

CBS News Transcripts 60 MINUTES November 21, 1993

HEADLINE: THE CIA'S COCAINE; CIA APPARENTLY BEHIND SHIPPING OF A TON OF COCAINE INTO THE US FROM VENEZUELA

BODY: THE CIA'S COCAINE

(When Mike Levine (DEA-retired) spoke with his former colleague at DEA, Annabelle Grimm regarding this case, he was told that "27 tons minimum" had entered the country)

MORLEY SAFER: A ton of cocaine--pure cocaine, worth hundreds of millions—is smuggled into the United States. Sound familiar? Not the way this ton of cocaine got here, according to what the former head of the Drug Enforcement Administration told Mike Wallace. This drug shipment got here courtesy of what he calls drug trafficking by the CIA, in partnership with the Venezuelan national guard. While rumors of CIA involvement in drug trafficking have circulated for years, no one in the US government has ever before publicly charged the CIA with this kind of wrongdoing. It is not the kind of accusation anyone in government would make without thinking long and hard.

MIKE WALLACE: Let me understand what you're saying. A ton of cocaine was smuggled into the United States of America by the Venezuelan national guard...

Judge ROBERT BONNER (Former Head, Drug Enforcement Administration): Well, they... [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_C.\\_Bonner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_C._Bonner)

WALLACE: ...in cooperation with the CIA?

Judge BONNER: That's what--that's exactly what appears to have happened. (Footage of Wallace and Bonner walking)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) Until last month, Judge Robert Bonner was the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the DEA. And Judge Bonner explained to us that only the head of the DEA is authorized to approve the transportation of any illegal narcotics, like cocaine, into this country, even if the CIA is bringing it in.

Judge BONNER: Let me put it this way, Mike. If this has not been approved by DEA or an appropriate law-enforcement authority in the United States, then it's illegal. It's called drug trafficking. It's called drug smuggling.

WALLACE: So what you're saying, in effect, is the CIA broke the law; simple as that.

Judge BONNER: I don't think there's any other way you can rationalize around it, assuming, as I think we can, that there was some knowledge on the part of CIA. At least

some participation in approving or condoning this to be done. (Footage of Wallace and Bonner; the CIA seal)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) Judge Bonner says he came to that conclusion after a two-year secret investigation conducted by the DEA's Office of Professional Responsibility, in cooperation with the CIA's own inspector general. And what reason did the CIA have for promoting this drug smuggling?

Judge BONNER: Well, the only rationale that's ever been offered is that that--this would lead to some valuable drug intelligence about the Colombian cartels. (Footage of a drug inspection; a ship; trucks; a building; General Ramon Guillen Davila)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) Over half of the Colombian drug cartel's cocaine crosses the border with Venezuela on its way to the United States and Europe. Back in the 1980s, the CIA was mandated by then-President Reagan to develop intelligence on the Colombian drug cartels. And so the CIA, with Venezuela's Guardia Nacional, or national guard, set up an undercover operation, a drug-smuggling operation in Venezuela that could handle the trans-shipment of the Colombian cartel's cocaine on its way to market.

The plan was to infiltrate the cartel, and it worked, for the CIA-national guard undercover operation quickly accumulated this cocaine, over a ton and a half that was smuggled from Colombia into Venezuela inside these trucks and then was stored here at the CIA-financed Counternarcotics Intelligence Center in Caracas. The center's commander and the CIA's man in Venezuela was national guard General Ramon Guillen Davila.

Ms. ANNABELLE GRIMM (Drug Enforcement Agency): I tried to work together with them. I was always aware that they were not telling me everything they were doing. (Footage of Grimm; a building; Mark McFarlin; a plane taking off)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) Annabelle Grimm was a DEA agent with 18 years' experience when she was made agent-in-charge in Caracas. And she says that the CIA station chief, James Campbell, and this man, Mark McFarlin, the CIA officer in charge at the center, told her that to keep the undercover smuggling operation credible, they had to keep the cartel happy, and the way to do that was simple: deliver their dope, untouched by US law enforcement, to the cartel's distributors, their dope dealers in the United States.

Ms. GRIMM: The CIA and the Guardia Nacional wanted to let cocaine go on into the traffic without doing anything. They wanted to let it come up to the United States, no surveillance, no nothing.

