

MARIHUANA:

The Second Most Favourite Chemical in the Whole Wide World

by Gary Gayda

Pot and Pat

'My first experience with marihuana was at York last year,' the student said. Pat (not the student's real name), had consented to tell me about a 'pot' experience. 'It was a quiet, friendly pot party.'

Interviewer: 'Where did you get it?'

Pat: 'Well, it's available quite readily in Yorkville.' (At least one student was getting it last month) 'But we got it from Chicago by mail.'

Interviewer: 'How many were at the party?'

Pat: 'I'd rather not say.' (There were 5)

Interviewer: 'Was it planned?'

Pat: 'Yes. It's very important to have a familiar atmosphere, and people around you when you take it.'

Interviewer: 'What effect did marihuana have on you?'

Pat: 'Well, it's hard to describe, although I am aware of its effect on me. (Pause) I noticed a repetitive rhythm, with six stages. A slight uneasiness quickly gave way to the first stage—a hilarious high. Everything was so damn funny: objects, people, thoughts, everything. Then, I began to feel cold. It was winter, but the room was well-heated. Still, I felt cold, and my heart speeded up.'

Interviewer: 'When was this?'

Pat: 'About twenty or thirty minutes after inhaling. After that stage, a relaxed, faintly languorous feeling came. Then a heightened sense-awareness. Colors seemed vivid, and merged. Music seemed distorted, and then very clear. I became very sensitive to different scents about the room. Or did I imagine them? They seemed very real, though. I was overcome with awe. And this awe was endless—for time and space were endless. I walked along beside the tennis court, and an hour later, I looked back. I had walked only a few feet, and not more than a minute had passed. The sun was setting, and I stared at it until it went down. The colours were beautiful—the reds and yellows were brilliant.'

Pat is not an isolated example. Without too much inquiry, I found five York students who were willing to describe their experiences. Two were co-eds. Most had obtained their 'boo' in Yorkville. Two of the students—one male, one female, noticed no apparent change induced by the drug.

Hemp Marihuana is known in Arabia as 'hashish', in Persia as 'beng', in Morocco as 'kif', in South Africa as 'bagga', in India as 'bhang' or 'ganja'. In scientific circles, it is referred to as 'the

flowering tops of the female plant of Cannabis'. Cannabis is the genus of annual plants, the Indian hemp. It is a tall, weedy herb, bearing male and female flowers on separate plants. Stems of the male plant yield hemp-fibre used for ropes. The resinous exudation from the female plant clusters, and from the top of the female plants, yields the various products listed below. The plant is often called simply 'hemp'. 'Bhang' is a decoction, or a smoking mixture derived from the cut tops of the uncultured female plant. The resin content is usually low. Sometimes the word 'bhang' is also applied to inferior plants.

'Ghanga' is a specially cultivated and harvested grade of female plants of Indian hemp. The tops are cut, and used in making smoking mixtures, beverages, and sweetmeats without the extraction of the resin. The plants grown for ghanga, which is a licensed agricultural industry in India, are those from which it is derived.

'Charas', also called 'churus', is the pure unadulterated resin from the tops of the finest female plants of the Indian hemp—usually those grown for ghanga. But in charas, the resin is always extracted. It is known to us only by the name 'hashish', and from it is derived the drug known as Cannabis indica. 'Momea'-charas emulsified, into warm human fat, and served in a chalice made from a man's skull—is a Tibetan treat.

'Marihuana' is the Spanish-Mexican name for bhang. The term was originally confined to Mexico, and is the only one used for Indian hemp in North America, except for the vernacular of the streets, which has termed it 'boo', 'gates', 'reefers', 'muggles', 'mooters', 'Indian-hay', 'goof-butts', 'Mary Jane', 'rainy day woman', 'grass', 'vaunce' 'pot'. It grows wild in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and is cultivated in a few flower-pots, and back-yard gardens. The wild Cannabis Sativa OR Cannabis Americana, the American variety, is sometimes called 'locoweed', referring to its effect on roving cattle. It is not as potent as the Indian variety. Pot ranges in colour from bright green to dark brown—in texture from coarsely-cut leaves, stems, and seeds, to a fine powder.

