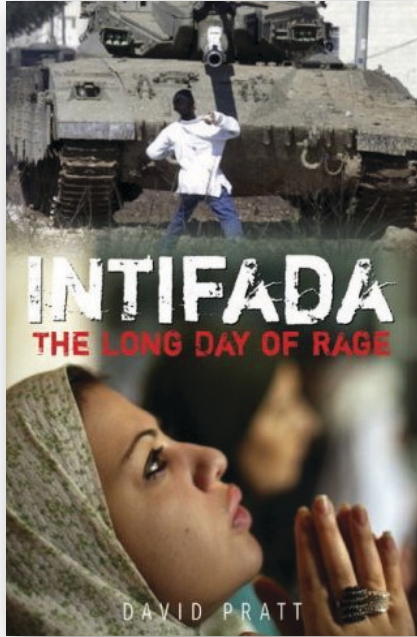


HEROIN'S TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION

David Pratt follows the flood
of heroin from Afghanistan
to Scotland and asks:

**Why has the war made it
so much worse?**





David Pratt is Foreign Editor of the *Sunday Herald* newspaper, based in Glasgow, Scotland. His latest book is *Intifada: The Long Day Of Rage* published in Britain by Sunday Herald Books, and in North America by Casemate/Flashpoint

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HEROIN'S TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION

DAVID PRATT

Smack, skag, horse – the street names for heroin in Scotland – are as familiar here as their Afghan counterparts – poder, mawad and gulbadan. For Scotland, like Afghanistan, has a deadly love affair with heroin. Out of 200 nations only five are ahead of us in drug abuse, and one of those, Afghanistan, supplies over 98% of the heroin that blights Scotland.

Heroin is all about winners and losers. If Scotland is the loser, then the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan are outright winners. Just consider the following chilling facts.

After the events of September 11, it emerged that it cost al-Qaeda \$500,000 to finance the attacks that changed the world that day.

Now, through the illegal heroin trade, it's estimated that terrorists like the Taliban and al-Qaeda can earn more than that sum every week. Indeed, up to 70% of the Taliban's entire funding now comes from

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Some of Scotland's own drug enforcement police officers seem reluctant to acknowledge the extent to which the Taliban – not just criminals – profit from international drug trafficking

the heroin trade; anything up to \$300 million annually, of which a huge chunk buys the guns, bullets, rocket launchers and components for the roadside bombs that kill and maim our service personnel and Afghan civilians with terrible regularity.

“When an addict in Scotland uses Afghan heroin, when a dealer deals, or a trafficker smuggles a consignment, each and every one of them is playing a part in fuelling the insurgency and helping the Taliban,” was how one senior official of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) put it to me recently in Kabul.

By contrast, some of Scotland's own drug enforcement police officers seem reluctant to acknowledge the extent to which the Taliban – not just criminals – profit from international drug trafficking.

In research findings, Professor Neil McKeganey, a drug specialist at the University of Glasgow, established that police seize just 1% of the heroin that enters

Scotland each year.

In the union of narco traffickers, terrorist groups, and international criminals, a real axis of evil has been created. Perhaps most worrying of all is that many of the Afghan warlords and drug barons involved in this insidious international racketeering are people the British Government seems happy to do business with.

Surely, after almost a decade of sacrifice in Afghanistan, this is not good enough. The time is long overdue for proper answers from the Government and drug enforcement agencies as to why we have failed to stem the tide of heroin that flows from Afghanistan on to the streets of Glasgow, Edinburgh and elsewhere in the UK.

What are our troops dying for in Afghanistan if this narco-state is allowed to flourish and export its deadly produce? It is a tragedy and a travesty that while yet more Scots soldiers prepare to deploy to Afghanistan, here at home their countrymen and women continue to succumb to a drug derived from a trade on which the Taliban depends for its survival.

Having spent the last 30 years covering Afghanistan's conflicts and the political and strategic fallout that comes from them, I decided the time had come to return and investigate the extent of the country's heroin trade.

In the provinces and back streets of Kabul I talked to poppy farmers, heroin addicts, dealers and traffickers. On the frontline of the war on drugs, I spent time with the "door kickers" in the fight against heroin trafficking – a group of elite counter-narcotic commandos trained and mentored by DEA agents and former Special Forces troops.

I also journeyed to Afghanistan's remote Badakhshan province near the Ta-



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jikistan border. Here the northern Silk Route, and the equally infamous Balkans Route, which runs through Iran, Turkey and south-eastern Europe, remain as two of the main trafficking conduits through which most of the heroin destined for Europe passes.

