

# NARCOTICS, U. S. A.

*Edited by*

**PAUL WESTON**

NARCOTICS, U.S.A. presents all the known facts and explores every phase of the problem of drug addiction as it exists in America today. Written by nine authorities in their various fields, the book sets forth the most accurate estimates available on the extent of addiction and the size of the illegal traffic. Reasons for initiation of drug use are fully discussed and the organization and techniques of the importers and wholesalers with their pushers and recruiters are explained in detail.

There is a stark account of the relation between drugs and crime (the addict-criminal and the criminal-addict), a discussion of the various drugs and their effects, an up-to-the-minute account of treatment and supportive care of addicts, and a careful survey of international, federal, and state legislation.

In conclusion, there are chapters on remedial measures—community programs, new legislation, educational safeguards, and an overall medico-social plan.

Of particular interest and value to parents, school teachers and administrators, social workers, physicians, judges, law enforcement officers, civic clubs, welfare agencies, and drug addicts themselves, NARCOTICS, U.S.A. makes fascinating reading for anyone interested in this strange and fearful twentieth-century menace.

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BROWN

True Experiences of Young Drug Addicts

**MONKEY  
ON MY  
BACK**

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True  
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of Young  
Drug Addicts

by WENZELL BROWN

GREENBERG



*Phrase used by drug addicts to describe frightful sensations they endure when deprived of narcotics.*

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ON MY  
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### AUTHOR'S NOTE

The names of all addicts, their friends and relatives have been changed; also some details of place and time have been shifted to avoid the possibility of identification. Only the names of public officials and others clearly and unmistakably identified are real.

the "wheels" deal. At the time of his arrest, he was a desperate man making a frantic bid to recoup his lost place of power in organized crime.

Sneaky Pete's seizure by the police had a sobering effect upon Johnnie, who had apparently believed that Rodriguez' position was an invulnerable one. The vision of a life in which he could live continuously "goofed" as one of Rodriguez' runners evaporated. Ben Bragman got Max and Johnnie together and laid down the law. Either Johnnie could be committed to Lexington a third time or else he would be arrested and "kick it cold turkey."

Maybe Ben's rage was what Johnnie needed. He began to whimper like a child and agreed docilely to the commitment. Ben was taking no chances. He took the boy home with him and kept him under guard until the arrangements were completed.

## NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

### 1

AFTER SNEAKY PETE'S ARREST, I MADE ONLY RARE VISITS TO Little Spain. There was danger there from Rodriguez' associates, from Rico, from the pushers, runners, and addicts who swarmed over the area. There was little reason for me to go, for both Hector and Johnnie were in Lexington and would remain there for the next four and a half months.

Winter had set in and the gay colors of the streets had turned to drab gray. The old women huddled in their rooms instead of on the stoops. The adolescents congregated in the smoky bars and restaurants. Only the children spent long hours in the streets after school or during the week-ends. The adults hurried along, the men with their collars turned up, the women in heavy overcoats of black or gray. New York winters are severe hardships for the people of the Caribbean. Heat and crowding has always been a part of their pattern. But the stanchions of the Third Avenue El, the grimy brownstone buildings, the hollow windows of the condemned tenements, the bitter wind, slush, and cold of Manhattan's winters are poor substitutes for the palm trees, the verdant foliage, the cobalt waters, the noisy plazas, the open market places of their native islands.

The chill tenements in which a dozen families may share a single toilet, a shower room lined with corrugated tin, a stand-pipe at the end of the hall, are cheerless and depressing. It is little wonder the youngsters seek escape in the cellar clubs, the pads, the flea-infested moving picture houses, even the "shooting galleries" and "jive joints," which are their only sources of amusement.

Pepe was back on the block but we were no longer friends. When he met me on the streets, he passed with his face averted. He was spending most of his time lounging about the pool-room where he was now accepted by Rico and the older boys as a full-fledged member of the Gauchos. He had grown much taller during his months in the reformatory. All the child-like qualities had shrivelled within him. His face had thinned, grown hard. He was no longer a boy but a man, one who could not be reached through kindness, interest, or sympathy. He wore sharpie clothes—a hat with a wide brim, a suit with wide lapels, a knit necktie made into a huge knot, shoes with pointed toes. Sometimes I would see him in the poolroom doorway with Rico. Pepe was now nearly a head taller than the older youth and much better-looking. Rico's eyes would follow me steadily. He would grin and sometimes speak. But his hostility was only thinly disguised. Pepe pretended not to know me. On the few occasions when I tried to speak, he stood still looking over my shoulder or walked away abruptly.