WALLACE: In other words, you weren't going to stop them in Miami or Houston or wherever. These drugs were simply going to go to the United States and then go into the traffic and eventually reach the streets.

Ms. GRIMM: That's what they wanted to do, yes. And we had very, very lengthy discussions. But I told them what the US law was and the fact that we could not do this.

WALLACE: So here you've got Jim Campbell, chief of station, who knows about this; Mark McFarlin, CIA officer, knows about this and are stimulating this--this business of sending what are uncontrolled deliveries of drugs--smuggling drugs into the United States, right?

Ms. GRIMM: Right.

WALLACE: Why in the world would they want to do that?

Ms. GRIMM: As they explained to me, that--this would enable them to gain the traffickers' confidence, keep their informant cool and it would result in future seizures of larger quantities of drugs. And also, they hoped to--I guess they thought they were going to get Pablo Escobar at the scene of the crime or something, which I found personally ludicrous.

WALLACE: But if Annabelle Grimm thought this was ludicrous, the CIA station chief, James Campbell, did not. He enlisted the assistance of CIA headquarters in Washington to get approval for the drug shipments. And his bosses at the CIA in Washington went over Annabelle Grimm's head, directly to her bosses at DEA headquarters in Washington.

Judge BONNER: They made this proposal and we said, 'No, no way. We will not permit this. It should not go forward.' And then, apparently, it went forward anyway. (Footage of Wallace and Bonner; a Guardia Nacional truck; inspectors)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) The joint DEA-CIA investigation we mentioned earlier confirmed that over a ton of cocaine made its way from the Counternarcotics Center in Caracas to the streets of the United States. And they discovered that at one point, General Guillen's national guard tried to ship 1,500 kilos at once.

Ms. GRIMM: They were not successful in that because apparently the package they had put together was too large. It wouldn't fit on the plane. (Footage of Guillen)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) General Guillen admits to the bungled operation. General RAMON GUILLEN DAVILA (Venezuelan Guardia Nacional): (Through interpreter) It was too big for the airplane door because the plane was a 707. WALLACE: The box was too big to get into the airplane, \$ 30 million worth of cargo, drugs? All these officials--the Venezuelans, the Americans, the--the Colombians--all so stupid that they don't have a box that's small enough to fit inside their own airplane?

Gen. GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) The traffickers made a mistake with the plane. (Footage of Guillen)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) Is it possible that General Guillen was doing this on his own, without the knowledge of the CIA?

Ms. GRIMM: I would find it very difficult, for several reasons, to believe that they did not know what was going on. They built, they ran, they controlled that center. General Guillen and his officers didn't go to the bathroom without telling Mark McFarlin or the CIA what they were going to do. (Footage of traffic; a Colombia road sign; an airplane landing)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) The drug-smuggling operation finally unraveled nearly a year after Annabelle Grimm says she told the CIA and General Guillen that it was illegal to send drugs uncontrolled into the US. Then a shipment arrived in Miami's International Airport and was seized, coincidentally, by US Customs. Customs traced those drugs back to the Venezuelan national guard, but General Guillen told us that operation had been approved by US authorities.

Gen. GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) Look, what I see here is that there is a problem between the CIA and the DEA, and perhaps they are trying to find a fall guy, who is General Guillen. If I had anything to do with illegal drug trafficking, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you. (Footage of Guillen; a document)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) General Guillen is right about one thing. He could travel to New York to talk to us about Judge Bonner's charges only because he had already been granted immunity from prosecution in that DEA-CIA inspector general's investigation. So we confronted the general with this document, a report from that investigation that reads like his confession. (Reading) 'Guillen lost his composure, and when directly confronted concerning his involvement in the unauthorized and illegal shipment of cocaine to the US, confesses.'

Gen. GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) Look, I say that that confession is not true. In that report, there are a lot of lies. It's useless. I have not confessed anywhere.

WALLACE: So you're clean?

Gen. GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) Clean until the last day God has for me. (Footage of Guillen; buildings; a document; McFarlin in a truck; a photograph of James Campbell; the CIA logo)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) So far there has been no legal action against General Guillen. As for the CIA officers? Well, Judge Bonner may believe that someone at the agency must have known, but the CIA and the US Department of Justice say they have discovered, quote, "No evidence of criminal wrongdoing."