Back in Scotland, at the end of the Afghan heroin trafficking trail, I asked senior police officers tasked with stopping the drug's influx why their seizure record is so poor. And finally, just as my journey began in the alleys of Kabul with those whose lives have been blighted by heroin, I met users on our own streets.

From the Golden Crescent to Glasgow, this is the story of two nations blighted by one drug. Above all, it's an account of how heroin sustains the war in Afghanistan and makes big bucks for many.

PART ONE

Eyewitness in Afghanistan

I had thought this story started last month in the backstreets of a neighbourhood in Kabul. But it didn't. It really began one day a few years ago, in the languid heat of a picturesque valley in Afghanistan's northern Takhar Province. In the peace of that afternoon, the gentle drone of spring insects was the only sound competing with the voice of an elderly poppy farmer called Mahmoud Yusef.

A genial elderly man with long, grey sideburns and beard, and wearing a woolen bobble hat, Mahmoud more resembled the cartoon image of one of Santa's little helpers than the cultivator and salesman of opium resin.

"This is only my first year, I've never grown poppy before," he assured me that

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day, his fingers nimbly drawing a wooden lancing tool across the skin of a poppy bulb.

I remember watching as a trickle of brown, sticky sap oozed out. In a few days' time, once dried, it would be scraped into buckets, and sold on for what is known as "farmgate prices" to a shadowy group of collectors and smugglers. How much, I asked Mahmoud, was he likely to earn from this, his first yield?

Almost instantly, the old man's geniality dissolved and he became cagey.

"I'm only a poor man, I don't even own this land," he insisted, before pausing for a moment. "But believe me when I tell you, the greed of those who get rich from poppy will bring pain to the people of Afghanistan."

It was a little over a month ago in a Kabul slum called Pole Sukhte, that the true meaning of Mahmoud's words were finally brought home to me.

One morning, along with my interpreter and two Kabul drugs workers, I found myself in a subterranean nightmare world beneath a bridge spanning a river full of grey sewerage.

Here, the pain that Mahmoud Yusef warned me about is now felt at its sharpest by the current generation of Afghan heroin addicts.

In this hellish place, hundreds of men, young and old, live among the rats and garbage, surrounded by discarded, bloodied syringes. Crouched in huddles they smoke and inject some of the purest heroin to be found anywhere in the world. So pure in fact, that a gram of the best heroin here, cut and mixed with other substances, could easily account for a number of the "tenner bags" of sub-standard "smack" to be found on Scotland's streets.

Kabul's version of that lesser quality heroin – still far superior to that in Europe



Within a few seconds of entering I encounter a young ethnic Hazara, his eyes rolling as he staggers out of the gloom towards me, holding out his arms like some horror movie zombie

– can now be picked up for the equivalent of as little as 75p a gram.

Such is Afghan heroin's reputation for strength and purity that its availability now in some parts of east Africa has resulted in addicts indulging in a practice known as "flashblooding" or "flushblooding": they inject themselves with blood from another user as a cheap way of sharing the high or staving off the pangs of withdrawal.

Entering the underground shooting galleries where Pole Sukhte's addicts are found is to come across equally disturbing horrors. It's like being shunted through a kaleidoscopic tunnel in which snapshots of human misery and psychosis twist and blur together.

Within a few seconds of entering I encounter a young ethnic Hazara, his eyes rolling as he staggers out of the gloom towards me, holding out his arms like a horror movie zombie. Both forearms are a mass of scars, abscesses and suppurating sores.

At first I fail to notice the syringe still hanging from his flesh, like a piece of macabre jewellery. The syringe is empty, and I ask Reza, my interpreter, why the young man still has it stuck in his arm.

"He says the longer he keeps it there, the longer the high will last," he says.

Seconds later, another man pushes his way angrily towards me. I brace myself for some kind of confrontation – only to watch him break into a bizarre dance, grinning, inches from my face.

Watching nearby, another addict, one of Kabul's many war amputees, teeters on his one leg, held up by a makeshift crutch, his loss and pain temporarily vanquished by the rush from the heroin he'd injected moments before.

Surreal as this place is, there is also tension in the air – barely 30 minutes before

our arrival, local police had made one of their regular raids. Some drug users were beaten, others arrested. According to one of the outreach workers with me, the police had come the night before – only the presence of the drugs workers prevented a few of the youngest addicts, little more than boys, from being abducted by policemen intent on rape and sexual abuse.

