

discussion **PLAYBOY PANEL:**  
**THE DRUG REVOLUTION**

*the pleasures, penalties and hazards of chemicals with kicks are debated by nine authorities*

**PANELISTS**

**HARRY J. ANSLINGER, 77**, graduated from Penn State in 1915 and obtained a law degree in 1930 from American University. A Government civil servant from 1918 to 1963, he served under nine Presidents and early in his career held consular posts in the Netherlands, Germany, Venezuela and the Bahamas. Once assistant commissioner of Prohibition, he helped make the dry years dry, then moved on to serve 33 years as commissioner of the Bureau of Narcotics and is widely considered the man most responsible for the 1937 Federal law banning marijuana, a reputation that has earned him the bouquets of some and the brickbats of others. Since 1946, Anslinger has been the U. S. representative to the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Both in the Bureau of Narcotics and on his UN post, he has been one of the major hard-liners on drug deterrence and has vigorously expressed this position as co-author of numerous books and articles, including *The Murderers* (about drug dealers) and *The Protectors* (about drug police). Friend and foe agree that Anslinger's position has remained tough, uncompromising and outspoken throughout his long life.

**WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS, 56**, is best known as the author of surrealist satires such as *Naked Lunch*, *The Ticket That Exploded* and *Nova Express*. After studying anthropology at Harvard, he briefly attended Vienna Medical School, then worked at such jobs as bartender, exterminator and private detective while privately pursuing such arcane studies as the ancient Mayan civilization of Mexico, being hypnoanalyzed by a psychiatrist and practicing "nonverbal awareness" with general semanticist Alfred Korzybski. Fifteen years of narcotics addiction (during which he traveled widely in Central and South America and, later, in North Africa) were terminated by a successful cure in 1957. Once a "walking pharmacy" who experimented upon himself with a variety of narcotic, psychedelic and other drugs, he is one of the few white men to have tried yage, the Peruvian Indian drug claimed to create telepathic powers. Burroughs now explores new areas of consciousness by making underground films (*Towers Open Fire*), learning to read Egyptian hieroglyphics (to escape the confines of "linear thinking") and combining all these elements

in his forthcoming book, *The Job*. Denounced by one critic for "extending the boundaries of the novel toward the public lavatories," Burroughs has been lauded by Norman Mailer as "the only American novelist today who may be possessed by genius."

**JAMES COBURN, 41**, is one of Hollywood's biggest stars, scoring well both at the box office and in the estimation of film critics. A graduate of TV commercials, he has demonstrated both verve and versatility, switching easily from the role of Derek Flint (in a series of bottled-in-Bond parodies of Fleming's phlegmatic superspy) to such offbeat characterizations as a stuffy naval officer (in *The Americanization of Emily*) and a batty surgeon (in *Candy*). Coburn experimented with LSD, under medical supervision, in the years before it was made illegal and remains convinced of its potential value to many users. In recent years, he has been a volunteer worker at the Los Angeles Free Clinic, helping people with bad trips and other drug problems. Coburn describes himself as very interested in Eastern mysticism and has a keen appreciation of contemporary art and music.

**BABA RAM DASS (nee Richard Alpert), 38**, was born to a wealthy family (his father founded Brandeis University and headed the New Haven Railroad) but strayed from the business world to major in developmental psychology, in which he obtained a Ph.D. from Stanford in 1957. During the early Sixties, he became associated with Dr. Timothy Leary's experiments at Harvard on psilocybin, a drug the Mexican Indians say "enables a man to see God." When the research moved on to LSD, Leary and Alpert became controversial, eventually left Harvard under ambiguous circumstances and set up the Castalia Foundation to study the mystic aspects of drug experience. Co-author (with Leary) of *The Psychedelic Experience* and (with Dr. Sidney Cohen) of *LSD: The Inside Story*, Alpert recently spent a year in India and Nepal, primarily studying in a Hindu temple in the Himalayas, returned as Baba Ram Dass and now preaches and practices raja yoga as the next step beyond drugs.

**LESLIE FIEDLER, 53**, has established himself as one of the nation's leading literary critics, a prominent liberal dissenter from standard liberal beliefs and the man who outpsyched the analysts by alleging that three of our most wholesome



**COBURN:** You can't attribute Haight-Ashbury to psychedelics, any more than you can attribute skid row to alcohol. The real cause is the alienating character of society.



**ANSLINGER:** Supposedly harmless marijuana smoking is regarded by several doctors as a sign of incipient insanity. Marijuana may even cause psychosis.



**BURROUGHS:** Nonchemical methods of mind expansion have a positive role to play. Anything accomplished by chemicals can be accomplished by other means.



**FIEDLER:** Creatively, LSD is a complete bust. Users talk about creativity, but they don't do anything about it. The painter stops painting and fantasy replaces reality.





**RAM DASS:** *A bad trip can be as valuable as a good trip. An eight-hour horror show can teach you a great deal, once you realize it was all inside you before.*



**OTERI:** *Marijuana is harmless and should be legal. As for heroin addiction, it's a disease and should be treated by doctors. Lean heavily on the heroin dealer.*



**WATTS:** *The police shouldn't be involved with drugs at all, nor with any other moral or medical problems that the individual should take to his doctor or minister.*



**COBURN:** *The passions we can't control—such as hatred, greed and lust—become controllable under certain drugs. This offers a new view of man and of society.*



**FIEDLER:** *This particular generation gap might almost be called chemical warfare—the potheads versus the boozeheads—or, more accurately, religious warfare.*

literary classics (*The Last of the Mohicans*, *Moby Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn*) all contain an unconscious theme of interracial homosexuality. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1941, has taught at several universities and is the author of such works as *Love and Death in the American Novel* and *No! In Thunder*. Fiedler was arrested in 1967 on a charge of "maintaining a premises" where marijuana was allegedly found, after becoming faculty advisor to the State University of New York, Buffalo, chapter of LEMAR (Legalize Marijuana), and has subsequently accused the narcotics police of framing him and of attempting to stifle academic dissent.

**JOHN FINLATOR**, 57, was director of the Food and Drug Administration's Bureau of Drug Abuse Control when this agency merged with the Bureau of Narcotics in 1968, after which he became the deputy director of the new Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in the U. S. Department of Justice. A graduate of North Carolina State University, Finlator has also been director of the Office of Manpower and Administration of the General Service Administration, special agent with the Department of State and national president of the Association of Federal Investigators. He has also served in a number of managerial and personnel positions and both taught and coached football in high school. Though totally committed to enforcement of the law, Finlator is generally considered more flexible and moderate than Anslinger.

**JOEL FORT**, 40, has an M. D. from Ohio State University and has specialized in public health, drug abuse and social reform. Now on the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley (School of Social Welfare), for some years he has been a leading spokesman for reform of drug laws—and for moving America beyond drugs. He is a former Consultant on Drug Abuse to the World Health Organization. Dr. Fort created the San Francisco Center for Special Problems, the only organization in the world to provide treatment for all forms of drug abuse and other forms of deviance, including criminal behavior, sexual maladjustment and suicidal depression. In a matter now in the courts, he was removed as director in 1967 for being too independent and for dissenting from established police philosophy on drugs, sex and youth. In 1969 he continued the work of his center by establishing the private Fort Center for Solving Special Problems. The author of *Pot: A Rational Approach* (PLAYBOY, October 1969), Dr. Fort has also written *The Pleasure Seekers* (see *Playboy After Hours*, page 28). He was a defense witness in the trials of Lenny Bruce and Timothy Leary and in the Boston marijuana trial in which co-panelist Joseph Oteri attempted to have the anti-pot laws voided.

**JOSEPH S. OTERI**, 39, partner in the Boston law firm of Crane, Inker and Oteri,

established a local reputation as a defender of the civil rights of policemen, then leaped to national prominence in 1967 as attorney for two students accused of marijuana possession. Oteri's defense was the most meticulously planned and massive legal assault ever mounted against the constitutionality of our anti-pot laws; and the transcript of the trial is considered by experts the most complete single review of the pharmacological, psychological, sociological and legal aspects of marijuana usage. A graduate of Boston College (B. S. and LL. B.), Oteri now advises other lawyers on constitutional challenges to our marijuana laws and is preparing to bring his Boston case before the U. S. Supreme Court. **ALAN WATTS**, 55, had his first book published when he was 18. After being ordained as an Episcopal minister in 1944, Watts acquired a masters degree in theology but left the clergy in 1950 to pursue his own independent studies of comparative religion, acquiring an honorary Doctor of Divinity from the University of Vermont in 1958. Best known for his several books on Zen Buddhism, he has also written extensively on Christianity, Hinduism, Taoism and modern psychology. An early experimenter with LSD, Watts regards himself as a friendly mediator between Christian moralists and Oriental mystics, hippie astrologers and skeptical psychiatrists, meditative ascetics and sexual revolutionaries. Among his numerous books are *Beyond Theology: The Art of Godmanship* and *The Way of Zen*.

**PLAYBOY:** In addition to provoking an increasingly acrimonious national debate, the use of illegal drugs has become symbolic of the so-called generation gap afflicting our society. Glorified in plays (*Hair*), movies (*Easy Rider*) and countless rock songs (*Let's Go Get Stoned*)—and condemned by large segments of the government, the clergy and the psychiatric profession—drugs such as LSD and marijuana are, rightly or wrongly, in the forefront of the war between freedom and repression, youth and age, powerlessness and power. At this critical juncture in history—the beginning of the Seventies—with enormous public interest focused on the subject, PLAYBOY has brought together nine key figures to discuss and clarify the issues at stake. Most of these men have been involved both nationally and internationally in the drug scene, and several of them have not only been where the action is but have made the action. Gentlemen, let us begin with the most popular of the illegal drugs, Cannabis—which is best known in this country in the form of marijuana. Would you attempt to estimate the number of Cannabis users in the world and tell us whether you think use is really increasing or just becoming more public?



which puts them in a third category entirely.

**RAM DASS:** Precisely. Every religion is a way of arriving at a certain state of consciousness and every society is based on a particular religion. Naturally, since any state of consciousness can be induced by a specific drug or group of drugs, you are going to find each society accepting certain drugs and bitterly condemning others. I myself have given up pot—and LSD—but not because I think they are bad. I quit because of personal reasons—first, because I'm doing *prana-yam* breath control and that doesn't mix with psychedelics; and, second, I don't want to break the law, since that leads to fear and paranoia. But I am not putting these drugs down. I honor them.

**FORT:** I think there's a misleading implication in overstressing metaphysics in all this. The fact is that America is a drug-prone society. Adults have set this standard by their own behavior and, even more, by the advertising they allow on all the mass media. If there's one message that comes through sharp and clear in all American advertising, it's that every time you have a pain, a problem or trouble of any sort, there's a salesman just around the corner who has the snake oil that you need. After all, this is the age of "better living through chemistry." Pop a pep pill to cram for an examination. Pop a barbiturate to get to sleep at night. Pop a tranquilizer or gulp a martini if you're nervous about a social occasion. And, of course, our teenagers have all been pre-conditioned to marijuana by cigarette commercials, which all play on the theme of escapism and suggest that you can find some magical release from the ills of the flesh by putting a dried plant in paper, lighting it and inhaling the result. It isn't really much of a step from that to marijuana; and pot, of course, seems to have the advantage that it really gives you a boost and tobacco doesn't.