However, the CIA did acknowledge to us that the investigation, quote, "Did reveal instances of poor judgment and management, leading to disciplinary actions for several CIA officers." Mark McFarlin, the CIA officer in charge of the Counternarcotics Center,

resigned from the agency last year. We tried to talk to him, but he told us the CIA would take legal action against him if he violated his secrecy agreement with the agency. As for James Campbell, the CIA station chief, we learned he was brought back to the US and promoted, but then he retired. Campbell did tell us, quote, "I've devoted my life to my country and feel like a victim in this thing. This happened without our knowledge.

We were there to prevent it." While CIA headquarters declined to answer our questions on camera, off camera a CIA official involved in the Venezuelan cocaine operation did. We talked to some people at the CIA. They say, 'The DEA does the same thing all the time. They let drugs walk. They let drugs into the traffic, and look the other way to further a more important goal.'

Judge BONNER: It's absolutely untrue. And frankly it--maybe it displays the kind of ignorance that makes the CIA dangerous in this area. It is wrong for an agency of the US government to facilitate and participate in allowing drugs to reach the streets. And apparently--you know, if the--if the CIA doesn't understand that, then I--I would be concerned that this kind of incident could be repeated. (Footage of Wallace and Dennis DeConcini)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) The CIA advised us they had recently briefed the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator Dennis DeConcini, and they urged us to talk with him, apparently believing he would defend the operation.

Senator DENNIS DeCONCINI (Senate Intelligence Committee): It was an operation that I don't think they should've been involved in.

WALLACE: No question, the drugs got in?

Sen. DeCONCINI: I don't doubt that the drugs got in here.

WALLACE: You'd think that maybe the agency would want to say, 'OK, we made a mistake.'

Sen. DeCONCINI: I think they made a mistake.

WALLACE: Yeah.

Sen. DeCONCINI: And I--you know, you hope when these mistakes are made that, hell, not too many more of them are, particularly when the mistake is a large quantity of substances like this that can kill people, and probably did. (Footage of Wallace and DeConcini)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) We asked the senator why no one in the CIA has been prosecuted for bringing in the drugs. Sen. DeCONCINI: It--you would seem to think there would be a good case there.

WALLACE: A case against?

Sen. DeCONCINI: Against an American who knew anything about it. But, you know, I've been a prosecutor, Mike, and you have to look at the case, convince a--a jury or a judge not to throw the case out. The Justice Department reviewed that and they decided not to prosecute these individuals from the agency. (Footage of the Venezuelan intelligence agency)

WALLACE: (Voiceover) And what about the vaunted intelligence gathered from the whole CIA anti-drug caper in Venezuela?

Judge BONNER: Well, let me tell you, I--first of all, I don't know of any. Because from what I know, no valuable intelligence of any kind was produced from this operation.

WALLACE: What intelligence was generated by the shipment of this 1,000 to 1,500 kilos, controlled or uncontrolled?

General GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) It was very positive.

WALLACE: Really? Who--who--who did you finger? What did you find out?

General GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) Right now, a truck driver and the truck that were trafficking drugs into Venezuela are under arrest. There was another truck and two similar van types were also caught.

WALLACE: So what you're saying is that you captured three or four or five truck drivers. I'm asking about intelligence in the United States that was generated by the actual shipment of these kilos into the United States.

General GUILLEN: (Through interpreter) Now whether or not here in the United States they arrested anyone or the intelligence gathered was useless, that is the responsibility of the Americans.

WALLACE: After speaking to us, General Guillen traveled to Miami, where federal agents found him and served him with a subpoena to appear before a newly revived grand jury investigation into the CIA's cocaine. But the word out of Venezuela is that the government there will not permit him to testify.

Ms. GRIMM: I look at that 1,000 kilos, at least that 1,000 kilos. I look at the fact--I mean, Mike, you're a taxpayer and that was US taxpayer money that built that center, that funded it, that maintained it. And I really take great exception to the fact that that 1,000 kilos came in funded by US taxpayer money and it hit the streets of the United States. I found that particularly appalling when you look at all the damaged lives that 1,000 kilos represents.

