

## Drug War Follies - Skunk Magazine Issue #22

Okay, gang, you had me down last issue with a stomach split from sternum to belly button. And now you've got me wearing a girdle to keep my insides in. But that doesn't mean I'm not back up to speed when it comes to loathing the stupid and criminal war on drugs, the sack-o-shit politicians who foist its carnage and fear on us, and the evil DEA and Narcoboy munchkins who carry out their demon plans. That said, let's start pointing fingers and naming names. First up, the incomparably idiotic John P. Walters, the US Drug Czar, who noted at during a July 12 press conference celebrating a number of recent pot raids in northern California's Shasta County that "the people who plant and tend the [pot] gardens are terrorists who wouldn't hesitate to help other terrorists get into the country with the aim of causing mass casualties."

The Shasta raids utilized 17 policing agencies, including the ever compliant California National Guard and the ever zealous DEA, whose members got to zip around Northern Cal in Blackhawk choppers while searching out lush gardens planted on national park land.

Walters, whose comments were printed in the Redding Record-Searchlight, went on to say that the growers were "armed; they're dangerous...[they're] violent criminal terrorists."

Despite Walters assertions, however, no arrests had been made at the time of his comments and there were no reports of either booby-traps or weapons found at any of the busted pot spots. By the time the two-week operation Walters was talking about was concluded in late July, 60 gardens with a total of 283,397 plants had been uprooted, 16 suspected growers had been arrested and 10 weapons had been found, including a bow, pellet guns, one pistol, one .30-.30 rifle and a couple of .22-caliber rifles. The stuff of terrorists for sure! That's quite an army, Mr. Walters, no shit. If I was one of those arrested I think I might ask my lawyer to charge Walters with libel for his name-calling.

On the other hand, had those 283,397 plants made it to harvest and found their way to smokers' bowls, imagine what a cash infusion it would have been for the local economy, and imagine how many more happy people there would be in Shasta and elsewhere. By elsewhere I mean my house, of course. My bowl. Thanks a lot, fellas.

Small by comparison, Dallas Police and the local DEA were celebrating the bust of three large pot plots in that city in late July and early August. One of the plots had 1,600 plants; two of the others over 10,000 each. Unfortunately for the authoritarians, not only were no arrests made, but no gardening equipment was found and the fields were said to look abandoned. In others words, more than 70 cops and DEA were utilized to dig up ditchweed for two weeks on mostly county property. Nonetheless, to save face, Dallas County officials put a street value of \$10 million on the pot taken from each of the two large hemp grows. Here's to you, Jack Herer!

Meanwhile, southern California was hit just as hard as northern Cali in July, but the targets there were medical marijuana dispensaries and users, rather than growers. On July 25, nefarious DEA Dudley-Do-Rights roared into Los Angeles and shut down 10 medi-pot dispensaries, while at the same time sending letters to more than 200 LA pot-club landlords that their properties would be subject to federal forfeiture laws if they continued to rent to care-giver organizations. The letters prompted more than 20 clubs to fold immediately, but the majority appeared to pooh-poo the latest Federal tactics to undermine the 1996 California law permitting medical marijuana use in the state. The letters and raids also prompted street protests in Hollywood and nearby Santa Monica, where more than a dozen protesters blocked DEA cars outside one club until the DEA released all of the employees they were detaining inside the club.

As one columnist wryly noted, it seems the DEA always targets Caregiver clubs during the summer months, when action in Central and South America simply gets too physically hot and sticky to bother with.

Among Los Angeles cannabis casualties was Craig X Rubin. While not directly connected with the recent round of raids, the timing was too perfect to miss as Rubin, a minister with the Universal Life Church, was convicted on August 2 of distributing marijuana on to his flock of 400 through his Temple 420. He faces a maximum of 4-years-8-months when he's sentenced on August 17.

