

# ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS





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## Episode #265

# Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

### 24th May, 2022

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about Fentanyl, the drug devastating America.

[00:00:30] It's the story of how one [synthetic](#)<sup>1</sup> drug went from relative [obscurity](#)<sup>2</sup> to being the number one cause of death for Americans aged 18-45, [overtaking](#)<sup>3</sup> guns, car accidents, and suicide.

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<sup>1</sup> made artificially, not natural

<sup>2</sup> the state of being unknown

<sup>3</sup> becoming more important than

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:00:46] In this episode we'll talk about the drug itself, what fentanyl does to the body and why it is so dangerous, we'll look at how it managed to spread so quickly through the country, and what the US authorities are trying to do about it.

[00:01:01] I should add that this episode is going to be followed by another [standalone](#)<sup>4</sup> episode on San Francisco, a city that has been [ravaged](#)<sup>5</sup> by fentanyl, so these two episodes will form quite a nice [duo](#)<sup>6</sup>.

[00:01:17] OK then, let's get right into it.

[00:01:21] In 1960 a Belgian pharmacist named Dr Paul Janssen developed a new kind of drug to [relieve](#)<sup>7</sup> pain.

[00:01:31] He called it fentanyl, and it was incredibly effective. Just a small [dose](#)<sup>8</sup> was required to relax a patient and [relieve](#) pain. As a result, it was quickly adopted by the medical community as a way to [relieve](#) pain and suffering, especially for patients suffering from [terminal](#)<sup>9</sup> conditions.

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<sup>4</sup> without being connected to other episodes on the same subject

<sup>5</sup> greatly damaged or harmed

<sup>6</sup> pair

<sup>7</sup> make it less strong

<sup>8</sup> measured amount

<sup>9</sup> leading to death, incurable

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:01:56] And for many years fentanyl remained a tightly controlled drug used in a medical [setting](#)<sup>10</sup>. Administered correctly it helped [countless](#)<sup>11</sup> patients [relieve](#) pain and suffering.

[00:02:09] And when Dr Paul Janssen died in 2003 at the [ripe](#)<sup>12</sup> old age of 77, his [obituary](#)<sup>13</sup> mentioned fentanyl only once, it was practically an [afterthought](#)<sup>14</sup> in a [glowing](#)<sup>15</sup> career that included being awarded more than 100 [patents](#)<sup>16</sup> and [authoring](#)<sup>17</sup> more than 850 scientific papers.

[00:02:34] Clearly, Dr Janssen was a talented scientist, but he died knowing very little about the true impact that his creation would have.

[00:02:45] It wouldn't be until 2013, 10 years after Dr Janssen's death, that illegally produced fentanyl [burst onto](#)<sup>18</sup> [the scene](#)<sup>19</sup> in the United States, and by 2016, just three

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<sup>10</sup> environment, context

<sup>11</sup> too many to count

<sup>12</sup> advanced

<sup>13</sup> public notice or announcement of his death

<sup>14</sup> a later or secondary thought

<sup>15</sup> very successful

<sup>16</sup> official licences to exclusively use his inventions for a period of time

<sup>17</sup> being the writer or author of

<sup>18</sup> appeared suddenly and in a strong way

<sup>19</sup> the specific area of activity

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

years later, fentanyl had become a [household name](#)<sup>20</sup> and the most deadly opiate in the country, killing more Americans than any other drug.

[00:03:10] Now it isn't just the most deadly drug, a fentanyl [overdose](#)<sup>21</sup> is the [leading](#)<sup>22</sup> cause of death for Americans under the age of 45.

[00:03:20] To put it another way, for any American who dies before their 46th birthday, a fentanyl [overdose](#) is the most common cause.

[00:03:32] The problems started when fentanyl moved from being in the hands of trained medical professionals to the hands of criminals.

[00:03:41] See, [in the right hands](#)<sup>23</sup>, produced in a medical setting and administered correctly, fentanyl isn't particularly dangerous.

[00:03:50] In fact, it has a relatively high what's called "therapeutic index", which is a medical term for the difference between the amount of a drug needed to have a positive medical effect and the amount that can be dangerous.

