

SB0708

Oppose

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"I have a 15, a 13, and a 9-year old, and I absolutely as a physician, as a dad, as the Surgeon General of the United States, wouldn't want them exposed to these products (marijuana), and wouldn't want them to falsely believe they're safe."

- Dr. Jerome Adams, U.S. Surgeon General

Marijuana Testimony - Content

Content - 1

Why I Am Here - 3

First Two Reasons Regarding How I Survived - 4

Beginning Therapy - 6

Two More Reasons Why I survived - 7

At Last, An End To Despair - 8

How I Began To Learn What Had Happened To Me - 8

- THC Then and Now -
 - American Heart Association
 - National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine
 - National Institute on Drug Abuse
- Mental Health Disorders / National Library of Medicine
- Mental Health Disorders / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Mental Health Disorders / American Journal of Psychiatry
- Mental Health Disorders / NBC News: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry / American Journal of Psychiatry
- Mental Health Disorders / National Institute on Drug Abuse

Marijuana Research Report

- Mental Health Disorders / Dr. Steven Simerville, St. Mary-Corwin Hospital
Pueblo CO Physicians Code Red

I Was Not Alone - 14

- Johnny's Ambassadors
- Moms Strong
- Parents Opposed To Pot

Victim Impact Statements - 15

The Maryland Connection / Part 1 - 15

- 1987 Amtrak Disaster, Chase MD
- "Maryland Children Get Sick"
- Mother Charged in Maryland Crash That Killed 5 Children, 1 Man
- Mental Health Association of Maryland

More Hospitalized Kids - 19

- A 9-Year-Old Accidentally Shared Her Grandpa's Marijuana Gummies With Her Fifth-Grade Class
- At least two children are hospitalized after eating THC candy
- Death Following Ingestion of an Edible Marijuana Product (CDC)
- Children's Hospital Colorado - Acute Marijuana Intoxication

Established Causal Links - 21

- Neonate Death Due to Marijuana Toxicity to the Liver and Adrenals
- A geospatiotemporal and causal inference epidemiological exploration of substance and cannabinoid exposure as drivers of rising US pediatric cancer rate

Behind the Wheel - 22

- 'Miracle kid' has face rebuilt
- 3 killed, including 2 kids, in 5 vehicle crash
- Fatal Crashes Involving Drivers Who Test Positive for Marijuana Increase After State Legalizes Drug (AAA)
- First States to Legalize Marijuana See Rise in Car Insurance Claims, Research Shows
- Report finds increase in car insurance rate; Marijuana, distracted driving blamed
- Today Show: Driving while high on marijuana causing spike in fatal accidents
- Driver of truck that hit church bus killing 13 was high on marijuana
- 9-year old girl killed by Inattentive Driver Possessing Marijuana

The Maryland Connection / Part 2 - Violence, Drugs, Gangs - 25

- Montgomery homicide victim was ambushed by MS-13

- Undocumented immigrant, deported twice before, caught raping woman
- Police say Towson killing is linked to MS-13
- Group of MS-13 members beat Md. man with bat in woods for refusing to join gang
- MS-13 members in Maryland stab man more than 100 times and decapitate him
- 3 teens charged in MS-13 killing of 14-year-old girl used machete, baseball bat

More Evidence of Violence - 27

- A Review of Cases of Marijuana and Violence (NIH - 2020)
- Violence and Cannabis Use: A Focused Review of a Forgotten Aspect in the Era of Liberalizing Cannabis (NIH - 2020)
- Marijuana: Tucson Massacre Suspect Jared Loughner Was 'Habitual' Pot User
- New Details Emerge About ... the 29-year-old man who authorities say killed 49 people and injured 53 more at a gay nightclub in Orlando
- Denver Man Who Said Marijuana Made Him Kill His Wife Gets 30 Years
- Father charged with capital murder after stabbing toddler in Lewisville
- Paranoid factory worker stabbed parents to death in frenzied attack during psychotic episode after smoking cannabis for years
- Queens man sentenced to 5 to 15 years in prison for 2016 fatal stabbing of his poet roommate
- Police: Accused killer told cops that bong hits led to violent episode
- Niles Township man found guilty of killing wife
- Japanese man Satoshi Uematsu sentenced to death for killing 19 people at disabled care home
- Salman Abedi: How Manchester attacker turned from cannabis-smoking dropout to Isis suicide bomber

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams - 30

- U.S. Surgeon General sounds the alarm for pregnant women and adolescents
- U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory: Marijuana Use and the Developing Brain

"A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste" - 31

My Personal Experience with the Marijuana Lobby - 31

- NORML
 - Your Government Is Lying To You (Again) About Marijuana
 - The NORML Truth Report, "Your Government Is Lying To You (Again) About Marijuana"
 - Recent Medical Marijuana Research (Fallacies)
 - Rheumatoid Arthritis
 - PTSD
 - Hepatitis C
 - Hypertension
 - Multiple Sclerosis

- Marijuana Policy Project
“Obstruction and lies is all they’ve got”

A Sampling of Marijuana Victims - 38

Why I Am Here

Imagine looking into a full length mirror, then imagine the mirror being smashed with a single blow to the head by a hammer. That has been my life for the past 50 years.

The main reason I am here, is to prevent what happened to me from happening to others.

For 50 years I’ve struggled with mental illness, all because I became addicted to marijuana in my early 20s, which then lead to a psychotic breakdown, shortly after my 25th birthday.

Words alone can’t describe the horror of existing in hell 24/7, as if a bug were being forever ground between a block of searing anxiety and a block of crushing depression, over and over and over and over ...

Worse was what I saw and felt in my brain. Thousands upon thousands of writhing and intertwining fiery tendrils, as if our sun had become home for thousands of gorgons and in the process, had gone mad.

Closing my eyes only made the horror clearer. Getting even 4-hours of sleep was a miracle. I was constantly tired, constantly exhausted, and practically catatonic.

Once while sitting in a clothing store, a person came over and touched my arm. He said I was sitting so still that he wasn’t sure if I was a manikin or not.

That’s how tightly I was trying to control my essence, for if I should let go for even a moment, the hell would become forever.

I was a kernel within a fetid swamp of horror. It was not me looking out my eyes. I was far back in my head, in a safe place where I’d found temporary refuge from madness.

Bright colors seemed to be reaching out to me, sinister, as if they were trying to talk. I avoided record stores, especially the “psychedelic” albums with their bright colors and distorted imagery.

Movies were far too intense to bear. Even magazines were risky, because I never knew what the next page would reveal.

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First Two Reasons Regarding How I Survived

It was because of two reasons I survived this torture:

I created a mantra that I repeated to myself over and over: “Hang on - Things will get better.”

Second and probably most important was that my wife, who wasn’t a smoker, stood by and supported me the entire time.

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I had no idea this could happen when I first started. The only perceived dangers in the late 60s and early 70s, were memory loss and paranoia, which was said at the time to only be temporary.

Getting “High” was the thing to do: You were “with it.” You were “hip.” You were “anti-establishment” and stood up to “The Man.”

It was one big party.

In fact, a popular saying of the 70s was: “Sex. Drugs. Rock & Roll.”

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The first time I smoked was an incredibly euphoric and beautiful experience. It was like all my worries and concerns had vanished. To say I wanted to repeat the experience is a major understatement.

