

中青新世纪英语阅读文库

社会热点系列  
Need to Know Series

可 卡 因

# Cocaine

Sean Connolly

 Licensed to China Youth Press by Harcourt Education Ltd



中国青年出版社

CHINA YOUTH PRESS

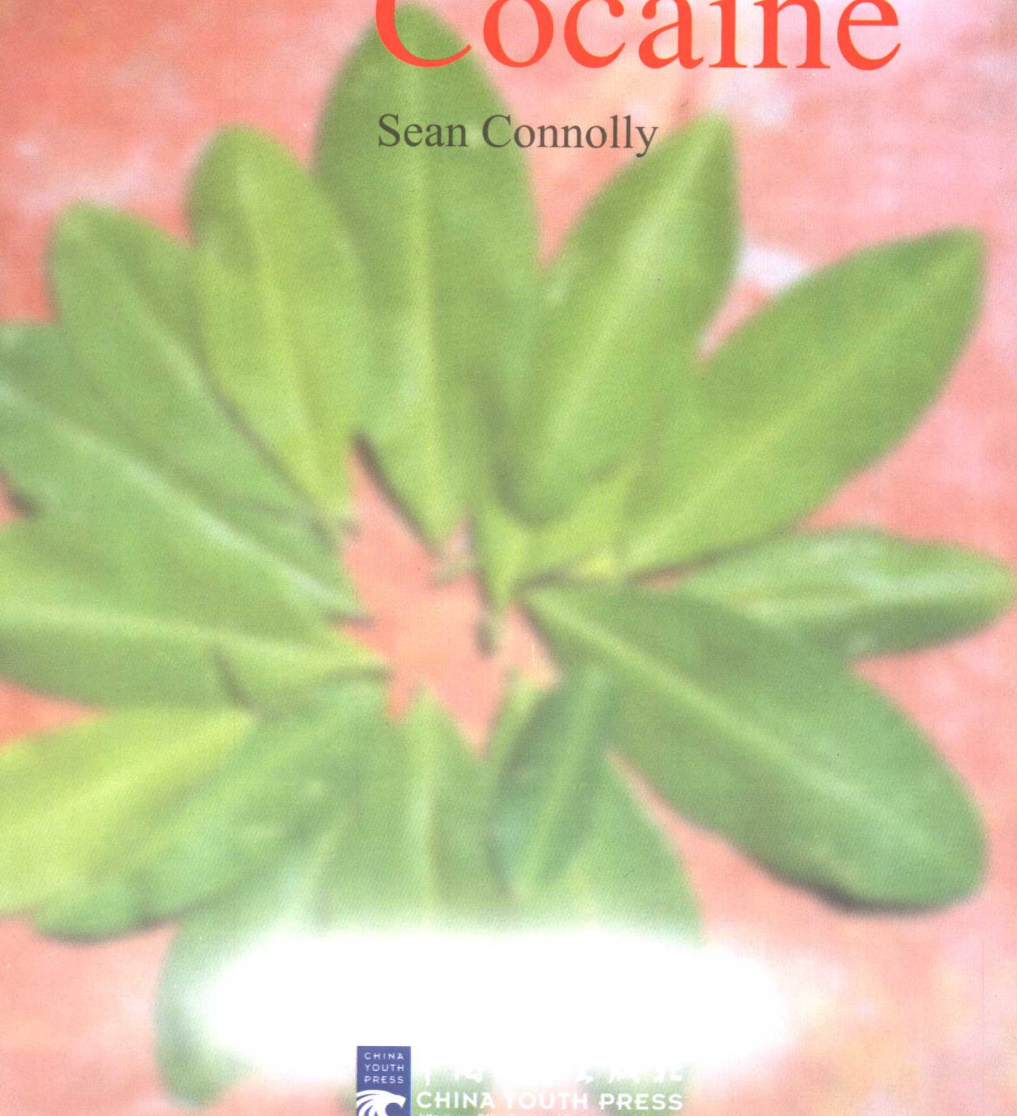
<http://www.21books.com> <http://www.cqchina.com>

社会热点系列  
Need to Know Series

可卡因

# Cocaine

Sean Connolly



CHINA YOUTH PRESS  
<http://www.21books.com> <http://www.cqchina.com>

## (京)新登字 083 号

北京市集佳律师事务所谢青律师代表中国青年出版社郑重声明:本书由版权所有人 Harcourt Global Library 授权中国青年出版社独家出版发行。未经版权所有人和中国青年出版社书面许可,任何组织机构、个人不得以任何形式擅自复制、改编或传播本书全部或部分内容。凡有侵权行为,必须承担法律责任。

侵权举报电话:010-84015588-8001 E-mail:hrm@21books.com

版权登记号:01-2004-3446

Cocaine by Sean Connolly

Harcourt Global Library, part of Harcourt Education Ltd.