During the days of the Soviet occupation, it was the Russian Cultural Centre. Though still known by that name, today it is nothing more than a ruin, its walls pockmarked and punctured by the bullets and shells that ripped the district apart during the fighting between rival mujahideen groups that gripped the Afghan capital in the 1990s.

My memories of this place have always been bad ones. On one occasion around that time, I was injured here during rocket exchanges. A few years later in the same building I came across a homeless refugee family whose children had frozen to death while taking shelter from the bitter Afghan winter. Today, the building remains a magnet for the dispossessed. In every room, corridor and alcove strewn with faeces and rubble, addicts cower.

More addicts than ever before

Kabul has always had its heroin and opium users, but in the 30 years I have been coming to this city the numbers were never like this.

So just why have things become so bad, and how much worse can they get? If anyone could provide answers to those questions for me, it was Dr Zemoray Amin. An Afghan and citizen of Kabul, Amin has been working for years on behalf of the French humanitarian agency, Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) at what can only be described as the Ground Zero of Afghanistan's heroin battlefield. Every



Cheapness and easy availability of drugs, joblessness, displacement and, above all, the effects of the war are the main reasons for heroin's escalating impact in Afghanistan

day he has to deal with the trail of devastation wrought on the addicts of Pole Sukhte and Demahzang.

While any figures are at best only estimates, Amin tells me that in 2005 there were perhaps 50,000 heroin users in Afghanistan; by 2009 that number had risen to 120,000 and is continuing to escalate at a devastating rate.

Ironically, even these estimates of Afghan heroin user numbers have a resonance with Scotland, where there are now said to be something in the region of 55,000 users, with both the numbers and deaths resulting from drug abuse rising.

According to Amin, cheapness and easy availability of drugs, joblessness, displacement and, above all, the effects of the war are the main reasons for heroin's escalating impact in Afghanistan.

But, he argues, there is another, even more worrying root cause. It stems from the widespread corruption among those within the top tier of the Afghan establishment, and complicity by the international community in ignoring that crookedness in exchange for political allegiance and strategic leverage in the fight against the Taliban.

He says: "There are many corrupt high-ranking officials in Afghanistan directly involved in the illegal heroin trade who are being supported from abroad and the international community. Believe me, I'm sure of it."

Asked as to who they are, he refuses to elaborate. It's hardly surprising, given that to name such individuals in Afghanistan these days would be tantamount to having a death wish.

Amin, though, points to the peculiar disparity between the intense levels of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) military activity in some areas and that fact that many heroin traffickers in

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these same places go unchallenged.

“The international community is not honestly and truthfully pursuing a counter-narcotics policy,” he tells me.

Asked what he means by that, he will only say that ISAF are sometimes less than strenuous in their efforts even when confronted by irrefutable evidence that a local warlord or official is directly involved in heroin trafficking.

Time and again during my recent visits to Afghanistan I have heard similar suggestions from a wide range of individuals and representatives of various organisations. The prevailing take seems to be a case of better the devil you know, where-by ISAF is accused of turning a blind eye to the involvement of local warlords in the heroin trade, provided they in turn keep the local Taliban in check.

Some well-placed Afghans have gone even further: a political analyst from the Taliban stronghold of Wardak Province, who has acted as a negotiator with the insurgents, told me unequivocally that ISAF officers themselves were directly involved in the heroin trafficking trade.

Such accusations are difficult to prove, and so far there is no evidence to implicate ISAF personnel in criminal activity. But virtually every Afghan I talked to, be they government officials, law enforcement officers or street level drug dealers, believed that heroin trafficking provided as much financial support for a select group within the Afghan government and establishment as it did for the Taliban.

“Heroin production and trafficking is a life support system for the war in Afghanistan, and the war in turn is the life support machine for the heroin trade,” was how Amin summed it up.

While the traffickers of the past almost exclusively were criminal mafias, for some time now other, arguably even more sin-



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ister, players have been at the sharp end of the business.

In 2003, after boarding two dhows in the Persian Gulf, US counter-narcotics agents discovered a couple of al-Qaeda terrorists with a consignment of heroin worth \$3 million. A few months later, agents in Kabul raided a traffickers' den where they found a satellite phone that had been used to call suspected terrorist cells in western Europe.

Working for the Taliban

In Kabul a few weeks ago, I met a former smuggler called Rahim, who like many Afghan villagers found himself working for the Taliban in order to make some money.

