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## Drugs, Gangs + Dropouts in the B.O.P.

by Nate A. Lindell, created 20 March 2015

My first encounter with dope was from watching "Miami Vice." It was the 80s + the show was a hit. Practically every episode showed too-cool cops busting arrogant hoods with what was, to me, magical powders, cocaine + heroin.

Unknown to me at the time (I was in grade school), my mom was using both of those magical powders. Then, one day, after I came home from the Third grade, my siblings + I found our mom laying unconscious in her recliner, white foam coming from her mouth. She'd od'd on both heroin + cocaine.

Us kids spent some time in foster care, while mom spent some time in rehab. The home scene didn't get much better after that, even though mom did eventually stay sober, after several years sprinkled with relapses.

Although I didn't realize it at the time, my experience with a poly-addict mom caused me to despise drug addicts, which (along with attending Al-Anon) protected me from ever trying cocaine, heroin or other hard, addictive drugs (I did experiment with psychadelics, use pot + alcohol in efforts to escape my f-d-up reality).

It's a long + different story, but, my personality + psyche were damaged. I wound up in prison for life, for a murder I committed at age 21. And here I've been since 1998. I lack the power or connections to change the fact that this is my society, my "home;" + what goes on in my home matters a lot to me.

It's another long & different story (you may find the details on my blog, [betweenthebars.org/blogs/540](http://betweenthebars.org/blogs/540)) how I wound up in the Federal Bureau of Prisons (B.O.P.) when I'm only serving a Wisconsin state sentence. So, ride with me; I'm in the B.O.P., my home.

It's yet another long & different story (also told on my blog), but, when I first arrived in the B.O.P., I was a member of the Aryan Circle (A.C., not the more notorious Aryan Brotherhood (A.B.)). For several reasons (including my discovery that "90%" — according to an A.C. member I'd met — of A.C. members in federal custody were in for distributing meth & were avid poly-addicts), I dropped out of the A.C.

In the federal system, to drop out of a White gang<sup>1</sup> means that the gang you dropped out of will try to kill you & members of other White gangs will at least try to stomp on you & kick your face in with the safety-toed boots handily provided to all of us by the B.O.P. 😊 So, the B.O.P. has special yards, special penitentiaries, where they send dropouts, unless the B.O.P. is trying to get a dropout taken out, which the B.O.P. sometimes does try. At the moment, the dropout yards for pens (Penitentiaries, max-security joints) include Coleman & U.S.P., Tucson USP & Terre Haute USP.

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**F.N. 1** The A.C. was founded by those disgusted by White prison gangs. I never thought of myself as a "gang" member, but a white-rights activist. However, the A.C. has devolved into yet another White gang.

So, although I started out at Allenwood USP, I wound up here at Coleman 2 USP. And this is where all the fun with drugs began.

When I was at Allenwood USP, there was very little dope on the yard, so the fiends were mostly forced into remission. Some fiends settled for getting addled from psych. meds — to my disgust, those fiends included an A.C. brother, someone I'd have been obliged to fight for. (His first words in my hearing were boasting to another friend, "Man, those pills had me up for three days." I had the urge to smash him right there, but didn't because I was ignorant of my surroundings).

Given that Allenwood was an "active" yard, filled with active gang members — A.C.s, A.B.T.s (Argan Brotherhood of Texas), skinheads, A.N. (Argan Nations), D.C. Blacks, Norteros, T.S. (Texas Syndicate), as well as "Independents" (the largest de facto White gang) — it was ironic that dope was so scarce on the yard.

I was amazed when I discovered that Coleman 2 was fat with dope & dope fiends! Heroin, suboxone (don't know if I'm spelling it right — it's pronounced sub-ox-in; it's an opioid that comes in paper-thin, slender strips, used to treat pain, heroin withdrawals & as a mood stabilizer), & of course, psych & pain pills are all over the place & avidly consumed by an outrageous majority of Whites.

My dumb ass didn't catch on to this reality at first, even though my very first cellie acted... nuts (anxious, paranoid & irrationally aggressive), shaking me down

about "Why are you here?!" (at Coleman 2), then refusing to look at my paperwork. He was worried I might tell on him because, "I like to get high now + then" (so he said - I learned it was more like he hated being sober now + then).

Unlik at a normal pen, where incoming White prisoners were greeted with respect, given gifts of cosmetics, clothing + shoes by their "homeboys" (Whites from their home state) or their gang, here at Coleman 2 the Whites on my unit merely gave me glazed or suspicious looks, or didn't look at me at all.

When I'd arrived at Allenwood I was treated like a lost relative by the Whites, given a radio by a Boston White guy + some shoes by a Wisconsin White guy. (Shoes are a mandatory gift, as they are essential for giving a prisoner good traction during a group fight.)

My first cellie here had our unit counsellor move me out of his cell + into another cell, where a Boston Black dude told me I had to get out because it was a Black cell. I had to fight off that guy, ended up snatching off his baseball cap, keeping, washing + wearing it - which wouldn't be tolerated at a normal pen), with no help from other Whites. (The head orderly told me that it was a Black cell, to which I replied, "Then I guess I'm Black, 'cause it's my cell"; he replied, with the back of his head facing me, "We'll see how long that lasts.")

