



The Sharps Shooter

November 23

Murder Ballads

Failed Prohibition

The Story Of Resusci Anne

Weaponised Fentanyl

Ketamine Treatment For Depression

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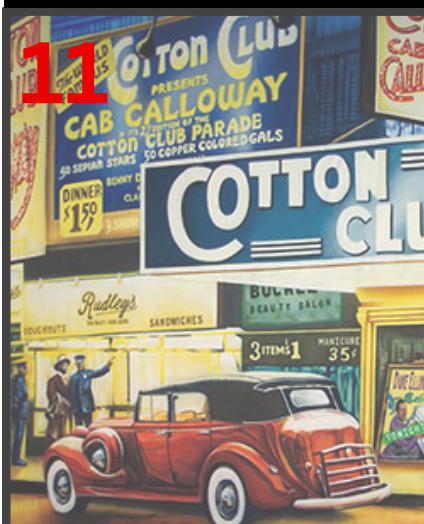
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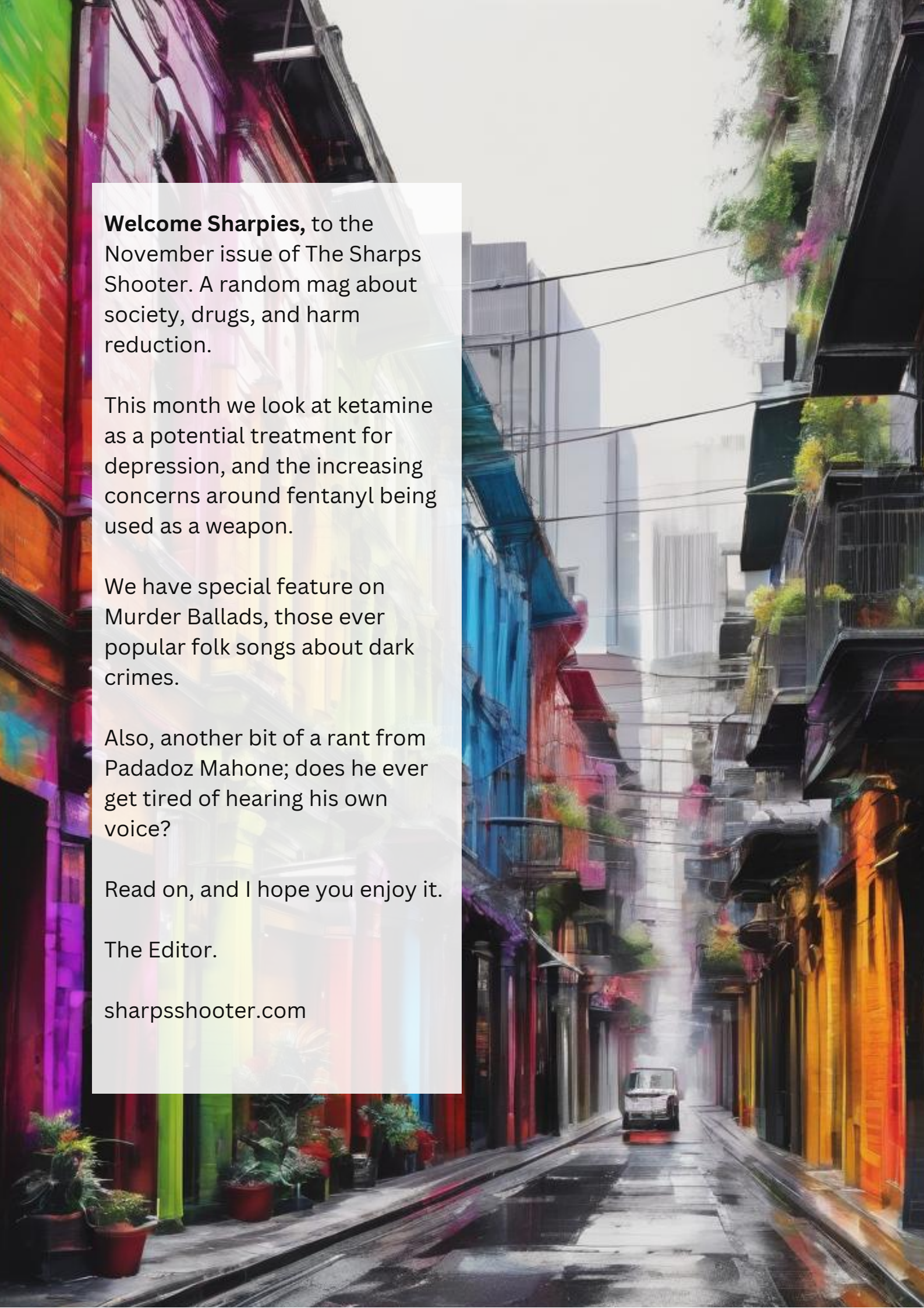
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WARNING. This issue contains discription of crimes, including murder

