



# Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade

*Chellis Glendinning*

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Its use as a narcotic is on a precipitous rise. Worldwide heroin production has doubled in the last decade, and the United Nations estimates more than 15 million users are addicted—up to 3 million in the United States. It's big business, too, with yearly global sales of \$500 billion—up to \$22 billion in the U.S. Enmeshed with terrorism, crime, government collaboration, corporate globalization, and the spread of HIV, the opiate trade is inextricably entangled with the functioning of global society. Finally, heroin is controversial because of the on-going debates about solutions to the health, social and economic havoc it creates.

*Chiva* uses creative nonfiction to merge the global epic of heroin trafficking with the human-scale story of its presence in the small desert town that boasts the most per-capita overdose deaths in the U.S. The book interweaves three themes:

The true tale of Chimayó, New Mexico, terrorized by its heroin dealers since the 1970s until, in the late '90s, its citizens rose up to challenge the epidemic in their midst.

The story of the author's relationship with a local dealer, and his involvement with addiction, crime, love, recovery and the judicial system.

The political context behind these stories: the global workings of the heroin production business.

Compelling, disturbing, yet hopeful, *Chiva* is both personal and political, revealing the relationship between colonization and drug abuse, and the importance of reclaiming sustainable culture as a key to recovery.

**Chellis Glendinning**, Ph.D, is a psychologist. An award-winning activist and writer, she is the author of four previous books, including *Off the Map: An Expedition Deep into Empire and the Global Economy* (New Society, 2002) which won the National Federation of Press Women 2000 book award for general nonfiction. She lives in Chimayó, New Mexico.

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