“There was a group of us from our village, the Taliban regularly paid us about \$250 and we carried many kilo bags of pure heroin over the border into Iran,” said Rahim.

Later, in a dispute over a drugs deal that went wrong, Rahim stabbed a man to death in Iran. He served a 12-year prison sentence there before returning to Afghanistan and Kabul. On the streets of Scotland, that single haul would have been worth hundreds of thousands of pounds – a mark-up that this time went straight back into the Taliban's fighting fund.

In places as far flung as Dushanbe, Istanbul, Karachi and Amsterdam, an elaborate chain of traffickers help Afghan heroin on its long, convoluted journey to Scotland's streets. Sometimes after being collected from the poppy farmers the opium resin might simply stay as opium, but more often than not it is processed – using what are called precursor chemicals, such as acetic anhydride and sodium carbonate – into the drug that is the real money-spinner: heroin.

All this would most likely take place at one of countless makeshift laboratories in Afghanistan. Often rough-and-ready, they are nevertheless capable of producing heroin that is more than 90% pure. While lower quality goods might then head for the local marketplace, top quality heroin is packed in 1kg brown paper wraps, sealed in plastic and bound in white cotton to await export.

Once it is ready for shipment, the traffickers' ingenuity knows no bounds. Sometimes it is simply moved over the border into neighbouring countries loaded on mules or hidden in lorries after bribes change hands. But at checkpoints in Iran the drug has been found hidden inside the stomachs of camels, and it has been layered into the bulkheads of boats in the Pakistani port of Karachi. Small quantities have even been found concealed in hollowed almond shells.

Tangle of agencies

Stopping the traffickers is the task of a tangle of law enforcement agencies. Sitting at the foot of some dun-coloured mountains adjacent to Kabul's international airport sits a well-guarded compound and hi-tech listening station that is home to the most elite of these agencies, an Afghan counter-narcotics commando team trained by members of the US Drugs Enforcement Administration (DEA) and former special forces soldiers. Known as the National Interdiction Unit or NIU, they are seen as Afghanistan's "untouchables" in the battle against the illegal heroin trade.

Dave Lopez, the US command adviser to the NIU, knows all about battling the entrenched corruption of the world's narco states. A former US special forces soldier with the elite 75th Ranger Regiment he joined the US army's counter-narcotics



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unit and took part in operations in places like Colombia and Iraq before coming to Afghanistan.

He said: "The NIU has actively arrested officials in the police force and are prepared to take it as far as the rule of law in Afghanistan will allow, even if it does go to the top."

He is also in no doubt that the Taliban are adept at using the trafficking trade in a way that has delivered massive financial and strategic gains for them.

"Once the Taliban realised that narcotic control was a major goal of the international coalition and Afghan government, they OK'd it to the farmers to grow poppy because they know it destabilises the government. That's also the reason why we're seeing even more opium and heroin production."

Asked if he believed that by dealing in the drug, criminal gangs in Scotland and elsewhere in Europe were helping sustain the Taliban, Lopez was unequivocal. "I believe that to be absolutely accurate," he said, "and I think most people both in the military and law enforcement worldwide are truly understanding that the narcotic trade does support the insurgency."

While it may be viewed from a very different perspective, at the Paisley headquarters of Scotland's Serious Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency, I put much the same question to Detective Chief Superintendent Allan Moffat, head of investigations. His response echoed that of Lopez.

Moffat said: "There is some difficulty for me as a police officer here in Scotland to say it links directly to the Taliban. What I can say is that it does link back to Afghanistan, and certainly all the research, all the material I have looked at, absolutely supports that position."

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PART TWO

Made in Kabul, shot-up in Glasgow

Jawad was left for dead in a ditch. Stephen was found overdosed in a doorway. Though more than 3,000 miles separate Kabul's Karte Seh district and Glasgow's Gorbals, the lives of these two men are inextricably linked by one thing: heroin. In the space of little over a month on opposite sides of the world, I listened to both tell of a hellish journey each had taken while trapped in the grip of a powerful and terrifying addiction.

Jawad is no stranger to pain – in Kabul's drug institutions, the methods used to detox heroin addicts come from the Middle Ages. Head shaved and stripped naked, on numerous occasions he has been locked in a cell and hosed down with freezing water.

But it was the night when some policemen started beating Jawad that the agony became so great he found himself begging them to stop. When eventually they did, he was so close to death his torturers decided it was safer to dispose of him in a hole near a heroin users' den on the outskirts of the city.

