

# Black Markets and Black Marketeers

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*“Know your shadow, it is 90% gold- Jung”*

While walking through the prison compound one day I saw an article in a newspaper shown to me by an inmate. It seems that in our own prison a correctional officer (CO) was caught selling contraband to inmates. The items in question were cellphones for \$2000 and a pound of tobacco for \$800 each, (packs of cigarettes get \$250-300 here). Tobacco and cell phones are illegal here. According to rumor, in some prisons tobacco is harder to find than heroin.

It seems that I got into the wrong business (I'm doing time here for pot and MDMA). On the outside an illegal substance like marijuana would get at most a 50% markup while here tobacco would get a markup of 500-1000%. There is nothing like the government to create markets that looks like price gouging.

Upon further inquiry I discovered that the CO in question was a woman of color. Considering how much effort the country is putting into motivating potential minority and women entrepreneurs one wonders about the mixed message that this arrest involved. After all dealing is an equal opportunity employer that ignores such barriers as class, race, sex, religion, looks, physical ability and especially previous criminal history. It is the greatest opportunity for wealth for poor people today. These marketeers work in the shadows by usually working at night or at least away from sight. Life needs darkness as well as light to survive. Those who work on this dark side are therefore black no matter what their race. Even the Mafia was known as the Black Hand. Working with dark aspects does not necessarily mean evil but it does mean working with the shadow, the unrecognized aspect of our being. Furthermore when one considers that marketeers can operate on both sides of law enforcement the strange implications of the War on Some Drugs starts to emerge.

As confirmed by statistics gathered by the US government agency National Institute for Drug Analysis the fatalities incurred by illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine, crack, amphetamines etc are quite small when compared to the deaths caused by legal ones such as alcohol or tobacco which cause hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. There are even more deaths if you include fatalities caused by drunk driving and fires caused by smoking in bed. Many consider sugar to be a drug in that its use can be addictive and leads to mood changes and serious illness. Obesity affects more than half of all people in the US with its concurrent diabetes, heart disease and strokes as the largest causes of death in this country. In comparison all illegal drugs combined cause less than 10,000 deaths per year. Many of these deaths and other problems are preventable if they were legal in that dosages and purity would become known to the consumer. Legalization would also give more opportunity to educate for health effects and reintegration into the community.

But all this damage is minimal compared to the costs inflicted by wrongful convictions, law enforcement, attorney and judicial costs, incarceration costs etc. Still there is a cost

greater than even all this. The great conservative economist, Henry Hazlitt, in his popular classic "Economics in One Lesson" touches upon this. For those of you who don't know or have forgotten his famous example of a common economic fallacy: it goes like this: A delinquent breaks the window of store. Some of those who see this effect think there is no net loss. They see that the owner now needs a new window and there is new business for a glazier. What is not seen is that the owner was planning to buy a new coat or what ever and that that potential commerce goes unnoticed and uncalculated because it never materialized. The economy does suffer from the broken window after all. .

Therefore when the state takes our tax money to investigate arrest, try and incarcerate and monitor people whose actions hurt no one but themselves it hurts the economy. The desire to alter one's consciousness is a natural one. Science has proven that even children have a desire to occasionally alter their consciousness which is why kids sometimes spin around making themselves dizzy. Even elephants will sometimes drink naturally fermented nectars of plants to get high. The state wastes our money to stop people from doing what they would naturally do and the results are staggering taxes, nightmarish crime, the corruption of law enforcement and the destruction of our cities and that still is not the main damage inflicted upon us. As is shown in Hazlitt's story there are schools, homes, businesses unbuilt and not even dreamed of because of the drug war. And even that is still not the most damaging aspect of this futile crusade.

For what is the most important factor in causing the economy or a culture to grow? Is it the natural resources? Look at Hong Kong and Singapore. They have no natural resources and they have thriving economies while Nigeria and Bolivia has gas, oil and mineral wealth and languish in mass poverty. Is it money? No look at Russia and Saudi Arabia where incredible wealth is extracted in oil but is invested in freer economies leaving many of its own people poor.

So how does a prosperous and stable community develop? A hint here. Look at business magazines. The lead stories focus on entrepreneurs and other creators and the opportunities they face. There is more to measuring than just numbers. There is more to wealth than just counting dollars. Where are the entrepreneurs?

Now let's go back to the underground economy. From the time a drug is grown or manufactured it needs to go through as many as 3 to ten or more levels before it reaches the consumer. Each of these marketeers depending on the enforcement climate can handle only to 10-40 customers even when working overtime. This ratio gets even narrower the higher up the supply chain you go. There are some suppliers who have only one customer. This increased amount of layers needed and other high costs to the consumers is because of the increased risk and caution required by the enforcement of drug laws. Many customers then become marketeers themselves just to supply their own needs.