**FINLATOR:** I think a better way to put it is that America is as affluent in drugs as it is in all other commodities. Then, too, we have a tendency to abuse almost anything, certainly including marijuana. Some of the panelists seem to overlook that fact. The dangers of Cannabis have been exaggerated and the penalties are often excessive, but I think it's a mistake to gloss over the potential problems.

**PLAYBOY:** What are those problems?

**FINLATOR:** The basic danger is getting caught up in what Dr. Fort calls the drug-prone society. Marijuana is psychologically addicting to certain people. It has a tendency to assist in the transformation of personality and in moving the young chronic user into a subculture where he feels safe from society. This is one of the *real* problems.

**RAM DASS:** The biggest danger is getting caught by the law, not by a subculture.

**ANSLINGER:** Again, that's ridiculous. The men best qualified to speak on this subject, who have seen the harm Cannabis drugs can do, are Indian physicians such as Dr. Isawar C. Chopra, who has stated flatly and unequivocally that Cannabis does lead to psychosis.

**OTERI:** I got Dr. Chopra on the stand in Boston, under cross-examination, and he admitted that his studies did not involve a valid scientific sample and didn't really connect marijuana and insanity in any cause-and-effect fashion.

**PLAYBOY:** Whatever the validity of these studies in other countries, many American physicians still believe that marijuana is a dangerous drug. The American Medical Association and the National Research Council's joint committee on drugs issued a statement to that effect late in 1968.

**OTERI:** I question the competence of the men on that committee. You have to understand the difference between a real expert and a phony expert. A true expert in this area is someone who has done therapy, research, clinical work or field studies, preferably all four, and has been deeply involved in firsthand experience for years. There are very few such experts on marijuana, but there are, on the other hand, many pseudo experts who, by virtue of a medical degree or by having someone ghostwrite articles for them, claim to be knowledgeable. And I'm skeptical of this country's medical societies. These societies all have drug committees, and a person can be a specialist in ingrown toenails or something else totally unrelated to marijuana and get himself put on a drug committee, eventually ending up as chairman and signing documents written by somebody else, thereby giving himself standing as an expert.

**FINLATOR:** That's a rather bold, yet safe, statement for a lawyer to make. Certainly, these men are competent and experienced. I think the young reader should at least listen to these doctors and not just toss them off as incompetent on Mr. Oteri's authority.

**BURROUGHS:** Doctors, however, are a variegated lot, like any other profession, with the usual incidence of stupidity and psychosis. Anybody can line up a few doctors to say *anything* he wants said.

**FORT:** The A. M. A. statement about marijuana being dangerous was based on a study of some 30 heroin addicts imprisoned in the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, who were administered varying amounts of ordinary smoking marijuana, an oral extract of crude marijuana and tetrahydrocannabinol, the active agent in all Cannabis drugs. With low doses of each of these substances, the subjects experienced the same high that people get with social marijuana smoking; but with increased dosages of the concentrated

extract, or THC, most of them showed marked perceptual changes. The experimenter, Dr. Harris Isbell, called these alterations of consciousness hallucinations or psychotic reactions. This, of course, merely confirms an axiom of psychopharmacology: With increasing doses of any drug, different and usually more dangerous responses occur. It would have been more correct, therefore, to say that marijuana, like all other drugs, including aspirin, can be dangerous if used in excess. As for the changes in perception, these can be described as psychotic reactions and hallucinations, of course, but also as consciousness expansion or religious vision, but that depends upon the prejudices of the person making the judgment.

**RAM DASS:** Exactly. A person can be called a lunatic in one place and a saint in another for reporting the same kind of spiritual experience. In India, many of the people we lock up would be called "God intoxicants" and given religious sanctuary. Nowadays, in America, anybody can be locked up as psychotic if two psychiatrists will sign a certificate to that effect. And the horror is that they will sometimes do that if the person sees reality differently than they do.

**FORT:** True, but I must add that some marijuana reactions are extremely unpleasant. I have seen people really in a panic over such experiences. However, the problem has always cleared up within a short period of time and hasn't resulted in permanent psychosis. Also, the incidence of this transitory type of psychotomimetic behavior is quite small in comparison with the number of marijuana users past and present and the number of times the drug has been taken by these users. Still, it definitely is something that any potential user should be made aware of.

**PLAYBOY:** What does marijuana do that gives pleasure to most of its users?

**OTERI:** I can't answer that personally, since I've never blown grass myself, but what users generally describe is an intensification of pleasure in sight, sound and the other senses, together with a general glow of well-being. Since I'm a hedonist myself and none of the alleged evidence of harmful side effects is convincing, that's all the justification pot needs, in my opinion. What's wrong with pleasure, pure and simple? If somebody has more noble effects to describe, I'd be interested, but I really don't think such arguments are necessary. If something is pleasurable and harmless, I say let people have it.

**WATTS:** I agree. Marijuana is a superb tranquilizer and, when used in a group setting, it creates much more humor— I might even say hilarious—sociability than any other drug I can think of. Sometimes I suspect that the vegetable kingdom is intelligent and had an enormous committee meeting a long time



ago, at which it was decided to provide a remedy for every poison. Pot may be a specific remedy for the bad effects of alcohol. Not only is it medically useful in treating alcohol withdrawal but it also has helped calm down the country at a time when alcoholic bad tempers are steadily raising our violent-crime rate.

**RAM DASS:** Social use certainly leads to the hilarity Mr. Watts describes, but the heightening of the senses is most acute when you use Cannabis in an isolated setting as part of solitary contemplation.

**FORT:** I'll agree with all that's been said about pleasure, relaxation and contemplation: marijuana has brought such relief to millions, although some people get nothing out of it. Its chief beneficial effect, however, has been to significantly reduce unemployment for tens of thousands of drug policemen. Let me add that there are also certain good effects that are much less subjective than the aesthetic or sensual experience of the user.

**PLAYBOY:** What are they?

**FORT:** The drug is widely used to treat diseases in Asia and Africa. It was also used medicinally in Europe and America until the last century. If the drug police were not so hostile to such research, we might find out if this ancient folk medicine has any significant contemporary usefulness. My own observations, in countries where Cannabis is still used medically, suggest that it may be helpful in treating depression, stimulating appetite, alleviating headaches, lowering high blood pressure and producing sedation or relaxation. In David Solomon's anthology, *The Marijuana Papers*, there are even two extremely suggestive clinical papers indicating that marijuana may be better for some mental patients than any tranquilizer currently in use. But we would know a lot more about this if Federal and state laws and policies didn't prevent research in this area.

**ANSLINGER:** You must be joking. The American Medical Association, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs have all stated that marijuana has no medical uses and should be considered a social menace. We don't need any more research to show that. I challenge you to name one doctor who has reported a beneficial medical effect of marijuana, outside of the backward areas of the world and that 19th Century folk medicine you were mentioning.

**FORT:** I'll name two: Lloyd J. Thompson, M. D., professor of psychiatry at Bowman Gray School of Medicine, and George T. Stockings, M. B., one of England's most honored experimental psychiatrists. The reason there aren't more in this country is because of you. Theoretically, any physician can get a tax stamp to do this type of research; but for years, the only ones who have been able to get these licenses are those whose research leads to the

conclusions the Government wants. You have led this country to treat scientific questions, at least in the area of drugs, the way such matters were handled in the Middle Ages. Fortunately, the National Institute of Mental Health has sponsored some unbiased research in the past few years; but that research should have been done decades ago, and every state should permit and encourage it.

**FINLATOR:** Still, there is no *proven* medical use for marijuana today, whatever Dr. Fort may care to speculate about the matter.

**PLAYBOY:** Before things get too heated, let's move on to another aspect of the marijuana issue—the alleged relationship between pot and hard narcotics, such as heroin. Do you think marijuana is really a steppingstone to more dangerous drugs, as its critics allege?

**ANSLINGER:** As I have repeatedly stated, the danger of progression to hard stuff always lurks in the background for the user of marijuana. Marijuana is always a scourge that undermines its victims and degrades them mentally, morally and physically. The files of my former bureau and every local narcotics squad, as well as studies done at Lexington, show that the vast majority of heroin users started their drug taking with marijuana. Neither I nor the bureau says that every pot smoker goes on to heroin or morphine, but the person who starts using marijuana is looking for abnormal kicks, and after a while, marijuana won't be enough and he'll want to go on to something stronger.

**OTERI:** I'd like to see somebody prove that. In our Massachusetts test case, the testimony of our experts and the cross-examinations of those testifying for the prosecution established that there is no evidence whatever of a causal relationship between pot and the true narcotics. The fact that things sometimes occur in sequence does not prove cause and effect. The figures cited say nothing about the much greater number of marijuana users, in the millions, who never use hard drugs. And if Americans were asked to be completely honest about their drug usage, we would probably find that alcohol and tobacco were their first illegal drugs, with some of them moving on later to marijuana and then a few moving to heroin. Does that prove a causal relationship between alcohol and heroin? I'm sure that 100 percent of heroin addicts drank either mother's milk or synthetic formula in infancy, but that doesn't prove a thing, either.

**PLAYBOY:** Another charge made against marijuana is that it leads its devotees to lose interest in ordinary social goals—to become dropouts. Is there any truth to that?

**ANSLINGER:** Certainly. The marijuana smoker is very prone to asocial behavior

and withdrawal. The economic consequences of having a nation of potheads would be dreadful.

**WATTS:** It's not quite that clear-cut, either with marijuana or with the stronger psychedelics, or even with alcohol. We're all familiar with the skid rows where some alcoholics end up and the hippie quarters where the psychedelic dropouts can be found, but the reverse is also possible. Some hard drinkers are very successful in business and even in Government. I also know many people who have become more socially involved because of their use of LSD. I myself must say that since I have experimented with mescaline, LSD and other mind-altering drugs, I have become a far more active participant in politics. I was much more of a dropout *before* I turned on.

**FIEDLER:** I think we should make a distinction here. Taking drugs can be merely an accommodation to the *status quo* if the things you take are the accepted, value-reinforcing drugs of the society; for us, that would be cigarettes, booze, aspirin and tranquilizers. But it can be revolutionary if the drug opens you to new values outside the social framework. If to change yourself is really to change the world a little, then taking mind-altering chemicals such as pot and LSD is radical social action.

**OTERI:** Which comes first, the chicken or the egg? I think dropping out, at least psychologically, precedes the drug. A kid who smokes pot and then runs away from home and joins a hippie commune probably started to drop out, deep down inside, before he smoked his first marijuana cigarette. This is obvious, I'd say, when you consider the number of pot smokers who are successful in business and never think of dropping out. Advertising is full of them. And then there are all the people who have been smoking pot since high school and are pursuing their studies in graduate school now. Some of them are even professors. And look at all the lawyers, writers, doctors and other professionals who just use it as a relaxant on weekends.

**ANSLINGER:** I wouldn't minimize the dropout problem and its economic consequences, but I'll grant you this: Though a lot of people seem to quit their jobs and just become loafers after trying marijuana or LSD, you'll find some of them have come back to their senses and are working again in a few months or years.

**FORT:** You just can't attribute Haight-Ashbury to pot and acid, any more than you can attribute skid row to alcohol; it's demonology to blame such things on a drug. The real cause is the alienating character of our society itself. Repressive family life, meaningless schools, pointless jobs, bigotry, wars, and intolerance everywhere: That's what people are reacting against when they drop out.