My favorite activity was to listen the “Progressive Rock” music of the time. When I felt the High wearing off, I’d smoke another pipe. It was typical 3-4 daily, sometimes more.

After a while, I began to notice was that the highs weren't as brilliant as when I started. My thoughts were that I only needed to smoke more, which I did.

In fact between my 23rd and 25th birthdays, I was High almost every waking moment.

Thing is though, instead of recapturing that initial euphoria, things just got "darker." That's the best way to describe it.

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Besides the music, I'd also read what were called "Underground Comics." These were essentially self-published and could only be found in shops that sold drug paraphernalia and such. Much of the material was irreverent satire and counter culture stories, specifically written for those who were or frequently got high.

At the beginning, the stories were funny. Sometimes, they had a twist that would "zap" your mind while you were stoned.

But just like with the music, they began to take on a sinister aspect. I kept on smocking though, believing that I would eventually recapture that euphoria.

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The anxiety started in the final months leading up to the breakdown.

I smoked before going to bed, but instead of being "mellow" I'd have this growing sense of agitation. I'd eventually fall asleep, and in the morning, things would seem "normal," such as it was.

Again, I'd never heard any warnings about this and in my youthful naivety, just kept at it.

Though I don't remember the exact day, in January of 1972 something snapped in my mind. I had smoked, but this time the agitation, rather than ebbing, consumed my being.

Everything I described earlier began at this moment.

In spite decades of therapy and medications, some of the effects still persist to this very day!

Beginning Therapy

I was initially treated by a psychiatrist, then a psychologist.

While this helped, it took a full 10-years for the flaming apparition to depart from my brain. Same thing with the grinding, rasping anxiety.

What I was left with though, was the crushing depression that was everywhere in my life. Plus there was this paranoia, not psychotic, but a constant undercurrent of fear. Maybe this was what the anxiety turned into.

Day after day I was plagued with hopelessness and thoughts of suicide. If it weren't for my wife and my mantra, I might not have survived the ordeal.

Two More Reasons Why I survived

A third thing that helped was that I had found a purpose in life, which was to learn to become a jazz pianist. This led me into composition of New Jazz and Modern Chamber Music, which has been my main focus ever since. To my credit, I've composed close to 700 pieces.

I accomplished this because I became obsessed. I had to, because the intense focus drew my attention away from the horror in my mind.

Just like with the profound negative effects, I'm still this way today.

If it hadn't been jazz, it would have been something, anything, that would give relief - just like the story of the condemned soul who begged for a single drop of water to be placed on his tongue, as he languished in eternal hell-fire.

Such was the desperation.

A fourth activity was drawing and painting. Not only had I read about art therapy, but I was also inspired by the artwork on the walls of the studio of the person I studied piano with, Jessica Williams.

These weren't works of beauty or exquisite technique, but rather my attempts to come to terms with what had happened to me.

<https://georgespicka.weebly.com/art-work.html>

In 2017, two of these were featured in an exhibit hosted by Maryland's First Lady, Yumi Hogan, in Annapolis - as part of a Mental Health Awareness project. I was also able to perform some original piano compositions during the reception.

Those drawings were also included in that years Mental Health America campaign, "Life with a Mental Illness."

Many of my compositions served the same purpose -
<https://georgefspicka-composer.weebly.com/art-videos.html>

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At Last, An End To Despair

Though there was gradual improvement, for over 25-years I struggled with this horrid depression, forcing myself by sheer willpower to better myself, only to sink back into despair.

This was a constant cycle.

The first real relief came in the late 1990s, when I began to take the modern antidepressant, Prozac.

Previously I'd been prescribed Elavil, but the results were these awful mood swings. When I took it, after the first couple of days the fog would be gone. After two more days I'd get so up - that it felt as if I were bursting out of my head. When I reduced the dosage, I went back to normal, then back to despair.

After two months of this, I decided to forego the medication.

The Prozac was more stable, but when the dose was increased, for some reason the depression returned.

I was then switched to Venlafaxine HCl, and now take the maximum daily dosage.

To that was added Trazodone, another antidepressant that helps with anxiety and insomnia. Again, it's the maximum daily dosage.

The effect was that instead of being immersed in a fetid swamp, I was hovering inches above it. And though I'd still sometimes sink back into the darkness, it wasn't eternal like before. I could pull myself out. Even so, I can feel it lurking in the background.

The most noticeable long-term issue is difficulty with memory, something I've mentioned to my doctor several times. It's not that I'm senile, but that my mind has trouble focusing on a task, and tends to wander.

How I Began To Learn What Had Happened To Me

- **THC Then and Now**

As I mentioned earlier, there was no warnings in the late 60s and early 70s of marijuana's dangers, so around 2014, I started searching for research and studies that might give information about what happened to me. As I was to find out, there were already studies and research articles concerning marijuana's many risks.

For example, the **American Heart Association** has published a number of studies, the first in 2001 - including a 2014 study that documented a **series fatal heart attacks** directly related to marijuana. And the evidence keeps mounting - <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/JAHA.113.000638>

However for my testimony, I will first focus mainly on the Mental Health aspect.

One of the things I learned was that at the time I suffered my psychosis, THC levels in marijuana were around 3%, which by today's standards are low.

A 2019 NPR article cited a 2017 study that can be found in the National Institutes of Health "**National Library of Medicine**," that modern potency was now around 17% THC.

"That's an increase of more than 300% from 1995 to about 2017," says Staci Gruber, director of the Marijuana Investigations for Neuroscientific Discovery (MIND) program at the Harvard-affiliated McLean Hospital in Belmont, Mass. 'I would say that's a

considerable increase.' ... 'And some products with concentrated forms of cannabis, like hash and hash oil, can have as much as 80% to 90% THC,' she adds."

Nora Volkow, director of the **National Institute on Drug Abuse**, states: "In general, people think, '**Oh, I don't have to worry about marijuana. It's a safe drug,**' " says "**The notion that it is completely safe drug is incorrect** when you start to address the consequences of this very high content of THC."

The article goes on to say: "That concerns scientists who study marijuana and its effects on the body, as well as **emergency room doctors who say they're starting to see more patients who come into the ER with weed-associated issues.**"

Here is a link to the NPR article -

- <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/05/15/723656629/highly-potent-weed-has-swept-the-market-raising-concerns-about-health-risks>

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- **Mental Health Disorders / National Library of Medicine***

This 2018 piece can also be found in the National Library of Medicine, "The adverse health effects and harms related to marijuana use: an overview review."

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6182105/>

"Evidence of harm was reported in 62 reviews for **several mental health disorders, brain changes, cognitive outcomes, pregnancy outcomes and testicular cancer.**"

I personally have been suffering from mental health disorders.

"Harm was associated with most outcomes assessed. These results should be viewed with concern by physicians and policy-makers given the prevalence of use, the persistent reporting of a lack of recognition of marijuana as a possibly harmful substance and the emerging context of legalization for recreational use."

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- **Mental Health Disorders / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the following:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects.html>

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< 1 > **“About 1 in 10 marijuana users will become addicted.”**

- That’s what happened to me.

< 2 > **“Marijuana use directly affects the brain — specifically the parts of the brain responsible for memory, learning, attention, decision making, coordination, emotions, and reaction time.”**

- I suffer from memory and attention problems.

