



# MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 27, 2022

Contact: Mike Donila Abbey Harris  
306-1177 cell 215-4579 office  
705-1681 cell

## **Mayor Jacobs to Host Author Sam Quinones for Discussion of Opioid Epidemic** *Noon on Aug. 17 at East Tennessee History Center*

**KNOXVILLE, Tenn.**— Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs will host a community discussion of “The Least of Us” at noon on Aug. 17 at the East Tennessee History Center (601 S. Gay Street). Author Sam Quinones, who also wrote “Dreamland,” will join via Zoom to participate and answer questions. The public is encouraged to read the book and attend the discussion.

The opioid crisis has been through many phases, each seemingly worse than the one before. With the introduction of synthetic opioids, overdoses accounted for more than 100,000 deaths in 2020, surpassing car wrecks for accidental fatalities. Quinones has spent years chronicling the opioid epidemic from pain pills to heroin, fentanyl to methamphetamine.

“The reality of this widespread epidemic is grim,” commented Mayor Jacobs. “But there is a lot of work and innovation being done to turn it around. Sam Quinones does a great job of identifying some underlying causes and highlighting solutions in different communities.”

In Knox County, coordinated efforts to combat the opioid crises are gaining ground. Recent efforts include Naloxone training and distribution, development of All4Knox action teams; expansion of peer support; hospital coordination; establishing The Gateway, Recovery Community Center; additional behavioral health resources; and expansion of treatment providers.

This program is co-sponsored by the Metro Drug Coalition, Knox County Health Department, All4Knox, and Read City USA.

Multiple copies of the “The Least of These” and “Dreamland” are available at the Knox County Public Library.

**About the Author:** Sam Quinones is a Los Angeles-based freelance journalist, a reporter for 35 years, and author of four acclaimed books of narrative nonfiction. He is a veteran reporter on immigration, gangs, drug trafficking, and the border. He is formerly a reporter with the *L.A. Times*, where he worked for 10 years. Before that, he made a living as a freelance writer residing in Mexico for a decade.

In “The Least of Us” (published October 2021), Quinones chronicles the emergence of a drug-trafficking world producing massive supplies of dope cheaper and deadlier than ever, marketing

to the population of addicts created by the nation's opioid epidemic, as the backdrop to tales of Americans' quiet attempts to recover community through simple acts of helping the vulnerable.

In January 2022, the book was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) Award for Best Nonfiction Book of 2021.

"The Least of Us" followed his landmark "Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic" (Bloomsbury, 2015), which ignited awareness of the epidemic that has cost the United States hundreds of thousands of lives and become deadliest drug scourge in the nation's history.

"Dreamland" won a National Book Critics Circle award for the Best Nonfiction Book of 2015. It was also selected as one of the Best Books of 2015 by Amazon.com, the Daily Beast, BuzzFeed, Seattle Times, Boston Globe, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Entertainment Weekly, Audible, and in the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg Business by Nobel economics laureate, Prof. Angus Deaton, of Princeton University.

In 2019, "Dreamland" was selected as one the Best 10 True-Crime Books of all time based on lists, surveys, and ratings of more than 90 million Goodread.com readers and selected by Slate.com as one of the 50 best nonfiction books of the last 25 years.

In 2021, GQ Magazine selected "Dreamland" as one of the "50 Best Books of Literary Journalism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"

For "Dreamland," Quinones has testified before the US Senate's Health Committee, numerous professional conferences of judges, doctors, librarians, hospital administrators and at more than two-dozen town hall meetings in small towns across the country.

A Young Adult version of "Dreamland" – for 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders -- was released in July of 2019.

Contact him at [www.samquinones.com](http://www.samquinones.com) or [samquinones7@yahoo.com](mailto:samquinones7@yahoo.com).

###