And that's why the themes of *Tarzan* and *Robinson Crusoe* are so popular and keep coming back in new movies and new TV shows. Some hippies have even left the urban communes and taken to the woods, literally trying to live out the *Tarzan* and *Robinson Crusoe* myths—and working hard, by the way, to develop alternate societies. You can't attribute that to a drug.

**RAM DASS:** I think that LSD, unlike pot, does cause people to drop out; but I think that's good. Pot is walking a foot off the ground; LSD is leaving the earth entirely and zooming across the galaxy at the speed of light. It cuts through your preconceived models of the universe and allows you to take a new look at everything. This often leads to rejection of your old life games and dropping out dramatically. You can hardly compare pot and acid at all.

**FINLATOR:** Oh, yes, you can; but the comparison is highly unfavorable to LSD. Although acid is one of the most intriguing drugs man has discovered, it is also one of the most dangerous. That's why so many college students—who may still experiment with pot—give LSD a wide berth. They know from firsthand experience the terrible freak-outs it can cause, as well as the dropouts.

**BURROUGHS:** What's wrong with dropping out? To me, this is the whole point: one's right to withdraw from a social environment that offers no spiritual sustenance, and to *mind one's own business*.

**PLAYBOY:** Would any of you care to attempt a description of an LSD trip for the sake of those who have never had the experience?

**WATTS:** All my trips were under scientific administration, with pure Sandoz laboratory acid, when such research was still legal; and I never took more than 200 micrograms. The kids who are buying black-market acid these days, adulterated with God knows what, and dropping amounts like 500 or even 1000 micrograms, have much wilder and weirder trips, I'm sure. Speaking only for myself, I would say that you know the drug is starting to work when you suddenly feel a certain sad humor about the people back down there at ground level. They look so *frantic*, as if they have no conception of the importance of life. They seem to be fleeing from demons and have no time to stop and look at what's around them, in the present moment. But you, of course, have all the time in the world. As the experience progresses, you commonly notice a metallic taste on the tongue, a slight tendency to sweat, a slight rise in body temperature and a feeling of physical instability. LSD also highly intensifies the sense of color. The world becomes almost jewellike and light seems to come from inside things rather than falling upon them. You understand what the Ninth Century Irish

mystic Scotus Erigena meant when he said, "All things are lights."

With another psychedelic, DMT, or dimethyltryptamine, the light again comes from outside, as in normal vision, but falls in an odd way, and objects appear as though they were made of enameled tin or plastic, so that the experience has been referred to as the "plastic doll" and immortalized in rock lyrics. Under LSD, people look as though they were made of precious materials, spun gold, black onyx or living jewelry. With the eyes closed, I notice an elaboration of exquisitely kaleidoscopic patterns similar to the arabesques one sees in Persian and Moorish art and similar to patterns in nature exhibited by branching ferns and mosaics. An LSD experience is multi-dimensional and electronic, almost science-fictionish, compared with mescaline or psilocybin, which are more earthy and vegetative. As the hours pass, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between controlling and being controlled. That can be enormously confusing and disorienting; it's as if you were a puppet but at the same time an omnipotent God in charge of the whole universe. A direct contradiction, you see, and very mind-blowing to somebody who is a strict dualist, although it's well understood by Orientals and Africans and American Indians. If you try to describe it to a psychiatrist whose viewpoint is rigidly Occidental, he's apt to jot down in his little pad, "psychotic reaction"—like the Lexington experiment we discussed earlier. Fortunately, I was working with a very enlightened psychiatrist, who understood that the European way of looking at things is not the only valid way.

**RAM DASS:** Let me add a few comments to that. Your time sense changes on LSD. With a single note of music, you can feel the many gradations of the beginning, middle and end of the note, as well as changes in the thought processes behind the note, and so on. When you look at someone's face, you start to see the face change, become fluid and become a thousand faces, so that one woman becomes a harlot, a virgin, mother earth, child, adolescent, Lolita, the Virgin Mary and, in that sense, all women. You can also project a face either backward or forward in time and see that person as an infant or as a crone. The face often takes on a luminescent quality and the eyes become almost literal mirrors of the soul. You feel as if you're making a very deep contact with the person behind his defenses at a more profound level than one usually makes in social contact. Then you start to feel yourself disassociating from yourself. After this stage, you may feel as if you've merged with another human being or even into the environment itself. In Hinduism, this transcendent merging is called "becoming one with

the Atman." It's as if you've moved to a level of consciousness in which everything is seen as energy. It's in this state that one physicist yelled out, "This is the first time I've seen what was meant by  $E=mc^2$ !" You understand the equivalence of matter and energy, even if you can't understand Einstein's mathematics.

**ANSLINGER:** Come off it. Whatever sublime feelings the person on LSD *imagines*, the fact is that he's out of his head. He can't function in any normal way. He couldn't play chess, make a bed, run a cash register. I can tell you about a case in a fraternity house where they were having a weekend party. On a dare, one of the girls took a sugar cube in which there was a drop of LSD. She was out for two days and during that time, she was raped by a number of the fraternity boys; and when she came to, she said she realized that something terrible had happened to her.

**FINLATOR:** Quite true. The LSD tripper not only cannot function in his normal way, he doesn't *want* to. He should not, of course, drive a car or engage in any other activities requiring concentration or skill, and most don't. But to say that these drugs are expanders of the mind is pure bunk.

**COBURN:** I can't agree. In the days before it was against the law, I took both LSD and peyote several times under the supervision of a psychologist, in order to find out if it was possible to attain the religious experience associated with these drugs. I found it an exciting enrichment of my awareness and one that I would never have thought possible before in my ordinary life. It was an overwhelming warmth of emotion that we rarely allow ourselves to feel. I think it's a giant step, and it seems amazing to me that it's looked on as such an evil thing, when there are drugs that are far more dangerous.

**BURROUGHS:** It's pure bunk for Mr. Finlator to say that psychedelics aren't expanders of the mind. Any user can testify to the contrary, and to rule out their reports is to rule out all firsthand experience, that isn't scientific.

**PLAYBOY:** What are some of the other drugs and plants that are capable of producing effects similar to LSD, and how extensively are they being used and abused?

**RAM DASS:** There are basically five groups of psychedelic drugs: lysergic-acid derivatives, particularly LSD; phenylethylamine derivatives, such as mescaline, the active ingredient of the peyote cactus; triptamine derivatives, such as psilocybin; piperidyl benzilate esters, of which JB329, or Ditran, is an example; and phencyclidine, or Sernyl.

**FORT:** There are also a number of synthetics derived from the amphetamine structure. These include MDA, MDMA



and STP, which is dimethoxy-methylamphetamine. Since these drugs had no clinical testing prior to their black-market distribution, proper dosage was totally unknown and people often took amounts of STP that produced two- or three-day trips and numerous untoward side effects. As the proper dosage was worked out informally, bad reactions seemed to decrease.

**WATTS:** In pre-Columbian Mexico, the seeds of *ololiuqui*, a morning-glory plant, and *teonanacatl*, the mushroom now called *Psilocybe mexicana*, were used by the Aztecs. The same morning-glory seeds and synthetic psilocybin are now used in America for psychedelic experiences. In fact, Dr. Leary's research began with psilocybin, long before he started using LSD on his subjects and himself. The full range of psychedelic plants and substances is enormous, including nutmeg, the fly agaric mushroom and the Jimson-weed plant, which contains the alkaloids atropine and scopolamine. Fly agaric and atropine are really dangerous, since an overdose can kill you.

**FORT:** Perhaps the most important thing to emphasize here is the enormous variety of substances that are available to people seeking to alter their consciousness and, hence, the impossibility of ever controlling or eliminating this through criminal laws.

**FINLATOR:** Still, I'd like to get to the kind of people who are using LSD through a better education program—one they can believe. It's true that the young are attracted to it—often the very young, such as 13- and 14-year-old teenyboppers. It's not the drug of the intellectual; although he has a keen interest in it, he gives it a very wide berth, as I said earlier. What is particularly disturbing is the attraction of high school students to the drug. Hippies may have listened to Leary and Alpert too long and dropped out too far, but we all hope that our very young men and women will study the drug and reject it. So far, however, we've done a rather lousy job of communicating with them.

**RAM DASS:** I think Tim and I had really very little to do with that, or at least far less than you claim. To the public, it looks like only young people aged 15 to 25 use LSD, but, actually, this is like the top of the iceberg. Most of my correspondence has come from ministers, lawyers, nurses, doctors and other people quietly using it in their homes and communities. And you're wrong about LSD not being attractive to intellectuals. Neurotic superintellectuals, who use verbalism as a defense against feeling, may shun it, but many well-educated people are interested and ready. But I have never recommended that anyone take LSD. All I suggest to any other human being is that he become educated about the issue and make his own decision. It

seems to me that if there is one thing we've learned about LSD sessions, it's that there has to be a voluntary choice for it to be a meaningful experience. There is a point after you've taken it when it starts to affect your space and time domain and you get scared. At that point, if you feel that somebody has pressured you into taking the drug, you tend to become paranoid and think they want to freak you out or drive you crazy. If you've chosen to do it on your own, you have to face the fear instead of projecting it outward and facing your fears can be a tremendously valuable experience. I really think a normal individual would benefit from taking LSD. A normal person, in our society, is extremely alienated from his fellow man, from nature and even from his own body, and LSD can end all that.

**WATTS:** I agree that LSD can be an extremely useful tool for certain people, to use very occasionally to solve a specific problem or to get over a specific hurdle. But the idea of being a chronic LSD user is something I simply don't approve of at all.

**FINLATOR:** I must object even to that modified endorsement. Considering the Federal law making it illegal for anyone to possess LSD for other than medical or scientific purposes, I think it's very irresponsible for you people to directly or indirectly encourage LSD use. Even if it were not a matter of violating a criminal law, there are a number of experienced workers with LSD who indicate that even the normal individual may have an unpredictable response that may be very dangerous for him. At best, it should be considered an experimental drug and its use very carefully controlled.

**BURROUGHS:** That I will accept. LSD may be safe for others, but it isn't safe for me. The two times I took it were nightmarish.

**WATTS:** Nothing I said was meant to urge others to try LSD. I stopped being a clergyman because I didn't feel like preaching to people. I don't have the missionary instinct at all and, therefore, I don't feel very much inclined to be a missionary for LSD.

**RAM DASS:** As for me, I think Mr. Finlator's whole approach is dead wrong. To talk about "controlled" research with LSD is an absurdity. Only a very naïve person believes that such control is remotely relevant to what LSD is all about. The environment, the motivations of the researchers and many other factors have tremendous effects on the LSD experience. Bringing orthodox scientific method into this reminds me of the drunk who lost his watch in the dark alley but went looking for it under the street light because there was more light there. It scares scientists to think about experience for which there are no symbols and events that don't involve measurable

physical energies. Nevertheless, that is the stuff of which the LSD experience is made, and it is fallacious to reject it because it doesn't fit into what you can measure.

**FORT:** Should we all abandon our involvements and concerns, take Hindu names, give up science and become priests?

**RAM DASS:** Not at all. You just have to recognize that this area of knowledge is experiential rather than strictly experimental. Like the archaeologist, you have to go out of the controlled situation of the laboratory into the raw field of nature itself, because that's where the information is.