Mrs. Maldonado was ill—a virus infection which confined her to her bed most of the winter. But the malady was more than physical. She was ridden by a sense of guilt, fear for Hector, the knowledge of her failure, and tremulous misgivings for what the future might hold for herself and the boy. After a single scrawled note, Hector did not communicate with her and we heard from him only indirectly. She kept the crudely written letter beneath her pillow and brought it out anew each week when I visited her.

Meanwhile, I had several talks with Bob Hazel. He felt certain that if either Hector or Johnnie was released from Lexington only to reenter immediately his old environment, the results would be disastrous. In each instance, drug addiction was only one symptom of a badly disturbed and unbalanced personality. For any hope of recovery, they would have to find new backgrounds, fresh interests, and suitable work removed from the original sources of their disorders. He predicted that if the boys returned directly to Spanish Harlem they would be back on drugs in a matter of weeks.

I argued the case. If the boys were taken out of New York and committed some minor offense, they would be dealt with harshly. Relatively speaking, New York was progressive in its treatment of youthful offenders. The authorities here had more experience in dealing with addicts. If conflict with the law should occur, we could expect reasonable treatment here. Moreover, if the boys were sent away, would not their very rootlessness deter them from making normal readjustments?

Bob shrugged. He said, "Let's face it. These kids have got all the breaks against them. They haven't got a fifty-fifty chance by any means. They've got one chance in a hundred, maybe one in a thousand, of kicking the habit and going on to lead relatively normal lives. No matter what you do, it's going to be wrong. Why don't you forget the whole thing? If you've got to interest yourself in kids, take on some whom you stand a show of helping."

Again I started the round of agencies which might be willing to aid the boys. The going was rough. No one wanted to employ a boy with a narcotics record. Nobody wanted such a boy in his home even though payment was provided to keep him there. Four separate agencies, however, did mention a man whom they thought might help the boys. He was Danny Carl- sen, a former addict who was operating an outfit known as Narcotics Anonymous. The telephone book listed the address

as 242 East 14th Street. On a blustering cold day, I picked my way past the crowds thronging the entrances of Ohrbach's Department Store, past the garish marquees of moving picture theatres, past reeking saloons, blaring music shops, and down-in-the-heel hash-houses. I crossed Third Avenue and was nearly to Second when I spotted the number. The office was in the Presbyterian Labor Temple.

An elevator operator told me that I would find Carlsen on the sixth floor, but I wandered about for some time before I located his tiny cubicle in the back of a small chapel. The office, scarcely larger than a closet, had two desks crammed into it. At one of them sat a young woman. I later learned that she was Barbara Doyle, the unpaid secretary of Narcotics Anonymous. Miss Doyle, who has never been a user, devotes hours every day to the aid of young addicts.

We talked for a few minutes; then Danny Carlsen came in. He was a short man, very thin, with a pale, haggard face. He was dressed in a shabby gray overcoat, a cheap blue suit, a crushed-in felt hat. He said to Barbara, "I'm all in. That boy in Jersey City—" He saw me and broke off in mid-sentence.

For the next fifteen minutes, I tried to draw Carlsen out, get him to talk. He was evasive, irritable. Later I learned the reason for this. A girl with whom he had been working had been picked up by the police the previous day and was being held at the Women's House of Detention. Carlsen thought that I was a policeman in disguise and that my interest in his work was only a pose to pry information from him.

As we talked, I studied the man whom narcotics addicts throughout the country call Danny. He was in his mid-forties. His face was gaunt, the skin taut against the bones. His eyes were deep-set, large. His forehead jutted, his eyebrows were heavy, his light-brown hair sparse. His mouth was wide and straight, his chin narrow. There were heavy creases about his

lips. His taut body, his indrawn expression, his compressed lips and clipped speech did not impress me favorably.

Then the telephone rang. Barbara answered and said to Danny, "It's someone who needs you."

Danny took the phone and there was a swift change in his manner.

I heard him say, "Yes, this is Danny."

There was a pause. "You say you're in Brooklyn in a drug-store calling from a booth? . . . Yes, if you need me I'll come."

