

Whom the Gods Would Destroy - Part 2

Category: Mike Scruggs' Column

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Retail cannabis dispensary in Denver selling many packaged varieties of high-potency marijuana. Almost 100 people died on Colorado roads in 2014 because a driver was high on marijuana, according to US Drug Enforcement Agency report.

The Politics and Consequences of Commercialized Pot

According to Ben Cort, drug addiction consultant, counselor, and author of *Weed Inc.—The Truth about THC, the Pot Lobby, and the Commercial Marijuana Industry*, published in 2017, billionaire “social justice” financier George Soros has spent over \$100 million to commercialize high-potency marijuana products in the United States. This money has mostly been run through Soros’s Drug Policy Alliance (DPA). Cort, a successful business owner and former addict himself, became an active leader opposing the DPA and its commercial, media, and political allies attempting to legalize and commercialize the cannabis industry in his home state of Colorado. The battle took the form of a proposed amendment to change Colorado’s Constitution to legalize, “regulate” and commercialize the cannabis (marijuana) industry. It was called Proposition 64.

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Marijuana (cannabis) has more than 100 chemicals in it, but only two are significant for this discussion. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is a neurotoxin that makes you high and can cause hallucinations and delusions. A 2017 National Academy of Medicine (NAM) report conclusively found that long-term use or high dosage of THC has a moderate to strong link to mental illness and related violence. Cannabidiol (CBD) has a mild calming effect that has been used successfully in a small number of medical applications. Recreational marijuana is relatively high in THC with little or no CBD. THC products are often misused as pain reduction products. What people really want is the THC “high.” It is extremely important to know that the THC content of marijuana products, especially “edibles,” has risen dramatically since 1975. The THC in a “joint” today is 15 times higher than it was in 1970. Yet the commercial marijuana lobby and many politicians are behaving as if marijuana candy that is 30 percent THC is no more dangerous than a 2 percent THC joint in 1970. This could have tragic future consequences.

Cort and volunteer activists like himself fought hard, but they had a difficult time raising money, while the proponents of legalization and commercialization backing Proposition 64 seem to have unlimited money pouring into the campaign to pass Proposition 64.

On November 6, 2012, Colorado voters passed Proposition 64, “regulating” marijuana sales and use in Colorado. It passed with 55 percent of the vote, surpassing the 51.5 percent victory for President Obama in Colorado the same day. Its “regulations,” written by two pro-marijuana lobbyist lawyers, essentially legalized the commercialization of the cannabis industry in Colorado, allowing plant growing, manufacture of products, advertising, promotion, and sales in an effort to cash in on both the medicinal and recreational market for marijuana products, but especially the recreational market. Commercial sales of marijuana to the general public began on January 1, 2014.

The proponents of Proposition 64 embraced the dubious and now proven false promise that passage would reduce crime and violence. They claimed that marijuana had no long-term serious health dangers based on an outdated and inadequate study. They claimed that it was no more a threat than alcohol and would be a health benefit to many. They played the usual race card guilt ploy that failing to pass Proposition 64 was racist and would hurt minorities. Most of all, they played the Colorado public for suckers. What the public thought was simply decriminalizing and legalizing a harmless mild intoxicant was a grand scheme to make billions of dollars without social responsibility or accountability. What was behind it all was getting rich quick by getting people higher and higher at greater and greater risk. Cort philosophized after the battle:

“So long as there is a thirst for drugs there will be those willing to supply those drugs no matter the harm caused, the lives lost, and the cost to society.”

Perhaps the biggest lie of Proposition 64 was a silent one. The public did not realize that the potency of new marijuana products in 2014 would be more than double what it was in 1996 or

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dream that it would be six times as high in Colorado in 2019 than it was in 1996.

