

Marijuana

Why did we ban it? (Zach Ripple)

Origins

Cannabis; up until the 20th century, was legal in the United States and was sold at drug stores as the product “Hashish” it was mainly sold in a liquid form or as a candy over the counter. Hemp, another product derived from cannabis was widely used to make rope, clothes, and many other products. It is believed that the widespread use of cannabis for recreational purposes was very low, as it was primarily an over the counter medicine. Presumably used as an “alternative medicine” to headaches, anxiety etc.

“Marijuana”

The idea of smoking Cannabis was first introduced in the early 20th century by refugees from Mexico, fleeing the turmoil of the Mexican revolution. To the Mexicans, the plant was known as “Marihuana” which over time turned into “Marijuana”. As we have seen many times in the past, large numbers of people from a distant land entering the United States tends triggered a xenophobic reaction from the general population which in-turn, rolled up-hill to Washington. Part of the reactionary fallout was the Federal Government's attempts to regulate marijuana, to in part control the immigrant population.

From an article by Alyssa Pagano of Business Insider

“Harry Anslinger (1) took the scientifically unsupported idea of marijuana as a violence-inducing drug, connected it to black and Hispanic people, and created a perfect package of terror to sell to the American media and public. By emphasizing the Spanish word marihuana instead of cannabis, he created a strong association between the drug and the newly arrived Mexican immigrants who helped popularize it in the States. He also created a narrative around the idea that cannabis made black people forget their place in society”. *1. Harry Anslinger was commissioner of the Federal Bureau Narcotics from 1930-1962

Regulation and Prohibition

- (1906) The Pure Food and Drug act is passed. This required medicine companies to list cannabis as the ingredient to any given product.
- (1907) California, in compliance with the Poison Act of 1907, lists cannabis as a poison
- (1925) At the International Opiate Conventional; exportation of “indian hemp”(hashish and other derivatives) is banned.
- (1930) Federal Bureau of Narcotics was established. Lead by the newly appointed Harry Anslinger, It's task was to enforce laws pertaining to recreational drugs, including opiates, cocaine, and marijuana.

- (1936) Geneva Trafficking Conventions: Anslinger, representing the U.S government proposed an international prohibition of distribution, cultivation and possession of all derivatives of cannabis not medical or scientific. He called upon member countries to use their criminal justice systems to take punitive action on anyone found in violation. Many countries disagreed with the U.S focus and wanted to concentrate resources on drug trafficking.
- (1937) Marijuana Tax Act is passed. This effectively banned possession or transfer of marijuana, making it a federal offense. The Act also imposed a draconian tax on physicians using cannabis on patients and manufacturers that produced products made of hemp. At the same time Anslinger began a campaign to turn the public against cannabis by demonizing it, not only to disrupt and control minority communities, but to destroy the hemp industry. Well connected business magnate including Andrew Mellon, William Randolph, and Henry DuPont saw the elimination of the Hemp industry as an opportunity to invest and profit from more expensive alternatives, such as nylon which un-coincidentally was developed by the DuPont family.
- Mandatory Sentencing (1952,1956): mandatory sentences of 2 to 10 years and a fine of \$20,000 for first time offenders in possession of marijuana.
- Controlled Substances Act (1970): The Marijuana Tax Act was deemed unconstitutional and repealed (violation of 5th amendment). The Government's response was to pass the controlled substances act. This assigned “schedules” to drugs. Marijuana was classified as “schedule 1” meaning, a high abuse potential and no medical use. This prohibited all forms of cannabis use.

Marijuana seems immoral and/or UnChristian (Vaughn Spargur)

Morality does not equal legality.

1. Even if you believe using marijuana is immoral, that does not mean it should be illegal.
2. There are lots of things that are considered immoral by some or many that are not illegal.
 - a. Adultery
 - b. Lying
 - c. Gluttony

Prohibition

1. The most important property right is over one's own self
 - a. According to the NAP the only time force is justified is if it used to defend against force.
 - b. Prohibition is the threat of force against any who would use or possess a specific item

- c. Since possessing or using marijuana (or any substance) cannot directly harm another person, there is no justification for prohibition
- d. So even if the usage of marijuana is immoral, it should not be illegal.
- 2. Prohibition against alcohol was abandoned because it did not work.
 - a. Negative results of alcohol prohibition (“12 bad effects of prohibition”, Daniel Florien)
 - i. Corruption
 - ii. Organized crime
 - iii. Economic disaster
 - iv. Prevented alcoholics from getting help
 - v. Extremely expensive for everyone, govt included
 - vi. Made alcohol itself more dangerous
 - b. Alcohol is as bad or worse for the user as marijuana. (“Marijuana vs. Alcohol: Which Is Really Worse for Your Health?” by Joe Brownstein)
 - 1. It is far easier to overdose on alcohol than marijuana
 - 2. Alcohol is far more likely to negatively interact with medications.
 - 3. Both lead to impaired senses and poor choices.
 - 4. Alcohol also has as many or more long term negative consequences as marijuana
 - c. Why then is alcohol “legal” but marijuana is prohibited?
 - i. No moral justification for the difference.
 - ii. In fact, if you had to pick the “lesser of two evils” marijuana, not alcohol would seem to be the better choice to remain legal.
 - iii. Many of the same exact “negative” results of alcohol prohibition are now seen in the war on drugs, if not worse.
 - 1. No legal market mechanism to regulate quality, potency, and legitimacy.
 - 2. Billions wasted in enforcement and punishment
 - 3. Corrupting influence on Justice system in many ways. (Cops using/selling, planting evidence, prison industrial complex, law enforcement lobbying)
 - 4. People afraid of asking for help.