Now think of the qualities needed to do this work. You need intelligence, especially street smarts and social skills, and most importantly daring. You need initiative tempered by discipline and discretion. These are the qualities of an entrepreneur. The underground entrepreneur must also be able to deal with the stress of not knowing what day you might be suddenly bankrupt due to a theft, imprisoned or physically attacked without legal recourse. There is also the discipline of not doing or overdoing the product in order to conduct business. An executive in charge of distribution or a store manager does not have

this stress. Nor does he need the tougher qualities that are sometimes needed in the underground economy.

Therefore as a consequence of the war on drugs the nation's poorest communities that are also largely communities of color are suffering a very large loss of talent and ambition that is unacknowledged. This loss is the reason there is such a lack of entrepreneurship, lack of family cohesion and lack of safety for everyone since entrepreneurs are usually responsible leaders in the community. Together with all the other factors have been mentioned this makes an ungodly synergy that is destroying our cities and its inhabitants. This drug war holocaust also goes far in perpetuating the evil racist myths of violence, lack of concern and corruption are inherent in racial minorities. This harms even those who have nothing to do with drugs or its economy. Even in white rural areas the same sad stories are being played out in the war against pot and methamphetamine.

In a legalized drug environment one hundred of these marketeers could be replaced by one low paid clerk or counselor. Do not forget that in this drug war these hundred marketeers' numbers must be constantly replenished due to arrests, prison time and violence. The violence is not so much due to the drugs themselves but to the incredible competition over turf. Sometimes there's no redress for disputes because they operate outside the legal system as individuals or small groups because large organizations can be easily busted. The violence in the crack trade is legendary. Take a look at 50 Cents, a leading gangsta rap star, who claims to have 8 bullet wounds from when he sold crack. Freakonomics, a best selling book describes the street life of a dealer lasting an average about 4 years before he goes to prison or dies. There have been so many rap stars in prison that one magazine even had a prison issue commemorating the many rap stars there. Please note that this level of violence is not usually present in the marijuana and psychedelics trade.

America is losing in another way as many of those out there making songs, films and other media in the "gangsta" culture are incorporating the violence of their drug trade into their music business. Many of the singers and even producers have died by gang violence even though their music business is still legal. Cases in point are the deaths of Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur. Even among the peaceful pot and psychedelic community the huge profitability has caused much greed causing shocking murders. The deaths of Sharon Tate, wife of director Roman Polanski, and others ordered by Charles Manson in the 60's were in revenge due to Polanski burning Manson in an LSD deal.

Many are getting involved in the "bizness" to fund their hopes of becoming involved into the rap culture which has expanded all over the world and may be the largest pop culture ever. Buying and selling drugs is a quick, exciting, lucrative, ongoing adventure for artists and other marginal people of all races all over the world. In Mexico, narcocorrado, that is the songs of the drug trade functions like hip-hop and rap and so interplays with it that the police have tried to implicate them in the drug trade.

The "gangsta" image promotes a controversial anti-hero success story that makes it immune to the commercialism that integrates and also neuters this vital energy. This is why it's popular all over Europe, Asia and Africa and has been part of attempts to topple governments all over the world. Unfortunately it can at the same time promote drug abuse, stupidity, violence and other evil behavior and greed just like the culture it

opposes. Heroism and villainy combine as one, sometimes in the same person. All this is a result of the drug war.

Any successful salesman will tell you that putting together a big deal is a powerful high. Putting together a deal on the black market is an even greater experience because of the risks involved. Deals here when they go wrong, can go very wrong and you can't call the cops or threaten to sue. One bonus feature is that when you do the transaction right there is the added thrill of putting one over the man (or the state). There is a pride of vengeance that was probably felt by John Hancock, a signer of the Declaration of independence and a smuggler. It's not just the cash, it's the flash.

This is a tremendous self confidence booster, a swagger, an attitude that empowers ghetto youth to overcome racist and economic barriers and inspired gangsta rap. Dealers have described to me that the lifestyle is more addictive than cocaine. And, of course, cocaine and crack dealers don't do their own product.

Even if the salesman doesn't do his own product it still affects them. The karmic connection is in all transactions legal or otherwise but those involving consciousness affect the conscience. Whatever you sell you get a portion of whatever your clients experience. I believe that this is the explanation of why the cocaine scene is more loud, edgy, self-destructive and dramatic than the marijuana scene.

Of course the lure of forbidden fruit make these scenes more lucrative, mysterious and more dramatic than legal business ventures. So even a safer and more potentially lucrative career such as being a realtor or stockbroker can be less attractive than dealing. However I have met people who after a career in dealing did make the switchover to legal finance and real estate.