< 3 > **“Marijuana use, especially frequent (daily or near daily) use and use in high doses, can cause *disorientation*, and sometimes cause *unpleasant thoughts* or *feelings of anxiety and paranoia*.”**

“Marijuana users are significantly more likely than nonusers to develop *temporary psychosis* (not knowing what is real, *hallucinations and paranoia*) and *long-lasting mental disorders*, including schizophrenia (a type of mental illness where people might see or hear things that aren’t really there).”

“Marijuana use has also been linked to *depression and anxiety, and suicide* among teens. However, it is not known whether this is a causal relationship or simply an association.”

- All this happened to me as well.

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- **Mental Health Disorders / American Journal of Psychiatry**

This 2018 study was published in Psychology Today, “Acute Marijuana-Induced Psychosis May Predict Future Illness.”

“For this study, the investigators reviewed the long-term outcomes of all persons who received a diagnosis of substance-induced psychosis between 1994 and 2014 and had no prior diagnosis of a psychotic illness — a group of over 6,700 people.”

“The most dramatic increases by far occurred in those who exhibited psychotic symptoms following marijuana use.”

“Over a *twenty-year follow-up period*, about *41 percent* of those who had a *psychotic reaction to marijuana* developed *schizophrenia*, and *47 percent* developed either *schizophrenia* or *bipolar disorder*.”

*“These results demonstrate that those who are diagnosed with **substance-induced psychotic symptoms, especially after marijuana use, are at high risk for eventually developing a chronic psychotic illness.**”*

- This helps explain what I went through.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/demystifying-psychiatry/201801/acute-marijuana-induced-psychosis-may-predict-future-illness?fbclid=IwAR0S_KfDcDW_hTWvIx1PdDAtbac8b1uXIUAqN1Sk633_9aplnF7XTOzANL0

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- **Mental Health Disorders / NBC News: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry / American Journal of Psychiatry**

In 2018, NBC News ran this feature: “Mental Health - Chronic pot use may have serious effects on the brain, experts say”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/mental-health/chronic-pot-use-may-have-serious-effects-brain-experts-say-n924441?fbclid=IwAR3WcOwi7fn4pD9dKAAaLqM0QiCAWTLaWPwU6ULw0UHJD9FkrY8HXEFHUyTU>

*“After four years of heavy use, Warner noticed that his short-term memory was starting to fray. He avoided talking to people, and **festering feelings of anxiety and depression** grew. He tried to mask them with weed, deepening his dependency.”*

*“Studies have shown that **chronic marijuana use affects the same brain structures that are involved with addiction.** The National Institute on Drug Abuse suggests that 30 percent of those who use marijuana may have some degree of “marijuana use disorder.”*

*“Marijuana use disorders are often associated with dependence — in which a person feels withdrawal symptoms when not taking the drug. Frequent users report irritability, mood and sleep difficulties, decreased appetite, cravings, restlessness and physical discomfort ... Marijuana dependence occurs when the brain adapts to large amounts of the drug, **requiring more and more to create the desired euphoric effect.**”*

*“Researchers estimate that **4 million people in the United States met the criteria for marijuana use disorder** in 2015, but only 138,000 of them voluntarily sought treatment.”*

*“A Canadian study published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry in 2017 showed a **substantial increase in ‘psychotic-like experiences’ in teenage users.***

The study also reported adverse effects on **cognitive development and increased symptoms of depression.**"

(<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jcpp.12765?systemMessage=Wiley+Online+Library+will+be+down+on+Wednesday+05th+July+starting+at+17.00+EDT+%2F+22%3A00+BST+%2F+02%3A30+IST+%2F+05.00+SGT+%28286th+July%29+for+up+to+1+hour+due+to+essential+maintenance+>)

"Other studies show that chronic use may even **interfere with normal development of the adolescent brain.**" (American Journal of Psychiatry - <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.18020202>)

- **Mental Health Disorders / National Institute on Drug Abuse**
Marijuana Research Report

In 2020, The National Institute on Drug Abuse published its revised "Marijuana Research Report. " <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/what-are-marijuanas-long-term-effects-brain>

"Several studies, including two large longitudinal studies, suggest that **marijuana use can cause functional impairment in cognitive abilities** but that the degree and/or duration of the impairment depends on the age when a person began using and how much and how long he or she used."

"Among nearly 4,000 young adults in the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults study tracked over a 25-year period until mid-adulthood, cumulative lifetime exposure to **marijuana was associated with lower scores on a test of verbal memory ... The effect was sizeable and significant ...**"

"Some studies have also **linked marijuana use to declines in IQ**, especially when use starts in adolescence and leads to persistent cannabis use disorder into adulthood."

"A large longitudinal study in New Zealand found that persistent marijuana use disorder with frequent use starting in adolescence was **associated with a loss of an average of 6 or up to 8 IQ points** measured in mid-adulthood. Those who used marijuana heavily as teenagers and quit using as adults **did not recover the lost IQ points.**"

"Memory impairment from marijuana use occurs because **THC alters how the hippocampus, a brain area responsible for memory formation, processes information ...** As people age, they lose neurons in the hippocampus, which decreases their ability to learn new information. **Chronic THC exposure may hasten age-related loss of hippocampal neurons.**"

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- **Mental Health Disorders / Dr. Steven Simerville, St. Mary-Corwin Hospital Pueblo Physicians Code Red**

The adverse effects marijuana on the developing brains of human embryos is the subject of this 2014 testimony by Dr. Steven Simerville, a pediatrician who at the time was Medical Director of the Nursery at St. Mary-Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, Colorado.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=K4bcl9Fqfls&t=174s>

“About 7-10% of our babies in a given month test positive for exposure to THC.”

“In the 70s when they first started looking at what does post natal THC mean, they looked at mothers who exposed their babies to marijuana. That marijuana was 2.5% THC. Our current marijuana is 15%.”

*“So it’s a **7-fold increase in the concentration of THC that our babies are being exposed to.**”*

*“**But back then, in the 70s, we knew that if a baby was exposed prenatally to marijuana, they would see decreased school performance, they would have difficulties in spatial reasoning, they would have difficulties in problem solving, difficulties in short-term memory, and they would be less likely to graduate from high school, and they would suffer from what we call academic underperformance, meaning they should have more potential but don’t live up to it.**”*

“That was with the 1970s THC. We don’t know what it means now.”

I Was Not Alone

In my search about marijuana’s dangers, I came across a number of parent based organizations, who were sharing submitted stories concerning the suffering and grief families had endured, because of losing a child due to marijuana addiction.

These are just three.