SAFER: And what happened to the tens of millions that were paid for the CIA's cocaine? Well, General Guillen insists he didn't get any of it. But Judge Bonner says one thing is certain, the Colombian cartel did. They got their money once the dope made it to our streets. Meanwhile, both the House and Senate Intelligence Oversight Committees continue to ask questions about what they call, quote, "the very serious charges surrounding the CIA's cocaine."

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Watch The Video on retired DEA agent Mike Levine's Youtube channel:

DEA Administrator Robert Bonner (Bonner later became a Federal Judge) "**CIA are drug smugglers.**" - **Federal Judge Bonner, head of DEA- You don't get better proof than this."**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_UbAmRGSYw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_UbAmRGSYw)

CIA Drug Smuggling - The Real Body Bag Case. with Undercover DEA Agent Michael Levine (author of NY Times non-fiction bestseller DEEP COVER) being coopted by CIA in South East Asia. Also: DEA busts CIA smuggling ton of cocaine. Head of DEA Judge Robert Bonner Accuses CIA directly of being drug smugglers. You don't need more proof than this.

Here are Mike Levine's comments on the video:

**Uploaded on Feb 18, 2011**

[michaellevine53 8 months ago](#)

**The whole investigation conducted by DEA, revealed that they were only caught for one ton, after they had gotten away with 26 tons over the previous year.** Check out some of our radio shows. Bottom line is they smuggled more dope than the Medellin Cartel

· in reply to [TheUnknownGrower \(Show the comment\)](#)

[Synnek1 7 months ago](#)

A Ton of "Cocaine"? More like: TONS! rofl! >:-)

[michaellevine53 7 months ago](#)

To be precise, a minimum of 27 tons...

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[michaellevine53 2 months ago](#)

Mr. P:

I may have a problem posting the entire show on youtube, but we have used the soundtrack on radio shows that you can find on the web site for The Expert Witness Radio show.. During these shows we discussed the findings that CIA, in fact, was caught smuggling 1ge quantities of cocaine that the people named in this brilliant investigative piece "should" have been indicted. If this is not enough I will have my producer and co-host digitize the 60 Minute piece and put it up on that site

· in reply to [MrPaulrael](#)

[michaellevine53 5 months ago](#)

Thanks for the kind words my friend. The book was DEEP COVER, in which I accused the attorney general at the time, Edwin Meece, of blowing the cover of an undercover team while they were outside the US (in Mexico, Panama and Bolivia) and very vulnerable to kidnapping and death. Unlike the CIA officer Valery Plame who was safely ensconced in her DC office when her cover was blown. Her case was, I suppose political. I was accusing people of treason. as libelous as it gets, if not true...

[michaellevine53 8 months ago](#)

Katie:

My first lesson in this came, as I documented in THE BIG WHITE, when CIA betrayed both the American people and the Bolivian government that trusted us, by supporting the drug traffickers in the takeover of Bolivia in the now infamous Cocaine Coup. It was the bloodiest revolution in that poor country;s history and the beginning of the crack/cocaine epidemic in ours.

· in reply to [Katie Nelson \(Show the comment\)](#)

[michaellevine53 9 months ago](#)

Let's start by demanding indictments in THIS case; we have solid evidence and credible DEA witnesses including a federal judge. Why go off on a conspiratorial tangent if we can't get an indictment in a case of CIA getting caught actually smuggling massive amounts of cocaine into the nation they're supposed to protect? When I was boxing on a USAF boxing team my coach said "if you open a cut keep hitting it till they stop they fight or the guy bleeds all over you." I'm giving you the cut.

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[michaellevine53 9 months ago](#)

my friend. Judge Bonner is still alive, so am I and so are the other DEA agents who appeared in the original 60 minute piece as witnesses detailing the case. the CIA agent who "masterminded" the smuggling of as much as 27 tons of cocaine into the US,(worse than Pablo Escobar) was named, and at the time was the CIA station chief of Venezuela. no one was prosecuted The reason i Posted it here is that , thanks to the use of taxpayer funds to manipulate media, few are aware of this scandal.



