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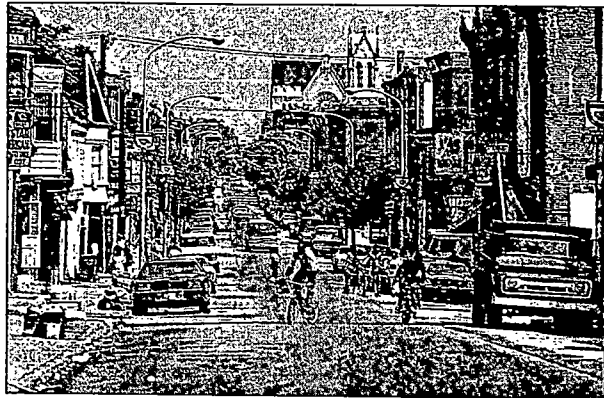
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CHILDREN OF THE UNDERCLASS



A neighborhood where even boyish play has ominous undertones

Felix and his friends are hanging out at 19th and Susquehanna, waiting for something. Everybody knows Felix: at 17, he runs one of the more successful crack franchises in north Philadelphia. Today, a rainy Saturday, Felix is wearing a black baseball cap and an expensive-looking black raincoat. He is scowling: anyone can see he's taking care of business. Thirty minutes go by before Silk comes up the block. Silk is carrying an umbrella, and he looks nervous. Felix and his friends meet Silk in the middle of the intersection. There is a sudden argument, and two of Felix's friends hit Silk with a flurry of quick body punches. Silk's umbrella goes flying and he falls to the rain-slick pavement; he lies there, defenseless and unresisting. "I *TOLD* you not to mess with my *MONEY!*" Felix yells, standing over Silk.

This story was reported by Vern E. Smith, Howard Manly and David L. Gonzalez. It was written by Tom Morganthau.





Then he and his friends saunter away. A message has been delivered, and everyone on the block will hear it.

It is late afternoon when Miss Nee comes home with the clothes for her foster child Joe: two pairs of shorts and two T shirts, bought at the secondhand store for less than \$5. "I just didn't want him to have to put up with people talking about him," she says. "You know how kids are. If you don't look just right, they're going to make fun of you." It's a slow afternoon in midsummer, oppressively hot on North 19th Street. Down the block, near Susquehanna Avenue, three teenagers are shooting craps in the doorway of Craig's Laundromat. Toddlers race up and down the sidewalk, playing noisy baby games, and older kids are lining up at Jewel's Store, around the corner on Susquehanna, for flavored water ice. Up on Diamond Street, at the other end of the block, a group of men nurse 40-ounce bottles of beer called 4-0s in brown paper bags.

Miss Nee's house stands near the north end of the block, on the west side of 19th Street. Owned by the Philadelphia Housing Authority, it is flanked on both sides by boarded-up buildings and it is almost barren inside. Officially, at least, Miss Nee, Joe, Kita and Yvonne are the only occupants, although on any given night Miss Nee, who is well known for her open-door policy, plays hostess for up to a dozen neighborhood kids. Miss Nee—Geneva Leaks, 52—has been rearing children all of her life. She raised her younger brothers and sisters and five kids of her own—and if she now takes no sass from Joe, Yvonne and Kita, she clearly understands their need for mothering. Joe Rutling is 14, and he has been living with Miss Nee for slightly more than a year. Okita (Kita) Allen, 15, moved in four years ago. Yvonne Williams, who is 14, has been in Miss Nee's care since she was 5 years old. None is related to Miss Nee by blood or marriage.

Miss Nee's neighborhood is in serious trouble, and the reason is crack cocaine. Crack is more than just the latest drug to hit the American underclass. Since its appearance on inner-city streets three to five years ago, it has proven to be an illicit bonanza for those who

sell it and a curse on those who use it. Unlike heroin, crack is widely used by women. That fact alone has disastrous consequences for low-income families. If single-parent households have contributed to the intractability of poverty in the past, no-parent households may be poverty's appalling future. And crack is a catastrophe for the young. It has touched off an explosive increase in birth defects and an epidemic of child abuse and parental neglect. Its profits, in neighborhoods where the standard of living is very low, have led or forced thousands of inner-city youngsters into hard-core crime, and many others into addictions from which they may never recover. It has bankrupted parental authority and it is destroying the fraying social fabric of inner-city neighborhoods all over the United States.

Miss Nee and her neighbors are under siege every day, but they have by no means surrendered to crack. The neighborhood, just west of Temple University and only 15 blocks from Philadelphia's glossy downtown, is a mixture of middle-income and

low-income residents. The 2100 block of North 19th Street, where Miss Nee lives, includes a church, a vest-pocket city park and 34 brick row houses. Many are owned by the Philadelphia Housing Authority and rented to low-income tenants. The residents take part in a neighborhood crime-watch program, and a clear majority want no part of drugs or drug dealing. Jewel Williams, the unofficial mayor of the Susquehanna Avenue area, has been fighting for his neighborhood for years. He has more than once considered pulling out. "But every time I get ready to pack up and leave I think, 'How can I escape this?'" he says. "I've got to do something for these babies, for these kids. Somebody's got to save the ones that are salvageable."

