



Wednesday, September 22, 2010

# Nixon Tapes Reveal Twisted Roots Of Marijuana Prohibition

## White House Conversations Reveal Prejudices, Culture War Behind Nixon's Drug War

### The Former Governor Delivered An Honest, Thorough Report. The President Wanted Something Different.

Washington, DC: "We need, and I use the word 'all out war,' or all fronts . . . ." That was Richard Nixon's reaction to his national commission's recommendation that marijuana no longer be a criminal offense, according to Nixon's Oval Office tapes. The year after Nixon's "all out war" marijuana arrests jumped by over 100,000 people.

(Download a PDF copy of the CSDP Research Report, ["Nixon Tapes Show Roots of Marijuana Prohibition: Misinformation, Culture Wars and Prejudice,"](#) as well as [text transcripts of portions of Nixon White House taped conversations](#), including the portions excerpted in the report. Also, check out this column written by humorist Gene Weingarten of the Washington Post on March 21, 2002, based on CSDP's research work, ["Just What Was He Smoking?"](#) Read this op-ed by CSDP President Kevin B. Zeese, ["Once-Secret 'Nixon Tapes' Show Why The US Outlawed Pot."](#) Finally, review the Shafer Commission's report, ["Marihuana, A Signal of Misunderstanding,"](#) by [clicking here.](#))

The Nixon White House tapes from 1971-1972 demonstrate that the foundation of the modern war on marijuana was Nixonian prejudice, culture war and misinformation. CSDP's Doug McVay spent several days at the National Archives listening to the Nixon White House tapes to find conversations about drug policy, especially regarding the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse ("the Shafer Commission"), appointed by President Nixon. He found: Nixon blaming calls for marijuana legalization on Jews; Nixon blaming the decline and fall of ancient Rome, and of the Catholic Church, on homosexuality; and Nixon criticizing the CBS sitcom "All in the Family" as a show which promoted homosexuality. (Check out [some of these transcripts.](#))

More importantly, Nixon made clear several times that he wanted a report which supported his views and 'tough on crime' policies, no matter what the facts might be. To his credit, Governor Shafer delivered instead an honest report, with conclusions based on all the evidence -- even though at the time he was being considered for a federal judgeship (needless to say, he didn't get it).

"At a critical juncture when the United States decided how it would handle marijuana, President Nixon's prejudices did more to dominate policy than the thoughtful and extensive review of his own Blue Ribbon Commission," observed Kevin Zeese, President of Common Sense for Drug Policy. "If we had followed the advice of the experts rather than Nixon's prejudices we would have less marijuana use, be spending less money on marijuana enforcement and many million less people would have been arrested." Since the Commission issued its recommendation that marijuana offenses not be a crime, fifteen million people have been arrested on marijuana charges.

## Highlights of Nixon comments on marijuana:

- Jews and marijuana: "I see another thing in the news summary this morning about it. That's a funny thing, every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish. What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob, what is the matter with them? I suppose it's because most of them are psychiatrists . . ."
- Marijuana and the culture wars: "You see, homosexuality, dope, immorality in general. These are the enemies of strong societies. That's why the Communists and the left-wingers are pushing the stuff, they're trying to destroy us."
- Marijuana compared to alcohol: marijuana consumers smoke "to get high" while "a person drinks to have fun." Nixon also saw marijuana leading to loss of motivation and discipline but claimed: "At least with liquor I don't lose motivation."
- Marijuana and political dissent: ". . . radical demonstrators that were here . . . two weeks ago . . . They're all on drugs, virtually all."
- Drug education: "Enforce the law, you've got to scare them."

**The Links:** Download a PDF copy of the CSDP Research Report, "[Nixon Tapes Show Roots of Marijuana Prohibition: Misinformation, Culture Wars and Prejudice](#)," [here](#). Also, [click here to download text transcripts of portions of Nixon White House taped conversations](#), including the portions excerpted in the report. Check out this column written by humorist Gene Weingarten of the Washington Post on March 21, 2002, based on CSDP's research work, "[Just What Was He Smoking?](#)" Read this op-ed by CSDP President Kevin B. Zeese, "[Once-Secret 'Nixon Tapes' Show Why The US Outlawed Pot](#)." Finally, review the Shafer Commission's report, "[Marihuana, A Signal of Misunderstanding](#)," by [clicking here](#).



[Common Sense for Drug Policy.](#)

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## **Nixon Tapes Show Roots of Marijuana Prohibition: Misinformation, Culture Wars and Prejudice**

Declassified Oval Office tapes from 1971-1972 demonstrate that the foundation of marijuana criminalization is misinformation, culture war and prejudice. The release of the newest set of tapes coincides with the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse (“the Shafer Commission”) appointed by President Nixon, and highlights the discrepancy between Nixon’s personal agenda and his Commission’s highly researched recommendations.

The most important recommendation of the Commission was the decriminalization of possession and non-profit transfer of marijuana. Decriminalization meant there should be no punishment – criminal or civil – under state or federal law.<sup>1</sup> The day before the Commission released its report President Nixon told Bob Haldeman: “We need, and I use the word ‘all out war,’ or all fronts . . . have to attack on all fronts.”<sup>2</sup> The conversation went on to plan a speech about why Nixon opposed marijuana legalization and doing “a drug thing every week” during the 1972 presidential election year.

One year after Nixon’s “all out war” marijuana arrests jumped over 100,000 to 420,700 people. Since the Commission recommended marijuana offenses not be a crime nearly 15 million people have been arrested.<sup>3</sup>

### **The National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse: Background**

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Shafer Commission is on March 22, 2002. When the Congress passed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse and Control Act of 1970 it created a “Presidential Commission” to report on the

<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, “Marihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding; First Report, Washington, DC, U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1972, pg. 151. The report of the Shafer Commission is available online at:

[www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/library/studies/nc/nemenu.htm](http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/library/studies/nc/nemenu.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Oval Office Tapes, March 21, 1972, 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 690-11 -- in this segment, the President is meeting with H. R. (“Bob”) Haldeman. Excerpts from Nixon tape transcripts begin on page five infra. A more complete set of transcripts of conversations about marijuana and the Shafer Commission are available at [www.csdp.org](http://www.csdp.org).

<sup>3</sup> See “Marijuana Arrests 1972-2000” on page six.

effects of marijuana and other drugs and recommend appropriate drug policies. Congress acknowledged it lacked reliable information about marijuana in particular and wanted the commission to advise it on where to place it in the Controlled Substances Act as well as on other marijuana policies.<sup>4</sup>

President Nixon appointed Governor Raymond P. Shafer of Pennsylvania, a former prosecutor known as a “law and order” governor, to head the Commission. The bipartisan panel included a congressman and senator

from each party, as well as, nine people appointed by Richard Nixon including the dean of a law school, the head of a mental health hospital, and a retired Chicago police captain.<sup>5</sup>

The Shafer Commission conducted the most extensive and comprehensive examination of marijuana ever performed by the US government. They recorded thousands of pages of transcripts of formal and informal hearings, solicited all points of view, including those of public officials, community leaders, professional experts and students. They commissioned a nationwide survey of public beliefs, information and experience. In addition, they conducted separate surveys of opinion among district attorneys, judges, probation officers, clinicians, university health officials and “free clinic” personnel. They commissioned more than 50 projects, ranging from a study of the effects of marijuana on man to a field survey of enforcement of the marijuana laws in six metropolitan jurisdictions.

<sup>4</sup>House Report No. 91-1444, Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, page 4579 “In addition, section 601 of the bill provides for the establishment of a Presidential Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse. The recommendations of this Commission will be of aid in determining the appropriate disposition of this questions in the future.”

<sup>5</sup>The Honorable Raymond Philip Shafer, Chairman, Dana L. Farnsworth, M.D., Vice Chairman, Henry Brill, M.D., The Honorable Tim Lee Carter, U.S. Representative, Kentucky Joan Ganz Cooney, Charles O. Galvin, S.J.D., John A. Howard, Ph. D., The Honorable Harold E. Hughes, U.S. Senator, Iowa, The Honorable Jacob K. Javits, U.S. Senator, New York, The Honorable Paul G. Rogers, U.S. Representative, Florida, Maurice H. Seevers, M.D., Ph. D., and J. Thomas Ungerleider, M.D., Mitchell Ware, J.D. and its Executive Director Michael R. Sonnenreich.

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This inquiry focused on the American experience. However, the Commission was well aware from the outset that the scope of marijuana use in the United States differs considerably from that in other countries where the drug has been used for centuries. Accordingly, the Commission sought to put the American experience in perspective by seeing the situation first hand in India, Greece, North Africa, Jamaica, Afghanistan, and other countries.

### **President Nixon on the National Commission**

When President Nixon first heard that the Commission was going in the decriminalization direction he warned Governor Shafer stating: “. . . you’re enough of a ‘pro’ to know that for you to come out with something that would run counter to what the Congress feels and what the country feels and what we’re planning to do, would make your Commission just look bad as hell.”<sup>6</sup> Nixon urges Shafer: “Keep your Commission in line.” Nixon also urges Shafer to not “go to HEW” (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare) describing them as “a bunch of muddle-headed psychiatrists” who let “their hearts run their brains, and it should be the other way around.” It is worth noting that, at this time, Governor Shafer was also being considered for a federal judgeship – an appointment he

never received.

Nixon also explains that the image of the Commission is important:

“You see, the thing that is so terribly important here is that it not appear that the Commission’s frankly just a bunch of do-gooders, I mean, they say they’re a bunch of old men [who] don’t understand, that’s fine, I wouldn’t mind that, but if they get the idea you’re just a bunch of do-gooders that are going to come out with a quote ‘soft on marijuana’ report, that’ll destroy it, right off the bat. I think there’s a need to come out with a report that is totally oblivious to some obvious differences between marijuana and other drugs, other dangerous drugs, there are differences. And also that you don’t go into the matter of penalties and that sort of thing, as to whether there should be uniformity in penalties, whether in courts, I’d much rather have uniformity than diversity, but uh, different approaches.”

<sup>6</sup>Oval Office Tapes, September 9, 1971, 3:03 pm - 3:34 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 568-4 -- The President met with Raymond P. Shafer, Jerome H. Jaffe, and Egil G. (“Bud”) Krogh, Jr.; the White House photographer was present at the beginning of the meeting.

President Nixon let Governor Shafer know that he was strongly against marijuana legalization saying he has “very strong feelings [on marijuana] the, best final analysis, that once you start down that road the chances of going further down that road are greater. I’m aware some disagree with that . . .”

