

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

JUST SAY NO TO THE MEDIA

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SPRING 2013

A thesis submitted  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for baccalaureate degrees  
in English and Crime, Law, Justice  
with interdisciplinary honors in English and Crime, Law, Justice.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act criminalized crack cocaine harsher than it criminalized powder cocaine 100:1. Media outlets such as TIME and Newsweek magazine saturated their reports on crack and cocaine with rhetoric that implied that crack was a more potent and dangerous form of cocaine and its use was spreading out of the inner cities and into the suburbs. Drug policy responds to the public perceptions of a problem. Mainstream media directly affects the public perceptions of a problem. If the rhetoric behind news coverage of crack and cocaine was exaggerated, then an exaggerated response to crack and cocaine like the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act should be expected. By analyzing the rhetoric behind the news coverage, the public perceptions policy makers were responding to can be understood.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to send out a sincere thank you to Professor Howard Smith for all of his help in helping me complete this project. I would also like to thank Jill Armington, a fellow scholar and Morale co-captain who always kept me motivated.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The 1986 Anti- Drug Abuse Act was drug policy birthed out of the Reagan Administration's "War on Drugs" and media sensationalizing the impact of crack and cocaine. One piece of the aggressive legislation was a law criminalizing crack possession 100 times harsher than cocaine possession. Someone convicted of possessing 5 grams of crack would serve the same sentence as someone convicted of possessing 500 grams of cocaine. This legislation made possessing crack 100 times more criminal than possessing cocaine even though crack and cocaine are chemically the same substance. Even though crack and cocaine are chemically the same substance they were perceived by legislators and the general public to have different impacts on American society. A major reason for this disparity in perception of crack and cocaine was the media's coverage of the two illicit drugs. The rhetoric behind the coverage of crack played into fear, danger, and holding crack responsible for all of the negative consequences of their environment and drug addiction. Most coverage of cocaine played into the glamorous lives of those who used cocaine and placed most of the blame on drug traffickers for the negative impacts of cocaine use. News publications like TIME and Newsweek magazines glamorized cocaine use and spent little attention on the negative side effects of cocaine and emphasized the social status associated with cocaine use. Because the rhetoric behind cocaine's long time coverage was that of glamour and style while the short but intense rhetoric behind crack cocaine's coverage created a dark cloud around the substance legislation criminally defining crack as being 100 times worse.

## Chapter 2

### Context

Before the late 1970s law enforcement did not make policing drug use a priority. Their nonchalant behavior towards cocaine stemmed from how prevalent the drug had become and feelings that it would be impossible to combat. They also lacked urgency because cocaine at the time was not associated with violent crime. Law enforcement prioritized violent crime over most criminal behavior. Cocaine became a nationally recognized problem during the late 1970s, specifically stemming from Florida where most of the cocaine was smuggled into the United States. Users of cocaine at the time were limited to people who could afford the hefty price. One day could cost a user hundreds of dollars. Because of how expensive cocaine was, the users were often times entertainers, athletes and professionals who could afford this expensive habit. Cocaine drug use increased throughout the 1970s because of the increased demand and subsequent supply that was entering the United States mainly through south Florida. The amount of cocaine in the United States increased causing the price to decrease and more Americans could afford to buy cocaine. By the early 1980s cocaine was extremely popular. In the beginning many Americans did not find cocaine use to be harmful or addicting. Sometime in the mid-1980s a smoke able form of cocaine started popping up in the inner cities (Foster 37). The smoke able form of cocaine looked like small white pebbles and is commonly known as crack. The first report of crack was in 1984 in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Times “published a story on local ‘rock houses’ selling pellets of cocaine for as little as \$25,” (30). Some say the name ‘crack’ comes from the sound it makes when heated in the pipe. Others think it refers to drug dealers cracking the hard substance into little pellet sized crack rocks. Crack is a substance that is created from

mixing water and baking soda with powdered cocaine and allowing it to dry. When the substance dries it becomes hard and dealers can break the crack down into small pellet sized crack rocks. Cocaine users who could no longer afford their cocaine addiction could now buy the same substance for 1/10 of the price. Crack is more addictive and its price makes it easier to keep up the habit. However, the side effects of crack use are similar to that of cocaine. Foster explains, “crack is not necessarily more concentrated - i.e., more cocaine molecules per milligram - than traditional powdered cocaine, “combating the popular misconception that crack is more potent (30). Crack is not more concentrated or potent than cocaine but its increased feeling of intensity is due to the way it is consumed (Erickson 4). Inhaling cocaine through the lungs creates the more intense feeling than snorting cocaine through the nose.

Crack cocaine is relatively new, created in the mid-1980s, so unlike cocaine, crack does not have a long history and its reputation was created in the mid to late 1980s rather than evolved like that of cocaine. Transforming crack cocaine from being a version of cocaine to one hundred times worse than cocaine would be difficult if the general public and legislators believed crack to be equal to cocaine. Exaggerations flew from the newsstands on how much more potent crack cocaine was than regular (powder) cocaine. Not only were there supposed chemical differences advertised about crack and cocaine, social differences were advertised as well. When looking through the lens of TIME and Newsweek magazine articles, two nationally recognized news magazines, there were two completely different images painted of the average cocaine snorter compared to the average crack smoker. Doctors, politicians, Newsweek and TIME magazine all created polar opposite cultures surrounding crack and cocaine which aided in the support for the 100:1 legislation.

Alongside the media coverage was Reagan’s declaration of war on drugs and Nancy Reagan’s Just Say No campaign that created a culture obsessed with ending drug use and drug trafficking. The Reagan administration began to militarize drug enforcement by placing the

FBI in charge of drug enforcement and investigation, while Congress made amendments allowing the military to be involved in civilian affairs. The Bail Reform Act of 1984 made it more difficult for accused drug offenders to stay out on bail. On September 14, 1986 President Ronald Reagan made a major television address calling for “zero tolerance” for drugs (Chespesiuk 27). In October 1986 Congress passed the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act allocating over a billion dollars of funds to combat drug abuse and authorized increased prison sentences for drug dealers along with mandatory minimums. The Reagan Administration turned increase drug trafficking and drug use into a national security concern. The entire government was working together to combat what they thought to be one of the most important issues of their time. Their belief in crack and cocaine being the major issue in America stemmed from the media’s coverage of crack and cocaine. Rhetoric of the media’s coverage on drugs influence policy makers to create legislation that will combat the drug epidemic Americans believed to be real.