It's depressing to even think how isolated + alone I feel, because I didn't worship the same God as all of the White guys on my unit - i.e. dope. I was also alone

because I had some scruples, even if not enough to entirely satisfy the system — e.g. I would not betray a friend (but woe unto a foe), wouldn't steal from a good dude (but I would from a cho-mo), & anyone could trust their children with me (but, if she was pretty & classy, probably not their wife). There was little I shared in common with others on my unit beyond our mutual incarceration & enjoying action movies.

Even though Coleman 2 was supposed to have no "active" White gang members, it was full of & run by the de facto gang of dope fiends, which crossed the otherwise uncrossable color line in the B.O.P.: dope fiends, regardless of race, all worshipped the same God & were more loyal to each other than to anyone who failed to do so. Being dope free, I was treated as a heretic, even an opposing gang member.

As backwards as it (hopefully) must seem to most Americans, on multiple occasions White prisoners (& others) offered me samples of suboxone. One guy told his pals, in my presence, "He doesn't get high! Isn't that weird?" The guy had rotten, misshapen teeth from his fiendery, burns & scars on his face from being stomped on & splashed with boiling oil for not paying dope debts, was infected with Hep. C, repulsed me more than a stinking bag of trash, yet was cool with his pathetic state — which I found weird! Weirder still was that other guys shot up using the same needle he used, after he used it!

For a couple weeks there was an infection going

around the junkie mafia on my unit, where they shot up on their arms, using dirty "binkies" (a binky is their cute name for a homemade syringe, consisting of a hyperdermic needle melted onto a plastic tube, usually with a rubbery plastic end piece that enables users to suck dope up + shoot it back out), pink, swollen tissue appeared. Sully, one of the worst fiends, ended up developing MRSA, requiring him to be hospitalized + get a chunk cut out of his arm; thank God (his God) that he was given Percocet for the pain! (Sully just returned to the SHU for testing positive for Meth + other drugs).

The fiendery was so bad that I had Sully begging me for my Prozac capsules... on credit, when he was notorious for not paying his dope debts. I declined. Hell, if I was gonna get ripped off, it sure wasn't gonna be for something as petty as anti-f-ing-depressants that don't even get you buzzed!

I literally felt like the guy in the movie Invasion of the Body Snatchers. Everyone around me was a pod person; they looked human, but, when you got to talking with them, they were... off, something less than human. They were bio-organisms solely concerned with seeking + consuming disabling chemicals.

My own life has been crazy, painful + difficult, thus I have dedicated myself to better comprehending the true nature of reality. I could not + can not relate with persons who had no interest in dealing with reality, who had no loyalty to another person, who would

say or do almost anything (e.g. steal from a "friend," prostitute themselves, lie to their "loved" ones) it took to obtain cold, lifeless chemicals that lulled them into believing they weren't a piece of shit.

My best bud became a short, 60-year-old, abnormally placid + square- (especially standing next to me - I'm 6'5," weigh 200 pounds + have horns tattooed from my temples to the crown of my head) looking Mormon, R.D. Cole. He's a brilliant abstract artist who said very little to anyone. We looked something like Danny DeVito + Arnold Swarzenegger in the movie Twins, as we played bocce ball, walking around the rec. yard, grumbling about how we hated most the guys around us.

What added to this stew of disturbia was how so many of the ex-gang members here fronted off, acted as if they were still active gang members or even convicts. In the chow hall some Whites even had a table where all the "cool" dropouts sat, guys like T. Scafe (a 60-year-old meth-fiend, bisexual who appeared to be 90 years old + pounds in weight, who got a life sentence for senselessly stabbing to death a D.C. Black just months before T. Scafe was to be released), "Booger" (a 30-something A.C. Kickout who had sex with, fell in love with + shot up after Black homosexuals).

On two occasions all the other White tables were filled up + Cole + I had to sit at the cool drop out table to eat, where we had to hear T. Scafe + another scumbag say, basically, we weren't good enough to sit at that

table. (I guess we hadn't sucked enough dicks or testified against enough people!) It took a lot of restraint for me to merely tell them to shut their mouths + not crush them shut, which they apparently realized, so shut up.

There were two other ex White gang members who found themselves in the same sorta situation as me - sober guys with good character, who'd quit their gang rather than being so scummy that they got kicked out. One of them, a volunteer tutor for special-needs GED students, told me he didn't even lend a cup of coffee to the Whites on his unit, because the guys asking for it asked for it after spending all their money on dope + would never pay him back. That guy helped me get a job as a GED tutor too.

Every week there were one or two guys on my unit "checking in," going to the SHU (Special Housing Unit) on p.c. (protective custody) status, because they couldn't pay their dope bills. Sometimes these check-ins claimed they'd been sexually assaulted, making a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) complaint, which automatically entitled them to remain in the SHU + get shipped to another prison. Other times, if the checkin couldn't demonstrate a valid threat, they'd have to spend about a year in SHU, on punitive status, receive 3-4 disciplinary write-ups ("shots") before they'd be shipped to another yard, where they'd begin the process again.