The Marihuana Smoker The most common way of taking marihuana is in the form of 'joints' or 'sticks'. This, according to a Toronto writer—'vaunce-head', Peter Ludlow, can be 'a clumsy construction pinched at one end, and twisted at the other, or a beautiful work of art (sic)—a beautiful, evenly-packed cylinder, carefully folded in at the ends. This 'art' form isn't practiced by all—one of the York vaunce-users described his first—and last—joint as an unwieldy cylinder. It had all the

aesthetic appeal of a snorkel tube filled with slimy sea-weed. Cecilie Kwiat appeared in an article in The Ryersonian lately. She walked along the Trans-Canada highway near Regina last summer, planting hemp seeds. Sort of a latter-day Johnny Appleseed. And she's a club organiser too. Ever heard of LEMAR? It stands for 'legalise marihuana', and membership cards cost \$1 and proceeds go towards lawyers' fees to help convicted potheads and a member automatically becomes a member of TUSC—TUSC—Those Under Surveillance Constantly By The Undercover Scarlet-Coated.

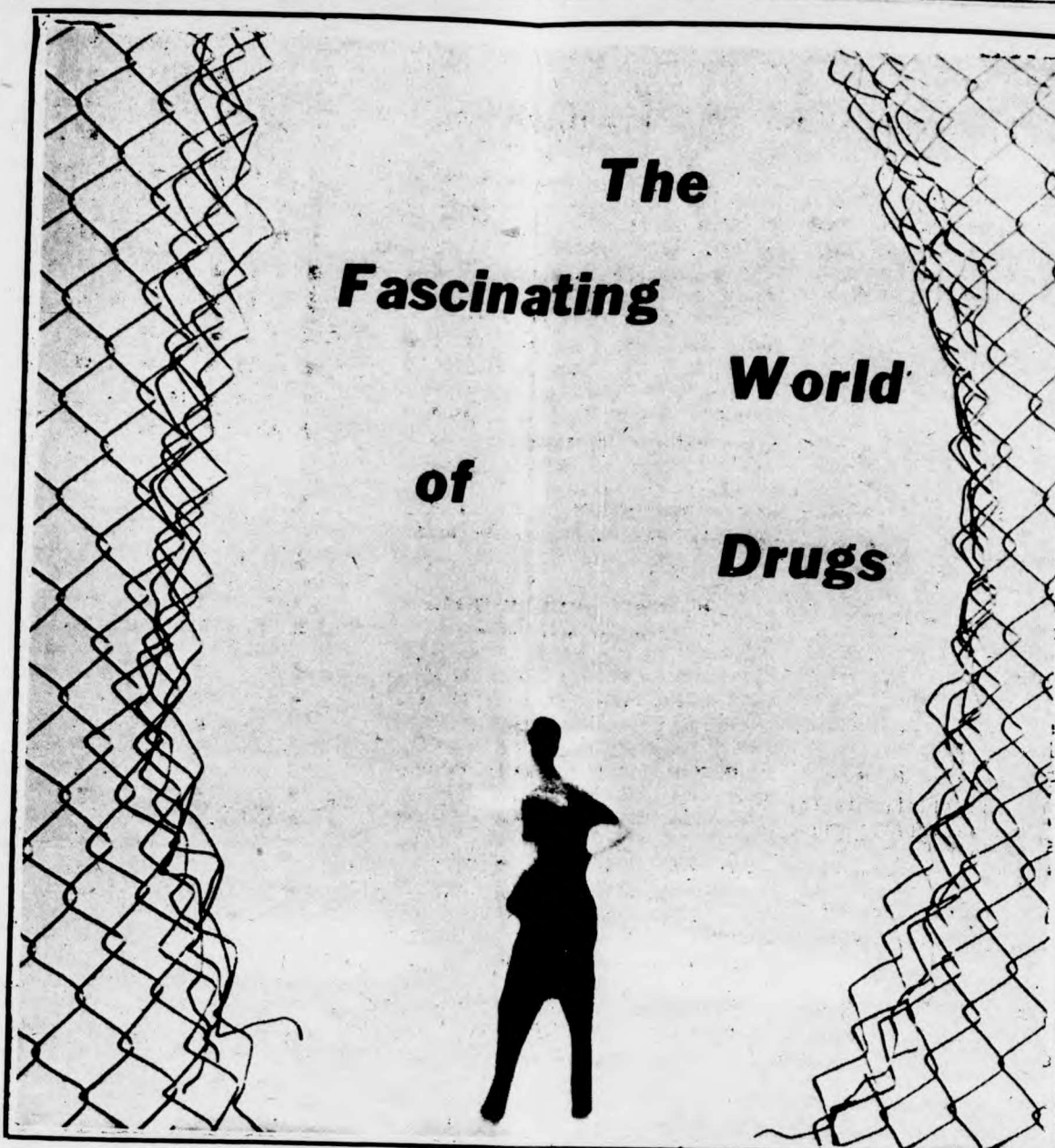
Here's how Cecilie rolls her own: You take two pieces of cigarette paper, and fold them along the joins. If you rolled them, some of the grass might be lost. Next, you wet the twisted end, and put the folded end in your mouth. She ran her tongue along the twisted end to ensure the proper effect for this onlooker. This makes the 'joint' (paper containing the marihuana) burn slower. You inhale, and hold your breath until the air enters your lungs. That is all there is to it, she smiled.

