

Attorney General Robert Morgan Speaks To Jaycees On Dangerous Drug Problem In State

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 were made, certainly foul play was apparent. The circumstances by which these cases came to the attention of authorities were different but the final conclusion in each case was the same: extensive examinations showed that cause of death was overdoses of hard narcotics and even the most cursory examination showed the tell-tale needle marks. Try to convince the relatives of these young men that there is no problem of drug abuse in this state. Try convincing the parents of three Raleigh teenagers—15 years old, I believe—who are now in critical condition from taking overdoses of drugs here in this city. Try convincing them and hundreds of other parents who have faced similar tragedies in North Carolina, that law enforcement officials, doctors, educators and mental health officials should not be concerned about the problem. I don't need to tell you that the crime rate is increasing in our state and nation. We all know that. But, some have implied that in this time of increasing crime, law enforcement authorities should not be concerned about the drug traffic but should attack other forms of crime. I ask the question, "How do such persons separate in their own minds—and to their own satisfaction—increasing drug use from generally increasing crime rate—especially violent crimes?"

Someone suggested that this could be done, so I got on the phone and called several of our experienced SBI agents throughout the state and asked them if they could see any connection between the two. I remind you now that I am talking to men who work daily in law enforcement, who work almost exclusively with serious crimes and most often crimes of violence. These men are not simply theorists, but practical, experienced and skilled men in law enforcement. They answered without hesitation that there is a connection between the alarming increase in crime and drug abuse and one after another they drew out illustrations to support their conclusions. Let me share a few of them with you, if I may. Our larger cities, centers of the hard narcotic traffic, have been plagued with robberies in recent months and as you have heard or read the news, several innocent storekeepers and service station operators have senselessly been gunned down even though they offered no resistance. In Charlotte, an elderly storekeeper and his wife were murdered in a robbery and the man charged with their deaths is an addict. Arrests have been made in a series of robberies in that city—those charged were addicts. In testifying before a Congressional committee, Police Chief Jerry Wilson of Washington, D. C., stated, "The narcotics problem is adding considerably to the problem of crime. We find this problem even among juvenile holdup men. It is not at all unusual to arrest a 16 or 17 year old in a holdup and find that they are narcotics users." It is easy for those of us from smaller communities to say, "Well, that is Charlotte or Washington, D. C., and we expect such things to occur in our larger cities but it won't happen in my little town." This simply isn't true. When an addict has to turn repeatedly to criminal acts to secure funds to purchase narcotics, often he must go to other communities in order to avoid recognition. He may live in an urban community, but prey by day or night on a small rural village or country store or filling station.

Many areas of the state who would not admit to having a drug problem are having problems with breaking and entering and burglaries. There is certainly a strong likelihood that they do in fact have a drug problem. Let me illustrate this by citing a case which also occurred in North Carolina. A notorious Eastern North Carolina racketeer would frequent dives and hangouts in larger cities of the North in order to learn the members of the drug community. Then he would gather up several carloads of addicts, supply them with forged checks made on North Carolina companies, transport them to North Carolina, dump them in a shopping center and flood the merchants with forgeries. In a few hours he would gather them back up, return north to Richmond, Baltimore and other cities, give them a percentage of the "take" to supply their habit and pocket all the rest. This Eastern North Carolina community of some 20,000 probably would not admit to having a drug problem. Drug addiction is an expensive habit. It can run from \$20 to \$100 a day, and the victim, because of his dependence on the habit, is going to obtain the money somewhere to support it. If there were no other evidence, common sense would tell us that there are few legal ways that a person—especially an uneducated person—can support that kind of habit. The person turns to crime—to shoplifting, to armed robbery and other forms of thievery in order to support his habit from day to day. Businessmen will tell you the tremendous losses which they are incurring from shoplifting. One major chain estimates that it loses 10 percent annually from shoplifting, and this loss, of course, must be recovered from the straight consumer. Goods stolen must be disposed of—converted to money for sidewalk or backroom purchases of drugs—so a chain of unlawful acts is set off by the addiction problem. The addict steals the goods; he sells them to a middle man who in turn must find the ultimate market for them. So one criminal act breeds another and after a while it becomes impossible to tell just how far the influence of illegal drug use does extend. We know also that one major way to support a habit is to get others addicted—in other words, to create a drug market in which to operate and make enough profits to support a personal habit. And there is violence within the illegal drug community itself. I could tell you of a recent execution in the style of Chicago gangland murders which occurred right here in North Carolina. The plot is simple. Two brothers, both unemployed, maintained an expensive apartment and a high scale of living. They had \$50 a day habits themselves and they had a corner on the illegal drug market in their town. Competing pushers were squeezing

