

A shadow in the city

Science



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ A Shadow in the City: Confessions of an Undercover Drug Warrior” is a well-known book written by Charles Bowden. As evident by the name, the book deals with drugs, the drug war and an under cover drug warrior.

The author of this book has touched a subject which has generally always been considered dark by many; and for that he has put forward the picture of a man who has worked extremely hard nearly all his life to put an end to the war against drugs.

The author has gone deep into the mind of a person namely Mr. O’Shay and has put forward many such things which go by ignored by a vast number of people. The reason behind writing this book evidently is to gain awareness and make the people give attention to the problems faced by the people who work on the front end of this problem.

These are the people who begin working as people with good hearts and even better intentions, and then they are forced to consign acts of pure evil or just simple lose at their work. Every single evil act wounds the mind and the soul of that person to the extent that nothing is left except pain, wounds, and a guilty feeling that agonizes a man who at his heart may be a good person.

Another thing which the author has tried to convey is the fact that anyone involved in the drugs business would either go up or go straight down. He will loose all signs of humanity along with all his morals and values (Bowden, 2005).

Summary

“ Joey O'Shay is not the real name of the narcotics agent in an unnamed city in the center of the country. But Joey O'Shay exists. The nearly three hundred drug busts he has orchestrated over more than two decades are real, too; if the drug war were a declared war, O'Shay would have a Silver Star”.

Charles Bowden

This well-known book which has been written by Charles Bowden presents an image of the life of an undercover drug agent and the effects of his work on the agent's sanity and sense of right and wrong. In this book the author has presented to his readers the unseen world of the drug wars where wicked crimes occur nearly all the time; where unfaithfulness and dishonesty are the only two things that one can depend on; and where alcohol and drugs are the only thing that people are concerned about.

In the book, the author has archived a career-making drug deal for pure Columbian heroin which is being coordinated by Joey O'Shay, a drug agent who has been working under-cover for more than twenty years.

The drug agent has made a vast number of drug deal busts without ever being identified by any of his targets; nevertheless, his purpose as an agent and that of America's war on drugs has grown more difficult to understand with each bust. O'Shay is at a point where he wishes to retire from his job. He wants to walk away from what he has been doing since a very long time—getting close to his enemies and then destroying them, but the way out is not easy.

He stands at a point where he does not know himself; he has become an entity trying to understand his own self. In the words of the author, “ he becomes a shadow in the city. He remains unknown to the life moving around him. He answers no questions. He grows, thrives, slides silently down the streets.

He acts. He loves. He loses. He kills. He is the law but few remember this fact. Sometimes, he forgets himself” (Bowden, p. 5). The problems faced by O’ Shay, him losing his personality, losing interest in his work and doubting his line of work, O’ Shay trying to find ways to get out of this drug business but failing at it and also failing at dying is what this book is basically about.

While working for the war on drugs, the police men or let’s say the drug agents face a lot of things which play with their minds. Horrific images, brutal realities, harsh lies are all part of the game. These things make the person doubt his own job just like O’ Shay doubts his by thinking whether this war is ever going to end or not.

Friendship and loyalty play a major role in this field. In the book, Bobbie is a girl who owns a hotel and has always been helping O’ Shay. She always listens to him and according to the author, “ Bobbie obeys no one, she is proud of this fact. But she always obeys Joey. Even in her dreams” (Bowden, p. 7).

The author also addresses the problem of cops having to face crimes being committed in front of their eyes in order to remain under cover. At times, these people see so much of these crimes being committed that they become unsympathetic and get used to it just the way O’ Shay does in the

book, but deep down inside, as the author has tried to portray, these people are anxious to undo all the things they have ever seen and known throughout their lives and careers. Yet, the author also goes on to remind the reader that such a thing is nearly impossible.

These under cover agents go through a number of personal changes in the way they think and perceive events and things around them. The war against drugs perhaps is a never ending war, as according to the author, the people who the under cover agents put away are immediately replaced by their successors, hence getting to the root of the problem is the main task here, which is not easy to be done.

Author's Position on the Drug War

As evident by the portrayal of O' Shay as a man who wishes to give up on his job, the author certainly believes that the war against drug is not as easy as some of us may think it is. It is a tough job which requires nerves. The author believes that the war on drugs might even turn out to be never ending, which is extremely bad.

This issue must be dealt with great strategy. Not only should small drug deals be busted, but the bigger much worst deals should be dealt with as well, but for that the under cover agents must be fully prepared and should not weary of their jobs just as O' Shay and a vast number of other under cover agents in real life do so. The war on drugs is a hard task and would take a long period of time to finish if it ever does. But as stated earlier, it requires thinking and strategic planning for the war to end and bringing about an end to drugs.

Influence of the book on my personal views of the drug war. Reading this book has brought about a slight change in the way I had previously perceived the war against drugs. I had thought that perhaps the life of an under cover agent is not all that scary or disturbing, but this text proved me wrong.

I thought that maybe if the authorities worked harder the problem would be finished in a very short period of time, but no; the text changed my view over that as well. I now think that the war against drugs might not end but even if it does it would require a very strategic plan.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion we can hereby culminate that “ A Shadow in the City: Confessions of an Undercover Drug Warrior” is a well-known book written by Charles Bowden. The book deals with drugs, drug deals, under cover agents and the way busting drug deals and dealing with thugs effects the way they think and perceive things and at times they also wish to retire from their jobs.

Bibliography

1. Bowden, Charles. (2005). A Shadow in the City: Confessions of an Undercover Drug Warrior. United States of America. Harcourt. ISBN: 0151011834.