"I lay there alone and couldn't move; my legs were paralysed from the beating," he recalled. By chance he was discovered by some other drug users, otherwise Jawad would most likely have frozen to death in Kabul's bitterly cold winter weather.

Stephen, a recovering heroin user from Glasgow, was also found in the nick of time. Newly released from the city's Barlinnie prison, he had scored some heroin near one of the city's hostels for homeless people before overdosing on a Gorbals street.

"When I came to, an ambulance had arrived, and a policeman told me I was



His cousin Michael died of an overdose around the same age: the boy's father came home from work one day to find his son dead with a needle still in his leg

lucky to be alive," he tells me.

Still only 24, Stephen first tried heroin when he was 16 and by his 18th birthday was a regular user. His cousin Michael died of an overdose around the same age: the boy's father came home from work one day to find his son dead with a needle still in his leg.

According to a UN study released last month, only five nations out of 200 are ahead of Scotland for drug abuse. One is Afghanistan, where more than 98% of the heroin reaching our streets comes from.

To get some idea of the daunting task they face, I joined the National Interdiction Unit (NIU) and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents they work with on a helicopter reconnaissance mission east of Kabul towards the Pakistan border.

"We're heading for an insecure area," shouted US DEA agent Barry Johnson over the clatter of the rotors from two ageing Russian-built Mi-8 helicopters as we waited to board along with two dozen Afghan NIU commandos. "A few days ago the Taliban attacked an Afghan army post in the vicinity, killing five soldiers," Johnson explained, adding that the area was "still hot".

As our helicopters thudded over dusty plains and hills, in every direction for mile after mile I could make out the remote mountain routes that weave their way along ridges and passes east towards Pakistan and north towards neighbouring Tajikistan.

For centuries these ancient smugglers' corridors have carried contraband, but in the 1980s they became known as the "jihad trails", along which arms and ammunition were carried on mules and camels to supply mujahideen fighters in their jihad, or holy war, against the occupying Russian army at that time. Today, these

same trails are used by Taliban and other drug traffickers to ferry illegal heroin and opium.

Following my time with the NIU commandos, I decided to travel north to Afghanistan's remote Badakshan Province on the border with the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan to get a better understanding of this Northern Route or Silk Route which, along with the so-called Balkan Route, through Iran and Turkey, are the two main conduits for Europe-bound heroin.

Once a major poppy growing region, today many farmers in Badakshan have bought into the promise made by President Hamid Karzai's government that if they gave up cultivating the crop they would be rewarded with agricultural subsidies and incentives. With little of this having materialised, there is a growing anger and lawlessness.

"Poppy farms that once had a car behind their house now only have a donkey, so many farmers are going back to poppy," was how one local summed up the current mood.

Across the border area there is much talk of the way the drugs trade is fuelling instability. "Heroin smuggling has created a lot of problems here, and many young men have been killed," a 'greybeard' – an elder – among a group of Badakshan farmers told me. From where we sat, it was barely an hour's walk to the porous border with Tajikistan, where Afghan traffickers including the Taliban would hand consignments of heroin to gangs of organised criminals, many of them linked to the Russian mafia.

Over the last few years, as the war in Afghanistan has intensified, there have been disturbing accounts surfacing in Badakshan of how Russian gangsters have been buying heroin which they then pay



It's said to be not uncommon for both sides to exchange a kilo of heroin for 15 Kalashnikovs, which are then moved to the battlefronts of Kandahar and Helmand where they are doubtless used in action against British and other ISAF soldiers

for directly in arms to Taliban officials at remote bazaars in the region.

One place, known as the Joint Bazaar, covering about 2,000 square metres and surrounded by concrete walls, developed a reputation as something of a 'clearing house' in this arms-for-drugs trade. Here it's said to be not uncommon for both sides to exchange a kilo of heroin for 15 Kalashnikovs, which are then moved to the battlefronts of Kandahar and Helmand where they are doubtless used in action against British and other ISAF soldiers.

The Badakshan greybeard I talked to told me of how 25 local Afghan men had just returned home having been released after serving a five-year prison sentence for trafficking. Though until now comparatively untouched by the fighting that wracks provinces such as Helmand and Kandahar, Badakshan – because of its strategic location on the trafficking trail – is becoming a dangerous place.

