

TRANSCRIPTION OF WCCO TAPE OF GODDARD PRESS CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 17, 1967,
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Dr. GODDARD. First of all, marijuana is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Narcotics, U.S. Treasury Department. I've been asked to comment on the subject a number of times and I've tried to make my position clear, that first we need more long term research to detect any possible serious side effects from chronic usage. But, secondly, I feel that the present penalty for personal possession is too severe, and I've simply said that the penalties for sale and distribution should remain but, I favor a penalty more comparable to that, that we have for the other hallucinogens. LSD, which is far more a serious and toxic drug than marijuana is, after all, a mild hallucinogen. It just isn't a rational kind of set of penalties for these two classes of drugs.

Question. Would you describe it as being more dangerous than alcohol? Marijuana is more serious than alcohol?

GODDARD. Well, trying to compare two different drugs is a very risky business itself. They have quite different mechanisms of action; alcohol's a depressant, where marijuana is a mild hallucinogen, at best, or maybe a euphoric.

Now, they both share some properties in common, however, they both distort our sense of reality, and therefore it's dangerous to operate heavy equipment or drive a vehicle when we're under the influence of either one of these.

Alcohol, probably lends itself more readily to control on the part of the least to the inexperienced.

So, there are some similarities, but there are also some differences. And as I've mentioned many times, we don't know what the long term effects of smoking marijuana or using marijuana in other forms might be, and we have to carry out this kind of research before, I for one, would be satisfied to say that the drug is safe under any conditions.

Question. Dr. Goddard, what major safeguards do we need in the commercial drug testing?

GODDARD. Well, we seem to have good laws at the present time. It's a matter of having the laws that exist in the form of the Kefauver-Harris Amendment of 1962, followed by those who produce and distribute drugs for the marketplace. I'm satisfied we're making progress in this field. We're trying to get truth in drug advertising. I think we're beginning to see some signs of progress.

Question. Do doctors know about the adverse effect of drugs? Are they well informed on that?

GODDARD. Well, this is one of the areas that the Kefauver-Harris Amendments was designed to correct, the failure on the part of firms who sell these drugs to sort of obscure or tend not to tell the doctor about the bad effects. We are seeing improvements in this, but I'm still not satisfied, that all of the scientific data is properly being provided to the prescribing physician.

Question. Can you specify some drugs that you think might have adverse effects?

GODDARD. Well, we have recently in the past year, in fact, caused a number of "dear doctor" letters to be sent out, and I think the doctors know what these are well enough without my going into details now.

Question. How serious is the shortages of flu serum going to be?

GODDARD. Well, I haven't kept up with the flu vaccine problems this year. I used to, when I was chief of the Communicable Disease Center, because we were the group that predicted how serious the flu season would be. The Division of Biologic Standards, part of the National Institutes of Health in the Public Health Service, determines what the nature of the flu vaccine will be, that the manufacturers turn out. So, it's not under my purview, and I'm not all caught up on the subject right now.

Question. How about drug pricing? Are you investigating companies that maybe sell drugs at inflated prices?

GODDARD. No, we have no responsibility for pricing policies of the drug industry. I'd like to make that clear.

Question. You were speaking of ante facto action by business, getting into the area of your talk this afternoon. Could you communicate to us some of the idea in—in a minute or so?

GODDARD. Well, I was simply trying to say that the business community, be more perceptive as to the writing that's on the wall and begin to take actions