

The crack epidemic of the 1980s essay

Countries, United States



It seems that drugs have always been rather a serious problem in this country, and hardly will it ever be eliminated. However, drugs have never been such an acute problem as it used to be in the 1980s during the crack epidemic.

How did the epidemic begin? Who stands behind it? How did it finish? And how did it affect our nation? Experts have different opinions about that. In this essay, I also want to share my ideas and views on the truth of the crack epidemic.

According to one of the most reputable journalists, Gary Webb, who investigated this problem, U. S. government has a direct connection to the epidemic, and CIA knew about all major affairs of the biggest American drug dealers such as “ Freeway” Ricky Ross. The crack epidemic was so huge in its scope that it even affected the American culture, particularly music.

I want to start with what I think about drugs. Definitely, it is an extremely serious problem, and I am glad that it is less acute nowadays than it was in the 1980s. However, I do not think that this phenomenon will ever be eradicated. I also wonder why other forms of drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes are not prohibited.

Are they considered to be less dangerous or harmful? Or, are they not considered to be drugs? Why not? People also get addicted to them and, probably, want to try something stronger like cocaine or crack. Thus, I am certainly against drugs, they can ruin one’s life, but we should admit that they are supported by other forms of drugs.

Besides, it seems like the approach of the American government to the problem is not effective. The War on Drugs turned out to be a failing campaign. At least, in the 1980s when the crack epidemic spread almost all over the country, and what is more shocking, government officials are believed to have been supporting the epidemic.

This is what the journalist Gary Webb talks about in his Dark Alliance series. In a few words, he says that the biggest American drug dealers like Ricky Ross bought Nicaraguan cocaine, which was one of the causes of the crack epidemic. Profits from those sales were addressed to the Contra movement, which was supported by the CIA.

This is what Webb wrote in his book, " My mind was racing. Blandon, the Contra fund-raiser, had sold cocaine to the biggest crack dealer in South Central L. A.? That was too much" (18). Yes, it was too much, but it seems like Webb tells the truth. One of the most notorious dealers collaborated with Nicaraguans, and the CIA knew about that.

Who was " Freeway" Ricky Ross, by the way? He is known for having the " drug empire" in the 1980s and making millions of dollars per week. For somebody, particularly, for some American rappers, he served as a source of inspiration. Perhaps, this person deserves to be respected to some extent. Yet, from my point of view, he was just a CIA's marionette, " his worldview was limited to South Central, and how much cocaine he could move into it" (Webb, 145).

Finally, what was the response of the hip-hop community to events during the crack epidemic? As for me, their response was not something that could make some changes at those times. However, I should admit that hip-hop singers realized all the truth behind the epidemic, that “ the CIA told Ricky Ross to put a crack in the sack”, which very often was reflected in their songs (The Original Hip-Hop Lyrics Archive).

Such problems as drugs are solved on the governmental level, but will we ever see the solution if the government is not interested in it?

Webb, Garry. *Dark Alliance: The CIA, the Contras, and the Crack Cocaine Explosion*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998.

“ My Favorite Mutiny”. Ohhla. com. The Original Hip-Hop Lyrics Archive. Web.