Partners in austerity, Miss Nee and her kids make do on food stamps and \$474 a month from the government. There is government-surplus rice, plenty of spaghetti and sometimes a little meat; the meat man, who drives through the neighborhood in his car once a week, sells to regular customers like Miss Nee on credit. Until this year,

In north Philly, a rising sense that children are at risk as never before



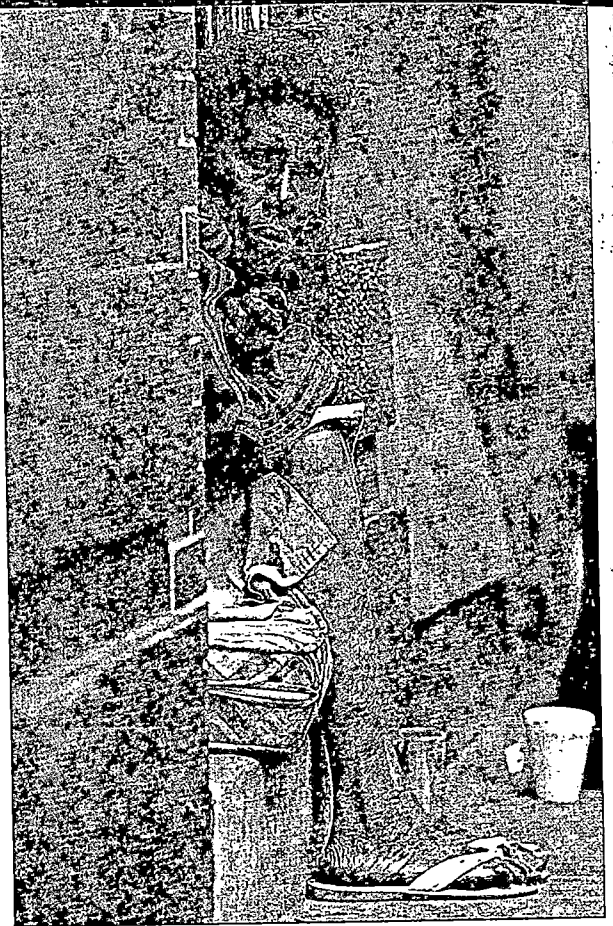
Miss Nee supplemented her income by taking her charges over to New Jersey to do daywork in the blueberry fields. The work was hard—all day in the sun at the minimum wage—but they needed the money and she wanted to teach the kids the value of a dollar. “What you get,” Miss Nee likes to say, “is what you sweat for.” Last spring, however, the social worker discovered that Yvonne’s brother had earned \$69 for two days’ work in a packing plant: under welfare rules, that amount was deducted from Miss Nee’s food-stamp allotment. “They say, ‘Try to get your kids a summer job,’” Miss Nee says now, “but I’m not taking no chances.”

Yvonne, Kita and Joe treat Miss Nee with respect and a hint of wariness: she is a tough lady, but she is the rock of stability in their young lives. All three have seen their families fall apart in recent years, and for practical purposes they are Miss Nee’s kids now. Yvonne, whose four brothers and three sisters are scattered among different relatives and foster homes across the city, sees her father only occasionally; she sees her mother, Alberta Williams, somewhat more often. “She goes off on her own a lot,” Yvonne says of her mother. “Sometimes she walks in the streets by herself.” Alber-

ta Williams, who says children “get on her nerves,” has been hospitalized several times for nervous breakdowns. She says her doctor has prescribed Thorazine, a powerful antipsychotic drug, for her problems, but admits she rarely takes it. “Yeah, I drink,” she says, “but so does everybody.” Yvonne says her mother “was having problems” and couldn’t take care of the family. “I used to cry a lot,” she says. “I still love her, even though she can’t take care of us. I love my mother and Nee equally.”

Kita, still tomboyish in her jeans, is pregnant at the age of 15—“babies having babies,” people on the block say, shaking their heads. Kita is laconic about her pregnancy—“it just came about,” she shrugs—but Miss Nee says Kita wanted the child. “Kita knows how to raise kids,” Miss Nee says. “She’s going to be a very good mother. She’s been cooking since she was 5 years old, and she took care of her two brothers.” Kita’s brothers now live with their grandmother, and her family has ceased to exist. Her father was killed in a gang feud before she was born, and though Kita will not talk about it much, her mother has a history of cocaine abuse. “I was a junkie,” Kita’s mother, Cookie Allen, says. “I was selling drugs out of my house.” Allen says she has been homeless since her family broke up two years ago. Asked about her relationship with Kita, Allen says “that’s none of your —ing business.”

Joe Rutling doesn’t talk about his family much either. His father has been in trouble with the law and his mother is down in Virginia, getting away from whatever happened in Philadelphia. When his mother asked him if he wanted to move in with Miss Nee last year, Joe saw his chance and took it. He’s a quiet kid who does well in school, and he keeps a certain distance from the other teenagers on the block. Joe sees the devastation crack has brought to north Philadelphia, and he is adamantly opposed to drugs. “I taught *myself* that drugs were bad,” he says firmly. “Sometimes, when people start talking about drugs, I just leave. It’s hard to tell people that stuff is bad for you—they don’t listen.” Joe says his father talks to him “every now



Miss Nee is tough—but she is a rock of stability for Yvonne, Kita and Joe

On any given night, Miss Nee’s house may be filled by up to a dozen neighborhood kids. She has a reputation for never turning a needy child away.

and then” and that he thinks about his mother “all the time.” He likes Miss Nee and he’s grateful for her help, but he has come to hate the neighborhood. “I see how it is here,” he says tonelessly. “It’s evil.”

