

SLUMS TO ASHES

The Tragic Truth of the "War on Drugs"



Mongoose Distro

by Noah "Kado" Coffin

Friday, August 28th 2020. Just another day that mirrors all those which came before it in the crowded confines of my stone and steel cage here in South Texas' Eastham Unit. Just now it is blisteringly hot as the horrid Texas sun bakes this red brick oven. In a few weeks it'll be freezing cold. My life is in phases of extremes. Extreme poverty, followed by extreme Justice, then extreme isolation and extreme hot or cold. The emotional roller coaster is certainly an extreme ride.

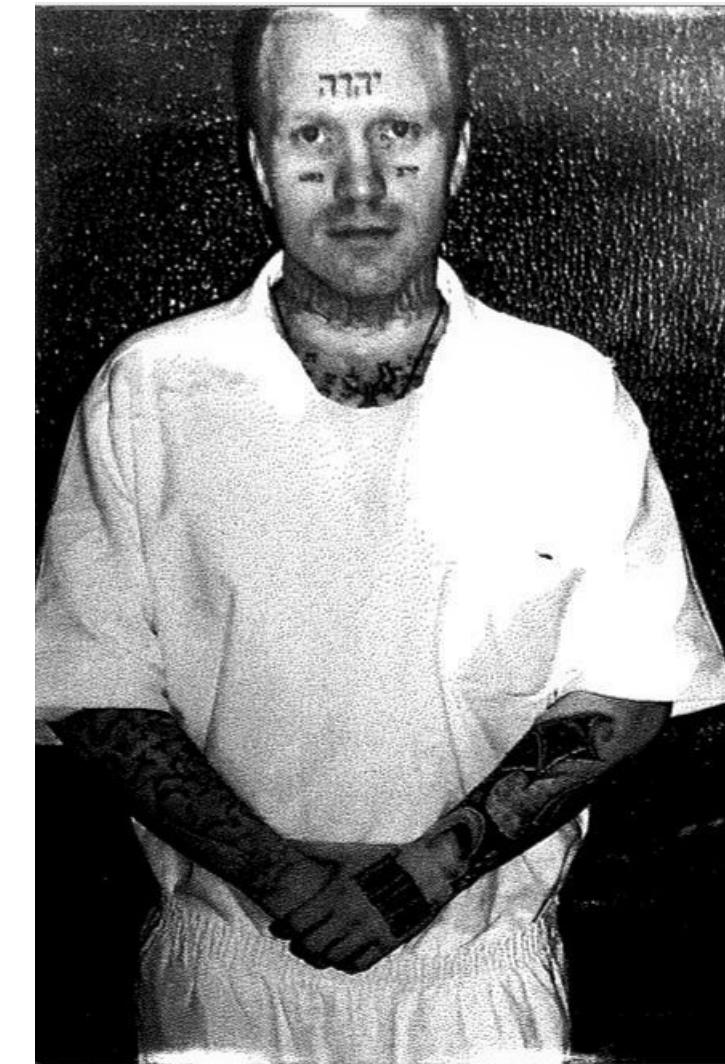
Covid-19 quarantine lock downs have meant no visitations, limited access to 5 minute call attempts, (only two tries of connecting before you go to the end of a long line and damn if family or friends have jobs or schedules...) and peanut butter or egg sandwiches 99% of this year. Not much to do except wait for a letter, workout as much as you dare on such a meal plan and if you're able to - read a book.

When the cop shows up at my door telling me to "cuff up" I already see what kind of day today has become. As the noise and chatter of 51 segregated prisoners fall to a complete hush, I realize that they know too. Anyone who's done "hard time" (as solitary confinement is coined) knows intimately what such an instance foretells...

I can vividly recall from early childhood my mothers' trip to prison for small time dealing. A single widow with six kids on welfare in the South Texas slums. Supplementing her income of 2.15 per hour "plus tips" by hustling joints and dimes to folks needing a bit more escape than what their Busch or Keystone could offer. A good ol' American bust on

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every situation concerning the government (or to personal life). Look at it. Don't take anyone's word for it.

