...public enemy number one in the United States...
is drug abuse.
In order to fight and defeat this enemy...
it is necessary to wage a new,
all-out offensive.
For nearly a year,
I have been devoting increasing attention...
to a problem which strikes at the
very heart of our national well-being:
Drug abuse.
I did not condone any drug abuse,
and we'll do everything possible to reduce...
this serious threat to our society.
Drugs are menacing our society.
They're threatening our values and
undercutting our institutions.
They're killing our children.
Thank you very much.
...and when it comes to
Drugs and alcohol, just say no.
Reagan says he will make it
a priority of his presidency...
to stop drug abuse in the United States.
This is your brain on drugs.
Those who smuggle and sell drugs are
as dangerous to our national security...
as any terrorist or foreign dictatorship.
The Reagan administration
is spending billions on two wars...
...the war on drugs at home
and the struggle for
Nicaragua abroad.
If we do not act decisively
in defense of freedom...
...new Cubas will arise from
the ruins of today's conflicts.
We will consult closely
with the Freedom Fighters.
The anti-communist
rebels known as the contras...
...an army founded and funded by the CIA.
Crack cocaine...
...a drug epidemic unlike any that's ever
probably existed in the history of the world.
For five dollars, you can begin
the process of addicting people.
Waging the war on drugs has
...one hundred billion dollars over the last ten years.
The crack trade has triggered a spasm of
gang warfare in south-central L.A...
...and DEA agents are swarming throughout.
How many of you have crack houses...
...in your neighborhood?
No brave law enforcement officer...
...no teacher, no doctor,
need be told how hard and cruel
America's drug problem has become.
By nineteen eighty-four,
Congress was preparing
to cut off funds to the Contras.
High-level government officials began looking
for other ways to continue the aid program.
There must be no Soviet beachhead
in Central America.
Good morning.
Who the fuck are you?
What do you want?
I called you about the government seizure of
property of accused narcotics dealers?
Yeah. The accused. Yeah, that's me.
Come on in.
Okay, great. Thanks.
- My last house, this sweet pad in Laguna -
- Yeah?
Charges didn't stick and
the feds still didn't give it back.
- But you did it?
- Did what?
Well, off the record, I mean, you sold the dope.
Yeah, but you're missing the point.
They took the freaking roof over my head.
Look, wait a sec...
All this stuff that you bought
with the drug money - the houses,
the cars, what have you -
...you lose it because it's
the crime that paid for it, right?
Did it, didn't do it... Who gives a shit?
Can't take a man's shelter.
Anyway, they didn't prove it, did they?
LA Sheriff's Department - nobody move!
- Let me see your hands!
Christ. Here we go again.
- Down, motherfucker down!
- Get the girl!
Secure the girl!
Look, I'm a reporter.
Shut the fuck up!
Better get that story out there.
- San Jose Mercury News -
- Hey!
I'm a reporter!
Quite a ruckus over there, huh?
Yeah, this guy almost broke my fucking arm,
the prick.
All right.
Hey, wait a minute.
Where...
Yeah, I'm sorry. We ran outta inches.
Look, you cut the kicker and you're gonna
blow the whole point to this thing.
The government takes
these people's shit, all right?
Their cars, their houses,
they take everything forever.
This is before they're convicted.
Even if they're acquitted,
they don't get it back.
They're drug dealers.
Alleged drug dealers, with rights.
Because this is America.
Four minutes until deadline.
Well, take my name off the story.
God, you can be such an asshole.
I'm an asshole because
I believe in due process?
Come on. This is our job.
Clock's ticking.
It's ticking.
It's still ticking.
And...
...don't call back.
This guy just had a shotgun in his ear.
Give him a break.
No, there was no shotgun. All right, look,
you're gonna have
to wait to read the article.
Your son is sixteen. Just FYI.
- I see you! Get rid of it. Honey?
Come on, don't do that.
- That's bad.
- That's amazing parenting.
- Don't do that.
- Don't do that.
It's really not a big deal.
Would somebody watch this?
I gotta show you guys something.
New addition to the family...
Oh my god!
Dad!
Holy...
This is a '71 Tiger Sports Triumph.
It's a beautiful bike
or it was a beautiful bike...
...and we're going to make it beautiful again.
This is the only deal.
- You and I have to rebuild it together, okay?
- Hey, hotshot.
- Okay. I love you, Dad.
- All right. I love you.
- We're happy.
- Goddammit.
Yes?
- We talked about this.
- Come on...
- No, come on." No.
- Look at him.
- Look at this. Look at the bike...
- I see it.
Look at this face.
Inside my head.
Me and my boy riding side by side,
to the mountaintops...
- Touching the sky.
- Isn't that right?
- Anything happens to him while he's on that bike
- Nothing's going to happen to him.
...I will cut these off
while you are sleeping.
- Wow.
- I thought you already cut those off.
While I'm sleeping!
Dad, you hang out with
some insanely bad people.
Don't eat your hair.
Well...
...bad guys are usually more
honest than good guys.
And more fun.
- Life lessons by Gary Webb.
- No, Mom. You actually have to read this.
I did already. It's great.
You guys gotta go, come on.
You heard the lady!
Come on! Who wants to ride
in the green machine?
- Dad's taking us?
- I'm taking you.
You're not going in your PJ's, are you?
Come on, guys!
- Let's get smushed.
- That's where I sit.
Got it? Step in like sardines.
Bye, Momma!
Bye Momma!
- Bye, Momma!
- Bye.
Bye Momma!
- One, two, three...
- Bye, Mom!
Here you go.
- It's probably cold.
- Thank you.
Hey, I know how bad you want
to do the Guv today.
Some real reporter work.
Yeah. How that shit gives you satisfaction,
I'll never know.
Hey, that story this morning?
That was a big one.
- But not the" big one.
- Yeah, what would that be?
Catching Clinton breaking into Watergate?
Hey.
Rich Kline, LA Times. How you doing?
My editors are pissed that
we missed the drug forfeiture story.
I'm sure they are.
It's an amazing job, by the way.
You got any advice for me, or...?
Ah, yeah. Don't let the assholes win?
I don't know.
Hey, who's Coral Baca and
why does she keep calling me?
Nobody?
She called five times...?
- Hola?
- Hi, this is Gary Webb.