They also discussed whether the Commission would recommend legalization of marijuana. Shafer acknowledged that there were some commissioners who favored legalization but they were seeking unanimity and Shafer assured the president that the Commission would not go that far. Egil Krogh asks him directly if the Commission is supporting legalization.

- Krogh: “So far you’re staying away from any possible endorsement of legalization of marijuana.”

- Shafer: “Absolutely, absolutely.”

- Nixon: “I would keep in mind that, you [unintelligible], you would run too strongly against the public tide, but suppose it ought to be done.”

- Shafer: “Well, I understand that.”

- Nixon: “You’re just, you have a great problem.”

- Shafer: “We have, we have four congressman on the Commission, two Republicans, two Democrats, and, at least one of the opposition would like to take over.

We’ve prevented that. I think that we’ve got the Commission moving in the right direction. We’re seeking unanimity, I think we’re going to have that, and we’re staying away from that, quote legalization endquote, syndrome that could create, uh, very--“

### **President Nixon on Marijuana**

One of the primary goals of the Shafer Commission was to separate myth from fact. The Commission noted:

“Recognizing the extensive degree of misinformation about marihuana as a drug we have tried to demythologize it. Viewing the use of marihuana in its

**“That some of these original fears were unfounded and that others were exaggerated has been clear for many years. Yet, many of these early beliefs continue to affect contemporary public attitudes and concerns.”**

*National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse  
March 22, 1972*

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wider social context, we have tried to desymbolize it.”<sup>7</sup>  
But, from the Nixon tapes it is evident that the President believed many of the myths about marijuana and tied it very closely to the blacks, Jews and the counterculture. Nixon wasn’t as concerned with correcting misinformation. His view regarding educating the public on marijuana was: “Enforce the law, you’ve got to scare them.”<sup>8</sup>

After a lengthy process of taking testimony, surveying the public and reviewing research the Commission appointed by Nixon concluded: “The most notable statement that can be made about the vast majority of marihuana users – experimenters and intermittent users – is that they are essentially indistinguishable from their non-marihuana using peers by any fundamental criterion other than their marihuana use.”<sup>9</sup>

But, President Nixon, speaking with Bob Haldeman in the Oval Office one month after he had been told his national commission would urge marijuana decriminalization had a different agenda: “I want a Goddamn strong statement about marijuana. Can I get

<sup>7</sup>National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, “First Report,” page 167

<sup>8</sup>Oval Office Tapes, March 21, 1972, 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 690-11 -- in this segment, the President is meeting with H. R. (“Bob”) Haldeman.

<sup>9</sup>National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, “First Report,” page 41.

that out of this sonofabitching, uh, Domestic Council? . . . I mean one on marijuana that just tears the ass out of them.”<sup>10</sup>

Regarding marijuana leading to other drug use, in a conversation with Art Linkletter, President Nixon said: “But, believe me, it is true, the thing about the drug, once people cross that line from the [unintelligible] straight society to the drug society, it’s a very great possibility they’re going to go further.”<sup>11</sup> In fact, the Shafer Commission found that marijuana does not lead to hard drug use (see box below).

In the same conversation Nixon compared alcohol to marijuana claiming marijuana consumers smoke “to get high” while “a person drinks to have fun.”<sup>12</sup> Nixon also saw marijuana leading to loss of motivation and discipline but claimed: “At least with liquor I don’t lose motivation.”<sup>13</sup>

The marijuana issue also played into the culture wars of the time. President Nixon saw a connection between



civil rights and anti-war demonstrators and marijuana

<sup>10</sup> May 26, 1971, 10:03 am - 11:35 am -- Oval Office Conversation 505-4 -- Meeting with Nixon and Bob Haldeman

<sup>11</sup> Oval Office Tapes, May 18, 1971, 12:16 pm - 12:35 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 500-17 -- The President met with Arthur G. (Art) Linkletter and DeVan L. Shumway; Oliver F. ("Ollie") Atkins was present at the beginning of the meeting.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

**Findings of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse include:**

- "No significant physical, biochemical, or mental abnormalities could be attributed solely to their marijuana smoking." (National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse, "Marijuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding; First Report, Washington, DC, U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1972, p. 61)
- "No valid stereotype of a marijuana user or non-user can be drawn." (p. 36)
- "Young people who choose to experiment with marijuana are fundamentally the same people, socially and psychologically, as those who use alcohol and tobacco." (p. 42)
- "No verification is found of a causal relationship between marijuana use and subsequent heroin use." (p. 88)
- "Most users, young and old, demonstrate an average or above-average degree of social functioning, academic achievement, and job performance." (p. 96)
- "In sum, the weight of the evidence is that marijuana does not cause violent or aggressive behavior; if anything marijuana serves to inhibit the expression of such behavior." (p. 73)
- "In short marijuana is not generally viewed by participants in the criminal justice community as a major contributing influence in the commission of delinquent or criminal acts." (p. 75)
- "Neither the marijuana user nor the drug itself can be said to constitute a danger to public safety." (p. 78)
- "Recent research has not yet proven that marijuana use significantly impairs driving ability or performance." (p. 79)
- "No reliable evidence exists indicating that marijuana causes genetic defects in man." (p. 84)
- "Marijuana's relative potential for harm to the vast majority of individual users and its actual impact on society does not justify a social policy designed to seek out and firmly punish those who use it." (p. 130)

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use even though the Shafer Commission tried to minimize the differences in lifestyle and the effect of marijuana on social order.<sup>14</sup> Nixon discussed this with entertainer Art Linkletter claiming: "... radical demonstrators that were here ... two weeks ago ... They're all on drugs, virtually all."<sup>15</sup>

Another area where President Nixon and the expert commission he appointed disagreed was whether marijuana use was leading to the downfall of the United States. The Shafer Commission noted: "It is unlikely that marijuana will affect the future strength, stability, or vitality of our social and political institutions."<sup>16</sup> Nixon on the other hand repeatedly claimed that marijuana use would lead to the "downfall" of the United States, unlike drinking which is used in "strong" countries like Russia, England and Ireland. Nixon claimed nations had not been destroyed by alcohol but "an awful lot of nations have been destroyed by drugs."<sup>17</sup>

In another conversation he links drug use, homosexuality and immorality to the downfall of great countries concluding: "You see, homosexuality, dope, immorality in general. These are the enemies of strong societies. That's why the Communists and the left-wingers are pushing the stuff, they're trying to destroy us."<sup>18</sup>

The marijuana debate also played into Nixon's prejudices – especially against Jews. In a conversation with Bob Haldeman, Nixon says: "I see another thing in the news summary this morning about it. That's a funny

thing, every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish. What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob, what is the matter with them? I suppose it's because most of them are psychiatrists, you know, there's so many, all the greatest psychiatrists are Jewish. By God we are going to hit the marijuana thing, and I

<sup>14</sup> National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, "First Report," page 92. "Concerns about marihuana use expressed in the 1930s related primarily to a perceived inconsistency between the lifestyles and values of these individuals and the social and moral order."

<sup>15</sup> Oval Office Tapes, May 18, 1971, 12:16 pm - 12:35 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 500-17.

<sup>16</sup> National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, "First Report," page 102.

<sup>17</sup> Nixon: "But, basically, I mean, uh, I know, uh, another way to look at it is this, if I may say so, in regard to, if you get to a, a little more sophisticated audience who really care about destiny, and if you uh, history, has ever been destroyed by alcohol. An awful lot of nations have been destroyed by drugs." Oval Office Tape, May 18, 1971, 12:16 pm - 12:35 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 500-17; Oval Office Tape, May 13, 1971, between 10:30am and 12:30pm -- Oval Office Conversation 498-5 -- meeting with Nixon, Haldeman and Ehrlichman

<sup>18</sup> Oval Office Tape, May 13, 1971, between 10:32am and 12:20pm -- Oval Office Conversation 498-5

want to hit it right square in the puss, I want to find a way of putting more on that."<sup>19</sup>

### **The Impact Today**

The marijuana issue continues to be hotly debated today. Unfortunately, many of the myths about marijuana put forward by Nixon continue to be stated today as if they were incontrovertible truth. The conclusion of the Shafer Commission rings true today: "That some of these original fears were unfounded and that others were exaggerated has been clear for many years. Yet, many of these early beliefs continue to affect contemporary public attitudes and concerns." The impact of the marijuana laws has grown. In fact in recent years the FBI has reported a record number of marijuana arrests – last year 734,497 were arrested for marijuana, 80 percent for possession.<sup>20</sup> From 1972-2000, 13,265,105 were Americans arrested on marijuana charges,<sup>21</sup> countless families have been destroyed by marijuana enforcement. To what end? The marijuana laws have not prevented nearly 80 million Americans from trying marijuana, nor have they prevented marijuana from becoming the most valuable cash crop in many states.

Voters in eight states have voted for medical marijuana by large majorities,<sup>22</sup> and a recent report from the Department of Justice indicates most local officials do not see marijuana as a significant problem.<sup>23</sup> Yet, the marijuana wars are getting more aggressive under the current presidential administration. The DEA is in the process of trying to ban hemp foods even though they have no intoxicating effect. And, they are using precious law enforcement resources, at a time of a domestic and international war against terrorism, to raid medical marijuana dispensaries in California. The latter is especially relevant because the Shafer Commission was created by Congress to advise whether marijuana should

be placed in Schedule I banning its medical use.

<sup>19</sup> Oval Office Tape, May 26, 1971 -- Oval Office Conversation: 505-4 -- President met with HR 'Bob' Haldeman, approximately 10:05 am.

<sup>20</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Report, "Crime in America 2000" (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Oct. 2001).

<sup>21</sup> FBI Uniform Crime Reports 1973-2000.

<sup>22</sup> Statewide votes allowing medical marijuana occurred in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Maine, Nevada, Oregon and Washington in the 1996, 1998, and 2000 elections.

<sup>23</sup> "Indeed, most state and local law enforcement agencies that responded to the National Drug Threat Survey 2001 identified marijuana availability and use as high, but the bulk of these agencies also identified the threat of marijuana to public safety and health as medium to low, and stable." National Drug Treat Assessment, National Drug Intelligence Center, US Dept. of Justice, December 2001.

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At the same time the Shafer Commission reported to the US, the Bain Commission reported to Holland with similar recommendations. The Dutch followed the advice of their experts and thirty years later their marijuana use rate is half that of the US – their hard drug use rates are even lower; they spend less on law enforcement and incarceration and have less problems related to drug abuse.<sup>24</sup> The Dutch have proven the Shafer Commission was right. Indeed, most of Europe is "going Dutch."<sup>25</sup> The Nixon "marijuana war" approach has been tried for three decades. Perhaps it is time to follow the recommendations of the Shafer Commission and reform the marijuana laws, decriminalize possession and small sales of marijuana.