Marihuana also may be smoked in a pipe. Or it can be spread from an incense-burner. In Paris, they eat it in brownies. Holy Betty Crocker—what a shocker!

Ludlow claims that 'good pot' gives results within minutes of taking one or two good 'pokes' or puffs. Only the puffing is more of a sucking action. The end-product of the joint is a 'roach', but on the way to this ash, the smoker—or, rather, the sucker—must suffer. The gritty marihuana smoke feels like sulphur in the throat, and even the most experienced 'teo' (marihuana smoker) coughs violently after a super-human effort at retention. During the inhaling, the joint is never twisted in the lips. Air is dragged through, and around it, but 'you don't puff, but suck, the smoke through, like a malted through a straw.'

History's Hemp Hipster The history of hashish is a long one. The hemp-hipster is not a modern phenomenon. The Emperor Shen Nung provides the first written observation of it in a work on Pharmacology—in 2737 B.C. Today, the active ingredient in cannabis resin—tetrahydrocannabinols—is extracted, and used for modern medicine, 'to relieve pain, especially headache, encourage sleep, and ease restlessness'. But to the Chinese it was 'The Delight-Giver', the generous dispenser of disorientations.

Hassan-i-Sabbah provided the world with the words 'hashish' and 'assassin'—and with the Assassins, thousands of pot-heads who garrotted with glee as they slaughtered for Hassan. Since then, many nationalities have adopted it as a cultural necessity. In Bombay, the potent



'Hip is the life-view in which serenity is boredom and, therefore, sickness; and one exists in the present—in that enormous present which is without a past or a future, memory or planned intention; the life where a man must go until he is best.' — Norman Mailer

'charas' is often incorporated into a sweetmeat called 'maajun'. In Egypt and the Middle East, hashish is smoked in special pipes called 'jossies' (along with glowing charcoal, the carbon monoxide from which doubtless contributes to the psychological effects). In Algeria, the special delicacy made from cannabis is called 'dawamesc', made from grinding the hemp-tops with sugar, orange juice, cinnamon, cloves, cardamon, nutmeg, musk, pistachios, and pine kernels! An alternate name might be 'Bartenders Nightmare'.

Europe didn't see the ganbling 6-10 foot weed until the nineteenth century. It was first used in Latin American countries about 1850; smoked as tobacco. About the turn of the century, marihuana was introduced to the southern United States, by labourers from Mexico. It took hold in New Orleans, particularly among the jazz musicians, who were about to introduce their revolutionary rhythms to the world. As they travelled about North America, so did marihuana. Allen Ginsberg, the voice of the New Left, claims that, today, most successful artists, poets, actors and novelists take it. Others have stated that song writers and movie and television writers create their surrealistic madness under its influence. However, laboratory tests have convinced jazz musicians that their playing is not

better, but often worse, when Mary Jane comes along.

