

**LIFE**

SYNANON HOUSE  
WHERE DRUG ADDICTS JOIN  
TO SALVAGE THEIR LIVES

**'A Tunnel  
Back into the  
Human Race'**

Photographed for LIFE  
by GREY VILLET

AMERICA  
FIRST

**San Francisco Examiner**

MONARCH OF THE DAILIES

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1964

**An Addict 'City'  
-Synanon Project**

**SYNANON**

down beat

**Congressional Record**

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 87th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1962 No. 160

**San Francisco Chronicle**

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1965 10 CENTS

He declared, East coast addicts come to Synanon

**A STUDY IN HEROISM**

STATEMENT OF SENATOR THOMAS J. DODD CONCERNING THE SYNANON FOUNDATION, A NEW METHOD FOR TREATING NARCOTICS ADDICTS

DELIVERED ON THE SENATE FLOOR, SEPTEMBER 6, 1962

**The San Diego Union**

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 4, 1964

**DAILY NEWS**

NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER

New York, N.Y. 10017, Wednesday, December 30, 1964

**Synanon Force Seeks N.Y. Aid**

By DICK BOWMAN

A "task force" from California has invaded New York

**TIME**

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

**Synanon**

**Synanon, Which Aids Addicts**

New York City is thinking of Dederich said he now has 300 former narcotics users in some 200 inter-city facilities and West-

Dederich's New York Times story won him a storied reputation as the man who arranged for the Bronx addicts to come to Synanon after

**"CRIME IS STUPID, DELINQUENCY IS STUPID, AND THE USE OF NARCOTICS IS STUPID; WHAT SYNANON IS DEALING WITH IS ADDICTION TO STUPIDITY."**

*Charles E. Dederich*

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH **Los Angeles Times**

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1964

**The New York Times**

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1964.

**Synanon to 'Distance Addicts'**

"We will have our own post-fire department, and we won't need a fire department," said the group's spokesman.

**Synanon City Of 5,000 For Addicts and Criminals Planned by Rehabilitation Unit**

Charles Dederich, chairman of Synanon Foundation, Inc., discussing plans to build California rehabilitation city.

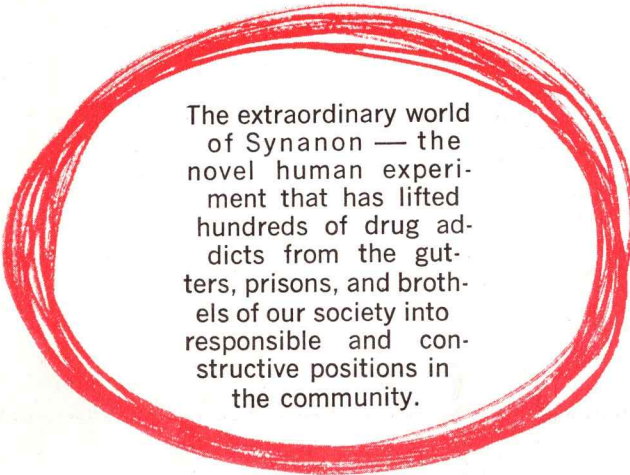
**Synanon Plans A 'City' for Drug Addicts**

If he raises the funds to start a rehabilitation center in California for addicts, Dederich...

MACMILLAN CO. PUBLISHERS

# The Tunnel Back: Synanon

by Lewis Yablonsky



The extraordinary world of Synanon — the novel human experiment that has lifted hundreds of drug addicts from the gutters, prisons, and brothels of our society into responsible and constructive positions in the community.

List Price \$6.95

## Some Ex-Addicts Speak . . .

"Most people in the world can get by with their little white lies and conning each other. We have found we cannot afford to lie at all. Any slips of truth on our part can be deadly. If we do not level with each other, we add more guilt to our already heavy load. This would fester, and we might split [leave] and go back on dope, get ourselves dead from an overdose, or go back to jail. We have to be honest to stay clean."

\*

"I call myself an ex-dope fiend, and the noise 'dope fiend' best describes my past behavior. During one of my 'periods' as an addict, I careened around highways on a motorcycle with long hair and a leather jacket—the whole bit. You know, the 'Wild One.' I went through other scenes too. I was even married for a while as a dope fiend. Let me give you a real example of my *dope-fiend behavior* . . . In the middle of the night, my wife begins to have labor pains. We get into the car, and I take her to this dinky little hospital. . . . In the middle of this 'beautiful-young-couple-having-a-baby, waiting-for-the-doctor scene,' in the back of my head I'm trying to figure out *how*

*I can get at some of the dope [Demerol] the nurse pumped into my wife's arm! . . . My wife is screaming her head off. I hold her hand and keep inching my way closer to the anesthetic tray where the bottle of dope I want so badly is sitting. . . . I couldn't really get concerned about my wife and kid until I had stolen the dope. . . . Now you know why I call people who use drugs 'dope fiends.'*"

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"I have been here at Synanon 13 months and I have been 'clean' since the day I arrived. Staying clean is a necessary part of the therapy here at Synanon, but the complete picture is much broader and deeper. I have gained insights into my personality that it would be impossible to put a price tag on. I am learning to accept myself, I am learning to love and understand other people, I am learning to be honest and truthful. If you can picture yourself buried alive for 16 years in a deep, dark, slimy pit with no way out and, after resigning yourself to your fate, suddenly see a little daylight where before there was none, then you know how I feel about Synanon."

