

St. Charles

a complete study of the dope problem

the
Narcotics Menace

the
**Narcotics
Menace**

Borden

by Alwyn J. St. Charles

St. Charles

the
Narcotics Menace

Borden

the
**Narcotics
Menace**

by Alwyn J. St. Charles

ALWYN J. ST. CHARLES

THE
NARCOTICS
MENACE

LOS ANGELES
BORDEN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1952

didn't sleep all the time I was there. I had intravenous feeding.

"By the fifth day I could breathe. When you're kicking it off you need someone to listen to you and that's what the doctors, nurses and internes did. Even the scrubbing woman would sit by my bed and listen to my chatter. They never left me alone. I was grateful.

"They shouldn't put a drug addict in jail. They never get cured that way."

"If you're a girl thrown into jail you're usually surrounded by Lesbians who figure out how they're going to get you. And all they talk about is dope. It's a strange and unreal world. They give you candy to lure and con you. They talk about the thrills from dope. They become your friends. So at the end of 90 days when you're released, where do you go?

"Your new-found friends take you under their wing. If you haven't been fixed before they'll take care of that right now. When you run out of money you learn to hustle. All that is important now is to get money so you can continue to be fixed. So you're picked up again and thrown into jail. Another 90 days. And out again and back to your friends. It's a vicious circle.

"Users should be put in a place where they can get help and a new lease on life, as well as kicking off their habit. Drugs are a physical thing with them. Even the pseudo-intellectuals who claim they get on it just for the mental kicks are lying. It's strictly physical and don't let them kid you.

"That's why you need vitamins and minerals to build your body back to where it was before you started on the downgrade with narcotics. I've been off it six months now and I've shed all my old friends. I had to for my own safety.

"My marriage has been annulled and I'm not likely to see my ex-husband again. He jumped bail the last time he was arrested.

"I call on my new friends in the Sheriff's office to show them I'm still being good. They pat me on the head and congratulate me. They're cynical, though, and wouldn't be surprised if I started on a habit again. They always look at my arms for new scars and it thrills me to prove to them there are none.

"You can't blame them. There's an old saying, once a hype always a hype, but I don't think that's entirely true. I think if you're young enough and haven't been on it too long there is hope.

"But you must always keep building a wall talking against it. That's why I think it was here we have a Narcotics Anonymous started here

"It would be a place for ex-users to go and talk against their habit. Dan Carlsen, Narcotics Anonymous in New York. He's get straightened out. There's an article about this week.

"We also should have some hospitals with the right care to help them get off their habit. room at General Hospital for all the Teen

"And above all, kids need understanding. help of mine I would be lost forever to a

"I hope all the teenagers who are tempted by marijuana, heroin or cocaine will read my book when they fall. It's no good, kids. Stay away from off jumping from the City Hall tower that's a juana stick, because that is just the beginning which too often there is no turning back."

was there. I had intravenous feeding. I could breathe. When you're kicking it off tea to you and that's what the doctors, Even the scrubbing woman would sit by chatter. They never left me alone. I was drug addict in jail. They never get cured into jail you're usually surrounded by how they're going to get you. And all it's a strange and unreal world. They give you. They talk about the thrills from friends. So at the end of 90 days when you go? ds take you under their wing. If you they'll take care of that right now. When you learn to hustle. All that is important you can continue to be fixed. So you're own into jail. Another 90 days. And out friends. It's a vicious circle. a place where they can get help and a l as kicking off their habit. Drugs are a Even the pseudo-intellectuals who claim mental kicks are lying. It's strictly physical vitamins and minerals to build your body before you started on the downgrade with t six months now and I've shed all my my own safety. a annulled and I'm not likely to see my mped bail the last time he was arrested. ds in the Sheriff's office to show them I'm t me on the head and congratulate me. and wouldn't be surprised if I started on ys look at my arms for new scars and it n there are none. a. There's an old saying, once a hype n't think that's entirely true. I think if haven't been on it too long there is hope.

"But you must always keep building a wall around yourself and talking against it. That's why I think it would be a good thing to have a Narcotics Anonymous started here in Los Angeles.

"It would be a place for ex-users to gather like alcoholics do and talk against their habit. Dan Carlsen has done wonders with Narcotics Anonymous in New York. He's helped many users to get straightened out. There's an article about him in TIME magazine this week.

"We also should have some hospitals where users could have the right care to help them get off their habits. They do not have room at General Hospital for all the Teenagers who are hooked.

"And above all, kids need understanding parents. Without the help of mine I would be lost forever to a normal way of life.

"I hope all the teenagers who are tempted to fool around with marijuana, heroin or cocaine will read my story and stop before they fall. It's no good, kids. Stay away from it. You'd be better off jumping from the City Hall tower than ever touching a marijuana stick, because that is just the beginning on the road from which too often there is no turning back."

staffed by five hundred scientists, technicians, doctors, nurses and orderlies. It is situated on a 1,100-acre estate eight miles out of Lexington proper.

The hospital operated by the United States Public Health Service is overcrowded today with about one thousand drug-addict patients, both men and women. Average age of the males is twenty-six, and of the females, thirty-five. Male addiction is said to be about four times that of women. Because of the crowded condition of the institution it has been impossible to segregate teenagers from older addicts.

The hospital has been nicknamed "Narco." At one time it was known as the Federal Narcotic Farm.

Inmates are given various fancy names, such as "patients," etc. Guards are called "security aids," and the disciplinary board is known as "the adverse-behavior clinic." The iron gates and window bars are soothingly painted soft colors of turquoise and rose.

The grounds at Lexington are surrounded by barbed wire. Mounted guards constantly patrol the fences, and iron grills and locks bar almost every door.