The hysteria of the voice on the other side of the line swept into the cubicle. Danny was only a foot away from me. I could catch words, phrases, of the boy who was talking. "I'm desperate. I've got to do something—got to. If I'm alone, I'll have to go back on. Maybe pull a score to get the money. I don't know. God help me! I don't know what to do."

Danny spoke soothingly. "Give me a name to call you by. No, not your real name. Just a nickname of some kind."

"Eddie."

"All right, Eddie. Now, listen to me. You know I've been on the hook, don't you?"

"Yes. I know."

"I've been through it all and plenty of times I've been a loser. But you can hold tight for an hour, can't you, Eddie? I'll be with you by that time and we can talk things over."

There was a sputter over the wire.

"No, I'm not police and I won't bring police and I'll get to you as soon as I can."

Again there was an interruption, a long one.

"Sure, Eddie, it's bad. But just take it for the next five minutes, then another five. That way you can hang on."

The boy gave directions and Danny jotted them down. As soon as the boy hung up, he reached for his hat and coat which

he had thrown on the table and hurried out, scarcely noticing me.

When he had gone, Barbara Doyle chatted with me for awhile, telling me of Danny's work. Then she gave me an invitation to attend the second anniversary open meeting of Narcotics Anonymous which was to be held the following Wednesday at eight o'clock.

During the intervening days I tried to learn what I could of Danny and the group. Among others, I talked with a police inspector with whom I had become friendly.

He said, "It won't work. You get a bunch of junkies together, what happens? They get to talking about the stuff. Dope is like mumps—it's contagious. A kid gets on the hook and he wants his buddies to try it. Not because he's pushing but just because that's the way a junkie is. So what? These kids start digging the cat. Pretty soon one of them thinks he'd like to try a pop just for the hell of it. Then the other kids don't want to be called squares. So they all take snorters. Each one knows it can't get him. It's just this once. But after awhile, they've started a joy club. Maybe some draw out but in the end there'll be two or three or more with monkeys on their backs."

"That may be," I argued, "but what about a kid who's desperate—who's on the verge of committing a crime to buy himself a fix? Whom can he talk to? Is there a rehabilitation center, a hospital, a clinic where he can get help?"

"No. There's nothing like that."

"What happens to the boy who's just out of Lexington or the Island? You say 80 per cent of them are back on heroin in a year. Is there any organization to help them in their struggle?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then why not give Danny a break? From what I've heard, the youngsters he's dealing with are those who have been given up by everyone else. In that case, at the very worst he can't do any harm."

The inspector shrugged but he agreed to go with me to the Labor Temple on Wednesday. When we arrived we found the hall already well filled with perhaps from two hundred to two hundred and fifty people. Only a scattering of these people were users or former users. There was a group of students from Columbia's Teachers College. Most of the rest were social workers, public officials, and members of citizens' reform groups.

A moving picture, *Drug Addiction*, released by Encyclopaedia Britannica was shown. Incidentally, this is a picture which can be rented for a few dollars by any interested group. Then Danny spoke and several of the welfare workers. After that, Danny announced that three members of Narcotics Anonymous would tell about their experiences. They would be introduced only by their first names.

The first of these was Baxter, a tall, angular, handsome colored boy. Baxter had joined the army when he was eighteen and been sent to Korea. Previously he had played the clarinet in his high school band and also performed with a professional group for a short time. In Korea, he had been assigned to an army band. The life overseas was rigorous. The bands were sent from place to place, often travelling all night and performing before the troops the next day. One night on the train Baxter had seen one of the other bandmen using a syringe. He had been curious, thinking the other boy was sick and injecting himself with medicine. The other boy had told him it was just something to make the long, tedious, jolting night ride go "fast and easy," and he offered Baxter a shot. At first Baxter refused but the two boys continued talking. Before the night was up, Baxter had decided he might as well "give the stuff a try." A couple of nights later, as the band returned to base, he tried a second shot, still not knowing what he was using. The hardships of the train journey disappeared and a rosy lethargic

state of pleasure took their place. He and his "buddie" spent the night "digging the cat."

In six weeks Baxter was on the hook, needing the stuff bad. His "buddie" was no longer supplying the decks free. Baxter talked with some other fellows and they advised him to lay off. He tried "kicking it on his own" and almost succeeded. Then one day they were caught in a raid and Baxter decided just one "pop" would fix him up. By the end of a week he was on H again, this time worse than ever. He had received a discharge and wound up in Lexington, one of "hundreds" from the Korean front.

