

Drug Activity

CRACK

Crack, also known as rock cocaine, was first found in Southern California in 1981, and within four years appeared in every area of the United States. It is currently the most popular form of cocaine, and even though it is extremely addictive, it is cheap and alarmingly easy to buy. Due to the 500 percent increase in the quantities of cocaine smuggled illegally into the United States, mostly from South America, crack usage has rapidly spread into every major city of the country. The violence it spawns, both from its dealers and users, has become the focus of media scrutiny in the past months.

Crack represents a fantastic business opportunity for the ethnic youth gangs which control virtually every facet of its transportation and sale. They have turned large portions of many major cities into war zones, controlling their turf like urban guerrillas who elude police efforts to contain the explosion of robberies, murders and assaults connected with the crack trade. The incredible profits obtained from the illegal sale of this drug go to finance the acquisition of automatic weapons arsenals needed by the gangs to perpetuate their wars, drive-by shootings and other forms of violence for which they have such a widespread reputation.

Crack derives its name from the cracking sound it makes when it is smoked before it is completely dry, and from its resemblance to cracked paint chips or cracked plaster. The manufacturing process which turns cocaine into crack does not employ ether, as freebase does, and therefore the danger of explosion is eliminated. Just as with freebase, crack produces an intense and sudden rush, but it represents an incredible magnification of the addictive powers of freebase or cocaine.

Crack is usually sold as small, white-brownish chips contained in plastic vials or bags. These chips provide the user with an intense high lasting from five to 20 minutes. When smoked, the cocaine molecules reach the brain within 10 seconds. However, this euphoric high is quickly followed by restlessness and depression. These feelings may cause the user to be so uncomfortable that crack smokers just keep smoking, sometimes in marathon binges, until they become exhausted, run out of crack or run out of money. The cycle of ups and downs helps contribute to the crack craving, and in some instances, addiction can occur in a matter of a few days.

Crack's rapid popularity can be attributed to its low price and acute high. Because it can be smoked instead of injected with a needle, the AIDS threat is not a deterrent to its use. A sharp increase in teenage use of crack has been documented in the last several years, and there are incidents where children as young as 10 and 11 years of age have been introduced to crack.

Crack is highly addictive because it works directly, through neurons, on the pleasure center of the brain. Crack produces pleasure, explaining why some addicts find it impossible to stop smoking it. In comparing the effects of crack with those of heroin, research indicates crack to be much more destructive. Heroin addicts use it once or twice each day, but a crack addict is looking for his/her next hit within minutes. At just \$5 to \$10 a hit, crack is more expensive than heroin. Heroin is a



This photograph shows items typically taken during a drug-raid seizure — drugs, money and guns.

depressant, usually producing a feeling of sleepiness and lethargy. But crack is a stimulant and its users are agitated, paranoid and often highly visible participants in violent crimes.

The manufacture of rock cocaine requires little technology, and the distribution network has limited central organization. Connected by huge amounts of cash, it has evolved into a billion dollar underground economy. The cocaine from which crack is made is smuggled mostly from Colombia, through Mexico, and then into the United States. Generally concerned only with the largest and most powerful drug traffickers, the Drug Enforcement

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

B.F. Goodrich applauds the efforts of ALADS to make our community gang free. We also challenge other businesses in L.A. County to show the same leadership in the war against gangs.

BFGoodrich . . . proud to be a part of this community.

The BFGoodrich Company is committed to supporting the communities in which we're privileged to do business.

BFGoodrich

GEON VINYL DIVISION
Long Beach, California

TACO NITE EVERY TUESDAY

THREE 49¢ TACOS FOR ONLY 99¢ AFTER 3:00 P.M.



WHEN IT COMES TO TACOS, TUESDAY IS THRESDAY.

Here's some news you'll really eat up. Every Tuesday after 3 P.M., you can get three scrumptious 49¢ tacos for a teeny price. Just 99¢.

Taco Nite every Tuesday. It's just one of the great deals you can grab at Del Taco.

Del Taco

As participating stores © 1988 Del Taco



These suitcases represent some of the large amounts of money confiscated during drug raids.

Administration (DEA) has sometimes been at odds with local law-enforcement agencies that are attempting to diminish the wholesale distribution of crack. But more recently, the cooperative efforts of the DEA and local authorities have been effective in apprehending large-scale distributors, and they have successfully disrupted crack-trafficking networks. Such cooperative efforts confirm that Los Angeles is the crack distribution center for the entire western United States.

Several factors can be directly attributed to the rapid spread of crack. The first is that the cocaine from which crack is manufactured is so widely available. The second factor is the inability of the justice system to adequately handle the huge number of drug offenders that stream through the courts. Many law-enforcement agencies maintain the position that the courts are too lenient with drug offenders because the whole system is overloaded, and the risk of prosecution is slight. This,

in effect, does not offer a serious deterrent to individuals committing drug crimes.

Crack has become the drug of choice in practically every state in the country since it exploded on the drug scene in 1986. Crack's easy marketability increased its sudden appearance in even remote areas and has created immense profits for those who distribute and sell this illegal drug. It has generated an epidemic of violence, spawned hopelessness and destruction for those who are addicted to it and has created a sense of futility. We must begin finding the solution for dealing with what might be considered one of the greatest social problems of our time, one that will continue to plague our society for years to come.

Co-Article Sponsorship by:

PAINTERS LOCAL 1346
2506 W. Compton Blvd.
Gardena, CA 90249
310/323-5988

VANDEBURG FOODS
1135 E. Artesia Blvd.
Carson, CA 90746
310/638-1992