## Chapter 3

### Rhetoric and Drugs

United States history is saturated with the rhetoric and perceptions behind a drug heavily influencing the legal policies applied to it. Opium smoking was associated with the Chinese and was made illegal around the same time Chinese immigration was heavily guarded. Musto explains where the negative opinions of opium smoking derived in the line, “weighing heavily against it was its symbolic association since mid-century with the Chinese who were actively persecuted” (Musto 3). Here Musto is explaining that because of opium’s association with the Chinese, the drug by association had a negative connotation and therefore was made illegal. Legislation reacts to public perceptions of drugs rather than the actual impact and harms of drugs. An example of legislation reacting to the public’s perception is the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act of 1914 which taxed and limited the sale and use of cocaine and opiates. Boldt argues that “moral reappraisal of addiction did not occur until patterns of use had shifted from the middle and upper classes to those in the working classes and the poor,” describing the social pattern of the opinions regarding narcotics during the 1900s (Boldt 266). He links the class shift in drug use to support of the Harrison Act (266). The Harrison Act was a reflection of the shifting association of narcotics with lower class people. Drug policy stems from the perception that Americans have on who is using the drug, and who is affected by the drug’s use allowing room for the stereotypes of the times to be reflected in legislation. Mckeganey explains, “Our drug laws express our sense of the society in which we wish to live,” making drug laws expand into the arena of social critique. Public fears, stereotypes and societal goals are woven into drug laws. The perceptions of drugs are created through political rhetoric and through the media. The media have a history of being

able to send the country into hysteria regarding drug use and in response legislators draft laws to combat the hysteria.

Media outlets choose which news is news worthy; therefore the media's choice to cover a certain topic implies the topic is important and should be of interest to the public. Because, "the choice of what is included (or excluded) sets the agenda and defines public interest", TIME and Newsweek magazines' constant coverage of crack and cocaine pushed crack and cocaine into the forefront of public interest by the mid-1980s (Lancaster 398). Crack and cocaine were being defined as the main topics of interest during the 1980s by the media affording the media's coverage the opportunity to shape public opinion around those topics. Media can influence public policy and policy makers. Lancaster states, "the more strongly media push an issue the more likely it is that politicians and policy makers will take notice and that media coverage will influence policy decisions," displaying how the media influences public policy (399). The crack epidemic was strongly pushed through the media, and calls for action were explicitly stated in magazine articles. The heavy coverage of crack and cocaine along with the rhetoric in the coverage influenced the policy makers' decisions. TIME and Newsweek magazines played off stereotypes when covering crack and cocaine even though their use spread across all demographics. Taylor explains the, "negative and stereotypical representations of drug users (particularly heroin and crack cocaine users) as criminal outsiders and a threat to middle-class sobriety, and the fabric of mainstream society, is also normal", affirming negative and stereotypical news coverage of drugs is the trend (371). These stereotypes found themselves being the bases for drug policy in the mid to late 1980s. The tough drug legislation and disparate sentencing of crack and cocaine was a response to the, "media incited moral panic about cocaine and specifically the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s," (Hartley 67). Drug legislation does not mimic the rhetoric of the news media but responds to the rhetoric of the news media. A

rhetorical analysis of the media's coverage of crack and cocaine will provide a picture of to what the drug policy in 1986 was responding.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Importance**

Analyzing the rhetoric behind the coverage of crack and cocaine will aid in explaining how these two substances were legally treated significantly different. Recognizing the language behind exaggerated statements and untruths could explain disparity in sentencing. Drug policy is a response to the rhetoric behind the drug rather than the actual impact made by the drug. This reigns as true especially for crack when a law was created deeming it 100 times harsher than a similar substance shortly after its appearance into American society. Crack cocaine was not well known until 1986, and in the same year, a law was passed attaching harsh penalties to its possession. There was not enough time for thorough scientific or social study on the actual impact of crack cocaine so policy makers were going off of what they heard. Policy makers were creating drug policy based off of the rhetoric of the American people which was created by popular news media. By understanding the rhetoric behind the created crack and cocaine disparity, there lies and understanding of how drug legislation can be influenced by the media. If Time and Newsweek magazines were correct in their assumption that the wealthy upper class used cocaine and crack saturated poor underprivileged areas then members of underprivileged areas were more likely to be arrested for longer periods of time for possessing small amounts of crack. This disparity in news reporting created a disparity in drug policy and sentencing. Fear was the mantra of coverage of all things related to crack. Crime rates, unemployment, poor living conditions were all attributed to crack cocaine. Everything from the normal inner city turmoil to malnourished babies being born were all traced back to crack cocaine in the media. When looking through the lens of TIME and Newsweek magazine articles, there were two completely different

images painted of the average cocaine snorter and the average crack smoker. TIME and Newsweek magazines' creation of polar opposite cultures surrounding crack and cocaine culminated in the creation, support and acceptance of the 1986 100:1 legislation.

## Chapter 5

### Methods

TIME and Newsweek magazines were chosen because of their broad reach in audience. They are nationally recognized and respected news publications; respected mean there is an attempt at an unbiased report that does not favor a particular political agenda. Both TIME and Newsweek aim to reflect the news of the nation and do not have an agenda behind their reporting. These magazines are also magazines that one would find in the waiting room of doctors' offices reaching a larger audience than just its number of subscribers. TIME and Newsweek are also ideal because they are weekly magazines. Because they only release magazines on a weekly basis they have the task of choosing which news of the week is important enough to make the publication of their magazine. This choice symbolizes that what is printed as news in their magazines should be of significant interest to their audience because it was ranked higher than many other news stories of the week. The fact that TIME and Newsweek printed multiple stories about crack and cocaine demonstrates the level of importance under which these two drugs were qualified.

In order to compile the TIME Magazine articles, I searched the TIME archives on the TIME's website. The word "cocaine" was used as the key search term, and the time period was between January of 1970 through October of 1986. The decade and a half time frame was chosen in order to include earlier articles that could set the tone of early cocaine coverage so a transition could be shown leading up to 1986. Articles earlier than 1970 would be too early and the articles would be placed in a context that is not relevant to the war on drugs rhetoric because cocaine was not the main target at that time. Ending the search in October of 1986 was because

the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act was passed in October of 1986 and therefore articles after that time could not influence the passing of that Act. The search came up with 400 matched articles and covers that needed to be sifted through in terms of relevance. Articles that simply mention a specific event in which cocaine was only brought up once were disregarded. Articles that were deemed relevant were articles that included cocaine in the discussion along with American rhetorical and social commentary. For more articles regarding crack, the term 'crack' was used as the second search term and the same date range was chosen (even though crack did not appear in news articles until the mid-1980s). The extremely early date was chosen to ensure that the first article about crack was included in the search. The 1986 end date was chosen for the same reason as cocaine to ensure that the time period leading up to the Anti-Drug Abuse act was covered but not beyond that.

Newsweek articles were recovered through the LexisNexis Academic - News Sources database. With LexisNexis I was able to place 'cocaine' and 'crack' as simultaneous key search terms with the same interval as TIME Magazine January 1970 - October 1986. Also, to narrow it to just Newsweek articles I had to control for publications named 'Newsweek'. Articles that lacked social and rhetorical commentary were disregarded due their make up being strictly factual. In order to do a rhetorical analysis on news articles the articles must have rhetoric and social substance.

