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 consultative 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-panades 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 yoga as the next step beyond drugs.

LESLIE FIEDLER, 58, has established himself as one of the nation's leading literary critics, a prominent liberal disserter from standard liberal beliefs and the man who outpsyched the analysts by alleging that three of our most wholesome drug 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 boozehounds—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 L.L.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 master's 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?
ANSLINGER: Cannabis stands just where it has for the past 1000 years. In the East, it appeals to a minority of the population—religious ascetics, the poor and the dissolute. In the West, like other hallucinogens, it is used by psychologically and socially maladjusted persons who have difficulty in conforming to social norms. But it has no general appeal to the public at large in any country.

FORT: That's not quite true. The World Health Organization has estimated that there are at least 250,000,000 regular Cannabis users in the world. We have between 12,000,000 and 20,000,000 of them right here in the United States, according to my own surveys and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the number is increasing. And pot, incidentally, isn't even the most popular illegal drug. To be perfectly accurate, tobacco and alcohol are illegal for adolescents in most states, and their widespread use by this group is much more prevalent than the use of Cannabis.

OTERI: I agree. Today, pot is smoked at every college campus, from Maine all the way across to Oregon. The ones we see in court are just the ones who are unlucky enough to get caught.

ANSLINGER: Well, I can quote Dr. Seegers, one of the American Medical Association’s leading experts on drugs. He says, and these are his exact words, “If marijuana had universal appeal, one would expect to find it accepted and used socially in moderate amounts in Asia and Africa by a majority of the population, but on the contrary in most countries, regular users are held in low esteem.”

FORT: Nonsense. In India, the caste that is held in the highest esteem of all—the Brahmins, or priests—are the heaviest Cannabis users. They’re the religious ascetics you mentioned a minute ago. They use it in the form of bhang, a sort of milk shake made from marijuana leaves. In the Arabic countries, most of the adult population are users of another Cannabis drug, hashish—which comes from the resin of the Cannabis plant, unlike marijuana, which comes from the leaves, and is a much stronger drug than either marijuana or bhang. Throughout Africa, most tribes have some knowledge of marijuana or hashish or both. And in America, the whole pattern has changed in the past decade. Marijuana is definitely no longer the drug of such excluded minorities as the blacks and the Spanish Americans; it’s smoked by people of all social classes, races, religions, occupations and ages.

FIEDLER: I'll agree with all of that except the last word. There is still a real split between the generations about pot, and people of 40 or over who have tried it are relatively few. In fact, I would say this particular generation gap might almost be called chemical warfare—the potheads versus the boozeheads. Actually, though, it would be more accurate to call it religious warfare—but only the potheads realize that there is a religious issue at stake.

PLAYBOY: This religious argument is the basis of Dr. Timothy Leary’s proselytizing for marijuana. He claims that we would all be better and wiser if we combined marijuana and silent meditation, as the Brahmins do, instead of alcohol and conversation. How do you gentlemen feel about that argument?

BURROUGHS: I agree. Americans would not only be better and wiser, as Leary says; they’d also be much less boring.

WATTS: I have smoked marijuana in places where it is quite legal and it can be a profound religious experience. Its use as an aid to meditation and yoga has been dated back to at least 700 A.D. If accompanied by such disciplines, marijuana can definitely give you a new insight into people’s motivations and into how the world itself works. You don’t have such a violent urgency about life; you are quieter, more at peace and have a very clear sensation of the continuity and harmony of your own being with all else. Isn’t that what religion is all about?

ANSLINGER: That’s ridiculous. A person under the influence of marijuana can get so violent that it takes about five policemen to hold him down.

FORT: Again, nonsense. There isn’t a shred of evidence that marijuana in itself provokes violence.

BURROUGHS: I would certainly agree with Dr. Fort. After seeing people use all sorts of drugs—in the United States, Mexico, South America, Europe and North Africa—I have no hesitation in saying that Cannabis is the least harmful of all the drugs in common use, with the exception of coffee and tea, of course. I have never seen anyone become violent while using Cannabis.

COBURN: It’s not that simple. I think that some people might become violent while on pot. But you should look at the whole background in such a case. More than likely, there is a psychological disturbance present to begin with, and then the individual is soaked in our environment. Fresh mass media until he thinks the only answer to every problem is the quick, violent solution. If he happens to be smoking weed when he commits his crime, this is probably the least significant of all the factors that lead him to blow up. And, frankly, I’m inclined to suspect that the effect is usually the opposite. There are probably countless people walking the streets today who have been prevented from attacking others because they sat down and smoked a joint instead and it pacified them. On the other hand, if they had gone into a bar and gotten drunk blind, they might have come roaring out in an alcoholic rage, looked for the guy they were sore at and really blasted him.