· 10 in reply to [Ben Dover \(Show the comment\)](#)

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

My friend, this video is only a short excerpt of an extensive investigation conducted by 60 minutes, which in turn was based on a joint secret investigation conducted by CIA and DEA internal security. Which resulted in Judge Bonner, the head of DEA making this statement... What more do you need?

I suggest you read THE BIG WHITE LIE

And DEEP COVER for even more detailed proof

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

I wrote about Noriega in "Deep Cover"-- A DEA and Customs undercover team was dealing with his people in Panama while he was still a CIA asset and protected by CIA. I don't think you will believe what happened unless you read the book and understand that every event was documented by secretly recorded audio and video. The book was a NY Times bestseller and Congress just pretended it didn't exist. Sadly, nothing has changed.

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[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

You've got to remember that during operation Trifecta (the deep cover operation in the book), Carlos Salinas de Gortari's bodyguard, on hidden video, promised me a wide open border to traffic drugs from Mexico into the US, if we completed the 15 ton drug deal we were in the midst of...NAFTA was then on the table before Congress... Ergo a lot of powerful people in our government that wanted the operation to fail before the American people became aware of it..That IS the real story in Deep Cover

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

The problem with answering your question is that it's the wrong question. It should be what logical reason would CIA have to be in bed with drug traffickers? First, is called "the junkie tax." CIA assets and black operations not funded by congress become self-funded via "licenses" to smuggle to the US. Two: There is no oversight of the CIA whatsoever, thus any "enterprising" officer can cut himself in on his asset's drug profits. If he gets caught, as in the 60 Minute piece, he's promoted.

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

Where was congress? Great question. The book DEEP COVER was voted one of the most censored by the media books of the year, by BILL MOYERS "Project Censored." Off camera, Mr. Moyers told me it was "the best read and least talked about book between the beltways. (Wash. DC)." It was almost funny. Meaning Congress wanted badly to ignore the book and its charges... If we had a responsible Congress, there would be no CIA supported drug traffickers, and Mexico would not be in the fix its in now.

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

In DEEP COVER, when you come to the part where the attorney general EDWIN MEECE, blows the cover of our undercover operation with a telephone call to the AG of Mexico (one of our targets) , WHILE the team was undercover in Bolivia, Panama and Mexico. Underline that passage, because the special

interests have not changed.. Remember the book was a NEW YORK TIMES bestseller, and the charge would be libelous as hell were it not true. Then ask yourself why mainstream media ignored the claim.

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

By the way. google it and you'll see that this past May, Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia held the Spanish translation of THE BIG WHITE LIE (La Guerra Falsa) up for it to be photographed by the world's press, proclaiming that it was the reason he had banned DEA from Bolivia. The mistake he made was that the book blamed CIA, not DEA. it described how CIA protection of top Bolivian drug traffickers helped them literally take over the Bolivian government during the "Cocaine Coup", 8/17/81.

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

You seem pretty knowledgeable and more astute than most. If you get a hold of THE BIG WHITE LIE, which is about a buck or two on the internet, you'll see that the first time Crack cocaine was documented was from Sonia Atala, the woman Pablo Escobar called "The Queen of Cocaine." While undercover working with me in 1983, she spoke of "Pichicata" (smokeable cocaine base) and how it was wildly addictive to Bolivian street kids. My report to DEA predicted it hitting the streets of the US shortly.

[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

The fact is that Bonner didn't take a bullet, he was just ignored. CIA director (then) Woolsey toured mainstream media making the false claim that the drug smuggling resulted from "a joint DEA CIA operation gone wrong." The fact is that DEA had no part in the operations which was, as the judge said, "CIA drug smuggling." 60 Minutes was the ONLY member of mainstream media to tell the truth.. The rest did their customary penguin walk. What a shame.

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[michaellevine53 1 year ago](#)

I did my own investigation including interviews with DEA people involved, before I went public on my radio show - the Expert Witness Show in NYC. The investigation revealed that as much as 27 tons of cocaine were shipped into the US by CIA before they were finally caught by US Customs. The CIA chief who ran it was named by 60 Minutes. No one was either prosecuted or lost their jobs, except for the DEA people who blew the whistle. With "protectors" like this who needs enemies?

Contact Mike Levine at:

[www.expertwitnessradio.org](http://www.expertwitnessradio.org)

