

CRACK

A shattering account of the crack cocaine years from award-winning American historian David Farber, *Crack* tells the story of the young men who bet their lives on the rewards of selling “rock” cocaine, the people who gave themselves over to the crack pipe, and the often-merciless authorities who incarcerated legions of African Americans caught in the crack cocaine underworld. Based on interviews, archival research, judicial records, underground videos, and prison memoirs, *Crack* explains why, in a de-industrializing America in which market forces ruled and entrepreneurial risk-taking was celebrated, the crack industry was a lucrative enterprise for the “Horatio Alger boys” of their place and time. These young, predominately African American entrepreneurs were profit-sharing partners in a deviant, criminal form of economic globalization. Hip-hop artists often celebrated their exploits but overwhelmingly, Americans – across racial lines – did not. *Crack* takes a hard look at the dark side of late twentieth-century capitalism.

David Farber is Roy A. Roberts Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Kansas. He is the author of numerous books, including *Everybody Ought to be Rich* (2013), *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism* (2010), *Taken Hostage* (2004), *Sloan Rules* (2002), *The Age of Great Dreams* (1994), and *Chicago '68* (1988). He lived in New York City with his family at the height of the crack cocaine years and later lived across the street from a small-time crack distributorship in Philadelphia.

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David
Farber

Rock
Cocaine,
Street
Capitalism,
and the
Decade
of Greed



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*“Up against Goliath, to bring butter home
I’m David on pavement, sling another stone”*

Ka

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Crack: A Playlist

Music to Read By

Eric Clapton, “Cocaine” (1977)

Lynyrd Skynyrd, “That Smell” (1977)

Glenn Frey, “Smuggler’s Blues” (1985)

Immortal Technique, “Peruvian Cocaine” (2003)

Grandmaster Flash and Melle Mel, “White Lines (Don’t
Do It)” (1983)

N.W.A., “Dopeman” (1988)

Public Enemy, “Night of the Living Baseheads” (1988)

UGK, “Pocketful of Stones” (1992)

Too Short, “The Ghetto” (1990)

Shinehead, “Gimme No Crack” (1988)

Notorious B.I.G., “Ten Crack Commandments” (1997)

Bone Thugs and Harmony, “Foe the Love of \$” (1994)

Nas, “Represent” (1994)

Jay Z, “Rap Game / Crack Game” (1997)

Ghostface Killah, “Columbus Exchange (Skit) / Crack Spot”
(2006)

Gucci Mane, “My Kitchen” (2007)

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CRACK: A PLAYLIST

The Clipse, “Virginia” (2002)

Ka, “Up Against Goliath” (2012)

Killer Mike, “Reagan” (2012)

Pusha T, “Nosetalgia” (2013)

Compiled by Max Bailey/Farber and David Farber

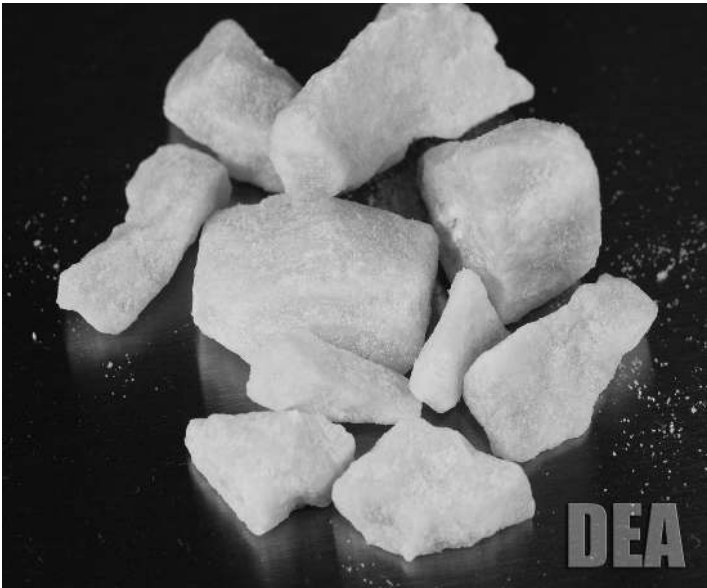


Figure 1 Crack cocaine. (United States Drug Enforcement Administration.)

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