He finally calls. I like your work.
You follow my work?
I do now.
Okay, what can I do for you?
It's what I can do for you.
Okay, what can you do for me?
My boyfriend Raffie's in prison,
for cocaine trafficking.
That's Rafael Cornejo.
Was that Columbian?
- Nicaraguan.
- Nicaraguan.
He has this gorgeous house
the government just took.
Good story, no?
Yes, it is. I just wrote it.
But Raffie's story is different.
He sold drugs for the government.
You want to say that again?
He brought four tons
of cocaine into the country...
...for the U.S. government.
Look, you have a very lovely voice.
- Thank you-
- I've copied every piece of paper.
Selling drugs for the government. Have you written that story? This is the thing you need to see. Wait a minute. You gotta be kidding me. Grand Jury transcript? How'd you get ahold of it? The government turned it over on discovery by mistake. Yeah, some mistake. It was Russell Dodson. Federal prosecutor Russell Dodson? The little bitch. I called the cops on him once. Called the cops on the feds? His goons were sneaking around my house. Could have been rapists. I think I'm gonna like you. So who's this Danilo Blandon? Wait. Ok. Let's see. That's who sold drugs for the government. He was a friend. He played with my kid. Then he rats. He's probably the biggest trafficker in the whole country. Way bigger than Raffie. Why use whale to catch catfish? - That make sense to you Gary Webb? - Not very much sense. No it doesn't. You have more documents? Everything is at my house. You want to come over? Why don't you just send the documents to my office? How's that? First things first, Gary Webb. Raffie's got court tomorrow. - Yeah? - Be there. Am I late? The judge called an early recess. It could be fifteen minutes or so. - Right. Yeah. So we've got time.
- There's my boyfriend, Raffie...
  He looks friendly.
  He doesn't like seeing me with other men.
  And there is the little bitch.
Russell Dodson.
Be right back.
So, Dodson. Gary Webb,
San Jose Mercury News.
- You always follow people into bathrooms?
- No. Not really.
So why is the local news
interested in this case?
I'm not.
But I am interested in Danilo Blandon.
Never heard of him.
Then why is he on your witness list?
You had this guy cold on major
narcotics trafficking
and you let him walk.
Why?
I have his grand jury transcript.
I know.
I've seen some screw ups outta
you guys but boy is that a big one.
So what's the story? Feds use
a bad guy to catch other bad guy?
- Do you even know what you have there?
- Yes, I know what this is.
Well, it's unheard of. It's a gift.
And I asked around about Danilo Blandon.
- No one has seemed-...
- We're talking here.
I'm telling you...
...whatever I got near,
it made him very nervous.
I know what I saw.
- And I've been doing this a long time,
- okay? So -
Don't do old and wise. I hate that.
I'm not old.
Come on. It's why you brought me in here.
To go after stories like this.
- But we're not the LA Times.
- We're not small-time, either.
There's more here, I promise you.
Get more info on Blandon
and then we'll take it to Jerry.
I gotta get back to San Jose.
Okay.
Hello, hello!
Smells good.
Who's Coral?
She's hot.
She drove a Camaro.
Of course she did.
She left this?
- Eat it.
- Mom, can we start?
- Yes.
- Yes. That looks so good.
- Yummy.
- Hello, gents.
- Hi.
- Why does she know where you live?
I don't know.
- She's a source.
- Yeah? For a story about strippers?
No. But that's a good one, though.
Drug dealers.
Okay. That's better.
Is it happening again?
- No.
- Is what happening again?
Come on.
Nothing.
- What's in the box?
- Eat your food.
- What happened with her?
- Nothing.
What happened with her?
Nothing.
I mean, I'm not going to do this again.
It's why we left my family, my friends...
- I know, I know.
- ...left Cleveland, moved out to California,
which I hate...
...all this stupid sunshine and shiny happy faces...
- Sunshine is so dumb. It's terrible.
- I'm being serious.
I know; well so am I.
Baby...
I'm not going to screw this up.
Understand?
Don't smile.
She said there's another hearing tomorrow.
Seriously, I fucking hate you.
I love you.
...dismiss all charges against Mr.Cornejo.
We are no longer proceeding
with the case, you Honor.
Hey.
Hi.
So what's going on?
I don't know. They've
been up there for a while.
The charges against Mr,
Cornejo are dismissed.
You are free to go.
What?
Very impressive, Gary Webb.
What just happened?
You terrified them.
They just stuffed
Danilo Blandon under a rug.
He's off their witness list.
No Blandon, no case.
Raffie walks.
Hey, hey, hey-
So you used me to get this
fucking case dropped?
I'm just the bimbo, remember?
Yeah, fuck you.
Be happy, Gary Webb.
You thought you were
getting a piece of cheese,
but I just gave you the mouse.
There's your story.
Danilo Blandon.
West coast...
Sorry about the air conditioning.
Come on in.
- How you doing?
- Pretty well.
You represent Ricky Ross,
the crack dealer?
Alleged crack dealer.
Freeway Ricky Ross.
Biggest dealer in Los Angeles...
...the epicenter of the national
crack epidemic" L.A. Times.
Who do you write for?
- San Jose Mercury News.
- Never heard of them.
Russell Dodson is the
prosecutor on your case?
That's public record. Yes.
What about Danilo Blandon?
- Maybe.
- Because I think he's going to testify
gainst your client tomorrow.
No, you've got that backwards.
Blandon and my client
are friends and associates.
If he's going to testify,
he'll be testifying for Ricky.
That would be awkward.
Why's that?
Because he's a government informant.
That's bullshit.
I have a Grand Jury transcript
released on discovery by mistake...
...by our Russell Dodson.
In it is evidence of Blandon testifying
against other drug dealers.
Goddammit!
Jesus, does that make sense.
You would not believe the horseshit
that Dodson puts me through...
...every time I ask him who
his secret weapon is.
Well it's not just Ricky,
it's probably half a dozen guys
he's going to testify against-
Fuck me! They block me!
Every time I ask for something.
Claiming - get this -
National Security.
National security and crack
cocaine in the same sentence?
Does that not sound strange to you?
Ok, what exactly do you want?
Who's this?
He's a reporter.
So what do you know about Danilo Blandon?
I don't know him.
Come on Ricky. Danilo's going
to testify against you tomorrow.