BURROUGHS: I’m sure of it; alcohol provokes more crimes than any other drug in the world. But getting back to pot itself, I would like to point out that the La Guardia Commission Report of 1944 reached the conclusion that it did not provoke violence, and so has every other scientific study I’ve looked at. The whole mythology of the pot-crazed killer or rapist is just something dreamed up by the tabloids.

ANSLINGER: Rubbish. Alcohol is always dragged into the conversation when people are defending marijuana, but it’s just irrelevant. It has nothing to do with the drug problem. I want to make it very clear that this supposedly harmless marijuana smoking is regarded by several doctors as a sign of incipient insanity. And there’s a lot of evidence that marijuana even causes psychosis directly. Doctors in India, Egypt and Indonesia have presented proof that continued use of hashish results in commitment to mental hospitals.

FORT: These studies from the Eastern world are based on anecdotes and personal estimates. There are no valid statistics based on scientifically controlled experiments from those areas.

OTERI: In the Boston trial where I first attempted to have the anti-marijuana laws declared unconstitutional, one witness for the prosecution quoted the very same studies. When I cross-examined him, he didn’t even know if the determination of psychosis had been made by a psychiatrist or a ward attendant.

BURROUGHS: I have lived eight years in Morocco, where Cannabis is used by a large percentage of the population, and I’ve never seen or heard of a case of psychosis that could be attributed to the drug. Local doctors I’ve talked with confirmed this impression.

FIEDLER: I think we have to get back to the religious aspect in order to understand drug prejudices. Drugs have always been considered either sacred or diabolical. The background of drug use in history involves charms, magic potions, holy sacraments and Devil’s orgies. In more advanced societies, the same cluster of ideas carries over into our modern distinctions between legal intoxicants, which are good, and illegal dope, which is bad. But that is purely a matter of social definition. In the Moslem countries, for example, it is Cannabis that is the legal intoxicant and alcohol the illegal dope. Let me add that these prejudices, although irrational, are not arbitrary. Each society permits the chemical aids that reinforce its own basic values. A quietist society will prefer the opiates, while an aggressive society such as ours will prefer alcohol. The Moslems, like our young people, choose Cannabis,
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 pranayam breath control and that doesn't mix with psychedelic; 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 America's 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 preconditioned 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.
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 alcoholic 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: Who's to judge?

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 back yards 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 last 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 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.

ANSLINGER: This is obvious, I'd say, to anyone 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 drop-out 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 skin 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 anything 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 Scota 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. One pattern to patterns of nature exhibited by branching ferns and mosaics. An LSD experience is multidimensional and electronic, almost science-fictionish, compared with mescaline or psilocybin, which are more earthly 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. 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 crab. 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=mc²!" 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; phenethylamine derivatives, such as mescaline, the active ingredient of the peyote cactus; triptamine derivatives, such as psilocybin: peperidyl benzilate esters, of which JB329, or Ditran, is an example; and phenycyclidine, or Sernyl.

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

FOFT: 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 teenage boppers. 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 is 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 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. Finlatur’s whole approach is dead wrong. To talk about “controlled” research with LSD is an absurdity. Only a very naive 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 streetlight 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.
in spite of the press's melodramatic harp, but my impression is that only about one drug again of the unpleasant consequences, also, are ing on suicides occurring during such just acute panic or psychotic reactions; major risks, and I can't support the mind-expanding drug may enrich you has never charted. The great Oriental be the privilege of any rational, responsi sions carry over after the drug has worn off. I have had the experience of fully seeing a painting for the first time. Let er, I 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 un- predictably.

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 if 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 harking 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 micro- scopic menace by comparison. But it has major risks, and I can't support the mystical evangelism of Dr. Leary and Ram Dass.

I stick to my position: It should 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.

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.

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.

Are there any foundation in fact for the allegations that LSD leads to blindness, death or birth defects?

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.

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 chromosomal 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.

You can learn that, without psyche-delics, 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 breaks, a finding that was sensationalized 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 breaks 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.

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.

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.

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 cumulative 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—theoretical—such as all the talking—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 junkyard 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...
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 Anthony F. Fokas, who recovered from a cancerous growth on the tongue. He smoked twenty cigarettes a day. When he was a boy his parents had given him a book about LSD. At the age of sixty-five he had the courage to take it seriously. He did six doses of LSD. At the time of the sixth dose he felt that he had a direct experience of God. His experience was so clear and prolonged that there now is a new lease of life for him.

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.

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 lusk 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 conducive 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 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 narc need the Syndicate and the Syndicate needs the narcotics 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 in 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. For the most part, at least, 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-heroin drug. Since all monopolistic and hierarchical systems are based on keeping people in anxiety, however, it's not 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 most addicts think just don't work. It's really the same approach that Alcoholics Anonymous uses for boozed 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 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 get the addicts 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 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 has little interest 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 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 desensitize 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 bella-donna, 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 hypocricy.

