

MARIJUANA TO GO TO POT, OR NOT?

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Marijuana is mostly used by a "young, emotionally immature, and unproductive group," according to careful studies carried out on the subject. This drug, over a period of time, tends to make the user more vulnerable to damage, both physical and mental, and less aware that he is being damaged.

When the question arises, To go to pot or not? the logical answer would seem to be to adopt the procedure that provides the best protection for body and soul. In other words, "Before you go all the way, Hodja, old friend, go back to the bath and put on your clothes."



"You tell your newspaper that the industry hasn't tested enough cigarettes to permit announcement of conclusive results."

## Marijuana— the Assassin Flower

**DANIEL CARLSEN**

*Executive Secretary, Narcotics Anonymous  
with BARBARA DOYLE*

The late DANIEL CARLSEN, born in Puerto Rico of Danish and Spanish parents and orphaned at the age of three, was adopted by a woman doctor in the U.S. Public Health Service and brought to the United States.

His foster mother was on the staff of the hospital in Saint Joseph, Missouri, where Danny also decided to become a doctor.

One day he developed an abscessed eardrum, and morphine was administered to ease the pain. Soon thereafter he began to steal the drug from the hospital dispensary because he liked the way it made him feel.

There followed twenty-five years of addiction—tortured, haunted years in which he struggled ceaselessly for relief. Many times he took the "cure" for this greatest of man's curses, only to revert in a short time again to taking drugs.

In 1948, during an enforced abstinence from drugs, he tried to take his own life. After emergency treatment in a metropolitan hospital he was sent to Lexington, where he had been many times before for the "cure." This time there was a difference: He was not fighting to live any more, or looking for a way out.

For the first time he made an honest prayer. Day and night he prayed to God to let him die, but out of the experience was born the new Danny.

Studying the program for rehabilitation of addicts in effect at Lexington, and adapting it into a broadened, vigorous plan, he founded Narcotics Anonymous the latter part of 1949 in New York City. Later he organized the National Advisory Council on Narcotics, or NACON, made up of civic-minded citizens whose aim it is to stamp out drug addiction in this country.

This untiring public servant has spoken to hundreds of civic, religious, social, medical, student, fraternal, patriotic, veterans', and other groups. He has appeared at staff conferences in hospitals and at symposiums in universities, as guest on radio and television programs. He literally gave his life in the fight for what he considered one of the most important of freedoms: freedom from drug addiction.

"IN view of the shattered lives I witness daily, I cannot too emphatically stress the need for prevention of drug addiction. This I believe can be achieved only when young people are thoroughly forewarned, and armed with facts concerning marijuana and other narcotics."

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With deceptive innocence the marijuana plant has spread its poison across the American scene. Marijuana is a species of the hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*, but it is known throughout the world under various names: hemp, Indian hemp, cannabis, hashish, and marijuana. In medical literature its active drug is known as *Cannabis indica*.

In Mexico marijuana is called, in the vernacular, "loco weed," with good reason. Many smokers of it are definitely loco, or crazy, while under the drug's influence.

Americans, prone to give a variety of names to a substance, call it "muta," "grafa," "hay," "grass," "muggles," "gauge," "weed," "pot," and "tea." The cigarettes are referred to as "Mary Warners" (although this nickname is fading in popularity), "reefers," "sticks," and "joints." Cigarette butts are "roaches," and smokers are "tea heads," "weed heads," "vipers," and "reefer heads."

Under any name marijuana is one of the most corrupting influences in our society today—and has been all through history. More than three thousand years ago hashish was referred to as being used in conjunction with religious rituals. The nuptial ceremony and the war dances among some primitive people included consumption of brewed hemp.

In the thirteenth century the original assassins reportedly took hashish to bolster their courage before committing murder. Some authorities claim, however, that the assassins took opium, not hashish.

Webster's definition for "assassin" comes from *hashshashin*: "One of a Mohammedan secret order, which, at the time of the Crusades, practiced secret murder, committed under the influence of hashish."