He's the witness they've been hiding.
Man, there ain't no way
they flipped Danilo!
Sit down, and listen to what he has to say.
They didn't flip anyone.
Ricky,
Blandon was working for
the government the entire time.
- You for real?
- Yeah.
He for real?
Blandon a snitch?
Look here, man,
he was a thousand time heavier than
I'll ever be.
He's LA, New York, Atlanta,
He's everywhere.
I couldn't sell it fast enough
to keep up with supply.
- Slow down.
- Wait. You mean demand.
No. I mean supply.
I was buying a hundred kilos a week.
Selling three million dollars a day.
And still couldn't get rid of
that inventory fast enough, man.
It was raining coke.
- Allegedly, Ricky.
- Allegedly.
Allegedly.
Look here, man. I gave him...
...six million a week. Allegedly.
- That's impossible.
- Is it?
- I'm exaggerating, Fenster?
- Yeah, I hope so.
How do you sell that much
cocaine on the street?
Look here, man, we used to cook it.
With baking soda.
We called it Ready Rock.
Powder was for rich folks.
Holy shit.
Look here, man, I was just the elf.
Blandon was Santa Claus.
This is where Ricky ran his operation.
No, don't get out of the car!
Are you out of your fucking mind?
How did this happen?
Exactly. Which is why we're
going to get the hell out of here.
What about this doesn't piss you off?
It's complicated for me.
Whatever the hell happened,
all this shit has run downhill,
right here.
I need to speak with Blandon.
He's a protected witness.
How are you going to do that?
Yes, I know. I can't.
But you can.
Mr. Blandon.
During the years when you
were acting as a paid
informant of the U.S. government.
The years you say you wholesaled cocaine
to my client in Los Angeles...
...was the government aware that you were
smuggling tons of cocaine
into the United States.
Objection. Relevance. Inflammatory.
The government called this witness,
your honor.
He is a paid confidential informant.
The jury has a right to know
the scope of his expertise.
Overruled.
Approach, your honor?
Later.
Mr. Blandon?
Yes.
Yes what?
The government knew.
Knew everything?
Objection. Speculation.
Sustained.
Mr. Blandon...
...how much money did you
take in from cocaine sales
while you were working
for the U.S. government?
One and a half billion dollars.
That's correct.
What did you do with that money?
We made so much money we had to keep an
apartment just to keep the cash.
It was floor to ceiling dollars.
We had to rotate the money
from the top to the bottom...
...to prevent mold from
coming on the money from
the humidity.
What the fuck does this say?
Did he have a partner
or a government agency he
was working with?
Mr. Blandon, were you working
with a partner at that time?
Yes.
Norwin Meneses.
That's correct.
Wait a second, what exactly
is happening here, your honor?
Clearly, this reporter
is giving direction to counsel.
Approach.
Thank you.
Your honor, this man
in the first row is a reporter
and he's giving questions to counsel.
If he is, and I'm not saying that he is...
Well, he is.
Ok, he is. But there's nothing in
the rules that says he can't.
I don't like it.
But I'm not going to stop it.
For now.
Then I am compelled to warn
the court that this door leads to
very sensitive national security matters.
Then maybe you shouldn't
have opened it.
Mr. Blandon, is it true
that you and Norwin Meneses...
...were in communication with
the federal government together?
Can you tell us who in the
federal government you
were in communication with?
Who were you working with?
The FBI?
Mr. Dodson can't answer
that question for you, Mr. Blandon.
Remember, you're under oath.
The DEA?
No.
It was the CIA.
The Central Intelligence Agency.
Yes.
So, Mr. Blandon...
...what did the CIA have you do?
Objection! Relevance, your honor!
Overruled. Mr. Blandon,
answer the question.
We were asked to support...
...a free and democratic Nicaragua
- the Contras...
...the rebels...
...by sending planes into
Nicaragua and raising money here
in the U.S. for the war.
Mr. Blandon...
...did the CIA specifically know
that you were selling cocaine...
...to buy guns and supplies
to support its cause?
Objection! This line of
questioning has absolutely no relevance.
Overruled.
They knew who we were.
Why else would they come to us?
The day Ronald Reagan got elected,
the Cubans and the Soviets started triggering...
...revolutions all over
South and Central America.
And when they got Nicaragua...
...that put them fifty miles
from the Panama Canal.
Reagan drew the line in the sand.
And that's where America was
going to win the Cold War. Except...
...Congress hated Reagan's guts,
so they wanted nothing to do with him.
They were never going to
fund his little Contra war.
So the White House needed money.
Lots and lots of money.
Guys, that's the eighties.
It's ten year old news.
What's the story?
Jerry, just let him finish.
Look, one of the DEA's most wanted
- not only not in jail for eternity...
...but apparently
on the government payroll.
Admitting in open court
that he brought in thousands
of kilos of cocaine to the US every day.
For them.
For who?
The US government.
Or with them.
Or at least while
they were looking the other way.
Jesus.
That little stunt
you pulled in that courtroom...
I got complaints
from Justice in Sacramento and Washington.
Yeah, but I got Blandon.
Jerry.
This is the biggest
story the Merc's ever had.
That's what worries me.
A lot of blind spots, you know?
We don't know Washington.
We don't do International.
We do now.
We do, do we? How many
CIA sources to you have?
- None yet.
- Get one.
What are they saying officially?
They're not even calling me back.
Holy shit.
Gary...
You get some sources on the record,
see where we're at.
Watch your ass.
The success of Communism in
Central America poses the threat...
...that a hundred million people from Panama
to the open border at our south...
...could come under the control
of pro-Soviet regimes.
If we cut off the freedom fighters...
...we will be giving the Soviets
a free hand in Central America.
Mr.Meneses?
Hi. Gary Webb. How are you?
Ok. What took you so long?
How's that?
No other reporter
has ever tried to find me.
Are you a friend, Mr. Webb?
Because your country
is no longer a friend of mine.
I'm not an enemy.
You play golf?
Hockey.
Step into my parlor.
The five iron.
A perfectly designed club.
In golf, if you have a five iron, 
you don't need anything else. 
If you use it, like a tool. 
You can carve any shot in the game. 
You can even slice a man open 
if you know how to use it properly. 
So, guns for drugs... 