Patients are allowed to bring in only a few scanty personal effects, and attendants take charge of these until the release date. Only two letters a week can be written by a patient, and all incoming mail is censored. A careful watch is made for letters coming in to inmates which may have been soaked in a strong solution of drugs. Every precaution is taken to prevent the smuggling of drugs into the hospital, and most of the ingenious methods of such smuggling are known to the officials.

When the patient is admitted, a thorough examination is made of all his clothing and his body openings are all carefully checked for possible drugs.

Some of the inventive inmates contrive weird methods of getting, or trying to get, a "fix." A patient may carry soap in his pocket to take imprints of the guards' keys. Or he may scream from terrible agonies pleading for just one "shot" from the doctor. Some have even cut their tongues to pretend that they are intensely suffering as the coughed-up blood indicates.

About one-third of the population is made up of Negroes, who come mostly from metropolitan centers. Twenty per cent of them are under the age of twenty-one. I.Q. tests indicate that they are

of higher intelligence than the outside population. This fact is almost unknown among the patients.

Surprisingly, ten to fifteen per cent of the patients are professional people, including ministers, psychiatrists, nurses, and a great number of musicians.

The many people who believe that drug addiction is restricted to the lower and criminal classes are shocked by this revelation.

In addition to the teenagers and the young adults, the ward is loaded with oldtimers who have been addicts for a long time. These junkies have been taking drugs for so long that there is little or no chance of a cure for them. Morphine junkies, and readily admit that they will continue their habit following their release. One of these oldtimers has been to Narco twenty-two times already, and has come up with even a higher record of relapses. Some patients are cured occasionally so that they can start a new life as an addict and get the big "kick" again which builds up its tolerance for the drug.

Dr. Victor Vogel, Narco director, defines drug addiction as a disease with a tendency to relapse," and says that only twenty per cent of the 37,000 cases handled last year were considered cured.

After the arrival of a new patient, he is taken to him to the "withdrawal" ward, where he spends ten days shaking off his painful agonies. The patient is given a morphine-like drug called methadon to ease the withdrawal from addiction. During the withdrawal period the dosage is gradually less until it is down to zero. This is the most difficult of the bodily reactions which occur when a person comes off drugs. The suffering is not easy even with the use of methadon. The patient gets restless, perspires, yawns, has diarrhea, and may lose five to fifteen pounds in one day. The height of the agony is reached after ten days of abstinence. It is gradually reduced in the next ten days of torture the body about has given up. At the end of the addict to feed it some drugs, and at the end of the patient is transferred to the convalescent ward to build up his strength.

that curable addicts were healed of their
mania.

treatment is expensive, and yet it is also
very inexpensive. An addict cured becomes
once again, a worker, a producer of essential
the remainder of his or her life. If not cured,
ruined at high cost to the taxpayers, lives
money for his supply of drugs, and is an
liability.

added up, the expense of curing an addict
and in every other way. Society, if it
addicts, is obviously being penny wise and

ily column in the Los Angeles MIRROR,
e of narcotics that is wrecking the minds
boys and girls in every walk of life is
many parents because they do not under-
stand it can't come into their homes."

the problem was different in the days when
Most of the inmates of that institution
and old-time addicts who didn't want to
leave them weren't worth saving. We had no
choice in those days," she said.

just because they made mistakes at Spadra
we should toss hundreds of young people
into jail. We'll find those incurables with
peddling their bodies along our streets
for the long run."

Vernon Kilpatrick reminded the group
gathered in Los Angeles in a few days by the
of the State Assembly where information
concerning what new laws would aid in halting
the use of narcotics of teenagers.

hospital for these young addicts," he advised
the thing you can do is let your legislative
body know your wishes. They are interested in votes,
and let them know about it."

He, chief of the Los Angeles Police Depart-

ment's narcotics bureau, endorsed the need for such a hospital, and
is reported by Miss Muir as stating:

"We arrest the young dope addicts and put them in jail, but we
know that isn't a great help to them. However, we know that when
they are in jail they are not committing crimes to get money to
support their habits.

"We must protect society from these enslaved boys and girls who
will do anything to get the money they pay peddlers for their
stuff. When we have enough of them locked up, shoplifting slows
down, but we know they'll be out again.

"It would cost you extra in taxes to support a State hospital for
these addicts but it costs you plenty as it is.

"For every addict who is arrested and sent to jail you taxpayers
have to dig down in the pocket. Then there is the terrific loss
among merchants through shoplifting. The retail value of the stolen
goods runs to much higher figures than is realized on the sale of
it by the thieves.

"Boys also resort to theft from cars and trucks. Some use guns
and lives of liquor merchants remaining open late at night are
constantly threatened.

"We have a problem with the girls who turn into prostitutes.
The Federal government does not have enough manpower to
cope with the growing importation and smuggling of narcotics
across our borders and into our seaports.

"There are now about two hundred men working in the U. S.
Narcotics Division and I feel that there should be many times
more than that to stem the flow of opium derivatives, cocaine and
marijuana into this country."

Attending the meeting were two members of the Los Angeles
group of NA (narcotics anonymous), also known as AA (addicts
anonymous), an organization founded at the Narcotics hospital
at Lexington, Kentucky. They were cured of their addiction and
offered themselves as living proof of the fact that given proper
treatment dope addicts can be healed.

Present also was a former inmate of an Illinois prison. He told
of how he became a heroin addict, couldn't get enough money
legally to obtain his 'H,' so he finally ended up with a gun in
his hand pulling hold-ups. "I couldn't make it, so I had to take
it," he explained. He went through the tortures of hell after his