

---

# Introduction

This is the setting for what follows below: narcotics are pouring in from abroad through a well-organized, efficient group of smugglers. One-fifth of the population abuses drugs, an epidemic surpassing any known since the Great Plagues. Not only the poor, but the wealthy and the children of the wealthy have succumbed. Within the nation, organized crime displays its drug profits without shame, ruling local governments, and threatening the integrity even of national government. None of their opponents is safe from assassins, not even the chief of state. Law enforcement is in shambles. The moral fiber of the nation has deteriorated past the danger point.

And one of the leading dope-traffickers writes to his superiors abroad, "As long as this country maintains its drug traffic, there is not the slightest possibility that it will ever become a military threat, since the habit saps the vitality of the nation." (1)

The description is familiar, but we are not writing of America in 1978, but China in 1838, on the eve of the first Opium War, when Great Britain landed troops to compel China to ingest the poison distributed by British merchants.

An American President lies dead of an assassin's bullet. Corrupt members of the Cabinet cover the tracks leading to a conspiracy, including the leading narcotics mobs, ethnic-based secret societies, and a foreign government. The public does not believe that the assassin acted alone, but the weight of the cover-up, the silence of the leading press, and the deaths of witnesses blur the trail from the public's view.

Was that the death of John F. Kennedy? It was also the death of Abraham Lincoln.

During the last century, British finance protected by British guns controlled the world narcotics traffic. The names of the families and institutions are known to the history student: Matheson, Keswick, Swire, Dent, Baring, and Rothschild; Jardine Matheson, the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, the Chartered Bank, the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company. Britain's array of intelligence fronts ran a worldwide assassination bureau, operating through occult secret societies: the **Order of Zion**, Mazzini's Mafia, the "Triads" or Societies of Heaven in China.

Paging back over the records of the narcotics traffic and its wake of corruption and murder, the most uncanny feature of the opium-based Pax Britannica is how shamelessly, how publicly the dope-runners operated. Opium trading, for the British, was not a sordid backstreet business, but an honored instrument of state policy, the mainstay of the Exchequer, the subject of encomia from Britain's leading apostles of "Free Trade" — Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill. The poisoning of China, and later the post-Civil War United States, did not lead to prison but to peerages. Great sectors of the Far East became devoted to the growing of the opium poppy, to the exclusion of food crops, to the extent that scores of millions of people depended utterly on the growing, distribution and consumption of drugs.

The Keswicks, Dents, Swires and Barings *still* control the world flow of opiates from their stronghold in the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Jardine Matheson, the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, and the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company *still* control the channels of

production and distribution of the drugs from the Far East, through the British dominion of Canada, into the United States. By an uninterrupted chain of succession, the descendants of the Triads, the Mafia, and the Order of Zion *still* promote drug traffic, dirty money transfers, political corruption, and an Assassination Bureau even more awesome than the conspiracy that claimed Abraham Lincoln's life. Of course, the drug revenues of this machine are no longer tallied in the published accounts of the British Exchequer. But the leading installations of the drug traffic are no more hidden than they were a hundred years ago. From the Crown Colony of Hong Kong, the "HongShang" Bank does what the Keswicks set it up to do: provide centralized rediscounting facilities for the financing of the drug trade. Even the surnames of senior management are the same.

Even today, the grand old names of Prohibition liquor and dope-running rouse the deep awareness of Americans: Bronfman, Kennedy, Lansky. Are the denizens of the India opium trade, of the Prohibition mob, imprisoned in the history books and behind the movie screen? Not infrequently, the observer feels a momentary lapse in time, and sees not a history book, but the morning newspaper, not the late-night movie, but the evening television newscast.

The story we have to tell happened twice. It first happened to China, and now it is happening to the United States. Emphasizing that neither the names nor the hangouts of the criminals have changed, we begin by telling how it happened the first time.