He was released and found a job with a band but he kept thinking about horse. Every so often the craving would hit him hard. He went back on and landed up in Lexington again. Now he was out and unemployed, but he was determined to "kick it forever." One night he had gone through hell. All the next day he had the jitters. Then a friend had told him about Danny. He had called Danny up and had come to see him. Danny had pulled him through the bad spell. Baxter had been "off" for five months. He thought he would never go back on.

The second speaker was a tall, shapely, very attractive woman who was introduced as Iris. I judged her to be nineteen or twenty, but as her story unrolled it became apparent that she must be close to thirty. She started her story by telling us that she had spent five years in prison. She had been raised in poverty, married when she was fifteen, and widowed a year later. To earn money for herself and her infant son, she had taken work in a dime-a-dance night hall as a "taxi dancer." The work had been hard, monotonous, often humiliating. Some of the other girls smoked bombers so the time wouldn't drag. Iris bought some and soon was smoking them regularly. But in a few months "the kick wore off." The same girl who had sold her the bombers offered her some heroin.

Iris said, "I didn't even know the name of the stuff I was

using. All I knew was I needed it and it cost a lot of money." The girl from whom Iris was buying went away and Iris had to find a new contact. This time the pusher was a man. One night while she was waiting for the pusher on a street corner, she was accosted by the police. She could not explain her presence and she was arrested. In court, she received a one- to three-year sentence for "loitering."

When Iris was free again she thought she could take it easy. Just one shot a day and that way she would never be hooked. But pretty soon it was two shots, then three, then four. At the end of six months, she had forgotten everything else except her need for the drug. The pusher who was selling to her "turned stooge." Iris was picked up again and sent to the House of Detention.

This time when she got out she thought she could "beat the habit" with drink. Whenever she felt the craving for a shot, she would take a drink instead. Sometimes she would deliberately drink herself into a semiconscious state, feeling that was the only defense she had against heroin. She worked whenever she could, but her employment never lasted for long. One of her jobs was as a waitress and at the restaurant where she worked she became friendly with another girl who was an addict. They started spending a good deal of time together, and one night when Iris was intoxicated her friend persuaded her to try a jolt. Just one shot was all Iris needed. Soon she was taking heroin steadily again and, because it was the only way she could "pay for her habit," she also started to push.

Even so, she could not raise enough money for her needs. The man from whom she was making her drug purchases told her about "an easy way" to get money. Under his tutelage she stole a government social welfare check from the mailbox of a woman who lived in a nearby apartment, forged the woman's name, and tried to cash the check. The very first time she tried

it she was caught. She was sent to Lexington and then returned to prison to serve out another year's term.

Meanwhile a terrible tragedy had struck her home. Her little boy had been left with her mother. One morning while the youngster was playing on the roof, a neighbor's child managed to get hold of a service revolver and fired it. The bullet struck Iris' boy, shattering the end of his spine. The doctors said the boy would live but never walk again except with crutches.

That night, alone in her cell, Iris prayed for the first time since she was a child. She did not pray for herself but for the boy. She demanded of herself the strength to help him.

The next Sunday, Narcotics Anonymous held a meeting at the House of Detention. In desperation, Iris attended. She heard Danny Carlsen and several others tell how they had kicked the habit. One of these turned out to be a girl she had known previously—"the worst junkie" she had ever seen. Iris decided that if this girl could kick the habit, so could she.

The same day that Iris was released, she called Narcotics Anonymous. Danny helped her get medical care, a job. But more than that he had taught her to be humble, that her selfishness was selfishness, that she had responsibilities toward others. Iris had kept her job for two years. She had supported her son and, in what spare time she had, she had become a part of the working staff of Narcotics Anonymous. Each time there was a Sunday meeting at the House of Detention she went back to tell her story. She let the girls there know that her tiny apartment was a haven where they could come in time of need.

During these two years she had never taken a shot. She never would take another.

While Iris had been talking, I heard a sound of muffled sobbing behind me. I turned and saw a girl in the pew in back. She was, I judged, about seventeen and rather pretty. There was a bandana around her hair. Most of her face was con-

cealed by a crumpled handkerchief held in her hand. She glanced up and caught me looking at her. For a moment she stared at me with a hint of defiance; then she averted her face.