Disclaimer: The articles in The Sharps Shooter are sourced from multiple sites and unaltered. The wording in these articles does not necessarily reflect our beliefs. No offence is intended.





Welcome Sharpies, to the November issue of The Sharps Shooter. A random mag about society, drugs, and harm reduction.

This month we look at ketamine as a potential treatment for depression, and the increasing concerns around fentanyl being used as a weapon.

We have special feature on Murder Ballads, those ever popular folk songs about dark crimes.

Also, another bit of a rant from Padadoz Mahone; does he ever get tired of hearing his own voice?

Read on, and I hope you enjoy it.

The Editor.

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MEMBERS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ARE PREPARING FOR AN OPIOID TERRORIST ATTACK

By Ken Klippenstein



Last year, the White House rejected a proposal from Republican lawmakers to classify fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction (WMD).

Although federal agencies had been preparing for a potential fentanyl WMD threat since 2018, the reclassification has mainly served to benefit these agencies financially and has not significantly addressed the ongoing fentanyl overdose crisis, causing unnecessary panic.

Despite government warnings about the fentanyl threat, some experts criticize the WMD classification as an attempt to secure more resources for the security industry. Even within the government, assessments indicated that a fentanyl attack was unlikely.

In 2018, an FBI bulletin referred to the possibility of a fentanyl-based chemical weapon attack as a "low probability high impact event." The DEA initially spread misinformation about fentanyl's dangers, causing panic among law enforcement.

Though the DEA later revised its guidance, misconceptions persisted.

A 2019 memo from the Department of Homeland Security's Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office omitted the FBI's low probability warning and suggested addressing the fentanyl issue as a WMD threat, including the development of fentanyl detection technology.

These proposals faced criticism. In April last year, lobbyist Kevin Fogarty registered to lobby for Families Against Fentanyl (FAF), a nonprofit.

FAF sought WMD classification for fentanyl, and some Republican lawmakers introduced legislation for it.

In September 2022, 18 state attorneys general urged President Biden to classify fentanyl as a WMD, but the White House rejected the proposal.

While the idea of fentanyl as a WMD may seem unusual, some argue that it poses a significant threat to first responders and public health. Military exercises simulating fentanyl WMD attacks have been conducted by the U.S. military.

Murder Ballads



Murder ballads tell gruesome tales of violence, often hideous, sexually motivated crimes against physically and socially vulnerable young women.

Songs are one of the ways that we have to speak about the unspeakable, to tell the untellable. In their stylised language, like literature and poetry, they can tell stories and broach subjects that are hard to talk about in speech and conversation.

Murder ballads are usually moralising confessionals in which the murderer confesses on the gallows – “Do not do as I have done” – but sometimes they try to evoke sympathy for the wrongdoer himself (and it usually is himself). Beneath this apparent morality, however, they aim to titillate, entertain, and, most importantly in days gone by, sell copies.

Yet it’s a genre with distant origins, having its roots in the folk traditions of Scotland, Ireland, and England. And they’re remarkable partly because many contemporary examples are so close in subject and form to songs from hundreds of years ago, thanks to universal themes of love, betrayal, and treachery.