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<sup>20</sup> something very well known

<sup>21</sup> the action of taking too much of the drug

<sup>22</sup> most important or common

<sup>23</sup> controlled by suitable or specialised medical personnel

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:04:05] In [clinical](#)<sup>24</sup> conditions, fentanyl is normally administered via a [patch](#)<sup>25</sup> or a [nasal spray](#)<sup>26</sup>, where very small amounts of the drug go slowly into the [bloodstream](#)<sup>27</sup>, so it is relatively safe.

[00:04:20] But the problems arise when it is produced and sold outside a [clinical environment, and taken recreationally](#)<sup>28</sup> by people who don't know exactly what it is they are putting into their bodies.

[00:04:34] See, the [potency](#)<sup>29</sup> of fentanyl, its power, its strength, is around 50 times that of heroin and 100 times that of morphine.

[00:04:46] Just two milligrams of fentanyl, like a couple of [grains](#)<sup>30</sup> of salt, can kill a full-grown adult.

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<sup>24</sup> medical

<sup>25</sup> a piece of material worn on the skin

<sup>26</sup> liquid medication that can be inhaled or taken through the nose

<sup>27</sup> the blood circulating or flowing through the body

<sup>28</sup> a medical environment and taken for enjoyment and not for medical reasons

<sup>29</sup> power, strength

<sup>30</sup> very small pieces or particles

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:04:54] It's typically smoked, [snorted](#)<sup>31</sup>, or injected, with injections being particularly dangerous because the user has very little idea about the strength of what they are putting directly into their [bloodstream](#).

[00:05:09] As one director of a police laboratory said, "You're injecting yourself with a loaded gun."

[00:05:16] It has a similar effect to drugs like heroin or morphine, a [rush](#)<sup>32</sup>, a [high](#)<sup>33</sup>, a feeling of [euphoria](#)<sup>34</sup> as the chemicals [bind](#)<sup>35</sup> to the opioid [receptors](#)<sup>36</sup> in the brain.

[00:05:28] It feels good, [blocks out](#)<sup>37</sup> pain, and gives its users a temporary sense of happiness.

[00:05:36] But it is highly addictive, the [high](#) is shorter and more intense than other opiates like heroin, meaning it can completely [consume](#)<sup>38</sup> its users lives.

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<sup>31</sup> taken through the nose

<sup>32</sup> a sudden intense feeling of energy

<sup>33</sup> a sudden intense feeling of energy and happiness

<sup>34</sup> extreme happiness

<sup>35</sup> stick, are attached or tied

<sup>36</sup> organs or nerves that react to a change in the body

<sup>37</sup> stops

<sup>38</sup> destroy

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:05:49] It appeared on the illegal drug [scene](#)<sup>39</sup> in the US really in the mid 2010s to fill an existing demand for opiates. Increasing numbers of Americans had become addicted to prescription opioids and as there was a [tightening](#)<sup>40</sup> of restrictions on who was prescribed opioids, an increasing number of opioid addicted people were left without any legal opportunities to feed their addiction.

[00:06:18] Heroin was one option, and the number of heroin addicts [skyrocketed](#)<sup>41</sup>. But heroin isn't cheap, and there was still [stigma](#)<sup>42</sup> surrounding it from its association with the AIDS [epidemic](#)<sup>43</sup> in the 1980s.

[00:06:33] The stage was set for a new drug, one that could be produced cheaply, easily, and didn't necessarily need to be injected.

[00:06:44] That drug was Fentanyl.

[00:06:46] It's a completely [synthetic](#) opioid, meaning it can be produced in a laboratory and making it much cheaper to produce than other natural opiates like heroin or morphine.

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<sup>39</sup> specific area of activity

<sup>40</sup> the act of making them stricter or stronger

<sup>41</sup> rose very quickly

<sup>42</sup> strong feeling of disapproval or shame

<sup>43</sup> the appearance of the disease in a large number of people at the same time



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[00:06:59] Heroin, on the other hand, needs to be [harvested](#)<sup>44</sup> from [poppies](#)<sup>45</sup>, processed, and transported often thousands of miles across land and [smuggled](#)<sup>46</sup> in ships before it reaches its final destination.

[00:07:15] Illegal fentanyl is thought to have a much simpler supply chain.

[00:07:20] Initially, it was first produced in China, and then often sent via normal mail, in [shipments](#)<sup>47</sup> of under 1 kilo, to the United States, where it would go almost directly onto the streets, and into the hands of addicts.

[00:07:35] 1 kilo of the drug can be bought for around \$3,000 wholesale, and this 1 kilo, given how pure the drug is, would be enough fentanyl to kill 500,000 adults.