They call it “clocking” in north Philadelphia, and it has nothing to do with punching a time clock. Clocking means getting a pack of cocaine from somebody like Felix, then standing on a street corner to hand off caps of crack to the pipers and users who drift by. The rules are well established: don’t let the police catch you holding too much cocaine, don’t use it yourself and don’t stiff the dealer when it comes time to pay up. (That was Silk’s mistake.) The clockers are all juveniles, and one of them, a boy named Bobby, is only 10 years old. Some of them wear tiny gold charms that look like miniature watch faces—a dealer’s trademark, which is probably where the term clocking came from. Everyone on 19th Street knows about clocking, and



many of the boys do it. "It's messed up around here," says Kevin Abbott, who is 14. "You can buy about anything for \$5."

"It's about *subliminal seduction*," says Pimpin' Sam. Pimpin' Sam is in his mid-20s—a heroin user, but one of many north Philadelphia addicts who has shifted to speedballing, injecting a combination of heroin and cocaine. Sam went to college for a while, and he uses high-powered terms like "subliminal seduction" to explain the basic appeal of clocking, which is money. "It's like the sneaker commercials on TV that say they can make you run faster and jump higher," he says. "The kids all want them. But basically, they all come from single-parent homes. Some of the parents are on welfare, others work. You got, say, 10 hungry kids that are willing to sell drugs all night and all day to get some Adidas or some other name-brand stuff. This is the only way they're going to get it."

"The dealer takes advantage of that, you understand what I'm sayin'?" He flashes the money in their face and says, "You can have this, you can have that. All you got to do is

clock, work on the corner.' And they think that's the way out, they think it's cool. So automatically, they grab hold to it—it's fast money, you know what I'm sayin'?" So they're hooked to the drug-dealing lifestyle. They think it's cool to wear gold and name-brand stuff, not being aware that they should be trying to get their education.

"My generation, what we were instilled on was morals, values and respect," Sam says. "If I disrespected your mother, she would beat me, and when I got home my mother would beat me, too. Respect played a bigger part. Now the new generation—what's being cool to them is being a hustler. It's got a lot to do with TV, parents, babies having babies. When you're young, you're gonna do what your parents do, [and] if your mother is on the pipe, you're going to be on the pipe." He hobbles away on crutches—Sam got his leg broken recently in some mysterious street-corner dispute—heading for the shooting gallery they call the Chateau Luzerne. As he walks up Susquehanna Avenue, two boys coming the other way take care to give him plenty of room.

Like any poet, Kevin Abbott writes about what he knows best. This is his rap song about north Philadelphia.

"I grew up in a neighborhood drug-infested.

All these situations, only once arrested.

I saw my people fall and rise, rise and fall

In this short life I've seen it all.

I saw my people selling smoke, and they're sniffing

It was like a dream, but the dream was drifting.

So if you're not doing drugs, raise your hand.

'Cause you will be reward-ed LIFE in the end."

A girl on the block is talking about her boyfriend. On Mother's Day, she says, her boyfriend wanted to buy his mother a present, but he had no money. So he decided to sell some powder. "I told him that if he wanted to be with me, he couldn't be involved with no drugs," she says. "He didn't have to do it. He never had any problems. He was getting good grades in school. But he was trying to be like the big boys. Earlier in the day, he want-

ed me to come around and visit him, but I told him no because he had all those drugs on him. I knew something was wrong. I could feel it." He called that night from jail, she says, busted on his first time out clocking.

Miss Doris Jackson—frail, arthritic and spirited—has lived on 19th Street for 50 years, and she is a pillar of the community. "Don't you care about yourself?" she says to the kids, shaking her cane. "Don't you know your body is a temple?" Neighbors laugh about the time Miss Doris marveled that a newborn child was so small. "Don't you know she's a crack baby, Miss Doris?" someone said. "Don't you know nothing?"

Early one morning Miss Doris got up to investigate loud voices on the street outside her house. It was Felix and his friends.

"You know you ain't supposed to do what you're doing," Miss Doris said.

"What am I doing, Miss Doris?" Felix said, grinning.

"Do you really want me to say it?" she asked.

"No, Miss Doris," Felix said.

"All right, now you know you done wrong," Miss Doris said, satisfied.

"Aww, Miss Doris," Felix said, retreating toward the avenue.

Almost everyone on the block has had some kind of confrontation with the clockers and pipers who infest the neighborhood. The Rev. Al Blasingame, who makes a brave stand for the straight and narrow at Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church just across Susquehanna Avenue, had his moment last spring when someone broke into the church and stole the telephone, some hand tools and his prized pastoral vestments. Furious, the Reverend Al offered a \$50 reward for information and got a tip that he ought to check out the clientele at a crack house half a block away. Enlisting Jewel Williams as a backup, Blasingame marched across the street to the crack house and, to the amazement of those inside, kicked in the door. "I'm going to get my stuff back or I'm going to throw each one of you out the window!" he said. "I'll give you three days to get my stuff back or you can prepare to go to war. Do you understand what I'm saying? I want my cape back."