- **Johnny’s Ambassadors** - <https://johnnysambassadors.org/>

*“Johnny’s Ambassadors is a non-partisan, non-profit, grass-roots alliance of individuals and organizations around the globe concerned about the **harms of youth marijuana use**. We are parents, coalitions, impacted family members, healthcare professionals, teachers, and nonprofits who seek to reduce youth marijuana use through education, prevention, and awareness. **We use evidence-based, scientific research and experts to teach the impacts of today’s high-THC marijuana on youth mental illness and suicide ideation**. Our allied organizations come together to save the lives of our youth, and Johnny’s Ambassadors actively promotes their activities.*

- **Moms Strong** - <https://momsstrong.org/>

*“We are a group of Moms who have seen marijuana **severely damage our teenage and young adult children**. While pot advocates promote stories of how marijuana is a safe, natural and fun activity, **we have instead witnessed our children develop devastating mental health issues after using it. We have observed the side effects of anxiety, panic attacks, paranoia, depression and psychosis, and have even seen a final result of suicide**. We have watched how these changes have occurred in some as a sudden psychotic break and in others gradually over a long period of addiction.”*

- **Parents Opposed To Pot** - <https://poppot.org/>

*“Parents Opposed to Pot bursts the “bubble of the marijuana hype” and **counters the false narrative that marijuana is harmless**. We know that no amount of marijuana, especially in its current high-THC forms, can be proven safe ... **Using current research and testimony**, we strive to prevent youth marijuana use by educating the parents.*

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Victim Impact Statements

The above organizations along with others, are sources of written and video statements concerning the negative impacts, including fatal outcomes, that marijuana has had on their loved one’s lives.

- <https://momsstrong.org/our-stories/>

- <https://johnnysambassadors.org/memorial/>

- <https://momsstrong.org/videos/parent/>

- <https://poppot.org/parent-perspectives/>

- <https://learnaboutsam.org/victim-stories/>
- <https://marijuana-anonymous.org/pamphlets/stories-by-teens/>

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The Maryland Connection / Part 1

1987 Amtrak Disaster

Some may be too young to remember, but in January of 1987, 16-people were killed in an Amtrak disaster in Chase, Maryland, that was directly related to marijuana.

- **NTSB Accident Report.** *"The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the failure, as a result of **impairment from marijuana**, of the engineer of Conrail train ENS-121 to stop his train in compliance with home signal 1N before it fouled track 2 at Gunpow ..."*
<https://www.nts.gov/investigations/AccidentReports/Pages/RAR8801.aspx>
- **George Mason University / Marijuana Fact sheet** - *"Marijuana can alter one's sense of time and **impair the ability to perform tasks that require concentration** ... Experiments have shown that **marijuana affects a wide range of skills needed for safe driving.**"* - <http://www.gmu.edu/resources/facstaff/facultyfacts/1-2/grass.html>
- **WIKIPEDIA** - *"At the time, the wreck was the deadliest in Amtrak's history ... Gates and his brakeman, Edward "Butch" Cromwell, were also **smoking a marijuana cigarette**. Cromwell was responsible for calling out the signals if Gates missed them, but failed to do so."* - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1987_Maryland_train_collision

Video of the tragedy can be seen at this link -

- **Rescue 911/ Amtrak 1987** - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Bol7q-78muY>

"I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of destruction to the train. I've never seen a train derailment of that magnitude before." - Dennis Dembeck, EMT

"The locomotive that was on fire, it was like somebody had taken a box of train parts, and sprinkled them all over. There were pieces no bigger than 2 or 3 feet."

- Bob Hausman, Fire Captain

"I remember seeing a rescue worker pick up somebody's head off the track, and they just had him by the hair. It was this charred, charred skull of a skeleton that was left."

- Witness

- **Baltimore Magazine** - <https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/section/community/special-report-on-the-crash-of-amtrak-colonial-94/>

*"Waskevitz, the first emergency worker on the scene, makes his way to the wreckage ... One victim is buried under the seats. **He checks for a pulse in her neck and feels none.** He digs farther, snaking along on his hands and knees, on his stomach, stashing debris behind him like a mole. **He comes to another victim, her neck apparently broken. She is also dead.**"*

*"Nearby, one woman is extricated alive and flown to the trauma unit, where **her legs are amputated. She lingers for eight days before dying.**"*

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Then there's the issue of stoned parents, who while high forget about potential consequences marijuana can have on their children.

- **Maryland Children Get Sick** - <http://www.poppot.org/2018/01/24/maryland-children-get-sick-big-marijuana-pushes-its-agenda/>

*"**Five schoolchildren were hospitalized** in southern Maryland after a middle school student brought and shared marijuana-laced food to school. Following an investigation, the St. Mary's County sheriff has *charged a father from Great Mills with reckless endangerment.*"*

*"The man's daughter and four other **students had a reaction to marijuana laced gummy bears ... All five students reported feeling ill,** and they were taken to the hospital in Leonardtown."*

Link to original story - https://www.somdnews.com/enterprise/crime_and_courts/father-charged-in-school-pot-candy-probe/article_5cc2c3b7-86c4-5509-9bf7-2617842c1e12.html

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- **Mother Charged in Maryland Crash That Killed 5 Children, 1 Man Had Marijuana and Alcohol in Her System: Prosecutors** - <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/mother-charged-in-maryland-crash-that->

[killed-5-children-1-man-had-marijuana-and-alcohol-in-her-system-prosecutors/138478/?fbclid=IwAR2032POJCij0HPhkKvuNtQVQNQUfMt73Ixp8Dooq86DWn8L346SdzwPyig](https://www.damariherald.com/news/killed-5-children-1-man-had-marijuana-and-alcohol-in-her-system-prosecutors/138478/?fbclid=IwAR2032POJCij0HPhkKvuNtQVQNQUfMt73Ixp8Dooq86DWn8L346SdzwPyig)

"The single-car crash at about 4:25 a.m. Feb. 2 killed sisters London Dixon, 8, and Paris Dixon, 5, who were Taylor's daughters ... Three of the sisters' cousins also were killed: Damari Herald, 15, Zion Beard, 14, and Rickelle Ricks, 6."

- **Mental Health Association of Maryland**

Can Marijuana Cause Mental Illnesses?

<https://www.mhamd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Risky-Business-Marijuana-w%EF%80%A2-MHAMD-logo.pdf>

*"Marijuana may increase the **risk of developing psychotic disorders like schizophrenia**. It can also worsen symptoms in people who already have psychosis."*

*"**Marijuana use during adolescence can have lasting effects**, including changes to the reward system in the brain and **trouble with thinking and remembering**."*

*"Marijuana use can cause symptoms of **mental health problems like psychosis (hallucinations), anxiety (panic attacks), depression, and sleep disorders**, but these symptoms generally fade after the effect of the drug has worn off."*

"People may get "too high" by using a strain of marijuana that is stronger than they thought it would be, by using too much, or by consuming it in different ways. Smoking marijuana usually takes effect quickly (a matter of minutes), while consuming edibles usually takes longer (a matter of hours) for an individual to feel the effects, and they may end up consuming too much because they "don't feel it" at first."

*"Adults who have been **diagnosed with marijuana (cannabis) use disorder have high rates of mental health disorders including anxiety, depression, PTSD, and ADHD**. It is hard to know whether the marijuana use disorder or the mental health disorder appeared first, since many people use drugs to self-medicate."*

More Hospitalized Kids

- **A 9-Year-Old Accidentally Shared Her Grandpa’s Marijuana Gummies With Her Fifth-Grade Class -**

Time Magazine - <https://time.com/5114582/thc-edibles-new-mexico/?fbclid=IwAR2aGA0gWnSPup3N1Q3u-XRhKilArcpkAv-HXT0fu5zOYNbXknF7sPbxSyo>

*“A 9-year-old girl came to school with what looked like typical gummy candies, but were actually edibles **laced with THC, one of the psychoactive chemicals found in cannabis** ... The candies reportedly belonged to the student’s grandfather.”*

*“The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment argued that **edibles put young children at risk** of accidental poisoning, and noted that **calls to poison control centers and visits to Colorado pediatric hospitals related to marijuana poisoning increased** ... “These findings suggest that greater availability of marijuana, particularly in edible products, can **increase risks to young children.**”*

This is a 2020 NBC News Report - <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/two-children-hospitalized-after-eating-thc-candy-food-bank-n1176721>

- **At least two children are hospitalized after eating THC candy**

*“An 11-year-old and a 5-year-old were **taken to a hospital** Friday night after consuming “Medicated Nerds Rope” candy.”*

*“**We are absolutely horrified** that this product went out to any of our partner agencies.” *Ginette Bott, Utah Food Bank president and CEO.*”*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* has even reported about fatal consequences of marijuana edibles.