Gord Lightfoot recently maintained in an interview, that 'a lot of people in the entertainment business use drugs.' He doesn't, and considers their use 'dangerous'. Furthermore, 'don't let anyone ever tell you it's not addictive, because I've seen an awful lot of people who just couldn't leave it alone. It was like a crutch for them'. One of the York vaunce-users couldn't write under its influence—both the inclination and the ability were lacking. It seems unlikely that a jazz musician or other creative artist could ever effectively communicate under the influence of marihuana. No alcoholic ever claimed that, and the effects of both stimulants are quite wimilary. The only improvement, it seems, is in the player's appreciation of his own music.

The Marihuana Cult Cults using marihuana still exist today. The Rastafari of the West Indies, and the Macumbahs and the Candombles of Brazil practise reefer-rites at their gatherings.

In North America, marihuana-taking seems to reach cult proportions in large U.S. urban centers, but in Canada, it has a somewhat smaller clientele. Inspector William Pilkington, head of the Toronto Morality Squad, estimated 1,000 users in Toronto

every Saturday night. When I asked if they were students, he replied, 'Some of them; but the majority are former students—the drop-outs, who also peddle the marihuana.'

They peddle three main brands—'sass-frass'; U.S.-grown, not very powerful; 'panatella': Central or South American-grown, more powerful; 'gungeon': African-raised, most powerful, and most expensive, but rarely available. It comes into Toronto from Detroit, Chicago, Atlantic City, and most often, Buffalo. The Mexican price is \$20-\$40 a pound; dealers sell it to pushers for \$240 a pound. When the user finally purchases it, for \$900-\$1000 per pound, it has been broken down into bags, (usually bank envelopes), sometimes called match-boxes. The bags are small—90 to the pound—but yield 14-20 joints. The cost: \$10 per bag, or \$.50-\$1 a reefer. When the supply is temporarily cut off—as it was this fall, when the RCMP raided Yorkville and the surrounding area, the price rises. The Toronto Star reports one youth paying \$60 a bag. Inflation has occurred in drug prices, too—the Toronto Star reported in a 1938 issue that the price was 2 for \$.25 (Marihuana arrived in Toronto in 1934).

Regular users go through one bag a week—beginning with 5 or 6 joints a day, and then tapering off as the supply dwindles. The Mob sometimes supplies it, but more often private dealers are responsible for the trafficking. It is less profitable than ordinary tobacco selling, unless sold in huge bulk, which easily leads to detection. Often, groups of friends will keep each other supplied by frequent trips to Buffalo.

Who buys it? An ex-trafficker who told all to The Man (RCMP) says he sold marihuana to university profs, lawyers, doctors, brokers, schoolteachers, accountants, plumbers, milkmen, and students.

The legal penalties for marihuana use and trafficking are severe. If you are caught smoking marihuana—even if some is found in your pocket—you can receive a 7-year prison sentence. And the penalty for selling or distributing it can bring a life sentence. Arrests are becoming more and more frequent. A special county court has been set aside for 43 drug cases in a 2-month sitting, and more arrests are being made daily. This year's arrests for drug possession and selling have already tripled last year's. Most of those arrested are teenagers from 16-19 and those in their early twenties. Yorkville is the pot centre, and most of the arrests are made there. A jazz-club owner (only twenty years old), was recently arrested for marihuana possession and trafficking, and the club closed. It's a pity, because its jazz entertainment was recently given a good revue in EXCALIBUR.

Dr. Robert S. de Ropp, a world-recognized authority on drugs, has noted two descriptions of hashish-taking, in Drugs and the

Mind. Baudelaire, an opium addict, and hashish habitue, described in Les Paradis Artificiels the stages of intoxication: 'from slow realisation to a period of hilarity when everything and everybody seems absurd (ever wonder why Bob Dylan giggles in 'Everybody Must Get Stoned'—high on marihuana?); then through an awareness of physical oddities—weak limbs, trembling hands, an awkward stupor, dilated eyes, pallid face, a dry throat, involuntary movements, deep raucous sighs—to a heightened perceptiveness in the senses, which begin to merge—colours give out scent, flowers are heard in all their tender beauty.' But deRopp points out that 'while hashish may distort what is already there, it does not create what is not there.' Therefore, it is not a true hallucinogen.

The French pharmacologist Brotteux divides the hashish effects into 4 stages: 1. A period of nervous excitation. 2. A period of hallucination (sic) and mental instability. 3. A period of ecstasy, and profound tranquility. 4. Deep sleep which terminates the hashish rature. De Ropp adds: 'There is an exalted period at the height of the drug's effect, during which the user withdraws, and enjoys a victorious monomania.'