The classic ballads of tradition, some of them centuries old, don’t tell us what to think or how to feel; there is no moralising. Instead, the story is allowed to unfold, the horror of it hitting us when we inhabit the characters’ world and imagine the circumstances described. In *Edward, or Son David*, a mother confronts her son, asking him to explain the blood on his sword. After claiming it was that of his hawk, hound, and horse, he finally confesses,

*that’s the bluid o ma brither John
Aye lady mither, ho lady mither,
That’s the bluid o ma brither John
He widna rule by me.*

In *The Bonnie Banks o Fordie*, as sung by Dick Gaughan, a man walking through woods encounters three young women, murdering two in turn when they refuse his advances saying,

*Oh it’s A’ll no be a robber’s wife
A’d raither dee by your penknife,*

You might say that modern murder ballads are the descendants of these older tragic songs, but they take as their focus the sensational killings that often begin or end them.

The Oxford Girlis, an archetypal British Isles murder ballad, possibly based on a 1683 tragedy, closely related to dozens more British Isles murder ballads (The Butcher Boy, The Bloody Miller or Hanged I Shall Be), and probably modelled on a broadside, The Cruel Miller. Norma Waterson and Martin Carthy sing,

*But I pulled a little stick from off the hedge
And struck her to the ground
Until the blood of that innocent
Lay trickling all around.
Down on her bended knees she'd fall
And tearfully she'd cry,
"Oh Jimmy dear, don't you murder me,
For I'm too young to die."*



Knife Dance by Henk Shiffmacher

Murder ballads are sometimes fiction, lurid stories from the imagination.

But all too often, they are based on real events and real people. as in the case of Laura Foster, memorialised in Tom Dooley, a North Carolina song based on the 1866 murder.

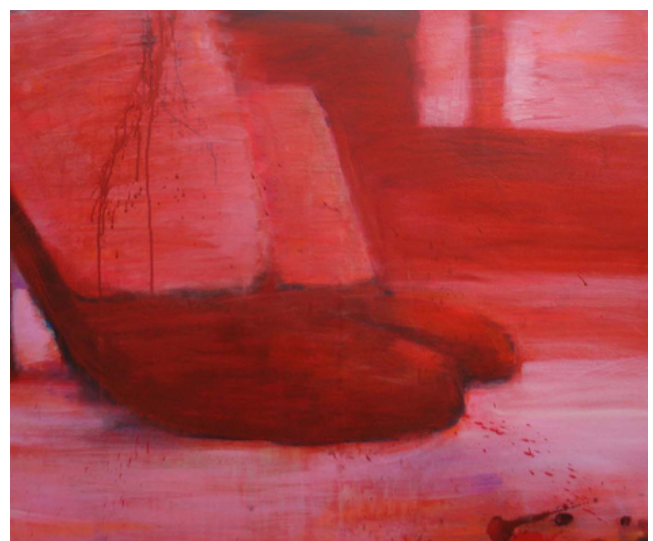
There were several songs and poems offering different perspectives, but this is by far the best known, and Tom admits up front that he did the deed, here in Frank Proffitt's version collected by Anne and Frank Warner in 1938,

*I met her on the mountain, and there I took her life.
I met her on the mountain, and stabbed her with my knife.*

The song-maker is clear on the moral lesson to be drawn,

*Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Poor boy, you're bound to die.*

In the murder ballads, the murderer usually pays the price at the end of the song, often with a gallows confession, a warning to others, and a prayer for mercy.



"Crime Passionel" by Birgit Gerritsen

THE MURDER BALLAD

The Murder Ballad is a 2019, multi media project in which artists contributed work which is related to or inspired by "Murder Ballads".

Painter, poets, photographers, writers, cartoonists and many more are invited to contribute their art.

The contributions can be entirely new work, created solely for this project, or existing art works which correspond with the topic of Murder Ballads.

