

Moore, Tania

From: Fikes, Cathy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 6:16 PM
To: Agenda Alerts
Subject: FW: Cannabis
Attachments: You Can Be Addicted to Weed. I Was When I Was 12. _ The Free Press.pdf

From: Russell Neal <russneal@ieee.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 5:42 PM
To: CITY COUNCIL (INCL. CMO STAFF) <city.council@surfcity-hb.org>
Subject: Cannabis

Please reject the bribe money to flood HB with cannabis on the Agenda for Oct 3. Stand up for HB families and children. Thank you.

Russ Neal
Huntington Beach
714-316-6179

**SUPPLEMENTAL
COMMUNICATION**

Meeting Date: 10-3-2023

Agenda Item No.: 8 (23-581)

College kids in the 1970s toked up. (Photo via Bettmann/Getty Images)

You Can Be Addicted to Weed. I Was When I Was 12.

*Roomers who fought for legalization have no idea how
dangerous it is.*

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By Gideon Modisett
September 14, 2023



In April, my father and I were at a Passover seder in Los Angeles hosted by some family friends. There was a man there in his sixties telling a story about going to college in the seventies, and all the drugs and partying he did.

At one point, someone asked where all his friends are today, and he said something like, “Everyone’s fine except for one who died of an overdose, but he got into the addictive drugs, you know.”

Under my breath, I said, “The *addictive* drugs?”

An older woman sitting next to me told me to speak up, so I did.

“I just feel like all drugs are addictive,” I said.

“Not weed,” he replied. He seemed pretty sure about this.

In my head, I was thinking, *What?!* But we were at a seder, and I didn’t want to be rude, so instead, I just said, “Gonna have to disagree with you there.”

I was 12 and in the seventh grade when Covid hit, and I immediately lost all my school friends. I became a regular at the local skate park, in Atwater Village, a few miles west of downtown L.A., just to get some real-world face time with other kids. But because I was a few years younger than the others, no one wanted to be my friend.

That is, until I met a high school sophomore named Martin. Martin was sarcastic and chubby and a good skater, and he didn’t care about our age difference, and he lived in the neighborhood.

We quickly became best friends because of our shared isolation, and pretty soon he invited me to his house.

Martin lived about a mile away from me, and every day after Zoom school ended, I put on my Nike Dunks and walked to his place.

The first time I went there, I walked into his room to see him and his brother, who was in his early twenties, smoking from a bong. I had known that this was a thing that older kids did, so I didn't freak out or anything, even though I'd never smoked before. Martin was my only friend at the time, and I didn't want to make him any more aware of my age than he already was. When they offered me a hit, I said yes.

For a while, I smoked only with Martin and his brother. We usually got high in a bedroom shared by his three siblings. I don't really remember what we talked about. After we got high, we'd usually go to the Foster Freeze. I'd get an Oreo milkshake. It was great.

Until Martin's family couldn't afford to live in L.A. anymore. Martin didn't have a dad, and his mom was a trucker and almost always on the road—she wired cash for groceries to one of Martin's sisters—and money was super tight, so they decided to move to Idaho. Martin's parting gift to me was the rest of his weed and the number of his dealer. I think her name was Veronica. She was two years older than I was.

And then I was back to having no friends. Every day.

But now I had weed to make me numb whenever I felt like feeling numb, which was often, and then more often. I began smoking on my own—first, only on weekends and only at the skate park, and then only at the skate park or on weekends behind the Costco, and then only at the skate park or behind the Costco or, you know, when I was walking somewhere, and then, eventually, anytime and anywhere I wanted to. I didn't realize I was losing control. It was just something I did, and then more and more.

At some point, I switched to disposable vape THC pens, which don't have much of a smell and are better for smoking indoors. Regular weed has around 15 percent THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, in it, but a preloaded

vape pen can have 45 to 70 percent. It's easy to get—Veronica had them, or other friends, or this guy who had a little stand on Hollywood Boulevard—and in time I got pretty comfortable with the whole thing. My parents found my pen once, and they came into my room once or twice when I was high.

The drug was so convenient. It was like my phone. I could take my weed wherever I went. I could be high anytime I wanted to be, which was almost always.

I think my older brother knew what was up, but he was busy doing his own thing. Mostly applying to college and graduating from high school.

By May 2021, school was starting to move back to normal. We were doing the hybrid thing then, with intermittent in-person and Zoom classes. But I was smoking more than ever. In fact, now it was a problem when I couldn't be high, because that would make me angry, and my anger was on a hair trigger. It got to the point where I would smoke myself to sleep during weekdays and then, on weekends, smoke until I puked and passed out.

You might think it was hard to hide all this from my parents, and it could be, but also, I got good at papering over things, covering my tracks, lying.



On January 3, 2022, I smoked my last joint on Melrose Boulevard. This was not planned. It just happened that way, although in retrospect it feels like a quasi-religious moment.

It was late afternoon, I was smoking, and my mom called me to see when I'd be home for dinner, and I had the tiniest bit of weed left in my roach. I remember saying I'd be home soon.

That was when these ultra-Orthodox Jewish guys in their black hats and kippahs and tallises walked by. This was near Fairfax, the center of Orthodox life in the city, so it's not as weird as it sounds—and they stopped,

looked at me, and approached me the way [Chabad](#) guys approach young men they suspect of being Jewish. They were hoping I'd wrap [tefillin](#) with them—[tefillin](#) are the miniature leather boxes that contain parchment that you wrap around your arms and forehead while you pray. They wanted me to be closer to God. I had never wrapped *tefillin*, but I said, “Yes, I am Jewish, and yes, I would like to wrap *tefillin*—just give me a second to get off the phone.”