All of the articles that were compiled and deemed relevant were read through and critiqued based on their rhetoric. A rhetorical analysis or critique is, "an effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language." (Selzer 281). The language used, the associations made with crack and cocaine, the emotions that are being targeted to persuade the audience are all apart of the rhetorical analysis. In order to display how the media's coverage of crack and cocaine heavily influenced the passing of the 100:1 legislation of 1986 a rhetorical analysis is key. As mentioned early, policy makers respond to the

rhetoric behind drugs when drafting legislation rather than the drug itself. This is especially true for the crack and cocaine disparity because the 1986 legislation occurred recently after crack was introduced. There was not enough time to make a decision based off of research but off of speculation and assumptions. The source for these speculations and assumptions came from the media. A rhetorical analysis of the media's coverage of the two drugs will expose the rhetorical disparity on crack and cocaine's coverage and how that disparity was made law in 1986. Selzer explains that, "through rhetorical analysis, people strive to understand better how particular rhetorical episodes are persuasive" (281). In reference to crack and cocaine news coverage from the 1970s through 1986, this rhetorical analysis will aide in understanding how the media, Time and Newsweek magazines, persuaded legislators into believing crack should be criminalized 100 times harsher than cocaine.

## Chapter 6

### Results: News Article Analysis

#### Time Magazine Cocaine Coverage

A TIME magazine article released on April 16th of 1973 was titled “Modern Living: Tyrannical King Coke” Before the article begins, the statement of the title offers insight on the views of cocaine during that time. “Modern Living” does not insinuate illegal activity. Modern living is a goal for those who can afford the lifestyle or will try to work for it if they cannot. Also, the term “King Coke” used in the title associates cocaine with royalty; not just royalty but the highest position of power in the royal hierarchy. The article begins with, “The dinner party on Manhattan’s fashionable East Side included all the chic refreshments”, and later including cocaine as one of the refreshments along with coffee and cognac. In this article cocaine was inserted into a world of modernity and chic living. Rhetorically this article places cocaine in a specific part of the country and simultaneously places cocaine in a specific social class. Cocaine is not simply in New York City, it is in the East Side of Manhattan which is known for being fashionable and a home of the wealthy.

The article goes on to inform readers cocaine is a felony but affirms that users of cocaine are not concerned in the line, “these grim facts have not stopped some enclaves of the bored and beautiful set from making the inhaling of coke a status cult (Modern Living ). The phrase “bored and beautiful” targets people who admire beauty and suggest a life of privileged leisure. Later the article goes on to explain how “bankers, lawyers, doctors and would-be socialites” snort cocaine in an attempt to keep up with “ostensible trend setters, and how pop musicians and other people in show business have been using cocaine for much longer(1). Even when the article mentions the negative side effects that have come with regular cocaine use, the statement is immediately

followed by statements of its expensive and social use. TIME magazine goes on to ask why cocaine is so popular and offers the reasoning being that marijuana is “passe” and that people are looking for “new thrills”(1). The reason for Cocaine’s popularity is not associated with being addictive.

The article concludes with a list of the most fashionable ways to snort cocaine and carry cocaine. Descriptions such as, “It is considered chic to inhale coke through a tightly rolled \$100 bill. Silver straws from Tiffany’s, intended for creme de menthe, are also used”, serve as how to descriptions rather than warning signs (1). When TIME magazine writes about crack, fear not glamorization will be the theme woven throughout the articles.

Another Time magazine article, “Behavior: Coke and Angel Dust” described cocaine use as being known as a “society high” (Behavior 1). Don Turnbaugh, chief of Customs patrol in Miami (the main entrance for cocaine traffickers), is quoted in “Nation: Pot Smugglers’ Paradise” saying, “The situation is out of control. We’re fighting at best a holding action. To think of stopping them is absurd” (Nation 1). In the late 1970s, there seemed to be recognition of the impossibility of combating the drug trafficking problem. One could almost find an acceptance of failure in the rhetoric of this article and articles like it.

Another TIME Magazine article, “Nation: A New and Deadly Menace” associated cocaine use with the East Side of Manhattan. The article describes the scene as, “a small party on Manhattan’s affluent Upper East Side, the hostess sets two small trays before her guests., One contains the familiar white line of cocaine, ready for snorting through rolled-up dollar bills or tiny straws.”(Nation: A New 1). Again cocaine is associated in with the more affluent part of New York City. Affluence and cocaine come hand in hand in this 1980 article.

In the July 1981 TIME magazine published an article titled, “A Fire in the Brain” that detailed the negative side effects of chronic cocaine use. The dark line, “With higher doses and chronic use, alertness and exhilaration so prized by coke’s connoisseurs quickly turn into

darker effects, ranging from insomnia to full-fledged cocaine psychosis” breeds feeling of worry and stay away. The timing of the onerous new style of cocaine reporting are either coincidentally aligned with the reign of the Reagan Administration or are results of cocaine's long term abuse finally coming to light (Living 1). Another article, “Some Close Encounters” by Ellie Mcgrath, actress Julia Philips shares her story about her cocaine addiction and warns potential users to stay away (Living: Some Close 1). While a warning coming from an actress is an attempt to stray the TIME magazine’s audience away from cocaine, the fact that the warning is coming from an actress who used cocaine hinders the cause. While her story and warning attempt to dissuade potential users, her title as an actress could entice some to want to use cocaine.

Along with articles stressing the dangers of cocaine over the chicness of cocaine there is new militant rhetoric arriving in TIME Magazine articles in 1981. In the article, “Cocaine: Middle Class High”, author Michael Deamarest writes, “The 'all-American drug has hit like a blizzard, with casualties rising”. The title suggests the same pattern of associating a positive American image like the middle class with cocaine. This changes once as soon as the article begins using the word 'casualties' instead of deaths. Casualties are a militaristic use of the word implying deaths. Even broader, casualties is also used to describe deaths during state of emergencies. The rhetoric of the Reagan Administration echoed both a militant approach along with a national emergency approach to drug policy. The word, 'casualties' creates that environment. Also, while the title seems to be with the same rhetoric as 1970s views on cocaine, there is a shift in the context of “Middle Class”. When cocaine was being associated with a particular class it was very clear cocaine belonged to the upper class. Upper class individuals represented a small population of the country. The term middle class opens up the audience, and makes it more likely that readers of the article identify with the class now being associated with cocaine. Furthermore the article later describes the risks, and 'casualties' of the drug and how cocaine is affecting middle class families causing a wider group of Americans to possibly feel

threatened by cocaine's presence. Cocaine is no longer a drug only wealthy individuals should stay away from, but now cocaine is in the reach of the middle class (Demarest 1). While the negative side effects were being emphasized, the fear created by health scares pales in comparison by the fear created by associating violence and drug use; a main characteristic of reports on crack on cocaine.