[00:07:51] After increasing pressure from the United States on the Chinese government, there has been a [crackdown](#)<sup>48</sup> on fentanyl laboratories in China, and a [subsequent](#)<sup>49</sup> reduction, or at least believed [subsequent](#) reduction, in the amount of Chinese-produced fentanyl arriving in the United States.

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<sup>44</sup> collected, gathered

<sup>45</sup> plants with red flowers that are a source of drugs such as morphine

<sup>46</sup> illegally transferred

<sup>47</sup> amounts sent together

<sup>48</sup> a series of stricter or stronger measures to limit illegal activity

<sup>49</sup> following

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[00:08:09] But this [crackdown](#) opened the doors for Mexican cartels, which buy the chemicals required to produce fentanyl directly from Chinese suppliers and then produce the fentanyl in Mexico, before [smuggling](#)<sup>50</sup> it northwards to the United States.

[00:08:26] Given that it is so much more powerful than drugs like heroin or meth, it takes up a lot less space, so you might only need a small handbag to supply an entire city's addicts with fentanyl for a month.

[00:08:42] As you can see, the [logistics](#)<sup>51</sup> of producing, transporting, and selling fentanyl are just so much simpler than other drugs.

[00:08:52] And the result of this is that it is very cheap for the end user, for the drug addict to get [high](#). Indeed, a [hit](#)<sup>52</sup> of fentanyl, enough to get a user [high](#), or kill someone who isn't used to it, typically costs just a few dollars, the same price as a cup of coffee.

[00:09:12] There are several effects of the drug being so cheap, effects that you will no doubt be able to [anticipate](#)<sup>53</sup>, to guess. Firstly, it has increased the demand for it. As it's so cheap, people can afford to take it frequently, and having enough money to pay for it is less of a problem than more expensive drugs.

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<sup>50</sup> transferring it illegally

<sup>51</sup> organisation

<sup>52</sup> a single measured quantity or dose of the drug taken

<sup>53</sup> guess

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:09:34] Secondly, it has meant that people have switched from other, [comparatively](#)<sup>54</sup> safer opioids, from prescription drugs like OxyContin or even illegal drugs like heroin, to fentanyl. It's stronger, it's cheaper, and there's more of it around.

[00:09:53] Thirdly, drug dealers often add fentanyl to other drugs precisely because it's cheaper. From cocaine to methamphetamine, police are increasingly finding that dealers are [cutting](#)<sup>55</sup> these more expensive drugs with fentanyl because they make more money and the end user still gets [high](#).

[00:10:13] The result of all of this is that there are more and more people taking fentanyl, both [knowingly](#)<sup>56</sup> and [unknowingly](#)<sup>57</sup>.

[00:10:22] And both cases are problematic.

[00:10:25] When someone buys illegal fentanyl, knowing it's fentanyl, it's very hard for them to know how strong it is. 2mg of fentanyl, which can be a fatal [dose](#) is, as we said, just like a couple of [grains](#) of sand, so it's very easy to accidentally [overdose](#), or for a [batch](#)<sup>58</sup> of fentanyl to be made too strong.

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<sup>54</sup> as compared to the others, relatively

<sup>55</sup> mixing, combining

<sup>56</sup> in a way that showed they knew about it

<sup>57</sup> in a way that showed they didn't know about it

<sup>58</sup> quantity produced at one time

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[00:10:48] This is dangerous enough for people who know they're taking fentanyl, but it's even more so for people who think they're taking something else.

[00:10:58] For the heroin user who thinks he is taking heroin, if he takes a “normal” amount of what he thinks is heroin and it is in fact partly or completely fentanyl, it can be [lethal](#)<sup>59</sup>.

[00:11:11] And even for people who think they are taking a completely different drug, not an opiate, they are increasingly [fatally](#)<sup>60</sup> surprised to find it has been [cut](#)<sup>61</sup> with fentanyl.

[00:11:23] There was a famous case in March of this year, March of 2022, where five young military [cadets](#)<sup>62</sup> died on a spring break when they took what they thought was cocaine, but it was [laced](#) with fentanyl.

[00:11:38] And an even more famous case of someone taking what he thought was another drug but it was in fact fentanyl was of the musician Prince. He thought he was taking Vicodin, a type of prescription painkiller, but it was actually a pill that had been [laced](#)<sup>63</sup> with fentanyl.

