a criminal record by committing thefts, prostituting themselves, or being involved in other crimes to support their habit. Because heroin was not as available then as it is now, there were fewer heroin addicts than there are today.

***Today, almost everyone has a friend, family member, neighbor, or acquaintance who is or was addicted to heroin or prescription opioids; many know someone who has died of a heroin or opioid overdose.***

Twenty-five years ago, most addicts migrated from other illicit drugs such as marijuana and cocaine; but few transitioned from prescription opioids, which is the case today with many heroin addicts.

Today's heroin addict is the boy or girl next door – who very likely does not have a criminal record now but will likely acquire one in the future if they remain addicted. Today's heroin addict finds it a little easier to function, often keeping their addiction secret from their parents. But heroin addicts don't have to be teens or young adults; heroin does not discriminate – it poisons addicts of every age.



With the introduction of fentanyl into heroin, the drug has become much more lethal and overdose deaths have skyrocketed. Because much of our society continues to believe that heroin/opioid addicts are criminals and outcasts, not enough is being done to get addicts the long-term treatment they need.

Most alarming is not just the fact that people are dying in record numbers, it's the fact that young people are dying in record numbers of a disease, every effort – both financially and operationally – would be made to eradicate the disease. Sadly, that's not the case with today's heroin and opioid addicts.

If you think today's heroin addict is a criminal and an outcast of society, this story may change your mind: Celeste Roppo was a high school cheerleader, living a normal life in Lockport, Illinois. After graduating from high school, she was involved in a head-on auto collision in which she was severely injured. (The other driver, who was DUI, died.)

Celeste was hospitalized for an extended period and provided with prescription opioids for her severe pain. When Celeste was discharged from the hospital, and after the doctor refused to provide her with more opioids, she began attempting to find them illegally. By that time, Celeste was an opioid addict.

When Celeste realized that she could acquire heroin on the black market much cheaper than prescription opioids, she tried heroin. Like most heroin addicts, Celeste was an addict after the first or second use.

Celeste was 24 years old when she died of a heroin overdose on November 29th, 2016. Celeste's mother, Sherry Roppo, is a volunteer in the Lockport Police Department's Safe Passage program, which helps addicts obtain immediate treatment for their addiction.

**Terry Lemming** is currently the Chief of Police in Lockport, Illinois. He was the first Statewide Drug Enforcement Coordinator for the Illinois State Police from 2004 to 2008, and he served as the President of the Illinois Drug Enforcement Officers Association from 2008 to 2017.

# Heroin boom in Stockholm, Sweden

**N**ever before has heroin been so cheap in Stockholm. Never before has the number of sellers been so high. Never before have the open marketing of heroin, the open usage of heroin, and the number of constantly chasing users been so high as they are now. The tragic effects of these facts follow naturally.

During the summer and fall of 2017, emergency vehicles and patrol cars ran almost as shuttles to the Klara district (part of downtown Stockholm) to respond to alerts about overdoses. Many of the overdose victims were saved, thanks to quick-responding and alert police officers and other emergency responders – and probably also thanks to the proximity of large healthcare facilities. But, unfortunately, not everyone was saved. During just the fall of 2017, at least 4 young men and women died in a public space in the Klara district.

## *West African networks*

### *from the top down to the street*

Historically, the heroin sales in Stockholm have been dominated and run by individuals and/or loosely connected networks with an ethnic origin from West Africa. For the last three decades, most of the dominating actors had in common that they came from Gambia. Unfortunately, for a long time, there was a certain “taboo” about



discussing this openly and publicly. The reason for this “taboo” was a number of unfortunate, generalized, public statements through the history of the police force – statements that could easily have been misinterpreted as if every Gambian sold heroin. But why Gambia? Gambia is a relatively small West African country, and the view on drugs in Gambia is very strict. No one has really been able to answer the question why things turned out as they did. But there might a number of probable causes.

The first one is that a relatively large number of Gambians came to Stockholm and Sweden, since Gambia was a popular charter destination and was visited by many Swedes as early as the 1960’s. Swedish women met

Gambian men, and love made many Gambian men to move to Sweden. Upon arrival in Sweden, many Gambians found it hard to adjust to the Swedish society. Racism is a strong word, but probably many Gambians had to withstand different degrees of discrimination; therefore, they had difficulties being accepted totally in the Swedish society, and difficulty entering the work market was even higher.