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Colorado now has over 700 licensed businesses, called dispensaries, selling marijuana products. They tend to be concentrated in minority neighborhoods. About 20 percent of those with income less than \$25,000 per year use marijuana in Colorado, and only 11 percent of those with incomes over \$50,000. The cannabis industry in Colorado is exploiting the poor and minorities to pile up their cash hordes. And yet we still hear the racial demagoguery that legalizing marijuana somehow helps eliminate inequality. What utter and cynical hypocrisy. Few minorities own these pot shops, and the arrest rates for black youths has gone up 58 percent and Latino youths up 29 percent since Proposition 64.

As we saw in part 1 of this series, in the legalized pot states of California, Oregon, Colorado, and Alaska, murders were up 37 percent and assaults up 25 percent from 2013 to 2017. This was compared to a 20 percent increase in murders and an 11 percent increase in assaults nationally during the same time period. Something is going wrong in Potland.

Many communities in Colorado, however, are seeing the light and reacting strongly. As of April 2017, 176 of 272 communities in Colorado have opted to prohibit the sale of marijuana products within their boundaries. But the Pot lobbyists will still have the poor and minorities to exploit.

Yet on "Marijuana Day" (420=April 20): California U.S. Senator and U.S. Democrat Presidential candidate Kamala Harris called for legalization of marijuana at the federal level for the purpose of "restoring justice."

The political influence of Soros, the DPA, and the Pot Lobby is not, however, limited to the Democrat Party. In early 2018, Colorado U.S. Republican Senator Cory Gardner threatened to block all President Trump's judicial nominees unless then Attorney General Jeff Sessions softened his stance on marijuana.

The Pot lobby also has strong support in the media, most notably the Washington Post. A February 23, 2015 title by Christopher Ingraham was "Marijuana may be in even safer than previously thought, researchers say." This is just another example of DPA-Pot Lobby funded "research." The Post also tried to blunt the influence of a major National Academy of Science report on the effect of marijuana use on cognitive ability (IQ) summarized below.

Beginning in April 1972 in Dunedin, New Zealand, a long-range psychological and medical study was undertaken on all the babies born between April 1972 and March 1973. A total of 1,037 participating children were evaluated at birth and again at age 5 and every 2 to 3 years through age 21. At age 13, they were given IQ tests. At age 38, 874 of those who were still living in the Dunedin area were again tested for IQ. Part of the interview and observation process included questions about marijuana use. On October 12, 2012, team of psychologists and doctors under the initial leadership of Madeline H. Meier published a study in Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS) assessing the effect of marijuana abuse. Of the 874, 750 had either never used

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evaluated according to their marijuana dependence in three categories from regular use at least
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four times per week to those who had at least three evaluations of marijuana dependence.

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According to Table 1 of the data, the two less severely dependent groups has a decline of 2 to 3 IQ
points, but the most severely dependent group of 38 people had an average drop of 5.75 IQ points.
Of these, there were 23 who had become dependent before age 18. According to the Abstract,
these had suffered a loss of 8 IQ points. My calculation from their data was a loss of 8.25 IQ points.
One conclusion drawn was that marijuana abuse may be especially damaging to adolescent brains
still in their growth stage.

IQ is not the only predictor of success in life, but studies have shown it is the single largest
predictor of success including annual income.

We must also keep in mind that the average THC content of marijuana did not rise above 2 percent until 1985 and had reached slightly over 9 percent as the Dunedin subjects were taking their second IQ test and to 12 percent by 2014. Currently, THC content of 20 to 25 percent is quite common, and in the booming commercialization of the marijuana industry in Colorado, sellers often advertise THC content of 30 percent or more. The neurotoxic effect on recent users consuming drastically higher THC content has not yet been measured, and the future could bring foreboding study results too late. One of the characteristics of marijuana addiction is that it occurs gradually over time. Another dangerous effect of high THC marijuana edibles is that it may be more than two hours before the first effect is felt, and this often causes a dangerous or sometimes deadly overdose as users continue to consume it without realizing they are building up an extremely potent overdose.