## **Nixon Conversations**

### ***Drugs and the Counterculture***

- Nixon: "The [unintelligible] to these, uh, these, uh, more radical demonstrators that were here the last, oh, two weeks ago. [unintelligible] They're all on drugs. Oh yeah, horrible, it's just a -- when I say all, virtually all. And uh, uh, just raising hell, and, uh."

- Linkletter: "That's right. And of course one of the reasons you can beat them is that so many of them are on drugs. The police are organized and did a great job. You know [unintelligible] I was here in town, [unintelligible]."

- Nixon: "Yeah, I, I [unintelligible] I got a hold, I got a hold of Mitchell on, uh, Saturday night, I said, bust them. And [unintelligible], and don't hurt anybody, I said don't hurt anybody, I don't want anything like Chicago, but I says, arrest the whole damn lot, if they

<sup>24</sup> Netherlands: Lifetime prevalence of marijuana use ages 12-up, 15.6%; past month, 2.5% (source: Abraham, Manja D., et al., "Licit and Illicit Drug Use in the Netherlands, 1997" (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Center for Drug Research, Sept. 1999); US: lifetime prevalence of marijuana use ages 12-up, 34.2%; past month, 4.8% (source: SAMHSA, US Dept. of Health and Human Services, "Summary of Findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (Rockville, MD: SAMHSA, Sept. 2001), p. 132, Table F.2, from the web at <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/NHSDA/2kNHSDA/2kNHSDA.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> Among the countries where marijuana offenses have been decriminalized is Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland. Most recently Great Britain has moved toward marijuana decriminalization. This March 14, the United

Kingdom's "Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommended reform making very similar findings as the Shafer Commission, e.g., marijuana use does not lead to health problems for most individuals or society, marijuana is safer than many other drugs, marijuana dependence is milder than for alcohol or tobacco, the risk of marijuana leading to other drug use is less than associated with alcohol or tobacco."

don't clear the streets. And they arrested them, and the police chief did a hell of a job."

- Linkletter: "He did, yes. And I think you get a lot of credit across the country for that, and he does too, but I mean the whole situation, when I mentioned in my talks that I was here, there's applause. Voluntary applause, because the people want to have that kind of stuff put down. And you did just right. Just right."<sup>26</sup>

### ***Marijuana compared to alcohol***

- Linkletter: "They sit down with a marijuana cigarette to get high --"

- Nixon: "A person does not drink to get drunk."

- Linkletter: "That's right."

- Nixon: "A person drinks to have fun."<sup>27</sup>

### ***Dope, homosexuality and immorality***

- Nixon: "Do you know what happened to the Romans, Romans? The last six Roman emperors were fags. The last six. Nero had a public wedding to a boy. Yeah. And they'd [unintelligible]. You know that. You know what happened to the Popes? It's all right that, po-po-Popes were laying the nuns, that's been going on for years, centuries, but, when the popes, when the Catholic Church went to hell, in, I don't know, three or four centuries ago, it was homosexual. And finally it had to be cleaned out. Now, that's what's happened to Britain, it happened earlier to France. And let's look at the strong societies. The Russians. God damn it, they root them out, they don't let them around at all. You know what I mean? I don't know what they do with them. Now, we are allowing this in this country when we show [unintelligible]. Dope? Do you think the Russians allow dope? Hell no. Not if they can allow, not if they can catch it, they send them up. You see, homosexuality, dope, immorality in general: These are the enemies of strong societies. That's why the Communists and the left-wingers are pushing the stuff, they're trying to destroy us."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Oval Office Tapes, May 18, 1971, 12:16 pm - 12:35 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 500-17.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Oval Office Tape, May 13, 1971, between 10:32am and 12:20pm -  
- Oval Office -- meeting with Nixon, Haldeman and Ehrlichman --  
conv. 498-5

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### ***Marijuana and the downfall of society***

- Nixon: "I have seen systems, I have seen the countries of Asia and the Middle East, portions of Latin America, and I have seen what drugs have done to those countries. Uh, everybody knows what it's done to the Chinese, the Indians are hopeless anyway, the Burmese. They have different forms of drugs--"

- Linkletter: "That's right."

- Nixon: "[unintelligible] China and the rest of them,

they've all gone down. The, countries, the north countries for the example -- why the hell are those Communists so hard on drugs? Well why they're so hard on drugs is because, uh, they love to booze. I mean, the Russians, they drink pretty good."

- Linkletter: "That's right."

- Nixon: "But they don't allow any drugs. Like that. And look at the north countries. The Swedes drink too much, the Finns drink too much, the British have always been heavy boozers and the rest, but uh, and the Irish of course the most, uh, but uh, on the other hand, they survive as strong races. There's another, it's a very significant difference."

- Linkletter: "That's right."

- Nixon: "And your drug societies, uh, are, are, inevitably come apart. They--"

- Linkletter: "They lose motivation."

- Nixon: "--mind"

- Linkletter: "No discipline."

- Nixon: "Yeah."

- Linkletter: "You know I did a show--"

- Nixon: "At least with liquor I don't lose motivation [unintelligible]"<sup>29</sup>

### **Common Sense for Drug Policy**

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*Our thanks to the staff at the National Archives and Records Administration for assistance with the Nixon tape archive.*

<sup>29</sup> Oval Office Tape, May 18, 1971, 12:16 pm - 12:35 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 500-17

### **Marijuana Arrests 1972-2000<sup>30</sup>**

1972 292,179

1973 420,700

1974 445,000

1975 416,100

1976 441,100

1977 457,600

1978 445,800

1979 391,600

1980 405,600

1981 400,300

1982 455,600

1983 406,900

1984 419,400

1985 451,138

1986 361,780

1987 378,709

1988 391,600

1989 398,977

1990 326,850

1991 287,850

1992 342,314

1993 380,689

1994 499,122

1995 588,963

1996 641,642

1997 695,200

1998 682,885

1999 704,812

2000 734,695

<sup>30</sup> FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, 1972-2000.



## JUST WHAT WAS HE SMOKING?

by Gene Weingarten.

21 Mar 2002

Washington Post

Now that the latest tapes from the Nixon White House have been released, the press is all over them with characteristic glee, eager as always to remind us that not long ago the leader of the free world was buggier than a flophouse blanket. Don't you get tired of this?

Me neither. So when researcher Doug McVay from Common Sense for Drug Policy sent me tapes he culled from Nixon's Oval Office rants about drugs, I pounced on them. I figured it would be a welcome respite from Nixon's recent rants about Jews.

From the Weed Screeed, May 26, 1971:

"You know, it's a funny thing, every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish. What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob? What is the matter with them? I suppose it is because most of them are psychiatrists."

In my professional capacity, I diagnose a delusional state of mind. It's simple logic: In a previously released rant, Nixon and Billy Graham gnash and froth over how Jews control the media. How can most Jews be psychiatrists and still control the media? Nixon does not explain.

But he does explain many other things in these drug tapes, including the insidious nexus between drugs, homosexuality, communism and, of course, Jews.

The excerpts begin with the Nixon doctrine on why marijuana is much worse than alcohol: It is because people drink "to have fun" but they smoke marijuana "to get high." This distinction was evidently enormously significant to Nixon, because he repeats it twice.

In an excruciating sequence from Sept. 9, 1971, Nixon is meeting with former Pennsylvania governor Raymond P. Shafer. Shafer heads a presidential commission on drug policy that Nixon has heard might be flirting with the notion of recommending the decriminalization of marijuana.

"You're enough of a pro," Nixon tells Shafer, "to know that for you to come out with something that would run counter to what the Congress feels and what the country feels, and what we're planning to do, would make your commission just look bad as hell."

Shafer begins to stammer. Nixon appears to be telling his commission, in advance, what to conclude.

If there is any doubt about this, Nixon erases it instantly. He instructs Shafer not to seek input from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which he seems to think is soft on drugs, apparently because it is filled with, you know, psychiatrists:

"As an old prosecutor, I don't mind somebody putting it in J. Edgar Hoover's hands, but I

come down very hard on the side of putting it in, uh, hardheaded doctors, rather than a bunch of muddle-headed psychiatrists."

Shafer can barely get a word in edgewise.

"They're all muddle-headed," Nixon says. "You know what I mean?"

The governor's discomfort is palpable. You can almost hear him hooking a finger in his collar.

Nixon continues, making things perfectly clear: "But anyway, the thing to do now is to alert the country to the problem and say now, this far, no farther, and I think that's what you want to do, take a strong line."

Suddenly, people start getting up. The meeting is over. Before Shafer knows what hits him, the president is pushing him out the door, with a gift of golf balls and cuff links.

Eventually, Shafer's commission would recommend decriminalization. The Nixon White House was appalled, understandably: Nixon saw drugs as a threat to the vitals of the republic -- right up there, hand in hand, with the scourge of homosexuality.

Nixon expounds on this in a lengthy monologue on May 13, 1971. On this day, he makes it clear that he does not like gay people. Northern California, he says, has gotten so "faggy" that "I won't shake hands with anybody from San Francisco."

Nixon loves this subject. He is nearly unstoppable on it. His top aides H.R. "Bob" Haldeman and John Ehrlichman are in the room, but they barely speak beyond monosyllabic sycophancies. It takes the president a while to get to the point, which begins with his review of a popular TV sitcom he has just watched, apparently for the first time:

"Archie is sitting here with his hippie son-in-law, married to the screwball daughter. . . . The son-in-law apparently goes both ways."

Nixon seems to have concluded, against all evidence, that Meathead is bisexual. Possibly it is the length of his hair. Another character in the show, Nixon reports, is "obviously queer. He wears an ascot, and so forth."

The president is outraged that this filth should appear on TV:

"The point that I make is that, goddamn it, I do not think that you glorify on public television homosexuality. You don't glorify it, John, anymore than you glorify, uh, whores."

The president asserts that America is in jeopardy from this Archie Bunker gay thing:

"I don't want to see this country to go that way. You know what happened to the Greeks. Homosexuality destroyed them. Sure, Aristotle was a homo, we all know that, so was Socrates."

Ehrlichman interrupts to reassure his boss. Socrates, he says, "never had the influence that television had."

Precisely, precisely. Nixon is on a roll, lecturing like a history professor:



"Do you know what happened to the Romans? The last six Roman emperors were fags. . . . You know what happened to the popes? It's all right that popes were laying the nuns."

Someone laughs nervously. Nixon bulls on, not a hint of humor in his voice.

