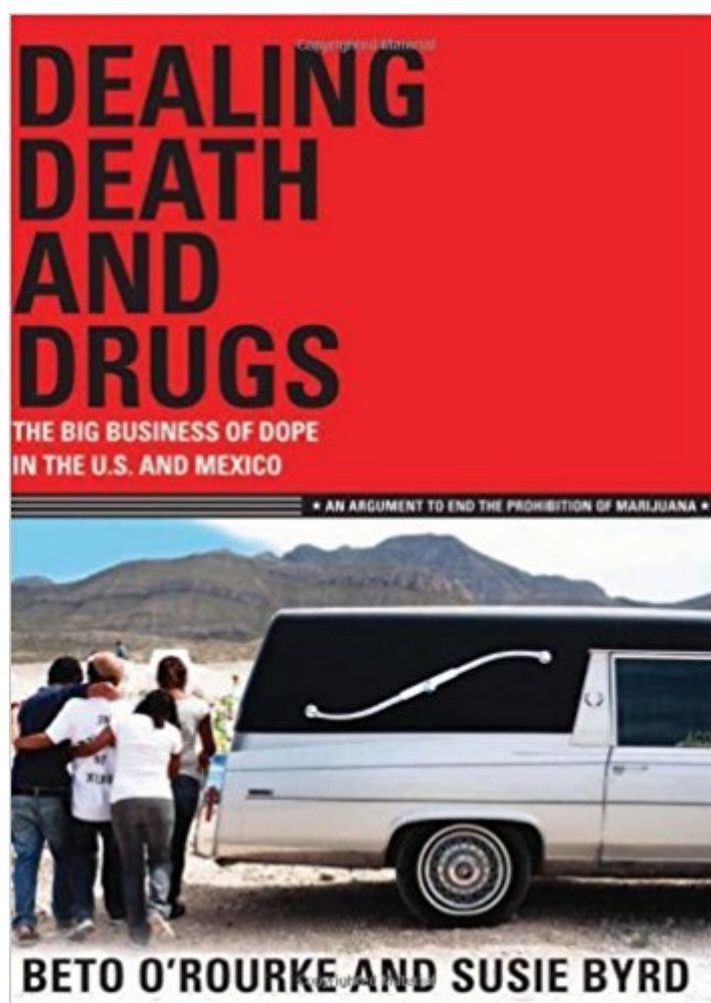


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Dealing Death And Drugs: The Big Business Of Dope In The U.S. And Mexico (Cinco Puntos Checkpoint Series)



Synopsis

The War on Drugs doesn't work. This became obvious to El Paso City Representatives Susie Byrd and Beto O'Rourke when they started to ask questions about why El Paso's sister city Ciudad Juárez has become the deadliest city in the world's 8,000-plus deaths since January 1, 2008. Byrd and O'Rourke soon realized American drug use and United States' failed War on Drugs are at the core of problem. In *Dealing Death and Drugs*; a book written for the general reader; they explore the costs and consequences of marijuana prohibition. They argue that marijuana prohibition has created a black market so profitable that drug kingpins are billionaires and drug control doesn't stand a chance. Using Juárez as their focus, they describe the business model of drug trafficking and explain why this illicit system has led to the never-ending slaughter of human beings. Their position: the only rational alternative to the War on Drugs is to end the current prohibition on marijuana. "If Washington won't do anything different, if Mexico City won't do anything different, then it is up to us; the citizens of the border who understand the futility and tragedy of this current policy first hand; to lead the way." from the Afterword A portion of the proceeds from the sale of *Dealing Death and Drugs* will be donated to Centro Santa Catalina, a faith-based community in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, founded in 1996 by Dominican Sisters for the spiritual, educational and economic empowerment of economically poor women and for the welfare of their families.