© Reed Educational and Professional Publishing Ltd 2000

The moral right of the proprietor has been asserted.

### 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

可卡因 / (英)康诺利著. —北京:中国青年出版社, 2005

(中青新世纪英语阅读文库·社会热点系列)

ISBN 7-5006-5710-2

I. 可... II. 康... III. 英语 — 语言读物 IV. H319.9

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2005) 第 000031 号

丛 书 名: 中青新世纪英语阅读文库

书 名: 社会热点系列 / 可卡因

编 著: (英)康诺利

出版发行: 中国青年出版社

地址: 北京市东四十二条 21 号 邮政编码: 100708

电话: (010) 84015588 传真: (010) 64053266

印 刷: 北京朝阳新艺印刷有限公司

开 本: 787 × 1092 1/16 总 印 张: 35

版 次: 2005 年 2 月北京第 1 版

印 次: 2005 年 2 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7-5006-5710-2/H · 114

总 定 价: 98.00 元 (共 10 分册)

# Contents

---

Introduction	4
What is cocaine?	6
Prevalence	10
Crack cocaine	12
Is cocaine addictive?	16
Cocaine's history	20
The clampdown	24
The cocaine cartels	26
Who takes cocaine?	30
Getting hold of cocaine	34
Cocaine consequences	36
Legal matters	40
Life with cocaine	42
Treatment and counselling	46
People to talk to	50
Glossary	52

# Introduction

Cocaine is a drug that has always had a great deal of publicity. Much of its reputation rests on the fact that it is expensive and that it is a popular drug with the rich and famous. It is often associated with **high-flying** people who are looking for a buzz that will take them that little bit higher still. With a reputation like that, it is not surprising that many people are tempted to take cocaine in the hope that they too will share in this experience.

## Mystery and misunderstanding

Like many drugs of abuse, cocaine has a history that has seen its reputation rise and fall. Along the way, the image has changed, as has the drug itself. From its humble roots – in the form of the **coca** leaf – as a mild **stimulant**, cocaine as we know it was developed as a cure-all medicine. Then, as the medical excitement calmed down, it came to be seen as a **menace**.

That view, in turn, was largely abandoned in the 1960s, when cocaine was seen as a relatively harmless alternative to 'harder' drugs such as heroin. Finally, in the 1980s, cocaine was once again transformed to the more **potent** variety known as crack – which claimed the reputation as the most dangerous drug available.

This book sets out to view cocaine in its proper perspective. Powdered cocaine, for example, is not the harmless drug that many felt it was in the 1980s. Crack, on the other hand, although it does not necessarily turn first-time users into instant **addicts**, does have the power to destroy lives very quickly. Cocaine, in its various forms, turns out to be less of a mystery than it was once considered. Like any drug, the thrill or the sense of power it provides comes at a price – and it is important to realize that the price is calculated in more than just money.

A user prepares several lines of powdered cocaine. He will use the rolled up banknote to snort the cocaine into his nostrils.



# What is cocaine?

Cocaine is a white crystal-like substance that usually appears in powder form. Its chemical name is cocaine hydrochloride and its names on the street are 'coke', 'Charlie' and 'snow'. Most of what is sold on the street as cocaine only contains 45–50 per cent cocaine – the balance is usually made up of sugar. Crack cocaine, which is also known as 'stone', 'rock', 'base' or 'freebase' has had the impurities removed. As a result it is much more concentrated, consisting of 85–95 per cent pure cocaine crystals. Both cocaine powder and crack are illegal drugs, and there are severe penalties for the possession or sale of either of them.