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<sup>59</sup> able to cause death, fatal, deadly

<sup>60</sup> with death as a result

<sup>61</sup> mixed, combined

<sup>62</sup> students (in the armed forces)

<sup>63</sup> mixed, combined

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[00:11:57] He was found dead in an elevator six hours later.

[00:12:02] Fentanyl was no longer something that was restricted to people living on the street, people forgotten by [mainstream](#)<sup>64</sup> society; it was something that drug dealers were putting everywhere, and the death [toll](#)<sup>65</sup> was increasing.

[00:12:17] In 2003, when the inventor of fentanyl, Dr Janssen, died, there were only 1,400 fentanyl deaths in America compared to 2,080 from heroin.

[00:12:31] In 2014, the year of the so-called “third wave” of fentanyl into the country, this had climbed to 5,544, in 2020 it had gone up 10 times again, to 56,516, and although the statistics haven’t yet been released, it looks like over 70,000 Americans died from a fentanyl [overdose](#) in 2021, so that’s almost 200 people every single day.

[00:13:03] Or to put another way, it’s 8 people an hour, so statistically during the time you’ve been listening to this episode, at least one person has died from a fentanyl [overdose](#).

[00:13:16] And, to state the obvious, these are all human beings, sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, people who love and who are loved, people who, for one reason or another, have fallen into a cycle of addiction and paid the ultimate price for it.

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<sup>64</sup> normal and accepted by most people

<sup>65</sup> number of deaths



## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:13:36] Because fentanyl addiction is so [gripping](#)<sup>66</sup>, because it is so hard to escape, and because the drug is so cheap, fentanyl addiction is for many a one-way street, one which starts with a loss of family and a roof over your head and ends on the street, dead after an [overdose](#).

[00:13:58] In terms of who is falling victim to fentanyl, it's [overwhelmingly](#)<sup>67</sup> a male problem, with men [making up](#)<sup>68</sup> 73% of fentanyl deaths in 2020.

[00:14:10] Although white Americans [make up](#)<sup>69</sup> the majority of fentanyl deaths, it's a drug that affects people of all ethnicities and ages, not all [proportionally](#)<sup>70</sup>, not all to the same extent.

[00:14:23] In fact, the most at risk group is black men aged over 55, a group which is four times more likely to [overdose](#) on fentanyl than any other group.

[00:14:36] Of course, the drug doesn't [discriminate](#)<sup>71</sup>, but its [potency](#) and low price makes it the drug of choice for people who have [hit rock bottom](#)<sup>72</sup>, people who are

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<sup>66</sup> hard to escape

<sup>67</sup> with a great majority, mostly

<sup>68</sup> forming or constituting

<sup>69</sup> form or constitute

<sup>70</sup> to the same extent

<sup>71</sup> treat people in a different way

<sup>72</sup> hit their lowest possible point

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

often struggling with homelessness, mental illness, and other forms of personal problems which are then [compounded](#)<sup>73</sup> by falling into a cycle of fentanyl abuse.

[00:14:59] Now, with the country in the middle of this [grip](#)<sup>74</sup> of addiction, what is actually happening, and what can be done about this?

[00:15:07] Well, in the next episode we'll look at the specific case of San Francisco, a city that is practising a harm reduction approach, where the use of hard drugs including fentanyl has been effectively decriminalised.

[00:15:23] But San Francisco is an [anomaly](#)<sup>75</sup>, it's unusual in this respect.

[00:15:28] The US government is, as you would expect, full of plenty of words, [policies](#)<sup>76</sup> and ideas about how to solve the issue of fentanyl addiction. Its strategy is primarily based on stopping the supply of fentanyl in the first place, stopping the drug getting into the country, and [taking it off](#)<sup>77</sup> the streets when it's there.

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<sup>73</sup> made worse

<sup>74</sup> tight hold, pressure

<sup>75</sup> unusual, not in agreement with the rest

<sup>76</sup> plans, strategies

<sup>77</sup> removing it from

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:15:50] From [cracking down](#)<sup>78</sup> on drug cartels to increased police presence on the streets to [prosecuting](#)<sup>79</sup> dealers, the overall policy is [in line with](#)<sup>80</sup> the country's War on Drugs policy, the movement that started in the 1970s and [advocates](#)<sup>81</sup> a total [crackdown](#) on drug trafficking and use.