Of course we know that crimes of violence are sometimes committed by marijuana smokers, but it does not necessarily follow that everyone who smokes marijuana engages in criminally aggressive acts. No one knows exactly how the drug will affect an individual, and this



fact should cause one to think seriously before he lends himself to destruction.

For centuries the hemp plant has grown wild and has been cultivated commercially throughout the world. In Eastern countries it has been smoked in pipes and has been eaten.

The variety of marijuana that we know was introduced into the United States in 1846 purely for medicinal and commercial purposes. Within thirty years it was discarded by the medical profession for more useful drugs. By this time, though, its intoxicating properties had been rumored, and a few people began smoking it for "pleasure."

After 1900, smoking marijuana cigarettes in Mexico increased in popularity and gradually crossed the border into the United States.

Until the Marijuana Act of 1937 was put into effect in this country, marijuana was used to make rope, twine, and certain grades of paper and cloth. The seed of the flower was mixed with birdseed, supposedly to stimulate birds to sing more vivaciously. From the seed, oil was extracted for manufacturing soap, linoleum, and oil for use in paints.

This weed often thrives unnoticed in our midst, growing wild or cultivated illegally. It can be raised in any one of the states, but is not so potent as that coming from Mexico. If it is cultivated in the North, it is not so strong as it is when grown in the Southern areas.

When the marijuana plant is mature, it reaches a height of from three to sixteen feet, usually four to six feet. It has compound palmate leaves with from five to eleven leaflets or lobes, usually seven. There is always

an uneven number of leaves. The leaflets, pointed, with sawlike edges, are dark green blending into pale green. At the end of each branch there is a flower which, when mature, looks like a cluster of yellowish, green seeds; and at the top of the plant is a much larger single flower.

The green plant is sticky to the touch and covered with fine, almost invisible, hair; it smells somewhat like green parsley. When it is dried and smoked in cigarettes, the odor is similar to that of any burning green weeds.

Those who congregate at a "tea" party to smoke marijuana may take great pains to disguise the odor, which clings to clothing, draperies, and upholstery. For this reason incense is often burned. After the party the smokers may open all windows and blow sweet-smelling powder around the room to rid it of the peculiar scent of marijuana.

The growing plant is sometimes camouflaged by being cultivated in fields of corn or other tall plants, such as sunflowers. If one is familiar with its distinctive odor and is passing a field where it is hidden from view, he will immediately recognize an odor not quite like any other in the world. When it grows, it seems almost as though the plant throws out fumes, just as its product throws out its insidious lure of false pleasure.

After being dried, the top leaves are stripped from their stems and coarsely crushed. Operating in furtive haste, the "manicurist" of the plant often fails to take out all the seeds of the pod, or flower. If seeds or bits of stems are carelessly left in the mixture, the person smoking it may develop a violent headache.



The mixture is rolled in two thin papers to keep the cigarette burning slowly. Papers are sometimes white, sometimes brown, and the reefer is generally thinner in diameter than is an ordinary cigarette made of tobacco.

In sparsely populated sections of Mexico, where fear of detection does not necessitate secrecy, the usable parts of the plants are chopped off and hung to dry, with the flower hanging down. It is never hung out of doors for the sun's rays to reach and parch.

Testifying to the fact that marijuana is popular in the United States is the appropriation of large quantities of it by investigating officers from time to time. Tons of marijuana plants, bulk and finished products, are seized and destroyed in this country every year. As alerted law-enforcement agents continue to ferret out the toxic weed, the probability of its being cultivated lessens.

At a public hearing when he was Attorney General of New York, Nathaniel Goldstein reported that "in four summer months [of that year] the Sanitation Department destroyed about 40,000 pounds of marijuana growing in lots of four out of the five boroughs of New York City. This amount could be made into 41,000,000 cigarettes, valued by dope peddlers at \$20,000,000."