**FINLATOR:** Mr. Ram Dass can't seem to lose his past identity as Richard Alpert, LSD evangelist. He criticizes present scientific method but offers no alternative except veiled suggestions that everybody should take a trip. Research should certainly continue, but not that sort of research.

**WATTS:** Yes, I wouldn't be so eager to gather data that I'd let just anybody try LSD. First of all, I would take a great deal of trouble to find out who might or might not be on the edge of a psychotic abyss and might therefore experience some bad effects with the drug.

**RAM DASS:** A bad trip can be as valuable as a good trip. An eight-hour horror show can teach you a great deal, once you realize that the drug didn't create it but only triggered it and that it was all inside you even before you took the drug.

**BURROUGHS:** Yes, a bad trip can be valuable—if you ever get back.

**FINLATOR:** Right. I must repeat that all this evangelizing is terribly irresponsible. I can't recommend that a person take LSD under any conditions, unless it is in a medical, clinical situation, and perhaps not even there. This drug is the most powerful and probably the most dangerous known to man. Its effects upon human beings are absolutely unpredictable. Even people who have taken a number of doses sometimes don't meet their Waterloo until maybe the 30th trip. The question one should ask himself is, since the drug is so powerful and unpredictable, should I play a game of chemical Russian roulette? The well-adjusted individual will answer in the negative, I am sure.

**PLAYBOY:** Just how widespread is the use of LSD-type psychedelics?

**FORT:** I would estimate that more than 1,000,000 Americans have used either LSD or a similar strong psychedelic.

**RAM DASS:** Tim Leary estimates that the figure is over 4,000,000.

**FORT:** Well, when you're dealing with behavior that has become illegal, you can never really know. This much, however, I'm fairly sure about: Most people who have experimented on themselves this way have been scared off either by bad



trips or by the growing legal repression. I'd say that the number of regular users of LSD, psilocybin, morning-glory seeds and so forth is only in the tens of thousands. However, there is also a much larger group, the 200,000 American Indian members of the Native American Church, who use peyote regularly as part of their religious ceremonies. Interestingly enough, abuse of the drug just doesn't seem to occur. Quite the contrary, anthropologists unanimously agree that the peyote religion has been a good influence in Indian life. Members of this church practically never become alcoholics or criminals and are generally very stable, moral and happy persons.

**RAM DASS:** LSD could play the same role in the lives of non-Indian Americans, if it weren't for the bigotry of Government officials. I was an atheist back in 1960 and I never would have gone to India, taken up meditation and become a religious man if acid hadn't forced me to recognize that there are areas of the human mind that Western psychology has never charted. The great Oriental myths are maps for those areas, once you learn to decode their symbolism.

**BURROUGHS:** Certainly, many important insights carry over after the drug has worn off. Under the influence of mescaline, I have had the experience of fully seeing a painting for the first time. Later, I could have the same experience with the painting without taking the drug again. Other permanent insights also occur, so that one exposure to a mind-expanding drug may enrich you for life. But I must insist that all of these drugs can be treacherous and unpredictable.

**FORT:** Actually, the bad trip has been so sensationalized by the press that some of you may be incredulous when I say this, but my impression is that only about one LSD trip in a thousand has really unpleasant consequences. I don't want to minimize the danger when I say that but merely to put it into perspective. Most of the unpleasant consequences, also, are just acute panic or psychotic reactions; in spite of the press's melodramatic harping on suicides occurring during such panics, such deaths are still extremely rare, although these risks are greater for the young, the unprepared, the poorly guided and the illegal user. Alcohol, tobacco, war and guns are the really lethal problems on the American scene, in a large way, and abuse of LSD is a microscopic menace by comparison. But it has major risks, and I can't support the mystical evangelism of Dr. Leary and Ram Dass.

**RAM DASS:** I stick to my position: It should be the privilege of any rational, responsible adult to take LSD as long as it is not destructive of other human beings. But I have also proposed that we create centers for the LSD experience in the same way

universities are settings for training the rational mind; and that LSD users should be licensed only after extensive training and psychiatric examination, the same way we license airplane pilots. **ANSLINGER:** That is the type of absurd proposal that Aldous Huxley made, that the individual be permitted to achieve euphoria any way he desires to get away from the reality of life. Only a disordered mind would entertain such a proposal. It is utterly monstrous and ridiculous.

**RAM DASS:** Historically, politicians in positions such as yours have usually been frightened of new and powerful things like LSD because they sense a real threat to their vested interests. I think we can safely leave it to the readers of *PLAYBOY* to determine if I have a disordered mind.

**PLAYBOY:** Is there any foundation in fact for the allegations that LSD leads to blindness, death or birth defects?

**FIEDLER:** As I recall the blindness scare, it was a crude fraud carried out by a high state official in Pennsylvania, who deliberately falsified the medical records of six male college students to make it appear that their blindness had been due to the use of LSD, although it was entirely from unrelated causes.

**FINLATOR:** Since we in the Government are sometimes accused of scare tactics, let me point out that the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs helped discover the truth in that case. We have not been able to find in this instance—nor in any other reported case of blindness alleged to have come from LSD's causing someone to stare into the sun—that there was any evidence for such charges, and we have said so frankly.

**RAM DASS:** The birth-defect yarn is much more complicated and reminds me of the famous controversy in astronomy about the canals of Mars. The astronomers who wanted to believe in intelligent Martians saw canals that could have been created only by design, but the astronomers who didn't like the idea of another intelligent race so close to Earth merely saw canals that looked like natural formations. Both groups were looking with equally accurate telescopes. On the subject of chromosome damage, you're looking through a microscope instead of a telescope, but evidently you still see what you want to see. I might add that one of the values of psychedelics is that they make you realize how much of the alleged reality "out there" is really just "in here," constructed by your own brain.

**FORT:** You can learn that, without psychedelics, in any class on perception psychology. But to be more specific about the chromosome story, it all began about two years ago, with a New York geneticist, then unknown both in his own field and in LSD research, who made a brief tour of Haight-Ashbury and

was sufficiently horrified by the hippies to rush back to his laboratory to prove that LSD was harmful. Quickly thereafter, the usually careful journal *Science* hurried into print this man's study based upon the extremely small sample of three people's white blood cells, two of them "normals" and the third a schizophrenic who had received not only LSD but other mind-altering drugs and a series of electroshock treatments. The white blood cells of the two other subjects were exposed to varying strengths of LSD in test tubes and then all three were reported to show a significant increase in chromosomal breakage, a finding that was sensationally pyramided by the newspapers into the yarn that LSD had been shown to cause human birth defects. Then the other side went to work, repeated the experiments—and didn't find the alleged chromosome damage. For a while, the studies were evenly divided between those who found some evidence of increased chromosomal breakage and those who didn't. However, the latest studies ruled out the factor of prejudice by using control groups and the well-known "double-blind" tactic; that is, the people who evaluated the blood samples didn't know whose blood they were looking at, the LSD users' or the non-users'. They were unable to find any effect of LSD on white blood cells and no one has ever shown it to cause birth defects.

**RAM DASS:** The interesting thing was the tactics used to sensationalize this story. The general newspaper-reading public, for instance, was never told that there is no scientific knowledge that definitely links damaged chromosomes in the blood to damaged chromosomes in the reproductive system. In other words, even if the blood-chromosome story had been true, it wouldn't have proved anything about birth defects.

**FORT:** And the public wasn't told, either, that similar evidence of damage to blood chromosomes has been reported in connection with such widely used products as coffee, alcohol, nicotine, DDT and aspirin. Now that would have created a real panic if the papers had cared to publicize it.

**FINLATOR:** The studies of the effect of LSD on chromosomes are certainly far from conclusive, but until we know a great deal more, I would strongly urge all pregnant women to stay away from psychedelics, especially during the first trimester.

**FORT:** Certainly; the first three months are crucial. I would add that the pregnant woman should also avoid, during those months, such socially accepted drugs as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol, as well as exposure to viruses and any form of radiation. There are 250,000 American children born each year with birth defects mostly of unknown origin and, in a culture where most people haven't



used LSD, it is irresponsible to keep harping on that and ignore all the other possible and confirmed sources of damage to the embryo.

**FINLATOR:** True. But before we turn to another subject, let me add that while I cheerfully grant everything Dr. Fort has said about sensationalism and exaggeration in this area—and I'll even volunteer my own opinion, based on FDA investigations, that reports of violence against others by LSD users, when checked out, usually are found to be untrue—this is still a dangerous drug. The possibilities of acute panic reaction, depression, psychosis and violence against oneself are quite real. People have, in fact, jumped out of windows to escape the unconscious forces this drug unleashes. Art Linkletter is trying to tell the young to learn from the tragedy of his own daughter.

**ANSLINGER:** Let's not minimize violence to others. There was that student in Brooklyn who killed his mother-in-law while he was on an acid trip.

**WATTS:** We'll never know what role LSD played in that tragedy. After all, *most* people want to kill their mothers-in-law. Besides, it came out later that he had been on dozens of other drugs in addition to LSD.

**RAM DASS:** In my experience, there has been virtually no significant amount of violence of any kind as a result of LSD. Look into any case where this is alleged and you'll almost always find that the individual in question was mixing acid with Methedrine, a drug that is known to produce paranoia in chronic users. Almost always, it was the Meth that was the real culprit.

**PLAYBOY:** On the positive side, how do you gentlemen evaluate the claims about increased creativity and the other benefits that are alleged to derive from LSD and the other psychedelics?

**FINLATOR:** LSD is a complete bust in that respect, contrary to the claims of its cultists. One researcher at Yale found no positive results after testing volunteer graduate students. LSD users talk about creativity, but they don't do anything about it. The painter who uses acid stops painting and *talks* art. The graduate student is full of cosmic plans but never starts one of them. The world of fantasy replaces the world of reality. Acidheads begin to neglect their personal appearance and become so introspective that they contribute nothing to the world. As to their claims about a new understanding of self, God and the universe: well, they could have acquired understanding through logical thinking—without drugs.

**WATTS:** I couldn't disagree more. Having seen some of the more recent works that have come out of psychedelic experiences, I think LSD has been very beneficial. These works are a return of glory to Western art. We haven't had anything

like it since illuminated manuscripts and stained-glass windows. It's difficult to estimate its value in literature. I can only say from my own point of view that I have derived all kinds of ideas for lectures and writing from it.

**FIEDLER:** Literature has always been drug-ridden. In particular, poets, whose function is to celebrate whatever transcends the ordinary, are eager to celebrate drugs. They are also likely to note an analogy between the way the mind opens in the course of artistic creation and what happens under the stimulation of the "holy" kind of chemicals. Until recently, many American writers always thought of alcohol as representing or even being their muse. This has given them the privilege of believing themselves in the same tradition as the Homeric poets, who never touched a lyre without drinking a ceremonial goblet of wine. Marijuana and heroin have inspired the songs of other poets, of course. Poetry itself, in fact, is a drug in the sense in which I use the word, though it proceeds *out* of the mouth rather than into it. Poets are, therefore, less terrified of drugs than, say, bankers or real-estate salesmen. Yet, poets know the terror of mind expansion, too—the danger of walking into the world of magic, which is the danger of no return, as all the myths tell us, from Gilgamesh right up to *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

**BURROUGHS:** I'll agree that the literature of drug use is voluminous. In the last few years, there has been a deluge of subjective reports describing LSD, peyote and psilocybin experiences, and very dull reading it is, for the most part. The successful use of the drug experience depends on the skill of the writer. But it has been my impression that any sedative drug that decreases awareness—the narcotics, barbiturates, excessive alcohol and so forth—also decreases the author's ability to create.