- **Death Following Ingestion of an Edible Marijuana Product**

<http://www.cdc.gov/Mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6428a6.htm>

*“In March 2014, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) learned of the **death of a man aged 19 years after consuming an edible marijuana product.***

“ ... he reportedly exhibited **erratic speech and hostile behaviors**. Approximately 3.5 hours after initial ingestion, and 2.5 hours after consuming the remainder of the cookie, he **jumped off a fourth floor balcony** and died from trauma.”

“The autopsy, performed 29 hours after time of death, **found marijuana intoxication as a chief contributing factor.**”

“This case illustrates a **potential danger associated with recreational edible marijuana** use. Some studies have suggested an **association between cannabis and psychological disturbances.**”

“Consuming a large dose of THC can result in a higher THC concentration, greater intoxication, and an **increased risk for adverse psychological effects.**”

- **Children's Hospital Colorado: Acute Marijuana Intoxication** - <https://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/conditions/acute-marijuana-intoxication/>

“The most common **overdose incidents in children** occur when the drug has been combined with food in an "edible" form of marijuana ... **kids mistake "edible" marijuana** (like **gummy bears, brownies, lollipops**, etc.) **for regular food.**”

“**Many young children who consume marijuana edibles require hospital admission due to the severity of their symptoms.**”

Established Causal Links

That was in 2014. In 2019, the following report was published in the National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine*

- **“Neonate Death Due to Marijuana Toxicity to the Liver and Adrenals”**

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31838485/>

“We report a **death of an 11-day-old white female neonate due to acute marijuana toxicity**. She died of **extensive necrosis and hemorrhage of the liver and adrenals due to maternal use of marijuana.**”

*“This case is unique in that **other possible causes of death can be eliminated.** With growing use of marijuana by pregnant women and increases in newborn drug screening of umbilical cord homogenate, more cases of neonatal death due to acute marijuana toxicity could be discovered.”*

* What’s important with this case is that it establishes a **direct causal link between marijuana and death.**

The absence of this link has been used by the marijuana industry and it’s representatives to deny all the dangers legitimate research has revealed. However, it has now been proven.

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Published just a few weeks ago in February 2021, another piece in the *National Library of Medicine** establishes a **Casual Link between Cannabis and Pediatric Cancer**

- **A geospatiotemporal and causal inference epidemiological exploration of substance and cannabinoid exposure as drivers of rising US pediatric cancer rates** - <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33632159/>

*“Age-adjusted US total pediatric cancer incidence rates (TPCIR) rose 49% 1975-2015 for unknown reasons. **Prenatal cannabis exposure has been linked with several pediatric cancers which together comprise the majority of pediatric cancer types.**”*

*“TPCIR rose while all drug use nationally fell, **except for cannabis which rose ... Cannabis legalization was associated with higher TPCIR.**”*

*“Data **confirm a close relationship** across space and lagged time **between cannabis and TPCIR ... making confounding unlikely and establishing the causal relationship ... Cannabis-liberal jurisdictions were associated with higher rates of TPCIR and a faster rate of TPCIR increase.**”*

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Behind the Wheel

But it’s more than stoned parents, kids, and marijuana edibles - A persistent piece of misinformation that’s been deliberately spread, is that it’s safe to smoke marijuana and drive.

- **'Miracle kid' has face rebuilt** - https://www.syracuse.com/crime/2015/06/4-year-old-miracle-kid-has-face-rebuilt-after-near-fatal-crash-caused-by-father.html#incart_story_package

“When a 4-year-old girl's face and skull were shattered to pieces in a crash on the State Thruway, doctors mended the bones together with sugar-based compounds.”

*“Peyton Bean was airlifted by Mercy Flight from the Sept. 25, 2014, crash in Ontario County to Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, where **she spent 11 days on life support in an induced coma and five more days recovering.** She was admitted as a level one trauma patient, the most serious.”*

*“**Peyton suffered 14 different injuries** - some of which are listed as ‘multiple fractures’ ... she was in the back passenger's seat as her father drove ... Her father, Bryan Tanner, 25, **was smoking marijuana in the car before he lost control and hit a tree.**”*

- **3 killed, including 2 kids, in 5 vehicle crash**

ABC News

- <https://abc7news.com/pot-crash-marijuana-cannabis-fremont-car/3481312/>

“The Alameda County Coroner's office identified two victims of the fatal I-880 crash in Fremont Tuesday night. They are 14-year-old Christy Limas and 9-year-old Brooke Limas.”

*“Dang Nguyen Hai Tran, 21, was driving a Toyota Camry involved in the crash and was **arrested for suspicion of driving under the influence of marijuana.**”*

*“**‘Driving under the influence, whether it's alcohol or drugs, the outcome is the same. It's dangerous. It kills people,’** said CHP Officer Manuel Leal.”*

AAA has been talking about the link between marijuana and fatal crashes for years

- **Fatal Crashes Involving Drivers Who Test Positive for Marijuana Increase After State Legalizes Drug**

<https://newsroom.aaa.com/2020/01/fatal-crashes-involving-drivers-who-test-positive-for-marijuana-increase-after-state-legalizes-drug/>

“A concerning number of Washington state drivers involved in fatal crashes are testing positive for recent use of marijuana, according to new research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.”

“The share of drivers who, after a fatal crash, tested positive for active THC – the drug’s main psychoactive ingredient – has doubled since the state legalized marijuana.”

“This study enabled us to review a full 10-years’ worth of data about the potential impact of marijuana on driving safety – and it raises significant concerns.”

*“Marijuana use can **inhibit concentration, slow reaction times and cloud judgment**. Its effects vary by individual, but a number of studies have concluded that **marijuana use impairs the ability to drive safely**. Previous research suggests that users who drive high are up to twice as likely to be involved in a crash.”*

The Auto Insurance Industry is talking about this too.

- **First States to Legalize Marijuana See Rise in Car Insurance Claims, Research Shows** <https://www.insurancejournal.com/magazines/mag-features/2019/01/07/513762.htm>

*“Crashes are up by as much as six percent in **Colorado, Nevada, Oregon and Washington**, compared with neighboring states that haven’t legalized marijuana for recreational use, according to research from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI).”*

“The new IIHS-HLDI research on marijuana and crashes indicates that legalizing marijuana for all uses is having a negative impact on the safety of our roads ... States exploring legalizing marijuana should consider this effect on highway safety.”