Smokers carefully save the butt, or "roach," because it becomes stronger as it shortens. A crotch is formed from a split match, bobby pin, or pair of tweezers to hold the butt so that the last possible drag can be taken. The small amount left is often saved, and, after enough is accumulated, is rerolled into new reefers.

Regarding marijuana and its effects on addicts, there are two schools of thought. One believes that marijuana

incites the majority of users to crime, that smoking it frequently leads to insanity, and that it stimulates most persons to sexual vigor and even violence. The other group believes that only a potential criminal commits crimes under the influence of marijuana, and that a normal person will not be so incited. It does not consider marijuana to be a contributing factor in permanent mental derangement, or that it has an appreciable influence on sex drives in most cases.

Is there any actual relationship between crime and marijuana? In the first place, it is a violation of the law to possess, grow, sell, or give away marijuana. Therefore merely having the drug in one's possession is a crime or felony, unless it is being used for experiments by an authorized researcher.

A person is technically a criminal when he smokes reefers. In addition, he is dealing with other violators of the law when using it. The association can have serious consequences for the novice, bringing about a gradual moral breakdown, disintegration of personality, and general antisocial attitudes. This is not the invariable rule, but one of the pitfalls encountered.

Bill, whom I had known for several years, was an accountant, mild-mannered, studious, and reserved. I was surprised to meet him one evening at a reefer pad, smoking marijuana. He told me that he had smoked it only twice before.

The girl who had come to the party with Bill was dancing with a man named Derek. The fellow sitting beside Bill was heckling him about Derek's taking his girl away from him. Bill didn't say anything, but his companion went on with it.



"Why don't you be a man?" he jeered. "Assert yourself! Show that guy he can't steal your girl."

Suddenly Bill was on his feet, walking toward the dancing pair. Within a matter of seconds the two men were swinging at each other. Derek's right connected with Bill's jaw, and he crashed to the floor, overturning a table holding food and bottles. Bill described it later, "Something exploded in my brain. I really didn't know what I was doing."

Bill's hand curled around a broken bottle, and the next moment a piercing scream came from Mary's throat. Bill had thrown the broken bottle at Derek, but it struck the girl with tremendous impact, slashing her face and neck.

Under ordinary circumstances, there was nothing in Bill's make-up to indicate this kind of behavior; but with restraints lifted by the action of marijuana, and acting on suggestion, he behaved in a stupid, unreasoning manner that caused irreparable damage.

Bill never smoked another reefer, but he carries with him scars as deep as those that still mark the face of a girl he never dreamed he could harm.

It is misleading to assume only a certain kind of person can become violent under the influence of marijuana. When we introduce into our system a poison that lifts restraints, releases inhibitions, and causes even a *temporary* mental disturbance, anything can, and too frequently does, happen.

Marijuana has peculiar features unlike any other drug. It is as definite a weapon in the system as a gun would be in the hand. It is not at all right to inform people that if they are fairly normal they can smoke marijuana without harmful results. You do not know

whether that is true; I do not know it; the greatest expert in the world does not know it. I have seen too many cases of normal, decent, right-thinking persons turned, in one soul-shattering second, into destructive, unreasoning *creatures* by taking marijuana.

One pound of unmanicured marijuana from Mexico when transported to the United States, manicured, and rolled into cigarettes, will sell for as much as ten to fifteen times the price. With such tremendous profit gained by those in the business of ruining lives, it is clear why any time a person decides to become a "sucker" by experimenting with marijuana, he will pay the price, while peddlers in death and destruction reap the profit.

Marijuana itself may be a savage assassin, ready to maim and ruthlessly kill its victims. Those who trade in it might well be described by Webster's definition of the word which is taken from "hashish," first cousin of marijuana: "Assassin: One who kills by surprise or by secret or treacherous assault; esp., a hired or appointed murderer."

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The use of marijuana has become so prevalent that anyone may come in contact with it. If young people are told the truth before this happens, they can avert disaster and remain secure from the torment of addiction and its attendant destruction.