The telephone and the hand tools were returned within the day—but the missing cape, which is what really got the Reverend Al going, turned out to be at the dry cleaner's. Only then did Blasingame realize what he had done. "There were four of them," he says now. "They could have killed me."

The crack house, one of the many city-owned abandoned buildings on the block, suffered a mysterious fire a few weeks later. Whoever did it was kind enough to warn the



Jewel Williams is ombudsman for a neighborhood in serious trouble

'How can I escape this?' he says. 'I've got to do something for these babies, for these kids. Somebody's got to save the ones that are salvageable.'



'I saw my people fall and rise, rise and fall, in this short life I've seen it all'

dopers and the next-door neighbors that it would be wise to go somewhere else that night, and the fire broke out after midnight. A crowd gathered quickly, though it was more than a few minutes before anyone called 911. The building, already stripped of its plumbing and wiring, was gutted so completely that even the crackheads were forced to move on. "Spiritual justice was done," one of the neighbors says.

Torching the building made little difference to the neighborhood. There are three other crack houses within easy walking distance and kids are still clocking along Susquehanna Avenue. The lookouts—little boys, some as young as 6—yell warnings as the police drive by, and the clockers run away through a maze of alleys. Like Vietnam, the Philadelphia drug war is a war with no front line: crack's real damage is within the family.

No one knows it better than Jewel Williams. Jewel is 32—stocky, muscular, perpetually alert, an omnipresent figure in the neighborhood. He owns the tiny con-

venience store on Susquehanna Avenue, and he is president of the Susquehanna Neighborhood Advisory Council, a city-funded uplift agency that maintains a scruffy set of offices down the avenue from his store. By night Jewel is a campus police officer at Temple University and he has a license to carry a pistol, a Smith & Wesson automatic. It is always there, holstered on his right hip, a symbol of his status as protector and ombudsman for the neighborhood. Jewel is married with three children of his own, and his wife, Bernice, thinks he spends too much time on the block. "My wife gives me hell sometimes because I spend more time with other kids than I do my own," he says.

But Jewel, convinced that "we've lost three generations already," is determined to do all he can. The Neighborhood Advisory Council, called "the NAC," started out as a campaign against blighted housing. But crack's arrival in the north Philadelphia ghetto has changed everything, and Jewel and his staff of three now provide recreation programs, summer jobs, coun-

seling and emergency food supplies, all on a shoestring budget. The common denominator is saving kids. "While we were out fixing up houses," Jewel says, "we found out it was our youth that was deteriorating." He estimates that at least 5,000 children under the age of 14 live within the NAC boundaries, many of them with surrogate mothers like Miss Nee.

One shelf in the NAC office is filled with boxes of infant formula for emergency cases. "We have families who are going hungry because the mother or father is on crack," he says. "They spend the money on drugs and then come here begging for food. Most of the crack mothers drop their babies off on the grandmother. Then we get the grandmothers calling us for milk to feed the newborns." In one case, he says, a woman addict locked up her children in the house while she went out for drugs. "The kids were in there for two days," he says. "Their Pampers had maggots in them. When you see something like that you say to yourself, 'Stop worrying about the 18-year-olds who're getting high and start paying attention to the little kids and the babies!'"

He could start with Lucas and Bobby. Bobby is a big kid who looks much older than his real age, which is 10. His mother,

so addicted that she is slowly becoming emaciated, spent the welfare checks on crack, and Bobby and his sister lived in an abandoned house with no electricity and no running water. When Bobby's grandmother bought him clothes, his mother sold them to get more crack. Finally Bobby went to a dealer he knew and began clocking on Susquehanna Avenue, hanging out all night until his pack of "nickel powders" was sold. "His mother don't care, as long as he's giving her some," says Lucas, who is 15. Lucas's mother is a crack addict, too. "I talk to her every day," he says. "If I tell her to leave it alone, she'll stop for about three weeks, then go behind my back." When he grows up and gets a job, Lucas says, "I'm gonna take her to a rehab place where she can get herself back together, and then I'm going to take her far, far away and let her live by herself. I love her."

It's not the kids, Renee Johnson says, it's the parents. "If the mother's sitting there selling [crack], what's that telling the child? If the son's out there selling it and the mother's sitting there holding it, what good is that gonna do? ... The mothers know the kids are making money, and they're getting some of the money so they're happy." The kids aren't bad, she says, "they just don't have no discipline. They figure if their mother's doing it, hell, I can go do it, too. That's why I watch the ones whose mothers are on drugs. I sit there and wonder, what're y'all thinking about?"

One reason Renee thinks about the kids so much is that she is a crack user, too—and she has a 13-year-old daughter, a beautiful girl named Kaneesha. Renee says a boyfriend turned her on to crack several years ago and that she became a closet addict. "She's never seen me do it. I used to go to work, come home and go straight to the room. I would never go outside until I came down," she says. Renee's mother persuaded her to enter a residential drug-treatment program in upstate Pennsylvania, but the stay there did not end her addiction. Now, she says, the thought that Kaneesha might try drugs is forcing her to try to set a better example. "What if Kaneesha was to smoke a joint? What could I say? What right would I have to say anything about her when I do it? It made me really slow down," Renee says.