- **Report finds increase in car insurance rate; Marijuana, distracted driving blamed** <https://www.wcvb.com/article/report-finds-increase-in-car-insurance-rate-marijuana-distracted-driving-blamed/26946952#>

*“Another factor driving Boston’s rise in car insurance premiums could be the **legalization of marijuana**, say experts. Research from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Highway Loss Data Institute found that **car crashes increase in states that legalize retail sales of marijuana** ... ‘States exploring legalizing*

marijuana should consider this effect on highway safety,' IIHS-HLDI President David Harkey."

- **Today Show: Driving while high on marijuana causing spike in fatal accidents** - <http://www.today.com/health/driving-while-high-marijuana-causing-spike-fatal-accidents-t91746>

"After the accident, Mary Gaston learned that the driver of the car that hit her son's motorcycle, 33-year-old Caleb Floyd, admitted he had been smoking pot."

- **Driver of truck that hit church bus killing 13 was high on marijuana** - <http://metrovoicenews.com/driver-of-truck-that-hit-church-bus-killing-13-was-high-on-marijuana/>

"The pick-up truck driver in this crash made terrible choices with tragic consequences,' NTSB Chairman Robert L. Sumwalt said in a news release."

- **9-year old girl killed by Inattentive Driver Possessing Marijuana**
<https://www.wmdt.com/2018/04/update-driver-identified-and-charged-with-fatal-child-hit-and-run/?fbclid=IwAR0J-eB0uD7vdhS-D90b-BaK36DCqUShxAOZAKQb41fsSJTOvaYBcGPLaEM>

*"Delaware State Police have identified and charged the the man who was wanted connection with a fatal child hit and run ... McConnell is charged with operation of a vehicle causing death of another person, **inattentive driving**, leaving scene of a collision resulting in death, failure to report a collision resulting in injury or death, and **possession of marijuana**."*

The Maryland Connection / Part 2 - Violence, Drugs, Gangs

The marijuana lobby scoffs at the notion of there being a connection to violence.

MS-13, one of the most violent drug gangs, first got into the United States as illegal immigrants through California.

They've been in or area ever since Washington, D.C. legalized recreational marijuana.

Most of the following crimes occurred in our region.

- **Montgomery homicide victim was ambushed by MS-13, according to court documents**

*"Know the connection between **marijuana use and gang violence**. This murder happened in Wheaton, MD, Montgomery County. "Detectives also said that on the night before the killing, at least **three of the suspects gathered together, smoked marijuana and discussed the ambush.**"*

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/montgomery-homicide-victim-was-ambushed-by-ms-13-according-to-court-documents/2020/06/11/786d2dd0-abad-11ea-a9d9-a81c1a491c52_story.html?fbclid=IwAR3mg1xuDMjOApRRHdIN4h1tynBbzjgSiHOBuymebYe7yc1EoilN04-VnfE

- **ICE: Undocumented immigrant, deported twice before, caught raping woman under stairwell**

*"According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Lopez-Gonzalez is a Salvadoran national believed to be associated with **MS-13** ..."*

<https://wjla.com/news/local/ice-undocumented-immigrant-deported-twice-before-caught-raping-woman-under-stairwell>

- **Police say Towson killing is linked to MS-13.**

*"MS-13 Came to our region **after Washington DC legalized recreational marijuana** ..."*

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-county/bs-md-co-ms13-response-20190906-se2u7lzkvrgexewsyzo7lnkade-story.html>

- **Police: Group of MS-13 members beat Md. man with bat in woods for refusing to join gang**

*"During their meal, two men sat down at the table and **invited the victim to smoke marijuana with them**. The victim declined."*

<https://wjla.com/news/local/ms-13-members-beat-md-man-with-bat-in-woods>

- **Police: MS-13 members in Maryland stab man more than 100 times and decapitate him**

"As many as 10 members of the MS-13 street gang lured a man into a park in Wheaton, Md., spoke with one another over walkie-talkies as he arrived, **stabbed him more than 100 times, decapitated him and then cut out his heart ...** "

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/police-ms-13-members-in-maryland-stab-man-more-than-100-times-and-decapitate-him/2017/11/22/0cba9760-cf7e-11e7-a1a3-0d1e45a6de3d_story.html

- **3 teens charged in MS-13 killing of 14-year-old girl used machete, baseball bat, police say**

"Three Maryland teenagers have been charged as adults in the **brutal slaying of a 14-year-old girl** who police said may have planned to go to authorities about a crime she and the suspects committed last month. "

<https://www.boston25news.com/news/trending-now/3-teens-charged-in-ms13-killing-of-14yearold-girl-used-machete-baseball-bat-police-say/950156117/>

More Evidence of Violence

- **A Review of Cases of Marijuana and Violence (2020)**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7084484/> *

"Here, we present 14 cases of violence with chronic marijuana users that highlight reoccurring consequences of: **marijuana induced paranoia** (exaggerated, unfounded distrust) and **marijuana induced psychosis** (radical personality change, loss of contact with reality). **When individuals suffering from pre-existing medical conditions use marijuana in an attempt to alleviate their symptoms, ultimately this worsens their conditions over time.**"

- **Violence and Cannabis Use: A Focused Review of a Forgotten Aspect in the Era of Liberalizing Cannabis (2020)**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7525024/> *

“... the focus of most cannabis-related harms has been on effects with users themselves. Harm-to-others including **injuries from violence** have nevertheless been unfortunately largely overlooked. There is meta-analytical **evidence pointing towards an association.**”

“First, evidence from meta-analytical studies in youths, intimate partners, and individuals with severe mental disorders have shown that **there is a global moderate association between cannabis use and violence** ... Preliminary data has even **highlighted a potential dose-response relationship with larger effects in more frequent users.**”

- **Marijuana: Tucson Massacre Suspect Jared Loughner Was 'Habitual' Pot User**

<https://www.laweekly.com/marijuana-tucson-massacre-suspect-jared-loughner-was-habitual-pot-user/>

“Jared Loughner, who killed 16 and severely injured Congresswoman Gabby Giffords along with 13 others, was **an admitted marijuana user**”

“Addiction medicine specialist Dr. Drew Pinsky of Celebrity Rehab has said repeatedly that **daily marijuana use triggers deep depression.**”

- **New Details Emerge About Orlando Nightclub Shooter Omar Mateen, the 29-year-old man who authorities say killed 49 people and injured 53 more at a gay nightclub in Orlando**

“In a portion of the questionnaire dealing with drug usage, **Mateen answered "yes" to having used cannabis or marijuana ...**”

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/details-emerge-orlando-nightclub-shooter-omar-mateen/story?id=39891550>

- **Denver Man Who Said Marijuana Made Him Kill His Wife Gets 30 Years** - <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/denver-man-who-said-marijuana-made-him-kill-his-wife-n744056>

- **Father charged with capital murder after stabbing toddler in Lewisville, police say** - <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/crime/2018/08/21/father-charged-with-capital-murder-after-stabbing-toddler-in-lewisville-police-say/>

*"Police said evidence indicates that Ness' attack on the toddler began inside the apartment ... Police said they found **"fresh burnt marijuana as well as a haze of smoke in the apartment."***

- **Paranoid factory worker stabbed parents to death in frenzied attack during psychotic episode after smoking cannabis for years** - <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3099469/Paranoid-factory-worker-stabbed-parents-death-frenzied-attack-psychotic-episode-smoking-cannabis-years.html#ixzz3bN9GPw6f>

*"He had been **smoking cannabis for 12 years** and was sectioned in 2011 after calling police and saying his parents had been murdered and 'replaced by imposters who were wearing their faces' ... police found around **five grams of cannabis in Dante's room** and **he admitted smoking around 12 hours before the attack**. He also told officers that **smoking the drug affected him 'strongly'**."*

- **Queens man sentenced to 5 to 15 years in prison for 2016 fatal stabbing of his poet roommate** - <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-queens-roommate-fatal-stabbing-sentencing-20200611-vrvhxbqvgixl3yp2mlgpqcu-story.html>

*"... the court finding Stetson-Shanahan **suffered a psychotic break due to his marijuana use** on the night of the killing. Authorities said the man **admitted to police that he was drinking beer and smoking pot** before the rampage."*

- **Police: Accused killer told cops that bong hits led to violent episode** - <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/police-accused-killer-told-cops-that-bong-hits-led-to-violent-episode/>

“... the 26-year-old was **stabbed 108 times** by multiple knives.”

