

## "Dark Alliance"

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"Quid coniuratio est?"

Review by Conspiracy Nation

*Dark Alliance* by Gary Webb. New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998. ISBN: 1-888363-68-1)

Gary Webb, author of *Dark Alliance: The CIA, The Contras, And The Crack Cocaine Explosion*, was the journalist with the San Jose *Mercury News* who caused such a fuss two years ago when his series of articles pointed to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) complicity in the crack cocaine epidemic. So-called "conspiracy nuts" have, of course, been screaming about CIA involvement in the global narcotics trade for years, but for Webb, then a mainstream reporter, to say similar things was fairly astounding. So, for awhile, the mass media paid attention to Webb's reports. But Webb paid a price for daring to get too close to the truth: Webb's story led the CIA to counterattack with "one of the most ruthless campaigns of vilification of a journalist since the Agency [CIA] went after Seymour Hersh in the mid 1970s." <sup>1</sup> Webb faced "savage assaults" from "other members of his profession." <sup>2</sup> "The attack on Gary Webb and his series in the San Jose *Mercury News* remains one of the most venomous and factually inane assaults on a professional journalist's competence in living memory." <sup>3</sup>

The fierce attack on Webb by mainstream reporters is a glaring and obvious clue to the fact that Webb had struck a nerve with his series, "Dark Alliance." A la Shakespeare: "Methinks they do protest too much." (A similar nerve was struck by Oliver Stone's movie, "JFK," which the press, en masse, began howling against *months* before it was even released. See, for example, Newsweek's cover story, "Why Oliver Stone's New Movie, *JFK*, Can't Be Trusted.")

So dewy-eyed Gary Webb just couldn't figure it out when his series on CIA complicity in the crack cocaine epidemic was so savagely attacked by his then-colleagues. (Webb was pressured out of his job at San Jose Mercury News as further punishment for daring to tell the truth - and not back down from it - in his 1996 newspaper series "Dark Alliance.") Webb, still a lamb in a forest full of journalist-sharks, was dumbfounded and dismayed when his then-colleagues unfairly ganged-up against him. Webb, an innocent babe, concluded that he just hadn't presented his case well enough - hence his current book, *Dark Alliance*. Webb figures that now, by meticulously detailing the evidence, his former press colleagues are all going to suddenly "get it." He is expecting big-time reporter/liars at such papers as *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* to read his book, have the blinders fall from their eyes, and immediately reverse their former positions.

Well, welcome to reality, Mr. Webb. It may dawn on you that, just because you are an honest reporter, it does not automatically follow that your former colleagues are also honest reporters. Mr. Webb, if you are reading this, here is a concept for you: (a) politicians aren't always honest; (b) policemen aren't always honest; so (c) could it possibly be that journalists aren't always honest? Could it be that many journalists "know which side their bread is buttered on?" Could it be that some of your former colleagues even though members of the noblest of professions, would actually sell-out the Truth in return for career advancement? Something to ponder, your former colleagues colossally ignore Mr. Webb, as your well-researched book. And Webb's book will not just be ignored by his former colleagues. The American couch-potato public will also ignore it, mostly because it is so meticulously and painstakingly put together. Webb is mathematical in his exactitude, slowly and carefully proving his theorem - so well so that only a few Einsteins will be plodding enough to sort through it. Like " $E=mc^2$ ," Webb's book is not for the average reader. What he needs is to have collaborated with, say, Conspiracy Nation (CN), in its production. We old hands here at CN could have given him some pointers, like how to add pizzazz to a story. For example, Mr. Webb, you should have spiced up your book with vague allusions to Merovingian kings, the gold from King Solomon's Mines, and the Spear of Longinus. The public - the open-minded public - has long since figured out that CIA means "Cocaine Importing Agency." So your book about CIA complicity in the crack cocaine epidemic is "old news" to them. They are hungry for new material and your book, while rock-solid in what it says, does not titillate and so fails to reach a wide audience.

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<sup>1</sup> *White Out: The CIA, Drugs and the Press* by Alexander Cockburn & Jeffrey St. Clair. New York: Verso, 1998. ISBN: 1-85984-897-4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.