Kaneesha is going to summer school this year, and she has an afternoon summer job as well. She thinks she wants to be a nurse, but she dreams of becoming a model. Renee, watching and worrying for any sign of involvement in drugs, thinks about getting family counseling or sending Kaneesha to Baltimore to live with her uncle. "Kaneesha can't understand why I stay on her the way I do," she says. "But I don't want her to go through the same things I went through when I was coming up. I wasn't taught the

way I'm trying to teach her, put it that way, and I don't want to see her follow in my footsteps."

There is a girl in the neighborhood who knows about another crack-house arson. The girl's mother was an addict, and she sold and used crack in the home. The family was in chaos and the children were going hungry. The girl tried to stop her mother's drug abuse many times and failed. Finally the girl said, "If I can't get the drugs out of the house, I can make it so no one gets drugs here." The girl burned down the family's house. She was 12 years old.

Children in this neighborhood are so exposed to drugs that teachers at the Head Start school at 18th and Diamond streets have begun teaching their students about crack before they begin the usual pre-reading program. "They can identify crack caps and vials as young as 4," says one teacher. "We've had to adjust our entire approach to what's important to these children."

Grade-school kids are introduced to cocaine along with marijuana. "It's called a turbocharge," Jewel Williams says. "They think turbo is not addicting, so they start

sucking on a joint at 10, 11 or 12. Before they know it, they don't want the weed. They've got to get that charge. So they go and buy a cap and then they're hooked up. They'll take anything and make a pipe out of it—a tin can, a broken car antenna." Kevin Abbott, the neighborhood poet, says younger addicts "know what's happening, but they just don't care."

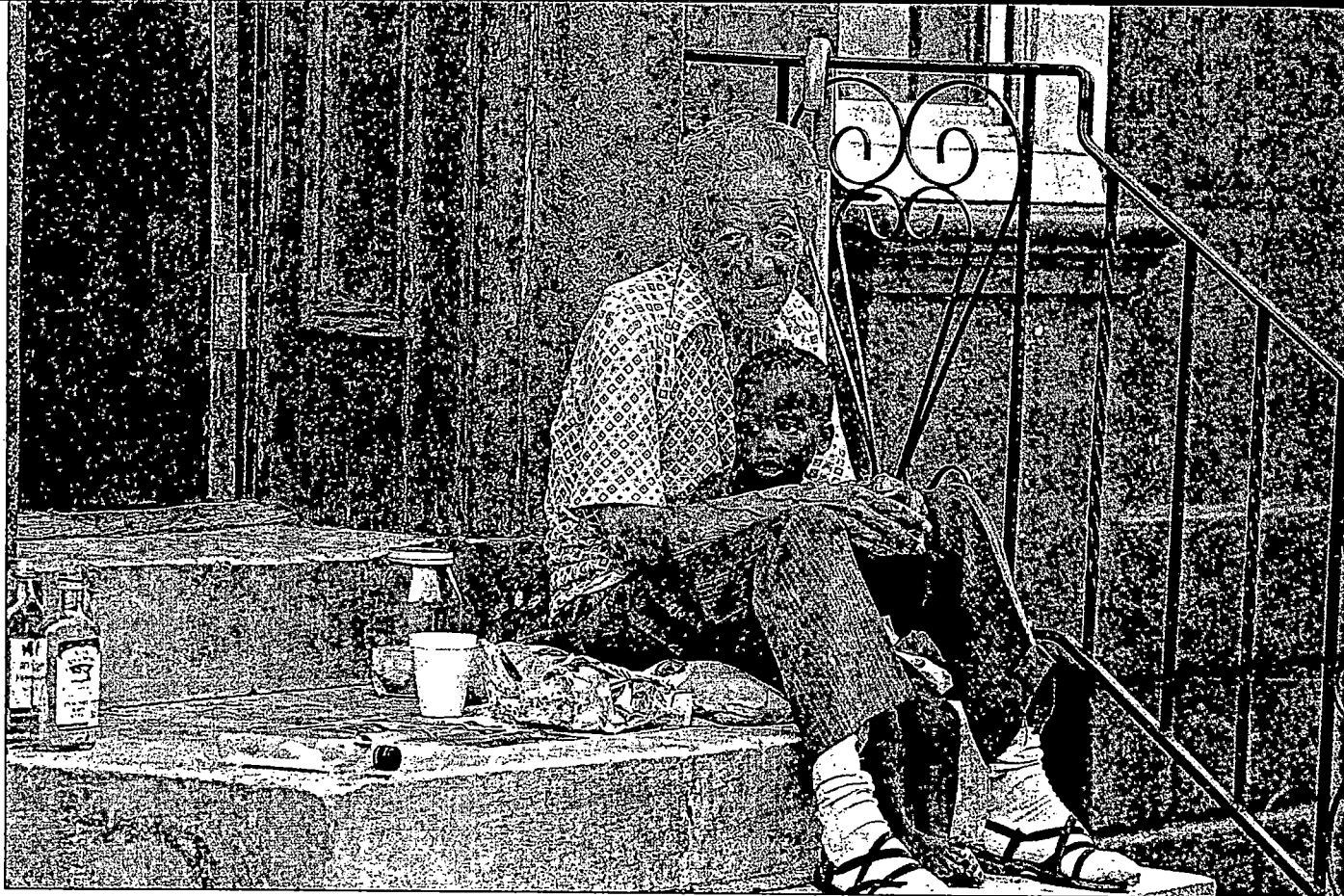
Five years ago a no-name north Philadelphia welterweight named Kevin Howard stunned the boxing world by decking Sugar Ray Leonard in what was supposed to be an easy bout. Leonard survived, winning the fight in a ninth-round TKO, but Howard became an instant hero for the homeboys on the block—another Smokin' Joe Frazier, the pride of black Philadelphia. "Just like I'm talking with you, I was talking with Sugar," Howard says now. "We had lunch together, we had dinner together, we went out together. He said to me, 'There's something about you I like. You ain't like all the other fighters. You ain't talking about killing me or knocking my eye out.' I said, 'It's not like that. This is a business. But believe this: if there's a fight, I'm going to try to take your ass out.' I mean, I showed no fear."