**Figure 1: High on Cocaine**

Figure 1 is the 1981 TIME magazine cover titled “High On Cocaine: A Drug with Status - And Menace”. The title suggests that status and menace comes with being high on cocaine. Menace is also on the bottom after a ‘-’ which makes it an after though. So status is the

dominant characteristic of being high on cocaine, and menace comes after. The visual, martini class filled with cocaine, is a strong rhetorical statement. A martini is a drink that is consumed while out of the house or at least socializing with multiple people. The consumption of a martini takes place in an environment where other people are watching. Having a martini is an action to be taken place in a social setting and is a drink of leisure and fun. A martini is also a relatively expensive drink. Because cocaine is inside the martini glass, cocaine is associated with the characteristics of drinking a martini. Cocaine is being displayed as a social drug of leisure and fun. Cocaine is also expensive. The glass itself is sleek and stylish, which can also be attributed to cocaine. While the title makes a small suggestion of it being a menace, martinis are not considered to be a menace is the drinker is of legal age and does not abuse alcohol. So if cocaine is associated to being equivalent to a martini then cocaine is not more of a menace than a martini is. Figure is a picture demonstrating that cocaine is as accepted and dangerous as a martini.

The letter from the publisher, in Time Magazine's July 1981 issue, stated, "We began our assignment assuming that cocaine fans were found mainly among the glittery rich in Hollywood and Manhattan. As the story shows, cocaine has become a very middle class phenomenon and can be found everywhere" spreading the concern of cocaine use across the country (Letter 1). Here cocaine is still associated with the rich but is being advertised as being in transition to the middle class. The word phenomenon does not automatically come with negative connotations and that is the description of the spread of cocaine to the middle class. The coverage of crack will contain the word epidemic instead of phenomenon which is automatically associated with negative connotations.

Wilde's article is an article about a couple going down to a drug infested part of Manhattan to score drugs. What is significant about this article is that it illustrates a picture of middle class and upper class people will go to grungy drug dealers to score their drugs. Another significant part of this article is that while it associates drug use to violence it does not associate

cocaine use to violence. Even when the main character in the article is shot for drugs, there is a clear distinction that he is shot for heroin.

Andersen's 1983 "Crashing on Cocaine" began in a similar pattern to "Modern Living: Tyrannical King Coke" with the description of a privileged lifestyle. "Phil and Rita's life shimmered like an advertisement", creating an image of a blissful happy couple's life (Andersen 10). While the cadence of the beginning of "Crashing on Cocaine" flowed like the 1973 article, the rhythm came to an abrupt halt suddenly. The rhythmical language followed by the abrupt halt can be seen in the line, "Phil and Rita played tennis and ate interesting foods and knew about wine and, starting four years ago, sniffed coke,"(Andersen 10). The phrase, 'sniffed coke' is placed to be seen as a stark contrast to the previously happy life painted before the line. Like the rest of the articles about couple cocaine use, the article goes on its description of the couple's down fall caused by their imminent addiction to cocaine.

After describing the couple being brought to down to their knees in search of more cocaine, Andersen inserts the two questions, "This is the good life? This is hip?" questioning the hipness that cocaine was supposed to bring to this couple (10). By questioning whether crawling on your knees is "hip" Andersen is asking a rhetorical question knowing that the image he created is undesirable and not hip. By asking whether Phil and Rita's addicted life is good or hip knowing the picture he painted of the couple is ugly, he is relaying the message that cocaine use is not hip. The questions allow room for readers to put cocaine use, the good life, and crawling on the floor searching for cocaine right next to each other so that the reader can draw his or her own conclusion crawling on the floor looking for cocaine is not the hip so neither is cocaine. Also described in the article is a 30 year old sales woman who was busted for cocaine possession. She is quoted talking about her surprise that law enforcement spent their time looking for her rather than a violent criminal. This represents the reports during the Carter days of law enforcement actually spending more of their time on violent crime and not focusing on enforcing the drug

laws. Officers complain that the reason why cocaine is growing in popularity and why it is hard to enforce is because there is no stigma attached to the drug and its illicitness makes the drug more exciting to buyers.

A scare tactic is used in this article that explains that because professionals are using cocaine it affects the community more. Andersen gives the example that if your local physician is using cocaine and has to operate on a patient that day; lives are at risk. This kind of fear not only hits home for many readers but it also has the potential to create distrust. If readers read that their local physician could be on drugs while practicing medicine this could cause readers to become suspicious of their local physicians. The article goes on to describe lives of formally positive members of society who are not addicted to cocaine creating the rhetoric that it could happen to anyone.

Even after reports of crack cocaine's entrance into the drug scene, TIME magazine still glorified those associated with upper levels of cocaine use. The 1985 article, "A Self-Styled Robin Hood" details the life of a high up drug dealer who takes his money back to South American and gives it to the poor. Associating this cocaine smuggler to a childhood hero desensitizes the drug dealer's role in drug abuse. The title also associates style with cocaine which has been the trend for over a decade (Self-Styled).

### **Newsweek Magazine Cocaine Coverage**

The first article is from Newsweek "Second Season". The article is a description of the new television shows coming on air. Cocaine is mentioned towards the end of the article once and is associated with the plot line of a mini series called "The Law" where an investigator is investigating "the death of a pro-football quarterback who was into cocaine," ( Waters 73). Here cocaine is associated with a person with fame and fortune.

Most of the 10 page article “Narcotics: Search and Destroy --The War on Drugs”, focuses on the Chinese opium smugglers and the many other eastern countries associated with trafficking heroin into the United States. Cocaine is first mentioned in the article regarding the creative ways cocaine and heroin are smuggled into the United States from Latin America. Law enforcement agents are creating a ‘smugglers profile’ of amateur smugglers. The article details the arrest of a 19 year old female model that was clutching a stuffed animal filled with 8lbs of pure cocaine. At this point cocaine smugglers are being referred to as “amateur smugglers” while the operations of opium and heroin traffickers are explained in detail as being a part of an elaborate international crime ring. In this article cocaine is associated with a beautiful woman, “19 year old model” smuggling cocaine in the most harmless and fearless way possible; by using a stuffed animal. By reading this article, cocaine is nothing to fear because it is being associated with amateurs, young women, and stuffed animals. It is safe to say that models carrying stuffed animals in 1972 were not used to create fear.

Newsweek’s 1976 article, “Kennedys: More Pillow Talk” is an article making claims about former President Kennedy’s extramarital affairs and possible illegal drug use. According to this article while former President Kennedy was smoking marijuana he was quoted in stating, “This isn’t like cocaine, I’ll get you some of that”(Kennedys 32). This article is worth noting because cocaine use is being associated with a former president. Also former President Kennedy and his wife were known as being a glamorous presidential couple with style and class. Therefore associating cocaine use with President Kennedy was not only associating cocaine with a member of America’s elite, but also associating cocaine with fashionable living.

The 1977 article “The Mexican Prison Swap” is an article detailing the swap of Mexican prisoners for American prisoners. The United States and Mexico came to a decision allowing American prisoners in Mexico prisons to be transferred to American prisoners to serve the remainder of their prison sentence in the United States and vice versa. The article however

does not criminalize the American prisoners and treats their homecoming like that of war heroes coming back to the States. The war hero rhetoric can be found in the line, “All they lacked was a snappy salute at the top of the ramp” (Holt 35). Later the article began to describe convictions. Both charges detailed were that of cocaine smuggling. The first was a woman who was forced to give birth in a Mexican prison due to her conviction of cocaine smuggling. Detailing the birth of the 18-month old baby girl allows room for sympathy rather than condemnation. The second story was of a man who was tortured with an electric cattle prod for trying to smuggle cocaine from Bogota to Los Angeles. Using describing his torture and also builds sympathy for the cocaine smuggler and does not criminalize him. This 1977 article builds sympathy for American cocaine smugglers.