There is another reason that makes the black market so appealing. Most conventional businesses even those that see themselves as diverse and non-racist are not. These establishment businesses, even in the ghetto, require a certain cultural conformity to the lifestyle, attire, language, regulations and credential forming bureaucracies and the 9-5 life to the point of Babbitry-it's a white bread prison.

In my style of this New Age, I invented or discovered myself as a radical libertarian, a broker of shamanic sacraments. Hemp and psychedelics have been a heritage of spiritual, therapeutic, cultural and medical use for thousands of years throughout the world. This even happened in Europe and America before the 60's as artists and writers used absinthe and hemp.

I have done research on LSD since 1967 in high school long before I took it. I discovered that there were over a thousand papers written on the use of it in treating alcoholism alone and more today would be written if it were not banned. Throughout my dealing and libertarian life I attended drug conferences where PhDs would read papers on the effects of psychedelics that commented on its beneficial use in therapy, creativity and spirituality. I also attended rock concerts of popular and well reviewed bands that were positively influenced by psychedelics such as the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane and the Moody Blues. I also went to religious celebrations, parties and countercultural and art fair events such as Burning Man where I also met similarly minded people. These innovators since the 60's were also involved in creating the new technology and business forms that make up what's left of our once powerful economy. My generation has ushered in undreamed of acceptance and opportunities for women and minorities, an environmental conscientiousness, as well as integrating profit making with a social

conscience as well the libertarian movement. People from these communities spoke well of my wares and my role in providing them. This is my community and I am proud of them.

Many of my clients also lived in a more corporate or conservative world and like all the others did not misuse and maintained their duties to family, business and community. The connections that I made between all these worlds allowed for an interesting exchange of stories and ideas.

Forming and joining these small decentralized illegal drug subcultures is an act of spontaneous order as described by Nobel Prize winning economist Friederich Hayek. No one knows or could know all the buyers and sellers of this shadow market even in a small town like Hoboken, NJ where I lived for many years. I have known of dealers that lived next door to each other and never knew it. Marketeers like me who see dealing as a calling rather just a business are rare and are unknown to each other even in this small world. Even if it were legal this shamanic activity would be discrete, private and humble as it has been practiced all over the world for thousands of years. Recently there has been through the Supreme Court decision legalizing ayahuasca for religious use a movement from hip urban intellectuals to the jungles of South America to study shamanic rituals and to bring them and their sacrament to America.

The larger drug culture(s) are the urban hard drugs with its street scene of pushers who anonymously sell to survive. They will eventually have to move off the streets to maintain their safety and freedom since being on the streets with increased police presence and cameras will change the rules. Prostitutes have done the same going to hidden brothels and some bars with only the most desperate staying on the streets. To survive one must blend in the neighborhood even if most of your neighborhood is doing something illegal. Dealing mostly with friends they form the economic infrastructure that is the underground that breaks through the surface as a counter-culture.

While this economic and cultural responses to the repression can be colorful and romantic such as the speakeasies of the Roaring Twenties, jazz, swing, rock and hip-hop clubs that formed our nightlife. However not all of this is benign. Prohibition of 20's not only increased street crime but led to the corruption that allowed for a nation wide crime syndicate. This led to a nationwide disrespect for the law, even good laws, against murder and theft.

The enormous profits in the illegal drug trade have grown so much that whole countries have flouted international agreements and even their own laws to take advantage of drug prohibitions and addictions. By complying with the logic of the marketplace Mexico, Jamaica, Columbia, Dominican Republic and other countries citizens and many high government officials have earned large profits. The dealers flouted with songs, parties and lavish lifestyles. This hurt the US reputation and influence in dealing with legitimate problems like pollution and corruption

The US has fumed in the media and arrested and imposed sanctions in response to the increasing criminality and corruption on both sides of the border. This also reinforced stereotypes of black and Latin criminality and reinforces the notion of covert Yankee imperialism. Drug policy became a tool which the US could aid or subvert regimes via sanctions, loans or military and police aid (which was sometimes used against dissidents and native populations).

Drug organizations or entire communities in which they exist alternatively become profit centers or scapegoats depending on the needs of the US and its allies. Sometimes drug prohibitions are enforced to safeguard legal drug interests such as alcohol and tobacco from competition. Culturally the Marlboro Man is powerful in Asia and reinforces the good cowboy image that the US wants to project. Pharmaceutical companies and its various mood alterants with profit margins of several thousand per cent (higher than even the most extortionate black market margins) need protection as well. Drug Prohibition also promotes the artificial medicine culture as well as many alternative remedies such as ephedra and others are made illegal to protect pharmaceutical monopolies against competition.