Howard lost it all in a blur of fast living. His last fight was three years ago, and he was knocked out in the seventh round. Today, he lives in a dilapidated row house and spends his days shuffling around the neighborhood with a broken-down shopping cart looking for salvageable trash. "He used to be a bad dude," one of the neighborhood boys

Jean Hobson says crack has hurt the neighborhood more than heroin did

'Little kids are starting—kids 6, 8 years old,' she says. 'They get the thrill and then they're hooked. [The dealers] use them to carry drugs.'





When families fall apart, children take refuge wherever they can

says. "But now, Kevin is like, 'Can I have a quarter or something?'"

"It doesn't make me feel good to know what I'm doing out here in the streets and know that kids still look up to me," Howard says. "The No. 1 thing I tell them is, 'Don't let nobody influence you into something wrong' . . . It's not only 'caine, it's alcohol, too. It's marijuana. These things are a downfall. I'm talking from experience."

Howard, who is only 28, says it would be "best for me to get out of the neighborhood so I can stay on top." He still thinks he will be "the spoiler of the '90s."

"Man up!" the lookouts shout as plainclothes officers Jeff Ziernicki and Harold Braxton creep up Susquehanna Avenue in their boxy blue Plymouth. Braxton and Ziernicki work the Double Deuce—the 22nd police district, one of the busiest in Philadelphia. Some 60,000 people live within the 22nd's two square miles, and police work there is a never-ending round of narcotics enforcement and domestic disputes that often involve crack. Drug arrests for adults and juveniles are sharply up in the past two years; last year the 22nd district seized drugs, cars and cash totaling nearly \$2 million. The cops see the social causes—the accelerating breakdown of the family, the lack of positive role models and economic opportunity for youth—but they see the pure viciousness, too. In one case, a year and a half ago, two brothers 9 and 12 were murdered when their mother, who was an addict, stole the stash they were holding for a

dealer. "We absolutely have to target the real young kids," says Philadelphia Police Commissioner Willie Williams, a veteran of the Double Deuce. "Completely educate them about drugs, sex and how to protect themselves from family members leading them to drugs."

With the city hall in a perennial budget crunch, street manpower is already stretched thin. That means cops like Braxton and Ziernicki spend their shifts jumping from one radio call to another—investigating burglaries, chasing clockers down the alleys, handling domestic disputes. Check day, when the welfare checks arrive, brings an avalanche of 911 calls for drug and alcohol emergencies; because crack abusers tend to be wired and hyperactive, even routine family arguments can erupt in violence. The reports of missing and abandoned children start the following day, when relatives and neighbors realize that the toddlers next door have no one to look after them. "We have to be marriage counselors, taxi drivers, referees, babysitters—everything," says Jeanette Barnes, a victim-assistance officer for the 22nd.

Capt. Al Lewis, the 22nd district commander, is trying to promote community-action projects like offering reading classes at the station house. He is also well aware that residents of the Double Deuce "desire nothing less than people in middle-class neighborhoods," which means protecting

them from the drug trade and the drug-related crime that is all around them. But the beat cops are not optimistic. "Can this neighborhood be brought back?" one officer asks rhetorically. "No. We lost this generation."

Police veterans and longtime residents are nostalgic about the good old days of heroin, PCP and gang wars—nothing, they say, compares with the social consequences of crack. "I've been through pot, white lady and blue lady [forms of synthetic heroin], and I can't go through this much more," says Jean Hobson, who has lived in north Philly for 40 years. "I'd rather see gang warfare come back. Now you don't have protection from nothing or nobody. When they get on that stuff, they don't know their own mother." Hobson, like Geneva Leaks, is famous in the neighborhood for rescuing unwanted children, and she is shaken by the fact that younger and younger children are being drawn into dealing and using crack. "The little kids are starting—kids 6, 8 years old," she says. "They get the thrill and then they're hooked. [Dealers] use them to carry drugs, because the man ain't gonna bother them. They're kids—kids you never thought would be caught up in this," she says. "My God, they were such good kids."

The names Felix, Silk, Bobby and Lucas used in this article are pseudonyms.



Associated Press

President Bush, in Chicago to campaign for Republican Congresswomen who oppose him on abortion, took time to visit Pickard Elementary School there.

Ana Zamora, right, had written to Mr. Bush asking his help in ridding her neighborhood of drugs. At left was a classmate, Guadalupe Guzman.