The check-in situation, which costs the B.O.P. a shit-load of money (to ship the guys) + clogs up the SHU, is



so bad here that, a week ago, 11 out of 30 prisoners on my wing of the SHU refused to go back out to the yard, stayed checked in! That's just the guys who were too stupid to inform the Administration of a specific person who posed a threat to them, or claim one of the many homo- or bi-sexuals here touched their weenie. (Three out of the 30 were smart enough to claim their weenies had been touched, literally.)

At normal pens, any White or Hispanic prisoner who has ever checked in will be beat off the yard, quite likely with a lock or a rock, maybe even stabbed.

It's not difficult to identify those responsible for + profiting from this epidemic. Those supplying the dope make so much money that they rarely leave their unit to go to the chow hall, because they buy + are supplied by others with all the food they need. Suppliers have the best of everything, buy + use other prisoners' phone minutes (each of us is allotted 300 minutes a month), + usually are very unobtrusive + well behaved. Those who smuggle the dope in, usually during visits (but suboxone + wax often come in the mail too) are rarely the actual supplier; but smugglers make a lot of money too.

There's no way that the Administration here doesn't know about the dope-fiend epidemic here. For example, when I was put in the SHU for an investigation after I adjusted the attitude of the first cellie I'd had (he was the head shower orderly), the SIS Investigator,

Lt. Natal, told me that there were guys here who'd tested positive for dope 30 times + he knew they'd test positive again, yet he wouldn't recommend they be transferred because he knew they'd get killed at a regular pen (for not paying dope debts or for their disrespectful conduct, caused from being high). I'd roughed up that first cellie because he'd changed the channel on me at the tail end of a movie my then cellie + I'd spent nearly two hours watching, which Lt. Natal agreed would've got him stabbed at a regular pen; all the s.o.b. had to say to me after I'd manhandled him was, "Man, you ruined my suboxone buzz!"

Functional addicts are acceptable here + opioids like suboxone + even opiates like heroin do permit a high degree of activity; they even seem to drive users to compulsively clean, a characteristic I found common in every addict here. Hell, staff could easily identify addicts just by noting who polishes their stainless steel sink after every use of water. Both my current cellie + the first one I had (each poly-addicts: meth, heroin) insanely rinse a "cleaning" rag in toilet water, then use it to "clean" the cell they live in + to polish the sink after any water's been in it. The head shower orderly on my unit (+ my first cellie) was damn good at keeping the showers clean enough to eat off of, spent hours cleaning five showers, high as hell — but his high kept him oblivious to his own reality + the concerns of others, disabling him from improving himself + from having true relationships with others

I wouldn't care if everyone around me stayed high, if it didn't cause or permit them to be morally insane. But that's what happens when a chemical makes them feel good even when they're lying to their poor, sick mom or their lonely, poor wives or girlfriends (often trying to feed multiple children) to get dope money — I've seen both happen. Guys like that had even less of a problem stealing from me to get dope money, & it's happened.

The counsellor for my unit, who essentially supervises the unit, knew well about the widespread use of dope. His head orderly (an ex-military Police officer) regularly reported everything that was happening on the unit, spending hours in the counsellor's office, eating cookies & drinking coffee with him. The head orderly had a gay lover, a Cuban guy, a notorious rat who was/is the main smuggler (his family visits & gives him balloons of heroin, meth, etc.) This head orderly was in the counsellor's office when my cell was searched for knives & I was locked in the SHU for chastising the head shower orderly....

I wouldn't be surprised if that counsellor got a kick-back for warning the head orderly about impending searches or otherwise aiding the drug trade.

Petty drug pedalers on my unit occasionally get busted, snitched on by competitors or sacrificed by the big dogs, making it look like the problem's being addressed. With so many guys checking in, the Administration had to look like it was doing something.

But what the Administration really worries about is

alcohol. Drunk prisoners, they figure, pose a greater threat to security than zombied-out addicts who don't want to lose their supply.

This is supposed to be a gang-free pen. But, after I was let out of the SHU for the issue with the shower orderly, three addicts rushed in a cell & attacked me while a fourth tried to hold the door shut. Despite that gang activity, by guys known to be friends, it was me whom the Administration decided to transfer. And — surprise, surprise — the guy I was assigned as a cellie (a cock-fiend who's best friend was a dope-fiend & a cock-fiend) stole all of my art supplies, photos of my girl friends (& their children!), valuable books, which were traded off for dope.

As senseless & seemingly corrupt as it is here at Coleman 2, the dope problem is far worse in pens such as Victorville, where the staff themselves are members of Hispanic gangs or on the A.B.'s payroll & bring in the dope & even get prisoners killed who they fear pose a threat of exposing their activities.

No wonder recidivism is so high.

So many more details could be included, it was hard to keep this to 12 pages; & it's hard to wrap it up with a snappy ending when the problem sure isn't ending.

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