All of the drug trade, good and bad (as well as its use) can be seen as an escape avenue of the oppressed. It is a road used by strong and weak, ignorant and educated, bad and good and all those in between. Mules, many of whom are desperate, poor illegal aliens, will carry anything even across closely watched borders. Not asking questions they carry cargo of unknown content to unknown recipients who bring it to who knows where.

The contraband items could be as tiny as the germs of bacteriological warfare or chemical agents or bombs. There is also the possibility of suitcase nukes being brought in unknowingly by smugglers. Smuggling is as old as borders and many of our founding fathers were smugglers. All these terrifying objects could be brought in by large, legal corporations, foreign and domestic, known or unknown to themselves by their employees. There has been a long term exponential increase in international trade for many decades. There is a good likelihood that such weapons may be here already brought over during the Cold War. There are so many places to hide and very few container loads are checked and even dummy bombs have gotten through according to 60 Minutes. Legalization would reduce the illegal avenues for smuggling as well as calming down international tension.

Drug importation to subdue or pacify a population has long been used as a tactic of war and colonialization. China would point to the Opium Wars. Conservatives would point to the heroin sold to GIs during the Vietnam War. Radicals would point to heroin shipped to the US during that war in body bags or by the CIA's Air America which was then distributed to pacify America's burning inner cities. It could be said that the CIA entered the drug trade to attain capital to finance black bag operations that would be too sensitive for Congressional oversight. There is also the cold rationality that this dirty business helps to deny power to the Mafia, China or terrorists. The importation of bad drugs by bad guys is creepy enough. But consider that the importation of a WMD on the literal wet backs of the illegal drug trade is such a horrible escalation of terror that even fear mongering Hollywood has yet to portray such a nightmare.

The US government claims that tons of drugs come into this country every day as well as thousands of illegal aliens. For once I believe them. No wall, military, police force, militia, or surveillance system has ever stopped this trade except through the most extreme gutting of civil liberties of a surveillance state. The financial incentives are too powerful for dealing not happening. US citizens are going into dealing because they see their income of a few hundred dollars a week go into several hundred or even thousands of untaxed dollars a day through the easy, unskilled task of dealing. Across the border many make only a few hundred dollars a year and therefore are even more enticed to cross the border illegally. Once across the border opportunities abound (even legal ones)

This is part of the myth of America. Truly drug dealing is an equal opportunity employer. It is also an opportunity to fight back against American racism and domination. By ending the drug war we create less incentive for illegal immigration and less of an incentive for smuggling and the criminality that can come with it. Ending the hypocrisy of this war will also help America's public image across the border.

For those who would dictate an even more drastic war on drugs-consider Afghanistan. This country has over 92% of the world's opium production. According to a New York Times article production of this dangerous flower has increased by 50% since America's invasion. It is the largest source of income for Afghanistan outside of foreign aid. According to a 4 month study done by the Rand Corporation which is a top research firm with many government contracts, so many of Afghanistan's top leaders are involved in the opium trade that enforcement projects are cosmetic at best. Opium war lords are the banking system, lending money and seeds to poor farmers who grow this crop to feed their families.

The Taliban when it controlled the government tried to fight the drug war and was so well motivated that it received millions of dollars from the DEA and even then they could not control it. Addicts would have their hands amputated and dealers executed and still the trade continued. The opium warlords then allied with the US during the invasion. Now the US is trying to stop the trade. As a consequence of this renewed folly the opium producing areas are now the most hostile to the American forces and their paid allies. Is it any wonder why the Taliban are now becoming more powerful as they reconsider their previous anti-drug position?

In running a guerrilla war, there is a need to make a lot of money quickly to fund operations and to feed friendly populations. Drug production and smuggling does that with no counter productive taxation or record keeping involved. On a large scale it becomes a guerrilla operation and on a small scale it becomes like a terrorist strike. So this counter economy fits a guerrilla structure ideally. In Afghanistan we had a choice to fight the terrorists or to fight the drug producers and now they are united against us. The US could lose as the British did twice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Soviets losing recently.

I once attended a presentation by famed insurgency consultant, adventurer and blogger Jack Wheeler, who worked with the CIA and the Mujadeen against the Soviet occupation force in Afghanistan during the 1980's. He advised the Reagan administration to supply ground anti air missiles called stingers to the insurgents. He noted that the Mujadeen in Afghanistan were exchanging drugs with the Soviet soldiers in exchange for weapons. He showed pictures of marijuana plants there. I later found bars of Afghanistan hashish that were stamped "Freedom of Afghanistan" years later in my business. I considered it an honor to aid these freedom fighters (that was what Reader's Digest called them then) by my commercial applications. Jack had also told that many Russian soldiers were coming home addicted for the same reasons that our soldiers came home addicted from Vietnam. Afghanistan has the reputation of being the graveyard or the recovery ward of empires.

