

THE UGLY SIDE OF DRUGS \ FROM YOUNG AND OLD USERS AND PUSHERS

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The dope man taught him everything.

He showed him **the** cool people to hang with, how to spot narcs poised for a raid on a dope house and how to sell **the** dope so he could have his own large wad **of** bills.

When he was 10 years old, J.W. was **the** baby-sitter for **the** dope man's children, and **the** dope man with his flashy car and expensive clothes took a liking to J.W., paying him \$100 whenever he spotted a narc in his west **side** Detroit neighborhood.

At 12, J.W. got his first gun, a 32-caliber. He also tasted heroin, a taste that became **the** \$150-a-day habit he could not kick despite two runs through **drug** -treatment programs -- "they were trash" -- and two prison terms.

At 26, J.W. was in **the** Detroit House **of** Correction, where he was serving one year for using heroin and carrying a .45- caliber Remington revolver. He was a junkie-pusher, a two- time state prison inmate who talked like a veteran on **the** terrible new risk in Detroit's **drug** wars.

"It was all right when **the** older guys had **the** dope," said J.W., who asked that his full name not be used. "They took care **of** their business. They wouldn't harass you. Then they put **the** dope in **the** young guys' hands, and it messed things up."

THE CITY PRISON in Plymouth was filled with street-wise **drug** experts like J.W., said Warden Emmett Baylor Jr. He suspected it was because **of** state prison crowding and judges' use **of** his prison as a place for short-termers.

Between 30 and 40 percent **of the** 850 inmates were there on **drug** -related crimes, Baylor suggested.

They were baby-faced newcomers and needle-scarred old-timers stuck at two ends **of** an **ugly** world: people who provide a chilling history **of** Detroit's deadly addiction to **drugs** and proof **of** **the** gun- **drugs** -crime connection.

The newcomers bragged about being tough, about being a man on **the** streets, man enough to kill somebody and about **the** good money pushers earn, sometimes \$1,000 a week.

Some said it was **the** big-money image **of** gangs such as Young Boys Inc. that lured them into giving up their low-paying jobs to run **drugs** .

Unskilled, barely educated, they wondered if they could forget **the** rich **drug** life-style once they got out.

The old-timers complained about how heroin prices have gone up, impure **drugs** and **the** increased danger on **the** streets. They reminisced about junkie pals who died years ago while in prison for any number **of** crimes, mostly larcenies and burglaries.

ALBERT BLOUNT, 53, who started using **drugs** in Detroit in 1948, recalled when pushers did not carry guns, when there was respect between pushers and junkies and when nobody sold to children.

If they did, **the** police would really get down their backs, he said.

Blount, a tall, thin Georgia-born man with badly scarred arms that looked like diseased weeds, stopped shooting heroin four years ago when he ran out **of** veins to put it into his body. He switched to cocaine and dilaudid. He served eight prison terms on crimes that he says were all **drug** -related.

He was serving one year for **drug** possession.

Blount, one **of the** first pushers in his east **side** Detroit neighborhood in **the** 1960s, said that, now, " **drugs** are all over **the** area."

What upset him is how **the** youngsters have taken over **drugs** .

" **The** young guys got this stereotype about **drugs** that you are supposed to be a hit man," he said. "Their conception is all wrong. I saw this catching on in **the** 1960s. These youngsters began to associate with gangsters, and now it's all **the** youngsters know. They have never seen **the drug** thing I have."

The future for him doesn't look much different.

"I don't see much change," he said with a shrug. "I don't know if I can stop dealing. I need money.

"I might as well be honest about that."

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