<https://themurderballad.com/>



Resusci Anne

How a Dead Girl in Paris Ended Up With The Most-Kissed face in History

By Peter Dockrill



Nobody knows what her name was. We don't know her age or background. How her life brought her to Paris, and left her drowned in the River Seine.

But when her lifeless body was pulled from those murky waters in the late 19th century, the girl known forevermore as L'Inconnue de la Seine (the unknown woman of the Seine) began an amazing new story in death.

This strange second chapter, a surreal postscript nobody could have ever predicted, ultimately helped save millions of lives, even after her own was cut so tragically short.

Or was it?

The exact history of what happened to L'Inconnue both before and after her fateful drowning is a matter of some debate - one shrouded in a frayed, fanciful Parisian legend. But what follows is the most commonly told version of a tale that's now perhaps 150 years old.

L'Inconnue, who is estimated to have been about 16 years old when she died, may have been a suicide. Nobody knows for sure, but there were no marks on her body, and many concluded she took her own life.

After she was pulled out of the Seine, she was transported to the Paris mortuary, and put on public display alongside the bodies of other unknown dead for the purpose of identification.



L'Inconnue

This grisly parade of nameless corpses was a popular diversion in its day.

"There is not a single window in Paris that attracts more onlookers than this," a contemporary account explains.

Despite the crowds, however, nobody recognised L'Inconnue, or at least none came forward.

But while she may never have been identified by the crowds who attended her corpse, that's not to say she went unnoticed.



Corpse viewing

Even in death her serene appearance turned heads. One of those heads belonged to an attendant at the mortuary, who - so the story goes - was so transfixed by her, he ordered a plaster cast to be made of her face.

The mask was a hit.

Before long, L'Inconnue's alluring, deathly likeness was reproduced in facsimiles sold in souvenir shops across Paris, then Germany, and the rest of Europe.

The mesmerising mask of this unknown dead girl - described by philosopher and author Albert Camus as the "drowned Mona Lisa" - became a coveted cultural icon.

In time, L'Inconnue's frozen half-smile rested on mantels and hung in drawing rooms all over the continent. She was positioned in artists' workshops, gazed upon as a mute, motionless model.

But it wasn't just sketchers and painters who were captivated. Poets and novelists became entranced too.

At some point, L'Inconnue turned into a kind of morbid meme for early 20th century writers, who contrived countless dramatic histories for this heartbroken heroine, engulfed by ill fortune and the weight of water.

"The facts were so scarce that every writer could project what they wanted on to that smooth face," museum archivist H el ene Pinet told The Guardian in 2007.

"Death in water was a very romantic concept. Death, water, and woman was a tantalising combination."

One critic described her as "the erotic ideal of the period", the aesthetic template for a "whole generation of German girls [who] modelled their looks on her".

Half a century after this explosion of fame and fascination was lit, L'Inconnue transformed into something else again - with the help of a man who was born decades after she died.

His name was Asmund Laerdal, and he was a toy manufacturer from Norway. His company had started off in the early 1940s printing children's books and calendars, before moving on to small toys made out of wood.

After the war, Laerdal began to experiment with a new kind of material that had just entered mass production: plastic.

Using this soft, malleable substance, he manufactured one of his most famous playthings: the 'Anne' doll, which in post-war Norway was acclaimed "toy of the year... with sleeping eyes and natural hair".

She might have been sleeping, but Anne wasn't L'Inconnue. At least, not yet.

One day, Laerdal's two-year-old son, Tore, nearly drowned. Had his father not rushed to intervene - pulling the limp boy from the water and forcing the water out of his airways - things would have turned out very differently.

So when a group of anaesthesiologists approached Laerdal and told him they needed a doll to demonstrate a newly developed resuscitation technique - a procedure known as CPR - they found an attentive, receptive listener.

For a toymaker accustomed to manufacturing miniature cars and play-dolls, it was a challenge to make a realistic, functional mannequin; one that could reliably demonstrate the physical complexities of cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Aside from the technical issues, what kind of face would he give to this giant doll?