- **Niles Township man found guilty of killing wife** - https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/publicsafety/niles-township-man-found-guilty-of-killing-wife/article_c8fa30ae-6ddc-5b13-ae1c-8181a9d581a0.html

“Lewis, 49, was accused of shooting and **killing his wife inside a small marijuana grow room** ... Lewis also was found guilty of **possession with intent to manufacture marijuana.**”

- **Japanese man Satoshi Uematsu sentenced to death for killing 19 people at disabled care home** - <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/3075346/japanese-man-satoshi-uematsu-sentenced-death-killing-19-people>

“Defence lawyers said he was **suffering from a ‘mental disorder’ linked to his use of marijuana.**”

- **Salman Abedi: How Manchester attacker turned from cannabis-smoking dropout to Isis suicide bomber** - <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/salman-abedi-manchester-attacker-isis-terrorist-europe-islamist-suicide-bomber-arena-explosion-a7753541.html>

“A short time later, he walked through the glass doors of the Manchester Arena, the city’s biggest concert venue, and blew himself up, killing 22 people and wounding 116 more.”

- **Cannabis addict obsessed with serial killings who stabbed two elderly women jailed** (January 2021) - <https://attackersmokedcannabis.com/2021/01/08/cannabis-addict-obsessed-with-serial-killings-who-stabbed-two-elderly-women-jailed/>

“Jayden Hayes attempted to kill one of his victims just 90 minutes after he had been released on bail by magistrates following other alleged offences.”

- **‘I will kill you all’ – what Sheffield machete attacker yelled inside McDonald’s as people fled in terror** - <https://attackersmokedcannabis.com/2019/08/28/i-will-kill-you-all-what-sheffield-machete-attacker-yelled-inside-mcdonalds-as-people-fled-in-terror/>

“[T]he defendant had come to the UK with his father and was ‘doing well’ until he fell in with the wrong crowd and started taking cannabis and then spice.”

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams

In addition to earlier providing information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health (marked in a red asterisk) * I also provided a quote from U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams. Below is a more detailed account of his statements.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=sxl7S9c0Vfg&t=14s>

- **“U.S. Surgeon General sounds the alarm for pregnant women and adolescents”**

*“No amount of marijuana use during **pregnancy**, or **adolescence**, is safe.”*

*“**This (warning) is being driven by the science**, and the most important thing I want people to know, is that marijuana potency has increased three-fold over the past several decades, and that’s just the plant.”*

“It’s a fundamentally different product that increases the dangers and the risks to young people and pregnant women.”

*“What we are talking here now is **science and data**.”*

*“Youth in those states (that have legalized recreational marijuana) think it’s more safe, when **the reality is that’s it’s less safe**, and that can cause **cognition problems**,*

learning attention and memory. We're seeing emergency department admissions for psychosis and poisonings go up for adolescents."

"Here's one of the scariest things that people don't know. As the THC content goes up, the danger of addiction goes up. 1 out of 5 adolescents who use marijuana will become addicted to the substance. We know that if you use one substance, you're likely to use other substances."

"My own brother is in prison due to crimes he committed to support his addiction. His first drug was marijuana."

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Dr. Adams has also released the following statement

- **U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory: Marijuana Use and the Developing Brain** - <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/addiction-and-substance-misuse/advisory-on-marijuana-use-and-developing-brain/index.html>

"I, Surgeon General VADM Jerome Adams, am emphasizing the importance of protecting our Nation from the health risks of marijuana use in adolescence and during pregnancy. Recent increases in access to marijuana and in its potency, along with misperceptions of safety of marijuana endanger our most precious resource, our nation's youth."

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"A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste"

This iconic slogan of the United Negro College Fund is more important now than ever, especially as representative of the Universal Right to grow up with a mind unencumbered by recreational drugs that falsely claim to be "healthy."

We've seen the scientific evidence. We've seen the testimony from grieving parents. Do we think it's not going to happen here?

Baltimore is already plagued by drugs and violence, but there are those who rather than fight, wish to capitulate, to surrender. This is not what "progressive" leadership is about. Those who really care for the community put its health, safety, and well-being first - Not their political careers.

What the community needs is healthy and clear young minds, minds that are full of courage and vision. Surrendering to the Marijuana Lobby sends out the message that we are helpless victims. Who here truly believes that?

Take away the Siren song, and the overt manipulation becomes far more clear.

So who are we to believe? The U.S. Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the data in the Medical Library of the National Institutes of Health, and the volumes of critical research performed by researchers, doctors, and scientists whose profession is to protect the health of our nation, - or the Marijuana Lobby, who dangles a carrot of prosperity before our communities, while continuing to ignore or denigrate those who are concerned about our nation's health?

My Personal Experience with the Marijuana Lobby

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• NORML

In March of 2017, I testified before the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, regard the recreational legalization of Marijuana.

The hearing started off with a statement by the bill's sponsor, Senator William Smith (D), Montgomery County, claiming that "No one had died from marijuana."

In my two minutes, I cited a 2014 study by the American Heart Association, that directly linked marijuana to a series of fatal heart attacks - <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/JAHA.113.000638>

Afterwards, I was followed by someone as I exited the hearing room, who verbally accosted me, saying that I was "rude" to contest the Senator's remark, and that I need to "Learn My Facts."

My response was that all I deal in is facts, and held out to him a copy of my written testimony, saying it had nearly 20 research links and articles about marijuana's dangers.

What he did was to turn around and re-enter the hearing room.

It wasn't that he didn't know about marijuana's dangers, he didn't want to know.

I was puzzled by his remark of needing to “learn my facts.” The American Heart Association is this nation’s highest authority on heart disease. There are no other facts.

Then I discovered that NORML has its own “Medical Library.”

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One document is:

“Your Government Is Lying To You (Again) About Marijuana (2003)”

- <https://norml.org/news/2003/01/15/your-government-is-lying-to-you-again-about-marijuana-norml-charges-in-new-report-rebutting-drug-czar/>

That would include the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Surgeon General, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the FDA - for starters.

The National Library of Medicine, the largest of its kind in the world, is housed in the National Institutes of Health. Typing “Marijuana Effects” into the search box yields 17,225 results.