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Richard School
2301 W. 21st
Chicago Ill. 60608

Honorable President Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush,

Hello, my name is Ana Zamora, I am in fifth grade at Richard School in Chicago. My neighborhood is terrible, there are gang members on the corners, gang signs on the walls. The gang members are selling drugs in the neighborhoods.

I never go outside because my mom gets scared that I will get hurt because of the gang fights. President Bush, I have heard that you are pushing for a war on drugs. Please help remove the drugs from our neighborhoods. I will do my part by saying no to drugs, I hope you can do yours. I know this is hard but you can do it.

Thank you

Love,
Ana Zamora



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News Release

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AMERICA IS READY TO BE MOBILIZED IN THE WAR AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS

Public Is Ready To Volunteer Time And Money

Respondents Divided Over The Degree Of Progress Thus Far

Millions of Americans are ready and willing to step forward and become President Bush's "thousand points of light" in the fight against illegal drugs.

Overall, 106 million (60%) adult Americans are willing to volunteer at least 5 hours a week or more in their communities to work against illegal drugs, and an equal number would voluntarily donate from \$20 to \$100 to help in the effort to stop the sale and use of illegal drugs in their communities.

- The 60 percent volunteering time would contribute more than 500 million hours of time per week in their communities.
- In total, Americans are willing to donate nearly \$5 Billion to this effort in financial contributions, if they are asked.

These results are based on a national poll of 810 randomly selected U.S. residents. The survey was paid for and conducted by the Gordon S. Black Corporation on behalf of Partnership for a Drug Free America, and the results appeared recently in USA TODAY. The survey was conducted by telephone during the second week of January.

In general, the drug problem is recognized by nearly all Americans as a critically important problem that must be solved. Eighty-four percent of the respondents described the illegal drug problem in their community as **very or somewhat serious**. However, only half (52%) of the respondents felt that some or great progress has been made fighting drugs in their communities and nationally, with 10% indicating that they believe no progress has been made at all.

THE PUBLIC'S "VOLUNTEERISM" HAS YET TO BE MOBILIZED

Despite the willingness of Americans to donate their time and money to fighting illegal drug use, this "spirit of voluntarism" is only partially tapped at present. Only 57% of the respondents are aware of anti-drug programs in their community; but 1 in 10 Americans are already involved directly themselves or have a member of their family who is involved directly in the fight against illegal drugs.

Of those involved today, 38% are involved with the schools, 28% with local governmental activities, and 10% in religious activities. The remainder are split between a variety of other types of organizations.

The public remains optimistic that the problem can be solved, however, with 59% of the respondents indicating that they believe the use of illicit drugs can be reduced by 75% within 15 years. Only 14% said they did not believe the problem could ever be reduced by 75%.

Dr. Gordon S. Black, the author of the poll, commented on these findings: "The first rule of voluntary activity is that you have to ask". Too many of community leaders aren't "asking", and that is unfortunate!"

ILLEGAL DRUGS CONTINUE TO AFFECT MILLIONS

A very large number of Americans have contact with people who use or sell illegal drugs. Overall, 36% of the respondents know somebody who uses illegal drugs. Exposure to drug use continues to be the greatest among 18-34 year olds where 51% know somebody who uses illegal drugs.

Additionally, 22% of the respondents know a person from whom they could obtain illegal drugs if they wanted to do so. Among 18-34 year olds, 4 in 10 respondents know a person from whom they could obtain illegal drugs if they so desired. Thus, despite the overwhelming public support for anti-drug measures, illegal drug use continues to be a part of everyday experience for millions of Americans, particularly young adults.

AMERICANS WANT TOUGHER POLICIES AGAINST DRUG USERS

Americans are ready for tough measures when dealing with the users of illegal drugs. For example:

- 84% of the respondents feel that the police should make a major effort to arrest those who buy and use illegal drugs.
- 68% of the respondents indicated that the courts are too lenient when dealing with the users of illegal drugs.

This supports the consistent finding that Americans want their communities to take action against the users of illegal drugs, instead of just concentrating on the sellers.

Said Dr. Black: "Interdiction and concentrating on the sellers has been only partially successful. The key today is to concentrate our resources on efforts aimed at reducing the demand for these drugs, and that means concentrating our new efforts on the users."

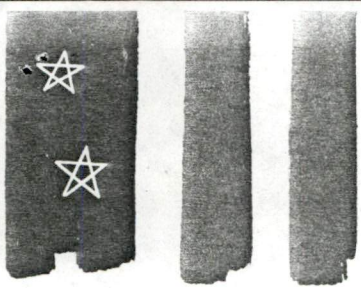
ABOUT THE STUDY

This national study of 782 adult Americans was conducted by telephone between January 10th and 12th, 1990. A survey of 782 randomly selected respondents has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for percentages of the whole sample. For a percentage near 50 percent, for example, this means that repeated samples would produce results between 46.5 percent and 53.5 percent 95 out of 100 times. All interviewing was conducted from the central telephone facility of the Gordon S. Black Corporation in Rochester, New York.

This study was voluntarily conducted for the Media-Advertising Partnership for a Drug-Free America by the Gordon S. Black Corporation. The Partnership is a national coalition of media and advertising companies, and their national associations, all of whom are contributing their time and talent to a Billion Dollar voluntary effort to use advertising to reduce drug abuse in the United States.

