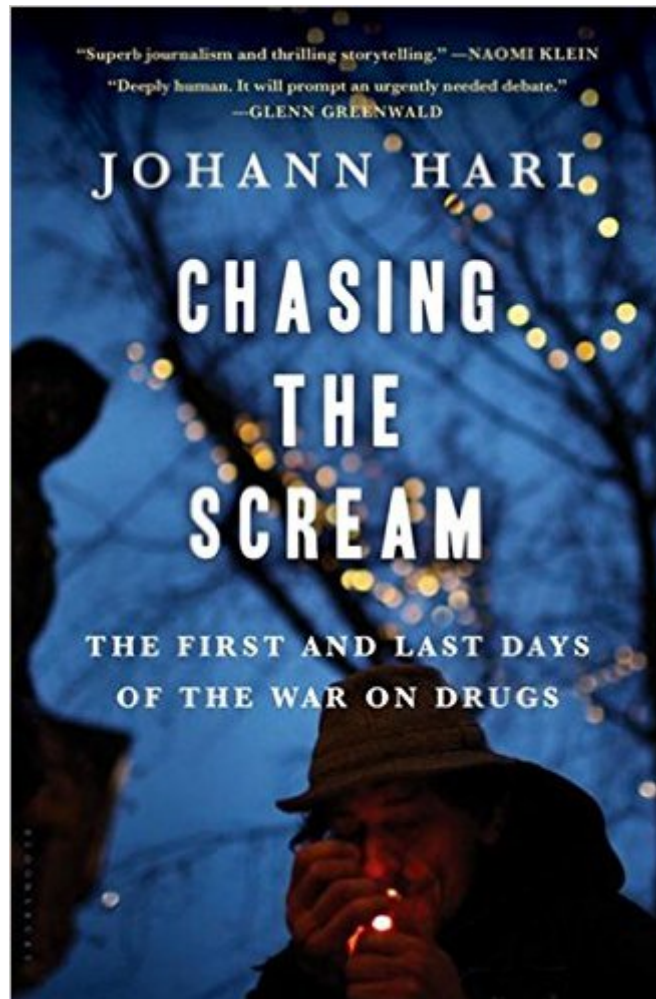


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# Chasing The Scream: The First And Last Days Of The War On Drugs



## Synopsis

New York Times Bestseller It is now one hundred years since drugs were first banned in the United States. On the eve of this centenary, journalist Johann Hari set off on an epic three-year, thirty-thousand-mile journey into the war on drugs. What he found is that more and more people all over the world have begun to recognize three startling truths: Drugs are not what we think they are. Addiction is not what we think it is. And the drug war has very different motives to the ones we have seen on our TV screens for so long. In *Chasing the Scream*, Hari reveals his discoveries entirely through the stories of people across the world whose lives have been transformed by this war. They range from a transsexual crack dealer in Brooklyn searching for her mother, to a teenage hit-man in Mexico searching for a way out. It begins with Hari's discovery that at the birth of the drug war, Billie Holiday was stalked and killed by the man who launched this crusade--and it ends with the story of a brave doctor who has led his country to decriminalize every drug, from cannabis to crack, with remarkable results. *Chasing the Scream* lays bare what we really have been chasing in our century of drug war--in our hunger for drugs, and in our attempt to destroy them. This book will challenge and change how you think about one of the most controversial--and consequential--questions of our time.

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## Customer Reviews

As a drug policy expert, I have to admit, I wasn't sure how well I'd do reading this book. I have a harder time getting into non-fiction books these days. I spend most of my time