## Marijuana— Caught in the Web

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I HAVE many reasons to regret deeply the wasted years I spent as a drug addict. If during that period I can be grateful for one thing, it is that fact that I did not smoke marijuana often. I am not saying that other narcotics are more desirable, but I do know that marijuana is a killer of men's minds and characters.

As nearly as can be determined, marijuana heightens the mood of the moment. If a person is feeling pleasant and at ease when he takes it, he is likely to become gay, even silly, laughing and talking a great deal, and finding everything amusing. If he is tired or depressed, he may become frightened and despairing. If he is feeling

frustrated, this might carry over, with the aid of marijuana, into a mood of aggressive hostility toward others.

Most of my reactions to marijuana were normal, I suppose. I laughed a great deal and, yes, even giggled, which is not particularly becoming to a grown man. But a few times I had bad reactions that are hard to forget. A reefer smoker refers to a bad reaction as a "bum kick" or the "bull horrors." At this time he is assailed with the most acute terror imaginable. He becomes suspicious, anxious, panicky—actually paranoiac.

Fortunately, I never became violent under the drug's influence. However, no reasonable theory, from my viewpoint, indicates I might not have become wild at some unguarded moment if I had continued.

One experience in Chicago stands out vividly in my recollection. Very tired, I went to a "tea" party, and had smoked only half a "joint" before the "bum kick" set in. I was so apprehensive and nervous that I had to leave. As I started walking home, I kept looking behind me to see who was following. With my heart pounding and my hands icy cold, I was almost frozen with terror—of what, I did not know. Half a block from my hotel I saw a policeman standing quietly, and panic swept over me. I knew he was there just waiting to grab me. The fear I felt then was more real than any I have ever experienced when in my right mind. I was shaking violently and drenched with perspiration by the time I reached my hotel room; and, even then, I kept hearing noises outside my door that spelled disaster. For hours I sat on the edge of my bed waiting for the unknown intruders to break in, and finally I fell into an exhausted nightmare. That's a "kick"? I thought. I didn't "dig it," as the "hip cats" say. I was



ready to "play it cool," or not smoke any, for a long time after that episode.

It was an unnerving sensation, nothing more, but suppose someone *had* approached me during the time of my magnified sense of danger. In that state of unreasoning terror and, with mechanical self-defense, I might have struck that person, even killed him.

Does marijuana lead to crime? I say Yes. It leads to crime both among so-called potential criminals and among normal persons. There really isn't any such thing as a person who can remain normal while under the influence of marijuana. Even the most lenient observers state that marijuana causes temporary mental disturbances.

Regarding permanent insanity, experts differ. One authority says he believes that marijuana does not cause serious and prolonged mental illness, while another famous expert says that in many instances persons using marijuana develop a type of dementia from which there is no recovery.

In countries where the hemp plant is used widely, at least 25 per cent of all mental cases are due directly to use of the drug.

When doctors report on what they call temporary disturbances, I wonder whether they ever follow up their surveys. It might be an enlightening experience. I have known innumerable chronic marijuana addicts who have, after a time, had complete mental breakdowns.

I am thinking of Pedro, a boy from Puerto Rico, who began smoking the weed when he was fourteen; I met him four years later. I talked to him many times, trying to help him understand what he was doing to himself.

"This stuff can't hurt me, Danny," he said. "I'm having a 'ball.'"

At nineteen Pedro was deteriorating rapidly, and at twenty he was declared legally insane. I visited him at the hospital, and he stared at me out of dead eyes without a flicker of recognition. It was pathetic to see such a young person completely broken in mind and spirit. His doctor said Pedro would remain in that condition for the rest of his life.

During adolescence and early adulthood, everyone needs to establish a pattern of mental health, so that he can realistically face and solve his problems. *When he turns to drugs for pleasure or escape, he lights the fuse in the chain reaction to destruction.*

Janet was only twenty-two when she came to me, nervous and depressed. "I've been in the middle of a 'teapot,'" she said somberly, "and now I'm out of it."