## South American roots

The source of cocaine is the leaves of the coca plant, which has two distinct species. *Erythroxylum coca* grows in the tropical forests on the eastern slopes of the Andes in South America. The second species, *Erythroxylum novagranatense*, grows in drier mountainous regions of South America – in Colombia, along the Caribbean coast and in some dry parts of Peru.

It is still common to see coca leaves on sale in the village markets of the Andes in South America.





## The effects

Cocaine powder is a stimulant like **amphetamine**, which seems to provide extra energy and confidence to those who take it. The effects are more intense than those of amphetamines, but they do not last as long. When taking cocaine, a user feels **euphoric**, confident and serene. In addition there is a greater sense of alertness and certain local pains are numbed.

A number of physical effects accompany the cocaine 'high'. These include raised blood pressure, heartbeat and body temperature as well as a decreased need for food and sleep.

These effects come on very quickly after the drug is taken; the first feeling is usually a sense of **exhilaration** or excitement. After a few minutes the effect levels off, which is when most of the common effects – increased confidence and alertness – take hold. The cocaine high only lasts about 40 minutes – about one-sixth as long as an amphetamine high. When it wears off, the user can often feel quite the opposite – agitated, depressed, tired and **paranoid**.

# What is cocaine?

## How people take cocaine

Many South Americans use the coca leaf itself to reach a gentler high than normally comes with cocaine. The mild high provided by the coca leaf has been used by Andean people for thousands of years in response to difficult high-altitude living conditions.

Cocaine itself, which comes as an odourless powder, is usually inhaled through the nose, or snorted. The cocaine user inhales the drug quickly through a tube. This process can be quite uncomfortable, and many people feel an intense irritation in their nasal passages.

Snorting the cocaine means that the drug enters the bloodstream through the soft tissue of the nostrils. It takes a little while for the cocaine to dissolve and seep through, so using this method means that the drug does not cause as much shock to the system as some other methods of taking cocaine. Continued snorting, however, can create some problems. For example, the soft tissue of the inner and upper nostrils can be rotted, in turn damaging the tiny blood vessels that lie just below the surface. Heavy cocaine users often have bad nosebleeds as a result. Despite such side-effects, most cocaine users prefer to snort rather than to **inject**, which carries the risk of contracting **hepatitis** or the HIV virus.

The cocaine high – at 40 minutes or so – is expensive, because it encourages the user to take more of the drug to reproduce or prolong the sensation. It is this sense of compulsion – the intense desire to take more of the drug – that adds to the already high cost of obtaining a single dose.



# Prevalence

Cocaine has always been an expensive 'high', although that in itself is part of its attraction. Many modern users seem to view cocaine as a fashion accessory, something that tells others about the amount of money they can spend on enjoying themselves.

The present pattern of cocaine use began in the late 1960s, when pop stars began to take the drug. Earlier in the same decade the main stimulant was amphetamines, but the word got out that cocaine provided a smoother high. Because many people can function – at work or studying – while high on cocaine, the drug carries less **stigma** than many other illegal drugs. This fact, coupled with its **snob value** in drug terms, makes cocaine an attractive choice for professional people.

These same factors – especially the cost – mean that cocaine is used by a relatively small proportion of young people. The Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence estimates that one to four per cent of British school children aged nine to fifteen have tried cocaine. This compares with a figure of about 25 per cent for **cannabis**.



## Dance culture

Although cocaine use among young people is very small compared with some other drugs, there are concerns that it could increase. Since the early 1980s, drug-taking has been a major part of the club scene of the youth culture, and there are certain drugs that come in and out of favour.

Ecstasy had been the most popular dance drug from about the mid-1980s onwards, but the mid-1990s saw problems with the purity of the ecstasy that was being sold. No one could be sure that what they were buying was actually ecstasy, rather than another substance that could be more dangerous. Amphetamines which, like ecstasy, give an energy boost have crept into the club scene. Cocaine seems to be following a similar route. Because cocaine is more expensive than other drugs, some young people are taking it as well as less expensive cannabis and **hashish**.

