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## **THE STORY OF DRUG TRAFFICKING 3x52'**

A documentary series directed by Christophe Bouquet and Julie Lerat

An ARTE France, YAMI 2 coproduction



**This documentary explores the history of drug trafficking from a political perspective. Opium, heroin, cocaine, and designer drugs have sparked wars, financed militias, and brought down states.**

**This historical epic covers two centuries, spanning more than 10 countries to reveal the murky role played by many states which have used the drug trade as an instrument of power.**

**DELIVERY: DECEMBER 2019**

## **EPISODE 1: THE SOURCE OF THE EVIL**

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In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, opium use spread throughout Asia, promoted by colonial powers. Meanwhile, the western pharmaceutical industry was developing some miraculous products, such as morphine, cocaine, and heroin. Addiction became a global scourge, and prohibition gradually became the norm. But outlawing these substances gave rise to the first drug-trafficking networks, which often sought to operate under state protection.



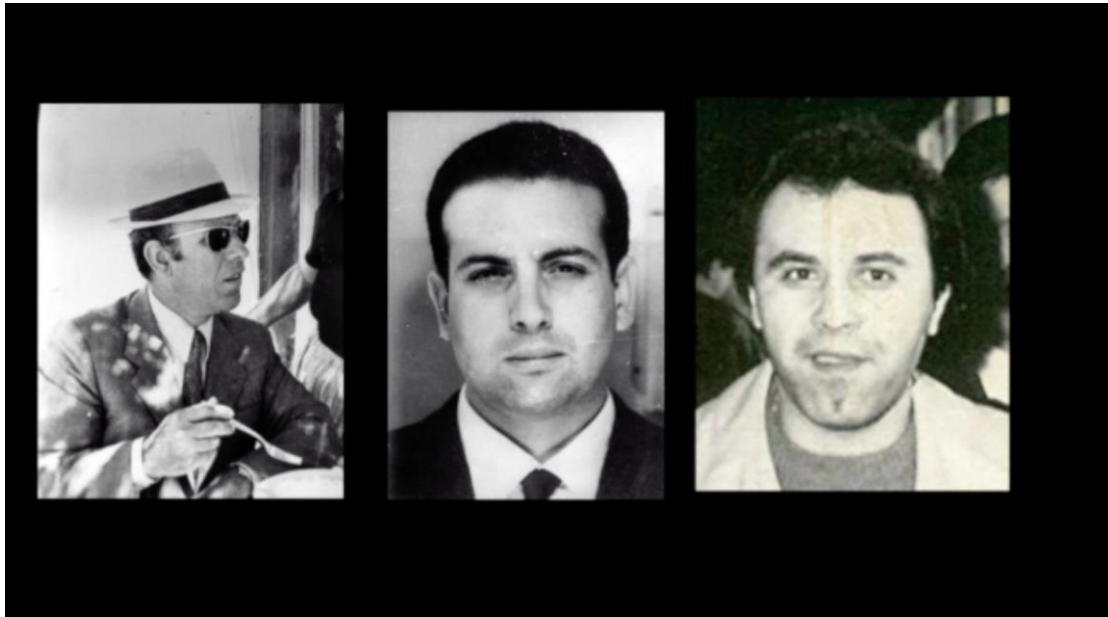
These networks underwent unprecedented growth during the Cold War, when secret services used the drug trade as a political instrument. The United States paid the price for this: In 1970, one third of their troops in Vietnam were addicted to heroin. A year later, in an historic speech, President Richard Nixon launched the war on drugs.

## **EPISODE 2: THE AGE OF THE BARONS**

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The world's leading superpower went to war on drugs, and hit hard. But drug trafficking never dies. It just moves on, changes, adapts. As the war on drugs progressed, a new generation of drug lords emerged at the end of the 1970s, more powerful than ever. These criminals were not only in it for the money; they also wanted power.

Pablo Escobar was the most notorious, but there was also Toto Riina in Sicily, Khun Sa in the Golden Triangle, and Felix Gallardo in Mexico, all of whom changed the destinies of their respective territories by taking drug trafficking to a global scale. They defied states and threatened the powers-that-be. It took almost 20 years for states to get organized and come up with strategies to bring down the drug barons.



### **EPISODE 3: THE INVISIBLES**

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The third episode opens on a world of drug trafficking that has been fragmented by the efforts of the police. Dealers have now changed; invisibility is their chief weapon. The trade has shifted to areas beyond law-and-order, like war zones in Afghanistan or areas with guerilla activity like Colombia. Designer drugs, which are easy to manufacture and conceal, play a key role in the transformation of the traffic.

In Mexico, the cartels have dragged the whole country into a merciless spiral of violence – wherever one looks, the toll of the war on drugs makes for grim reading. This poses the question: Is it time to legalize drugs, radically changing the current situation and perhaps the way we perceive them?



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