America's attempt to be the narcotics cop of the world is a bad image to have. Since the 60's hippies from America and Europe had cultivated excellent relations with those who produced and used hashish in Lebanon, Afghanistan, India and Morocco. By trying to force these people out of business we are chasing them into the arms of the terrorists. While few might ally with Taliban or become terrorist many more will not aid us in our war on terror or establish friendship.

Our culture is our biggest export and our greatest source of good will. Our musical culture, such as rock, jazz, rap and pop has drug roots (I'll get more into this later) and is our greatest weapon. Many of those in the Mid East who have worked with us have said so just as many Russian youth came to our ideas through music and film during Communism. The hatred of America that American drug policy engenders make it less likely that American values and cultural product will be adopted or bought. This alone will hurt us more than 9/11.

You best fight an idea with a better idea, not just with a critique. Intolerance and tyranny can only be successful in recruitment if they are successful as showing other ideas as an attempt to dominate things at home. By not providing a convenient tiger at the gates we make it easier for dissidents there to model themselves after dissidents here in creation of new cultures. The Taliban knew very much what it was doing when it banned music, films, TV and the internet in Afghanistan. The anger and the intolerance of the Taliban were partly in consequence to the unbridled corrupting opportunities of an illegal drug trade and its resultant chaos which emerged after the Soviets left. In a milder fashion this is mirrored in our home country as people who live in drug dealing neighborhoods get very angry about the corrupting values of an indiscreet illegal drug trade. The insane profits, the corruption and violence would be minimal if legal. Its influence on culture and politics would also decline. Instead of a common sense approach we try to enforce our puritanical values as Afghanistan's main province for opium, Helmond, is also the most violent. Helmond can be translated as Hell Mouth.

Good things can come from nitrogen and glycerin. Forced together with a spark of forming evil intent they can be used to explode seemingly unmovable objects. The same things can happen from oppressing drugs and religion. Many drug dealers in prison are discovering Islam. Most of them are really reforming their lives and are shunning drugs and violence. But the same explosive elements that you have in Afghanistan can happen here even if 99.9% of all Moslems in the West righteously condemn these horrible activities.

. It is quite possible that we might escape this horrible scenario. These angry revolutionaries might be dissuaded from their political aims by becoming successful in organized crime. According to some accounts the Sicilian Mafia began as a revolutionary group to free Sicily. After becoming successful in bootlegging alcohol, smuggling, prostitution, gambling in America they successfully used their talents and resources in blackmail, intimidation and violence to move into unions, construction and attaining government influence. The decision to go into drug dealing was fraught with danger as well as outrageous profits and the boss of all bosses, Castellano, was assassinated because of his antagonism to this venture. He had gotten his family out of the rackets as many now do due to the incessant investigations and indictments and the incredible sentences. This legal barrage on the Mafia with the consequent turning of informers is having an effect. What happened is that there are now drug dealing organizations of almost every ethnicity; Russian, Columbian, Jamaican, Puerto Rican, Mexican and others that are making the Mafia look comparatively pacifist in combination. In Mexico a drug gangs membership numbers over a 100,000; so large that the military is called in to clear out areas. It is said that gang hits there are videotaped and placed online in an outrageous display of bravura. These gangs are organized in the US as well and members are moved from country to country with phony IDs when things get too hot for them.

The cynicism, corruption and hatred of America is growing everywhere, here and abroad, crossing lines of class and race spread by modern technology. Fortunately most of those righteously angry about the insane, racist, fascist drug war understand that music and videos are better outlets than violence. These are also better tools of social change. Let's hope it stays that way. Still angry, talented people, even with insane ideas, moving within a hot, underground culture are more powerful than the explosives they might project. The pot and acid culture of the 60's helped reduce racism and ended the war in Vietnam and the draft cooling down the desire for revolution. The spillover of this culture into Eastern Europe, South Africa and the Philippines led to dynamic yet peaceful collapse of authoritarian regimes accompanied by the rise of the free markets, democracy and the liberation of home cultures.

The next upward collapse of authoritarian structures will happen in America and the rest of the world if we want it. We must produce peaceful means of change rather than continuing America's cop culture of police chases and invasion tactics where everyone ends up under surveillance. Even in the MidEast the only Israeli and Moslem peaceful, cultural, social interaction is the rave scene fueled by ecstasy or MDMA. To help them do this incredibly amazing beneficial and fun interaction is to its necessary to remove their greatest obstacle- the drug war.