The Chairman of The Partnership is Mr. James Burke and the Executive Director is Mr. Thomas Hedrick.

The Gordon S. Black Corporation is a firm specializing in market research and public opinion polling, with offices in Rochester, New York City, and Washington D. C. The firm is the polling firm for USA TODAY and CNN NEWS, and its clients include other newspapers and television stations across the United States. Dr. Gordon S. Black was the author of the survey. Dr. Black has a Doctorate degree in Political Science from Stanford University and is a widely known authority on public opinion, voting behavior, and opinion research methods.



AMERICA, MOBILIZING AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS...AND READY TO DO MUCH MORE.

Summary of research conducted by Gordon S. Black Corporation

-810 National Sample Phone Interviews
 1/12/90

1. How serious is the illegal drug problem in your community?

Very	46%
Somewhat	38%
Not Very	12%
Not At All	3%

2. Are you aware of anti-drug programs in your community?

Yes	57%
No	43%

3. Are you or anyone in your family involved in volunteer anti-drug programs?

Yes	10%
No	90%

4. Who sponsors the program?

School	38%
Civic/Gov't	28%
Church	10%
Other	20%

5. How much progress do you feel has been made combatting illegal drugs?

	<u>Community</u>	<u>Country</u>
Great Deal	6%	8%
Some	45%	44%
Not Very Much	33%	36%
None	10%	10%

similar

Some sense ^{that} progress
is being made - but not much...

challenge
local officials
take lead in
mobilizing...

6. Given active community involvement, how long do you think it will take to reduce illegal drug use by 75%?

3 years	5%
5	15%
10	29%
15	10%
20	8%
20+	15%
Never	14%

Community
Call to Action

7. Do you know someone who uses illegal drugs?

Yes	36%
No	63%

8. Do you know somebody from whom you could get illegal drugs?

Yes	22%
No	76%

8. Should police make major effort to arrest those who buy/use illegal drugs?

Yes	84%
No	13%

9. Would you be willing to spend 5 hours/week in volunteer efforts to stop the sale and use of illegal drugs in your community?

Yes	60%
No	34%

10. Would you yourself be willing to donate to a community-wide effort to stop the use of illegal drugs?

\$5B to Community efforts

	Yes	No
\$20	60%	32%
\$50	41%	54%
\$100	53%	44%

11. In dealing with users do you think the courts are:

too harsh	5%
too lenient	68%
about right	19%

EXPERT 'POOPS' ON DRUG-BUG PLAN

By ELI TEIBER

Post Correspondent

WASHINGTON — The prospect of coca-munching caterpillars as drug war bio-weapons has just one little problem — they are living cocaine factories, and the stuff is in their droppings, scientists said yesterday.

"It [the feces] is concentrated as blazes," said Prof. Murray Blum, a researcher at University of Georgia, who is one of the few authorities on the now-famous caterpillar.

"The feces are loaded with cocaine," he said in a telephone interview with The Post from his Athens, Ga., lab.

Blum and other scientists spent months in an isolated village in Peru studying the effects of cocaine on man and insects.

He said his analysis of the caterpillar poop revealed it to be so potent that when the villagers ran out of coca leaves for chewing, he "offered this box of cater-

"It's [caterpillar poop] concentrated as blazes [with cocaine]."

— PROF. MURRAY BLUM

pillar droppings" as a gesture of good will.

The offer was refused — villagers were indignant at the invitation to chew caterpillar dung, he said.

The caterpillars eat the coca leaf and concentrate the cocaine into the matchhead-sized black droppings called "frass" by bug experts.

"The caterpillars are biomagnifying it," said Blum.

Meanwhile, spokesmen for the governments of Bolivia and Peru — the two largest producers of coca — also signaled rejection of

the caterpillar plan proposed for study by the Bush administration.

Government scientists had claimed very little was known about the voracious coca-eating caterpillar from South America.

But Blum called the administration caterpillar proposal "just crazy."

"They would have to bodily place the caterpillars on the plants," said Blum dismissing the idea of dropping caterpillars and their eggs from a plane onto the coca fields.

"These are very squishy [insects] and they don't bounce very well at all," he said.

Blum said he can't understand why the federal government didn't get in touch with him about the malyunia caterpillar.

"There was never a word from them [the Department of Agriculture researchers]. I wondered why," said Blum, who published a paper on his findings nearly nine years ago.

Gzech prez in dramatic plea for U.S. to aid Gorby

By MARILYN RAUBER

Post Correspondent

WASHINGTON — In a spell-binding speech to Congress yesterday, Czechoslovakia's playwright-president, Vaclav Havel, urged the United States to help Eastern Europe by reaching out to the Soviet Union.

"You can help us most of all if you help the Soviet Union on its irreversible, but immensely complicated road to democracy," Havel said.

"Our freedom, independence and our newborn democracy have been purchased at great cost and we will not surrender



Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet (George Bush Library)

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01. Letter	Brandi Conley to POTUS, re: War on Drugs. (3 pp.)	n.d.	P-6, (b)(6)	

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Record Group: Bush Presidential Records
Office: Speechwriting, White House Office of
Series: Speech File, Backup
Subseries:
WHORM Cat.:
File Location: Drugs N.D.

Date Closed: 12/8/2004	OA/ID Number: 08486
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