

## BOOK REVIEW

Sarah Kerrigan,<sup>1</sup> Ph.D.

### Review of: *A Brief History of Cocaine, 2nd edition*

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**REFERENCE:** Karch SB. A brief history of cocaine, 2nd ed. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2006, 188 pp.

*A Brief History of Cocaine* is definitely an engaging read. Karch's second edition has been updated to include the most recent information on trafficking, consumption, cost, and trends in the use of this drug, estimated to be a staggering \$16 billion industry here in the United States.

The activities of drug cartels, globalization, terrorism, interdiction efforts, and government activities on an international scale are cleverly presented. The author maintains historical focus by comparing and contrasting the past to the present in a way that maintains terrific readability. Were it not for this book one might not realize that drug trafficking dates back to the time of the Spanish Conquest and that initial reform efforts date back to the 1500s.

Likewise, Karch traces cocaine's use back to the ancient Moche tribe and the Inca legend of "Mama-coca," from whom the coca plant was supposedly derived. From this legend we realize that even the association between cocaine and sex is not new, but some 2500 years old! For a relatively short book (188 pages) the author covers a wide variety of topics ranging from its trade as a commodity, the effects of cocaine abuse on society and even celebrity deaths. The common thread in this book is the comparison of old and new. This makes for a refreshing read, and one that is extremely relevant read for practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines.

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