**COBURN:** Exactly. One set of drugs puts you to sleep and the other set wakes you up, for the first time in your life. Of course, waking up can be pretty painful for some people. In the research I know about, the subjects who have the worst trips are psychologists and psychiatrists—apparently because they have made adjustment and submission to society as it is such an important goal in their lives.

**RAM DASS:** Different drugs definitely seem to affect the artist in different ways, as one would expect. You can almost relate the changes in serious popular music to the changes in drug fashions. Early Dixieland was largely shaped by alcohol and the more complex developments—Chicago style and so forth—came in when jazz musicians discovered pot. Then you had a lot of them turning to heroin in the Forties and you got the very introverted progressive jazz. Rock 'n' roll came in with a return to marijuana and a rejection of heroin. The recent tendencies in

heavy rock are all connected with the stronger psychedelics and I would say that 90 percent of the rock industry, which is shaping the minds of the young today in a very dramatic way, has been linked to acid.

**COBURN:** Certainly there are plenty of psychedelic themes in rock songs like *Mr. Tambourine Man*, *Mind Gardens*, *Flying High*, *Mother's Little Helper*, *The Crystal Ship*, *Brain Police* and lots of others. This comes from use of the drugs or from association with other musicians who have been turned on. After all, the real significance of the LSD trip is not the experiences that you can put into words, because you know they are all drug induced; it's something else that lets you go inside your head and find the real center of gravity of your being, as in Oriental meditation. It's like a sequence we had in *The President's Analyst* where we show two people making love on a hilltop while spies are killing one another all around them; the lovers are encircled by violence, and yet their attention is on love. Most of the critics missed the point and, even though the movie was full of references to drugs, they didn't realize that that sequence was an allegory on the kaleidoscopic shocks of the LSD trip and the calm center of serenity in the middle of it all. Mixed-media shows are another approach to the same theme; with these devices, you create astounding things—fantastic, beautiful, sometimes hideous entities—that exist only for a moment. But the point is not this retinal circus, as it has been called, but the light, the pure light, that permeates it all.

**BURROUGHS:** Yes; and, going back a bit, I want to disagree with Mr. Finlator's statement that you can achieve this kind of awareness through logic. Actually, logic—the linear, Aristotelian way of thinking—can put you in touch with only a very small area of reality, as Marshall McLuhan and the semanticists have pointed out. But consciousness expansion is certainly not dependent upon drugs. One means of altering consciousness is Scientology. I have recently taken courses on this in England. Some of the students were former users of Cannabis and LSD and they assured me they had never accomplished as much with either of those drugs. I feel that nonchemical techniques such as this have a more positive role to play than any chemical methods. Let me stress this very strongly: Anything that can be accomplished by chemical means can also be accomplished by other means, given sufficient knowledge of the processes involved. Recent experiments show that brain waves can be controlled and turned on or off at will. Any trip you want will soon be available without drugs.

**WATTS:** I won't comment on Scientology, about which I know nothing, but the Orient has dozens of varieties of meditation



and yoga that yield the same basic experience as LSD. The trouble is, it takes an awfully long time to get anywhere with these methods, and most Westerners just don't have the patience. But if you take a few psychedelic trips first, then you're ready to use meditation fruitfully. You have the hang of it. Certainly, LSD has made meditation much easier for me.

**PLAYBOY:** Some theologians claim that the chemically induced mystical experience is valueless because one hasn't earned it. How would you answer that?

**WATTS:** Aldous Huxley answered it, years ago, when he pointed out that this objection ignores the traditional Christian teaching of gratuitous grace. This is specifically a gift of God that *isn't* earned. My own answer is more sardonic. I just say this objection proves what I've always suspected: that if you scratch a WASP, you find a Christian Scientist. The WASPs, both in England and America, are very much under the influence of the Cartesian split between mind and body and, therefore, they despise the body. Naturally, they can't understand LSD, any more than they can understand Oriental religions, which seem quaint and comical to them. But early Christianity was different, not only in recognizing gratuitous grace but in the whole sacramental tradition of spiritual gifts from such material substances as water, bread, wine and oil. You see, primitive Christianity was materialistic as well as spiritual: The two were not separated. Since Descartes, we have separated them and we think we are materialistic. Actually, we are merely abstract, or mentalistic. A materialistic culture would not turn the world into a junk yard full of poison gas, the way we have done.

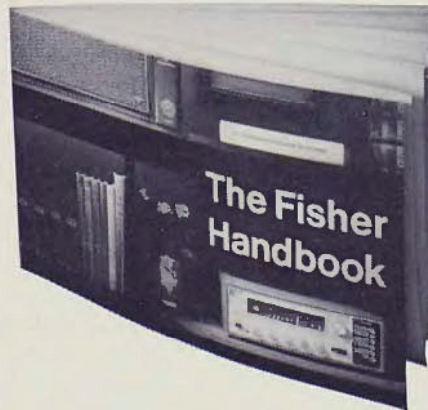
**RAM DASS:** Amen. The so-called materialistic American lives entirely for mental satisfactions—game rewards, as Tim Leary says. Money and status are very abstract, especially when the price of getting them is the reduction of the real, material world to a more and more lethal cross between a swamp and a penal colony. The real materialists are up in the hills, living in hippie communes and breathing unpolluted air. As for the more basic religious question: One of the holiest men I met in the Himalayas told me that LSD is the form in which God came to America. My own guru asked me for some acid one day and took 900 micrograms—a fantastic dose. I watched him in horror, but nothing happened. He didn't change at all. You can explain that any way you choose.

**FORT:** I want to get back to something that doesn't sound so paradoxical to the ordinary American. LSD and the other psychedelics have additional uses beyond possibly turning people into nature mystics or fresh-air lovers. There have been a number of clinical studies in which

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these drugs have been found effective in treating chronic alcoholics, heroin addicts and schizophrenic children, among others. There have also been positive results using LSD to bring peace of mind to terminal-cancer patients.

**RAM DASS:** An outstanding example is Aldous Huxley, who took one last acid trip the day he died of cancer. His wife reports that he was in pure bliss at the moment of death, like some Oriental or early Christian saint. Compare this with the ugly horror of most cancer deaths.

**FORT:** Even more impressive is the potential these drugs may have for treatment not just of specific pathologies such as addiction and childhood schizophrenia but for the entire spectrum of character disorders and mental problems. It's a scandal the way this has been swept under the carpet by our national practice of one-dimensional viewing-with-alarm.

**PLAYBOY:** Methedrine is one of the few drugs, along with heroin, that many young people have themselves been crusading against. Just how dangerous are the speed drugs?

**FINLATOR:** Pretty hazardous in the case of methamphetamine, which is the drug originally called speed. The other amphetamines pose some problems, too, but should not be confused with meth, which is the one that led hippies to spread the warning "Speed kills." Although there is no physical dependence created, one may easily develop a very compulsive type of habit, and the cumulative effect often involves hallucinations of a definitely paranoid cast, leading to aggressive and antisocial behavior. You can also see a rather clear-cut impairment of mental functioning in general, loss of emotional control, poor judgment and occasional toxic psychoses. Let me emphasize, lest I be accused of terror tactics, that these things happen only after a long period of heavy abuse.

**BURROUGHS:** I won't challenge a word of that. There is no medical excuse for amphetamines, especially meth, and no indication that people who appear to need them at a given time could not get the same benefits from safer stimulants, such as caffeine. All types of speed are extremely injurious to health and the chronic user almost always ends up with a paranoid mentality and, frequently, with hallucinations that confirm his delusional suspicions. I think we should stop the whole ugly scene by prohibiting the manufacture of these worthless chemicals.

**WATTS:** I know how badly off some speed freaks get, but using it occasionally isn't all that bad. I have taken doses up to ten milligrams when I had a great deal of work to finish in a hurry. It gives you a burst of energy and increased mental clarity. But I am very cautious about abusing anything of this sort, so I haven't explored it much.

**FINLATOR:** One of the worst aspects is the withdrawal period, after the user has been on speed a long time. Again, I don't want to exaggerate; it isn't nearly as terrible as the withdrawal experienced by heroin or barbiturate addicts or alcoholics. But it is extremely painful and leads to depressions, often including the paranoid hallucinations Mr. Burroughs mentioned.

**RAM DASS:** The whole speed scene is pretty sad. Some go through a period where they get stuck in the same fantasies over and over again. The trip can take several years, but there are a lot of people who have been through it and finally come out the other side. It doesn't seem to have the lifelong addictive properties of heroin.

**COBURN:** Yes, but those years are all wasted. Since my wife and I have been working at the Free Clinic in Los Angeles, I've seen a lot of methheads and the picture is really pitiful. Speed really fries your brain.

**BURROUGHS:** Let me say another word about the paranoia associated with Methedrine. There's a rationale to it; the user's friends really *do* turn against him. They lock their doors and pretend to be out, because they can't listen to his rantings any longer. You see, the typical Meth reaction is an interminable, rambling, very agitated monolog.

**RAM DASS:** We're all talking as if the methheads, who shoot speed right into the arm, like heroin addicts, are the most dangerous abusers of amphetamine drugs. Not true at all. Many of our Government officials drop amphetamine pep pills at a fantastic rate, especially the ones who have to jet around the world for conferences every week. They think they're using it only to keep alert, but many of them really have the habit. The American people should seriously consider the extent to which our entire international policy is shaped by people who are chronic users of a drug known to produce paranoia and irrational hostility.

**FORT:** You're exaggerating. My own observations in Washington and the state capitals suggest that the most abused drug in Government circles is alcohol. The real amphetamine scandal is the casual way it is prescribed by doctors who ought to know better. In a recent typical year, the American people consumed 153,000 pounds of amphetamines—and 971,000 pounds of barbiturates, which are even more dangerous—all obtained through doctors' prescriptions. Obviously, a lot of these physicians should go back to medical school and learn about abuse of drugs.

**ANSLINGER:** That's another red herring. There's no real problem of overprescribing by physicians in creating drug abuse. The illicit market is the big problem.

**FORT:** Many people would like to think so, but, actually, sedatives, stimulants and tranquilizers are now used by about

25,000,000 Americans, with a significant portion involving misuse and abuse. This includes barbiturate addictions, amphetamine psychosis and deaths from accidental or deliberate overdoses. The widely publicized use of speed by some young people is small in comparison with the use of Benzedrine, Dexedrine and Preludin by respectable middle-class adults getting it from their physicians and pharmacists.

**BURROUGHS:** I would add that all evidence indicates that the amphetamines and barbiturates on the illicit market are obtained from the legal market. These drugs are overproduced by respectable corporations, and that's the source of underground supply.

**RAM DASS:** I don't think anybody should be blamed for that. An individual does what he chooses to do, and in this society, there is always a way to do it. What you should do is educate people or get them turned on to something else, so that amphetamines and barbiturates don't appeal to them as much.

**FORT:** Instead of trying to switch people from one group of drugs to another, I'd like to teach everybody how to live *without* drugs. Failing that, I would at least hope to make people aware of the risks, and the difference between use and abuse, so they would confine themselves to short-term, selective, discriminate use of a given drug like alcohol or marijuana.