"That's been going on for years, centuries, but when the popes, when the Catholic Church went to hell in, I don't know, three or four centuries ago, it was homosexual. . . . Now, that's what happened to Britain, it happened earlier to France. And let's look at the strong societies. The Russians. Goddamn it, they root them out, they don't let 'em hang around at all. You know what I mean? I don't know what they do with them."

"Dope? Do you think the Russians allow dope? Hell no. Not if they can catch it, they send them up. You see, homosexuality, dope, uh, immorality in general: These are the enemies of strong societies. That's why the Communists and the left-wingers are pushing it. They're trying to destroy us."

Well, that was 31 years ago, and I am happy to report that the Jew-homo-doper-Commie-shrink-lefty-pope cabal has not, to date, destroyed us. Nixon seems to have been wrong on this one.

Of course, it's not the first time he was wrong. Yes, he was a crook. No, it wasn't a third-rate burglary. And yes -- we do still have Dick Nixon to kick around. Apparently, thanks to his tapes, forever and ever and ever.

May 13, 1971, between 10:30am and 12:30pm -- Oval Office

Conversation 498-5-- meeting with Nixon, Haldeman and Ehrlichman

[The President and his advisors were discussing a recent episode of "All in the Family," a television show on CBS. **President Nixon was offended by the show's favorable treatment of homosexuals.**]

RN: "But, nevertheless, the point that I make is that God damn it, I do not think that you glorify on public television homosexuality. The reason you don't glorify it John anymore than you glorify, uh, uh, uh, whores. Now we all know people who have whores and we all know that people are just, uh, do that, we all have weaknesses and so forth and so on, but God damn it, what do you think that does to kids? What do you think that does to 11 and 12 year old boys when they see that? Why is it that the Scouts, the, why is it that the Boys Clubs, we were there, we constantly had to clean up the staffs to keep the Goddamned fags out of it. Because, not because of them, they can go out and do anything they damn please, [unintelligible] all those kids? You know, there's a little tendency among them all. Well by God can I tell you it outraged me. Not for any moral reason. Most people are outraged for moral reasons, I, it outraged me because I don't want to see this country go that way. You know there are countries -- You ever see what happened, you know what happened to the Greeks. Homosexuality destroyed them. Sure, Aristotle was a homo, we all know that, so was Socrates."

JE: "He never had the influence that television had."

RN: "Do you know what happened to the Romes, Romans? The last six Roman emperors were fags. The last six. Nero had a public wedding to a boy. Yeah. And they'd [unintelligible]. You know that. You know what happened to the Popes? It's all right that, po-po-Popes were laying the nuns, that's been going on for years, centuries, but, when the popes, when the Catholic Church went to hell, in, I don't know, three or four centuries ago, it was homosexual. And finally it had to be cleaned out. Now, that's what's happened to Britain, it happened earlier to France. And let's look at the strong societies. The Russians. God damn it, they root them out, they don't let them around at all. You know what I mean? I don't know what they do with them. Now, we are allowing this in this country when we show [unintelligible]. Dope? Do you think the Russians allow dope? Hell no. Not if they can allow, not if they can catch it, they send them up. You see, homosexuality, dope, immorality in general: These are the enemies of strong societies. That's why the Communists and the left-wingers are pushing the stuff, they're trying to destroy us."

Unknown: "Sure, sure. Yep."

RN: "And I don't know, I, we talk oh and I and Moynihan will disagree with this, Mitchell disagree with this, [unintelligible] will and all the rest. But God damn it, we have got to stand up to these people."

[Later on in this conversation tape, Bob Haldeman left, and George Schultz entered with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. The following is from that segment. The President and Daley are talking about how Chicago approaches drugs.]

RN: "Well, let me tell you one thing that just happened here because it probably wasn't, I'm sure it wasn't in the press here, I had a press conference in California which was not televised,

but, I was asked about marijuana because a study is being made by a group, [unintelligible] the government. Now, my position is flat-out on that. I am against legalizing marijuana. Now I'm against legalizing marijuana because, I know all the arguments about, well, marijuana is no worse than whiskey, or etc. etc. etc. But the point is, once you cross that line, from the straight society to the drug society -- marijuana, then speed, then it's LSD, then it's heroin, etc. then you're done. But the main point is -- well, well we conduct, well this commission will come up with a number of recommendations perhaps with regard to, [unintelligible] the penalties more, because [unintelligible] too far in this respect. As far as legalizing them is concerned, I think we've got to take a strong stand, one way or the other, and, uh."

RD: "Against, uh."

RN: "Against legalizing. That's the position that I take. Because I think if we legalized it, take the, then, then, your high school and elementary kid, well why not? It [unintelligible]."

May 26, 1971, Time: 10:03 am - 11:35 am -- Oval Office  
Conversation: 505-4 -- Meeting with Nixon and HR 'Bob' Haldeman

RN: "Now, this is one thing I want. I want a Goddamn strong statement on marijuana. Can I get that out of this sonofabitching, uh, Domestic Council?"

HRH: "Sure."

RN: "I mean one on marijuana that just tears the ass out of them. I see another thing in the news summary this morning about it. You know it's a funny thing, every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish. What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob, what is the matter with them? I suppose it's because most of them are psychiatrists, you know, there's so many, all the greatest psychiatrists are Jewish. By God we are going to hit the marijuana thing, and I want to hit it right square in the puss, I want to find a way of putting more on that. More [ unintelligible ] work with somebody else with this."

HRH: "Mm hmm, yep."

RN: "I want to hit it, against legalizing and all that sort of thing."

June 2, 1971, Time: 3:16 pm - 4:15 pm -- Oval Office Conv. 510-3  
-- Nixon met with John Ehrlichman

RN: "Why in the name of God do these people take this stuff?"

JE: "For the same reason they drink. It's a, they're bored, it's a, it's a diversion."

RN: "Drinking is a different thing in a sense. Uh, Linkletter's point I think is well taken, he says, 'A person may drink to have

a good time' -"

JE: "Mm-hmm"

RN: "-- but a person does not drink simply for the purpose of getting high. You take drugs for the purpose of getting high."

JE: "Yep, yep."

RN: "There is a difference."

September 9, 1971, Unknown between 2:57 pm and 3:03 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 568-3 -- The President met with Egil G. ("Bud") Krogh, Jr.

RN: "What we want to do, uh, don't want to, keep him too long, sort of boring you know."

EK: "I know it is, it's uh, all we're trying to do now is to give him some ability backing the commission to keep some of the extremists like Hughes and the rest from going off, and giving a dissenting report or something that we have to repudiate outright. The Attorney General's feeling is that we're, we listen to him. The fact of the meeting is all we need right now, plus a picture. He's asked for a picture. And he just told me he said 'I know what the game is,' he said, 'we're just, I'm gonna get a picture, I'll go back to the Commission, I'll tell them, uh, that we met, the President listened, was appreciative, was [unintelligible]."

RN: "Doesn't want a press picture does he?"

EK: "No sir, just Ollie. [unintelligible], no press picture."

September 9, 1971, 3:03 pm - 3:34 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 568-4 -- The President met with Raymond P. Shafer, Jerome H. Jaffe, and Egil G. ("Bud") Krogh, Jr.; the White House photographer was present at the beginning of the meeting.

RN: "When will the marijuana one come out?"

RPS: "The marijuana will come out in March '72. In other words we are coming into the final phases of it now, we've had all of our public hearings. We have not, we have nine more informal hearings."

RN: "You've had all your public hearings already?"

RPS: "All of the public hearings, yes, and, uh, we've had, had, have had several informal hearings, we have nine more of those including one at, at federal college (?), Monday."

RN: "Here."

RPS: "Right here in Washington, [unintelligible]."

RN: "Hard to find anybody who isn't on the stuff?"

RPS: "Uh, no. [unintelligible] Over 75 percent of the [unintelligible] are white, and, uh, and under 18, almost 85 percent, which I [unintelligible]."

RN: "It's now becoming a white problem."

RPS: "It's almost, it's a real tragedy. Well look, the thing, the thing is, we're, we've been a very low profile commission as you know from the very beginning. We didn't go through the whole folderol and, uh--"

RN: "How long have you been operating, uh, I don't know."

RPS: "Well, you appointed us, the last day of January. We organized on February the Fifth, but we didn't get any money until the end of March."

RN: "So you didn't start till then."

RPS: "No, we, uh, were in operation April, April, because, uh--"

RN: "And so your hearings began."

RPS: "Right. You very carefully, uh, gave us some money in advance before Congress acted to give us any money, you gave us some money out of your contingency fund. And uh, when we got our, uh, uh, money, then, uh, we were able to move in high gear. I want to thank you very much for the fact that all the money that we've requested has been approved. I've been working closely with George Schultz and, uh, and Congress has approved what we asked for which is, uh, really uh, extraordinary. But we've uh, we've got a tiny morale problem as uh, you may or may not know, and that's one of the reasons why I wanted to see you, get what we're doing into proper perspective so that, uh we won't have to go through this again. We had a [unintelligible] that, you know, that Congress would, some of your enemies in Congress would like to use this as a, a [unintelligible] and we're not going to let that happen if we can possibly avoid it."

EK: "How would they use that as, as a [unintelligible]."

RPS: "Well, when the Commission was first formed you know, there's criticism in part of the press about the fact that we're old and conservative and that we were put together by a President to merely tow the party line and the attitudes of uh, [unintelligible]. Then secondly, Mike Sonnenreich, who's our executive director and doing a very excellent job came from BNDD, in the Department of Justice and those people from the scientific community thought that, uh, they should, uh--"

RN: "Would you like some tea, or Coca-Cola, or--"

RPS: "I'd love some tea."

RN: "Or coffee."

RPS: "Or coffee. Coffee if you have some."

RN: "Coffee's [unintelligible] here. Yeah. Fine."

RPS: "And uh, uh, we had a little trouble getting Mike uh, uh, elected by the Commission the --"

[unintelligible, RN and RPS talk over each other]

RN: "Do you know him?"

JHJ: "Yes."

RN: "Do you like him?"

JHJ: "Competent man."

RN: "Yeah."

RPS: "In any event that was just one of the --"

RN: "The thing about, let me say that the thing I'm, I really feel concerned about is this, that uh, Ray, is, that I know you were a former prosecutor, uh. The difficulty with the whole commissions, you set them up, is that, uh, you're going to [suffer ?] them, you know, we've had so many discredited committees, [unintelligible] screwing off in every different direction, so forth. I'm sure you understand. This is an area of course where we, we don't, I mean there's an awful lot of stuff Dr. Jaffe's the first to, admit and he's a real expert in his field, that we don't know all the answers. However, I have a strong firm convictions which I have expressed and which I won't change, about the, about the, the, the situation [unintelligible] about marijuana, in, in two areas. One, about its legalne-, about legalizing which some would do. Second however, now on the other hand, my, my attitude toward penalties on marijuana, is uh, very powerful. I talked with District Attorney on [unintelligible] and all the rest, and to take somebody that's smoked some of this stuff, put him into a jail with a bunch of hardened criminals, is [silly ?], that's absurd."

