

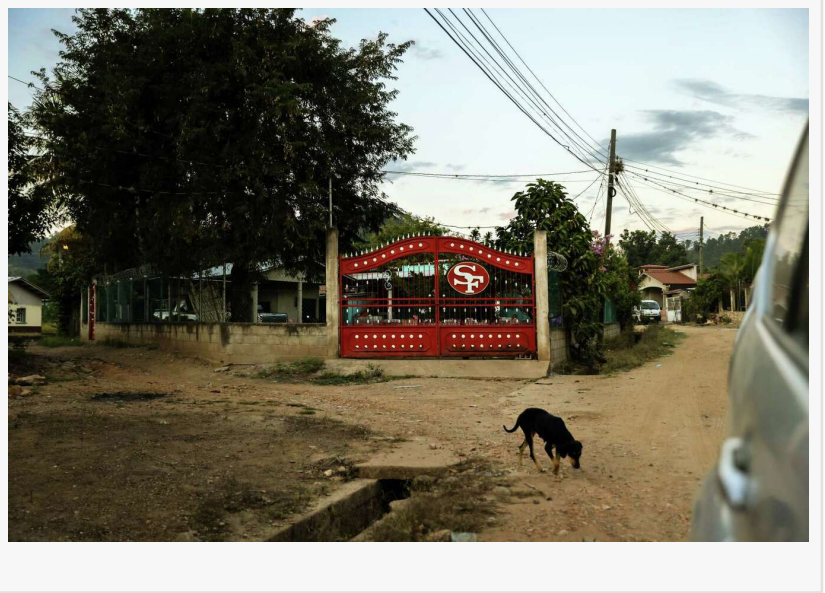
San Francisco Chronicle Investigation Exposes How The Open-Air Drug Trade Works

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, July 10, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- For the past 18 months, [The San Francisco Chronicle](#) has embarked on an ambitious investigation to understand the mechanics of street-level drug dealing in San Francisco and its connection to an economically depressed region of Honduras that a high concentration of the city's dealers calls home.

Lead reporter Megan Cassidy and photographer and reporter Gabrielle Lurie traveled to the U.S.-Mexico

border and to the Siria Valley in Honduras, where money earned from San Francisco's devastating drug trade is visible in the mansions rising along dusty roads and on gates and murals emblazoned with Bay Area insignia.



"The vast majority of Hondurans in the Bay Area hold legal jobs and make our community a better place," Chronicle Editor in Chief Emilio Garcia-Ruiz said. "But to understand our overdose crisis it's important to learn about all facets of the drug trade so we can make informed decisions about how to save lives."

Cassidy and Lurie also spent hundreds of hours in the open-air drug markets of San Francisco's Tenderloin and South of Market neighborhoods, where Lurie has been documenting the drug crisis since 2019. Lurie was named a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 2022 and 2023 for her coverage of victims of the drug epidemic. Cassidy and Lurie observed the daily movements of the drug business and interviewed more than 100 people impacted by it for the project, including drug users, residents, activists, police officers and 25 current and former dealers.

To better understand the connection between the Siria Valley and San Francisco, Cassidy reviewed thousands of pages of records, from death reports and police statistics to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainer requests and court documents from nearly

3,400 local and federal drug cases.

The investigation found that hundreds of Honduran migrants face drug charges in San Francisco and that during the pandemic Honduran dealers came to dominate drug sales in the fentanyl-ravaged Tenderloin and SoMa neighborhoods, the epicenter of an overdose crisis that has claimed more than 2,200 lives since the start of 2020. The majority of these dealers hail from the same small villages and towns, The Chronicle found.

Today, the results of the investigation are publishing in five parts:

□ This is the hometown of San Francisco's drug dealers:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2023/san-francisco-drug-trade-honduras/>

□ This is how San Francisco's open-air drug dealers work:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2023/san-francisco-drug-trade-how-dealers-work/>

□ One mom's path from Honduras to drug dealing in the Bay Area – and prison:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2023/san-francisco-drug-trade-leydis-cruz/>

□ He's known as the 'OG.' This is the man San Francisco's drug dealers say 'opened the path':

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2023/san-francisco-drug-trade-early-honduran-dealer/>

□ Why is it so hard to solve the drug crisis in San Francisco?:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2023/san-francisco-drug-trade-policy/>

□ Editor's note: Why and how The San Francisco Chronicle told the story of open-air drug dealing: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2023/san-francisco-drug-trade-about-investigation/>

"When I started this job in September 2020, I was told that drugs in San Francisco are sold by migrants from Honduras who are forced to do this work and are victims of human trafficking," Garcia-Ruiz said. "Megan and Gabrielle showed incredible courage in getting to the bottom of what was really happening. They found truths that are far more nuanced than what we expected. Our local crisis, it turns out, is truly global in nature, and solving it will require all of the community coming together."

About The San Francisco Chronicle

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