

The 'Big Lie'

One in 5 has tried cocaine

By Michele Rowe
The Pendulum

Whether it is addictive or not, almost 21 percent of the students at Elon have tried cocaine a few times and 7.5 percent are currently using the drug.

"It (cocaine) gives you energy and makes you more sociable at parties," one user, "Jennifer," said. "It feels good when it numbs your gums," said another, "Kimberly." "I use it because it makes me feel like I can do anything. I feel like I'm flying high," said "Tom."

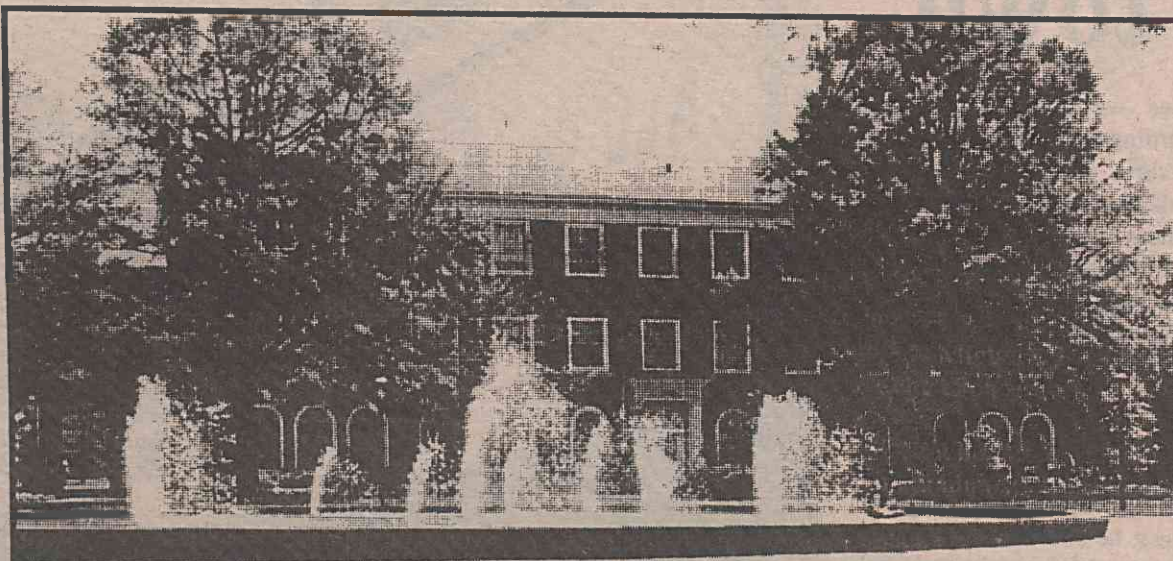
Students say part of the reason they try cocaine is because they hear so much about it. Cocaine is often the topic of television news reports and stories in newspapers. It makes people curious. What is so wonderful about cocaine that it is talked about everywhere?

"I tried it because I want to try everything in life possible," Jennifer said. "I'm not addicted. I only use it on occasions."

"I use it about once a month," said "Joe." "I think using cocaine is like using alcohol or any other kind of drug. People should just use it in moderation."

Tom, who no longer uses cocaine, said one of the long term effects of the drug is that it makes users extremely paranoid. "It's very bad for your nerves," he said. "After you come down from being high, you get depressed and crave more. If you do too much, you can overdose and have brain seizures or heart failure."

"There is nothing really that good about it except that it makes people more sociable," Tom said. "It's also real bad for your nose and that's the way most people use it. You can take it orally and it will have the same effect."



Drug use by students

Reasons for Drug Use

Get high	65.5
Feel good	56.0
Relax	42.0
Celebrate	40.0
Be sociable	37.0
Relieve boredom	26.0
Fit in	23.0
Ease inhibitions	22.0
Relieve emotional pain	20.4

Figures based on Fall 1988 survey of Elon College students.

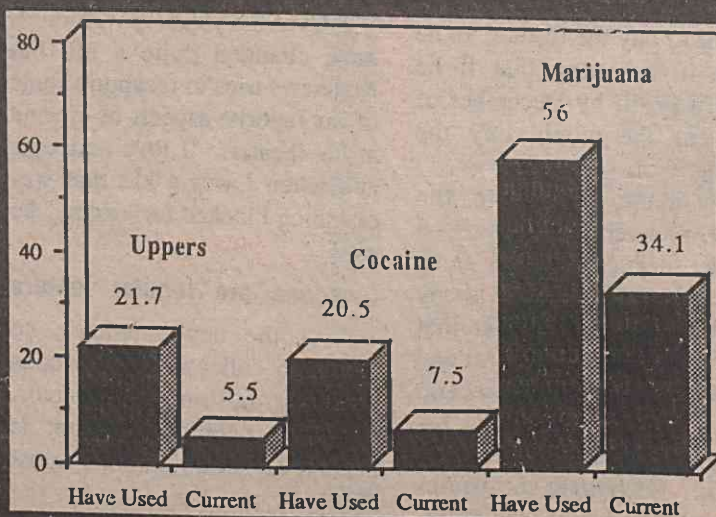


Photo by Pat Hobin
Courtesy of Burlington Police Department

Jennifer started using cocaine in high school. "I was introduced to alcohol, then marijuana, and then I started using cocaine my senior year," she said. "I haven't ever tried any other kind of drug and I probably never will."

"I started using it my sophomore year here and now I only use it occasionally," Kimberly said. "I usually buy it from friends that are students. It's fairly easy to get and it's very easy if you know it's in town and

who to get it from. Usually I only buy about half a gram for \$50. I don't use all of it in one night and I share it with someone."

"My friends purchase it and sometimes I give them money," Jennifer said. "Sometimes my friends just share. I used to use cocaine about twice a month. In one night, I use about a quarter of a gram, which costs around \$25. This amount is usually shared between three or four people."

"A lot of people get together and buy an eight-ball," said Joe. An eight-ball is an eighth of a gram of coke. "Most of the time I have to go home to northern Virginia to get an eight-ball. It's a lot easier to get it from home."

Cocaine is often referred to as the "big lie." Tom says the drug got its name because addicts will do anything -- including lying and stealing -- to get it.

Q & A

Following is an interview of Detective Mike Woznick, Elon College Police Department, by Dana Manley.

Q. Is a person who uses drugs considered a criminal or a victim?

A. Criminal. Drug users are criminals. There is not one single individual that I have ever encountered in about 10 years of law enforcement that went to a party, sat down and was jabbed in the rump with a needle and all of a sudden he got hooked on drugs. Drug users are drug users by their own choice and weakness.

Q. How many students are facing drug-related charges in Elon College now?

A. To the best of my knowledge, none at this point in time.

Q. When you pull someone over for a DWI, do you have tests for drugs other than alcohol?

A. That doesn't seem to be necessary because if we find somebody who we think has been driving under the influence and in his or her car we find some marijuana, usually, when we go to court even if they blow a double zero on the breathalyzer they can still be convicted.

Q. Does the drug survey seem accurate to you?

A. I think the actual current usage rates are higher than they're showing.

Q. How easy is it to get drugs in Elon? Do you find that they come more from outside areas, or is there a source within Elon?

A. Well, there is a source of drugs coming directly into Elon College from the drug trafficking states -- the Florida area, the New York area.

There have been drugs that have been directly linked to Elon College students that were shipped in here through the U.S. mail from the Holland, Amsterdam area. There have been packets of cocaine shipped in magazines that have had addresses here at Elon College.

I would venture a guess and say that bigger cities would probably be the source of most

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