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Customer Reviews

"A levelheaded, analytical exploration of why the drug war isn't working, and how the regulated legalization of marijuana could help stem a hemorrhage of blood and money"; Dealing Death and Drugs almost overwhelms with statistics, but it kind of has to." •Texas Observer" It makes sense that those with a truly front row seat to the destruction of the Drug War would give birth to a treatise on marijuana legalization; It's a message that is sure to resonate with others if this tract can gain public notice beyond the reaches of the border, where residents are already intimately acquainted with the price of prohibition." #151; San Antonio Current" #133; a highly readable political manifesto for a more reasoned and enlightened drug policy #133; O'Rourke and Byrd are to be commended for courageously and intelligently broaching and suggesting concrete policy changes concerning controversial issues upon which the future of El Paso, Juárez and other U.S.-Mexican border communities depend." #151; Howard Campbell, El Paso Times

The War on Drugs doesn't work. This statement becomes obvious if you live on the U.S./Mexico Border. Especially if your home is in El Paso, Texas, and you have witnessed Ciudad Juárez's sister city become one of the deadliest cities in the world. This is why El Paso City Representative Susie Byrd and former City Rep Beto O'Rourke started to ask questions about the United States' 40-year old War on Drugs. Byrd and O'Rourke soon realized American drug use and the United States' failed War on Drugs are at the core of the problem. In Dealing Death and Drugs, they explore the costs and consequences of marijuana prohibition. They argue that marijuana prohibition has created a black market so profitable that drug kingpins are billionaires and drug control doesn't stand a chance. Using Juárez as their focus, they describe the business model of drug trafficking and explain how it has contributed to the tragedy taking place in Juárez today. Their position: the only rational alternative to the War on Drugs is to end the current prohibition on marijuana. Beto O'Rourke announced that he will seek the Democratic nomination for El Paso's seat in the U.S. Congress. He recently completed his second term on the El Paso City Council. He continues to run Stanton Street Technology Group, a web-development company he co-founded. Susie Byrd is serving her second term on the El Paso City Council. Before running for City Council, she served as a top aide to Mayor Ray Caballero. She

co-edited *The Late Great Mexican Border: Reports from a Disappearing Line* (Cinco Puntos Press, 1996). A portion of the proceeds from the sale of *Dealing Death and Drugs* will be donated to Centro Santa Catalina, a faith-based community in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, founded in 1996 by Dominican Sisters for the spiritual, educational and economic empowerment of economically poor women and for the welfare of their families.

A very persuasive argument for legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana by a responsible legislator who is obviously not a druggie but who has researched the economics behind the cartels which fuel violent crime. A good analogy to alcohol prohibition is also shown.

This is a descriptive analysis of dynamics caused by the War on Drugs which are not commonly known or presented. It offers realistic reforms needed for the nation's policies regarding drugs.

An eye opener about the tragedies associated with marijuana prohibition.

great read

Dealing Death and Drugs: The Big Business of Dope in the U.S. and Mexico is a concise, well-reasoned, and compelling "argument to end the prohibition of marijuana." If the thousands of murders over the last few years on the Mexican border is an indication that the war is being won (as suggested by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency), then why has the number of young Americans that use marijuana not changed appreciably in 30 years? Faced with such a failure of policy, what are our options? Authors Beto O'Rourke and Susie Byrd present their case. The opening chapters humanize the circumstance of citizens on the U.S.-Mexico border. As an outsider with nostalgic interest in my one-time home, I was shocked to learn that there had been over 3,000 murders in Juarez in 2010 alone. Why? The illegal marijuana trade is extremely profitable for organized crime cartels, and there is a Hollywood movie-like battle over power for the El Paso smuggling route. In Chapters 2 and 3, the authors' arguments flourish with easily digested facts from respected sources, free of poisonous dogma and deadening recitation of statistics. It is here that O'Rourke and Byrd laid the groundwork for the dirty truth - the U.S. drug war has failed. A rational drug policy solution must be discussed. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 read like a crime novel, where drug-dealers-turned-snitches spill information on the corrupt cartels. We learn of the rotten core of the illegal marijuana trade - how it moves across the border, how money changes hands, and why violence grew out of cartel

turf wars. In chapter 7, the authors' argument blossoms by pointing out the contradictions of the current drug policy. Despite billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars spent to fight the marijuana industry, the drug war has made "[N]o appreciable impact on curbing drug access and abuse." The authors provide a brief history of marijuana criminalization in Chapter 8, and draw policy parallels to the alcohol prohibition of the 1920s. It is in the final chapters that O'Rourke and Bryd cultivate thought in what they call the "least bad solution" of decriminalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana. Of course, the preceding 86 short pages were building toward this conclusion. While fraught with many problems (public health issues, continued black market), this policy may be the "best of a number of terrible alternatives." I highly recommend this book to policy wonks, students, or casual readers of non-fiction looking for tight, well-supported and clearly communicated book on the topic of U.S. marijuana policy.