The third speaker of the group was Charlie. Charlie made me think of a poster of a typical American boy. He had blond hair, a rugged face, a turned-up nose, a quick embarrassed grin. He said he didn't have much of a story to tell—not like Iris. This is the way it was with him. His old man wasn't exactly rich but he was well off. His mom was tops. He didn't have any troubles at home, except his folks were kind of strict. As for Charlie, well he liked a good time. The way he looked at it, pretty soon the draft was going to catch up with him. So he'd better have his fun first.

He got to hanging around with a gang of kids. They were nice guys, too. They thought the same as he did about good times. They got hold of some hot rods and smashed them up. Then they tried happy sticks and bennies. Getting goofed once in a while was okay. Then one night a kid from the gang showed up with some horse. They all tried it and it made them sick. The rest of the gang had enough, but Charlie took some more on a dare. A couple of the older guys tried to warn him off and he had decided to show them he didn't need their advice. Then before he knew it, he couldn't lay off. He'd made up a lot of lies to tell his folks to get money. Then he began pilfering around home, and finally he had broken into a half-dozen stores. Every penny he could lay his hands on went for horse. Luckily for him, his old man caught up with him before the police. Charlie had taken the cure. It was tough sledding, though, when he got out. The other kids didn't like having him around. Especially the girls. They thought he was still a hop-head or a dope fiend. They were scared of him. It had been so bad he'd nearly started taking the junk again, but in Lexington he'd heard about Danny. He decided to give Danny a try, and since then he'd been with Narcotics Anonymous. It was four

months now. He knew he had to kick the habit for good because they wouldn't take him in the army otherwise. He hadn't been so hot about going in before, but now that was what he wanted more than anything else.

Charlie's talk was followed by a round of applause and then a minister said a brief prayer. Danny called the meeting to a close.

I whispered to my police inspector friend, "What do you think now?"

He grunted, "I'd like to wait a few months and hear what's happened to these kids. Take this guy Charlie, he's been off for four months but that's no proof he'll kick it cold. Do you want to lay a bet he won't be back on in another six months? I got a sawbuck that says he will."

While the inspector had been talking I looked around for the girl I had heard sobbing. She was not in the pew, nor could I see her anywhere in the auditorium. Sometime while Charlie was still talking she must have slipped away.

## 2

Danny and Barbara were harassed by difficulties. They were operating without funds and, while welfare agencies, hospitals, prisons, and churches advised young addicts to go to Danny, none of them gave financial support. Every time I visited the office, there was a fresh emergency—their telephone was about to be cut off, their typewriter had been stolen, a boy who needed hospitalization badly could not raise the fare to Lexington. When a publicity article appeared in a national magazine, they were flooded with requests for help but only two dollars came in through the mails.

Danny was on relief; Barbara had no income except what she earned from part-time typing. The few former addicts who wanted to help were not sufficiently stable personalities to conduct the interviews with skill and tact.

Danny was reticent about talking of himself, not because of any desire for concealment but because he was too filled with the work he was doing to think of anything else. Nevertheless, as the days passed on, I managed to patch together part of his story.

He was born in Puerto Rico in the small town of Humacao. His father was Danish, his mother a native of Spanish extraction. But Danny had only the skimpiest memories of either of them. Both parents died before Danny was five, and a woman doctor in the United States Public Health Office brought the orphaned boy to her home in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Danny lived a fairly normal life in St. Joseph until he was fourteen. Then he developed a painful growth inside his left ear. He was hospitalized and, to reduce the pain, he was given morphine. This was a time when the dangers of morphine addiction were not fully understood, and Danny received repeated dosages. Danny did not know what was happening to him but he got a "lift" from the morphine. It made everything "rosy" and peaceful, besides relieving the suffering of his earache. He noticed where the morphine was kept and surreptitiously took additional doses. When his earache was better, he still had access to the hospital and continued to steal the drug.

In the hospital Danny met an older man who was using heroin. This man taught him how to "pop." To the boy it was all something of a game. He was having new and strange sensations and he had no idea of what lay ahead. Within a few months his craving for the drug became an intolerable thing. As soon as he was "off" he suffered cramps, retched and doubled up in agony. The hospital had discovered Danny's raids on their drug supply and locked them up more securely. His source of morphine was cut off.

Danny took to the road. Whenever he could, he found work. For awhile he was a dishwasher, a farm hand, a worker on a construction gang. The pay was never sufficient to supply him

with the drugs he needed. He always had to steal on the side to satisfy his craving.