You know, it's easy to think that 
this situation was only about drugs. 
But you need to look at 
it from our point of view. 
If the Contra movement would 
have no friends and no money... 
...we would have been forced to live under 
a government that tells you what to say, 
what not to say, what to think, 
what not to think. 
If you were me, 
would you sit still and watch as your 
children are forced... 
...to live a life of 
irrelevance and servitude? 
And you watched 
from the deck of your yacht? 
My yacht? 
Norwin, you were arrested for trafficking 
narcotics for the first time in 1975. 
That's ten years before the Contra war. 
Come on, you're not a freedom fighter. 
I thought you were my friend. 
Just looking for the truth. 
Well you're gonna get the truth. 
You got someone else down here 
I could talk to? 
I can introduce you to my banker, Mr. Baier. 
I'd like that. 
Come, I show you the airstrip now. 
So when did all of this start? 
They were always looking 
for ways to raise money to fight this war. 
There was this one time when Ollie... 
Ollie went to his friends in Washington, 
- and this is years ago- 
- Oliver North?
Oliver North.
No, Oliver Hardy. Yes, Oliver North.
So he said why don't we use the cash
seized from the cocaine arrests...
...to fund and support the Contra war?
Of course, they declined you know.
But as you can see,
Ollie wasn't the only
person with ideas like this.
Did it have to be drugs?
The ends justify the means.
Yeah, write that down.
You Americans don't
want coconuts or bananas.
You want cocaine,
and I know where to find cocaine.
And my pilots were already flying
from Central America to the United States.
And they were American.
How long ago was this shut down?
Eight to ten years ago.
The land is now privately owned.
If I was in the CIA and I was risking my life
overseas doing something illegal...
...believe me, I would want someone
like me to help do the job.
Write this name down: Fred Weil.
W-E-I-L
That's the guy you have to talk to.
What was stored here?
Weapons. Cash.
Lots and lots of cash.
These pilots, do you know their names?
I don't know.
Now that you know the truth,
you will be faced with the
most important decision of your life.
Oh yeah. What's that?
Deciding whether to share it or not.
You have a family? You married?
Like I said.
The pilots used little airstrips
in Florida, Arizona, California.
Come.
I'll take care of it.
Down on your knees.
Keep your head down.
Don't answer that.
Passport.
Yes, we have to go now.
We're leaving.
Nice and calm.
Nice and calm.
You're where?
I'm in DC. And look, don't worry.
You want me here.
Trust me on this, Anna.
The guys are getting nervous.
You're supposed to be back here.
Look, I changed planes in Miami.
I kept all my receipts.
I'll pay for my own damn flight back
home if I have to, all right?
We can't do this on the phone,
and I don't want
to do this on the phone.
Look, I've got to go.
Fred Weil?
Gary Webb, San Jose Mercury-News.
I don't talk to the press.
Call Public Affairs.
I spoke to Norwin Meneses.
That's classified. How did you get it?
Got it from a drug dealer.
Perfect.
Listen, I was John Kerry's lead investigator on
the senate subcommittee that investigated this.
You have no idea
what you're getting into.
Why don't you tell me?
Tell me what I'm getting into.
I'm on the National
Security Council now.
And I have the trust
of the President and his cabinet.
It took me ten years
to get back to that place.
Your name goes nowhere near this.
This conversation never happened.
You have my word on that.
You ever done anything like this before?
No.
Has your paper?
Not that I'm aware of.
Some fancy information that you have there.
And dangerous.
I'd be remiss if I didn't
tell you that other reporters
have been down this rabbit hole.
Seasoned reporters.
Who knew their way around Washington.
And Central America.
- So what are you telling me?
- I had an American citizen...
  ...a rich Republican Party fund-raiser,
a White House favorite, in my office..
  ...upset about things he was hearing.
He believed in freedom
and defeating communism...
  ...but not in laundering
narcotics money for guns.
And he's sitting
in my office in the U.S. Senate...
  ...and he gets a phone call
telling him that if he talked to me...
  ...he'd die.
This is your ticket out of small time,
right?
- You're going to make your bones on this.
- This is a true story
My friend, some stories
are just too true to tell.
That's bullshit.
Yeah?
And yes, it is.
Congratulations.
You figured that out.
Too true to tell.
Welcome to San Francisco
International airport.
Please do not leave your bags unattended.
Sometimes I wish I could just climb
inside that head of yours
...and see all the shit you carry around.
Really?
No. Not really.
There's too many bad guys.
And ghosts.
And scary monsters running around.
Well, what do you want me to do,
Sue? Do something else for a living?
No.
This one just scares me.
Be careful.
Hey.
Yeah.
Jesus.
Hello?
It's Russell Dodson.
Hello, Russell Dodson.
Listen, we haven't
handled this right at all.
Before you print anything,
there's a few guys from
D.C. that would like
to sit down with you.
You should hear them out.
I'm listening.
Gary.
Thanks for coming.
I'm Agent Miller,
and this is Agent Jones.
- Can we get you a cup of coffee?
- No.
How about one of those cappuccinos?
Just got a new espresso machine probably
cost the tax payers thirty grand.
No, I'm fine.
Get him a cappuccino.
Now we don't agree
with everything that happens in
our agencies, so this
is a little awkward for us.
But you're getting
into some sensitive areas.
There are ongoing operations
you're in danger of exposing.
Operations that have taken months,
years to set up.
Thousands of man hours,
millions to fund.
And how do you know that?
We know you were in Nicaragua.
We know you saw Meneses.
Am I being followed?
What's your angle, Webb?
Some governmental informants are scumbags?
Look, I was under the impression that
you guys had something to say to me?
But, to answer your question, no.
My angle is that the
American government knew drugs were
put on the streets
to fund an illegal war.
What you want to say happened,
ever happened.
Then why am I here?
American kids...
...were going to die in that war.
American kids did die.
They're still dying.
Just not the ones you care about,
aparently.
We'd never threaten your children, Mr. Webb.
My children?
What did you say?
I'm writing the story.
Okay. I'm about to press send.
We're ready. All hands on deck.
Don't over-edit it.
Don't worry.
Anna.
Gary. I got it.
Go enjoy your family.
Let's go, let's go, let's go!
All right last one in is a rotten egg!
Is it cold or warm?