That's when Laerdal recalled a strange, enigmatic half-smile. A serene mask he'd seen hanging on the wall at his in-laws' house. It was, of course, L'Inconnue.

Laerdal kept the name of his Anne doll, but gave the new mannequin L'Inconnue's face, along with a body of full sized adult dimensions - including a collapsible chest for practising compressions, and open lips to simulate mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Laerdal felt it was important that the mannequin should be a female, suspecting that men in the 1960s would be reluctant to practise CPR on a male doll's lips.

The mannequin was given the name Resusci Anne (Rescue Anne); in America, she was known as CPR Annie. That incredible number, amassed over almost 60 years of live-giving mouth to mouth, is why Resusci Anne is often said to have the most-kissed face of anyone in history.

Today, the Laerdal company estimates that two million lives have been saved by CPR.



Prohibition Was A Really Shit Idea.

Padadoz Mahone

Most of us can admit that we're not perfect. That we'll sometimes come up with some bad ideas that go horribly wrong; that time I tried to drunkenly wee off the side of a cliff, for example. Luckily, it wasn't a very big cliff, and the ambulance arrived quickly.

Occasionally, some genius dreams up a solution to a problem that goes so spectacularly badly, that it ends up making things much worse.

Like when the Australian government introduced Cane Toads to stop beetles eating the Queensland sugar cane crop, only to unleash a biblical-level plague of unstoppable, poisonous bastards that have eaten several native species to extinction.

Even when cane toads become food themselves, these arseholes are so toxic, anything that eats them is will almost certainly die.

Which brings me to Prohibition. The American one, when between 1920 and 1933, the government banned the production, sale, and drinking of alcohol.

The road to prohibition started many years before, in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Back then, The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Anti-Saloon League fought to improve the lives of women and children by addressing the poverty, squalid conditions and violence they believed was caused by the "demon alcohol".

They prayed and they marched, and they marched and prayed, and when that didn't work, they fought dirty.

One of their leaders, Carrie Nation, "Hatchet Granny" as she was known, became a household name after she smashed the shite out of several saloon bars with a tomahawk.

As they got more powerful, the WCTU campaigned for the complete prohibition of alcohol. And they won.



Carrie Nation with her tomahawk

On the 17th of January, 1920, prohibition became law, and the shenanigans started.

US President Herbert Hoover wrote that "Our country has deliberately undertaken a great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose."

In reality, the great and noble experiment was a total shit-show

The problem with the plan was simple; it was complete bollox!

Prohibition was meant to address the havoc that booze was wrecking across America, but instead it was a licence for moral crusaders to wage war on anyone they saw as a threat to the fabric of white, protestant America.

Immigrants were particular targets for these anti-booze Zealots.

The Irish, Germans, and Italians ranked way up at the top of their hitlist, although Catholics, African Americans, Mexicans, the poor, and people that lived in big cities were also seen as weak and corrupt sinners, and fair game!

Immigrant communities, who mostly lived in cities, and whose use of whiskey, beer, and wine were at the very heart their cultures, were considered little better than drunken savages.

Prohibition was supported by the "Drys" in many rural communities, but it was hated and widely ignored by the "Wets" in the cities.

At the height of prohibition there were over 30,000 illegal bars, known as "Hooch Joints", "Gin Joints", or "Speakeasies", in New York City.

So many people went to Speakeasies, they were considered the "worst kept secret in America."

There were big clubs, small clubs, back room bars. Clubs called "black and tan" clubs where blacks and whites drank together, although these clubs were the exception rather than the rule.

Even the most famous club at the time, The Cotton Club, kept black performers and the white audience apart.

Owney Madden, (whose nickname was "The Killer"), the Irish-American boss at the Cotton Club, made a fortune from illegal alcohol, and unusually for a gangster of the era, lived to spend it in his retirement.

But he wasn't the only one to get rich selling "hooch". Prohibition was a great time to be a gangster. Al Capone, Lucky Luciano, Bugsy Siegel, and Frank Costello were just some of the gangsters that built empires from bootleg alcohol.