*"Synanon is a tunnel back into the human race."*

This remarkable book tells the inside story of one of the most fascinating social experiments of our time: the rehabilitation of drug addicts by those who have been addicts themselves. Synanon is a community of former addicts that was founded in California in 1958 by Chuck Dederich, an ex-alcoholic with a genius for understanding and solving human problems. Its basic tool is an unorthodox kind of group psychotherapy in which members of the community probe themselves and each other with savage and relentless candor. Withdrawal and regression, identity and emotional growth, status and interpersonal relationships—the problems they face are, in many cases, merely dramatic exaggerations of the problems faced by the non-addicted community.

But Synanon is more than group therapy for a community of ex-addicts. In the words of author Yablonsky, it is "an effective approach to racial integration; a humane solution to some facets of bureaucratic organization; a different way of being religious; a new method of attack therapy; an unusual kind of communication; and an exciting fresh approach to the cultural arts and philosophy."

More compelling than fiction and filled with profound psychological insights into criminal and addictive behavior, here is the full story of Synanon—its successes and failures, its theories and methods, and, above all, the ex-addicts and criminals who have passed through its doors. "Never in my professional experience," writes Yablonsky, "have I encountered a more direct and honest response to any questions I chose to ask." Through tape recordings of actual therapy sessions and detailed case histories, we were introduced to Charlie, the sixty-year-old ex-addict who gave up drugs after forty years of crime and addiction . . . Paula, the guilt-ridden ex-prostitute who was first introduced to drugs at the age of twelve . . . Jack, the "mother-lover" . . . and John who hid his fear behind a criminal mask. Black and white, Gentile and Jew, young and old—Synanon is an "integrated community" in the fullest sense of the phrase.

With a rehabilitation rate far higher than those of more "professional" agencies, Synanon has achieved a tremendous breakthrough in the treatment of what was once presumed to be an incurable psychic disease; yet it has been dogged by persistent opposition both from within the profession and from the greater community outside. **THE TUNNEL BACK** tells everything there is to know about Synanon, the exciting and controversial new approach to human rehabilitation whose implications for twentieth century society are profound and far-reaching.

## About the Author:

The unofficial sociologist of the Synanon Foundation, Lewis Yablonsky has spent a decade and a half at work on the problems of crime and narcotic addiction. A graduate of Rutgers, he received his Ph.D. at New York University. He has taught at UCLA, the University of Massachusetts, Harvard and Columbia, and worked for various social agencies, prisons, and correctional institutions. The author of *The Violent Gang*, Dr. Yablonsky is now Professor of Sociology at San Fernando Valley State College, California.

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## "ENABLING YOUR DOLLAR TO GO RIGHT"

Synanon's drive for funds has been a continuous process. At our first shanty in Ocean Park, with twenty members, our total cost was about \$15 a day and, most often, it had to be raised on the day we needed it. Teaching professional thieves and shoplifters that they should go hungry until an honest dollar came in was a social and psychological triumph. Reid Kimball, now one of our directors, had to be restrained from going out on a fund drive with a gun. At that stage of his development, armed robbery for a righteous cause seemed perfectly justifiable.


Our financial position has not changed greatly from those early days. Every dollar given Synanon goes directly into our work. There are no salaries, and legal and accountants' services, among many others, are contributed. Goods and services contributed by business and professional people in the various communities have been the key to our survival. There is a tax situation that enables a businessman to contribute goods at virtually no cost to himself. Seventy-five percent of our food is contributed, as is all of our furniture and clothing and a large percentage of the parts that are used in keeping our old cars and appliances running. When we have been unable to find certain skills in our labor pool, labor unions have helped us. Nevertheless, cash is our big problem. Our current cash outlay per day for maintaining five hundred people is \$1,600.

The failure of some of our government supported hospitals is now being openly recognized. New York closed its Riverside experiment after wasting millions of dollars. The Federal Government is considering closing its huge Public Health Service Narcotic Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky. The narcotic problem isn't decreasing; it is growing; and Synanon is, literally, and I mean this in the exact sense, the only answer to the nation's narcotic problem. History has put us in a spot. The burden has been shifted to us, but not the support that the failing institutions had. Until the local, state and federal governments begin picking up the check, we have to ask the public to do so.

If you have any doubt as to where your dollars will go or what they will accomplish, visit one of our facilities and live there for a week, if you wish. Statistics mean little, but digits translated back into people can become an imperative truth. You'll be convinced that the more you help us, the more safety you'll have on the streets of your own city.

*Charles E. Dederich*

**SYNANON FOUNDATION, INC.**  
A non-profit Foundation with the Federal Tax Deduction privilege for donors.  
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Phone 362-6778 Area Code 415

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*Contributions are badly needed and should be mailed to:*  
**SYNANON FOUNDATION, INC.**  
8330 Engineer Road, San Diego, California 92111

Contributions are tax deductible.