So I got off the phone with my Mom, and we wrapped *tefillin*—the black leather curling up my arm, the little black box attached to my forehead, me praying with my new Chabad friends on the corner of Melrose and somewhere.

When we were done, I removed the *tefillin*, jumped on a bus, and headed home, and when I entered the house, my parents—who were sitting in the living room and by this point onto me—asked me to empty my pockets. I pulled out three joints.

Suddenly, all the lying caught up with me, and everything was out in the open.

I don't remember much about what went down. I remember my parents were very angry and disappointed, and I think my mom cried, and then I cried, and I remember I was screaming, but I can't remember exactly what. I was still high from the weed I'd smoked. Five minutes later, we sat down to dinner the way we always did, except this time we ate in silence.

The next day, at my mom's urging, I attended my first [Marijuana Anonymous](#) meeting on Zoom. I sat on the couch in the living room. My mom sat next to me. There were maybe twenty people in the meeting, no leader, just people talking about how they wound up there.

It was super difficult. Because I'd been suppressing my emotions with the weed the whole time, when they came back, they came back strong.

But the MA meetings helped. The big thing they drilled into your head was if something bad happens that you can't control, just accept it. That was the word: *accept*. That way, you're less likely to get upset, and less likely to self-medicate.

I remember getting my 30-day chip, which looks like a big coin and represents one month of sobriety.

Then I got my 60-day chip.

Then my 90-day chip.

Slowly, the mood swings went away. I thought about weed a lot, but I didn't want it as much.

And then even less, and less.

Last week, I got my 18-month chip.

And do you know what? I love that chip. That chip is maybe the hardest thing I've ever had to fight for, and the hardest part was figuring out that the fight wasn't between me and weed, or me and Veronica, or my parents, or any of the other kids who were constantly smoking up. It was an internal fight against myself.

So, when this man at the seder told me weed isn't addictive, it reminded me of literally every conversation I've had with everyone over 30 about weed (except for my fellow recovering addicts, who know better).

These conversations usually include lines like: "I didn't know weed could be addictive," or "But you're good now, right?"

Yes, I'm "good now," but different, and everyone who's ever felt controlled by a chemical substance knows exactly what I'm talking about. I won this, but it's not like it's the lottery. It takes work every day.

It's funny, but all of my peers get it. No one my age has ever challenged, let alone attacked me, for saying weed can be addictive.

Here's the reality: I don't know anyone 15 or 16 who hasn't smoked, and they all know it's not like their father's (or grandfather's) weed. It's *much* stronger, and the consequences of smoking are getting worse. "[Marijuana use disorder](#)," as the experts call it, is now four to seven times likelier among people who smoke when they're minors. Cannabis-related hospitalizations have "[increased significantly](#)" in the past decade, tripling among 18- to 25-year-olds.

Meanwhile, older people with hazy memories of getting high in their dorm rooms four or five decades ago insist weed is a safe, recreational drug. The message seems to be that it's weird or backward to say anything bad about weed.

I'm now 16, the same age Martin was when we met, and tomorrow is the eve of [Rosh Hashanah](#)—the start of the Jewish New Year, and even though I'm not especially religious, I've been looking forward to the High Holidays for months.

I think that's because I'm like many recovering addicts—I want to keep pushing forward, and I fear what might happen if I don't. I want to make movies. I want to read more books and go to college and meet cool people. Mostly, I want to live as richly as I can, and every holiday is a little border between the old and new me.

And it's because Rosh Hashanah focuses things. Everything stops. You go to temple. You breathe a little slower. You're with your family. You chant the same words that Jews everywhere chant, and for a little while you're all connected with each other, in person or across many temples all around the world, and you feel elevated—closer to wherever you're supposed to be.



Gideon Modisett is a high school junior in Los Angeles. Read Eric Spitznagel's Free Press piece American the Stoned [here](#).

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Friday, September 15, 2023



Comments 667



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macirish Sep 14

Once again The Free Press doesn't just "touch" the third rail of an unpopular subject - no, they grab it and shake it!

Thank you for sharing your story.

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9 replies



KP Sep 14 · *edited Sep 14*

Thank you for writing this. My dad was a surgeon. He ALWAYS drilled into us that playing with drugs is like playing Russian Roulette. You never know how your body is going to react so don't even try it. He would tell us stories about drug-induced people in the emergency room. I took the same approach with my kids.

Frankly, what stupid parent tells their kids to take a gun out with only one round in it and have them spin it? That is what these old folks are telling their kids and grandkids to do. And they are arrogant about it too.

Maybe your story will wake some people up.

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Moore, Tania

From: Fikes, Cathy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 6:17 PM
To: Agenda Alerts
Subject: FW: Resolution No. 2023-39.

From: dad2st@aol.com <dad2st@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 10:28 PM
To: CITY COUNCIL (INCL. CMO STAFF) <city.council@surfcity-hb.org>
Subject: Resolution No. 2023-39.

I urge you not to adopt and draft this resolution concerning cannabis sales within the city.

A reply will be appreciated.

Sincerely
Chuck Burns
Huntington Beach

Moore, Tania

From: Fikes, Cathy
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 6:17 PM
To: Agenda Alerts
Subject: FW: Cannabis

From: David Linderman <dlinbc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 6:35 AM
To: CITY COUNCIL (INCL. CMO STAFF) <city.council@surfcity-hb.org>
Subject: Cannabis

Against cannabis sale and use in Huntington Beach.