As might be expected, no job lasted for long. Danny wandered from place to place, in and out of hospitals, bumming, stealing a little, working for a week now and then. He learned all the tricks of the addict desperate to get his supplies. He got on intimate terms with pawn-shop keepers to whom he sold not only the articles he stole but even the shoes from his feet. He was coached by other addicts to "frame a twister," fake a spasm in order to obtain a shot from doctors, and to forge prescriptions for narcotics.

Before Danny was seventeen, the world for him had become a blurred background against which he experienced alternately the nightmares of drug-imposed sleep and the hideous reality of waking to insufferable agony.

Danny tried every known drug—heroin, cocaine, speedballs, marijuana, benzedrine, demerol, and a host of others—that would give him respite from his suffering. As with all addicts, the pleasurable effects of the drug soon wore off. It became a matter of shading. Without drugs his pain was acute beyond bearing. With drugs, his suffering faded into dull confusion. When he came out of his drugged torpor, he was frantic until he could return there. All power of reason, every moral sense deserted him. Life was a hysterical search for the drugs that released him temporarily from the terrors of reality but bound him inextricably to his nightmares.

Danny's first arrest was for a minor offense—dropping a slug into a subway turnstile. When the police searched him, however, they found more slugs, an eye-dropper, and a hypodermic needle. Danny went to jail and nearly screamed his lungs out in "the tank." This tank was a cell about six feet by three, without windows and with a solid iron door. The only communication with the outside was a hole just big enough for a warder to push through food and water. The cramps, the

business, the nausea, the cold sweats, the interminable retching could only be borne because the pain robbed him of the power to think. If there had been a way of killing himself, Danny would have taken it. He battered himself against the tank until he fell to the floor exhausted, writhing but unable to stand.

When the most acute phase wore off, Danny was able to pace his tiny cell, screaming and shouting. He had hallucinations that the walls were crumbling in on him, that he was being hunted. He had periods of fitful sleep from which he awakened with abdominal cramps, fever, and cold sweat. His body was a single aching mass. He stripped naked because the touch of his clothing was painful beyond endurance. Even the thin prison sheet was too heavy a burden for his body.

By the end of seventy-two hours, the worst was over, but Danny was still too stunned by the horror of his experience to think rationally for weeks to come. The shock had nearly driven him mad. And all through the dreadful nights one idea lay uppermost in his mind: just one shot—that was all he needed to end his pain. Just one shot. That was all.

Danny was let loose, but he was not cured. His first thought was how to get himself a fix. Pretty soon he was back in jail. This time they sent him to Lexington. In the hospital he endured the slower and less acute tortures of gradual withdrawal. A few months he was free again, officially cured, but with a psychological dependence on the drug no less strong than what had been before.

Danny's life for the next twenty years was a succession of relapses and cures. His vision was impaired, his mind stultified. He seemed an endless gray sheet of pain endured in a frenzy that led to hysteria. The nightmare of sleep and the nightmare of waking fused into one. Danny spent nine of these twenty years in prison; he went through the "cure" at Lexington eight times. In the periods when he was free, Danny embarked on a

ceaseless quest for drugs and the money with which to buy them. When he had a supply, he would lock himself in his room to use them. Sometimes he would have the illusion that people were spying on him—that they could look through the tiniest cracks. He would pull the shade down, tack it to the window frame. Then he would stuff the keyhole with cotton and stick newspapers into the cracks of the door. Even so, he never felt safe from the eyes of his imaginary watchers.

He suffered hallucinations, too. He would hear his name called when no one was about. He would hear it shouted along a deserted street or issuing from his closet. The same thing might happen on a crowded bus or subway. The voice drowned out all other sounds.

Under the influence of drugs he lost all sense of time and distance. A city block would seem "miles and miles" long. He would walk for what seemed hours and instead of reaching the intersection, he was certain that the corner was even farther away. Then suddenly, without warning, he would have covered the distance he thought to be miles.

He believed that people were following him, and he would have to fight the impulse to run madly along Fifth Avenue or through Times Square. He did not know who these pursuers were, only that they meant to do him harm.

In Danny's boyhood he had attended church, but religion had never had any deep significance for him. Sometimes in his half-crazed state he would pray for another shot. He would swear to the doctors that if they would give him just one more cap he would lay off the drug forever. At the time he said these things he meant them. To pray for drugs, to beg for them, in no way seemed ridiculous. It was like praying or begging for life itself.