- It's warm.
- Ready?
All right; precious cargo.
Dizzy yet?
- No.
- Okay.
Come on, Momma!
- Come on, Mom, get in.
- Why do they gang up on momma?
- You have to dry my hair!
- Where you going, Dad?
- Dad...
- Don't!
Dad, it's up! It's online!
Mom!
Oh my god, Mom, check this out.
It just went up. It's everywhere.
Gary!
For the better part of a decade,
a San Francisco Bay-area
drug ring sold tons of cocaine...
...to the Crips and Bloods street gangs of
Los Angeles and funneled millions...
...in drug profits to
Latin American guerrilla army run
by the US Central Intelligence Agency...
...a Mercury news investigation has found.
This drug network opened the first
pipeline between Columbia and...
Hey.
Hey.
You did it.
Yeah.
Want to go fool around in the woods?
Yeah.
- Yes, I do.
- Yes, I do.
- Don't look, don't look.
- Hey, come on!
You should see our switchboard!
It is lit up like a Christmas tree!
We're getting calls
from all over the world. Gary.
What do you want to do?
Well, it's just the beginning,
 isn't it?
I think there's more to do.
Got to keep riding out the story.
Keep digging.
Anything you need.
Okay? But take a victory lap.
Hey, that graphic you guys used?
The crack pipe on the CIA emblem?
Are you out of your mind?
It's like the CIA is cooking
crack in their basement.
Gary. That was my idea,
so blame me, but come on.
We got their attention, didn't we?
We're just calling
to say thanks for doing this.
- There is a lot of pride here this morning.
- Congratulations, buddy.
Hey. Gary.
Yeah?
You did it.
This is the big one.
Enjoy yourself!
Let's focus on the Washington Post,
And get Richard
Zuckerman on the phone.
What interests me is who is gonna tell me
how we missed this goddamned story.
How'd the San Jose Mercury News,
a paper one-fifth the size
of the Los Angeles Times...
...and three hundred
miles away-scooped us...
...on one of the most
important stories in this city in,
in what? Twenty years?
How about you, Rich?
Didn't you cover Ricky Ross?
- Parts of it.
- Yeah, apparently the wrong parts.
We had Blandon in one of our stories.
- As what?
- A government source.
He's also apparently almost single-handedly
responsible for the crack epidemic.
Which, by the way, started right here...
...in Watts,
five fucking miles from where we're sitting.
Look, I don't need to tell you this...
...but if this story stands,
some of your people are going to jail.
The idea that any one person
could have played a decisive
role in the crack epidemic...
- ...is absurd.
- What about Norwin Meneses?
We have no documentation...
...that this guy ever
did any business with us.
This Gary Webb, he's got nothing.
He's got drug dealers and
money launderers as sources.
Rich, you know this guy Webb.
What do you think?
It's thin.
Except that he posted all
his sources on the Merc website.
- So?
- So nobody's done that before.
I need every line of that story taken
apart and checked for inaccuracies.
Get Dominic Brady
back here from Washington.
- I want at least fifteen people on this thing.
- What if we're over reacting?
I mean, it's the San Jose Mercury News.
Is anyone even going to pay attention?
A reporter for the
San Jose Mercury News suggested...
...that the CIA might have played a role...
...in permitting Nicaraguan
drug dealers to distribute...
...crack cocaine in south central
Los Angeles during the 1980's.
That had enormous resonance within
the African-American community.
We have been faked out,
we have been tricked,
and we have been undermined.
If they had put that crack
in Beverly Hills,
it would be a presidential issue.
We love our children.
Just like you love yours.
I think it is enough information here...
...to say to the CIA,
you stand accused.
President Clinton will be back out
on the campaign trail next week -
I've got...
...requests for you from CNN, CNBC...
...Jerry Springer,
Geraldo Rivera and Montel Williams.
The London Times and Le Monde
are sending in to interview you...
...and Sixty Minutes
and Dateline both want you, but
only if you don't do the other one.
And I just got the call last night...
...the National Press
Association Journalist of the Year...
...is Mr. Gary Webb.
Congratulations. Gary.
On, baby!
Thank you.
Life's beautiful.
It's checking out Richard.
I spoke with the banker in Panama City.
His name is Hans Yorg Baier.
He met with Webb. He confirmed...
...he laundered drug money for the Contras.
Norwin Meneses was his client.
Are these sources reliable enough?
For the Post?
I mean, they're all drug dealers.
The banker isn't a drug dealer.
Also, there's this American ex-pat that had
a ranch in the jungle for thirty years.
And he let these two American pilots
land and take off from his airstrip.
And, he let them store
dope on his property.
You're talking to drug
dealers and money launderers.  
I'm talking to Langley.  
Well, I'm filing.  
You guys do whatever you want with it.  
So what's our point of view?  
That Webb doesn't have any legitimate sources...  
That the CIA would never use these low-lifes and in fact denies it, in fact denies it unequivocally.  
That basically, he's a fraud and so is his story.  
'I'll take that upstairs and see if it'll fly.  
Yeah, you're going to turn into a chip.  
Hey, wait you guys, it's on.  
Come here, it's on.  
In tonight's Eye on America, accusations...  
...underscore the word accusations that are nothing...  
...short of explosive.  
hat the CIA...  
...knowingly and intentionally did what amounts to pump crack cocaine into Los Angeles...  
That's not what he said.  
...to help fund rebels in Nicaragua.  
You never said intentionally.  
Whether or not these claims prove true, they anger they...  
A lot of people are saying...  
...of course, including people in Congress...  
that the CIA intentionally addicted African Americans to crack cocaine.  
Right. Well, what you and others are doing is putting words in my mouth.  
We never made that claim.  
What have you got to prove that Americans working in the US government...  
...collaborated in selling crack cocaine into the African American community of Los Angeles?  
Well, first of all, we never
said that Americans working
in the government were doing this.
These were Nicaraguans
working for the CIA-run army.
Okay. It's not CIA-U.S. officials.
Not that we know so far.
Okay. It's not U.S. officials.
Okay. Go ahead.
What the CIA wanted to do was to fight
a war that Congress didn't want.
And the ripple effect of that
- what happened in south Los Angeles
and other American cities
- well that was a mistake.
This is a smoking cannon...
...that leads all the
way to the White House.