RPS: "Absolutely yes."

RN: "There must be different ways than jail. I think that's your experience, is it not? Have you talked to, uh, what's his name up there, uh--"

Unknown: "Arlen Spector"

JHJ: "Uh, no I, no I haven't."

RN: "Spector's got a remarkable crime program, where, where where basically they don't even get records."

JHJ: "Uh, we've been working on it, we've been working on it."

RN: "Almost like probation, give them probation before uh, before indictment."

JHJ: "Uh, Illinois has just passed a similar bill."

RN: "They do the same thing?"

JHJ: "In effect we sentence people to a school, for six months. They have to come every Saturday, they're, been doing this. It was initiated by the uh, by the uh district attorney and that ultimately if they haven't been rearrested and if they carried out the sentence appropriately, they don't, they're not criminalized, and yet it's not legalized."

RN: "What you have here is a very interesting live situation,

where there is a certain [unintelligible] through the country, that, heh, on the one hand want to make smoking illegal, cigarette smoking illegal and marijuana legal. Now, that's what I mean, that doesn't make any damned sense now. I mean, probably if we repeat what that didn't help its best aspects everything shouldn't do anything shouldn't need it, but uh, you know if they're going to [unintelligible]. On the marijuana thing, I have very strong feelings that that's, uh the, best final, uh, analysis, that once you start down that road, uh, the chances of going further down that road are greater. I'm aware some disagree with that, but uh, the uh, and also we have some people that are, frankly promoting it. They're not good people. The whole marijuana, uh--"

RPS: "I understand that, let let me answer, not answer, at least discuss with you the points that you've raised because this is crucial to what we're attempting to do."

RN: "Mm-hmm."

RPS: "National commissions have not been in very excellent repute, but we--"

RN: [unintelligible]

RPS: "And, uh, when you asked me to take this job I hesitated in fact, did not, uh, see I could see clouds of what happened with the Scranton, uh, Scranton Commission. I thought that was a disgrace. I told John Mitchell that and I think he passed it on to you. I thought that the things that arose before --"

[unintelligible, RPS, RN, possibly one or two others spoke at once]

RPS: "Well, sure, but I'm just saying--"

RN: "Just went off, [unintelligible]"

RPS: "And, uh, and third, I said that if I would take it of course I had to have your support but that we were going to play it low pro, profile, we were not going to have a great lot of hoopla and we would do nothing that would in any way embarrass you or the Administration because in the long run that's going to hurt the country, if we have a Commission that just comes through with a report that, that, that creates controversy and gives fodder for the newspapers to, to, to create a lot of conflict, that, they're not [unintelligible]. So we've been very careful on that. And secondly, I think that I am able to say without qualification that you have a commission here that you yourself have appointed, that they are very intelligent, they are well-known in their own fields and in their own communities and they're not going to do anything such as happened in previous Commission reports."

RN: "Good."

RPS: "And insofar as legalization, I think the thing that has caused us the greatest problem was your statement in San Clemente -- which is a part of your strong convictions, naturally you expressed them as you felt them. But you used the word legalization, and, the way I answered it was, Look, we're a national commission, we're going to take a look at the whole picture, we know that the president is interested in what we're doing, is concerned about the problem, and, uh, we've never had a

chance to discuss what he means by legalization. If he means, uh, removing all controls, or if [unintelligible] simple possession, these are things that can be worked out at a later date. We're going ahead and make our studies, and I know that he is wholeheartedly behind us because of everything that he has done. That does not mean that he's going to agree with everything which we say, but, that he knows that these are men of, uh, integrity, men and women of integrity who wanted to do something for their country."

RN: "Mm-hmm, mm-hmm."

RPS: "Now, what, what happened on this when this statement was made, several members of the commission called up and said, well we may as well, give up. I said No, that isn't right, the President has his own, uh, convictions on this and he isn't going to tell the Commission what to say or what not to say."

RN: "Come out with a different view."

RPS: "Well certainly, you know we [unintelligible, both RPS and RN talk at once]

RPS: "Well, yes, but sure, the point is, that, I mean, say what they say, what the Commission is doing is, is, is following [unintelligible], and in fact, the, the confidential report that I had prepared to give you to Bud so that you, you've maybe even seen it--"

RN: "Yeah."

RPS: "--gives clearly the direction that we're going, and I think that that should relieve your mind, uh, uh, insofar as your personal convictions or so. We don't want you to say, Well I've got a great commission, anything they say we'll follow; well of course not, that's ridiculous."

RN: "No, no. [unintelligible], to look at it."

RPS: "Now on the hand we are a national commission, certain, with the, really the first commission going in to this particular problem of long-range action on the whole field of drug abuse that the United States has ever had. We're, we're we're conducting a national survey that's never been done before."

RN: "Mm, hmm"

RPS: "With clear, you know, [unintelligible] going to get tough. But at the present time, we have about a million nine, we're going to need, uh, seven, we don't know how much but we have uh, but the point was that we were initially authorized one million but Congress was so interested in it that they upped the authorization to four, but we're going to get five, and the total amount is what about 3.7?"

Unknown, probably EK: "About that."

RPS: "I think that for the, for the little over two --"

RN: "Will you take polls and do a lot of --"

RPS: "We're going to have a survey put out by one of the fine outfits out of Princeton, uh, not Gallup, but Research Associates, they're a very good, uh, outfit. And they're willing



to do this uh, uh problem of marijuana attitudes, then we're going into the whole field of what is the extent of marijuana. We have all kinds of figures, anywhere from 8 million up to 40 million."

Unknown: "[unintelligible]"

RPS: "That's right. In our, in our total [unintelligible]."

RN: "Like what we had in Vietnam."

RPS: "What we're trying to do, we don't [unintelligible], we don't believe, that, that uh, that there should be, uh, given to the people the combination of the use of a dangerous substance--"

RN: "With respectability [unintelligible, both RN and RPS speaking at same time]."

RPS: "We don't want to give it respectability, and we will not be--"

RN: "Like uh, almost, almost anything in the drug field, it's making it respectable, just make sure you don't. That's fine, if they, I, there's some person, he can try anything, maybe even heroin, and get away with it."

RPS: "Well sure."

RN: "It won't work with kids."

RPS: "One of our, one of our doctors on our, uh, on our Commission is uh, is one of the finest pharmacologists in the nation, Dr. SeEVERS of Michigan. Jerry knows him very well, he has his own [unintelligible], he talks about heroin, he says you can smoke a little, er, take a little heroin and, uh, and get away with it. It's the idea that it becomes a [unintelligible]. What we want to do is to be sure that we don't give approval, the approval of society. We're interested in --"

RN: "Right."

RPS: "--public health."

RN: "Very important, very important."

RPS: "I can't say that publicly --"

RN: "Not just, not just physical health."

RPS: "And, and we're not, we're not just interested in the, uh, pure pharmacological effects of these drugs. We're looking at the whole social picture."

RN: "Good."

RPS: "We want to de-mythologize marijuana so that the kids aren't going out experimenting with it because they think it's great stuff. And uh, [unintelligible RPS and others talking at once]. I think, I think that we've gone into this thing as, uh deeply as, as uh, any commission could. [unintelligible], I'm, I'm having a great time learning, and, uh, we, we have individuals, but what we need from you is your, uh, public support, as a commission, not from the standpoint that you're going to accept what we say but that here is a commission that is working on a problem that

cuts across the cross-section of every, uh, family in, in the nation, next, next to your economy, and incidentally I think that what you've done in that regard is excellent."

RN: "No, we're --"

RPS: "But what we--"

RN: "Yeah, yeah, this, this, you're right, it's terribly important."

RPS: "Next to the economy, and also the winding down of the war which I don't think will be a particular issue next year and I think you agree with me there. I think the problems of drug abuse will be a political issue. And, while our report isn't going to give you a platform, it's going to be the thing that will, uh, bring us the kind of victory you want, but it can be a source of possible embarrassment and that's why I don't want to have, give any ammunition to the, those who would like to use it against you."

EK: "So far you're staying away from any possible endorsement of legalization of marijuana."

RPS: "Absolutely, absolutely."

RN: "I would keep in mind that, you [unintelligible], you would run too strongly against the public tide, but suppose it ought to be done."

RPS: "Well, I understand that."

RN: "You're just, you have a, a great problem."

RPS: "We have, we have, uh, four Congressmen on the Commission, uh, two Republicans, two Democrats, and, at least one of the, the opposition would like to, uh, to uh, take over. We've prevented that. Uh, and uh, I think that we've got the Commission moving in the right direction. We, we're, we're, we're seeking unanimity, I think we're going to have that, and we're staying away from that, that, that quote legalization endquote syndrome that could create, uh, very--"

RN: "You see, the thing that is so terribly important here is that it not appear that the Commission's frankly just a bunch of do-gooders, I mean, they say well they're a bunch of old men who don't understand, that's fine, I wouldn't mind that, but, but if they get the idea you're just a bunch of do-gooders that are going to come out with a quote soft on marijuana report, that'll destroy it, right off the bat. I think there's a need to come out with a report that is totally, uh, uh, oblivious to some obvious, uh, differences between marijuana and other drugs, other dangerous drugs, there are differences. And also that you don't go into the matter of, uh, penalties and that sort of thing, as to whether there should be uniformity in penalties, whether in courts, I'd much rather have uniformity than diversity, but uh, different approaches. I'd say look, everywhere, hell, in Texas they put them in jail for six years."

RPS: "Well, longer than that, you can get 99 years up in North Dakota."

[unintelligible, both RPS and RN talk at same time]

RN: "--it's very tough, most [unintelligible] off the wall."

RPS: "Well the Act, the Act of 1970, the, the drug abuse act of, er narcotics control act of 1970 is the best thing that has hit the country, best, this is the best thing that has hit the country in the narcotics field. And it is, and, the Commission is wholeheartedly behind that, I, I give you that assurance. We're going to, we're going to [unintelligible] the shots at marijuana, scientific shots, and after all, three of the members of our commission, our advisors, uh, to Jerry -- Dr. Seevers, Dr. Farnsworth, and uh Dr. Brill, they're three of the foremost medical men in the country. And so you can rest assured that we're not going to go off half-cocked, we're not a bunch of stupid, you know?"