**PLAYBOY:** A few moments ago, Dr. Fort said that Americans use 971,000 pounds of barbiturates a year. What are the principal barbiturates in use today?

**RAM DASS:** First, I guess, are Nembutal pills, which are called yellow jackets or dolls, as every reader of Jacqueline Susann knows. The second, Seconal tablets, are called red devils, appropriately enough. The third barbiturate in general use, phenobarbital, has a rather tame slang name by comparison, I'm afraid; they're just called phennies. All three are generally known as goof balls.

**PLAYBOY:** How serious is barbiturate use? Mr. Burroughs gave the following vivid description in *Naked Lunch*: "The barbiturate addict presents a shocking spectacle. He cannot coordinate, he staggers, falls off bar stools, goes to sleep in the middle of a sentence, drops food out of his mouth. He is confused, quarrelsome and stupid. And he almost always uses other drugs, anything he can lay hands on: alcohol, Benzedrine, opiates, marijuana. Barbiturate users are looked down on in addict society: 'Goof-ball bums. They got no class to them!' The next step down is coal gas and milk, or sniffing ammonia in a bucket—"The scrubwoman's kick." Was that description colored by the mood of black comedy in your novel, or is it accurate?

**BURROUGHS:** Perfectly accurate. I originally wrote it for *The British Journal of*



*Addiction* and only later incorporated it into the novel.

**FINLATOR:** Barbiturates are certainly a big problem now. It's very easy to take an overdose; the drug affects you with the very first tablet, so you're likely to lose your number sense and take twice as much as you intended. When a user mixes barbiturates with alcohol—which is quite common, I'm afraid—this overdosing frequently leads to death. The relatives and the police never know for sure whether it was an accident or a suicide.

**FORT:** That's the way Marilyn Monroe died, and Dorothy Kilgallen, and a lot of others who aren't so famous. Among the Hell's Angels, it's considered a sign of *machismo* to drop several drugs at the same time, so you can find a kid who not only has barbiturates and alcohol in him but also pot and speed and maybe some acid, and he's coming at you at 80 miles per hour on a motorcycle. Frightening.

**FINLATOR:** Barbiturates are also physically addicting, and the general public doesn't seem to be sufficiently aware of that fact. I can assure your readers that the withdrawal is just as harsh as is the case with heroin and can even result in coma or death.

**BURROUGHS:** Barbiturate withdrawal is worse than heroin withdrawal, in my opinion.

**FORT:** Alcohol withdrawal or d.t.s is also worse than kicking heroin, and the public hasn't been told that, either. The victim can have generalized convulsions and a toxic psychosis. Somebody who's hooked on both alcohol and barbiturates is much more likely to die in a cold-turkey withdrawal than a heroin addict is. It's imperative that he be tapered off with a gradual substitution-withdrawal program. And you can't underestimate this problem. There are probably 200,000 barbiturate addicts in America, many of them mixing the pills with alcohol.

**PLAYBOY:** How does that compare with the number of heroin addicts?

**ANSLINGER:** There are about 100,000 heroin addicts in America; and without the efforts of Federal narcotics agents, the number would be much higher.

**BURROUGHS:** Pardon a cynical smile. In America, thanks largely to our efficient Narcotics Bureau, police action against addicts has been carried further than in any other country, and yet we've got more per-capita use of heroin than any nation in the world. This would seem to a rational observer to suggest the hypothesis that police repression and increased penalties are not the answers to problems that are basically medical.

**ANSLINGER:** I hear that line all the time, and it's dangerous nonsense. The addict is a police problem as well as a medical problem. He is not able to carry on a productive life and always comes to the attention of the authorities. Even addicts who are doctors can't be trusted; they

get careless and slovenly in their work, become liars and lose all moral feelings. In Iran, where there are a lot of opium smokers, the army couldn't solve the problem of finding lorry drivers. You can't take a chance and let an opiate user get behind the wheel of a truck. The heroin addict is always irrational and generally, he's a thief. They'll even become bank robbers, because they've lost all fear.

**BURROUGHS:** If they've lost all fear, the narc squads will soon restore it. Besides, heroin addicts I've known in England don't fit that description at all. The American addict steals to get money, because the policies of the Narcotics Bureau have created an artificial scarcity that has raised the price of a fix to an astronomical level. Few addicts commit crimes of violence. They tend to be sneak thieves, shoplifters and lush rollers. If they could obtain the drug legally, their crimes would vanish. As an occasional citizen of New York, I consider the burglaries committed by desperate addicts to be immoral and a goddamned nuisance. I say give them some legal junk before they steal my typewriter.

**ANSLINGER:** It's immoral to just let people remain addicts. Heroin is pure poison. Most of the addicts arrested are under 35, and you rarely see an old junkie. They live about two thirds of an average life.

**FORT:** That is sheer unmitigated rubbish. Heroin is a hard drug only in the sense that the addiction is very strong; it's much softer than many other drugs in the dimension of actual physical harm to the body. Chronic excessive use of heroin produces no permanent damage at all, except for the addiction itself—which is, of course, a form of slavery. Chronic excessive use of alcohol, by comparison, would inevitably create irreversible and often fatal destruction of the liver and brain. If many of our heroin addicts die young, it's mainly because of the brutal way our society treats them, including cold-turkey withdrawals with associated convulsions and spasms, police sadism and the black-market situation that forces them to become thieves or prostitutes.

**COBURN:** My impression is that the effect of the drug is quieting and pacifying. It's not at all inductive to criminality, except when it's made illegal.

**ANSLINGER:** Do you want to make it legal? Do you realize that if it weren't for the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, we'd have as many addicts as there were back in 1914, when one in 400 Americans was hooked?

**FORT:** Heroin wasn't even being used in this country in 1914. But even if you're talking about the widespread use and abuse in those days of elixirs and tonics containing other opium derivatives mixed with alcohol, I still question your figures. There was no medical definition of addiction at that time, and no survey research, so we don't know how many addicts there were.

**ANSLINGER:** My figures include all opiates and cocaine.

**BURROUGHS:** Be that as it may, nobody here suggests legalizing opiates across the board. We're talking about making them selectively available to people who are already hopelessly hooked. This is a rational social measure, and all citizens with windows leading to fire escapes will appreciate what I mean. I would also like to point out that my own problem with addiction was solved, through medical treatment, while I was in England and could have obtained all the junk I wanted on prescription. All the time I lived under Mr. Anslinger's fatherly protection in this country, I found it quite impossible to kick my habit. And I tried 11 times.

**PLAYBOY:** Does heroin addiction in itself pose problems even where the drug is legal, as it is in England?

**BURROUGHS:** Definitely. Total dependence on junk is the definition of addiction and such a condition is boring. I think there's also a decreased awareness, diminished creativity and a lack of interest in all that isn't God's own medicine. But the ordinary addict is quite capable of working efficiently at uncreative, blue-collar jobs, as long as his daily supply of the drug is available. It's only when his supply is cut off that he becomes a social liability, like the junkies who do most of the petty thieving and shoplifting in New York today. And it's not just the addicts who suffer under these laws; the whole public pays the bill. With 100,000 addicts in the country and the average habit costing about \$50 per day, that means the public is going to be robbed of 50 times 100,000, or \$5,000,000 every 24 hours. Since the Syndicate controls heroin, this means the Government is forcing the enslaved addicts to rob us of almost two billion dollars per annum, thus funneling that sum into the Mob, to be used in financing further criminal ventures. Why does such an idiotic situation continue? I personally can explain it only by remembering that it's like an old movie. The narcs need the Syndicate and the Syndicate needs the narcs to keep this tired and expensive show on the road. If junk is the monkey on the addict's back, the addict is a monkey on the public's back.

**PLAYBOY:** How can the problem be solved?

**BURROUGHS:** I'm convinced that the apomorphine treatment is the only therapy that works with narcotics addiction, since it acts by regulating metabolism and removing the need for junk. I don't have to use will power to avoid a relapse into morphine addiction. I simply don't want junk. Apomorphine is the only drug known that acts in this way. A number of addicts have taken this treatment at my suggestion, and all agree that it's the only treatment that works and that it's the least painful form of treatment. Yet most American doctors are completely ignorant of its use in treating addiction. Apomorphine is listed in the United



States as a narcotic subject to the same regulations as morphine; but in both France and England, only an ordinary prescription is required and it can be refilled any number of times. It's difficult to avoid the conclusion that a deliberate attempt has been made in the United States to mislead medical opinion and minimize the value of this treatment. This drug also seems to have wide use for other problems in addition to curing addiction. Variations of the apomorphine formula could lead to a specific anti-anxiety drug. Since all monopolistic and hierarchical systems are based on keeping people in anxiety, however, it isn't surprising that the use of the apomorphine treatment has been consistently opposed in certain drearily predictable quarters of the Western world.

**FORT:** I certainly agree that there should be experimentation with this and any other new approach to narcotic withdrawal. Psychological self-help techniques, administered by ex-addicts themselves, such as the Synanon and Daytop Village programs, also have a definite value—although with most addicts, this just doesn't work. It's really the same approach that Alcoholics Anonymous uses for booze addicts; and while it should be encouraged, I fear that the press has somewhat overemphasized its value. There is no one solution, not even the methadone-substitution program that is so fashionable now; but comprehensive outpatient programs to treat all forms of drug abuse should be established in every major city.

**ANSLINGER:** I am of the opinion that as long as there is any organization attempting to take people off narcotics, it is all right, even though some of their attitudes are questionable. I think Synanon is doing good work. As for Daytop, once in a while, I hear of a case where they help someone. The methadone-maintenance program is doomed to failure, because it merely substitutes one narcotic for another. It is cruel to put out hope for people in this program. Usually, you conduct research quietly in a laboratory, but this project has been conducted in the press and has not been properly evaluated. I think many of the statements made about this and other treatment programs are irresponsible. The Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs tells me that it has picked up a number of people from the methadone program for engaging in unlawful activities; and I've recently talked to several addicts about whether methadone blocked out heroin and they had a good laugh at that. I said, "Well, suppose the Government made methadone legal. Would you switch to it and leave heroin alone?" And they said, "Of course not."

**BURROUGHS:** I agree that the methadone program isn't a cure; it's just taking a man off cut whiskey by giving him strong wine. But I thought the point of the

program was to keep these unfortunates out of our apartments.

**FORT:** Yes. It's true that the methadone program substitutes one drug for another, but much more important is the tremendous accomplishment involved in taking an individual out of a totally self-destructive and criminal life style and teaching him to function again. The great majority of people who have participated in this program have been able to work or go to school productively and have been removed from the vicious cycle of illicit heroin addiction. Our ideal should be to help individuals become self-sufficient and cure them of dependency on methadone or Synanon or psychoanalysis, but we often have to settle for less.

**BURROUGHS:** Let me emphasize that apomorphine does not have these drawbacks. You don't have to stay on apomorphine to stay off junk; once your metabolism is regulated and you don't need the narcotic anymore, the apomorphine can also be discontinued.

