

# THE OBSERVER



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*Reporting Accurate and Objective Information Based on Facts, not Agenda-Setting Theories*

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Dominic Casey | Private Investigator

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## **Gangs, Drug Lords & Social Networking**

Social networking is a prominent way of communicating for the drug lords and gives new meaning to AT&T's Hall of Fame slogan "*reach out and touch someone.*"

According to CannaZine which is a global news website originating in the U.K., [Singaporean women are recruited as drug mules by African drug gangs via social networking websites.](#)

The drug gangs are actually Nigerians using the disguise of businessmen who socially access the Singaporean women via internet networking. Using the temptation of romance, holidays and cash, the women are flown to a destination who then pick up the drugs and deliver them to Australia, Europe and/or the USA. [The Central Narcotics Bureau](#) reiterates that Singapore has tough laws against drug trafficking. "*The death penalty, carried out by hanging, is mandatory for anyone caught trafficking more than 15 grams (0.525 ounces) of heroin, 30 grams of cocaine or 500 grams of cannabis.*"

The internet is still referred to as having a "[Wild West](#)" mentality. Government officials use caution regarding social networking sites which could jeopardize and present liabilities involving the security of opening records.

Professor Michael Wilds of Northeastern State University and author of a gang activity survey states: "*You're seeing more recruiting done to the younger population.*" Gang members use Facebook and YouTube to recruit those as young as [2nd graders](#). [Text messaging and cell phone communication](#) related to drug manufacturing, distribution routes and criminal activity allow contact with incarcerated gang members including those who have been deported to Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico and several Central American countries.

Drug lords are notorious for making current weather reports available on their MySpace or other social network websites to aid and assist their drug traffickers. Conversations between major traffickers are common and detectable. Drug lords appear to think Law Enforcement is not savvy to modern technology and their brazen new ways of communication. Drug traffickers' loosely guarded conversations and photos proudly and prominently displayed globally, will result in their arrests.

Because Mexican authorities realize drug dealers are using Twitter accounts to avoid drug sweeps, the Mexican government is [cracking down on the use of Twitter and Facebook](#). Alexis Okeowo in Mexico City states, "*Facebook has been on the radar of government officials who believe that it has been used to facilitate the abduction of the relatives of powerful businessmen and politicians, with kidnappers allegedly using the social-networking site to discover the identities of a high-profile person's family members.*" Identity theft has increased using the data and photos collected from Facebook accounts.

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Our Canadian neighbor to the north recently hosted the G20 Economic Summit in Toronto, Ontario in June 2010. The cannabis Canadian group [G420 literally "gave away" 5 lbs. of marijuana](#); however, serenity was not the result. 1,060 protesters and bystanders were arrested by the 19,000 Law Enforcement officers. This massive arrest sweep is twice as large as the 1970 Canada October Crisis in Quebec according to Cannabis Culture magazine which also has a Facebook account.

In 2004 a Harvard undergraduate student Mark Zuckerberg began one of the largest web sites globally called Facebook which now include hundreds of millions of users. Anyone with a valid email address and over the age of 13 years old can join Facebook.

Phishing, scams and spam are by-products of social networking involvement. The Canadian Business magazine, July 19, 2010 issue pg. 28, article [Why We'll Never Escape Facebook](#) states the case for quitting Facebook is strong. Facebook's data base is the fastest growing base of personal information; however, it changes privacy policies at whim and retains the users' personal data. Having more site visitors than Google, Facebook boasts 500 million users. The average American spends 14 minutes daily on the site and 41% of all Americans and 47.9% Canadians are Facebook followers.

**Caution:** *Be extremely aware of social networking sites. Protect yourself and those you love from becoming 'social butterfly victims.'* Even [Jim Breyer, a Facebook board member and investor was the recipient of hacking](#).