RN: "Well, I know about you, you know, but I know your problem of course, Ray, --"

RPS: "But I'm, I'm, I'm --"

RN: "Keep your Commission in line."

RPS: "I'm going to keep the Commission in line and one of the things that I can do it is to raise their morale--"

RN: "Mm-hmm."

RPS: "--is to, to have them assured. In fact, they asked me to come see you because they're concerned."

RN: "Well let me ask you, how close is your contact with Krogh and Jaffe?"

RPS: "Well we have a, we have a very excellent --"

[unintelligible as RPS and RN try to talk at the same time]

RN: "--but you work with the staff."

RPS: "I have not had a chance to meet with Jerry as much as I would like to be and I think that we will be doing more things together--"

RN: "I think that would be a good idea, you see, we've given him a very broad, uh, uh, assignment here and uh, and uh I think, I think, he's uh, how how do you feel, would you like to say a word about the Commission, what uh, what our attitude should be?"

JHJ: "Well, soon as I can stop behaving like a one-armed paperhanger we're going to have more and more contact, uh --"

RN: "Would you say it's a bunch of do-gooders?"

JHJ: "In this interim, gearing up, I, I probably share the, part of the responsibility for not linking up with Mike and others--"

RN: "Let's try to do that, shall we? After all, it is a commission that's spending three and a half million dollars, it will have enormous impact when it happens. And of course, the problem in this field is, uh, the acceptability among those, I mean it's a question, it doesn't make a damn bit of difference what we say about drugs, if people want them, they think it's all proper, they're going to use them, they're going to find ways to get it. And, uh, I think the most, the most important, uh,

function of the Commission really is education, using, using the [unintelligible] lead the country a little about this thing, whether this is just a, uh, is, is, as you say mythology, misdirect, etc., on both sides. Some of it, some of it is that maybe marijuana is, uh, is, [unintelligible] saying those are the worst things that can happen, and others [unintelligible]."

RPS: "Well, Mr. President. Well, I hate to make broad statements, but I think that this is going to be one of the most far-reaching reports that, uh, has come out of a national commission--"

RN: "How many members do you have in this Commission?"

RPS: "We have nine provided by you and four Congressmen, that's thirteen."

RN: "Nine appointed, er, public members, how many are doctors?"

RPS: "There are four doctors. Four doctors."

RN: "Four doctors, the other men we know as [hippies?], [unintelligible]. Well I think what we really need here, let me suggest this, first you go back to your Commission and tell them we had a talk and that, we uh, we I believe the work of the Commission is enormously important, naturally I can't endorse in advance the Administration cannot, what its findings are, not knowing what you're going to find. But I urge the Commission to dig and delve deeply and particularly I, I, I think that in this field more than anything else, we need lots of men on the job, and, in this field we need, above everything else, men on the job for the purpose of educating the public. I think your, uh, maybe your low profile men is fine up to this point but when your report comes out, it's going to be very high profile, it should be, and I think it would be probably helpful, probably helpful if we could have some good consultation at that time."

RPS: "Oh there will be."

RN: "In other words, because if we don't have, what I think they have, Ray, is same that happened once. Well now Scranton, with it, did well, himself, but his staff ran away with the thing, you know, and it was a turbulent time. But you see, and and he's [unintelligible], but you're enough of a pro to know that for you to come out with something that would run counter to what the Congress feels and what the country feels and what we're planning to do, would make your Commission just look bad as hell. And I think in, I think that, and on the other hand, you could probably render a great service, that doesn't mean we're going to tell you what it's going to be, but we're going into this too, see, and naturally the whole, we're looking into it from the White House, from the Jaffe group and we're going to be into it, the, naturally from the Justice Department and the HEW, you know, and all the rest."

RPS: "One thing we're stepping --"

RN: "Most of them are stepping on each other --"

RPS: "--and we should know that. There are thirteen different agencies and that's --"

RN: "That has been, I've said that and I told Jaffe when he came in here that, we're [unintelligible], and I don't think he's been able to do much yet, but, and the Defense Department's,

everybody's in it, and nobody's doing it well. That's part of the problem. So we'll be very interested in your recommendations in that respect. But let me just say one. Don't go to HEW."

RPS: "Oh for heaven's sakes no --"

RN: "Don't go to HEW. Well we might, we might have big problems with HEW too. The difficulty that, that, well, Bureau, as an old prosecutor, and, uh, as an old prosecutor, I, I, I don't mind somebody putting in J. Edgar Hoover's hands, but, the, I, I come down very hardly on the side of putting in, uh, hard-headed doctors, rather than a bunch of muddle-headed psychiatrists."

RPS: "Well you've, you've hit on --"

RN: "They're all muddle-headed. You know what I mean?"

RPS: "Of course I --"

RN: "I know those people over there, doc--"

JHJ: "Too many of them are."

RN: "Huh?"

JHJ: "Too many of them are."

RN: "Too many of them are, I mean, their, they get so that their hearts run their brains, and it should be the other way around, most of the time."

RPS: "Our operation, our operations are going to complement each other very well because we're working on the long-range blueprint for the things that are the people of the United States on a total policy -- health policy, social policy, and, and as well as, uh --"

RN: "I think [unintelligible], I think they have enormous respect, and I think we ought to try to play [unintelligible, participants speak at same time], and I think, and I urge, I urge strongly that the Jaffe office have the very closest contact with the Commission, maintaining of course your independence and theirs. They have to because Ray [unintelligible], but on the other hand, you could [unintelligible], and they're all trying to find the answer and maybe there aren't a hell of a lot [unintelligible]. You agree?"

JHJ: "Yes. I think there are different emphases. They're long-term but focusing right now on marijuana. We're responding with action to the crisis of heroin and other drugs--"

RPS: "We, uh, we're on the, we're on the hard drugs end. Well we just came back from Belgium. We're not in marijuana so much. We came back from Amsterdam, er Holland, and Belgium, and England. And one of the things that we were looking into in England primarily was the kind of methadone treatment that, that Jerry is interested in, because we want, we think that this is an excellent approach and we're out in the field getting first-hand knowledge --"

EK (?): "That reinforces what we're doing terrifically too."

RPS: "No, I'd, uh, there's no reason in the world why this couldn't be, uh, worked out. Uh, in substance, just exactly what

you want to, have happen, and it has to work in a [unintelligible] too, for the benefit of the general public, and this is what --"

RN: "Read an amusing story, [unintelligible] was telling me, --"

RPS: "I have an amusing story too--"

RN: "uh, it is uh, this is a father and son, got, got arrested [unintelligible], his father says, you [unintelligible]. [unintelligible] a couple more weeks you know he says, our, says you know I'm working my garden and everything, father says ok, father says well, uh maybe the kid couldn't [unintelligible] that day, go out and work in the garden. He found out that the little son of a bitch was growing marijuana, had to wait for the crop to come in. It's an absolute true story. But, I, I, I believe having said all I have, I have a tremendous [unintelligible], I see these kids, and we've all, we've all, uh, grown up, and, there was smoking, there was alcohol, there's a lot of other things people do, er, in the old days, etc. etc. I mean, there's a, the uh, maybe, uh, uh, going to see Greta Garbo in the day, etc. etc. Don't call me yellow, is that --"

Unknown: "I Was, I Am Curious Yellow."

RN: "But anyway. It's a [unintelligible] what we did, but, by golly, the thing to do now is to alert the country to the problem and say now, this far no farther, and I think that that's you want to do, is take a strong line."

RPS: "I think this can be done, and I think that uh, the report that comes out will be, uh, something that we can, uh, wholeheartedly embrace. You may not --"

RN: "[unintelligible]"

RPS: "What? Oh [unintelligible, meeting starts to break up, noise of people moving and talking. The president gives Shafer some golf balls and cufflinks.]

RN: "Ah, very good."

RPS: "Thanks."

RN: "How's the golf?"

RPS: "It's uh --"

RN: "You slipping in?"

RPS: "Yes, [unintelligible]"

RN: "Some golf balls. Here's another, cufflinks, all right?"

RPS: "I also [unintelligible], thanks very much, and uh, I know that you're aware of the other, other problems--"

RN: "Yeah."

RPS: "Marianne Means wrote a rather nasty column, I guess you saw it, indicating that you were treating me like a dog because I had been recommend, recommended for a judgeship that I was afraid to [laughter] go on the Commission."

RN: "That's right. Well Marianne Means has to do that shit, she's says, she does those things in order to get paid attention to."

RPS: "Well sure. She lost her, little boy though, you know."

RN: "Well what?"

RPS: "Well she was very close to a previous administration, you probably remember."

RN: [unintelligible]

RPS: [laughter]

RN: "No I haven't tried that myself, I leave, I leave that for fellows like yourself. I mean uh, you work her over."

RPS: "Well don't worry, I will."

RN: "No, invite her in, but there's no worse. Ok, Ray, see when we see you."

RPS: "Thanks again."

RN: "You [unintelligible] I have every confidence in, you worked on Howard Fuller, you've--"

RPS: [unintelligible]

RN: "Well, you know I put it, uh, we're doing our part."

RPS: "[unintelligible]"

RN: "Is, is Scott screwing it up?"

RPS: "I think so, but I can't [unintelligible]"

RN: "That's what I understand. Mitchell knows that, that it's Scott, but uh, [unintelligible], you know you --"

RPS: "I can't, I can't prove that, I can't, I uh told Mitchell [unintelligible] was a good man, because he worked in my campaign and your campaign, some son of a bitch is [unintelligible] close to Schapp."

RN: "Who?"

RPS: "They decided they made the mistake, that they're going to get me, and Scott played with [unintelligible]."

RN: "You look, [unintelligible], just keep working on him because he'll be, he'll be contained --"

RPS: "Just one other question--"

RN: "-- change from one thing to another."

RPS: "I know. There is one other point to make."

RN: "Mm-hmm, mm-hmm."

RPS: "Uh, [unintelligible]"

RN: "Appeals? Yeah, I heard, yeah."

RPS: [unintelligible]

RN: "Our first appointment is going to be a black. Because point one, that we're going to have another one after that. We've got to have one because Ray--"

RPS: "How many other --"

RN: "Half the, half the [unintelligible], so there are going to be two."

RPS: "There will be. One and then the other."

RN: "So talk to Mitchell about that."

RPS: "Keep that, uh--"

RN: "The first one, they're going to do how, Ohio, and he will be--"

RPS: "I just want to be with you if there's anything I can do to help you next year--"

RN: "One of the military fields might be good, but I, I don't know, but uh--"

RPS: "But this other thing may come through--"

RN: "District court might be better --"

RPS: "That's circuit."