The 1978 article, “Inside Hollywood” is an article detailing the glamorous life of Hollywood actors and directors. Everything from the upscale restaurants frequented by Hollywood’s elite to the price of their cars and houses is detailed. There is only one section that mentions a downside to the glamour. The section focuses on the then front page story of director Roman Polanski who fled the country to avoid charges of a sexual affair with a 13 year old girl. Following that section, is the line, “And by all accounts drugs - particularly cocaine - are still getting a heavy play”, explaining that cocaine is the specific drug of choice for Hollywood’s elite (Ruby 70). In an article detailing the glamour of big players in Hollywood, cocaine is specifically brought up as being a part of that glamour. A famous film producer is quoted in saying, “Everybody knows certain people are on drugs, but that doesn’t mean they’re unreliable” (70). This statement adds acceptance to drug use, presumably cocaine drug use, and also allows for readers believe that one can be functional while using cocaine. According to this article cocaine is a glamorous, accepted drug by Hollywood’s elite, and it does not affect your functionality nor your career.

Beck's 1979 "A Ban on Drug Paraphernalia?" is a story on crack down on the selling of drug paraphernalia. The story begins with an undercover cop dressed up in an outfit that is supposed to exude 'normal head shop shopper attire'. He is dressed wearing, "faded jeans and a racing-car T shirt", and looks over the colorful display and buys a book on cocaine and a bottle of a substance used to dilute cocaine. This is one of the rare cases of cocaine possibly being associated with middle classness before the 1980s. The undercover cop's attire, faded jeans and a T shirt, is far from a glamorous outfit, and when he purchases paraphernalia associated with cocaine, it associates a middle class outfit with cocaine. The weakness in this association is that the outfit along with the purchase is fake. This is an undercover cop faking and trying to look like a normal head shopper so one could find critique whether his outfit and purchase matched the normal everyday occurrences of head shops. The article concludes by stating "one in 22 have tried cocaine" compared to the one in five Americans who have tried marijuana making cocaine the less threatening drug.

"Miami's Narcobucks" is a 1980 article detailing the hundreds of millions of dollars flooding South Florida due to the narcotics trade. Here specifically cocaine trafficking is being linked to increased amounts of illegal money laundering through banks in Miami, Florida. While this article directly associates cocaine with crime, the crime a sort of victimless crime. Large amounts of money flooding Miami and being laundered to secret off shore accounts does not create a feeling of immediate danger. These crimes are also not associated with any particular race in the article allowing for the reader to create the picture of the white collar criminals. Here cocaine is not being associated with glamour but is associated with large sums of money and victimless crime. In this article, cocaine is causing increased amount of illegal activity, the activity only seems to be affecting DEA, FBI, and U.S custom agents who are agents.

"Drug on the Job: The Quiet Problem" opens with a story of a financially struggling office supply delivery man who sells marijuana on the side to add an extra \$500 of tax

free money a week to his income. Cocaine is later mentioned in the line, “employees at one electronics firm openly dry cocaine in the corporate microwave ovens”, implying its acceptance in the corporate work place. While marijuana is associated with a working class salesman, cocaine is associated with a corporate firm. The word “firm” instead of office also adds to the sense of higher prestige; therefore making a stark class distinction with those who use cocaine. This article also associates cocaine use with being employed. Later articles covering crack will rarely associate crack use with steady employment. Again cocaine here is viewed as being a drug that does not negatively affect your career or employment status.

“The De Lorean Carnival” is a 1984 article describing the carnival environment of the trial surrounding the General Motors Executive who is was accused of being involved in a \$24 million cocaine drug deal. The article begins with describing the defendant’s wife as being a, “fashion-model wife” who wears her “\$300 sunglasses” every day of court. Describing the trial surrounding a \$24 million as a carnival makes the criminalization of cocaine drug deals almost a joke. Combining the expensive sunglasses with the prestigious position held by the defendant and cocaine continues to be associated with wealth. A 1984 article

The article “Breaking Out: America Goes Dancing”, is the first Newsweek article is an interesting article. The main article is about the new style of dancing that was created in the Bronx New York called break dancing. The article goes on to further describe the environment surrounding break dancing including hip hop dj’s and rap music. According to the article the song “white lines” is a song that is catching the attention of a broader audience because of its warnings against cocaine. This article claims that because rap artists are rapping about cocaine, now, “All these preppy, white kids are coming in” and wanting to buy rap records. The broader audience is referring to “preppy white kids”. This is being attributed to message songs warning about cocaine. So while hip hop and all its elements are connected to inner cities like the Bronx in New York, its broader reach is attributed to songs about cocaine. This means cocaine is not a

characteristic of inner cities, its is a characteristic of the new broader audience which is white kids. While this article is focused on the positive new urban culture created by hip hop, it also simultaneously associates topics surrounding cocaine with being relevant to a white audience.

“Colombia’s Kings of Coke” is a 1985 article giving overview of the main South American players in cocaine trafficking business. In this article cocaine is associated with wealth and influence but the rhetoric has shifted. The way these Kings of Coke are handling their wealth has negative connotations. The Colombian Kings of Coke are described as all sharing traits of being, “cocky adventurers who flaunt their millions, buying everything from banks and hotels to soccer teams and fighting bulls” (Whitaker 19). Their success and affluence is not being glamorized but being turned immoral. The cocaine kings’ wealth is seen as gaudy instead of classy. The article also focuses on the violence associated with these kings of cocaine placing them more on the immoral end of the spectrum. Later in the article a cocaine king is known for having an obsession with Adolf Hitler solidifying the association of large Colombian cocaine traffickers with evil. Because of the amount of wealth these cocaine kings accumulate and the power that comes along with that wealth the article details the need for more law enforcement funding and man power. While American drug use is not being associated with violent crimes, cocaine trafficking is being associated with violent crime and is linked to funding the immoral lifestyle of these cocaine kings.

The June of 1986 article, “Cocaine is a Loaded Gun” is an article addressing the death of college basketball star Len Bias. Len Bias was a star basketball player for the University of Maryland and died after being picked to play professional basketball of cocaine intoxication. This story goes on to explain how much “killer potential” lies in cocaine and that despite cocaine’s danger college athletes still use it. The article describes cocaine as a, “glamour drug, seemingly safer than heroin or PCP”, that kills. This rhetoric holds on to cocaine’s association to glamour but concludes with the result of death. The coverage of cocaine after the Len Bias death is a sharp

difference from previous coverage of cocaine. In this article cocaine kills while in previous articles cocaine was simply a drug of style. The Len Bias death placed cocaine back on the map of dangerous drugs along with crack.

