



Drug Crazy: How We Got Into This Mess and How We Can Get Out

Mike Gray

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Six years in the making, *Drug Crazy* offers a gripping account of the stunning violence, corruption, and chaos that have characterized America's drug war since its inception in 1914. Weaving a provocative analogy between the drug scene today and the failure of Prohibition in the 1920s, *Drug Crazy* argues that the greatest danger we face is prohibition itself.

While the target of our nation's controlled-substance laws may have shifted from hooch to heroin, the impact on society--discriminatory policing, demonization of the users, graft and grandstanding among lawmakers and lawbreakers--is an instant replay. Instead of Al Capone, we have Larry Hoover of Chicago's Gangster Disciples running a multimillion-dollar drug syndicate from his prison cell in Joliet.

In a riveting account of how we got here, conventional wisdom is turned on its head, and we find that rather than a planned assault on the scourge of addiction, the drug war happened almost by accident but has been continually exploited by political opportunists.

From the explosive opening montage of undercover cops caught in a shoot-out on Chicago's South Side to a humid courtroom in Malaysia where a young American faced death by hanging for possession of marijuana, *Drug Crazy* takes us to the front lines of the war on drugs and introduces us to a cast of villains and heroes, profiteers and victims. Among them:

• Pauline Morton Sabin, a Republican aristocrat who administered the coup de grâce to Prohibition by leading a million women into the arms of the Democrats.

• Harry Anslinger, a former railroad cop who guided the Bureau of Narcotics through five administrations and engineered some of the most enduring and pernicious myths of the drug war.

• Pablo Escobar Gaviria, the Colombian kingpin who nailed a suspected informer with a bomb--killing him along with a hundred innocent airline passengers.

From the men and women in the forward trenches, *Drug Crazy* brings back a grim report: The situation is deteriorating on all fronts. In a sobering tally of the cost in crime, human suffering, and cold, hard cash, it documents the failure of crop eradication in the source countries, the hopeless task of sealing the border, and the violent world of the major players. We see the steady erosion of the Bill of Rights and a grinding criminal justice mill so overwhelmed that it's running a night shift.

We do, however, get a glimpse of a way out of this swamp. Lessons from Europe--and from our own experience--are pointing us toward higher ground.

In *Drug Crazy*, Mike Gray has launched a frontal assault on America's drug war orthodoxy, and his frightening overview of the battlefield makes it clear this urgent debate must begin now.

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