We have no evidence...
...of a conspiracy by the CIA...
...to engage in encouraging
drug traffickers in Nicaragua...
I am going to make somebody...
...pay for what they have done
to my community and to my people.
Don't give me the conspiracy bull -
There has never been
a conspiracy in this country.
Senior Baier...
Hello?
It's Fred Weil.
You haven't seen the east coast papers yet?
No.
It's 4 AM.
I was you once. Gary,
I started down this road.
Though nowhere near as far as you are.
When they saw...
...I wasn't gonna stop, they
'controversialized' me.
Do you have any idea
what I'm talking about?
They make you the story.
And you have a history of schizophrenia,
you're a liar, you're a homo...
...you beat your dog...
...you're a pedophile -
it doesn't matter if none of it's true.
The point is...
...no one remembers what you found.
They remember you...
...and you're nuts.
You cease to exist.
You there?
Yeah, I'm here.
Remember, you get the most flak...
...when you're right above the target.
That's when they empty
all their guns into you.
When you're about
to drop a bomb on the on the Kremlin...
Or in this case,
the Central Intelligence Agency.
Hang in there. Gary.
Morning.
You guys don't look so good.
Morning, Gary.
Good morning.
We just want to take your temperature,
you know, get
your perspective before we weigh in here.
About what?
Well, the CIA's response to you for one.
Well, there isn't one really, is there?
Still nothing?
Not a single source? I mean
...at this point,
I'll take anybody who takes home
a check from the CIA. Anyone.
They're a secretive organization,
Jerry. I mean, that's what they do.
They're secretive. They don't talk.
Well, at least the Washington
Post isn't saying we got
all our facts wrong.
Because they're not.
But what the Post is saying is that
we're just here to attest to the moral
purity of the Central
Intelligence Agency.
Gary, Walter Zuckerman is a living legend.
Yeah, who thinks his job
is to defend the CIA.
He used to work for them.
He was a media intern for
god's sakes. Am I crazy?
I mean reading this stuff
is like reading Pravda circa 1953,
you guys. I mean,
what am I missing here?
Gary, cards on the table.
We got a call from Corporate this morning.
They are getting a little nervous.
And so we're just going to take a beat,
step back,
look at the big picture
on behalf of the paper.
We don't want to print anything else
until we get our ducks in a row, ok?
And we're keeping you in the loop.
No big deal
- Gary, can I talk to you for a second?
- Yeah.
I just got a call.
NBC's cancelling their segment on the
story. They're not gonna run it.
And you're not going to believe this,
but we've heard
the Washington Post is going
to say you're an active
part of Ricky Ross' defense...
...that your involvement verges
on complicity and that
you and Ricky Ross are telling
this fairy tale together.
- It's not funny.
- Come on.
- It's funny.
- No, our careers could be on the line.
Look, we drew blood.
They're going to say anything.
Would you?
What?
I'm sorry. I didn't mean that.  
You think I'd make some shit up?  
No.  
- You're my editor.  
- I know.  
It's my name on this story but it's  
your name on that damn door.  
Don't forget that.  
Right there.  
It's Rich Kline.  
It's Gary Webb.  
Really?  
Ok.  
Hello?  
What's happening here, Rich?  
The only people you have in your story...  
...is the former Director of the CIA,  
the current Director  
of the CIA and - guess who -  
...a bunch of CIA officials.  
Are you following up on anything  
I wrote or are you  
just talking to the CIA?  
I can't be talking to you.  
Why?  
I don't know. I'm sorry.  
Son of a bitch.  
What the fuck.  
Hey!  
What the hell you doing?  
I can see you!  
Son of a bitch  
Son of a bitch!  
I saw him and I chased  
him down the goddamned street.  
Ok, so then you tried to shoot the guy.  
I fired a warning shot.  
I have a family to protect.  
Did he try to break in?  
No. He was at the back of my car.  
He wasn't trying to steal it.  
I don't know what the hell he was  
doing but he was there.  
See his fingerprints or some shit.
He was messing with it,
I don't know what he was doing.
What are you doing?
Do you have any reason to believe
your family's in danger, Mr. Webb?
No.
No.
Dad!
What is that?
That's Ian.
You can't - put that shit down.
Hey dad! Dad!
All these people just came down and
are looking through all your shit!
Can I help you?
You can't be in here.
- It's a crime scene.
- It's not a crime scene.
Excuse me, this is my house
- what are you doing?
Who the fuck are you?
Hey, will you put this down?
This is my shit! This is my house!
Get the fuck out!
Get the fuck out of here!
Ian, anybody comes down here,
hit them with that.
I see you!
I know you had a hard night
last night but I need to warn you...
before you come into work
tomorrow that the next week
or so is going to be rough.
Now Dateline thinks you lied to
them so they're coming after you.
And so is Nightline,
and every other major that
hasn't had their shot yet.
Well, the story's tight.
It's not perfect.
Well, Jerry put the brakes on.
I need to keep going.
I'm not done, Anna.
And I need you to protect me so
I can finish what we started.
It's not the story now.
This is about you.
The New York Times gave us a courtesy call.
They went into everything.
Every closet and corner of your life.
Every speeding ticket, every bar fight,
every libel suit
That's gossip, that's not news.
And now Jerry's talking
about you working out of the
Cupertino office for a while.
Jerry's out of his mind.
That's not happening.
Hey bud, come on in.
That's not a good idea.
Ian, go to your room.
What is this?
They found out about that woman?
The woman in Cleveland,
at the Plain Dealer.
Yeah? And?
Why didn't you tell us the whole story?
What the fuck.
Look, who I do or what the fuck I do in my life
is not your concern, you understand that?
- This is between my wife and I, god -
- Excuse me.
It's between my wife and I,
goddammit it's not your fucking concern.
You can take any man's life,
put in under a microscope.
You can dissect it, turn a simple
man's life into a circus sideshow,
you know that.
What about the rest of me?
Can we focus on that?
Dad, what happened in Cleveland?
Come on.
There's no such thing as
a little mistake, Ian.
One wrong turn and you're lost.
- Keep turning trying to get back-
- You sound like a writer, writing.
I'm asking my father
what happened in Cleveland.
I screwed up.
Who was it?
A reporter in the newsroom.
What was her name?
- Why does that matter?
