

The economics of the skag trade

SOL YUROK

TRAGEDY of the kid junkie? How? Do it like TimeLifeHamillDailyUSNews&WorldReportBreslin....

Say something about the eyes. Coldness in the eyes; tombstones in the eyes of a pinkcheeked kid who's caught a Jones. Wan face. The shivers on a hot day and sweating on a cold one.

Do the desolation row bit. Relate to bombed-out houses; war image. Crouching in the rotted doorway and living in the abandoned slum building. O.D.'s in the empty rooms far away from mama.

Even highschool football heroes are on scag. Middle-class addiction, so therefore it is now tragedy. What was the daily body-count before it moved into middle America? Junkies in Larchmont and Scarsdale and Riverhead and Croton and Greenwich, don't forget those.

Put in a touch about the hypodermic, the works in a hardtop cigarette pack. Mention hepatitis. Picture an arm, fist and knot-muscl-ed and the needle in; the plunger rising and falling, the blood sucking in and out, mixing with the stuff, the taut raised vein before boot comes... and how some get erections and orgasms... The kid pusher.

And, oh yes, don't forget the faces. Maybe something about the faces, like Jewish kids about to be incinerated. Ah, that's a good touch. Junk has made them all tragic looking.

And do the thing about the kidgirl prostitutes to whom come the fat-ankled businessmen and bored diplomats tooling down Flatbush Avenue in ticket-immune Cadillacs while cops a block away hassle long-haired kids. And the rise and fall of the market. They all talk about prices and the weight.

Jazz about the slums. Slick look of the hard 16-year-old pusher, cool and sadistic and lip-licking, holding the product off the market for 20 minutes more, with his pleafaced entourage of junk-starved; there's nothing like humiliation transmitted downward and inward to break down old hangups and loyalties till shame is banal and guilt not even a memory.

Oh yes, bring in some heroic social worker fighting against the odds. And the tough-minded social scientist ready to tread on a few toes.

Little idiosyncratic touches: the stockbroker on cocaine.... And how high-level executives in New York Life and Chase Manhattan.... Maybe it's not so idiosyncratic after all....

A little arithmetical probe: 500,000 junkies (I speak of junkies alone), an extremely modest estimate, spending \$20 a day on their habit (150-a-day habits are not unknown) add up to a market of more than three and a half billion dollars a year. (Business Week estimates three billion dollars a year.)

At that rate it's not a matter of psychology, individual variation, individual choice, tragedy, if you will: specific individuals may avoid it, but growing numbers of people cannot avoid becoming addicts. The junkie shivering in the doorway, a picture image-hungry reporters seemed addicted to, is better understood in terms of the junkies singleminded and back-breaking contribution to the Gross National Product.

To begin with, the junkie is a high consumer of what is, as William Burroughs has pointed out, the almost perfect commodity. The ideal nature of heroin lies in the fact that each dosage incorporates a built-in obsolescence and demands a constantly escalating consumption.

The junkie is an almost pure economic creature, living for the fix, the hunt, the fix, keeping his body alive merely to consume heroin at a rising rate, at the same time circulating enormous quantities of money.

It is in the nature of a high-speed, high-pres-

sure business that it demands total attention to that business alone. All previous relations that get in the way of the "getting and spending" cycle drop off: family loyalty, sexual feelings, love, cohort loyalty, friendship, compassion. The junkie is always ready to work, and not only that, but to work overtime, at his or her very specialized job.

Mere legalization of smack cannot alleviate



the problem at this stage since the other need-relations of drug consumption, the mystiques, the rites, hipness, status, symbols of possession, sudden riches, guilt, legal insecurity and excitement, even romantic destruction of the self, the whole paraphernalia of addiction are not satisfied.

The junkie will be driven to use any means necessary to get the money to buy the produce. There's nothing like heroin consumption to teach the real meaning of the work ethic. And it is on the junkie's back that a vast economic edifice is being built.

The money that a junkie puts into the system takes a variety of paths before finding legitimate outlets whether here or in some other country: the Mafia may bank in Switzerland but the Swiss bank has no qualms about investing the Mafia's bread in very straight businesses.

Tax-exempt supplements are provided for police incomes, for the heroin industry is a semi-protected industry. This works in two ways: bribes, and money realized from police resale of confiscated heroin on the junkie market. This money doesn't stop on the police level but is further drawn upward where it is distri-

(Please turn to page 14)

Meanwhile, at the City Council, a crackdown on syringes

ANDREA O. COHEN

IT was a mustering of forces behind ill-concealed lines separating inner city blacks concerned with curing heroin addiction and whites, especially outlanders from Congress, whose main aim was to curb drug-related crime. The City Council's April 7 hearings were called to discuss what effect stricter guidelines, a central registry and control of drug paraphernalia would have on the "misuses and tragedies" associated with the use of methadone. The implied intention of cracking down on DC treatment centers and

physicians specializing in heroin addiction was less than subtle.

