

Weeding Out the Truth

✘ While many intellectuals, academics and liberals advocate for the legalization of marijuana and the use of medical marijuana, I would venture to say that few, if any, have worked in the area of child abuse and neglect. I have for over twenty years. I can safely say that between 70-80% of those cases are the results of substance abuse – drugs or alcohol – or both.

Over my career, I've personally handled many hundreds of cases where parents have lost permanent custody of their children because drugs were far more important to them than their children. I've seen mothers sell their children for a fix. I've seen far too many children get ready for school by themselves and prepare their own meals because their parents were loaded. I've seen parents hooked on cocaine, heroin, methadone, methamphetamine, LSD, PCP, and, yes, marijuana.

As a practical observer, I've seen the effect of marijuana on otherwise intelligent people. I've seen how marijuana sucks the life out of people to the point where they could care less whether they ended up dead in the gutter. I've seen the condition of their homes, or should I say pigsties, and the neglect of their children. When a parent is stoned, they can't think straight; they can't take care of their children because they're in a different state of mind; things, other than their children, take priority; they're in a completely different time line; and they're impaired to the point they can't respond to emergencies.

Sadly, over the years, I've continued to hear far too much joking on tv shows like MadTV, SNL and even my favorite nighttime show, Red Eye on FoxNews, about the "recreational" use of marijuana being no big deal.

While some folks can "chemically abuse," and control when,

where and how much they use and can actually be functional, unfortunately, many suffer from “chemical dependency,” a disease that can’t be controlled. In that case, marijuana is, indeed, a gateway drug and someone can easily move on to any other drug, both legal and illegal.

We’ve got far too many problems already with alcohol and nicotine in this country. Adding marijuana to the mix is just asking for trouble.

And what about medical marijuana? I wonder how many real medical problems are actually being treated by marijuana. I figure if you’re in real pain, you should be going to a real doctor and not some doctor sitting around in a dispensary handing out medical marijuana certificates like candy. If you’ve got a legitimate ailment, a real doctor would conduct a full examination, have x-rays taken, conduct blood tests, have an MRI performed and make a diagnosis based on those results. If you have chronic back pain, you should get a real diagnosis and a treatment plan. More importantly, I doubt that a doctor hanging out at a dispensary is going to monitor any of these people or perform a chemical dependency screening or assessment which, by the way, is actually a 1 ½ hr. assessment recommended by the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Instead, I’ve heard that it isn’t uncommon for store-front doctors to take a “patient’s” word for their condition or symptom. This lack of monitoring is particularly dangerous for those with chemical dependency. Let’s not forget the additional scammers who sell their prescriptions.

And if medical marijuana is so great, why is the Family Treatment Court here in Seattle an abstinence based program? If someone has a medical marijuana certificate, they’re asked to leave the program.

And if you don’t believe the line is blurred between the doctor and shopkeeper, consider a shutdown earlier this year

of a Venice, California operation in a building which housed a "doctor's office," a smoke shop and a dispensary.

I was tempted to actually go into one of these dispensaries to see how easy it was to get a prescription but I was told that some record is kept and I certainly don't want my name on any registry associated with medical marijuana. Instead, I spoke with a lovely woman who is part of the judicial system in Seattle who confirmed everything I've said here. She grew up around people with addictions and has worked with countless people in this area for fourteen years.

If I see a child playing around with a wall socket, I wouldn't give him a paperclip and say, "go for it." For me, it's the same thing with marijuana. Because someone wants to use it, I'm not willing to pass him a joint and say, "knock yourself out."

Please don't tell me we're losing the drug war. I don't have a solution. But I know from my own experience, legalizing something that is harmful to families and children, for medical reasons or in general, is just plain wrong.

I don't get it but if you do, God bless you.