Rubin, now 41, is one of the good guys. High Times mag—I used to work there—began following his work back in the early 1990s when he schooled the Havasupai Nation—who live at the bottom of the Grand Canyon—on the value of hemp. He later worked with the Lakota Sioux to get them to plant hemp on that nation's land—hemp which the US government subsequently destroyed. Rubin then opened 2000 B.C., a hemp store, in West Hollywood, which became the store of choice for Hollywood's elite looking to pick up a little something to smoke from. He later began to appear as a regular on the television show Weeds, and in 2006 published a book, 9021GROW which discussed many of the stars who frequented his store, including : Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston, Harrison Ford, Kirsten Dunst, Drew Barrymore, Luke Wilson, Jack Black, Ricky Martin and even Martha Stewart. The book also remade the argument that hemp could be utilized to replace fossil fuels and explained why the war on drugs is so disastrous not only for people in the US, but worldwide.

Rubin's most recent affront to the drug war warriors was the April, 2006 founding of Temple 420 "as a refuge for the spiritual growth of the 420 Nation." He calls it a Judeo-Christian fellowship which utilizes the 10 Commandments as its members' spiritual guide. And marijuana is the Temple sacrament. It was evidently utilized in Temple services, and the local PD couldn't handle that, so Rubin was arrested at the Temple in November 2006.

His recent conviction on charges stemming from that arrest has every decent pot smoker wishing they had the brass balls Rubin has, and hoping that he gets nowhere near the 4-years-eight-months he could get.

Our thoughts are with you Mr. Rubin. You know, busting huge pot fields visible from Blackhawks, shuttering medical pot dispensaries that are public, legal and highly visible, and even arresting a minister of a church whose sacrament is cannabis are not difficult things to do. But most busts in the drug

war aren't done by simply looking up a dispensary's address in the telephone book. Most busts come out of someone snitching on someone else. And there are a variety of types of snitching: You buy \$100,000 worth of pot and it turns out to be hemp, you might drop a dime on the dealer. You punch your lady when you're high on crack, she might call the cops on you. Five guys get busted for a deal when one of them gets drunk and brags about it to the local judge, those guys are probably going to start rolling over.

None of the above is approved behavior. Snitching is bad. But the majority of snitch work is even worse: it involves bad guys, generally guys with a felony or two under their belts and a couple more in the pipeline being told they can avoid three-strikes-ye-out—life without parole—if they'll allow themselves to live under some narc officer's thumb and go around trying to make drug deals that will net the narc collars in exchange for the snitch not doing the time for his crimes.

Those are the pro-snitches. Very very bad behavior. Some of them even make money off the deals they do. Others get a sort of "criminal immunity" card, which allows them to continue to commit their crimes, knowing that when busted the cop they work for is going to get their charges dropped on the basis of them being an undercover informant.

These scum have a special place waiting for them in Dante's Inferno. Just below lawyers. And as bad as the snitches are, the cops who run them are worse, because they're asking for deals to be made where none would have existed without their interference.

How many times have I run across guys and women who were minding their own business when an old pal—now a snitch—bumps into them and asks them to score a dime bag of pot for them. Heck, who would turn a friend down? So you go to the local beer joint and score the bag and the next day both you and the guy you scored from are busted.

And how many times have we read where a snitch names a house as a crack or coke location and the narcs jump on it, get a warrant, bust the door down and terrorize or even kill the people inside before they realize the snitch gave them bad info.

Too many times. It's a damned daily occurrence here in the US.

Well, though it's way way too late for hundreds of thousands of people who've suffered at the hands of snitches, and probably won't amount to much, it was momentarily refreshing to see the House Judiciary Committee meet on July 19 for a hearing on the use of confidential informants. The hearing was the first of its kind for the Feds, and was spurred by last December's wrong address killing of Kathryn Johnston, a 92-year old grandma from Atlanta. A snitch had given her address as a dope house. The snitch's handlers got a no-knock warrant and started breaking down her door in the middle of the night. She pulled a gun and the cops leveled her.

The case made news not only because of her age but because the cops tried to get their snitch to plant pot in her house to cover up the fatal error. Two cops are doing time as a result of that; a third is awaiting sentencing.

At the hearing, lots of talk about regulating and supervising the use of snitches came up. So did the corruption of police work that comes out of allowing some criminals to continue their criminal lives so long as they can continue to produce collars.

Unfortunately, despite promises that there will be in-depth hearings on rectifying the situation in the Fall, the truth is that summer hearings generally go nowhere, and this might be the last we hear of Federal interest in snitches until the next Kathryn Johnston comes along.

It would all be funny if people weren't dying and the prisons weren't full.

## About the Author

Source: <http://petergormanarchive.com>