RN: "Circuit, circuit."

RPS: "Well, you're going to keep plugging it for me, you don't want me to --"

RN: "Oh yeah, yeah."

RPS: "you don't want me to get out of that."

RN: "No, hell no, we have [unintelligible]. As a matter of fact, I get, uh, you know that it's [unintelligible]."

[unintelligible]

RPS: "I think the country is so much better now."

RN: "Oh yes."

RPS: "I'm worried about the youth, I'm worried about the kids."

RN: "Oh sure, well--"

RPS: "And I'd like to, to see something done about starting little, uh, groups on campuses that could, could spread out to help you."

RN: "I think they're working on that--."

RPS: "Well that, that ought to be done, ought to be started now."

RN: "Finch, Rumsfeld."



RPS: "Well, they're, they're two of the best to do it."

RN: "[unintelligible]"

RPS: "Again thanks very much."

RN: [unintelligible]

RPS: "-- I say to the press, can I, can I say that you're wholeheartedly, that you stand behind us, and that --"

RN: "They'll ask you about the [unintelligible], I say that my convictions--"

RPS: "That your personal convictions, but that you are aware that we're going to take a, an independent view of the whole thing--"

RN: "Right."

RPS: "--we don't --"

RN: "That I [unintelligible] all the information we can get. But my, make it clear that my personal conviction is solid. I, uh, now don't --"

RPS: "I'm not going to, I'm not going to say, look, he has his personal conviction and he's entitled to that."

RN: [unintelligible]. Ok. All right."

RPS: "Thanks a lot."

May 18, 1971, 12:16 pm - 12:35 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 500-17 -- The President met with Arthur G. (Art) Linkletter and DeVan L. Shumway; Oliver F. ("Ollie") Atkins was present at the beginning of the meeting.

AL: "And then of course, uh, um, I bear down mostly on marijuana because that's the puberty rite today, and I really give them a lecture on marijuana. And you see, the big problem with marijuana--"

RN: "I was asked about marijuana --"

AL: "You should know this --"

RN: "-- two weeks ago in, uh, California, the, what do you say about this, I said well, we're going to have a commission report, I said, [unintelligible] can be very clear, whatever it says, I'm against legalizing."

AL: "Absolutely."

RN: "I said, now, as far as penalties are concerned, that's something else, they should of course be uniform but we, I'm against legalizing, period. I think you've got to draw the line on the damn thing because--"

AL: "That's right. That's right."

RN: "-- they say, well, it's the same with booze. Well, maybe booze is bad, but the point is that, uh, you can, uh, uh, maybe booze can lead to marijuana, can lead to, speed, or uh, or LSD, can lead to heroin, so forth. But, basically, I mean, uh, I know, uh, another way to look at it is this, if I may say so, with regard to, if you get to a, a little more sophisticated audience who really care about destiny, and if you uh, [unintelligible] history, has ever been destroyed by alcohol. An awful lot of nations have been destroyed by drugs."

AL: "That's right."

RN: "Now, this doesn't, this is no advocacy for alcoholics, good God, it's a horrible problem--"

AL: "Terrible."

RN: "And, uh, you and I and many mutual friends, and we can have, we um there but for the grace of God go I, all of us, you know. But, believe me, it is true, the thing about the drug, once people cross that line from the, from [unintelligible] straight society to the, the drug society, it's uh, it's a very great possibility they're going to go further, it's [unintelligible] --"

AL: "That's right."

RN: "I don't know, I, I say don't give up."

AL: "There's a great difference between alcohol and marijuana."

RN: "What is it?"

AL: "The worst that you can have when you're in with other alcoholics is more to drink, so you'll throw up more and get sicker and be drunker."

RN: "And that also is a great, great incentive, uh--"

AL: "But when you are with druggers, the, you can go from marijuana to say heroin. Big difference."

RN: "I see."

AL: "If, if, if you're with a guy who suggests you have three more drinks than you should have, you're just going to get sicker. But if you're with a guy who you're already high and he suggests you try, this instead of this, you can go much further. Now, let me tell you one thing about marijuana you should know, that all of, the word marijuana should never be used until you say, what kind of marijuana."

RN: "Oh."

AL: "There is every grade. Now they say legalize marijuana or it isn't bad. What marijuana isn't bad? The mild stuff we grow in Wisconsin, or the stuff from Morocco? The twigs and the leaves, or the rosin? The kind of person who uses it, is he psychotically sound or unsound, is he [unintelligible]? All these things make a difference. So when you say marijuana, you're saying [from one to twenty ?]. And you can never say marijuana, you've got to say: marijuana Acapulco, or marijuana from Mexico, or marijuana from Illinois. Three different things. And, what kind of a person is

getting it, what kind of people is he with? I think that marijuana [unintelligible] all people with [unintelligible]."

RN: "[unintelligible]"

AL: Yes. There's a man, named Dr. Harvey House (?). Dr. House (?) is the chief clinical psychiatrist at the University of California in Berkeley. Five years ago, they asked him for the paper what he thought of marijuana, and he said, it's a light hallucinogen, probably wouldn't cause any harm to anybody. And this was played up. And he was worried because it was so played up. He spent five years studying. About two months ago he released his new story, and it can all be put in five words: pot smokers can't think straight. Pot smokers can't think straight. If you are a regular head and use it regularly, you are not using your priorities correctly. You are not judging what is most important. You have a kind of a will-less way of thinking. And he described it, [unintelligible], as guys walking along a meadow, and have the same appearance, but some parts were boggy and quicksandy and some were firm, and that's the kind of thinking that pot smokers have, they, they, and, and when people like that say these things you can't tell me that this guy Brown, from your NIMH who was quoted this morning as saying that, uh, marijuana is really nothing and perhaps should be, uh, should be given the same penalty as a parking ticket. Good night!"

RN: "Now did you see this statement by Brown, the National Institute of Mental Health this morning? Uh, he should be out. I mean, today, today. If he's a presidential appointee [unintelligible] do is fire the son of a bitch, and I mean today! Get the son of a bitch out of here. Don't know whether he's, probably just a [unintelligible] but he's going to be out."

AL: "Good. That's a terrible thing for a guy in his position to say. A parking ticket would be the equivalent, he was quoted as saying. Because, uh, because, uh, marijuana is insidious. It can be harmless, and nothing, and it can be terrible."

RN: "I know. Well, you know I suppose they could say that, alcoholics don't think straight too, can't they?"

AL: "Yes. [unintelligible] Really. But, but another big difference between marijuana and alcohol is that when people s-smoke marijuana, they smoke it to get high. In every case, when most people drink, they drink to be sociable. You don't see people --"

RN: "That's right, that's right."

AL: "They sit down with a marijuana cigarette to get high --"

RN: "A person does not drink to get drunk."

AL: "That's right."

RN: "A person drinks to have fun."

AL: "I'd say smoke marijuana, you smoke marijuana to get high."

RN: "Smoke marijuana, er, uh, you want to get a charge --"

AL: "Right now --"

RN: "-- of some sort, you want to get a charge, and float, and

this and that and the other thing."

[34 second portion withdrawn as personal]

RN: "See dodeine basically, is a, isn't that a derivative of the same --"

AL: "Sure, it's opium. Opium. It's an opiate."

RN: "Yeah. But you take, uh, Alice Longworth was telling me once, she loves, I mean, she's of course, the gal's great [unintelligible], or something like that, or [unintelligible] or something, she had, cancer operation two years ago, a year ago, and she --"

[portion withdrawn as personal]

AL: "Just takes the pain and everything, and you smooth it away, just like an iron on the wrinkles. It's a lovely thing when you're sick. It was called, it was called the soldiers' drug you know, after the Civil War."

RN: "Yeah, mm-hmm."

AL: "It was invented in the Civil War, and they invented the hypodermic in the Civil War."

RN: "I have seen systems, I have seen the countries of Asia and the Middle East, portions of Latin America, and I have seen what drugs have done to those countries. Uh, everybody knows what it's done to the Chinese, the Indians are hopeless anyway, the Burmese. They have different forms of drugs --"

AL: "That's right."

RN: "[unintelligible] China and the rest of them, they've all gone down. The, countries, the north countries for the example -- why the hell are those Communists so hard on drugs? Well why they're so hard on drugs is because, uh, they love to booze. I mean, the Russians, they drink pretty good."

AL: "That's right."

RN: "But they don't allow any drugs. Like that. And look at the north countries. The Swedes drink too much, the Finns drink too much, the British have always been heavy boozers and all the rest, but uh, and the Irish of course the most, uh, but uh, on the other hand, they survive as strong races. There's another, it's a very significant difference."

AL: "That's right."

RN: "And your drug societies, uh, are, are, inevitably come apart. They--"

AL: "They lose motivation."

RN: "--mind"

AL: "No discipline."

RN: "Yeah."

AL: "You know I did a show--"

RN: "At least with liquor, I don't lose motivation [unintelligible]"

AL: "I just finished doing an hour film with a former gang leader of the Mau-Maus, in, in Brooklyn. Puerto Rican gang, two hundred boys and a hundred and seventy five girls who go out with zip guns and switchblades and tire chains, and this is ten years ago. And this guy was converted by Billy Wilkerson, of the Cross and Switchblade, he's now a preacher."

RN: "Yeah."

AL: "Puerto Rican gang. But we went back into his territory, they called it their turf, in Brooklyn, I just finished--"

RN: "Their turf. Yeah ok. Yeah."

AL: "And I talked to a number of his ex-buddies, all heroin addicts."

RN: "Yeah."

AL: "There are no more kid gangs in Brooklyn or the east side of New York, none of these Angels and, Mau-Maus and the rest of them because they're all addicts and the minute you become an addict, you can't be a gang. You can't have a gang because you can't have discipline, you can't meet, you can't have a leader, you don't care. It's all split up into fractional muggers, all of them trying to make their own way. But that's an example of what drugs did to gangs. Breaks them. And gave us the seven hundred thousand individual kids all having to hustle three to four hundred dollars worth of goods a day to get a fifty to a hundred dollars worth of heroin."

RN: "The [unintelligible] to these, uh, these, uh, more radical demonstrators that were here the last, oh, two weeks ago. [unintelligible] They're all on drugs. Oh yeah, horrible, it's just a -- when I say all, virtually all. And uh, uh, just raising hell, and, uh."

AL: "That's right. And of course one of the reasons you can beat them is that so many of them are on drugs. The police are organized and did a great job. You know [unintelligible] I was here in town, [unintelligible]."