- It matters to me.
Barbara.
Did you love her?
No.
Do you love mom?
I love your mother.
You, your brother, your sister,
your mother...
You're everything to me.
You're all I got.
I couldn't stand losing that.
What happened to her?
She committed suicide.
That's really shitty.
Yeah it was.
Is that why we left Ohio?
Because you ran away?
Yeah, we needed a fresh start.
God, I'm really disappointed in you.
Mom's amazing.
We don't have a choice, Gary.
This is the only option
on the table right now.
Good for you to get out
of the line of fire for a beat.
You can cool off, pop out
some easy human interest stuff.
Dad, what's in Cupertino?
It's the paper's bureau for losers.
Where I won't get in trouble.
Or so they think.
Maybe just don't go, Daddy.
I know. But honey, Daddy's
got to go to work.
We've got the house to pay for
and all these school clothes.
You guys are growing like weeds.
Look after them.
You guys be good.
Photos. Your old records.
- Some of Christine's drawings.
- Ok.
That kind of thing.
I hate this.
I know.
I don't want to be alone.
I'm no good at it, you know that.
Maybe some time apart will be a good thing.
Well, it's got to be.
Ok.
I love you, daddy.
- Bye.
- Love you too.
Love you, daddy!
I was told that the
Police Department is having trouble
keeping the troopers' horses healthy...
Yeah, I hear it was bowel trouble?
Constipation.
I have you on record as working
in Nicaragua with John Cullen
and Barry Reid between '81 and '85.
Yeah, I worked with Reid,
but I don't know Cullen.
You got any contact info for Reid?
Last I heard he was in New Orleans.
I think he died though.
I'd like to review your flight logs.
Names of pilots-
I can't do that, Mr. Webb.
Is there anyone else I can speak to?
I don't know, maybe if you try back
in a week you can talk to my boss.
Is Cullen residing in Lake City?
Down in Florida maybe? Look,
I can't talk to you.
You didn't even open the box I gave you.
What? Oh honey, I can't open that.
You can't?
Look, I gotta focus.
You understand? I gotta focus
so I can finish this thing.
And then what happens?
Then it's done.
And then what?
Then what? What? I didn't choose
what's happening here, Sue.
I didn't choose this.
I don't want to fucking be here in
this shitbox. Away from home.
Come on. What is this?
What do you mean?
Can't you see what this
is doing to all of us?
That's not fair.
Look, you are who you always were, Gary.
No regret...
...no blame, no judgment, it's just a fact.
I guess it's me who's changed.
What are you saying?
- What are you saying?
- I don't know.
You do know.
Say it!
I don't know.
Don't turn on the light.
I'm John Cullen.
Do you know that name?
What you found here, Gary, is a monster.
I was recruited by the Agency...
...out of college.
I knew Spanish and Law...
...and I wanted to do good.
I wanted to fight some evil empire.
I went to Central America.
Made nice with radicals.
Slept with some of the pretty ones.
And turned in names.
Then I started noticing
that they were disappearing.
Permanently.
The people that we hunted...
Murdered...
All they had...
...was a deep desire to reform the
government and have free elections. That's it.
After I left the Agency, I worked my way into a major drug cartel. It was early Medellin. I solved logistical issues. Bringing supply into the United States. Paved the way, you might say... ...as the traffic grew. And grew.
Well someone in Washington knows what you do and is doing nothing to stop it. It's all lies and corruption, Gary. You become attracted to the power, then you become addicted to the power... ...then you're devoured by the power.
Your thing and my thing, are they connected? Are they the same? Yes. They are the same. Danilo Blandon. This is him. Yesterday. This is you here. Today. Nobody wants to hear your sad story, Gary. You can go on record. And end up dead? No. Then why are you here? I'm confessing. Who else am I going to tell? Anna? Who is it? It's Gary. It's six in the morning. I found him. Or he found me. - Who? - The asset. It's the piece I've been missing. The only thing I didn't have. It's what you kept asking for. So I can keep going. He was a part of the operation, Anna. You understand that? CIA.
Look if I can just get him to go on record, he'll confirm everything.
He came to my goddamned motel room.
- I'm not finished with it.
- You gotta talk to Jerry about this.
Calm down.
I'm not finished!
Look, I'm trying to keep you on the payroll, ok? I'm trying to save your career.
I know I'm not just gonna sit back and be quiet and do nothing so I can collect your goddamn check.
- I understand.
- You know that. You know me.
I'm gonna keep going.
I'm gonna finish this.
For you.
Or I'm gonna do it for somebody else.
Look, there's a staff meeting tomorrow.
We'll talk about it there. OK?
OK.
OK.
Morning, Gary.
I wanted to run a couple ideas past you guys.
About this asset, the CIA asset.
Gary, have a seat.
- Hey Pete.
- Hey.
When'd you get in from Washington?
No easy way to say this, Gary so I'm just going to say it.
We've had Pete backtrack a few of your leads.
Why didn't you tell me?
Well I'm telling you now.
Pete, why didn't you say anything?
We didn't like some of the some of the stuff that Pete brought back, ok?
Some of your sources have changed their stories.
Of course they did.
Well, they're saying they never said the things you have them saying.
Well that's how they operate, Jerry.
- They"?
- The Agency.
They deny everything.
Everyone who works with the CIA,
the CIA denies everything.
Did you ever get an actual
CIA operative on the record?
We never made that claim.
I think that's been
very clear at this point.
Did you not tell them about
the guy who came to my hotel room?
But he said he's not going
on the record, Gary.
- No. I think I made-
- Did you get anyone who works
for the CIA on the record?
Who is this guy?
Outside Counsel.
OK, let me catch you up
to speed here, counselor.
The CIA uses people who work for the CIA.
They also use people who work with the CIA.
You get the difference.
We don't operate in a
courtroom or in absolutes, Gary.
We operate in shades of grey.
I didn't realize truth
was a shade of grey.
Anyone else?
It's not what you can prove,
it's what people say they remember.
Your word against theirs.
Would have been wonderful to get a couple
of innocent people on the record.
Yeah, well nobody a part
of this story's innocent, Jerry.
You know, call Norwin Meneses.
He's in Managua.
He's in a prison.
He was happy to speak
to me when I came down...
He said he never spoke to you.
You kidding me?