Like so many marijuana addicts, she had graduated to heroin. Now, temporarily freed of both drugs, she lived in fear of reverting to addiction. Marijuana was her greatest enemy, she said.

While we were discussing her problem, I learned that her emotional disturbances were so complicated that I was not qualified to guide her. I took her to a psychiatrist and was saddened to hear the verdict.

"There is no way in which you or I can help her," the doctor said gravely. "She is a very sick girl. The only effective treatment for her lies in a hospital, and even so, it will be a long, long time before she will be well."

This girl had had an unhappy childhood in a loveless home. When she first smoked marijuana, she found a false solution to her problems. As exhilaration was fol-



lowed by depression she found herself so involved that there was no way out of the web.

No one really knows how many cases of mental illness follow marijuana addiction and are precipitated by the drug. So many cases of mental derangement follow the smoking of reefers that it is only logical to believe that they are not just coincidental.

When one depends on artificial means for escaping reality, the price is high, and in the end the victim discovers he has literally been paying for nothing, losing his will, his spirit, and his physical and mental health.

Sex often shares headlines with marijuana. It has been both positively declared and indignantly denied that marijuana stimulates sexual fantasies and results in brutal sex violence. Regardless of what the answer is, no one has ever declaimed that marijuana leads to a healthy sexual adjustment.

We have been discussing the long-range effects or *results* of marijuana intake. Let's see what the more immediate effects are.

As previously pointed out, the use of marijuana releases inhibitions and lifts behavior restraints. It causes intoxication of a unique nature, similar to but not exactly like that derived from the continued use of alcohol or cocaine. It also produces hallucinations and delusions.

One hazard is the drug's unpredictable effect on various individuals. Naturally it does not affect everyone in the same way. No substance known to man does.

In the beginning it often produces exhilaration and a sense of temporary well-being. This "high," however, diminishes as the smoker progresses into addiction.

Marijuana affects all the senses. Its use causes frequent lapses of memory and severe mental disturbance, attacking the central nervous system and distorting judgment. Time and space are seen out of all proportion to reality. It seems sometimes as if a person has lived for hours in the course of a few minutes. Space and distance do not exist. An inch can look like a foot, or a mile.

Walking down the sidewalk, the smoker, while only half a block from the corner, may think that it looks at least three miles away and that he will walk hours to reach it. After he has crossed the street he finds that the curb presents a problem; he might lift his foot high to climb the curb because it seems so tall.

A smoker's breath smells like burnt rope. His eyes are often seriously irritated and so bloodshot that the color is orange-red where it should be white. The drug dilates the pupils of the eyes, making them fixed and staring. His eyelids are often swollen and droop sleepily after he has smoked the weed.

Marijuana increases the rapidity of thought, but in a disconnected manner.

Years ago I moved into a rooming house in Detroit, and on the first day I ran into a "viper," a marijuana smoker, whom I had known in the South. When he asked me to accompany him to a reefer pad, I did not hesitate.

Returning to my residence, I encountered my landlady at the front door, and stopped to speak to her. I couldn't remember paying the rent, so I stood talking, talking, talking, one part of my brain trying to direct conversation, and the other part attempting to unravel



the all-important question: Did I pay my rent? I was aware of the fact that I was jumping from one unfinished sentence to another, and that she was bewildered, but I could not stop the incessant talking that sounded like thunder in my ears.

Finally the confused woman managed to get away from me, and I went to my room. The next morning I found the rent receipt where I had left it the day before. It was unnerving to realize that I had put myself in a position where I didn't know what I was doing or saying, and that I had lost the ability to connect and control thought and action.

Sense perceptions are heightened after one has smoked a reefer. Sometimes colors appear brighter, sounds seem louder or sharper, and sensations more vivid. At the other end of the scale, of course, are those reactions when everything seems grim, unreal, and terrifying. Thoughts come quickly, and the illusion is that one thinks more clearly, reasons and talks better, and performs more efficiently. Actually, it has been proved, time and again, that efficiency is seriously impaired when one smokes marijuana.

