

Ferdie J. Deering

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New Drugs, Attitudes Hold Peril

LAW enforcement officials in many places and a segment of the public apparently have given up on controlling use of marijuana.

Crowds at certain concerts and other events in Oklahoma reportedly light up "pot" to such an extent that officers despair of arresting offenders. Elsewhere, tolerance of nominal amounts of illegal drugs has become commonplace.

This attitude could result in a side effect that may be more disastrous than the multibillion-dollar, mind-blowing, debilitating effects attributed to the marijuana trade.

Scientists are discovering new kinds of drugs and new applications of existing drugs that could send millions of people off on binges from which they might never return. Claims are made that new drug technology may result in a "choose your mood society."

A recent article in *Fortune* magazine described a number of such drugs. One disperses illusions and nightmares. Another creates synthetic recollections of things that

never happened. A couple of others purge the mind of unpleasant memories. One which supposedly restores sexual potency is being tested in Dallas.

After it was discovered that "chemical behavior modification" could help to stabilize mentally retarded or disturbed people, scientists turned attention to possible uses of drugs to alter characteristics of normal people.

They found that certain chemicals tended to increase motivation, improve memory in the elderly, and enlarge creative capacities. Some are called "mind-opening agencies."

One scientist described new drugs as "amplifiers of specific senses that will enhance the visual, the interpretive color sense or the auditory acuity, without blanketing the entire body with intoxication and confusion."

Tests for "mood drugs" seem to have been accelerated by discoveries concerning the brain. It is now held that agents of change in the

brain are electrochemical, with chemical messengers called "neurotransmitters" carrying signals to nerve endings.

By promising desirable results in ordinary life for normal people, drug technology presents new temptations. Inability of agencies to enforce laws against marijuana enlarges the specter of a drug-addicted nation.

In the *Fortune* article, one scientist said: "There is no social, scientific or medical apparatus for optimizing normal human behavior. . . . Under whose aegis could we administer a creativity drug, for instance?"

Such a protecting power or influence is not required. If there's a way to make money out of it, somebody will do it.

Before we accept this development as an inevitable turn of events, perhaps we should note that when LSD first became available it was stockpiled by the U.S. Army for possible use in disabling enemy forces. We could disable ourselves.