I was in Managua for three days,
you know this-
I know you were in Managua.
He said you never got
inside the prison.
He said he never saw you.
Well there were five hundred
other people who did.
Yeah, but can you prove it?
What, you mean, like did I bring home
a t-shirt from the prison gift shop?
Do you have any proof you were
actually inside that prison?
I bribed my way in.
For Christ's sake.
It's a third world country.
What did you expect me to do?
What about all my notes?
Legally, they're just your notes.
All it means is you wrote them.
You could have made them up later.
- Fuck you.
- Easy Gary.
Fuck you both.
You questioning my ethics?
Thinking I'd re-engineer a goddam thing.
- How fucking dare you!
- Calm down.
What about this Swiss banker? Baier?
Yeah, what about him?
- I can't find him.
- We're going to have to
look a little harder then.
No one's heard from him, Gary.
This is crazy. This is nuts.
The CIA can't take a piss without
getting their dicks caught in their fly
but they're absolutely fantastic at this.
I mean, look at you guys.
You're looking at me like I'm crazy.
Like I'm lying.
- This is-
- That's what you're doing!
Nobody's saying that.
- This is not personal. Do not-
- How is this not personal?
Look, we got into this together,
so we're going to get out of it together.
How are we going to get out of it?
We are going to print an open letter...
...saying that some mistakes were made.
Don't do that.
Don't do that.
Come on, there's a bigger
picture here, open your eyes.
My eyes are wide open.
Know what I see?
I see a bunch of people who are
worried about their reputations.
Terrified that the Post
or the Times aren't going to
pluck you from the foothills of San Jose...
...and give you a job on the mountaintop.
You know Jerry, you print that letter,
you can't undo it.
Not ever. You become a paper that tells the
truth only when you fucking feel like it.
Some of the heavyweights of American
journalism have examined Webb's work...
...and found it reckless, often wrong.
Just this week, Webb was
pulled off the CIA story...
...after his own executive
editor admitted the articles...
...oversimplified the origins
of the crack epidemic.
He also wrote,
I feel that we did not have proof
that top CIA officials knew.
Many Americans do seem willing
to believe that their own government...
...could have been involved
in drug smuggling.
Despite the criticism of
Mr. Webb's work...
...he is scheduled to receive the
Bay Area Journalist of the Year Award.
Some within the organization are debating whether he is worthy of this—
Where the fuck's my bike?
Come on. Come on!
Hey, excuse me,
have you seen a bike that was here?
motorcycle?
Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!
God!
Come on.
What are you looking at?
- He's here!
- I see his car!
Daddy!
Dad!
Hey munchkins!
How are you?
How you doing?
Good to see you. How you doing, kiddo?
What happened to your hand?
That's just a little scratch.
It's nothing.
You ever coming home?
Working on it kiddo, we're working on it.
Mom! Dad's here!
Hi, chicken.
- Hey mom.
- Look at you.
Come on, Christine, let's go.
You look beautiful.
I look beautiful.
Come in.
What's this?
It's a long story.
It's nothing. It's boring.
Hi.
How you been?
Really good, considering.
I've decided to continue writing on my own...
...without the paper.
You're resigning?
Yeah.
- Well that's good.
Yeah.
I mean, you know.
Walk away. Fresh start.
Make room for something new.
Yeah.
Thanks for coming with me.
It means a lot.
Tonight's going to be a good night.
Journalist of the Year
- You guys behave.
- Love you guys.
Where's Ian?
No way.
No way.
What?
What?
This is great!
Yeah.
Oh man. Look at her.
You did it! You did it! You did it!
Thank you.
I'm so proud of you.
- Thank you.
- I'm super proud of you.
All right! Yes!
I'll follow you.
Yeah, don't drive too fast.
- Well what?
- We'll see.
Unbelievable!
Unbelievable.
Congratulations.
Congratulations, Gary! Good job!
Thank you, thank you.
Good to see you, good to see you.
My first story was about a dog that
should have died, but wouldn't.
I was twenty-two.
It was a stupid little feature,
but I was proud of it.
I put it in a frame
and hung it on my wall.
And believed I joined a secret
guild of reporters that day.
If there was ever a believer, it was me.
My last story was about a police horse in Cupertino, California...
...who died of constipation.
Actually, it's not a joke.
But to begin with a dog and end with a pile of horseshit...
...there's a kind of poetry in there, somewhere.
But this, this is horseshit.
Me being up here.
Look, I know I pissed off a lot of people over the years.
Many of whom are in this room right now.
But I think that's what good investigative reporting does.
It ruffles feathers.
But I was never fired.
And my editors never threw me under the bus.
And that's because I never wrote anything until now...
...that really mattered to a lot of people.
Mattered in a scary way.
I'm not going to take it back.
Make nice to save my job.
Because I thought my job...
Sorry.
I thought my job was to tell the public the truth.
The facts, pretty or not.
And let the publishing of those facts...
...make a difference...
...in how people look at things.
At themselves, at what they stand for.
That's shame on me.
This is the only thing I ever wanted to do.
And for a while...
...a long while, it was an honor.
Before we say goodnight, 
there's one more item of business. 
Hey dad. 
Hey bud. 
You ok? 
I'm not sure. 
Well, I'm really proud of you. 
Thanks bud. 
Listen. 
I've done a lot of things 
that I'm not proud of. 
But I've never stopped loving you. 
Not once. 
I know. 
- I need some air. 
- Yeah. 
Hey dad, don't go too far. 
This town hall meeting allows the 
South Central community to interact... 
...with the director of Central intelligence. 
Please join me in welcoming CIA Director, 
John Deutch. 
How are we supposed to trust... 
...the CIA officials to investigate themselves? 
Is Gary Webb in the house 
is the first thing I want to ask? 
Is Gary Webb in here? 
Gary Webb is the reporter 
for the San Jose Mercury News 
who broke the story wide open. 
Allow Gary Webb to have full access to the 
Investigator General's full documentation... 
...and comparatively go through 
it as the investigation goes on. 
There's no question 
in my mind there is a complicity 
in the flow of drugs into this country. 
Same pilots, same airstrips, 
same airplanes... 
...carrying guns and drugs at the same time. 
And people knew it. 
South Central Los Angeles and 
every other city in America 
...are owed an explanation.