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## NARCOS: A Netflix Series and the Law Enforcement Lessons It Can Teach Us

*By Eddie Molina*



*Photo courtesy of Netflix, Inc.*

This past September Season 2 of the Netflix hit series *Narcos* was released. In case you haven't heard of it, *Narcos* is a docudrama that follows the violent and complex life of the 1980s cocaine drug kingpin, Pablo Escobar. The series documents actual events that detailed Escobar's life and chronicled both the height of his empire and his eventual downfall.

Although the series centered on Escobar, there were other characters that proved to be critical to the story. Most notably, DEA Agents Steven Murphy and Javier Pena. They spent years tracking down Escobar and were a pivotal part of the series.

I must add that, first, the show didn't completely capture Escobar's true evil nature. They pictured him as a family man that occasionally acted in violent ways and may have ordered deadly attacks on others. However, it is widely believed that he was directly responsible for the deaths of over 3000 people. Those deaths weren't limited to criminals but included people that positively contributed to society, like judges, police officers and the like.

Second, the Narcos series does, however, romanticize and glamorize the drug trafficking lifestyle. From a law enforcement perspective, we know that drug trafficking is a short lived, dangerous world that typically ends up with people dead or in jail.

After I watched the second season, it occurred to me that there are some law enforcement lessons to be learned that still ring true today. It reminds me of important elements of law enforcement that we should never forget. Below are some examples: (There is a minor spoiler alert for those of you that are currently into the series)

1. **Never stray away from your moral compass.** As a law enforcement officer, you are issued a great deal of power that carries an even greater amount of responsibility. In Narcos, DEA Agent Pena was sharing intelligence with enemies of Escobar, who were criminals and drug traffickers themselves. Although you can argue he was pursuing the greater good, there was certainly a question of morality. As a law enforcement officer there are countless ways you can sacrifice your morals for personal and even professional gains. It is the power you yield that must be managed properly using high ethical and moral standards.
2. **Your family must always come before the job.** DEA Agent Murphy was so absorbed into his work that his wife flew back to America without informing him. Although part of that decision was due to safety, she also didn't feel comfortable with him away from home so much. For many officers, their jobs define them. But that should never come before family. Don't get sucked into working too much overtime, or spending all night trying to crack the case. Think about your family and how they need you too. Learn how to balance everything so that nothing is sacrificed entirely.
3. **Never underestimate criminals or your enemies.** Towards the end of Escobar's reign of terror, the Search Bloc (the highly trained Colombian Police task force assigned to capture Escobar) had few leads and their work was quiet for some time. Predictably, complacency fell in. However, Escobar still had the means and capability of launching large scale attacks- which is exactly what he did. Escobar ordered a powerful bomb be set off near the Presidential headquarters. Scores of innocent people were killed in the attack, to include children. In law enforcement, it is easy to become complacent during the 'quiet times.' It is during those moments that things can go very bad. Remember to stay alert at all times.
4. **Training is a key component to success.** The Search Bloc had tried numerous times to raid a building or area in a complex urban environment to capture Escobar. That required the team to have a high degree of tactical skills which can only be mastered through training and experience. As a law enforcement officer, you should continuously refine your skills through training, whether through practical exercises or education. Don't let a lack of skill be the difference between life and death.

These are the main law enforcement takeaways from Narcos. It's a dramatic gem that's filled with factual scenes and entertaining story lines. But make no mistake, Escobar was a domestic terrorist who used evil to instill fear into everyone within his sphere of influence.

Spend the time and the \$10 a month for a Netflix subscription, and watch the hit series. You will not only be entertained but you will see the underlying law enforcement lessons to be learned.

*About the writer: Eddie Molina is an OIF veteran and focuses on leadership. He voluntarily writes articles for the law enforcement, first responder and military community. For more information go to [www.eddiemolina.com](http://www.eddiemolina.com)*