If taken in excess, marihuana can cause ill effects. The high feeling normally experienced turns to anxiety, stomach pains, and vomiting. Sidney Katz quoted Dr. R.G. Bell in a recent newspaper article about long-term effects. Dr. Bell is director of the Bell Clinic for addictions. 'The idea that you can't be hurt by marihuana is nonsense. If you take a large enough dosage of this or any other drug, you'll have a cumulative build-up which could lead to toxic effects.' But de Ropp says that 'marihuana never hurt anybody, and the Narcotics Bureau would do better to devote its time and energies to the control of the really dangerous drugs—morphine, heroin, and cocaine—instead of chasing after a relatively innocuous weed'

Katz himself says that 'the claim that marihuana is mentally and physically harmless has yet to be fully substantiated', and uses the errors made in recognizing the addictiveness of morphine, heroin, and demoral ('the most addictive drugs known') as a point in his non-pot case. He also quotes Dr. Donald Louria, a Cornell University professor of medicine, and chairman of the New York State Council on Drug Addiction. Along with nervousness, tension, severe anxiety, and a panic state, 'on rare occasions it may even precipitate a severe psychosis.' Paranoia and megalomania are sometimes caused for a brief time, and acts of aggression or feats of super-human strength result, bringing injury upon the user and those about him.

However, Mr. Katz does not mention the New York Academy of Medicine report on the 'marihuana problem': 'Smoking marihuana does not lead directly to mental or physical deterior-

ation. The habitual user knows when to stop, as excessive reverse its usually pleasant effects. Marihuana does not lead to addiction (in the medical sense), and while it is naturally habit-forming, its withdrawal does not lead to the horrible withdrawal symptoms of the opiates. No deaths have ever been recorded that have been ascribed to marihuana. Marihuana is not a direct causal factor in sexual or criminal misconduct. (Contrary to popular belief, it is a sex-depressant, not an aphrodisiac.) Juvenile delinquency is not caused by marihuana smoking, although they are sometimes associated. The publicity concerning the catastrophic effects of marihuana smoking in New York are completely unfounded. It is more of a nuisance than a menace.'

Dr. S.J. Holmes, Director of the Narcotic Addiction Unit of the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Research Foundation, states in the Spring 1964 edition of Addictions: 'The fact that a smoker found with one cigarette may be sent to penitentiary is fantastic and ridiculous when compared with the use of alcohol and its effects. The situation is really a disgrace to our civilization, and merits much consideration.'

Although Inspector Pilkington maintains that 'potsville leads to the main-line—heroin addiction', Dr. Holmes notes that the only link with narcotic drugs is the fact that marihuana is illegal. People are forced into the same areas and methods of dealing for marihuana as others are for heroin and, at times, this availability and association may lead to a change of drug habit from marihuana to heroin.

The danger of association with heroin pushers and habitues is perhaps the greatest danger in pot-smoking. When pot loses its potent appeal, heroin is readily available.

What can be done? I suggest that a Royal Commission on marihuana-use is the only answer. It should have broad terms of reference allowing it to explore the social, medical, and legal aspects of its use, and including the authority to recommend changes in laws, if they appear necessary as a result of the commission's findings. I'm a dreamer, though—the U.S. legal establishment is against it, and it has an enormous impact on Canadian law enforcement; and the United Nations 1961 'Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs' has pledged the U.N.'s support in eradicating the 'menace' of marihuana. Can we defy the world and THE UNITED STATES?

Editor's Note: Because of space limitations in this week's edition of EXCALIBUR, the last part of this article, The Hallucinogens, plus official and unofficial comment on student drug use will appear in a January edition of EXCALIBUR. And, contrary to a persistent rumour, EXCALIBUR'S masthead will not be changed to THE WEEKLY OPIATE.

Thank to Lynn McKee for braving a heavy cold, swollen typing fingers (both of them), and my writing in order to type this article.



STONG HOUSE

YORK'S CULTURAL CENTRE



photo credits: Don McKay

on the right: Rex Lingwood and Sandi Noble already taking advantage of York's artistic centre. C'mon let's see some more of you at Stong House.