RN: "Yeah, I, I [unintelligible] I got a hold, I got a hold of Mitchell on, uh, Saturday night, I said, bust them. And [unintelligible], and don't hurt anybody, I said don't hurt anybody, I don't want anything like Chicago, but I says, arrest the whole damn lot, if they don't clear the streets. And they arrested them, and the police chief did a hell of a job."

AL: "He did, yes. And I think you get a lot of credit across the country for that, and he does too, but I mean the whole situation, when I mentioned in my talks that I was here, there's applause. Voluntary applause, because the people want to have that kind of stuff put down. And you did just right. Just right."

[snip]

March 24, 1972, 3:02 pm - 3:39 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 693-1 -- press conference

[snip]

Unknown reporter: "Mr. President, uh, do you have a comment sir on the, uh, recommendation of your commission on drugs that the use of marijuana in the home be, uh, no longer, uh, considered a crime?"

RN: "Um, I met with Mr. Shafer, uh, I've read the report, uh, eh, it is a report that deserves consideration and will receive it. However, as to one aspect of the report I am in disagreement. I was before I read it and reading it did not change my mind. Uh, I, uh, oppose the legalization of marijuana, and that includes the sale, its possession, and its use. I do not believe you can have effective criminal justice, uh, based on the philosophy, uh that something is half legal and half illegal. That is my position, despite what the commission has recommended."

April 21, 1971, 4:18 pm - 6:13 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 485-4 -- The President met with H.R. ("Bob") Haldeman and John N. Mitchell at 4:18 pm -- The discussion ranged over policy, scandals, and appointments. The transcribed segment below deals with the Shafer's appointment to the federal bench.

[snip]

JM: "Do you who's going on the board, or was, until the, got this, appointment to the bench? Ray Shafer."

RN: "Who? Did we appoint him to the bench?"

JM: "Didn't you know that?"

RN: "[unintelligible] God no."

JM: "Yeah."

RN: "I'd, I thought everybody was against appointing him to anything."

JM: "That uh,--"

RN: "I just sign those appointments [unintelligible]"

JM: "Well he hasn't, he hasn't gone up yet but this is--"

RN: "District court?"

JM: "No, it's a circuit court. This is Scott and Schweiker's, and, a lot of other [unintelligible]."

RN: "Whatever you want. Everybody else told me never give Shafer a damn thing, all Shafer [unintelligible] in Pennsylvania, but you want him, fine."

JM: "Hell I don't want him, but, hell I thought he was great on the marijuana commission, but uh,--"

RN: "That's where we had him, thought that was that."

JM: "Well, starting, you know, bring, bring back some unity in that --"

RN: "Well let me say this: he ain't going any further. That's pretty [unintelligible]."

JM: "Uh, Shafer has a pretty good, uh--"

RN: "He does have a good legal background. I believe -- oh yes, he was a prosecuting attorney, and all this. He uh, and incidentally had a damn good record. He's a good lawyer. He'd be good judge, as good as anybody."

JM: "Well, now my, you know, my answer's, that's what I would say, it's a hell of a good place to get him out of the way where he can't, cause any problems, [unintelligible] good court. Uh--"

RN: "He's qualified, that's the point. Here it is--"

[2 minute 25 second item withdrawn for personal reasons]

March 21, 1972, 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm -- Oval Office Conversation No. 690-11 -- in this segment, the President is meeting with H. R. ("Bob") Haldeman.

RN: "I saw, for example, [unintelligible] on a pamphlet they're giving out on drugs. And, uh, presentation, [unintelligible], shows, which of course I would, [unintelligible], but where, uh, [unintelligible], they, they put in as a quote from the President on the front of the pamphlet with a picture, and a good strong picture and the rest, that said that, that the problem of drugs is our number one and must be dealt with in a variety of ways."

HRH: "Eh."

RN: "When I saw variety of ways I god damned near puked. And I thought, for pity's sake, we need, and I use the word all out war, or all fronts, or, uh, uh, despicable, or, this in a variety of ways just pissed off [unintelligible]. It's typical, Bob, of what we get out of that shop over there."

HRH: "Even if you want to make that overall [unintelligible]--"

RN: "You can't say that--"

HRH: "You've got to, you've got to attack it, attack from every direction."

RN: "--have to attack on all fronts."

HRH: "On all fronts, yeah."

RN: "Yeah."

HRH: "You've got to attack the problem of the addict, the problem

of the pusher, the problem of the, [unintelligible], victim.  
Yeah, boy you can sure, uh, water it down and then it --"

RN: "Variety of ways. Well now [unintelligible], except that,  
there are several ways."

HRH: "Well what that means though is that we can't really handle  
it."

RN: "That's right."

HRH: "And that's a, that's a brush-off --"

RN: "It's a cop out."

HRH: "-- it's not like appointing a commission."

RN: "A cop-out."

HRH: "But handle it in a variety of ways really says we don't  
know how to handle it. Which may be the truth. But it sure as  
hell isn't the thing to say."

RN: "Well. Here's the thing to say, there's ways to handle it,  
just, just kick the hell out of it. We enforce the law--"

HRH: "The way to talk, the thing to talk about, [unintelligible]  
all the Jaffe crap is not the stuff to talk about. I mean-- "

RN: "That's what they hit me with [unintelligible]. Remember what  
I said."

HRH: "I know."

RN: "You got to kick [unintelligible] when I got out there and I  
didn't do it. I, but what gets, who cares about the Jaffe stuff,  
the treating of the addicts."

HRH: "The mothers don't, because their kids aren't addicts. And  
they're, eh, you just don't worry about that, what you worry  
about is this son of a bitch that's going to come up --"

RN: "That's right."

HRH: "-- and try to slip a packet of marijuana to your kid."

RN: "Or, heroin."

HRH: "Or heroin."

RN: "Give them a fix. Or LSD, or something--"

HRH: "Or LSD, or slip something in his Coca-Cola."

RN: "Yeah. Right."

HRH: "That's what you worry about, you're not worried about  
addicts. Nobody knows an addict, but everybody knows a kid who's  
been smoking marijuana."

RN: "Bob, the truth's, people are not concerned about anybody but  
themselves."

HRH: "Exactly."



RN: "They're not concerned about the other kids whose, uh--"

HRH: "Well kids aren't addicts anyway, I mean nobody, there aren't enough addicts, addicted kids, to matter."

RN: "[unintelligible]. This is a typical thing, it's like the, a black kid, [unintelligible], uh, everybody used, uh, you know it's like old Jim Rhodes, he said, of course he's a typical [unintelligible], I mean, 1960s something like, [unintelligible], he said, you know he says all these people you know, [unintelligible], they come down here, these people, three or four hundred of them, they're picketing around, they're talking to legislators and to press, he, he said [unintelligible] he said, eh, mental health centers and all the other, [unintelligible], he says, I didn't take the money, [unintelligible] I just turned it down, and they gave the money to the niggers."

HRH: "He's right, there's a hell of a lot more niggers than you can buy them off."

RN: "He is [unintelligible, both RN and HRH speak at same time]."

HRH: "Jobs, get them off the streets so they aren't killing people."

RN: "Now we all know that mental institutions are a horrible thing, I mean, we see, you know, people in them, I visited them, just tears your heart."

HRH: "Oh there's no question."

RN: "But god damn it, why do we have a bunch of psychiatrists sitting around, making people who are not mental cases, mental cases? You know, psychiatry is a God damned racket."

HRH: "Yeah."

RN: "In my opinion, there are some that are important and necessary, but most, most people would do a hell of a lot better with a preacher than a psychiatrist."

HRH: "Pretty weird, some of them."

RN: "Oh sure."

HRH: "Uh, there's just, there's no question on the drug side that, that stopping the supply is important because people know if there isn't any, then nobody can buy it."

RN: "They like this stuff about the Turks."

HRH: "And that's good. And the other thing is getting the God damned pushers."

RN: "Oh they want --"

HRH: "--and they'd like to frankly hang them. And then education, educating the kids, they talk about that, but that, that's a tough one to peddle, you know. You can educate the hell out of them but it just--"

RN: "Educate them, shit."

HRH: "--doesn't get anywhere."

RN: "That's right. Enforce the law, you've got to scare them. [unintelligible]."

HRH: "That's exactly it."

RN: "Right."

HRH: "But mostly the pushers. Let's get the guy that's peddling it rather than the children, [unintelligible] the kid that, that's got [unintelligible]. Because kids will try anything that comes their way."

RN: "Yeah. Drug use, [unintelligible] our best, but let's think about, about just doing a, the next speech on the damn thing. I believe [unintelligible]. You know. But it's like why am I against legalizing marijuana."

HRH: "Was talking about it last night, John was saying I wonder what would happen if we did a drug thing every week, and I said I thought that's what you were supposed to have been doing a year and a half or two years ago, that's, that was our plan--"

RN: "Yeah."

HRH: "--just do a drug thing every week. Hit something hard every week on, on something that we're doing on drugs. That doesn't mean the President going out and selling, it's marijuana--"

RN: "[unintelligible] won't pay attention unless I do it."

HRH: "Oh I'm not so sure."

RN: "I, I had a very good line that I, you know, I of course can't use the talking points [unintelligible] had this gobbledygook about drug addiction and the rest in here [unintelligible]. They get progressively dumber, and he does great. You know what I said? I said I [unintelligible] when he came into this there were nine federal agencies working on this. After he'd been in the job for eight months I asked him how many did he find that really are, he said there are thirteen. He says I was four short, people working on this. I said, now this doesn't, it's necessarily bad. [unintelligible]. But also we have to realize there's a lot of petty bureaucrats competing with each other, empire-building, and more interested in building their bureaucracies than they are in dealing with the problem. I said I told him to stop this, I told him to knock heads together, and I said I told him to knock heads together and either they cooperate or the heads will roll. That's the words I used. Now, heads roll."

HRH: "[unintelligible] Yeah.

RN: "Kind of thing that people--"

HRH: "Yeah."

RN: "Yet some of our guys come up with some of that, that's presidential. Heads will roll is presidential."

HRH: "It is when you're dealing with something like that, what you're talking about somewhere people will want heads to roll."

RN: "Well what did you think [unintelligible]. But it's ridiculous, these damn little things that keep farting around, fighting with each other and competing with each other, and, huh."

# **Marihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding**

Commissioned by President Richard M. Nixon, March, 1972

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Hashish is a related form of the drug, made from the resins of the Indian hemp plant. Also called chocolate, hash, or shit, it is on average six times stronger than marijuana.

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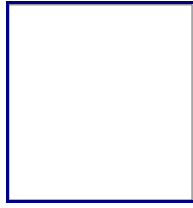
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