

Operation fly trap



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

However, all of this wouldn't be possible without the help she received from the Harry Guggenheim Foundation award. That grant helped her begin her fieldwork in 2005. Her fieldwork was conducted in the Pueblos neighborhood in Los Angeles, this is where she got inside information from the gang members themselves. She also studied from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), here she befriended a couple of FBI agents that were in charge of Operation Fly Trap. All of this fieldwork paved her way in writing a very objective book.

She received individually received both sides of the issue and wrote this book to give her point of view on the subject. In her Ellwood she would study the effects of the justice department and the consequence it has on the community and family of the criminals involved. The time she spent on the inside, with the people of the gangs and the lives they lead, would lead Phillips to question both the success of this operation and the methods used to conduct it (Phillips 175).

Los Angeles was struck with dramatic economical times, the economy was unraveling in every way possible. The economy was hurt by the 2001 crisis, depreciating international dollar, dwindle of union jobs, bifurcation of the manufacturing sector, and an unchanging education system (Phillips 7). All of these factors would be reasons of why a good working class citizen would turn to dealing drugs, being a member of a gang, and/or using drugs. Drug money was "easy money" as one would say.

You could make stacks of money fast, with little effort most of the time. The hard part was not getting caught. With the increase in drug activity

happening In Los Angeles was the same Increase In prison sentences. It got so bad that Incarceration became Californians number one industry. It would grow to employ the largest number of people in the state (Phillips). One of the other important factors that have to do with the increase in incarcerations was the fact that the state of California waged a war on drugs.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) went from housing 21 , 539 Inmates In 1978 to 217, 444 in 2011, making drug offenders 55% of the BOP population (Phillips 8). Although part of this prison rate is in fact due to the aggressive policing and harsh sentencing the criminals were given. This made Phillips think and wonder if all of this was part of the solution or just part of the problem. From her extensive field work she goes on to say that the way the LAP approached the drug problem was in fact producing one of the problems they were trying so hard to prevent. Here she needed to take the next step, on the inside. She began this step by living in the neighborhood of Pueblos, which was run by the African American and Hispanic race. She luckily befriended a local named Ben Kaplan and lived there with his family. From there she was able to get a first hand view point the ever so popular drug environment. She was also able to see different sides of the spectrum like how the environment affected the families and communities alike. How the laws and actions of the police affected them as well.

There use of surveillance, through wiretaps and confidential informants, having a negative impact on the lives of the community. She figures out how the families are shaped through this involvement in crime. Phillips research in all of this goes to prove how unbiased her book really is, she practiced true reflexivity. All of her facts are hard facts that she went and lived first

hand. She witnessed drug deals, witnessed people snorting cocaine, and dinettes the wiretaps that were given to drug dealers.

All of this information she writes from is purely unbiased facts, writing from an etc perspective, her way of co- existing with the people, sitting back and observing them, was how she approached her story. Phillips goes on to write about how the incarceration of a family member affects the family as a whole. Unintended consequences include threaten or actual eviction, the involvement of child social services, desalination of families, depression in children, and high mortality rates among already vulnerable people (Phillips 20).

Arresting a drug dealer for " slinging" coke may seem like a win for the police but in all reality it causes a snowball effect on the rest of the family that will have to deal with. Phillips findings go on to say how the police work unintentionally tears apart the family functionalism. The only way to prevent crime is to have a strong united family. Operation Fly Trap was the combined effort of the LAP that removed twenty-eight key members of the local, gang-related drug trade. They did a great Job in reducing drug related crimes, however did very little in the gang related activity.

Where the police succeed in incarceration rates, they fail in the goal to build a strong community. Phillips lasting conclusion in this ethnography is that incarceration can lead to increasedpovertyrates, negativehealthoutcomes, rises inviolence, and instability among already vulnerable families. Lastly the importance of manufacturing gangs as iconic, newly federalism villains (Phillips 21). Phillips, Susan A. Operation Fly Trap: L. A. Gangs, Drugs, and

the Law. N. P. : n. P. , n. D. Print. " Susan A. Phillips. " Susan A Phillips. N. P. ,
n. D. Web. 26 cot. 2013..