[00:16:11] At least in terms of the number of people dying from fentanyl [overdoses](#)<sup>82</sup>, it doesn't look like it's working. More and more people are dying, and there doesn't seem to be any [reversal](#)<sup>83</sup> in the trend.

[00:16:25] The problem is that fentanyl is pretty much the perfect drug from a drug trafficker's point of view.

[00:16:33] You can produce it in a laboratory, meaning there's no need for fields, farmers, the right weather, and it's much easier to hide from the authorities than a large field.

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<sup>78</sup> taking stronger or stricter measures against

<sup>79</sup> taking them to court, bringing them to trial

<sup>80</sup> in agreement or accordance with

<sup>81</sup> publicly supports

<sup>82</sup> actions of taking too much of the drug

<sup>83</sup> change to the opposite direction

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[00:16:44] It's incredibly powerful, which means that small volumes can be transported easily without [customs officials](#)<sup>84</sup> realising.

[00:16:53] All this means that it can be sold very cheaply, [thereby](#)<sup>85</sup> increasing the amount of people who are able to take it.

[00:17:01] The result of this is that it is an incredibly [lucrative](#)<sup>86</sup> business to be in, the fentanyl business.

[00:17:09] A drug trafficker can buy or produce a kilo of the drug for around \$3,000. This is enough to make half a million fentanyl pills, enough to kill 500,000 people who haven't used the drug before, or get 500,000 experienced users [high](#).

[00:17:28] If a pill is sold for only \$4, this means the 1 kilo of fentanyl can be turned into \$2 million of street fentanyl. Obviously, there are some costs involved, but you can see how much money is involved.

[00:17:45] The only problem with fentanyl, from the drug trafficker's point of view, is that it's a drug that kills its users, although there seems to be no [shortage](#)<sup>87</sup> of people who are willing to try it.

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<sup>84</sup> people whose job is to check travellers' bags to make certain they are not taking illegal goods into the country

<sup>85</sup> as a result

<sup>86</sup> producing a lot of money

<sup>87</sup> a situation in which there are not enough of them

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:17:57] All this being said, the problem of fentanyl is only one part of America's opioid crisis, a subject which we covered in detail in episode 230.

[00:18:08] It might be the most potent part, the most deadly part, and it is the drug that is responsible for the greatest number of deaths, but it is only one piece of the [puzzle](#)<sup>88</sup>.

[00:18:20] After all, fentanyl emerged as a product to meet the demands of America's increasingly addicted population.

[00:18:28] After tens of millions of Americans first got [hooked on](#)<sup>89</sup> prescription opioids, fentanyl was there as a cheaper, more powerful and more available alternative.

[00:18:40] The reality is, and even American officials have admitted as much, that fentanyl is so cheap to produce, so easy to transport, and so profitable to sell, that it will be incredibly difficult, [nigh](#)<sup>90</sup> impossible, to completely [eliminate](#)<sup>91</sup> from the streets of American cities.

[00:19:00] It might be destroying lives by their hundreds of thousands, but it is here to stay, and the sad reality is that there doesn't seem to be any [coherent](#)<sup>92</sup> plan to do anything about it.

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<sup>88</sup> problem

<sup>89</sup> addicted to

<sup>90</sup> near

<sup>91</sup> remove

<sup>92</sup> clear and carefully considered



## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

[00:19:14] OK then, that is it for today's episode on Fentanyl, the drug devastating America.

[00:19:21] I hope it's been an interesting one, that you've learnt something new, and I'm sorry to not finish [on a high note](#)<sup>93</sup>, so to speak, but when it comes to this particular subject there isn't a huge amount of good news to report.

[00:19:35] As a reminder, next up we'll be looking at what's happening in San Francisco, a city that has been [ravaged](#) by fentanyl, and one where there were more deaths from fentanyl than COVID. So keep a look out for that one.

[00:19:50] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:19:53] Is fentanyl something that you've heard about in your country?

[00:19:57] What do you think could, or should be done, about the issue of fentanyl in the United States?

[00:20:02] Who is to [blame](#)<sup>94</sup>? The pill-prescribing doctors, the drug traffickers, the people taking drugs, or is it a product of [structural](#)<sup>95</sup> problems in American society?