reading things online, and I've read so much about the war on drugs that it's hard to get excited about reading a book about it. But less than halfway through the first chapter, I couldn't put it down. It's an amazing read. Johann Hari has done something really phenomenal with this book, by combining compelling storytelling with the factual highlights of the abominable history of the war on drugs, plus an undeniable blueprint for replacing that war. For drug policy experts like me, it's a great read with some fascinating personal perspectives, while filling in a few historical knowledge gaps. Definitely a reading highlight. But if you're an average politically-aware reader who doesn't know all that much about the drug war, I think you'll find it even more valuable. Here, in one book, you get good stories with all the verified information you need to become informed on this critical issue. I plan on buying a few copies to give to friends to read. Additionally, you'll learn through detailed analysis that much of what you think you know about addiction is wrong. Hari starts with the biggest villain of all: Harry Anslinger, by researching through all his diaries and files stored at Penn State University. I've known mostly about Anslinger's war against marijuana, and now learned a few more things about what he did to get the war on drugs started in full force in the book. Johann Hari provides us, throughout the book, with incredible access to individual players in the drug war. For the history, in addition to Anslinger, his research provides detailed insights into:-- Billy Holiday, a jazz singer and drug user whose paths crossed with Anslinger's, and-- Arnold Rothstein, who invented the modern drug gang, and was the first major figure in organized drug crime in the United States. And as Hari moved us to the present and future, these personal stories came from actual extensive interviews with an amazing array of individuals, including:-- Chino Hardin, a drug dealer for years in Brooklyn, who started his business when he was 14 years old.-- Leigh Maddox, a state trooper who later turned away from the drug war.-- Rosalio Reta, a killer for the Zetas in Mexico, who resides in a prison in Texas.-- Marisela Escobedo, who refused to accept her daughter's murder by drug traffickers, and led protests in Mexico, until she was assassinated in front of the government palace (interviews were with family and friends).-- Gabor Maté and Bruce Alexander, who developed new ways of looking at addiction, while working with addicts in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.-- Bud Osborn, a poet and homeless addict who helped transform that area of Vancouver and bring about the notion of rights for addicts.-- Ruth Dreifuss, former President of Switzerland, who supported and promoted harm reduction approaches, including heroin clinics.-- João Goulart, who helped lead a revolution in drug policy in Portugal.-- José Mujica, president of Uruguay, who brought marijuana legalization to his country. And we learn about the players in the very different legalization approaches in Washington and Colorado. Good stories, compelling

arguments, and powerful facts (all fact-checked by the author and editors, with over 65 pages of notes, and a website with actual audio tapes of the interviews for those who want more). I think this is the most important book about the drug war and addiction out today.

I read this in less than 12hrs, marking and making notes on every page. He manages to weave personal stories in and then zoom out to the larger issues at stake. It's well-cited & has plenty of links, so any ideas of plagiarism or factiousness should be researched before throwing accusations. (Plenty of links, citations, etc.) He's honest about his conflictions and changes in people's stories. I have buried more friends between 20-40 due to heroin/pills (& a few drunk driving,) than most can imagine. I know all too well that even people who "know better" can still become addicted. There is so much isolation in being an addict, causing further withdrawl from society & unwillingness to tell friends/family for fear of being judged. When you're an addict, one often feels as if there's nobody else who understands...except your sick addict running buddies. I was a professional, it took me almost a year to kick, and after a while I told everyone who didn't know. I was ostracized, except by 2 people who I NEVER expected to have any compassion for me (those were the friends I \*thought\* I'd lose. They gave me comfort & love.) Punative measures aren't helpful for addiction, mental illness, etc. My fair city is cited a few times in this book as Anslinger was severely delusional in his pursuit to punish all addicts, and I see the faces of desperate addicts every day. I know how corrupt my PD is. While he lays out info in a somewhat informal way (cited!,) it paints a human picture. It's a GREAT read in tandem with "The New Jim Crow." (Alexander.)

A captivating read (Mr. Hari is an excellent writer) and fascinating many-faceted exploration of the origins and affects of the "war". I especially like that he periodically returns to the macro view so the reader can keep it in perspective. He makes a lot of sense. I know that being given drugs doesn't mean addiction is inevitable: after four surgeries and generous doses of demerol once the drugs were stopped and I had healed I had absolutely no desire for and hardly any memory of the drug itself. Drug use vs. drug addiction lies on a spectrum; its not a black or white thing. In order to move forward with good science and research this area needs to be liberated from the politics behind it so that the only agenda being served is the truth.. I hope that Mr. Hari continues to explore and write about the progress of the "war" and treatment. I am curious about one area he did not write about. Why is it that some children are traumatized/abused as children but do not become addicts? How did they dodge that bullet? Some people say its all about choice but I want to know what inspires the choice.

This is a timely review for the general public concerning the link between insecure attachment and addiction. Other good books on this topic are "Addiction as an attachment disorder" by P. Flor, and "Addictions from an attachment perspective", edited by Richard Gill. The attachment system first studied by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth does have a lot to do with addiction, and recovery does involve developing secure bonds in AA or elsewhere, to replace the pathological bond that has formed to the substance of abuse. Attachment has something to do with emotional self-regulation, or self-soothing, and people who grow up with insecure attachment styles have greater difficulty in this area. This is a complicated, developing area and it is good to see more material about it. Whatever else a higher power may or may not be, it serves a function as a strong attachment figure invoked in the mind that helps with self-soothing when we face life's inevitable uncontrollable dilemmas. Our brains evolved to make secure social bonds, not just hugs, and many people have a social network that is too sparse to provide any sense of security. Chemicals like oxytocin, vasopressin, and endorphins are involved in this process, which like addiction is a social as well as neurochemical phenomenon.

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