The next article, "Cocaine Babies: Hooked at Birth" is an article that details the horrors of babies being born addicted to cocaine. The article insinuates that cocaine addicted babies is becoming more and more popular. In the line, "doctors are certain that the number of cocaine-affected babies is rising, Newsweek makes implies that it is a fact that cocaine-affected babies are becoming more prevalent but he language is that doctors are certain, which in reality means doctors think cocaine affected babies are rising (Barol 56). The article does acknowledge that it is difficult to separate a newborn being affected by specifically cocaine because often times the mother is on multiple drugs. The more shocking part of this article is its dismissal of scientific studies. In the line, "Although premature births have not been indicated as a major risk in most of the studies conducted so far, some doctors are convinced that cocaine causes them," Barol displays a disregard for the studies and relies more on a doctor's opinion (56). "Cocaine Babes" is actively trying to link cocaine abuse to inflicting harm on newborns despite supportive evidence.

### **Time Magazine Crack Coverage**

Time Magazine's first article about crack was in their December of 1985 issue. It was titled, "Narcotics: A Deadly New Hit". The title again is something to analyze before the actual body of the article. The part "Narcotics" is a segment the magazine posts every issue on the new updates in Narcotics. A narcotics segment in every issue during the 1980s helps describe the social climate of that time. Narcotics were a main topic in the 1980s. The rest of the title "A Deadly New Hit" instantly lets the reader know that there is a new narcotic and that is deadly. Negative connotations are already associated with the new narcotic before it is given a name.

There is also no instant class association like with the previous titles about cocaine that started with titles such as “Modern Living” which associated cocaine use with being modern. The article begins, “On the mean streets of New York City, where the drug entered the marketplace last year, it is known as ‘crack’. Unlike the “Modern Living” article that specified the Manhattan’s East Side when giving a location to cocaine use, the location for crack is specified as being introduced on the ‘mean streets of New York City’. There is no specific region of New York City highlighted here but what readers do know is that crack is found on the ‘mean streets’, adding more negative connotations to crack.

Also now a social class can possibly be associated with crack cocaine; you would not call Upper East Side Manhattan’s streets mean. Crack is not found with upper class wealthy Americans but it is found on the undesirable streets of New York City. Also Upper East Side Manhattan is a specific location while mean streets of New York City is a broader description spreading crack’s reach from the beginning.

The next line describes crack as “highly purified cocaine” which is just not true. Crack does have a more intense feeling of euphoria than cocaine but that is due to the method of ingestion the potency of the substance. The low price and intense high is emphasized as being alluring to teenagers from all socioeconomic backgrounds. From the start crack is not advertised to only affect a specific social class but a large range of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. From this article readers learn that crack is found on the undesirable streets of New York City but attracts people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. These two facts associate crack with mean undesirable neighborhoods, while simultaneously attracting teenagers from all socioeconomic backgrounds; creating an environment for fear. Fear of the deadly drugs of the mean streets spreading to suburban teenagers.

The article also mentions that 13 states have reported the drug’s presence making it not just a New York City problem and creating more fear. Another special feature of stating that 13

states have reported the drug is that those specific 13 states are not mention allowing for the possibility for readers who live in states not yet affected by crack to incorrectly fear that crack has infiltrated their state. Time Magazine's first article about crack that does not even reach 200 words has the possibility of creating a large impact on the views of people's perception of the new drug.

The first line of "The High Price of Abuse" sets the tone for the rest of the article. In its description of crack the line reads, "Crack is cocaine intensified. Its effects are cocaine's -- but amplified, sharper, meaner, uglier." clearly stating that crack is worse than cocaine in every way (High). Beginning the article with the statement that crack is more intense version of cocaine defines the article and the drug. It is a short easily comprehensible sentence. Anyone can remember that crack is cocaine intensified. The article goes on to explain the science behind crack's intensity. The terms biochemistry, and dopamine flood the readers' brain while the first line is a clear statement that the reader can take away from the article.

Lamar's "Crack: A Cheap and Deadly Cocaine is a Fast-spreading Menace" is short article describing the everyday activities of the crack game in different parts of the country. The description of LA as involving, "the desperate addicts chasing an ever more elusive high know it as "rock.", adds negative rhetoric towards the crack addict. The addict is described as desperate creating a picture of a completely undesirable person and distancing the reader from the crack addict. Readers could find themselves susceptible to being addicted to something but they might find it harder to being desperate. Being desperate is seen as a flaw and not a known human characteristic like addiction. Adding a personal flaw onto crack addicts leans toward holding the crack addicts responsible for their addiction not because they are human but because of who they are as an individual. This article supports readers to blame crack addicts for their addiction.

Thomas' "America's Crusade" is an article narrating America's fight against drug use from the militaristic drug enforcement agencies to the local neighbors placing red exes

on crack dealers' doors. The article displays the New York headline, "CRACK USERS" BABIES' CROWDING HOSPITAL NURSERIES", implying there being something wrong with babies who born to mothers who use crack being in hospital nurseries (Thomas). The article also advertises the upcoming televised address from President Reagan and his wife Nancy Reagan on their position on drug use. There is a breakdown of the increased budget dedicated to drug enforcement. The article quotes the New York City Police commissioner saying, "I believe the crime problem in America today is the drug problem", claiming that crime rates are directly influenced by the drug trade. The article then goes on to narrate the history of American drug abuse and drug regulation concluding the history lesson stating that America's drug problem in 1986 is far worse than America's previous drug problems. This article gives off a rhetoric that displays a picture of all Americans working together to fight drug abuse. All of the drug problems described in the mini history lesson were taken under control which implies that the all-around effort will also result in crack and cocaine being taken under control. This of course will happen only if everyone joins in the fight against drugs.

An interesting article popped up in the October 6th 1986 issue titled, "Press: Reporting the Drug Problem". This article claimed there was an over reporting of crack and that this was due to the desire to sell magazines and up ratings. Henry reports that, "NBC has aired more than 400 reports on drug abuse since the beginning of March", implying a case of over reporting. The article concludes with the position that piece by piece crack and cocaine is not being hyped but because almost all news media is reporting about crack and cocaine it is definitely has a heightening effect (Henry).

### **Newsweek Magazine Crack Coverage**

On March 17th, 1986 Newsweek Magazine posted its first article about crack-cocaine. The title was "An Epidemic: Kids and Coke". From Newsweek's first article the title alone

associates children with this new 'epidemic'. The fact that crack is being claimed to be an epidemic on its first news coverage is extreme. This five sentence article sets the tone for the Newsweek coverage of crack cocaine. The first sentence, "Cocaine, once the illicit plaything of the trendy and well-to-do, is now being sold in a cheap and dangerous new form -- and American teenagers are succumbing to its allure," is announces the new drug, insights fear, creates the desire to protect the youth (Epidemic 3). Again cocaine use is associated with being trendy and a drug for the successful. The transition, "is now" gives off the feeling that the image of success being trendy is being distorted.