In Solidarity,

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the dreaded drug war front line. I shudder to think of how many casualties my widowed mother would have just piled up had Uncle Sam not put her away and shatter her already fractured home.

Even more detailed in memory, I'm able to call up images of a sick and bedridden mother who can't stop throwing up, using the toilet or hold down anything but iced milk because she'd run out of her "pain management medication". Oh, but the dealer had a permit. That dealer sold for the Pharma Cartel and Uncle Sam got his cut, so nevermind that the legal heroin they spoon fed my struggling mother was beyond addictive, deadlier than black tar for its availability and addictive properties - it had the approval of Congress.

So I don my ridiculous Covid-19 mask, submit to restraints and I'm escorted to the desk of a L.T. I've done this a time or three during my hard time stint and even once before in General Population. Ten years of Texas Tuff Justice and I'm already running out of reasons for a trip like this.

The L.T. Dials a number I know yet have seldom called due to these restraints and my custody level. He says a few words and hits speaker phone so I could share this travesty with him. My oldest brother is hesitant and uncertain as he tells me of my mothers overdose. Many voices I've not heard in a decade or longer come through on the speaker. They are people I once knew, like my mother, but a decade is a long time and so I cannot say I know them now. Time changes

people. Once I learn the whole situation I'm obligated to end my brother's hopes that I could attend the service. (I'm not able to attend a shower alone, without restraints and an escort) I ask for photos and suddenly I want to be anywhere but in that office. I need to do pull ups until my rusted locker pulls down off the wall and so I cut the call short. My social skill aren't what they once were. My brother concedes that he has to cremate Mom. We're a poor family. Seems my mother never made it far in her life. She never left the confines of her poverty or addiction. She struggled to get SSI until she died. Well there's a few mountain peaks far from this nightmare my mother lived and died in and I think I'll take those ashes to the heights and let them fly when or if I leave this place. 60 months to discharge and 120 months done, but my casualties have been pretty substantial thus far.

By the time that sanctioned dope ended my mothers' life and struggle it had eaten through her stomach. (She had feces in her stomach when they tried to pump it) As I reread an article by John Whitehead titled "Tomato Gardeners: The Latest Victim in the Government's War on Drugs" I cannot fathom the elitists voracious appetite for wealth, nor by which means they'll go to gather that abundance. It's not about those peoples' potential drug operation. It's about money. The government will supply a dealer the product, offer them protection, bailouts if they need, tax cuts and benefits and a retirement if they'll sling dope for ol' Uncle Sam, but if you're in any way trying to hold out then they'll

come at you with an organized force that no cartel or mafia in all of history could rival. Your taxes fund that capability and our collective ignorance, complacence and "look the other way, not my issue" attitude allow it to continue. Whitehead's article exposes a turf war, not a war on drugs! Marijuana?! Come on people! Go to any place a dispensary is "legal" and that's A-OK because that's Uncle Sam's block and his product.

Don't mistake me here. I'm not for dealing rights - obviously I'm not that fond of dope. I see it for its truth - a cafe and an assault on the people. Dulling the senses and making them pliable. What better way to rule a mass of subjects than to drug them and zombify them? Inside these walls it's done with other "less fun" drugs, but it all works in much the same way. Control and power to proceed as pleased.

People, just wake up. Don't be fooled by slight of hand or slick explanations. Don't listen to what people or government tell you. Look at what's being done. They can call raids on a homestead tomato farmer, or a poverty stricken widow, a drug war policy, but if you really just tune out their rhetoric and look at the situation you'd see it for what it is. Why the muscle of military and police would be applied on potential small time dealers if that same entity sells it "legit"? That's easy to see, but if people are stoned on legal dope or duped by the word game then it's not so easy to make the connection. This isn't just advice on how to spot a government turf war. It needs to be applied to