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Acid, Spies & Secret Experiments

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Cocaine, Cartels & Crackdowns

Cocaine lands in America from secret airports, lining the pockets of violent cartel bosses, and an infamous "black widow", as the CIA's shadow wars have unintended consequences. President Reagan ...

Gangs, Prisons & Meth Queens

America's War on Drugs rages on. The Clinton Administration's support of NAFTA inadvertently opens the door to Mexican cartels, and its response to a wave of violence leads to mass incarceration. A ...

Storyline

"America's War on Drugs" is an immersive trip through the last five decades, uncovering how the CIA, obsessed with keeping America safe in the fight against communism, allied itself with the mafia and foreign drug traffickers. In exchange for support against foreign enemies, the groups were allowed to grow their drug trade in the United States. The series explores the unintended consequences of when gangsters, war lords, spies, outlaw entrepreneurs, street gangs and politicians vie for power and control of the global black market for narcotics - all told through the firsthand accounts of former CIA and DEA

officers, major drug traffickers, gang members, noted experts and insiders. Night one of "America's War on Drugs" divulges covert Cold War operations that empowered a generation of drug traffickers and reveals the peculiar details of secret CIA LSD experiments which helped fuel the counter-culture movement, leading to President Nixon's crackdown and declaration of a war on drugs. ... Written by The History Channel

Sobering Exposé of the United States' Biggest Policy Failure of the Late 20th and Early 21st Century

22 June 2017 | by classicalsteve (Oakland, CA) – See all my reviews

The best statement which sums up the drug problem in America goes something like this: The worst side effect of marijuana is possible incarceration. In other words, the effects of marijuana itself are not nearly as devastating as being incarcerated for using it and/or possessing it. If there was ever a governmental policy among first world nations which has failed disastrously to produce the desired results, it would have to be the US Government's so-called "War on Drugs". The History Channel's multi-part documentary pulls the curtain and reveals the "wizard" behind this confusing and enigmatic obsession which older government leaders have had towards drug use. While drug addiction and abuse are certainly problems, from circa 1970 to 2010, lawmakers and officials painted a picture about drug use which justified policy that has led to much police brutality, drug cartels, and unnecessary violence. This documentary is one of the History's Channel's best efforts to demonstrate how the whole idea of a "War on Drugs" has been a complete and utter catastrophe along the lines of the Titanic and the Hindenberg.

Were and are drugs a problem? Certainly. But so is bank robbery! It's not like the US government went on an all-out war on bank robbery! Sexual assault is also a huge problem, but I've never heard any government official declare a war on "sexual assault". And yet, according to the documentary, the old guard who were running the country in the 1960's and 1970's, particularly Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, J. Edgar Hoover, Ronald Reagan, G. Gordon Liddy, and other top-ranking lawmakers and officials were scared to death of the wave of counter-culture which was questioning the sensibility of the previous generations. Part of the counter-culture movement was the use of psychedelic narcotics by some of the Beats and Boomers, certainly not all, initially consuming marijuana and eventually Acid (a.k.a. LSD). However, instead of engaging in a dialogue with young people, the old guard decided the best thing was to squash the movement, in particular vilify and stop drug use.

And yet, according to the documentary, there was much hypocrisy about drug use. In Cuba prior to the rise of Castro, the US-backed president Fulgencio Batista, allowed for much drug-use at his own private parties. Nevermind marijuana was illegal in the US at the time, and drugs were consistently imported from Cuba along with their cigars. When Castro came to power and dethroned Batista, trade relations with Cuba ended, particularly the importing of marijuana and cigars from Cuba! Other venues would have to be used.

G. Gordon Liddy and J. Edgar Hoover were convinced the counter-culture movement, particularly in California but elsewhere in the US was being supported by the Russian Soviets (USSR). Although FBI agents working for Hoover could find no evidence that Russia had anything to do with drug use, Johnson, Hoover and possibly then Governor Reagan believed that somehow the counter-culture was

not just destroying the fabric of society, it was being backed by communists! The documentary does reveal that some Boomers from wealthy families were subsidizing the creation of LSD. Yes, they were being subsidized but not by Soviet communists!

Running beneath the entire documentary is a sense that lawmakers and officials were over-blowing the counter-culture. Yes, young people, made up of the Beat and Baby Boomer generations, were asking questions about US society and some of them were using drugs. However, that doesn't mean that experimental drug use was unzipping the fabric of America. The US government did their own experiments on LSD, and one of their subjects was a young Ken Kesey who eventually became known for his bus with kool-aid spiked with LSD. Eventually Timothy Leary got into the act.

In the early 1970's, President Richard Nixon was the first to declare an official "War on Drugs". For the next 40 years, the US government has perpetually vilified anything associated with experimental drug uses. New laws and policies against drug culture and trafficking were passed and enacted which made, in the grander scheme of things, made people huge law-breakers if they were ever caught. Mandatory sentencing was enacted if someone was in possession of a certain amount of illegal narcotics, never mind the circumstances surrounding particular cases, and unfortunately much of the American public bought the idea that drugs were the cause of nearly every problem in American society. One young man who never broke any laws or ever hurt anyone was sentenced to life in prison for dealing marijuana.

However, the unintended consequences of the war on drugs far outstrip the problems of people taking the drugs themselves. Drug cartels of South America emerged out of the civil wars in places like Panama and Nicaragua where US-trained Latinos were using their skills to trade in one of the most lucrative markets the world has ever known: psychedelic narcotics. The so-called "War on Drugs", first implemented by President Nixon then President Reagan, later President George HW Bush, and even reaffirmed by President Clinton has only pushed the prices higher for those narcotics, making the trading in these substances more lucrative than property and other commodities. Because profits in drug trafficking are so astronomical, drug cartels can bribe low-level police officers, borders official, even truck drivers!

There will always be people who are psychologically unstable and can't handle certain experiences without dire consequences. That doesn't mean all people should be forbidden from having these experiences. Some people go crazy if they spend too long engaged in virtual reality. As far as I know we haven't banned virtual reality. People with gambling addictions have wrecked families. However, psychedelic and experimental drugs were vilified as being far worse than many other things. They failed to realize that during this entire period, crimes and felonies as a result of alcohol abuse far outstrip those of drug abuse. We tried from 1920 to 1933 to ban alcohol also with disastrous unintended consequences. Is this not the same problem?