The words 'cheap' and 'dangerous' combine to create negative images surrounding crack. Describing the drug as dangerous is the beginning of creating fear around crack. The line, "American teenagers are succumbing to its allure," is a line that makes the American teenager seem helpless and in need of protection (Epidemic 3). American teenagers are not using the new drug they are succumbing to it taking power from the teenagers and placing the power with the drug. Before crack is even named in the article it is viewed as having power. The new drug is personified into being a dangerous and alluring figure. Crack will be personified into a dangerous figure that is feared and held accountable for the conditions surrounding its use. The personification of crack is the first stark contrast to coverage of crack versus the coverage of cocaine.

"Tale of Three Addictions" is a series of three young women's battle with crack and cocaine addiction. The first story details a 19 year hold's battle with crack addiction. The single parented mother is quoted stating, "I picked her up to throw her out and felt her bones sticking out. It scared the hell out of me", in response to her daughter knocking on her door in the middle of the night. Later the daughter refuses treatment and steals money and valuables from her mother and ends up back on the streets. Here the daughter is seen as coming from what some would find a trouble home because of her mother's single parent status. The sympathy is placed

on the mother instead of the drug addicted daughter. The line, "Eileen struggled hard to raise her daughter alone, but Lori didn't seem to appreciate her efforts," adds sympathy to the mother Eileen and makes her drug addicted daughter seem unappreciative. Sympathy is being focused more on the consequences of Lori's drug addiction on those around her than the negative effects of drug addiction on Lori herself.

The second story titled, "Child of the Mean Streets" is a story about a 13 year old girl who battled crack addiction, crack addicted parents, and the rough environment that surrounded her. The article details the difficult life the girl had to live through including rape and suicidal thoughts. Her saving grace was her grandmother who entered her into a drug treatment facility who helped her recover. The article also acknowledged that the 13 year old was Hispanic making a racial tie to crack. Again, the conditions of crack use are grim and have horrifying consequences. This time the sympathy is focused on the young girl who lived a hard life starting at a young age.

The third and final story title 'A Cheerleader's Fall' is a story about a 14 year old past cheerleader who became addicted to cocaine after being suspended from the cheerleading squad. This article focuses on how Andrea, the 14 year old, was an honors student who was a part of the social elite before her drug abuse. Andrea hit the bottom when she ran away from home and started using free-base cocaine which is a smokeable form of cocaine that is mixed with ether instead of baking soda. Free-base cocaine is addictive like crack but more expensive. Andrea's story ends with her being treated and going back to her good student life style. The article also attributes her improvement on her new step father who is playing a vital role in her recovery.

This article offers a great insight into the image of the crack user and cocaine user that Newsweek is painting. The crack user comes from a troubled home, while the cocaine user was a good student but is sucked in after a disappointment. Also, in the article the cocaine

user is successfully rehabilitated due to the entrance of the supportive father figure which is lacking in the previous two stories.

“The Drug Crisis: Crack and Crime” is an article emphasizing the significant negative impact crack has made on American society. Crack is emphasized as being the national security issue and should be on the top of policy maker’s list of priorities as well as being a main concern of Newsweek readers. Crack is being held responsible for, “creating enormous profits for drug traffickers, spawning crime and destroying thousands of lives”(Drug Crisis 3). Associating crack with crime, and the destruction of lives makes crack something to fear and fight. Because of crack Newsweek is calling policy makers to take action to protect American lives from crack.

Smiths’s 1986 article, “The Plague Among Us: The Drug Crisis” is an article built on sensationalized metaphors. The first metaphor is in the title. Using the word “plague” to describe the America’s drug addiction problem implies that people are being killed at an alarming rate. Also because the plague was a disease it could also imply that the drug crisis is contagious. The article opens with the line, “An epidemic is abroad in America, as pervasive and as dangerous in its way as the plagues of medieval times.’ solidifies the plague comparison while including the term epidemic. As discussed before epidemic automatically comes with negative connotations. Placing terms ’epidemic’ and ’plague’ in the same sentence multiply their affect making the drug situation bigger than just the plague and bigger than just the epidemic. The drug crisis is both.

“The Plague Among Us” goes on to detail who Newsweek has been on top of its drug coverage since the LSD boom in the 1960s. While Newsweek has always covered problem drugs in America it vows to intensify its coverage of crack because of how much more serious and dangerous crack is. Smith informs readers that, “crack happens to be the newest, purest and most addictive commodity now on the market, but there is more -- much more,” in his fear inducing

rhetoric (15). Smith's language labels crack as the most dangerous drug on the market. The article goes on to state that crime rates have spiked with drug use being the direct cause. In the article they state they will begin to cover crack as an "authentic crisis. The final statement, "and the story of crack and the law reflects our commitment to share that concern with our readers," is a self-directed call to action. In June of 1986 Newsweek is planning on making their coverage of crack more serious and addressing crack more as an American crisis.

"Crack and Crime" begins with the story of a crack bust in the "high-crime streets of Boston" (Morganthau 16). Fear is the driving force throughout this article. The first fear is the cops fearing that if they do not keep up with the drug busts then crack will become as prevalent on the streets of Boston as they are in New York City. The second fear in the article is that crack is spreading not only to cities like Boston but throughout the nation. The third fear created by the article is that police are losing their battle against crack. This fear works by creating a feeling of helplessness. If a reader is afraid of crack entering his or her neighborhood and depends on the police to prevent that from happening; hearing that the police are losing will increase his or her fears.

Another fear created in the article is a fear of crack being a stimulant. Morganthau compares crack to heroin finding comfort in the fact that heroin is a depressant leaving users immobile while crack makes user alert, active and paranoid. A special feature about this article is that it gives a description of crack dealers. The description of crack dealers is someone who is, "wearing Fila running shoes". While this is not a detailed description it is not a description of a professional. It is a street tennis shoe. The next scare tactic is reinforces the first fear that crack is spreading instead this time it specifies where. In the line, "There are ominous signs that crack and rock dealers are expanding well beyond the inner city. L.A. police say rock houses are opening up in San Fernando Valley and in beach-front towns like Venice; in Florida, lawmen report a similar trend," crack is being described as moving from the inner cities to good

neighborhoods(17). Fearing that an inner city problem will make its way to the suburbs and good neighborhoods across the country makes crack more of a national problem.

“An Inferno of Craving, Dealing and Despair” is an article detailing the lives of two crack dealers who conduct their business in Time Square, New York. One of them ends up in jail while the other was arrested for prostitution has dreams of being a social worker. The article concludes with concluding that these two dealers’ stories being the result of the plague of crack. Crack in this story is the cause of their misery; crack is again personified and has caused a plague that is responsible for ruining people’s lives.

“Crack: The Road Back” is a June 1986 article opening with the story of a woman who came from a good family’s struggle and eventual rehabilitation from crack. The article explains that she is one of the lucky ones. The article goes on to explore the great business opportunity opening a drug rehabilitation center is because of its high demand during the crack epidemic. Here, drug use is now being advertised as an opportunity to capitalize on financially. Because there is an epidemic of drug abuse and a limited amount of drug rehabilitation, the rehabilitation business would a smart investment according to this article. A part of this article worth noting is that crack smoker that comes from a good family is rehabilitated. In previous articles about crack smokers, they are usually destined for demise. This article implies that if you come from a good family you can still become hooked on crack but you might be one of the ‘lucky ones’ and be saved and rehabilitated with the help of your good family.