Are we to believe that all research that points to marijuana’s dangers are “Lies”
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=marijuana+effects>

NORML states: *“This report responds to a recent letter from the Drug Czar’s office urging law enforcement officials to “aggressively prosecute” marijuana violators. The letter further advocates prosecutors “tell the truth” about marijuana, and then lists more than a dozen unsubstantiated, misleading, and fallacious statements regarding cannabis.”*

This trouble for NORML is, as supported by the research and statements I’ve shared, these *“unsubstantiated, misleading, and fallacious statements regarding cannabis”* are not only real, but deadly.

This is how NORML indoctrinates people, including legislators, into believing marijuana is harmless, by telling them they’re being continually lied to, which they are indeed.

It’s why teenagers, in spite of all the warnings, smoke, get addicted, develop mental health problems, and sometimes in desperation take their own lives.

We as a people, as a community, as a nation, need to take a stand against this.

- **The NORML Truth Report** <https://norml.org/marijuana/library/truth-report/>
“Your Government Is Lying To You (Again) About Marijuana”

“The White House’s anti-marijuana propaganda campaign has continued to take on an increasingly alarmist and extremist tone, arguably crossing over any reasonable line of probity. The Administration’s latest rhetoric does not qualify as mere exaggeration; they are flat-out lying to the American public about marijuana.”

Besides accusations of lying, there’s extremism. In psychology, this is known as projection. Even as far back as the late 60s when I became addicted, we knew marijuana made one paranoid.

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- **Recent Medical Marijuana Research (Fallacies)** <https://norml.org/marijuana/library/recent-medical-marijuana-research>

The FDA has only approved four medications that involve marijuana, for three specific uses.

This NORML document presents a list of 24 treatments that involve marijuana.

I’m sure that as scientific research continues, more legitimate uses will be found. However, as with many of NORML’s statements, this document is misleading.

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Rheumatoid Arthritis is listed, but then I found this from the **Rheumatology Network**:

*“Many rheumatology patients may seek cannabinoids to relieve pain, but **solid evidence for effectiveness is lacking ...**”*

*“The groundswell of advocacy driving the use of medicinal herbal cannabis is **contrary to medical opinion ...** “*

*“Contrary to common belief, **herbal cannabis is not an innocuous substance, either for short- or long-term use, and its effects undermine the primary goals for treatment of rheumatic pain, namely reduction of symptoms and maintenance of function.**”*

PTSD is also listed, however the **U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs** along with the **National Center for PTSD** state: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/consult/2016lecture_archive/11162016_lecture_slides.pdf

Short-term use

- Impaired short-term memory, making it difficult to learn and to retain information
- Impaired motor coordination, interfering with driving skills and increasing the risk of injuries
- Altered judgment, increasing the risk of sexual behaviors that facilitate the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases
- In high doses, paranoia and psychosis

Long-term use

- Addiction (in about 9% of users overall, 17% of those who begin use in adolescence, and 25 to 50% of those who are daily users)
- Altered brain development
- Poor educational outcome, with increased likelihood of dropping out of school
- Cognitive impairment, with lower IQ among those who were frequent users during adolescence
- Diminished life satisfaction and achievement (determined on the basis of subjective and objective measures as compared with such ratings in the general population)
- Symptoms of chronic bronchitis
- Increased risk of chronic psychosis disorders (including schizophrenia in persons with a disposition to such disorders)

“As marijuana use becomes legal in some states, the dominant public opinion is that marijuana is a harmless source of mood alteration. Although the harms associated with marijuana use have not been well studied, enough information is available to cause concern.”

Originally published in the New England Journal of Medicine - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262846407_Adverse_Health_Effects_of_Marijuana_Use

Hepatitis C is also mentioned by NORML, however another research article in the National Health Library says: **“We conclude that daily cannabis use is strongly associated with moderate to severe fibrosis and that HCV-infected individuals should be counseled to reduce or abstain from cannabis use.”**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3184401/>

Hypertension: The 2014 American Heart Association study I cited earlier mentions elevated blood-pressure levels. THC gets to the brain by latching onto red-blood cell oxygen receptors. The brain, being deprived of oxygen, instructs the heart to beat faster.

Also, this piece from the Harvard Medical School, originally published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology states: “*They concluded that **marijuana users had a higher risk of death related to high blood pressure than non-users. In addition to increasing the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure can lead to kidney disease and heart failure.***” <https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/marijuana-linked-to-high-blood-pressure-risk>

Multiple Sclerosis: The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has published the following statement:

*“The AAN findings (American Academy of Neurology) state that smoked cannabis research studies **have not produced enough evidence to assess its safety or effectiveness for treating MS symptoms** including spasticity, pain, balance, posture and cognition changes ... Cannabis is a complex substance which may contain many different components affecting the body. Production of marijuana for medical use is not standardized or supervised by the FDA or any other agency ... The guideline notes that cannabis usage, as with any therapy, may result in both potential benefits and potential side effects. For these cannabis derivatives, **the most commonly reported side effects were dizziness, drowsiness, difficulty concentrating and memory disturbance.** The guideline also points out that **the long-term safety of cannabis use for MS symptom management is not yet known.**”*

- **Marijuana Policy Project**

“Obstruction and lies is all they’ve got - let’s disarm the prohibitionists today” <https://ashevilleprogressive.com/site/uncategorized/24762/>

So starts a letter I received last year, written by Marijuana Policy Project’s Executive Director, Steve Hawkins. From a psychological perspective, it, is an excellent example of “Projection.”

“Projection” is a process by which an individual who cannot consciously confront his own failings, “projects” them onto others. It is one of the more common psychological defense mechanisms.

Relying on “dishonesty and blatant falsehoods to achieve its goal” is the description of Marijuana Policy Project.

Rather than openly discuss the growing problems with marijuana that are being reported by victims, and supported by research, Steve Hawkins, Marijuana Policy Project, and NORML, instead denigrate those who are concerned for the health of our nation, especially its youth, as being “Lying Prohibitionists.”

The reason can clearly be seen in MPP’s logo “We Change Laws.” In order to do that, they have to influence the minds of legislators and as we all know, propaganda is rampant in politics.

Throughout the ages, one of the greatest forms of trickery has been the siren song of money, prosperity.

That spell must never be broken, because to do so risks a sudden glance beyond the mesmerizing scenery, into the dimness beyond.

For the marijuana industry and its lobbyists, it is a glimpse into hell - a hell that consists of the CDC, the U.S. Surgeon General, the National Institutes of Health, the American Heart Association, the American Journal of Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association, Baltimore Sun, Dr. Steven Simerville - St. Mary-Corwin Hospital, European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, Frontiers of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, Mental Health Association of Maryland, National Center for PTSD, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Library of Medicine, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, National Public Radio, NBC News, New England Journal of Medicine, Psychology Today, Time Magazine, Washington Post, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Americans Against Legalizing Marijuana, American Anti Drug Council, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Attacker Smoked cannabis.com, Community Alliance for Drug Free Youth, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, Drug Free America Foundation, Families Anonymous, Five Minutes of Courage, Marijuana Anonymous, Marijuana Victims Alliance, National Families in Action, One Chance to Grow Up, the Other Side of Cannabis, [Partnership for Drug-Free Kids](#), Smart Approaches to Marijuana

A Sampling of Marijuana Victims