Medicinal Uses

- 1. Historically in Judaism Marijuana has been used for many purposes (“Did Aaron the High Priest smoke? The Biblical Roots of Jews and Marijuana” Yoseph Glassman)
 - a. Can be used to make the wick for the Shabbat candle
 - b. Various other uses

- i. Clothing, rope, accessories, and roofing materials.
 - ii. It's use was prohibited during Passover, which implies it was used in food at other times.
 - c. There were many different medicinal uses as well, specifically for the seed pod of the plant.
2. Even the most hardcore anti-drinking Christian will allow for the use of alcohol for "medicinal purposes". (1 Timothy 5:23)
 - a. Does it not stand to reason then that the same should be true for marijuana?
 - b. In the 13th century, Pope John XXI, who was also a physician wrote books on medicine, which included a few medicinal uses for the hemp seed. ("Medical Cannabis: a short Graphical History - Catholic Medical Books" by Antique Cannabis Book)
3. Many different parts of the marijuana plant were used for medicinal purposes up until it was made illegal. ("The Illegalization of Marijuana: A Brief History" Stephen Siff)
 - a. The only person to speak against the Marijuana Tax Act (1937) was a representative of the American Medical Association.
 - b. In the 1944 the New York Academy of medicine produced a report saying marijuana was merely a mild intoxicant.
 - c. The greatest proponents of marijuana prohibition because it was so "dangerous" were not doctors, or medical researchers, but the government.

Things marijuana helps with (Hodey Johns)

(Collective Evolution)

"1) Pain Relief

Studies show that THC activates pathways in the central nervous system which work to block pain signals from being sent to the brain. Likewise, cannabis has been shown to be especially effective against neuropathic pain, or nerve-related pain."

"2) PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is another common reason to use medical marijuana. Interestingly, the high from THC is also associated with temporary impairments of memory. While this may be seen as a drawback for some marijuana users, impaired memory is often therapeutic for those who struggle to forget painful memories, such as patients who suffer from PTSD. Recent studies confirm that oral doses of THC can help relieve a variety of PTSD-related symptoms including flashbacks, agitation and nightmares."

“3) Nausea & Vomiting

THC has been available in pill form for treating nausea and vomiting in cancer patients since the 1980s. Marinol, a pill containing synthetic THC, was the first THC-based medication to be approved by the FDA for this purpose. Since then, other THC pills have been developed and prescribed to patients undergoing chemotherapy, including a pill called Cesamet.”

“4) Appetite Stimulant

Along with its ability to reduce nausea, THC is known to work as a powerful appetite stimulant in both healthy and sick individuals. Similarly, Marinol and Cesamet are regularly prescribed to boost appetite in patients with cancer and HIV-associated wasting syndrome. A number of studies conducted with Marinol suggest that THC can also stimulate weight gain in anorexia.”

“5) Asthma

Treating asthma may not seem like an obvious use for medical marijuana. But as it turns out, THC’s ability to improve breathing in asthmatics is supported by research dating back to the 1970s. Following trials that showed smoking marijuana could help calm asthma attacks, scientists tried (and failed) to develop an inhaler that could deliver THC. While the THC inhaler idea was ultimately abandoned, some say modern-day vaporizers might be the solution.”

“6) Glaucoma

Another benefit of THC recognized early on was its potential to relieve eye pressure in patients with glaucoma. Likewise, after studies in the 1970s showed that smoking marijuana could reduce symptoms in glaucoma sufferers, scientists tried (and failed again) to develop a way to administer THC in eye drops. The idea proved too complicated due to the fact that THC is not soluble in water.”

“7) Sleep Aid

Many are aware of the sleep-inducing effect of marijuana, and research shows that THC is largely responsible. In fact, trials conducted in the 1970s found that oral doses of THC helped both healthy individuals and insomniacs fall asleep faster. Interestingly, more recent studies suggest THC may also improve nighttime breathing and reduce sleep interruptions in those who suffer from a common disorder known as sleep apnea. Researchers are currently working to develop a THC-based medicine for treating the condition.”

Side Effects of Opioids versus Side Effects of THC (Honey Johns)

Opioid Side Effects are both short term and long term:

“The side effects of opiate abuse are fairly varied and may include:

- Drowsiness.
- Lethargy.
- Paranoia.
- Respiratory depression.
- Nausea.

Because of the intense high produced by the interaction of several opiates and the brain, the drugs remain extremely addictive, sometimes causing measurable symptoms of addiction in under three days.

Opiates also cause your irises to relax, creating pinprick or pinpoint pupils. This is one of the big giveaways of opiate abuse, and it's hard to disguise.

Because of the way opiates often reduce your reaction times, driving while under the influence of opiates is often dealt with harshly, and you could lose your freedom along with your license. In some states, the mere presence of an illegal drug is enough to determine that you were driving while intoxicated, although the federal government is pushing states toward defined limits, just like with alcohol.

Long-term effects can include:

- Nausea and vomiting.
- Abdominal distention and bloating.
- Constipation.
- Liver damage (especially prevalent in abuse of drugs that combine opiates with acetaminophen).
- Brain damage due to hypoxia, resulting from respiratory depression.
- Development of tolerance.
- Dependence.”

For Marijuana, the effects are greatly reduced:

(Web MD) “Use of marijuana can cause dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, dry or red eyes, heart and blood pressure problems, lung problems, impaired mental functioning, headache, dizziness, numbness, panic reactions, hallucinations, flashbacks, depression, and sexual problems.”

We should be careful to note 2 things when we look at the side effects of marijuana usage. The first is that many (and perhaps most) of these effects have more to do with smoke inhalation rather than the actual plant itself. The second is that research is repressed, and so most lists include “possible” effects and not a complete list of the effects themselves.

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