For the roots of the drug war is rooted in religious oppression. Just to give one example Catholic Spain, in its Inquisition in Latin America suppressed the use of peyote, mushrooms and ayahuasca to root out any opposition whether religious or cultural to their plans to dominate the New World. In SUNY professor Dr. Thomas Szasz's work "Ceremonial Chemistry" the treatment of the drug user, whether he is merely eccentric or a danger to himself is compared to the witch hunting of medieval Europe. This work received a positive review in the flagship publication National Review.

The roots of the drug war are also racist. Prohibition's anti alcohol laws were passed to oppress recent immigrants from Germany, Ireland and Italy. They had traditions of drinking responsibly at religious festivals and family gatherings. They responded by bath tub beer and a successful repeal of the Prohibition amendment. The anti-opium laws were passed to suppress Chinese immigrants in California. Henry J Anslinger, a prohibition agent who thought that prohibition would have worked if only it had been enforced hard enough. He was a hard core racist and is quoted as saying that "Reefer makes darkies think that they are as good as white men".

For the roots of the drug war is rooted in fascism. There have been moves by government officials even in the UN to ban marijuana literature During the 1960's black, radical bookstore owner Martin Sostre received a 10 year sentence for 2 joints. Former Harvard professor Timothy Leary received a similar sentence for one joint and his advocacy of LSD. During Prohibition women had their children taken from them for possession of alcohol. This inhumane tradition continues today with women losing custody of their children for mere drug possession.

The racist, fascist roots of the drug war are thriving today as was revealed in an article called "Drug Bust = Jim Crow" in the Nation magazine by Ira Glasser. He was head of the ACLU and is now president of the Drug Policy Alliance. In it he states that "about 22% of all monthly drug users are black and Latino (the same as in their representation in the population) but 80% of the people in prison for drug offenses are black and Latino. In liberal NY state 92% are". There is also a 100-1 ratio of crack to cocaine sentencing ratio.

Whites use cocaine and non-whites favor crack. You figure it out. He also addresses the 'driving while black' issue in saying that "17% of drivers on a stretch of I-95 were black (yet) 73% of all cases stopped and searched were driven by blacks" in the search for drugs. Similar ratios were seen in searches at customs and street searches." 96% of all these searches were fruitless.

From the beginnings of our country, during Reconstruction and during the civil rights era a constant struggle has been waged to secure voting rights for blacks. Once more the racist government has found a way to replace the literacy tests, poll taxes and other intimidation to stop blacks from voting. In the Deep South (where else?) 30% of all black men are denied the right to vote because of criminal records.

This disenfranchisement has had a huge effect on Congress and the Electoral College. According to Glasser that despite the rise of conservative GOP voting the Senate would have remained under Democratic control from 1984-2006 if former felons were allowed to vote. "Even worse is that convicted felons are nonetheless counted as citizens for the purpose of determining how many Congressional seats and electoral votes states have..." One of the reasons that legislators seek prisons in their districts (aside from a having a retirement home) is that prisoners are counted in the government aid disbursement formulas and districting but are not allowed to vote as in other democracies." ... This is similar to the times of slavery when slaves were counted as 3/5 of a person in the census yet denied the vote."

During the fight for civil rights from the 1920's to the present many of those engaged in that heroic struggle were tarred with the epithet of communist or criminal. Some actually adopted those ideas and lifestyles as an act of rebellion. It was an act of rebellion that positioned itself diametrically opposed not just the state but to their community and family as well. Most of them later found out that in doing so they hurt themselves and their community. Radicalism and outlawry are products of alienation and then a consequent deep, intimate involvement in the community that is opposed to it. There are many people who once advocated criminality, violence or communism who later renounced those beliefs while still involved for some progressive change such as Richard Wright and Malcolm X. A similar change is noticed in the writings of the first 'gangsta' writer, Donald Goines.

It is part of the psychology of the oppressed to adopt the scorn and the epithets of their attacker as a badge of honor. This began centuries ago when under the oppression of the Roman Empire the Christians adopted the cross as their symbol. It continues today as gays adopt the terms "faggot" and "queer" as a show of militancy as well as the pink triangle that the Nazis forced them to wear in concentration camps. Blacks have reacted similarly in their frequent and friendly usage among themselves of the term "nigga" or their going to their roots in adopting African culture and or Islam. Going to prison has now become a rite of passage for many minority youth and has street cred for becoming a rap singer. Beware of calling people evil or fascist unless they actually fit the literal use of these terms or they might actually adopt these identities.

Zaraqawi, the nihilist head of Al Qaeda in Iraq who was responsible for countless acts of terrorism was radicalized while in prison for crimes committed as a juvenile delinquent. If we don't want to see this repeated here then we need to end the son of Jim Crow- the Drug War.