How is it that a person begins using such a vicious drug? Few people realize the consequences of taking marijuana. They believe they can put it down after trying it just once. But there are few people who have smoked marijuana only once.

Many people take it through curiosity, or because they want to go along with the crowd, or because they fear the ridicule of others if they refuse.

The secretary of our board of directors (of NACON) was twenty-four years of age before she ever came in

contact with any narcotics. She was offered a marijuana cigarette at a social gathering.

"What does it do to you?" she asked.

"Oh, it just makes you drunk," was the reply.

Not being interested in becoming intoxicated and being old enough to be indifferent to the opinion of others, she declined.

"I often wonder what would have happened to me if that marijuana had been offered to me when I was a few years younger," she said.

Perhaps this is part of the answer to youthful addiction today. Adolescents reaching toward adulthood, prone to emulate and experiment, who are exposed to narcotics without being given all the facts concerning them, are ready "suckers" for the bait thrown out.

Regarding the attendant evils of marijuana, Inspector Peter Terranova, when chief of the Police Narcotics Squad in New York City, repeatedly made the statement in public that it is a well-known fact that marijuana is the steppingstone to more deadly drugs, such as heroin.

Victor H. Vogel, former medical officer in charge of the United States Public Health Service Hospital at Lexington, Kentucky, said: "In reviewing the records of the teen-age addicts in the hospital, I learn that without exception, the teen-age addicts [to heroin] *first smoked* marijuana. The established pattern is for marijuana addiction to lead to addiction to other and more serious addicting drugs."

I do not minimize this danger, for it has definitely led unfortunate persons deeper and deeper into the hell of drug addiction via the heroin route; but I do



believe this is not the only danger, or even the greatest danger, connected with the vile weed.

Marijuana jeopardizes one's physical, mental, and emotional health; robs its victims of self-control and will power; and causes the user to violate the law and actually risk his own life and the lives of others.

But there is a still greater hazard.

Many people claim marijuana is not addictable. In order to understand this problem, one should know what addiction means. It is made up of three factors: dependence, tolerance, and habituation. *Dependence* means that one must continue to take drugs to feel right. *Tolerance* describes the physical need for increased dosages of drugs. *Habituation* is psychological dependence on drugs.

Marijuana does not produce physical dependence or tolerance, but it does bring out psychological dependence. For those inclined to pooh-pooh the impact of psychological dependence, let me say that it is nothing to be shrugged away, not where marijuana is concerned. I have known this psychological addiction to get a strangle hold on its victims that is most difficult and many times impossible to break. The power of the drug, the strong craving for it, the shattered nervous system, and the depressions that linger long after a user has stopped smoking marijuana must not be underestimated if this problem is viewed fairly.

In my opinion, *the greatest danger connected with marijuana is the misinformation given the public concerning the drug.*

If people are encouraged to believe that only those of poor homes, criminal backgrounds, or unstable make-

up are prone to marijuana addiction, or are affected by using the drug, a false sense of immunity is given them.

The widely accepted theory—and unfortunately, acted-upon theory—that *this* person is liable to fall prey to marijuana if he experiments with it, and *that* person is immune, is utterly false and without basis.

There is one way in which a person can be certain he is safe from the poisonous weed: *Never touch it in any form.* But he should understand why he is not touching it by learning the truth.

If, in addition to proper behavior at home and in the school, children were taught the *truth* about marijuana and other narcotics, we would not have our present epidemic of drug addiction.

I only wish that when I was sixteen years of age and began taking narcotics, which were first given me for medical reasons, some informed adult had told *me* the truth concerning them and the tremendous and tragic consequences of taking them.

I cannot go back now to unravel all the threads that wove the pattern for the waste and heartache that make up my life; but I can go forward, earnestly and unceasingly endeavoring to tell the truth to those who have the right to know what I should have been told.



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