## Chapter 7

### Analysis

Both Time and Newsweek share similar general rhetoric regarding crack and cocaine. Articles like “Modern Living: Tyrannical King Coke” and “Inside Hollywood” glamorize cocaine use without focusing on the possible side effects of its use. It took Newsweek the death of college basketball star Len Bias, to finally emphasize the high possibility of death that comes with using cocaine. TIME magazine started to report their skepticism of cocaine when realizing that cocaine addiction can happen to people who start out using cocaine socially. Even after the realizations of the dangers of cocaine, glamorous rhetoric continued to be woven throughout reports of cocaine. Glamour, status, modern living, and affluence all surrounded cocaine coverage. The polar opposite occurred with crack coverage.

Time and Newsweek coverage of crack is based in fear. The first method of creating fear around crack was associating crack with children. The first article recognizing crack in Newsweek was titled “An Epidemic: Kids and Coke”. Associating children and babies with crack use automatically plays to the emotions of the audience. Another fear inducing rhetoric woven in crack coverage was the term epidemic. Epidemic is a term that implies mass danger. Also the fact that crack was introduced as an epidemic, “An Epidemic: Kids and Coke”, makes it more scary. Crack did not become an epidemic it was birthed as an epidemic into the media. TIME magazine’s “The Plague Among Us; The Drug Crisis” is also an article that used a term implying mass harm. A plague is a disease that spreads rapidly killing a mass number of people. TIME magazine’s second article involving crack, crack’s impact was compared to that of a plague.

The coverage of crack and cocaine are far from similar. If an article mentioned that crack was a form of cocaine it often went on to incorrectly state that crack was the more potent form of cocaine. These two disparate coverage of crack and cocaine from TIME and Newsweek magazines aide in understanding how chemically similar substances carried different prison sentence terms. It makes sense how the drug associated with terms like plague and epidemic was criminalized harsher than the drug associated with glamour and affluence. The plague is one hundred times worse than a martini.

As displayed in the Time and Newsweek articles media has the opportunity to heavily influence its audience on their opinions of a topic. Readers of these magazines are not just TIME and Newsweek's audience they are voters. Voters who by reading the news are attempting to stay informed on the news around them. Understanding that voters look towards the media for information helps emphasize that, "media should matter because they provide most of the information people use in voting" (Stromberg 652). Voters do not automatically adopt the opinions of news outlets but these news outlets emphases on particular topics display the topic's importance. TIME and Newsweek may not have influence voters to believe that crack is one hundred times worse than cocaine, but they do influence voters to think about crack and cocaine. Stromberg explains, "media may influence policy by influencing the weight voters put on different issues in their voting choice" reiterating that the main way the media influences its audience is creating hot topics not necessarily forming people's opinions on topics (652).

Rhetoric behind news coverage aides in influencing the public's perception of the news. Most of the articles described crack and cocaine's use through vignettes of specific users of either crack or cocaine. Little attention was given to the long-term and overall effects of the drugs. West explains, "Far more attention is devoted to personalities and specific events than to longer-term policy development" (1007). Audiences were given specific stories with specific problems, and wanting public policy to address those specific issues on a mass scale. "Tale of

Three Addictions”, outlined three girls’ specific stories that tugged at the audience’s emotions. If these audience members are expecting public policy to address a girl’s drug use that comes from a single parent home but on a mass scale, the target of that policy will be displaced.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusion**

By analyzing the rhetoric of the TIME and Newsweek articles it became clear that the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act was in response to the rhetoric behind crack and cocaine that was created by coverage like TIME and Newsweek magazines. The glamour, social status and association with affluence aided in making cocaine seem like a drug that was not as harmful as crack. The plague, epidemic, and overall negative environment associated with crack use confirmed beliefs that crack was the worse drug in America and far worse than its glamorous counterpart cocaine. TIME and Newsweek coverage worked hand in hand with the context of the early to mid-1980s. Claiming a drug is an epidemic during a war on drug heightens the need for the drug to be eradicated. The Reagan Administration's growing support for more funding and militarization to combat drug use in America aided in creating an environment that placed drugs on the top of the list of priorities. The articles creation of fear with the government's mobilization to take action against all things drug related creation the perfect recipe for a harsh piece of legislation. Knowing that drug policy has a history of responding to the rhetoric behind a drug, it is clear that it would have been extremely unprecedented the 1986 drug policy would have treated crack and cocaine close to similar because the rhetoric of the mid1980s deemed them to have two completely different impacts on the country. If drug policy responds to the rhetoric then relatively equal crack and cocaine sentencing laws would have not been a correct response to the public rhetoric. Unfortunately responding to the rhetoric behind drug use is a misguided approach and could result in public policy that does not solve the problem but create new ones.

Much of the rhetoric behind crack and cocaine used information that was incorrect. TIME and Newsweek reported multiple times on how much more potent crack was than regular powder cocaine; however that is not the case. Newsweek reported that crack affected babies being born was on the rise while simultaneously admitting that it was difficult to distinguish between a crack affected baby and a baby subject to other drugs such as alcohol. The magazine articles linked crack to poverty, prostitution, and crime ridden environments. Crime ridden environments, prostitution and poverty existed before the introduction of crack. The rhetoric behind the media personified crack as the cause of the inner cities woes and threaten to spread its plague across the country. When rhetoric is turned into policy it makes it difficult to find the actual problem to in turn create an actual solution. Crime, poverty, and unhealthy newborns existed before crack existed in the inner cities and affluence, glamour and socialites existed before cocaine. If policy makers and the American public could have looked past the sensational rhetoric of the news media, then it could have seen the possibility that crack might not have been the cause of the inner cities problems but instead a result.

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## ACADEMIC VITA

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#### Objective

To secure a position as a law school student

#### Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA      May 2013  
College of the Liberal Arts

#### Honors and Fellowships

Schreyer Honors Scholar  
-Penn State's Honors Program  
Paterno Fellow  
-College of the Liberal Arts Honors Program

#### Work/Internship Experience

University Park, PA      June 2012 - Present  
Tutor for the Morgan Academic Support Center for Student Athletes  
-Tutored student athletes  
-Established beneficial study habits for students  
-Produced target GPA for the athletes to ensure eligibility

State College, PA      May 2012-August 2012  
Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General  
-Advocated for victims of consumer abuse  
-Managed over 300 cases in 3 months of consumer complaints

Richmond, VA      May 2011- Present  
Astrix Medical Supplies  
-Maintained office supply stationery to keep operations running smoothly  
-Created systems of operation for daily business procedures

University Park, PA      October 2009 - Present  
THON Mail Call Captain  
-Led a group of 35 committee members  
-Organized events for over 720 participants