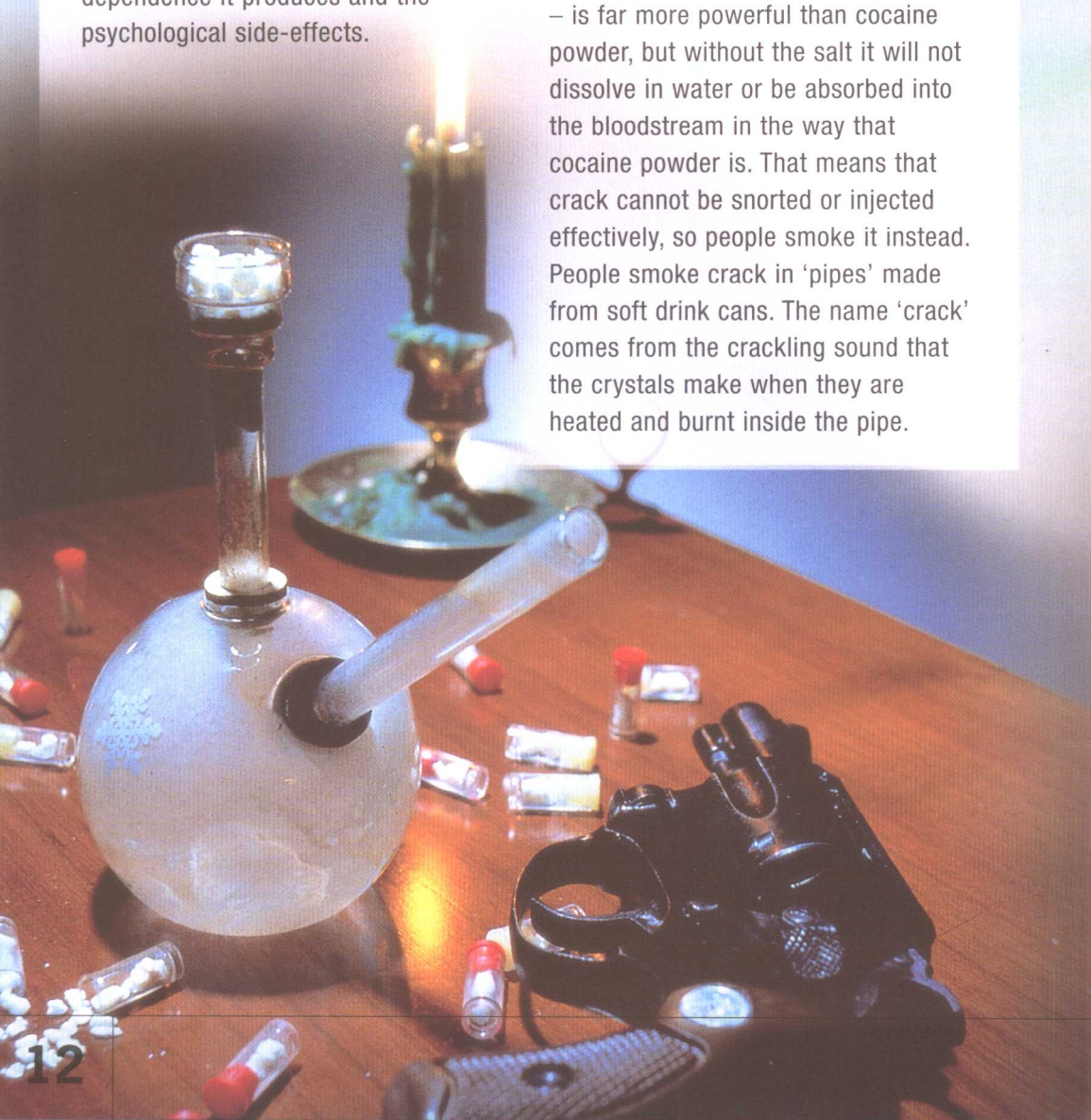


# Crack cocaine

Crack cocaine is a **derivative** of cocaine powder that produces an exaggerated version of the normal cocaine high. In fact, it is like a more intense version of cocaine in every sense – the high, the sense of dependence it produces and the psychological side-effects.

## Intense sensation

Crack is often called 'freebase' because the potent base (the active ingredient in the drug) has been 'freed' from the salts and other chemicals of the cocaine powder. The result – crack – is far more powerful than cocaine powder, but without the salt it will not dissolve in water or be absorbed into the bloodstream in the way that cocaine powder is. That means that crack cannot be snorted or injected effectively, so people smoke it instead. People smoke crack in 'pipes' made from soft drink cans. The name 'crack' comes from the crackling sound that the crystals make when they are heated and burnt inside the pipe.