**PLAYBOY:** What approaches would you gentlemen suggest to prevent abuse of the other drugs we've discussed?

**BURROUGHS:** Since people will always take drugs of one sort or another, it might be wise to undertake a really objective inquiry to determine what drugs do the least harm and under what conditions these drugs should be available. The drug problem, like all problems, wouldn't be there if things had been handled right in the beginning. Drug news played up in the press creates interest and curiosity. So you get more people wanting to try these drugs, more users, more outcry, more laws and more young people in jail. Any serious attempt to actually enforce this welter of state and Federal statutes would entail a computerized invasion of privacy and sweep us into a total police state. Remember the boy in Arizona who read about the maniac sex killer slaying eight Chicago nurses? He proceeded to kill five women before the fuzz nailed him. Any newspaper story will duplicate itself like a virus; plane hijacking and oil slicks, for example, are the "in" things right now. Then the press gave LSD the build-up—it's new, it's exciting and anybody who is anybody in literature and the arts has logged a trip. It's dangerous and glamorous, so it's the thing to do for all the young people who hear about it. Now, after shoving a sugar cube into every open mouth, the press is screaming to stamp out this evil, talking about people jumping from sixth-story windows, hacking mothers-in-law to death, calling for more laws and creating more criminals out of otherwise quite harmless young people. Now we have a drug problem.

**ANSLINGER:** Good Lord! That takes the prize. We've been hearing some of the most ridiculous statements that have ever been made. To blame these things on our laws is ridiculous; it's one of those

Hitler-type lies that have been carried around and repeated and repeated until everyone believes them. We've been providing proper drug education by just presenting the facts about the dangers of drugs, and they have been set forth by experts. The one objective is to educate people as to the dangers of narcotics and show that all of them lead to an escape to nowhere.

**FORT:** Most of what we've heard about drugs from you, as a matter of fact, has been myth and misinformation. Real education has not been tried in this country. Meaningful education would begin in elementary school with the presentation of objective, factual information about all the drugs, from alcohol through narcotics, by well-trained and groovy teachers. Drug-education programs, as well as sex education, should continue throughout the school years and should also be available to the general public. Additionally, such programs should desensationalize drugs, making clear that both the dangers and the benefits have been exaggerated in the past.

**RAM DASS:** Let me mention that there are certain asthma remedies containing belladonna, which hippies sometimes use if the LSD supply temporarily dries up. Since the proper dosage level is usually not known by these kids, they often go into convulsions or coma. A beautiful example of law enforcement in operation: You take away a comparatively safe drug and drive them to a much more dangerous one.

**FORT:** That is precisely what happened during San Francisco's recent war on the hippies, and again during Operation Intercept. But the worst problem of all is the one we have hardly touched: nicotine, and the associated coal tars and poisons in ordinary cigarettes, which are directly linked to heart disease, lung cancer, high blood pressure, bronchitis and emphysema. There are 75,000,000 smokers risking these diseases in America today. They kill 400,000 Americans a year and smoking leads to vast property damage from fires.

**COBURN:** I know I can't really justify my smoking, since I realize it's physically harmful to me. Certainly, it makes us adults look pretty silly to kids. The way we throw fits over marijuana and ignore the tobacco problem really shows up our hypocrisy.

**FINLATOR:** There are still other drug problems that should be mentioned. Young people experiment with many different agents, such as bananas, airplane glue or nutmeg, in an attempt to find kicks. They should be told the facts about these substances in a manner they can accept. Every time we hear of another so-called abuse of something, we try to keep our cool and study it medically.

**WATTS:** But nobody in Government seems to have gotten the point of the banana hoax a few years back. The hippies or



Yippies or whoever started this yarn were trying to teach us something and we don't appear to have learned. The lesson is that there are vast numbers of natural psychedelics and the Government is going to look increasingly foolish if it tries to make them all illegal. The nation's leading manufacturer of catnip, which is a mild psychedelic, reports that its sales doubled in 1968—while the cat population remained relatively constant. Already, one legislator—in Ohio, I believe—has introduced a bill to impose a 15-year sentence on anyone caught smoking catnip, but this is another absurdity. If catnip is banned, another legal psychedelic will become popular. The Swedes have a psychedelic seaweed and somebody will begin importing it soon, I'm sure—if they haven't already. The Government's position against consciousness-expanding agents will grow increasingly ridiculous. Next year, it might be orange peels.

**PLAYBOY:** How long has the Government been involved in drug regulation?

**OTERI:** In a small number of states, Massachusetts among them, there were anti-marijuana and anti-narcotics laws as far back as 1911. But these laws were, in fact, toothless; nobody enforced them and they carried penalties like 60 days in jail. In 1937, Mr. Anslinger had a hearing conducted before Congress to propound the Marijuana Tax Act, the purpose of which was to do away with the "killer drug," marijuana. A small number of witnesses joined in reciting anecdotal testimony ascribing to marijuana every conceivable form of degeneracy, including rotting of the brain. A pharmacist and a veterinarian testified about such things as the alleged effects on the personality of dogs. The average citizen today would be absolutely shocked at the thought that a law that has such widespread effect and has ruined so many lives was passed on the basis of this kind of skimpy, one-sided evidence. Every state now has an anti-marijuana law, generally based on the Uniform Narcotics Act, and the penalties are quite harsh under both state and Federal laws. It's also a system riddled with absurdities, as in Massachusetts, which punishes marijuana possession with three and a half years in prison, while being present in a room with marijuana is punished with five years in prison.

**BURROUGHS:** All of these laws result from misinformation, mismanagement and what can only be called deliberate bad intentions. You'll remember that famous junkie, Sherlock Holmes; he never had cops sniffing around his digs looking for the needle. And that was before the invention of "permissiveness." The present hysteria on the subject of drugs has been fomented by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, local narcotics agencies and the sensationalism of the press. Drug control

is a thin pretext, and getting thinner, to increase police powers and to brand dissent as criminal. The pretense of looking for narcotics gives the authorities the right to search any person or premises at any time, and the police are continually lobbying for more anti-narcotics laws and stiffer penalties. Many of the laws passed under this pressure are very dangerous to our so-called freedom. In some states, for instance, it is a crime to be an addict. Penalizing a state of being, apart from any proven illegal act, sets a precedent that could be extended to other categories of "offenders," including anyone opposed to official policies. To classify all opposition as criminal is, of course, a simple device by which a fascist regime takes over a country. The standard practices of forcing young people to become informants under the threat of prison sentences if they don't cooperate, or of undercover agents encouraging narcotics violations in order to run up a score of arrests, pose a threat to common decency and an American way of life in which one could reasonably take pride.

**ANSLINGER:** This is some of the most vicious tripe I have ever heard. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs arrests only traffickers. They leave the addicts to the local police. Federal agents are only after the person who imports and sells. Naturally, it is easier to make the case against the addict than the trafficker; but to make a case against the trafficker, you have to spend a lot of time investigating. And I see nothing wrong with undercover work; that's standard police procedure everywhere.

**FINLATOR:** Federal law enforcement does focus on the trafficker, in spite of the popular misconception that the law concentrates on the addict because he's much easier to arrest. Police are honorable men, for the most part, and they recognize that the culprit in the whole drug problem is the trafficker. Contrary to the widespread myth, we don't allow our agents, nor do we encourage those with whom we work, to use covert agents on college campuses. I don't think such campus undercover work is necessary and, as far as the drug problem is concerned, I believe it to be ill-advised.

**WATTS:** But I don't think the police should be involved with drugs at all, nor with any other moral or medical problem—such as abortion—that the individual should take to his doctor or his minister. The police have enough work to keep them busy, regulating automobile traffic, preventing robberies and crimes of violence and helping lost children and little old ladies find their way home. As long as the police confine themselves to such activities, they are respected friends of the public. But as soon as they begin inquiring into people's private morals, they become nothing

more than armed clergymen. And this is very unfortunate, in view of our tradition of separation of church and state. We don't want cops who are simply preachers with guns. It's as a result of this kind of thinking that police today are detested by enormous numbers of people and regarded as upholders of the most reactionary attitudes. It's very unkind to police, as dedicated men, to put them in that sort of position—preventing certain kinds of personal pleasure that cannot hurt anyone else. The Government is not supposed to be a kind of universal nursemaid.

**RAM DASS:** I also think such practices are ill-advised because they just increase the paranoia of human beings toward one another. The lack of respect for the privacy and dignity of the individual in this society is a sign of the sickness of the times.

**FORT:** In some ways, we are really moving closer and closer to the Orwellian world of 1984, and the tactics of the drug police are indistinguishable from those of the Communists and other totalitarians. One glaring manifestation of this was the inclusion of suspected marijuana possessors in the 1968 Congressional legislation authorizing accelerated wire tapping and electronic eavesdropping, thus making perhaps 10,000,000 people subject to possible secret scrutiny. Now there is a move to abolish the need for a search warrant before the drug police break into a house. The end in no way justifies the means.

**OTERI:** The thing that bothers me most about the whole situation is that we're losing what this country means to me and to millions of other people like me—freedom. Not license; I don't confuse license with liberty. But we are supposed to have freedom to at least make our own decisions. I think that the average American today would trade his freedom for cradle-to-grave security, and I find this very tragic. There is a tremendous erosion of the rights of people. Americans don't care any more that agents listen to their telephone conversations. They don't care that they can be followed and spied on. I will venture to say, as a matter of fact, that you couldn't get the Bill of Rights through a legislative committee today, and this bothers me deeply, because I think this is what America is all about. The one thing that symbolizes our country is the Bill of Rights, and I hate to see it being eroded.

**FIEDLER:** It's worse than that. It's actually a war against our own children.

**FORT:** Yes, but I think the young also use drugs such as marijuana as a symbolic way of waging war against the hypocrisies, deceptions and injustices of the adult world.

**FIEDLER:** That's why I say this is a religious war between the generations. Most of what has been publicly disseminated about pot and LSD in our society has



obviously been more the product of fear than of fact. I doubt that absolutely objective research is possible at all in this area.

**WATTS:** In America today, society defines certain drugs as sinful and then looks around for evidence to prove that they are also dangerous. Our Western civilization is against pleasure; that's really what the controversy is all about.

**FINLATOR:** These are the kinds of all-inclusive denunciations of law-enforcement efforts that are fashionable now. I believe you gentlemen are too intelligent to believe everything you've said, but you think it sounds good on a panel such as this. All of you know that for organized society to survive, it must restrain and regulate itself. Let's not be so sophomoric as to intimate that all our problems can be laid to the existence of such necessary restraints.

**PLAYBOY:** What about the alleged connection between drugs and sexual pleasure? Dr. Leary and others have claimed sex-enhancing benefits from LSD, and advertisers also imply this with alcohol and tobacco. What is the real relationship between drugs and sex?

**ANSLINGER:** There isn't any question about marijuana being a sexual stimulant. It has been used throughout the ages for that: in Egypt, for instance. From what we have seen, it is an aphrodisiac, and I believe that the use in colleges today has sexual connotations. A classical example of amatory activities is contained in the article "Hashish Poisoning in England," from the *London Police Journal* of July 1934. In this remarkable case, a young man and his girlfriend planted marijuana seeds in their back yard and when the stalks matured, they crushed the flowering tops and smoked one cigarette and then engaged in such erotic activities that the neighbors called the police and they were taken to jail. As to LSD, one medical expert has made the statement that the principal side effect of taking it is pregnancy. If we want to take Leary literally, we should call LSD "Let's Start Degeneracy."