Or perhaps those who rule America need a villain for its theater of oppression? While the US government makes some cosmetic changes in its racial appearance for reasons of political correctness the sides and characters of this drama are still black and white. Understanding the various shades of gray while adding more colors might help bring this story out of the shadows. And even in crime shows of high and pop culture we find new colorful stories emerging

Entry for many immigrants to the American halls of power was an initiation ritual of crime – an ordeal of dangerous and humiliating behavior that was more revealing and lucrative than that offered in most fraternities. Once within this fraternity they discovered the secrets and misdeeds of the upper class men. The first crime families, composed of recent immigrants from Italy took the jobs of alcohol distribution etc. because the more lucrative businesses of banking and such were monopolized by the WASP elite. Still these newcomers overcame the prejudices against them and realized the American Dream. They knew that one should work the streets because the streets were paved with gold.

They even got paid twice. They made the businesses pay and got into more legitimate lines of work. But they also made the public fascination of crime pay off in media and tourism. Sicily has even benefited from the consequent tourism to former Mafia hideouts. They have even transcended the traditional role of villain in America's most respected art forms; TV and film with the award winning show "The Sopranos" and the "Godfather" films. Did the forces that make the rules in this society foresee such a result?

The drug war has had a mostly bad effect on those who continue to be outlaws. For only when an outlaw becomes a rebel can he win the respect and acceptance of the community and its resultant protection. This is a difficult rebirth and involves much soul searching. But many do so as they get older. A lot of this happens in prison.

But what happens to those who arrest, try and imprison him when that outlaw/rebel wins that respect? There is a cultural crisis as police, investigators and lawyers are prominent to the point of severely over representation in news, entertainment and in the legislature over their numbers in real life. Not only are they more numerous than necessary they get in the way of ordinary people living their own lives. By having so much prominence they attract talent that should be going to other fields. We are incredibly over lawyered for example, having more lawyers per capita than any other country except for Israel which has religious laws and is under a state of siege. Still many lawyers leave the profession because much of it is quite boring with loads of paperwork and stress. Still there is a surfeit of lawyers with more law students in law school than there are practicing. Is the drug war a make work program for under employed lawyers? One might compare this situation to a healthy body that develops too many white blood cells that have as its role the defense against infections.

Legal and police work lend themselves readily to fiction with its characters (and perhaps their testimony) more dramatic and heroic than they really are. The courtroom drama and successful legal appeals are quite rare except in TV which qualifies as legal fiction. It has the appearance of closure as it appears to be resolved in an hour. Yet in spite of the body counts, the treasure spilled and the constant images of criminals arrested insecurity and crime flourish. Lawyers, judges and law professors agree that the law has become so complex that there is no connection anymore between the theater and rituals

of the law and real justice. Philosophers, theologians and dramatists from all perspectives have said so for years in works too numerous to count.

From ancient times we have been addicted to the adrenaline of violence as well as that most dangerous drug of all – the compulsion to compel others. The drug war is a deep acknowledgement of the conflict within our society and in ourselves as we struggle between liberty and control and the energy it unleashes. The drug war fulfills our need for a crusade. We gave up the heavy use of this violence inducing drug in 1945 after many complaints from the home front. But still there have been relapses as police actions at home and abroad and falling warriors here and there in worlds fictional and all too real. The need for violence may in fact be biological. The police pay for this drug war like soldiers do; in stress, addictions, alcoholism, suicide and divorce rates that are much higher than the rest of us. It's a man's world, after all.

Police are also dangerously isolated from community interaction like parties. They must report all infractions of the law that they witness including underage drinking, marijuana use and gambling even in a private home. Police report that even stopping a vehicle on a road for a minor violation can be a gut wrenching experience since it's possible that the driver (or passengers) might be a dealer. The unknown driver expecting the worst might react violently in an attempt to escape. In response to this and the futility of the drug war an organization of law enforcement personnel was founded called LEAP (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition) and has over 5000 members. Among them are police chiefs, county sheriffs and narcotics officers, some of them with 20 years of experience, speak on behalf of legalization. It must be a hard thing to say that one's entire career of enforcing the drug war was a tragic waste of effort.

This development marks the last group to break from the drug war. The conservatives had broken on this a long time ago. The most famous of American conservative economists, the late Milton Friedman wrote extensively on the drug war and had his name on a petition of thousands of economists who were against the drug war. William F. Buckley, who founded the conservative movement with the National Review magazine, is an outspoken advocate of legalization. NR has had entire issues devoted to that subject with such notable authors as Richard Brookhiser, D Keith Mano and others weighing in.

