

Gary Webb - Pulitzer Prize Winner, Author Of Dark Alliance CIA-Drug Series Dead Of Reported Suicide

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Press Accounts Fail to Mention His Vindication by CIA Inspector General Reports and Congressional Investigations

Gary Webb, 49, the Pulitzer Prize winning reporter from the San Jose Mercury News made America hold its breath in 1996 when he showed us proof of direct CIA involvement in drug trafficking. For a few months many of us had hope.

He reportedly died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head two days ago. His body was discovered at 8:20 AM Saturday as movers reportedly found a note on the door of his residence asking them not to enter but to call for paramedics.

Webb's August 1996 series Dark Alliance for the San Jose Mercury News pulled deep covers away from US covert operations and American denial about connections between the CIA and drugs. Gary left a bigger historical footprint than anyone who has ever touched the subject including among others, Peter Dale Scott, Alfred McCoy, Jonathan Kwitny and me.

His footprint was made possible in large part for two reasons. First, his reporting was meticulous and produced hard records that could not be effectively denied. Second, prominent African-American leaders like Jesse Jackson and representatives Maxine Waters and Juanita Millender-McDonald of Los Angeles and Compton respectively took up the torch lit by Gary and ran with it just before the 1996 presidential election which saw Bill Clinton win his second term just eight weeks after the stories broke. I was there at that time and it is not an understatement to say that much of this country was "up in arms".

Waters at one point vowed to make the CIA-drug connections, fully documented by Webb, her "life's work" if necessary.

In death the major press is beating him almost as ruthlessly as they did in real life. No part of the major press has acknowledged that Webb's work was subsequently vindicated by congressional investigations and two CIA Inspector General's reports released in 1997 and 1998. FTW did report on Webb's vindication and his legacy has - at least at the level of authentic journalism - not been lost.

Please see:

<http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/pandora/RendGW.html> ,

and <http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ciadrugs/volii.html>

For more FTW coverage of Gary Webb's life please use the search engine at www.fromthewilderness.com.

The LA Times obituary, in all of its meanness and inaccuracy is [here](#).

Of the six obituaries I have seen on him, the one from the L.A. Times was the most brutally Soviet in its attempt to crush out his memory as thoroughly as his work. Of course the Times would have to do that. It was in Los Angeles where Webb dug up and documented the direct connection between the CIA and cocaine smuggling/trafficking as crack cocaine ravaged this city in the 1980s and the Contra war decimated Central America.

The Times already had known of this for decades. Starting in 1979 I dealt extensively with the Times trying to report the same connections with regard to heroin smuggling by the CIA. Cocaine did not become a national epidemic until around 1980. By 1996 I had 17 bitter years of funneling hard evidence to the Times and watching as staff writer David Rosenzweig — among others including Ron Soble and David Johnston (now of the New York Times) — kept taking the information, promising to do something, and then spiking the stories in exchange for promotions.

When Gary autographed his 1998 best-seller *Dark Alliance* to me he wrote: "To Mike. You were there before I was."

Richard Heinberg, author of *The Party's Over* and *Powerdown* observed after reading the Times' obituary, "The LA Times obit is disgusting. 'What's our attitude toward investigative journalism? Well, of course we try to discourage it wherever we can, but sometimes it happens anyway. Then we get especially nasty—we have to, naturally, to protect our reputation.'"

I always knew it was a fight to the death. I don't think he ever fully understood that. Retired DEA agent Cele Castillo who had reported on direct CIA drug involvement from Honduras and El Salvador in the 1980s and I both told him in 1996 what he was up against and what it might cost him.

GRATITUDE

There would be no FTW, or *Crossing the Rubicon* without Gary Webb. Catherine Austin Fitts and I would never have met had it not been for Gary Webb. Dick Gregory would not have made me his white son on the radio had it not been for Gary Webb. I would never have confronted John Deutch at Locke High had it not been for Gary Webb.

I myself might have committed suicide in 1996 — broke, divorced and having given up all hope of making people listen — had it not been for Gary Webb. For some years now it has been the farthest thing from my mind.

I rediscovered my purpose and maybe Gary lost his. This is a tragedy of Shakespearean proportions.

KNOWN DETAILS

I called the Coroner shortly after the first flash came in here from Bay Area journalist and producer Kellia Rames. His time of death was listed at 8:20 AM. Since it was Saturday, the

homicide detectives would have been off and had to be paged. I estimate two hours (minimum) for them to get to the crime scene (unless a uniformed supervisor handled it). Add three hours minimum for crime scene, photos etc; that means he went to the Coroner's most likely around 1 PM. It could have been much later depending on response times on a Saturday before Christmas.

When I called the Sacramento Coroner's Office at 8:20 PM on Saturday I spoke with an unidentified female who stated that he had just been there since late that afternoon. I identified myself as a friend, ex-cop and journalist and she confirmed a single shot to the head. I wasn't sure it was our Gary Webb so I got his date of birth, hair and eye color. They matched. Gary was a good looking man with a moustache and I asked if that fit. She hesitated for quite a while before answering, "I can't tell."

This led me to suspect that the weapon used was a shotgun.

I then confirmed his death with the San Jose Mercury News and the L.A. Times. We will see if later facts don't mesh with what has been reported thus far.

I called the Times again at about 9:15 because I wanted to make sure someone said some good things about Gary. I dropped some names and got to the writer or the editor on the story who wouldn't ID himself. He said he'd have someone call me back to get my statement. No one ever called back and then the Times published their maliciously spiteful obituary just after midnight Sunday. It was clear to me that they wanted/needed to put a spin on his death.

Gary Webb deserved better than this and those of us who knew him and benefited from his work will see that he gets it.

I am going to the funeral and I will be asking questions in Sacramento. Given the disproportionate number of "suicides" of authors and journalists who have covered such stories, and the mainstream's horrendously dishonest coverage of such events, it is right to see if there are grounds to be cautiously suspicious of these accounts. But it is also right to avoid hysteria and unsupported conclusions until there are solid reasons to suspect foul play.

Gary would have wanted us all to do this by the numbers, patiently and thoroughly. That was his style. That was why he was so good.

When funeral arrangements are announced FTW will publish them and we encourage all of our subscribers to send flowers, write letters and show their thanks to this man who changed all of our lives forever.

It wouldn't hurt if you wanted to let the L.A. Times know what you think of their obituary.

Sleep well, Gary. Wherever men and women of honor gather together from now on, your name will be spoken with reverence, respect and gratitude.

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