



feit pills were responsible for the death of music star Prince; about one hundred white pills found on his property looked exactly like Vicodin but actually contained fentanyl.”

From Paisley Park to the park behind your apartment, no place seems to be immune. “When you think of the opioid epidemic, you think of a lot of white middle class people,” Westhoff said. “That certainly has been a big part of it, but there’s always been a huge African-American population using heroin, and now that fentanyl is in the mix it’s causing massive casualties in places like LA and Chicago. This is not a death sentence for just one demographic. Just when the prescription pill deaths were finally falling, and just when the heroin deaths were finally falling, the deaths from fentanyl are going way up. And prescription pills are still abused at a very high rate, so if fentanyl really starts getting cut into pills, then this thing can balloon even worse than it already is.

“It just seems like with each drug epidemic, things keep getting worse.”

Toward the end of Fentanyl, Inc., Westhoff points to some solutions. “The crack epidemic, the meth epidemic—keep in mind people were blaming the user back then, so thankfully we’re moving beyond that.” He also supports

A potentially lethal dose of fentanyl.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DEA

harm reduction strategies like supervised injection facilities, which he argues “is really just a no-brainer.”

“We know from the failure of the War on Drugs that focusing on the supply side is not going to work,” Westhoff said. “Killing a drug kingpin from Colombia or capturing El Chapo doesn’t do anything—the drug supply is just getting worse. The drugs will find a way to get here, drug users will find a way to get their drugs, and all we can do is focus on the demand side.”

The shifting goal posts make the problem nearly impossible to smother. Still, the author hopes his contribution plays a role in navigating us out of this state of emergency.

“The inventor of fentanyl, Paul Janssen, there’s literally nothing written about him, and so I wanted to tell his story and that of the other people who brought these drugs to life,” Westhoff said. “No one did it on purpose really—these are all drugs taken from scientific literature.

“I tried to have it not just be about statistics, but about bigger trends. Even when this information is out of date, I think people are going to want to look back on how this fentanyl crisis got off the ground.” □

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THE CAMP FIRE EMERGENCY PROJECT IS COMPLETE

We have removed hazardous trees and debris, installed wire mesh drapery to protect the public from falling rock, repaired damaged drainage systems and other important highway components on SR70 and SR191.

Caltrans District 3 and North Region Construction will continue monitoring the highways impacted by the Camp Fire while finishing minor repair work throughout the winter and spring 2020.

CALTRANS IS PROUD TO BE PART OF THE REBUILDING OF PARADISE AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES AFTER THE CAMP FIRE DISASTER.

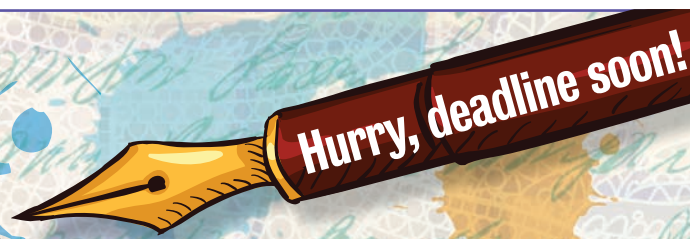


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Fiction 59

The Chico News & Review’s annual Fiction 59 flash-fiction contest is back. Submit your 59-word stories today for the chance to have your work published in the annual Fiction 59 issue of the CN&R, on stands Oct. 24. Winners will also be invited to share their works during a live reading at The Bookstore (118 Main St.) on Oct. 25.

NEW THIS YEAR: Six-Word Stories

Go really micro with your fiction and tell a story in only six words. Here’s a famous example (possibly by Ernest Hemingway):

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

Please do not include a title with six-word story.

Six-word stories will not be separated by age category.

All other rules for Fiction 59 apply.

For submission guidelines, visit newsreview.com/fiction59

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9:
IN THE CN&R OFFICE AT 4:59 P.M. OR ONLINE AT 11:59 P.M.**