Already in those days, West Africa was a reloading site of drugs. Access to the product was already in place via contacts in the native country. At the same time, an increased opiate misuse came about. In the early 1980’s, the opiate misuse went from a rather marginalized phenomenon to a fully developed misuse. These simultaneous

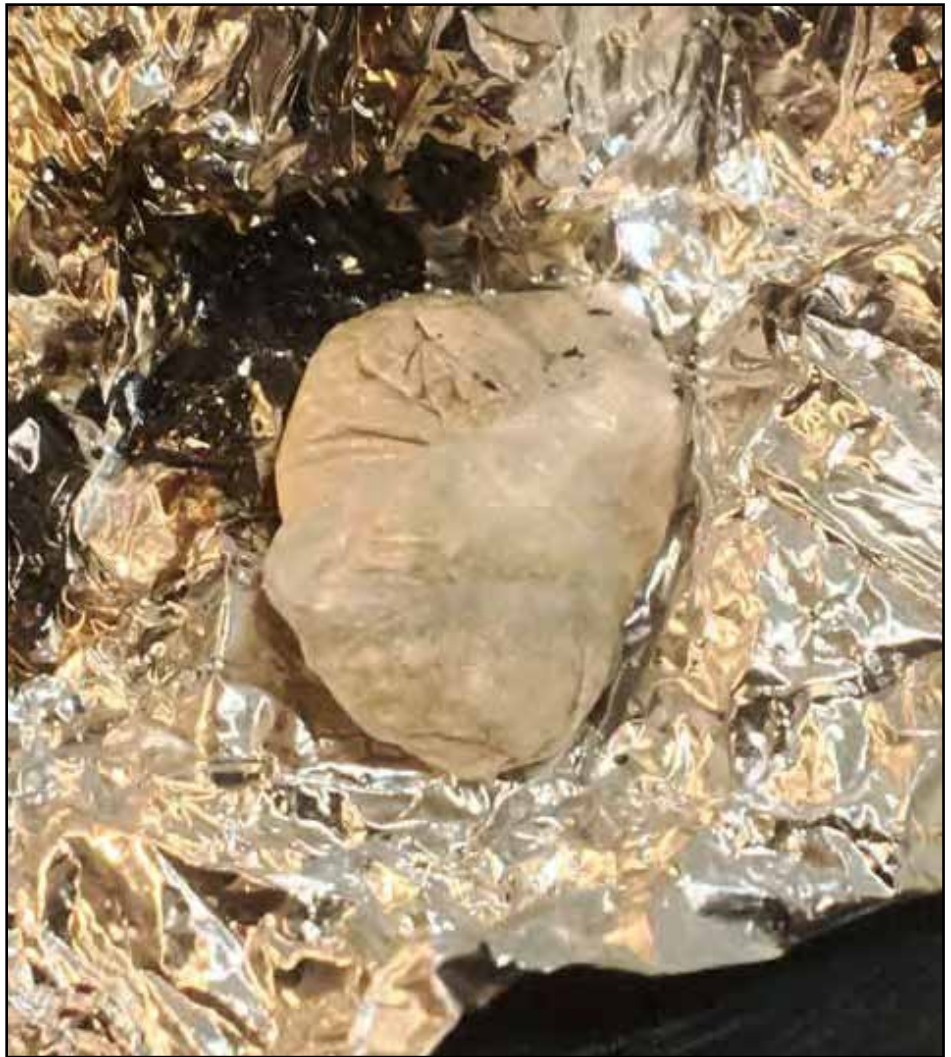
events affected the development of the situation to what it did become.

At an early stage, there were regional differences. In Stockholm and large parts of the country, the use of heroin hydrochloride (the white heroin) was predominant. In the southern parts of Sweden, the brown heroin base was predominant. But this has changed. In the heroin market in Stockholm today, the brown heroin base is as common, if not more common, than heroin hydrochloride.

During the 1990's the loosely connected Gambian networks dominated the Stockholm market totally. They ran all sales, from importing to distribution. The organization was in the form of "families" who controlled the import and distribution to street sellers, as well as controlling the cash flow and sending capital to their home country. Sometimes, the odd seller came from another West African country, foremost from Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and the Ivory Coast. These sellers had to act upon the Gambian networks' conditions. Most of these sellers disappeared. The ones who managed the best were the sellers from Senegal, a country which has had historically close connections with Gambia and is looked upon by many as the same country. Only a few actors came from Nigeria, but the strength ratio was soon to be altered.

### ***Nigeria takes over***

The Gambian dominance separated Sweden from other European countries. In most other countries, the heroin market – and, to some extent, the cocaine market – was controlled by West African networks originating from Nigeria. Even if Nigerian actors had been present in Stockholm for some time, it was not until the early 2000's that things really changed. Within six or seven years, more and more actors in Stockholm came from



Nigeria. Gradually, a quiet but obvious takeover happened which led to today's situation where the Nigerian networks seem to dominate import and storage of heroin. The networks also bring in large amounts of cocaine, but they are not as dominant in that market.