"At night especially we can't pass on the roads, because of insecurity and gangs of armed men," says the greybeard. I ask if they are Taliban, but like other people here he is reluctant to say, except to confirm that many are linked to the illegal drugs trade.

NIU adviser Dave Lopez, told me it's often difficult to tell who is who among the traffickers.

"You may have a trafficker who is not part of the Taliban because it didn't benefit him, but as alliances shift and powers come in and take control of some areas, this same trafficker may find it profitable to align himself with the Taliban and therefore becomes part of the Taliban network," explains Lopez.

Another Badakshan man, an agriculturalist, said that while some poppy cultivation had been curtailed in the region,

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at 2,200 metres above sea level in the remote Khash District of the province, the illegal opium and heroin industry was as active as ever.

Speaking in Badakshan's provincial capital, Faisabad, he described how government vehicles full of armed men able to pass unchecked at roadblocks were ferrying heroin to the Tajikistan border for local drug barons. But it is the Taliban that are said to profit the most.

Not only does it impose a 10% "ushr" – or religious tax – on the poppy crop, in effect it services the illegal heroin trade, offering its fighters as escorts for other traffickers' shipments when it's not moving its own. Revenue generated goes to pay for the Taliban fighters' salaries, weapons, fuel and food.

Once out of Afghanistan and into European Russia or Turkey – if the heroin comes via the Balkans Route – the consignments are broken down into increasingly smaller batches as they are ferried across countries as diverse as Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and others by road by myriad traffickers who might move heroin one week and illegal immigrants or other contraband the next.

En route to the UK and Scotland, Germany and the Netherlands are invariably staging posts. This was confirmed yet again in February after anthrax-contaminated heroin that infected 11 Scottish drug users also appeared in Germany. Once inside UK territory, links between organised criminal gangs in cities including Liverpool and Manchester help forward the drug to Scotland's street dealers.

The Glasgow Connection

"The housing schemes like Possil, Pollok, Castlemilk, Royston are full of dealers, in some you can get anywhere between four to eight dealers," Scott, 30, a recover-



Scott first started using heroin when he was 16, following in the footsteps of his older brother, who at first tried to stop him but in the end let Scott beg for him on Glasgow's streets to help sustain both their habits

ing drug user, told me when we talked in Glasgow's Tradeston district on the River Clyde. Scott says that as soon as somebody gets "busted" within hours "somebody fills his shoes".

Scott first started using heroin when he was 16, following in the footsteps of his older brother, who at first tried to stop him but in the end let Scott beg for him on Glasgow's streets to help sustain both their habits. He says his mum and dad had been really good in trying to help him, at one point after he left home trying to track him down and get him off the drug, but he always fell back into using heroin. Like Scott, Maria, another recovering drug user I spoke to, described to me a life punctuated by periods of homelessness and hostels where dealers openly traded, often in full view of staff.

She told me of days lost "gauching" – slumped in a stupor along with friends who were also on heroin. Maria also spoke of losing control of her life and her child, of a recent miscarriage, of the pain of those among her family and friends who watched her lurch from one crisis to another.

Among two of the most worrying and depressing things I discovered while talking to Scotland's heroin users is that the current generation are often the offspring of parents who themselves were linked to drug abuse, and that – perhaps most worrying thing of all – is that those falling into the hell of heroin are getting younger all the time.

Stephen said: "You see these wee lassies, some only 14 or 15, now in Glasgow city centre begging for money and some are working the streets."

On that day in Tradeston, Stephen, Scott and Maria told me of how empty buildings and the arches of nearby railway bridges were regularly used as shooting

galleries not unlike those I encountered in Kabul, though with fewer users. Within minutes of following their directions, the *Sunday Herald* photographer and I found used syringes and needles

Today across Scotland, Afghan heroin – the same product I saw used in the slums of Kabul – can be bought more easily than ever. The tenner bag, an eighth for £70-£100, a sixteenth or “teenth” for £40-50. “If you’re looking, it’s easy,” says Stephen.

From Afghanistan to Scotland, two



The most worrying thing of all is that those falling into the hell of heroin are getting younger all the time

nations and many lives blighted by one drug. After nine years of war and endless promises by our politicians to end the scourge of Afghan heroin, gangsters from Glasgow to Kabul make bigger money than ever. Meanwhile, the Taliban profit handsomely too.

Not only does it pay for the bullets and bombs they use to kill our servicemen and women across Afghanistan, but here at home the drug destroys the lives of so many of our youngsters. What a scandal that is.

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