



# No Speed Limit: The Highs and Lows of Meth

*Frank Owen*

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Hells Angels and fallen televangelist Ted Haggard. Cross-country truckers and suburban mothers. Trailer parks, gay sex clubs, college campuses, and military battlefields. In this fascinating book, Frank Owen traces the spread of methamphetamine—meth—from its origins as a cold and asthma remedy to the stimulant wiring every corner of American culture.

Meth is the latest "epidemic" to attract the attention of law enforcement and the media, but like cocaine and heroin its roots are medicinal. It was first synthesized in the late nineteenth century and applied in treatment of a wide range of ailments; by the 1940s meth had become a wonder drug, used to treat depression, hyperactivity, obesity, epilepsy, and addictions to other drugs and alcohol. Allied, Nazi, and Japanese soldiers used it throughout World War II, and the returning waves of veterans drove demand for meth into the burgeoning postwar suburbs, where it became the "mother's helper" for a bored and lonely generation.

But meth truly exploded in the 1960s and '70s, when biker gang cooks using burners, beakers, and plastic tubes brought their expertise from California to the Ozarks, the Southwest, and other remote rural areas where the drug could be manufactured in kitchen labs. Since then, meth has been the target of billions of dollars in federal, state, and local anti-drug wars. Murders, violent assaults, thefts, fires, premature births, and AIDS—rises in all of these have been blamed on the drug that crosses classes and subcultures like no other.

Acclaimed journalist Frank Owen follows the users, cooks, dealers, and law enforcers to uncover a dramatic story being played out in cities, small towns, and farm communities across America. *No Speed Limit* is a panoramic, high-octane investigation by a journalist who knows firsthand the powerful highs and frightening lows of meth.

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