Then one night something strange happened, something Danny himself cannot explain. It was during his eighth "cure" at Lexington. He was alone in the darkness of his room. With-

out conscious volition he began to pray. But this time he did not ask God for dope. Instead, he spoke humbly in the darkness, saying that he was powerless to help himself and that, if he was to continue living, only God could help him. This was, Danny claims, his first honest prayer.

When Danny awoke the next morning, he felt some change had taken place in him. Ever since he had first become addicted, drugs were the only truly important thing in his world. Never at any time had he really wished to give them up. But now Danny recognized in the drugs an enemy which he must fight.

Danny resolved that morning never to use drugs again; in the four years that have passed since then, he has honored that resolve. But Danny felt that his own salvation was not enough. He must dedicate his life to helping others trapped as he once was by the use of drugs.

But what could he do? He was a man of very limited education whose whole adult life had been spent in prisons, hospitals, or under the influence of drugs. He had no training in sociology or psychology. But he had one asset that no social worker had. He had experienced every conceivable degradation connected with drugs and he had managed his escape.

As soon as possible, Danny went to Alcoholics Anonymous and studied their plan. Some of the program could not be applied to drug addiction. Danny borrowed what he could from their experience, but he had no one to call on for help. Many alcoholics have cured themselves, returned to their businesses, and become highly successful. This was not true of narcotics addicts. At best, there were a handful of former addicts who were truly cured. And the lives of these few had been so shattered by the horror of their experiences that they were in no shape to help others. Danny must work alone.

All Danny asked for was a phone, an office, and free hours to devote to those who needed him. The Labor Temple let him

have the tiny cubicle and he was able to go on relief. By eating one meal a day, living in a tiny room, and wearing shabby clothes, Danny made his relief money stretch to cover the cost of the phone and the necessary trips. Soon word of Danny's work reached the addicts. The phone was rarely silent for more than an hour at a time. For the first time, drug addicts had hope of reaching someone with whom they could talk without fear.

Danny believes in God and the efficacy of prayer, but there is nothing mystic or cultish in his philosophy. It doesn't matter if a boy or girl is Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant, he says. "What does matter is that they have faith in some greater force than themselves. The very first step toward the cure of drug addiction is honesty. When an addict is willing to admit that he is powerless to control his drug habits, he has taken the first step toward recovery. Having achieved this state of humility, he is then ready for the next step—belief in a power greater than himself. Any concept of a higher power is acceptable. Most men call this power God—but even that is not necessary. Success in treatment of drug addiction lies in the willingness of the addict to go beyond himself and in his own way pray for strength."

When Danny made this statement to me the first time, I challenged him sharply. Narcotics addicts suffer from both physical and psychological dependence on the drug. Prayer is not enough. Addicts require both medical and psychiatric care.

Danny agreed instantly. "That is quite true, but a 'cure' without the real desire of the addict to free himself is also useless. Addicts cannot be cured by prayer alone. They must obtain medical attention. When a man has been taking dope for any length of time and tries to give it up, his suffering is frightful. Withdrawal must take place under competent supervision. The bravest man in the world needs medical help during this time. But he must have spiritual help, too. Something must

spring up within him that is strong enough to fight against and defeat the drives which would otherwise force him back into addiction."

Danny keeps in touch with social welfare agencies, hospitals, courts, clinics, and prison officials. Whenever an addict is in trouble, he knows that there is one person who will stand beside him to help as much as he can and that that person is Danny. Working without funds, Danny has wrought many minor miracles. Scores of boys have gone to clinics and hospitals instead of prison. And when they are out, Danny stands by. For every success, there are a dozen failures, but Danny knows the percentages and that his score is relatively high.

In working with girls, Danny has an even more difficult job. The hospitals and clinics are crowded and have long waiting lists. To tell an addict to wait for six months or a year is completely futile. When the addict is ready to take the cure, immediate medication is required. In Lexington the girls' wing is extremely limited. Sometimes the only way in which a girl can get treatment is by voluntarily committing herself to prison. This is a terrible decision to make and most girls shy from it, though sometimes the only alternative is to fall into a life of crime. In two cases I have known Danny to persuade girls that self-commitment is the wisest course and, because the girls have accepted this terrifying prospect with courage and pride, he believes that the chance of their eventual cure has been improved.

To these girls, as to all others who come to him for help, Danny has given a copy of a prayer which he suggests they repeat each morning. It reads: "God give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."