**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 psychedelic drugs 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—where 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?

OTEI: 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 propose 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 type I have ever heard. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs arranges 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.

FINITATOR: 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 honored 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 nuns' community.

RAMDASS: 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 totalitarianists. 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.

OTEI: 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 licenses 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, deceits 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
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 degenerative. 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 claims. LSD has helped some with these problems and is likely to be of benefit to others, but only in select ed 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.

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 regulate international 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 that Leary 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 McPherson 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 1957 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, where drug 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 be the contradictions and absurdities of present legislation will 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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PLAYBOY PANEL

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course, it did drive the traffic into Detroit
and Chicago, but those cities are in states
that haven’t enacted strong enough laws
in this area.
OTERI: I still say that marijuana is rela-
tively harmless and should be legal—
period. As for heroin—addiction is a
sickness and should be treated that way,
by medical men, not policemen. We
should lean heavily on the heroindealer,
but we shouldn’t punish the user.
ANSLINGER: Do you know what the con-
sequence of legalizing marijuana would be?
Right now, we have 50,000 deaths every
year caused by drunken drivers.
Make marijuana as easily available as
booze and I predict that we’d see at least
three times that number, around 100,000,
additional deaths on our highways every
year.
FORT: I’m not at all sure of that. So far,
the only investigation of the effect of
marijuana on driving ability, conducted
by the Washington State Bureau of
Motor Vehicles, indicated that, while
inexperienced users are somewhat inept
behind the wheel, habitual users drive
safely, in marked contrast to alcohol. But
as preventive medicine, one should avoid
both booze and grass while driving. I’d
say.
ANSLINGER: That test is very unconvinc-
ing. All the experiments were done in a
laboratory with simulated driving condi-
tions and they didn’t actually take any of
the subjects out on the road. Police
chiefs in Africa have repeatedly told
me that the hashish-smoking driver is the
worst possible risk behind the wheel,
because of the distortion of distance and
time associated with Cannabis drugs. I’m
convinced that legalizing pot will produce
carnage on our highways even
worse than a second Vietnam.
OTERI: I hope you’ll permit me to trust
the laboratory test more than the opin-
ions of your police-chief friends. I also
wanted to say how pleased I am that even
you, a few moments ago, agreed that
penalties for possession should be lower-
ed. That statement and the Nixon
program, unsatisfactory as both are, rep-
resent real victories for our side. When
I first got involved in this fight, back in
1967, Dr. Fort was virtually the only pro-
fessional in the country attacking this law,
and many of my colleagues thought I
had gone crazy. Now everybody—from Mar-
garet Mead to Government officials
such as Mr. Finlator and Dr. Stanley
Yolles of the National Institute of Men-
tal Health—is speaking out against the
harshness of our present pot laws. Nix-
on’s proposals merely register the fact
that this change of opinion is being felt
in Washington. I stick to my prediction:
When the dust settles, Congress will give
up entirely on trying to prosecute people
for simple possession. I also think, even-
tually, that small dealers will be left
alone. The average sale doesn’t involve
some big-time majoso dealing in 100-
pound loads; it’s just some college kid
selling half an ounce to a friend. I find
it absurd to set the penalty in such a
case at the same level as the penalty for
a gangster who smuggles heroin across
the border.
WATTS: Possession of any drug shouldn’t
be a crime, and I hope Congress will
realize this. The effect of making simple
possession into a felony is that I can get
rid of any business rival or any neighbor
I dislike merely by planting something
on him and then making an anonymous
phone call to the police. That is Kafka-
esque. The law should state clearly that
nobody can be prosecuted for what is
found on his person or in his home, unless
there is clear-cut evidence that he
was about to sell it. Speaking pragmati-
cally, I also think that legalization of
possession is in the wind because the
cigarette companies are sure to recognize
the commercial possibilities and put
their lobbyists to work. As for other
drugs, I’m sure the Government will
continue severe restrictions on heroin,
amphetamines and LSD. But as far as
LSD is concerned, such laws will do no
good, since acid is completely odorless,
colorless, tasteless and generally unde-
tectable. The laws will merely escalate
black-market operations, putting more
bad acid into circulation and creating
more bad trips. Young people will go on
taking it, anyway, despite these risks.
What I personally would advise is allow-
ing Sandoz Laboratories, where LSD was
created, to sell it to psychedelic insti-
tutes, where it would be researched and
administered by properly trained physi-
cians.
COBURN: I don’t even know whether LSD
should be in the hands of doctors. But
maybe that would be an intermediate
step. Eventually, the policies for psyche-
delics should be controlled by a panel of
educated citizens, including artists as
well as lawyers and scientists.
FORT: I’m much more pessimistic than
the rest of the panel. I think the new
pattern of drug laws will give the appear-
ce of greater rationality than those we now
have on the books, but this will be Illusory. Specifically, I think the penal-
ties for use of marijuana will de-
crease, but then, later in the Seventies,
perhaps increase again. This will be
because marijuana will be incorrectly re-
classified as a hallucinogen rather than a
narcotic, and, due to the sensationalism
of certain politicians and the press, the
word hallucinogen is going to become as
loaded with demonological connotations
as narcotic ever was. But use will in-
crease, leading to an informal policy like
our present practice toward illegal booze
in the hands of teenagers: selective and
hypocritical partial nonenforcement of
the law. Meanwhile, and most distressing
of all, the two drugs most widely abused and most harmful to the American people as a whole—alcohol and tobacco—will continue to be ignored.