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<sup>93</sup> in a pleasant or enjoyable way

<sup>94</sup> be considered responsible for it

<sup>95</sup> related to the way it is made or organised

**English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #265**  
**Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America**

[00:20:14] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started. You can head right into our community forum, which is at [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com) and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:20:27] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:20:32] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

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## Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Synthetic	made artificially, not natural
Obscurity	the state of being unknown
Overtaking	becoming more important than
Standalone	without being connected to other episodes on the same subject
Ravaged	greatly damaged or harmed
Duo	pair
Relieve	make it less strong
Dose	measured amount
Terminal	leading to death, incurable
Setting	environment, context
Countless	too many to count
Ripe	advanced

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<b>Obituary</b>	public notice or announcement of his death
<b>Afterthought</b>	a later or secondary thought
<b>Glowing</b>	very successful
<b>Patents</b>	official licences to exclusively use his inventions for a period of time
<b>Authoring</b>	being the writer or author of
<b>Burst onto</b>	appeared suddenly and in a strong way
<b>The scene</b>	the specific area of activity
<b>Household name</b>	something very well known
<b>Overdose</b>	the action of taking too much of the drug
<b>Leading</b>	most important or common
<b>In the right hands</b>	controlled by suitable or specialised medical personnel
<b>Clinical</b>	medical
<b>Patch</b>	a piece of material worn on the skin
<b>Nasal spray</b>	liquid medication that can be inhaled or taken through the nose
<b>Bloodstream</b>	the blood circulating or flowing through the body

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

**Clinical environment, and taken recreationally** a medical environment and taken for enjoyment and not for medical reasons

**Potency** power, strength

**Grains** very small pieces or particles

**Snorted** taken through the nose

**Rush** a sudden intense feeling of energy

**High** a sudden intense feeling of energy and happiness

**Euphoria** extreme happiness

**Bind** stick, are attached or tied

**Receptors** organs or nerves that react to a change in the body

**Blocks out** stops

**Consume** destroy

**Scene** specific area of activity

**Tightening** the act of making them stricter or stronger

**Skyrocketed** rose very quickly



## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

<b>Stigma</b>	strong feeling of disapproval or shame
<b>Epidemic</b>	the appearance of the disease in a large number of people at the same time
<b>Harvested</b>	collected, gathered
<b>Poppies</b>	plants with red flowers that are a source of drugs such as morphine
<b>Smuggled</b>	illegally transferred
<b>Shipments</b>	amounts sent together
<b>Crackdown</b>	a series of stricter or stronger measures to limit illegal activity
<b>Subsequent</b>	following
<b>Smuggling</b>	transferring it illegally
<b>Logistics</b>	organisation
<b>Hit</b>	a single measured quantity or dose of the drug taken
<b>Anticipate</b>	guess
<b>Comparatively</b>	as compared to the others, relatively
<b>Cutting</b>	mixing, combining
<b>Knowingly</b>	in a way that showed they knew about it

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**Unknowingly** in a way that showed they didn't know about it

**Batch** quantity produced at one time

**Lethal** able to cause death, fatal, deadly

**Fatally** with death as a result

**Cut** mixed, combined

**Cadets** students (in the armed forces)

**Laced** mixed, combined

**Mainstream** normal and accepted by most people

**Toll** number of deaths

**Gripping** hard to escape

**Overwhelmingly** with a great majority, mostly

**Making up** forming or constituting

**Make up** form or constitute

**Proportionally** to the same extent

**Discriminate** treat people in a different way

## Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America

Hit rock bottom	hit their lowest possible point
Compounded	made worse
Grip	tight hold, pressure
Anomaly	unusual, not in agreement with the rest
Policies	plans, strategies
Taking it off	removing it from
Cracking down	taking stronger or stricter measures against
Prosecuting	taking them to court, bringing them to trial
In line with	in agreement or accordance with
Advocates	publicly supports
Overdoses	actions of taking too much of the drug
Reversal	change to the opposite direction
Customs officials	people whose job is to check travellers' bags to make certain they are not taking illegal goods into the country
Thereby	as a result
Lucrative	producing a lot of money

**Fentanyl: The Drug Devastating America**

**Shortage** a situation in which there are not enough of them

**Puzzle** problem

**Hooked on** addicted to

**Nigh** near

**Eliminate** remove

**Coherent** clear and carefully considered

**On a high note** in a pleasant or enjoyable way

**Blame** be considered responsible for it

**Structural** related to the way it is made or organised

*We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*