There are, however, no more than 10 private physicians and five clinics using methadone in the District and all favored stricter guidelines. (Note: In drafting its new guidelines, the D.C. Medical Society did not consult with the Medico-Chirurgical Society, an association of over 300 black physicians, or with Dr. Thomas Moore

(Please turn to page 12)

... and at the FCC, a crackdown on lyrics

NICHOLAS JOHNSON

NICHOLAS Johnson is a member of the Federal Communications Commission. The following is from his dissenting opinion on the FCC ruling on radio stations playing records with drug-oriented lyrics.

THERE is a serious question as to whether the majority is, in fact, really as concerned about drug abuse as it is in striking out blindly at a form of music which is symbolic of a culture which the majority apparently fears--in part because it totally fails to comprehend it. If the majority were in fact concerned about drug abuse, they surely would not choose to ignore song lyrics "strongly suggestive of, and tending to glorify," the use of alcohol, which is the number one drug abuse problem in this country. I do not think it's the business of the F.C.C.

to be discouraging or banning any song lyrics. But if the commission majority is really interested in doing something about the drug problems in this country, and is not just striking out at the youth culture, why does it ignore songs like "Day Drinking"?

... You know we just stopped
in for one short snort
Hey we are out on a binge
Hey we got no troubles just
doing our number
Day drinking again

And why has the commission chosen to focus on record lyrics and yet ignore commercials which use language "tending to glorify the use of drugs generally?" How can anyone possibly justify the F.C.C.'s failure to examine the im-

(Please turn to page 15)

Hard Times

JAMES RIDGEWAY

Hoover, the press and others

FOR years J. Edgar Hoover captivated the public with revelations of Communist or Mafia plots. There was as an instance the time the director feared Martin Luther King was falling under the spell of vicious Commies. Hoover had him placed under surveillance. The story of what happened to King and how Hoover used the information to further his own interests, is illustrative of how the FBI dicks do a job. Rumors about King's private life first started circulating in Washington following a House Appropriations Committee hearing several years ago. J. Edgar Hoover was testifying and he was asked if it were true that King had a yen for women. People who attended this hearing said Hoover replied that yes it was so. Hoover then went on to explain that the FBI was worried for fear King and his civil rights movement were coming under the influence of Communists, and as a precaution the FBI had placed King under surveillance and tailed him around the country. Part of the information coming from the surveillance were detailed reports about King's sex life. Stories of what went on at the Appropriations committee hearing soon got out. When reporters pushed the FBI for verification they were offered affidavits, allegedly taken from women involved. While the FBI proffered the sex stories, it insisted they could not be attributed, and that if they were, the Bureau would deny them. The Crime Records Division, the FBI's euphemism for a public relations office, embellished Hoover's original tale by describing parties in Stockholm. FBI undercover men had gone there to observe King accepting a Nobel prize. FBI agents in the South spread these stories around the countryside.

The FBI is meant to be an investigatory agency, but it spends much of the time smearing people the director or his cronies don't like. For years the Bureau had depended on cooperation of the pliant Washington press. In the past The Evening Star was regarded as the leading Bureau paper. You could always read what the Bureau was about to do or what its political line was by following the stories in that paper. FBI agents felt so much at home in the Star's city room that they even requested reporters to supply them with names of antiwar protesters before the reporters had time to write up the stories. The FBI's Crime Records Division was forever on the phone trying to talk reporters into running background stories about how this or that student leader was a Commie tool. They even called up reporters and begged them to write books about how SDS was a Red plot; the FBI promised to provide dossiers on all student leaders. The FBI became a nuisance and finally people began to feel embarrassed for them. Sympathetic reporters said their friends in the FBI were really good cops and they hated all this student stuff and wanted to get back to doing dick work on Italian gangsters. But Hoover was obsessed with Commies and wouldn't quit.

For the top government dick, Hoover has some pretty peculiar relationships. He's director of the Hertz Foundation. Based in Los Angeles the foundation was begun by John and Fannie Hertz of the rental car company. The foundation is connected to the company through interlocking directors. Hoover's relationship to the Hertz Foundation is suggestive because car rental companies are plagued by having their autos stolen. The FBI handles a lot of stolen car cases, and according to Hertz, the Washington Hertz office has a direct line to the FBI.

Another odd connection is Hoover's friendship with Lewis Rosenstiel, former head of Schenley Industries. It was Roy Cohn who brought these two together. Cohn always regarded Rosenstiel like a father and called him the "Supreme Commander." Rosenstiel is a fawning admirer of Hoover's. It was Cohn who engineered the \$100,000 a year job at Schenley for Lou Nichols when he left the FBI. Nichols was Hoover's special assistant for years, and is also a close friend of Nixon's. Nichols runs the J. Edgar Hoover Foundation with Schenley money.

