



# Informers not hired— but they get paid?

"The game is open to everybody and anybody can play. The name of the game is turn in a friend for \$40."

When it comes to informing, reliable sources are a difficult thing to come by. One thing is certain. In this city there are at least three high schools in which an aura of distrust is starting to blanket the students. Not all of the students, and probably not a majority.

However, that depends on who you talk with. At one high school of a thousand students, a grade eleven girl involved in selling drugs claims the percentage of regular drug users is no higher than five per cent. Yet, a young city youth worker who graduated from the same school last year estimates 400 students use pot, hash, or LSD regularly.

Whatever the case, as the 15-year-old drug seller puts it: "Everyone suspects everyone else. The simple fact that this kid was taken down to the office made the kids think he was a narc. They left him alone at parties. The kids thought that this other boy was a narc because his father is a policeman. He had to eat alone in the cafeteria. He seems to be prying all the time so the kids suspect him. They don't trust anybody."

At another school, the tension seems to be less. As one student there said: "The kids all know who the narcs are and just stay away."

What the police are concerned about seem to be cases like these: Methedrine (speed)—"There was none during the first semester at our school, then this chick got a shipment and it was there for a month." "Speed" is the one that kills with overuse.

Marijuana—"If it was legalized, there wouldn't be the paranoia but I'll tell you this, you'd have a lot of stoned teeny-boppers walking around."

"Sure there's shooting (injections). If there's nothing else, you shoot speed."

As for the general feeling at one high school, a student says, "we have fun but it's a strange kind of atmosphere, you know."

## EVERYONE "KNOWS"

Everyone, whether they smoke, drop, shoot, or not; just "knows" there are informers among them. They have no facts.

"There isn't any concrete evidence, just suspicions, things that could have been coincidences happening at the wrong time."

Some say they are paid, anywhere from \$40 for a "small head" to \$100, even \$500 for a "big head." Few students can back it up with even reasonable assumptions, it is just rumor. But the rumors are believed and the atmosphere is there.

Both the city police and RCMP pay for information as do most police forces. Both forces deny there are "going rates", that each case is judged on its merits. The city police say most of their information comes from concerned citizens.

Edmonton Police Chief F. Sloane says \$40 for drug users "is a little rich for our blood."

Inspector W. H. Stuart, head of the city police morality department, says there is probably the "odd case" of high school students being paid but to his knowledge he does not think so.

In connection with drugs, he says there are no plainclothes police on campus. "I think the campus police always know when a city policeman comes on to the campus," he said.

## "WE'RE NOT THERE"

Staff Inspector F. K. Shaw, of the city police says "we're simply not there. We are not the only police. You have your own security. It's darn too obvious and stupid anyway."

Chief Clerk of the RCMP's Criminal Investigation Branch says it is not the policy of the RCMP to send plainclothes police to the campus unless for a particular investigation. He says the force does not have enough men for such activity anyway.

## RELIABLE SOURCE

But the person who named the game "turn in a friend for \$40" is neither a school student nor a policeman.

His comments are published here not because they are unusual but because he is as close to being a "reliable source" as seems available.

Sunday, The Gateway contacted a district Community Development Officer who arranged to have the source contact the paper but in his opinion, "the chances are almost nil as the only phone numbers he has are in two downtown cafes."

However, he did phone, identified himself as an informal social worker and said that the kids "know that I'm not a cop and won't fink out on them."

These are his credentials as he listed them: Connections with several drug dealers or pushers, a connection with the plainclothes city police, and connections with the RCMP in that each gives the other useful information.

He had this to say. "I've known pretty well what has been going on in town ever since it started (the drug scene). I don't think in the high schools there is that much going on. The police have the situation well in hand, by watching the known pushers."

"Actually, at \$40 a head, its uneconomical for the informer. The \$40 is paid for information on persons using marijuana, hash or LSD. One way or another, providing the name of the informer is known, 80 per cent of them get their money."

## NEED INFORMER TO GET WARRANT

"I would say this is one thing for sure: they need to have an informer to be able to really get a warrant to search a place. They have to have more than sheer speculation to go on."

"When I was offered my little nest egg (for information on other matters than drugs), I got kind of sick. It made me sick to think that this is how hard up they are for information."

"I have heard directly from one person who informed and got his \$40. Carl Pesche (the "hooded informer" involved in arrests at Middle Earth last year) told me \$40 was the going rate when/he was undercover."

"There are some people on the police force who are on the kids' side. We found that out when it came right down to the nitty gritty at Middle Earth. When the police could only carry out 15 of their 40 arrest warrants, then we knew. Someone had warned the kids two days before the bust."

Just how much basis he really has for these statements is an unsolved problem. He says he plays the game very close to the edge and that is why his name does not appear here.

At least his comments seem indicative of the rumormongering, underworld atmosphere covering parts of Edmonton. That is not news either, that we have criminals.

The question seems to be, rather; how many kids are being dragged under by that world?

That question is one to ask when a 15-year-old, intelligent girl who pushes pot and looks quite like a freckle-faced boy with long hair, says candidly of informing: "It's unethical, it's all I can say. These guys get buddy-buddy with you and then they fink on you. How do you feel?"