FORT: Whatever Congress says, people will use what they want—but I think LSD is making itself obsolete. All acid does is show you the possibility of another type of consciousness and give you hope. But your own impurities keep bringing you down. It's a yo-yo phenomenon—getting high and coming down. After a while, you dig that if you want to stay high, you have to work on yourself. Also, LSD values are coming to us now through rock music and TV; a 13-year-old can get high and see through the illusions of space and time without even taking acid. LSD isn't necessary anymore.

BURROUGHS: If society really wants to curtail drug use, it must alter the conditions that give rise to it. The plain fact is that modern urban life is virtually intolerable. But Ram Dass is pointing up what I suggested earlier: that anything that can be done chemically can be done in other ways. You don't need drugs to get high. Academies should be established for young people—academies teaching Zen, karate and nonchemical turn-ons as sensory withdrawal, control of waves and stroboscopic lights. I would also urge the use of tape recorders to make people aware of their verbal-association lines, to break free of word magic. Techniques now being used for control of thought could be used, instead, for liberation. Insight could be trained into the nature of human speech and words turned again into usable tools, instead of instruments of opinion control, once labels and obloquies are no longer confused with each other. Students would be conditioned to look at the facts before formulating any verbal pattern. This program is essentially a disintoxication from inner fear and inner control, a liberation of thought and energy to prepare a new generation for the adventure of space. With such possibilities open to them, I don't if many young people would want dangerous drugs like cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and barbiturates.

COPERN: They won't reject psychedelics, though. Man will always want to explore inner space as well as outer space.

BURROUGHS: To explore inner space, I think, is to explore outer space.

COPERN: Exactly. Psychedelics bring to consciousness something that is real. The social changes that have taken place in recent years—such as the popular uprisings against the Vietnam war, for example—were astounding and beautiful and related in some way to psychedelics. If the Government started practicing what it preached, it would eliminate a lot of the negative vibrations being felt by the young people who now want to drop out. They feel it is necessary to form a new union, maybe a religiously inspired tribe of some kind aimed at some sort of self-evolving school that will teach us how to be more human and less animal. The drug revolution, like the social revolution, isn't over.

FORT: I admit we must expect an ever-increasing spiral of greater drug use, including newly synthesized drugs. This will be true as long as the many social and psychological reasons for drug usage remain unchanged. The widespread use of marijuana by Peace Corps volunteers and GIs, both in this country and abroad, is even more symptomatic than use by the civilian public. Most Americans beyond childhood are alienated from their work, their family and society; are underemployed or unemployed; find school, jobs or even leisure-time pursuits boring and meaningless; and many of our institutions and official leaders are outmoded and incapable of responding to the modern world. The increasing use of pot by the civilian public is a measure of their disillusionment with our leaders. Ronald Lee Ridenhour, the soldier who exposed the Pinkville massacre, has revealed that use of Benzedrine and even morphine is also on the rise among our troops there. Other reports indicate that heavy alcohol abuse is also occurring, and home-brew booze can be found in most platoons. The same feeling of being betrayed—and the same resort to any drug in sight—will continue, in the Army and out, as long as we have a crisis of mediocrity and senility pervading our bureaucratic-political process. The only question is: Will we become a civilized nation with rational and humane priorities or will we continue the punitive approach that has failed so miserably in the past? The choice is ours; and the decision is an urgent one.

PLAYBOY: If it were possible to summarize a consensus of the views expressed during this discussion, it might be possible to draw some conclusions and make some predictions; but the clear-cut absence of such a convergence suggests that the issues are as clouded as the future of drugs and of drug legislation. But even if agreement has not been reached, you have all performed a public service by taking the time to debate the problems and prospects confronting us, as you see them. This, in itself, must be a step toward clarification and toward wiser public policies. Thank you, gentlemen.