



MARK WILSON

YOU WILL KNOW FEAR

Welcome to the Age of Idiocy. The pendulum has swung even farther to right while we slept.

You know all those extremely personal items you have in the various drawers and cubbyholes of your home? Do you think for a moment they are safe? Are you still under the impression that your home is your castle, that you have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Do you really think you have the right to privacy?

Imagine, if you will for a moment, that you are an "aging hippie-type," perhaps pushing 50, and that you have never been in any sort of trouble with the law.

Suppose one day you decided the socially accepted drug alcohol was bad for you, and gave it up. Suppose you came to the conclusion that if you wished to use any drug at all it would be more intelligent to use the least harmful substance you could find. Suppose you decided that the major difference between chocolate ice cream and marijuana was that when you ate chocolate ice cream it didn't make you feel like smoking marijuana, but that when you smoked marijuana it sometimes made you feel like eating chocolate ice cream, and that was about the worst thing you could think about marijuana.

Suppose, after decades of personal observation you realized that you had never known or even heard of anyone being harmed by marijuana, and that after twenty-five years of smoking it sometimes occasionally or even daily you had noticed no ill effects whatsoever. Suppose you didn't like the hassle of trying to buy the stuff and decided to just grow a few plants yourself, involving no one else, thus eliminating the danger and inconvenience of acquisition of what you have come to believe is a relatively harmless substance. Then suppose one day some neighborhood kids climbed the fence and came into your backyard, discovered your few plants, recognized them, and told mom and dad when they got home. Suppose then that dad was under indictment for some crime and decided to make a deal with the police by turning you in.

Did you know that drunk driving is a misdemeanor, while growing one marijuana plant is a felony? Did you know that since November 1989, when the Oregon Legislature changed the

laws, "cultivation" of marijuana in any amount can result in confiscation of your home, your automobile, any firearms you may own and that it can send you to state prison?

Believe my, my friend, it can happen! If you have 100 acres of land in Oregon and someone drops one seed on your soil and a pot plant is discovered by the DEA — regardless of your knowledge or intention — the state can take your home.

Do you realize that marijuana is classified in the same category as heroin, speed and cocaine? All it takes in the "war on drugs" is a "tip," real or imagined, that you grow pot and you will be under suspicion and surveillance.

What this means is preposterous. It means that it is less dangerous for you to buy marijuana from a dope dealer than to grow your own.

The state drug task force is presently engaged in an all out war on anyone who has any connection with marijuana in particular, and is using any means, however illegal, unethical or immoral. The idea is to use PR and propaganda to instill fear. Even if there is no arrest or conviction; even if the case is thrown out of court. You have still been subjected to a thorough search of your home, in which one of the officers is quite likely to slowly look through any polaroid photos you may have of your wife. If your home is searched the police will take not only any winter stash of marijuana they may find, they will take every pipe (even your favorite tobacco pipe), aligator clip, cigarette case — even ashtrays and cigarette papers. They will look through every photograph you own on the pretext that there may be pictures of marijuana somewhere.

After several days of not smoking marijuana you will realize that you are undergoing no withdrawal symptoms, and this will bolster your belief that the drug is, indeed, as harmless as you thought it was. The feeling of fear, resentment, and a sense of having been violated will be every bit as intense as if you had been gang-raped repeatedly, and knew the rapists would be back.

You will feel like a Jew in Nazi Germany. Your name will have been in the newspaper; you will have wiped out your life savings and will have borrowed money from anyone you can in order to retain an attorney because you will need an attorney and most of them require a substantial and often nonrefundable deposit, ranging from \$1,500 to \$5000 or more. And the attorney will inform you that you will need two attorneys, since your wife will probably also be charged with a felony — even if she had nothing to do with your pot growing activity.

You will live in the constant fear of being arrested, cuffed and transported in a police vehicle to the jail where you will be fingerprinted, photographed and booked; and you will know that it could happen at any time, day or night.

And you will wait. Every time a car drives by your home a terrible feeling will come over you. You will wonder if your telephone is tapped, and you will find it difficult even to have sex with your wife because you will wonder if a narc is lurking outside your window, and the image of some perverted cop going through your private things and fondling your wife's undergarments will be very strong.

And all this expense to the taxpayers will have been incurred to stop one person from smoking marijuana now and then. And you will feel as though you live in a police state, an amoral society where such a thing can happen.

The first night after the search you will wake every twenty minutes to the realization that it is not just a bad dream. You will think about jail, and you will be more righteously indignant than you have ever been before wondering how the police action against you could possibly have any bearing on keeping drugs away from kids or discourage Uzi-toting, inner-city thugs wearing \$300 tennis shoes and driving BMWs purchased with crack money. And you will begin to think the police are just going after the easiest and least dangerous targets. Who wants to face an Uzi?

And you will lose some of your faith in a system that makes you fear those who are supposed to be protecting you, and you will wonder how anyone could do such a thing to anyone as harmless as yourself.

And your life will be changed forever.

And however mellow and peaceful and philosophical you may have been before you will feel a deep resentment towards those who have caused you to hate them for their disregard of your life.

And your fundamentalist Christian neighbor will say, "If you aren't doing anything wrong you don't have anything to worry about." And the Gestapo dope cop will say, "I vas chust doink mine chob."

And no matter how much you may love this country you will know without doubt that there is a pervasive insanity, resulting in a gross misdirection of priorities in the so-called "drug war" upon the people of the land.

And you will never be the same.

— A BUSTED CITIZEN

At the editor's request the author of this article agreed to remain anonymous to protect him from further grief.