Everything about crack happens fast. The 'rush' starts immediately, begins to wear off in a few minutes and is over after about twelve minutes. As with cocaine powder, in order to get high again, the user needs to take another dose of the drug.

## Cause for alarm

Crack became well known in the early to mid-1980s, when stories of its use began to spread. One of the most dangerous aspects of the drug was its ability to create dependence in the user after only a few 'hits' (see panel, page 18). Stories began to appear about how people would become crazed addicts after taking crack just once. Use of crack was concentrated in inner-city neighbourhoods with high unemployment and few opportunities for recreation. The blast of confidence that crack offered was a short-term escape from the problems of life in a tough neighbourhood. Unlike cocaine powder, crack seemed to be especially popular with young people.

The powerful cocaine derivative 'crack' is sometimes smoked in a glass pipe, where it burns and crackles while being smoked.



# Crack cocaine

## Crime fears

The original rumours of 'one hit and you're hooked' are exaggerations, but there is no denying that crack takes hold of people in a way that powder cocaine does not. The problem of dependence – the urgent need to get frequent supplies of the drug even when there is no money to pay for it – creates the problem of crime.



Many crack users turned to robbery to get money for more of the drug. Young people used abandoned houses or apartments as a base – a ‘crack house’ – and went out in search of money and more supplies. Then they returned to take the drug. American newspapers were full of stories about the ‘crack **epidemic**’ in the mid-1980s, and there were widespread fears about a new generation of addicts and the crime wave that they would **unleash**.

Crack remains a serious problem, both in terms of dependence and crime. However, there has been a move away from the use of crack, especially among the young inner-city people who had been the most frequent users. People in many inner-city neighbourhoods have made it clear that they do not approve of the way in which crack has threatened their young people. For many ‘crackheads’, as those whose lives are ruled by crack are called, this local pressure to stop taking the drug is more powerful than the criminal **prosecution** they face for selling crack.

**“It got to the stage where I wanted crack so badly that I would crawl on the floor for crumbs (of the drug), it made me feel so alert, like I was the best person in the world and the world is a good place – for three minutes – and then you have to have more. I’d come down crying and feeling terribly lonely.”**

(Sam, former crack user, quoted in *Drugs Wise* by Melanie McFadyean)

# Is cocaine addictive?

Although the terms **addictive** and **addict** are often used in relation to drugs, most medical professionals prefer the terms 'dependent' and 'dependent user'. Part of the reason for this slight change of terms has to do with social matters: the word 'addictive' carries a sense of being uncontrollable and even unforgivable. 'Dependent', on the other hand, suggests a way of behaving that can be overcome. Professionals also find it useful to talk of someone being either physically dependent or psychologically dependent on a drug.

A drug causes physical dependence if the user continually needs to increase the dose to maintain the effects – a pattern called **tolerance** – and then suffers **withdrawal symptoms** when it is stopped. Alcohol and heroin are good examples of drugs that cause physical dependence. Cocaine, with the possible exception of crack (see panel, page 18), is unlike these drugs in that it does not promote physical dependence.

## Cocaine craving

For many years drugs workers focused mainly on physical dependence, leading many people to consider cocaine to be relatively harmless.

However, it has also been known for many decades that cocaine can lead to a profound psychological dependence, in which the mind **craves** the 'good feelings' that come with the drug. Furthermore, the tiredness and depression that many users feel after stopping the drug – although not 'textbook' withdrawal symptoms – encourage further use.

Cocaine users often begin to have cravings for the drug, which can begin as a yearning for the pleasant effects that they associate with it. Over time, these cravings can become intense, leaving the user feeling unable to deal with ordinary daily routines. Some users are unaware of the changes that occur in their own outlook, although normally a cocaine user recognizes how their life becomes dominated by the drug. The increasing cost of the habit is one obvious signal, but cocaine users also notice they are giving up or reducing their social or family activities because of the drug.

**A regular cocaine user will often snort many lines of the drug in a single session in order to recreate the first rush of being high.**