Returning once more to the dealers it is quite surprising that even though they suffer most from the drug war in long prison sentences, violations of their rights, property and privacy they are strangely silent. The only drug users that express themselves are those involved in the marijuana and psychedelics culture and these are mainly those who use it for spiritual or health reasons. Through such organizations as MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Study) Drug Policy Association and Medical Marijuana Project there are conferences, magazines and websites and political activity devoted to legalization and the reasons why. Rick Doblin got a degree from Harvard in order to get legal scientific peer reviewed studies approved by governments all over the world and he has succeeded. There have been art exhibits, concerts and other events as well. They send doctors, PhD's and other experts to testify in Congressional hearings and litigate cases all the way up to the Supreme Court. They sometimes even win.

Users from other drug cultures are also silent. Many are not even sympathetically present in music or film or websites except as an anti-hero or figure of tragedy. Even rap artists, who are the cultural reflections of the underground of the drug trade, are silent. Even on the racism of crack/cocaine sentencing struggle they are silent except for the rap

entrepreneur Simmons. I have asked why this strange disconnect of support from this powerful community from many rap fans who are present in my prison. The answer they give is a shrug of the soldiers.

The only reason that I can give for this phenomenon is that of one given by the philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand. She spoke of the "Sanction of the Victim". Business people are seen as an oppressed class in her society and will suffer as long as they remain silent. Only when they have the courage and the philosophical awareness of the right to pursue a profit will they be free. The fascism and envy of the oppressors needs the silence or sanction from the victim so that he can be ripped off and imprisoned with a clear conscience. So the system constantly puts out a torrent of propaganda like the cop shows and rants from talk show hosts and politicians to justify ripping off all entrepreneurs, not just drug marketeers.

Of course many dealers do operate with a moral vacuum. They do not understand the karmic relation of themselves and the effects of what they sell. Many have no sense of ethics at all. If you want liberty and prosperity you must have a code and sense of responsibility. Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword. What goes around comes around. Call it karma

We are to a great amount a reflection of our clients no matter what we sell. When you sell or give something that touches the soul as much as a psychoactive drug does you get a piece of their experience. We are all reflections of the quality of our products and our customers so we should be concerned about their experiences. Trips can be pilgrimages or roads to hell. I have always believed that the essence of psychedelic use was to know yourself, the universe and your place in it; as Aldous Huxley and other philosophers have written.

Timothy Leary once counseled me by telling me that I should not go into dealing unless I saw it as a calling. Even if one saw it only as a business there is much to know that is written in magazines, books and on the internet about the effects of various drugs. There is much that is written by wise, non judgmental medical and spiritual authorities that is understandable by the layperson. One book that I highly recommend is "From Chocolate to Morphine" by Dr Andrew Weil. Andrew is a medical doctor who graduated from Harvard medical school and teaches medicine at the University of Arizona. His picture has been on the front cover of Time and Discover magazine and he has had PBS specials. He advises hospitals on nutrition and wellness through natural healing. He has studied shamanism and has taken most of the drugs listed in his book. In this book he advises how the drugs work, their health effects and how to ameliorate damages that some drugs do and how to do them safely. I was amazed to discover in this prison community of hundreds of drug users and dealers that no one, not even the drug counselors who work here, was even aware that this book existed. No one has ever said to me that they had even checked the internet or read any magazines or books to gauge the health effect of anything, legal or not, that they had ever taken.

The point here is quite simple. If you want the liberty of taking and distributing drugs you should take the responsibility of knowing about them and your clients to achieve harm reduction. Would you not expect that those who serve you food eat it as well? Can you imagine seeing a doctor or pharmacist who is not completely aware of what they dispense? Many dealers of psychedelics would not sell me anything that they have not tried. The underground nature of this situation does make it difficult but not impossible.

There is a movement among drug counseling professionals called Harm Reduction which is associated with the legalization community.

There is a website for example called DanceSafe where people send their (mostly Ecstasy) pills anonymously with a code number to where they are discreetly analyzed as to ingredients and composition. The pills are then photographed with the code number and the results shown so that users, parents, counselors and even law enforcement personnel can see what is available on the street without the danger of anyone being busted.

The same could be done with adequate funding for all drugs so as to avoid the tragedy of accidental overdose or poisoning. Strangely the government is even against such a humane public health service even if privately funded. What is equally strange is that heroin users are attracted to street heroin that has been linked to overdoses. Is there a death wish out there? Perhaps these unfortunates could find harm reduction counseling services in other countries where clean needles, safe injecting rooms etc can be found.

While there are moderate responsible users of this drug in America they are largely silent. The black civil rights movement provided the model for organizing for expanded rights for women, gays and other minorities. Drug users and sellers have been victimized largely through race and class and are seen as, fairly or not, representative of their race. It is amazing that few from either the civil rights community or the minority drug community see the linkage of the greatest working of racism in this country today- the drug war. Where are the crews and bands for liberty against the drug war? You have nothing to lose but the chains of servility to the state. The drug war must go!

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