

'I turned into a bat and flew'

'Reefer Madness' sprang from old tax bill

(CPS) — "Reefer Madness," the once popular concept of marijuana that misled a generation's beliefs about the drug, began with an obscure tax bill hearing nearly 40 years ago, according to a legal researcher.

Charles H. Whitebread of the University of Virginia's law school traced the history of marijuana laws from the passage of the first state prohibition of the drug by Utah in 1915.

Whitebread, who began searching records in 1968 to discover where the idea started of making marijuana usage criminal, said 27 states had made the drug illegal

when Congress passed the Marijuana Tax Act in 1937.

Congressional hearings on the bill lasted only two hours, Whitebread said. "Their key witness was Enslinger, the head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, who testified that marijuana created in its users "insanity, criminality and death."

The Marijuana Tax Act, an extensive measure that included prohibition of marijuana and hemp production, passed Congress without debate against protests from the American Medical Association. "Now no medical bill could pass Congress without the approval of the AMA," Whitebread

said. "Why did it then?"

Birdseed manufacturers who were using marijuana seeds in their mixed seed products were exempt from the act because, Whitebread said, "they tried other seeds, but none other made the bird's coats so shiny or made them sing so much."

The 1937 act set the stage for "Reefer Madness," Whitebread said, but the real origin was the sensationalistic newspaper coverage of five major criminal tri-

als in the early 1940's in which murderers were acquitted on criminal insanity resulting from marijuana use.

A prominent physician testified on one of the trials that he had tried smoking marijuana himself, Whitebread said. "After two puffs on a marijuana cigarette," the doctor said, "I turned into a bat and flew around the room for five minutes, landing at the bottom of a 200-foot inkwell." A terrified audience believed him.

Whitebread said he holds no high hopes for national legalization of marijuana because the public confuses legalization with promotion. He believes that suppression of marijuana usage poses graver dangers than legalization.

"We simply have more to lose as a nation from that intrusion than from practice, whether it be smoking marijuana, reading pornography or using contraceptives," Whitebread said.

Howitzer used to settle argument

(AP) — Feel edgy?

In Ansbach, West Germany, residents of an apartment building were awakened before dawn last Thursday to find a big U.S. Army cannon aimed straight at their building. The landlady and 19 residents promptly fled.

Not a shot was fired, however, from the 175 mm howitzer. A newspaper later reported the gun wasn't loaded.

A U.S. Army spokesman said Tuesday that Spec. 4 Jonathon Robinson requisitioned the self-propelled weapon from a guarded motor pool after an argument with the landlady, smashed it through barriers at the post and tore up streets and a park en route to the apartment building.

Military Police caught up with the soldier by the time he reached the building, where he lived, and took him into custody, the spokesman said.

Robinson, 24, from Memphis, Tenn., was charged with misappropriating a government vehicle, driving while intoxicated and destroying government and civilian property worth \$2,500. The Army said he was normally assigned as a gunner on the tracked weapon.

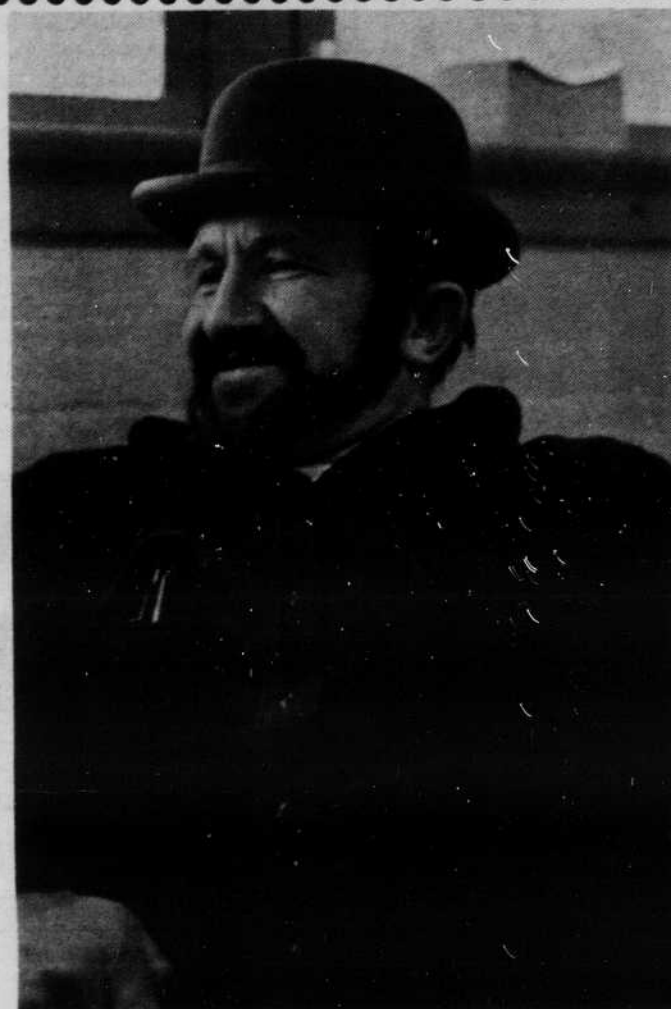
A German newspaper said Robinson's landlady had confiscated his tape recorder and phonograph because he refused to pay \$600 he allegedly owed her.

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"Our law system has become increasingly secularized."

Up until the late 19th Century the method of training lawyers was that of apprenticeship rather than the university law schools we have today. It was during that time that Blackstone's Commentaries were relied upon heavily by the apprenticing attorney. The significance of Blackstone is that he echoed the historic Western view that human law is derived from divine law. "This, then, is the general significance of law, a rule of action by some superior being . . ."



Blackstone reflected the Judeo-Christian view that, just as the Universe is governed by certain natural laws, which are discoverable by man, there " . . . are the eternal, immutable laws of good and evil, to which the creator has enabled human reason to discover, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions." The knowledge of God is discoverable in similar manner. (Romans 1:19)

Before the Fall man lived in fellowship with God. During this period man's reason was unclouded, and God put it to work. When God chose man to name all the animals, it is interesting to note that man just named them right then and there. He did not have to watch them in their habitats to see what species they were. He just named them. (Genesis 2:19) Adam did not have to employ the scientific method to realize who Eve was. He knew how Eve had been created even though he had never seen a woman and had been asleep during her creation (Genesis 2:21-23)

The fall of man resulted in separation from God. Since then, man hasn't been able to totally understand God's natural law through the use of reason but can only perceive glimpses of it. Man's " . . . reason is corrupt and his understanding is full of ignorance and error," according to Blackstone.

Man has continued to reject God and His wisdom. (Romans 1:22) Consequently, God has also given us His law by direct revelation, such as the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:1-17) According to Blackstone, "The doctrines thus delivered we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures."

Since the mid-19th century our law system has become increasingly secularized. It's divine basis is rarely mentioned. Despite the popularity of secular thinking, our present law is closely intertwined with Christian ethic.

Throughout Scripture you find the seeming paradox of man's insignificance, yet eternal importance. (Psalms 8:3-5) Man is a unique creature and was the subject of a very special creation. (Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 2:7)

The value of the individual is an idea which permeates the U.S. Constitution and the American legal system, yet the foundation of that concept is found in the Bible.

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