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The Medical Marijuana Scam

By

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Most drug prohibitionists oppose making marijuana a legal medicine, as well they should. Similarly, most people who believe drug prohibition should be repealed support making marijuana a legal medicine, as well they should not. Disease and medicine have nothing to do with whether we ought to have free access to marijuana.

Prohibitionists think drugs are safe only when physicians are empowered by the state prescribe them. Medical marijuana pushers think so, too.

Both prohibitionists - who say marijuana is inherently unsafe - and medical marijuana pushers - who say marijuana is safe - are lying to the public about drugs. Drugs are neither safe nor dangerous. Their safety depends on how people use them. Marijuana is no different from heroin in this regard.

Why aren't medical marijuana legalizers pushing for heroin legalization? Because they think marijuana is a good drug and heroin is a bad drug. Why aren't medical marijuana pushers objecting to restrictions on tobacco? Because they think marijuana is a good drug and nicotine is a bad drug.

Is marijuana medicine? Almost anything can be labeled and used as medicine. When psychiatrists deprive people of liberty, they call it medicine for mental illness. Slaveholders called whipping medicine for slaves who ran away. "For medicinal purposes," a senior citizen told me as she winked and turned from the bar at a wedding I attended years ago. She was holding a double scotch. Addiction treatment providers call illegal drug use "self medication." Magnets, vitamins, herbs, homeopathically prepared lactose, acupuncture needles, chiropractic, and mineral baths are all considered medicine by any number of people throughout the world. As Thomas Szasz once observed, masturbation was once considered to cause many diseases. Now, "sex therapists" regard it as medicine. And, speaking of therapists, psychotherapists seem to accept just about anything as medicine. Aromatherapy, poetry therapy, prayer therapy, writing therapy, cognitive therapy, exercise therapy, pet therapy, music therapy . . . anything is therapy if you want it to be, and therapy is medicine even if you don't want it to be. My point is this: What we call medicine depends on who says something is medicine, who is using it as medicine, and for what purposes it is being used.

Who stands to benefit if marijuana becomes legal medicine? Medical marijuana advocates assert that sick people need marijuana as medicine. That is the kind of base rhetoric politicians are especially fond of. Usually, we hear "it's for the children." Now, "it's for the sick and diseased." A 14-year-old I know sees through this nonsense: "They say marijuana is medicine so that people can smoke it for fun," he recently told me. "People will invent all kinds of diseases they say they need marijuana for." Anyone with a little clear thinking won't be bamboozled by the medical marijuana pushers.

The medical marijuana movement is spearheading the "harm reduction" movement. Harm reduction is a euphemism for state control of private behavior. The people who direct this movement believe that any number of bad behaviors should be regarded as public health problems requiring medical treatment. These are the high priests of what Szasz called the "therapeutic state," the union of medicine and state that has replaced the theocratic state. The therapeutic state is a religious crusade masquerading as medicine.

Who really stands to benefit from medical marijuana? Drug legalizers will get a foot in the door. Doctors and pharmaceutical companies will make money. Illegal drug dealers will continue to profit from the black market. People who want to get stoned with impunity will invent and lobby for new diseases that require marijuana. The Food and Drug Administration will get bigger. And the people who invest in marijuana on the stock market will be laughing all the way to the bank.

And the poor person with glaucoma? Well, he could smoke marijuana if he wanted to. However, he could also just continue to put Xalatan drops in his eyes, like I do. And the person nauseated from chemotherapy? Well, she could smoke marijuana if she wanted to. It might help. But she could also just continue to use any number of currently available anti-nausea agents.

And the people who just want to have fun? Well, they could continue to buy their dope from the usual suspects and hope they don't get busted.

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