The Gambian networks seemed to have been thrown out of power. How could this happen? Once again, there are no simple answers. A cautious guess and possible answer to the question may be found in comparing the population of the two countries: Gambia has approximately 2 million inhabitants, and Nigeria has 186 million!

Whatever the reason, it became clear that networks from Nigeria chose to bet on import of heroin and cocaine to Sweden and Stockholm. It didn't take long until the first seizures with

connections to clear Nigerian networks came about. At the same time, an abundance of heroin could be seen that pressed the prices on the street. In 2015, police officers in Stockholm city warned that the prices had been cut in half locally and that a ball of heroin (normal weight of 0.2 to 0.25 gram) was priced at 200-250 SEK (Approximately \$40-\$50). Compare that with the fact that in the late 1990's, the same amount would have cost SEK 500. (Approximately \$80).

### ***Increased pressure on the street***

By the fall of 2017, the 2015 prices just a memory; prices had been halved once again, to today's level at which a ball of heroin costs approximately 120-

150 SEK (\$15-\$19).

Also during 2017, a huge increase of street sellers occurred. On any given day, as many as 25 to 30 sellers could operate openly in the Klara district. Sometimes they worked alone, sometimes in a group.

The local Narc division of the police at Norrmalm, (a police precinct in Stockholm) worked constantly against uneven odds. During the period of September until December, no less than 30 West African heroin pushers were arrested. Many more were arrested but, due to lack of evidence, they were released. The pushers had swallowed the drug and, due to poorly executed routines and lack of resources, the investigations were not completed. Suspected dealers were released even though police officers could testify that they had seen drug packages in the dealers' mouths.

### ***Human trafficking for selling drugs?***

A great number of the dealers who were on the streets of Stockholm during the fall of 2017 were so-called "guest workers". They were young men of African origin from Gambia, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau. Most of them came with Spanish or Italian temporary permits. Many of the arrested appeared to be unfamiliar to their work. Some of them had apparently also unreasonably quickly started their "business". To be able to start, after only a few days in Sweden, to pack portions of heroin; to have a cellphone full of potential buyers; to have handwritten notes with addresses to shelters, etc.; is not something that can be done without someone running the logistics.

Intelligence sources within the drug environment revealed that some of them had been tricked into coming to Sweden under the impression that

they would be given "proper" jobs. Before long, they had become dependent, and in that sense they had become simple prey for those who wanted to exploit them. A reflection about this is a wish that Swedish Police will be able to convict someone within this group for trafficking, since the only purpose of this trafficking is to sell drugs.

Another worrying development during the latter part of 2017 was that some of the heroin dealers who were arrested were, or claimed to be, very young. In some cases, they were even under the age of 15. Once again, unfortunately, the justice system and the community failed to solve and handle these problems.

Many of these cases were lost due to incompetence from various authorities. Routines were lost. Responsibility was not taken. The common denominator in the cases with the "young dealers" was that they came from Senegal and had entered the EU via Italy, where they had obtained a temporary permit. Is it organized or coincidental?

### ***No signs of decline***

Recently, the police, in cooperation with Customs, made many large seizures connected to the Nigerian networks. Seizures have also been made in other Nordic countries, and Stockholm was suspected to be a reloading or distribution center. Despite



the successful seizures, the activity at the open drug scenes is still very high and the prices are low. If we want to be successful in disturbing these highly active drug networks, we must stay strong and persevere, as well as improve our competence. But we must also use cooperation – nationally well as internationally. ➤

***Lennart Karlsson***  
***President of the SNOA***

### ***Editors note:***

This article is from the Swedish Narcotics Officers Association and reprinted with their permission. *The Coalition* will reprint additional articles in upcoming issues.



## Coast Guard offloads more than 7 tons of seized cocaine in Port Everglades

**WHO:** Commanding officer, and the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk

**WHAT:** Offload approximately 7 tons of cocaine

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. Thursday, August 9

**WHERE:** Pier 2, Port Everglades - 1800 SE 20th St, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316.

MIAMI — More than 7 tons of cocaine seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean from early June to mid-July will be offloaded by the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913) Thursday in Port Everglades.

The drugs were seized during the interdiction of seven suspected smuggling vessels and the recovery of two floating bale fields found off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America by the cutter Mohawk, Coast Guard Cutter Tampa (WMEC-902), Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC-625) and Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC-630).