**FORT:** That's more demonology. Sex isn't degeneracy, Mr. Anslinger; and, contrary to your fantasies, no mind-altering drug is in itself a specific aphrodisiac. The most widely used substance to enhance sexuality is alcohol, which is closely associated with a tremendous amount of heterosexual and homosexual behavior, since it loosens inhibition and reduces guilt and anxiety. In theory, a person could learn to use any one of several drugs to increase sexual pleasure, but the main ingredient would be the user's expectations and knowledge. Also, LSD is not a specific cure for frigidity or homosexuality, as Leary has claimed. LSD has helped some with these problems and is likely to be of benefit to others, but only in selected instances, where the person is motivated to change his sexual orientation,

is well prepared for the experience and when this is part of a broader program of social therapy. No figures are available on how many individuals with these problems have taken LSD or what overall effects have occurred.

**FINLATOR:** Most of Dr. Leary's claims have not been valid. Even those who were at one time close to him in the psychedelic movement have berated him in public and in print for his statements about LSD as an aphrodisiac. No medical uses for LSD have been completely proved, whether it be for alcoholism, frigidity or homosexuality, and it cannot be considered a specific treatment for these conditions.

**RAM DASS:** Tim is absolutely right about LSD enhancing sex. Before taking LSD, I never stayed in a state of sexual ecstasy for hours on end, but I have done this under LSD. It heightens all of your senses and it means that you're living the sexual experience totally. Each caress or kiss is timeless. I'm also convinced marijuana is a sexual stimulant; it certainly intensifies the experience by slowing time down so that it appears to last longer.

**FINLATOR:** At your age, Ram Dass, could it be that you're boasting a little?

**WATTS:** Cannabis is not an aphrodisiac, but I'll agree that it can very much enhance the quality of the sexual experience. I would not describe LSD as an aphrodisiac, either. It doesn't make you want to jump into bed with the nearest female. For me, it has always been a peculiarly above-the-belt experience—much more intellectual, aesthetic and imaginative than erotic. On the other hand, if it comes about that while using LSD it is natural, convenient and spontaneous to have an erotic relationship arising from an affectionate feeling toward another person, it can be the most astonishing experience of merging. It's like a kind of coming together of galaxies that seems incredibly beautiful.

**PLAYBOY:** Obviously, then, the erotic effects of Cannabis and LSD vary considerably from person to person.

**COBURN:** Yes, but even more important than the enhancement of sex is the new dimension of love that these drugs open up. I think something new is forming. I guess it's in kind of an embryonic stage now. All of the passions that we can't control—such as revenge, hatred, greed and lust—become suddenly controllable under certain drugs. This is fantastic and offers a whole new view of man and society.

**PLAYBOY:** But none of these possibilities can be explored until the drug laws are modified or repealed. Do you think that's likely?

**OTERI:** Yes. One of the big things that's happening is the series of court challenges to marijuana laws. The Boston trial in September 1967 was the most thorough drug case presented anywhere. It rose out of the fact that the Massachu-

setts statute, like other states' laws, classifies and deals with marijuana as a narcotic; and we in my office decided that if marijuana, in fact, was not a narcotic but a relatively innocuous drug, the state had no right to regulate it in this manner. We sought to establish this by using the most qualified experts in the field, paring down an original list of 31 to 11 who we thought were unassailable in their credentials. The Government countered with eight people whose credentials I dispute, and I think it was the first time that the expertise of people who make pronouncements on marijuana was truly exposed in a courtroom and has become part of the public record. The case took two and a half weeks to try; the transcript ran to about 1900 pages and through direct examination and cross-examination, we exposed all the myths that have been propounded. We made a comparison of marijuana vis-à-vis alcohol and tobacco, showing that marijuana is certainly less harmful than either of these two substances and that, consequently, it is a violation of a person's equal protection under law to impose the present marijuana laws. We lost the first two rounds in the courts of Massachusetts, although the lower court did state in its ruling that there was a desperate need for further study and that there should be a different approach to the handling of first offenders. Our main hope lies with our appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court, where we hope for a hearing this year. We raise issues more fundamental than those in the Leary case, and a victory for us might well make all anti-pot laws unconstitutional. Other cases raising some or all of these issues are now being tried in all parts of the country, including Oregon, California, Michigan and Iowa. We have hundreds of requests for copies of our briefs and motions and we have tried to help as many lawyers as possible mount these attacks.

**FORT:** In 1968, Alaska became the first state to take marijuana out of the narcotics laws and put it under the dangerous-drug laws, which makes first-offense possession a misdemeanor rather than a felony. The former attorney general of that state, Edgar Boyko, was primarily responsible for that landmark reform, which has been little publicized. Also in 1968, California reinstated pre-1961 legislation that makes it possible for a judge to impose either a misdemeanor or a felony penalty for a first-offense possession conviction; between 1961 and 1968, the judge was required to treat it as a felony. On the negative side, the U. S. Senate has approved the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, an international treaty that attempts to rigidify our present drug policies. It did this at the instigation of Mr. Anslinger without any public hearing and without dissenting votes.

**ANSLINGER:** Dr. Fort doesn't like the Single



Convention treaty because it imposes very strict controls on all the nations of the world over Cannabis products as well as other drugs. The Supreme Court has ruled that treaties as well as the Constitution are the law of the land, so all of you aren't going to change a thing. I'm amused by fellows like Leary, Ginsberg, the hippies, college groups and some far-out professors who are participating in the movement to make marijuana legal. These people are utterly ridiculous and wasting their time, now that we've got this treaty.

**FORT:** The United States and other countries have not always adhered to treaties they have signed; and, besides, the treaty you're talking about doesn't even affect marijuana, because the leaves of the Cannabis plant are excluded from coverage. Also, the treaty specifies that if a particular country's courts find something unconstitutional about the drug laws, then that part of the treaty is not binding on that country. Nowhere does the treaty say that possessors of the drug must be made criminals, nor does it specify what kind of penalties to impose.

**PLAYBOY:** As we discussed earlier, peyote is legally available for use by members of the Native American Church in their religious ceremonies, and Dr. Leary has established the League of Spiritual Discovery along similar religious lines. Do you think this is a genuine new religion or just a device for bringing about legal use of marijuana and LSD?

**ANSLINGER:** This idea of using marijuana like the Native American Church uses peyote will not get very far, because Congress, in its wisdom, is not going to permit it. Furthermore, it's purely a way to obtain an aphrodisiac, which I am quite sure is in the back of the minds of those people who want to legalize marijuana.

**WATTS:** I don't think for one minute that Tim Leary established the League of Spiritual Discovery just as a device for himself and others to find a way to use marijuana and LSD legally. His interest in these substances has been extremely honest, sincere and religious from the beginning. Religion is not just a front nor just a gimmick. It's a frank recognition that these chemicals have a religious dimension. And although he may have promoted the League by means more reminiscent of Aimee Semple MacPherson than those of the Archbishop of Canterbury, I still wouldn't question his sincerity.

**OTERI:** I find the religious-freedom argument pretty tenuous myself. The Supreme Court upheld the right of the Native American Church to use peyote, but only because it has been part of Indian religion since Aztec days. It won't buy the same argument for a religion only a few years old. I'm sure Leary would have lost if he had based his Supreme Court case on that argument.

**PLAYBOY:** Whatever the validity of Dr. Leary's religious-freedom argument, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld his other contention—that the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 is unconstitutional because it forces the purchaser to incriminate himself by buying a tax stamp. What effect will the Leary decision have on the problems we've been discussing?

**WATTS:** All the Leary decision means is that now you can smoke pot in a Federal park. Everywhere else, you are still under the jurisdiction of state anti-marijuana laws.

**FORT:** Exactly; the state laws are unaffected. Also, we can expect a new set of Federal laws, carefully written to avoid the constitutional pitfall noted by the Court. I would say that the best thing about the Leary decision is that it's another important reiteration of the basic principle that a man cannot be forced to incriminate himself.

**OTERI:** There's more to it than that, and I think I speak with some inside knowledge here, since I observed the case closely from a legal viewpoint and even filed an *amicus curiae* brief, against the existing law, on behalf of the National Students Association. Officially, you can say that all the Court did was reaffirm the constitutional guarantee against self-incrimination—and, incidentally, demand proof, rather than presumption of guilt, when smuggling is alleged in connection with possession—but the implications go much further. As a result of that decision, to name one example, I don't think the Government could now win a Federal conviction for possession of grass.

**ANSLINGER:** That's irrelevant. The Federal Government has never sought possession convictions, anyway. All we were ever interested in was the major dealers. In my 30 years with the bureau, I can hardly recall a possession case that we prosecuted.

**BURROUGHS:** Some people may have a better memory, Mr. Anslinger.

**OTERI:** That is a somewhat misleading statement, Mr. Anslinger. What usually happens is that the Federal and state narcotics agents will cooperate in setting up a raid; then, if the quantity of grass seized is large enough to create a presumption of intent to sell, it becomes a Federal case; and if the quantity is much smaller, the Feds turn the case over to the state authorities and they usually prosecute for possession. But to return to the original question: I think the Leary decision is a critical turning point, because it shows the beginning of rationality, rather than hysteria, in regard to marijuana. I think the Court is starting to realize that if the Government has any business in this area at all, it should concern itself only with sellers, as it did during alcohol Prohibition, and leave the users alone. In fact, I predict that the Court will abolish the crime of possession

entirely when it rules on one of the next cases that raise this issue.

**FINLATOR:** I wouldn't expect that at all. I do think, however, that the Leary decision is a signal that we will have to take a new look at our drug laws, which Congress is already doing. Of course, many of us have felt for a long time that the whole question needed a new approach; we didn't need the Leary decision to tell us that. As for the crime of possession, Mr. Anslinger is right: The Federal Government has never pressed hard on that issue. However, considering the Leary decision as a sign of the times, I expect that the states are going to have to re-examine their own laws and that individual possession will be treated more leniently.

**OTERI:** I don't think you realize the degree and variety of public pressures mounting against these laws. *The Wall Street Journal* reported on November 3, 1969, for instance, that the *U. S. Tobacco Journal* favors legalized pot. They discuss the fact that modern marketing methods could surmount the hurdle of prevailing irrational prejudices. I predict flatly that even the modified Nixon program will never get through Congress.

**PLAYBOY:** The Nixon program has already been altered toward lower penalties for possessors, while still in committee. What do you gentlemen think will finally emerge as the new Federal drug program after Congress has examined the President's proposals and the various alternatives currently being debated?

**RAM DASS:** Obviously, the laws should be changed. It should be possible to purchase marijuana the way you purchase alcohol, and heroin addicts should be treated as sick people, not as criminals. Whether Congress will be this rational, however, is open to doubt.

**FINLATOR:** I'm sure that such a radical program as Ram Dass suggests has no chance at all. However, there are going to be major changes, and people in government at all levels are trying to bring some semblance of sanity into this area. I expect that the contradictions and absurdities of present legislation will be ironed out by an omnibus bill, more or less along the lines of President Nixon's proposals, with uniform penalties rather than the inconsistencies we have at present. Probably, there will be a general lowering of penalties for those who are merely users and not dealers—and for all drugs, not just for marijuana.

**ANSLINGER:** The penalties will be lowered, I agree. But I'm sure Congress will never legalize marijuana. History is strewn with the bones of nations that tolerated moral laxity and hedonism. While I don't oppose some leniency toward users, the ideal situation is in Ohio, where a law was enacted providing a *minimum* penalty of 20 years for the sale of heroin. Addiction dropped 85 percent the first year. Of

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