It was a service that people wanted. Capone once said, "All I do is supply a public demand... somebody had to throw some liquor on that thirst."

To some, Capone was a hero, he was free with money, set up soup kitchens for the unemployed, and swaggered about in a big white hat, like a fucking 1920s Kardashian.

Of course, when he wasn't engaged in these acts of civic duty, he was murdering anyone who crossed him, with extreme brutality. The Saint Valentine's Day Massacre was down to Capone.



To be fair, there were some unintentional upsides to Prohibition.

So illegal bars and clubs sprung up, that prohibition helped create the Roaring '20s.

Women got more freedom, leading to what has been called, "the first sexual revolution".

jazz transformed America and how black Americans were seen, at least in the underground club scene.

To hide the shitty taste of poorly made bootleg booze, cocktails, and cocktail parties became a thing.

Drinks like the "Bees Knees", an absolute classic made from gin, honey, and lemon. Or the "Last Word": gin with Chartreuse and maraschino cherry liqueur, which was born at the Detroit Athletic Club in 1922.

Literature, and the arts boomed. F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel, *The Great Gatsby*, sells 500,000 copies every year to this day, nearly 100 years later.

But as a means to curb alcohol use, Prohibition was a complete failure, which caused more problems than it hoped to fix.

It made criminals out of otherwise law-abiding citizens. Poorly-made bootleg booze poisoned, blinded, and killed countless people.

Job losses in the alcohol industry caused mass hardship and meant less tax revenue to tackle it. The government's inability to collect taxes on alcohol made the problems of the Great Depression even worse than they would have been otherwise.

Prohibition bred widespread corruption among law enforcement officials and politicians who were bribed or stood-over by bootleggers.

Organised crime and the violence that came with it flourished, and the death count was staggering.

This absolute shambles of a policy was repealed in 1933, although some states continued to ban alcohol for many years afterwards.

There's an American saying, "There is no learning in the second kick from a mule." We make the same mistakes and we get the same outcomes, play the same stupid games, and win the same stupid prizes.

Today, drug prohibition and the War on Drugs, make all the same mistakes. In this new war, the battle lines are still drawn on race, income, and perceived morality. It's a war on people, and there are many casualties.

Some solutions are just worse than the problems they mean to fix.



Prohibition agent with bootleg alcohol



A woman hiding a bottle of whisky in her boot, from where we get the term "Bootlegging".



Owney "The Killer" Madden

Cotton Club 142nd Street & Lexington Avenue

JUNE 5, 1925 8PM

Tickets 50 cents

Presenting the Trumpet
King of Swing



LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Singing Fat Waller's
Ain't Misbehavin

Curing Depression With Ketamine

The Dream Could Become A Reality

Ketamine, often associated with party scenes, is finding a new identity in the world of mental health. It's not your typical antidepressant, and its mechanism of action is fascinating.

Ketamine seems to work in cases of severe depression when other treatments have failed.

Ketamine's quick onset is like a breath of fresh air for those grappling with depression. Dr. Carlos Zarate Jr., a leading researcher in the field, says, "Ketamine can produce rapid antidepressant effects within hours."

This is a game-changer because conventional antidepressants can take weeks to show any impact.

Ketamine doesn't just boost mood; it appears to reset the brain. Dr. Gerard Sanacora, a professor of psychiatry at Yale, explains, "Ketamine may promote synaptogenesis, the formation of new connections in the brain."

This neural rewiring offers hope to individuals who've been stuck in the dark grip of depression.

However, the effects are not everlasting. Ketamine's effects typically wear off in a matter of days or weeks.

But it provides a window of relief, and ongoing research aims to find ways to extend its benefits.

When it comes to depression, ketamine is proving to be a ray of hope, delivering rapid results and offering a new approach to understanding and treating this complex condition.

More on Ketamine in future issues



THE SHARPS SHOOTER

A random blog about society, drugs, and harm reduction

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