- Mohawk was responsible for four cases, seizing an estimated 3,395 kilograms of cocaine.
- The cutter Tampa was responsible for two cases, seizing an estimated 1,363 kilograms of cocaine.
- The cutter Venturous was responsible for one case, seizing an estimated 741 kilograms of cocaine.
- The cutter Alert was responsible for two cases, seizing an estimated 981 kilograms of cocaine.

“I couldn't be prouder of Mohawk's crew,” said Cmdr. Bob Kinsey, cutter Mohawk commanding officer. “Today's offload highlights the successes of a dedicated team of multiple cutters and international and interagency partners who remain committed to disabling the illicit smuggling networks that fuel criminal organizations and threaten our economic, national and border security.”

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement along with allied and international partner agencies play a role in counter-drug operations. The fight against transnational organized crime networks in



the maritime domain requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by U.S. Attorneys in districts across the nation.

The Coast Guard increased U.S. and allied presence in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Basin, which are known drug transit zones off of Central and South America, as part of its Western Hemisphere Strategy. During at-sea interdictions in international waters, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The cutter Tampa is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The cutter Venturous is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida. The cutter Alert is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Astoria, Oregon. ➤



## NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION

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Phone: (866) 803-8678

[www.nnoac.com](http://www.nnoac.com)

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July 31, 2018

Dear Drug Enforcement Forum Invitee,

The National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC) invites you to participate in our 2018 Drug Enforcement Forum on September 12, 2018 in Washington, D.C.

Building upon the successful gathering last year, the NNOAC will host a day-long forum on drug enforcement, with a particular focus on the heroin and opioid crisis. It is important to bring together leaders within the law enforcement community to discuss the challenges we all face surrounding drug policy and related issues. We hope this year's forum will lead to consensus on certain programs that can be embraced by law enforcement and a broader group of partners and more aggressively pushed in joint messaging to the public and to Capitol Hill.

This year's forum will focus on three main themes as it relates to the opioid and heroin crisis: 1) effective law enforcement initiatives; 2) effective partnerships between law enforcement and other partners including public health professionals and prevention groups; and 3) priorities of the various law enforcement groups on what their organizations consider priorities for tackling this challenge. We hope to have vibrant discussions to develop consensus where it can be achieved, and to craft a common message that will help to advance our collective policy goals.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has once again graciously agreed to host the forum at their National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Invitees will consist of representatives from federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations; local, state and federal prosecutors; and other organizations dedicated to reducing the impact of dangerous drugs on our country. We ask that you limit attendance to no more than three individuals from your organization. Should you find it necessary to send more attendees, we will be happy to work with you to accommodate those requests, within space and staffing limitations. The NNOAC will host a reception immediately following the forum at a location to be announced.

Please confirm your attendance [here](#) or by emailing [jledden@bbm-dc.com](mailto:jledden@bbm-dc.com).

**What:** 2018 NNOAC Drug Enforcement Forum

**When:** September 12, 2018

**Where:** Ariel Rios Federal Building – ATF National Headquarters, 99 New York Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C., Elizebeth Smith Friedman Auditorium

We hope you will be able to attend this important forum to discuss these challenging issues. Please contact me at your earliest convenience if you have any additional questions. I can be reached at 202-664-9244 or by email at [bbushman@nnoac.com](mailto:bbushman@nnoac.com).

Sincerely,

Bob Bushman  
President, NNOAC



## NNOAC Drug Enforcement Forum

September 12, 2018



Draft Agenda as of 7/31/18

Ariel Rios Federal Building – ATF National Headquarters

99 New York Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C.

Elizebeth Smith Friedman Auditorium

*\* Schedule is subject to change*

*\*\* Attendees are expected to participate and share their ideas during the group discussions.*

### Maximizing the Impact of Law Enforcement in Addressing the Heroin & Opioid Crisis

#### Sept. 12

- 0830 - 1000      **Welcome, Introductions, and Keynotes**
- 1000 - 1015      Break
- 1015 - 1200      **What's Working in Drug Enforcement**
- Multijurisdictional Task Forces
  - Information Sharing and Deconfliction
  - HIDTA
  - Intelligence Led Operations
  - Group Discussion
- 1200 - 1300      **Lunch on Your Own**
- 1300 - 1430      **Outstanding Examples of Law Enforcement Partnerships**
- Treatment
  - Public Health
  - Prevention
  - Shipping and Freight Industry
- 1430 - 1445      Break
- 1445 - 1645      **Roundtable Discussion: Raising our Voices on the Importance of Law Enforcement Programs in Addressing America's Drug Crisis**
- Perspectives from Law Enforcement Organizations
  - Group Discussion
- 1645 - 1700      **Wrap Up: Take-aways and Next Steps**
- 1730 - 1930      **Hosted Social** (Location TBD)



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