Dealing Death and Drugs: The Big Business of Dope in the U.S. and Mexico is a succinct but credible argument for ending the prohibition on marijuana--a perfect choice for use in the classroom, either for juniors and seniors in high school, or freshman and sophomores in college. Written from the viewpoint of two lifelong citizens of El Paso, Texas--not to mention that they're both El Paso city politicians as well--the book takes readers from the marijuana farm deep in Mexico through the system of drug transportation through Mexico and into the U.S. to distribution points around the U.S. They follow the economics of marijuana to show just why the drug is so profitable and just why it is a major contributor to the violence tearing Mexico apart the last few years. This is a great introduction to the topic, perfect for social studies, geography, political science, and freshman comp classes.

Fascinating read. I recommend it to anyone curious about the "war on drugs" and how the Texas border fits in.

It is written better than most books. But it still has problems with "that" vs "which", "since" vs "because", commas where they don't belong, no commas where they do belong, and misuse of parenthesis and em dashes. However, this is typical from most writers, editors, and publishers (who employ both). Here are some examples of poor analysis: The table on pg. 108 shows this: Pot Value = \$19B Weight = 3300 tons V/W = \$5K/ton Cost: \$23/lb = \$23(3300)(2000) = \$0.152B Profit: \$19B - \$0.15B = \$18.85B Cocain Value = \$30B Weight = 207 tons V/W = \$145K/ton Cost: \$4000/lb = \$4000(207)(2000) = \$0.1656B Profit: \$30B - \$0.16B = \$29.8B Heroin Value = \$20B Weight = 44 tons V/W = \$450K/ton Later, the author indicates the costs of each. So I added that above. It's pretty

easy to tell which is most profitable: It's easier to move 44 tons of heroin and make \$20B (\$450K/ton) than to move 3300 tons of pot and make nearly the same (\$19B) at \$5K/ton. So Heroin is #1, Cocaine #2, and Pot #3. On pg. 31, she says that Nieto was found with 1900 lbs of pot, enough for 4000 hits and 2 million joints. But that just doesn't "add up." That implies that each joint has $1900 \text{ lbs} (16 \text{ oz/lb}) (28 \text{ grams/oz}) / 2,000,000 \text{ joints} = 0.426 \text{ g} = 426 \text{ mg}$. But a joint typically has 1000 mg of pot + 200 mg of paper. So she should have said $1900(16)(28)/1000 = 851$ joints. And she implies that one hit = $1900(16)(28)/4000 = 213 \text{ g}$. But a typical "hit" ranges from about 60-100 mg. So she should have said $1900(16)(28)(1000)/100 = 8.5$ million hits. Pg. 34 says that a 1900-lb load would be valued at \$138,700 in Juarez. So that means it sells for \$0.16/gram? No way, Jose. Pg. 37 says that the Chicago Police values the street value of 1900 lbs of pot at over \$5 million. So $\$5,000,000 / 1900(16)(28) = \$5.87/\text{gram}$? Maybe in Juarez. But in Chicago, I'll bet it sells for \$10/g, or \$10 million. Pg. 43 says that the cartels can buy a pound of pot for \$23 and sell it in Chicago for \$550/lb. So that's $\$550 / (16(28) \text{ g}) = \$1.22/\text{g}$. No way again, Jose. It sells for \$5-\$10/g. And their profit is not related to the retail price. They can buy a pound of cocaine for \$4,000. So if their revenue for cocaine = \$30B for 207 tons, then their cost is $\$4000(207)(2000) = \0.1656B . So profit = $\$30\text{B} - \$0.1656\text{B} = \$29.8\text{B}$. For pot, it's $\$23(2000)(1900) = \87.4 million. So profit = $\$19\text{B} - \$0.0874\text{B} = \$18.9\text{B}$. So that does make cocaine the most profitable. On pg. 57, she says that the US Govt estimates that 5600 hectares was cultivated in 2005 and 17,500 hectares in 2009. Yet the chart on pg. 56 shows that they eradicated 30,000 hectares in 2005. How can they eradicate more than was cultivated? Overall, it succeeds in showing the futility of the drug war and proposes to legalize them. I agree.

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