Hoover's long term friendship with Rosenstiel was interesting because Rosenstiel was associated with some pretty tough cookies in the liquor business. Hank Messick, a Miami crime reporter did a run down on some of the Schenley distributors: In Boston, Schenley is

handled by Joseph Linsey, head of Whitehall Liquors. He is a philanthropist and along with Rosenstiel gave the Joseph M. Linsey Sports Center to Brandeis University. A couple of years ago Messick was employed by the Herald-Traveler, a Boston newspaper, to direct reporting on organized crime in Boston. First thing he discovered was that Mickey "The Wise Guy" Rocco, the east Boston Mafia leader was on the Whitehall payroll. It was at that point that the Herald-Traveler lost interest in Boston crime. Messick returned to Miami.

In California Art Samish was on the Schenley payroll at a salary ranging from \$36,000 to

\$54,000 a year. Samish was good friends with Joe Addonis and Mickey Cohen and most recently was in prison on an income tax evasion rap. In Miami area Schenley's distributor was Jay Weiss, who ran Tiny's Liquor Stores, a mushrooming whisky enterprise. But the Tiny empire folded in the midst of scandals caused by the state crime investigation. And it was Lou Nichols, Schenley executive vice president, who stormed down to Florida and told the state beverage commission that he had been personal assistant to J. Edgar Hoover and to quit pushing his guy around.

(All rights reserved)

THE McDOWELL PAPERS

CHARLES McDOWELL JR.

Crisis in shirts comes to a head

FOR the first time in my life, I find myself standing above the average of my fellow men in a matter of dress. It is, of course, only a quantitative edge that I have achieved over the average. Still, it is a dizzying thing to have happened after all these years.

According to my count, there are currently 29 shirts in what might loosely be called my wardrobe. They are in the shirt drawer, and closet and the dirty clothes, and one is in a file drawer marked "pending" in the press gallery of the U.S. Senate.

I am counting shirts that one would expect to wear with a necktie, not several sports shirts in interesting color combinations and several frayed white tennis shirts, nor a purple bowling shirt that shines in the dark, a blue basketball jersey with the white numeral 20 on front and back (vintage 1946), a mouse-colored jersey of recent vintage but complicated history marked Wake Forrest Athletic Association or a white formal shirt with some mildly embarrassing ruffles down the front.

Nor am I counting a red wool shirt that my wife has expropriated, a plaid wool shirt that my older daughter has expropriated, or a fine white shirt that I acquired at a Ship's Service store in Florida in 1944 and that I have kept ever since as an item of curiosity because, (1) it remains in perfect condition, and (2) it gives me hives every time I try to wear it.

What follows is a sort of inventory of the shirts I am counting as my "wardrobe", and which I publish, despite a well-known abhorrence of trivia, because it might teach all of us something about mankind and his shirts.

Eight white shirts. They are in the drawer in laundry wrappers. None has been worn for perhaps a year, not really because white shirts are virtually obsolete in contemporary fashion but mainly because they are cemented in starch. Having finally admitted defeat in the decades-long battle of "no starch, please," I have turned to drip-dry types that can drip and dry at home.

Two medium-dark blue shirts made of some miracle fabric that produces scores of little balls around the collar. These shirts have to be picked clean of the little balls before wearing.

One green rayon shirt that went to the laundry and came back in a half-size version, and is being retained as evidence in prolonged negotiations.

One shirt that appeared to have brown checks in the store and turned out to have lavender checks at home, and so far has not been worn outside in daylight.

One maroon shirt of uncertain location. My wife hides it.

One dark, dark grey shirt. I like it a lot, but have to wear it out of the house under a high buttoned overcoat because my family says it connotes a professional gambler or outright felon.

One pink shirt, a present from the family, that I can't seem to remember to bring home from the file drawer in the press gallery.

One white shirt with blue stripes. Perhaps attractive, it itches like the devil.

One shirt with narrow green and white stripes. Whenever I put it on, my wife and two daughters keep sending me back to change neckties endlessly.

One electric blue-checked shirt for which no satisfactory necktie ever has been found.

One light-blue shirt that apparently was washed and ironed with five flavors of Life Savers in the pocket, wearable if I remember to keep my jacket buttoned.

Four shirts of various hues have been in the drawer with the white shirts for a year or so. Wearing any of them makes me nervous for reasons I cannot articulate satisfactorily for my wife.

Five shirts, sturdy and drip-dry, that I wear nearly all the time. Actually, I need some new shirts.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

HELP PULL THE WRAPS OFF DC. . .

The DC Gazette is seeking volunteers to conduct research on local DC affairs under the supervision of Gazette contributing editor James Ridgeway.

This is a research, not a writing job, and no pay is involved.

If interested, send resume including areas of particular expertise or interest and number of hours available weekly to:

Gazette Research Project
109 8th St. NE
Washington DC 20002