Laws harsh on 'pot' users

(This is the second of a three part series on marijuana, its ef- fects, and the law.)

Last week several general aspects of marijuana were dis- cussed. This week’s article focuses on the narcotic laws and how they may affect the student, and on several of the hidden dangers inherent in the "weed."

Every potential user should be aware of the legal aspects of the drug. The more important laws are as follows:

A person possessing marijuana may receive a fine of not more than $500, or can spend up to three and one-half years in a jail, federal prison, or house of corrections.

Anyone (with certain exceptions including doctors and pharma- cists) selling or even giving away marijuana will go to prison any- where from 5 to 10 years the first time he is caught, and from 10 to 25 years after that (after the first offense the sentence in- cludes no parole, suspension, or probation for at least 10 years).

If anyone, including another minor, induces a minor into tak- ing the drug, or if he even gives the drug to a minor, regardless if said minor uses the drug him- self or not, will, the first time, be sentenced to between 10 and 25 years. If caught more than once, he will then spend, between 25 years and 100 years (with no parole, suspension, or probation before the minimum sentence of 25 years has been served).

Accomplices beware

What might come as a surprise to many is the still law regarding accomplices. Anyone being where the drug is illegally kept or deposited, or knowingly being in the company of a person possessing marijuana, or conspir- ing to violate the law, may be sent to jail or prison for up to five years (by law anyone receiving a sentence of two and one- half years or less will be sent to a local jail; anything over that will be referred to a federal prison). He will be fined not less than $500 and not more than $5000.

What the law means to a student is this. If the student is aware that his roommate has pot and is not smoking it, he is liable to be arrested, and will be held liable and will definitely be arrested during a raid (police are required by law to arrest every- one present). A student who in- nocently studies while his room- mate smokes pot could be in trouble.

Parents notified

Whenever an arrest is made for any reason pertaining to drugs, the parents are imme- diately notified (and will probably testify in court). The subject will be a direct act of aiding a minor, and is considered to be a criminal, and is considered to be an accomplice and will be subject to the above law! Naturally the police will not pursue such people every time they find a supply, but if they do find out someone had knowledge they may hold responsible.

Anyone present at a pot party, whether smoking the pot or not, and whether they even know pot is being smoked or not, will be held liable and will definitely be arrested during a raid (police are required by law to arrest every- one present). A student who in- nocently studies while his room- mate smokes pot could be in trouble.

As Detective Garret J. Flanagan of the Easton Police Department (Vice and Narcotics Bureau) put it, "A fellow may be very smart in the world won't help him." It would behoove students to con- sider this advice while making decisions concerning drugs.

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