in so the brothers simply waited in an alley and gunned down their competition in the drug traffic. There is money to be made in drugs and you may be assured that as long as there is, the criminal community is going to vie for control of the market. Its members are going to make sure that new people, young people, are introduced to drugs, that they are addicted to drugs, and that drugs are available to support their habits. Recently agents of the State Bureau of Investigation, working undercover, made contacts in the drug community to purchase a large quantity of stimulants. The original purchase price was to be more than \$10,000 but our agents could not obtain that kind of money to show even though arrests would be made on the spot and the money recovered immediately. We did manage to obtain a few thousand dollars and the buy was arranged. Three armed men came to make the sale. They had in their possession nearly 50,000 capsules worth a small fortune in the retail drug traffic. All three of the men were arrested in spite of the fact that one stood guard outside the room where agents and pusher dealt, ready to shoot anyone who tried to frustrate the sale. The drug business is lucrative enough that here in our own state laboratories have been set up to produce nothing but illegal drugs. Local officers and agents from the State Bureau of Investigation recently closed down such a laboratory in Piedmont North Carolina which was manufacturing in bulk an LSD-type drug. None of these capsules were destined for legitimate medical use; in fact, there is no present medical use for it. In addition, chemicals were seized that would permit the manufacture of a variety of other illegal drugs. The man was not in the business for kicks—this was no fad for him. It was a business proposition and he was making money. Needless to say, drugs were serious business also for the young men who executed a 10-year-old acquaintance they thought was ready to inform on them. I think that probably most of our people are concerned most about the way drugs have touched our young people. In a very real way they have become the victims of this age of drug abuse. They are by nature experimenters and drugs for centuries have presented a mystery to men. Those of you who are parents know how difficult it is to impress a youngster with the danger presented by fire and high places, and later last cars and alcohol. Again it is the nature of young people to a certain extent to defy danger sometimes until taught by experience. You know that lessons learned by experience come hard. Thank goodness, there is another way to learn—the way we learn most things—by the experience of others. We want to teach our young people the danger of drugs, we want to spare them the pain and the headache that accompanies drug use and their efforts on stopping those dealing in drugs, those pushing drugs and preying on the nature and weaknesses of their fellow North Carolinians. Some persons have asked how we can make such a statement when arrests are made for possession and sale of comparatively small quantities of drugs valued at only

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Mr. Farmer

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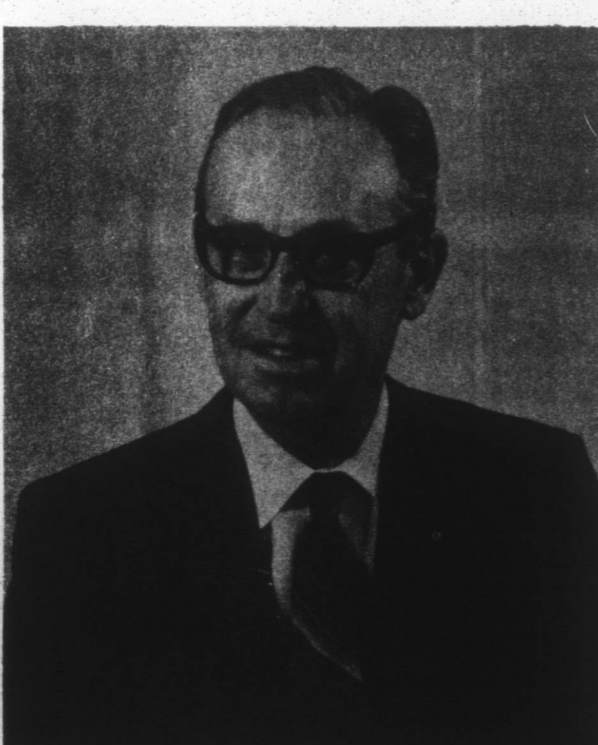
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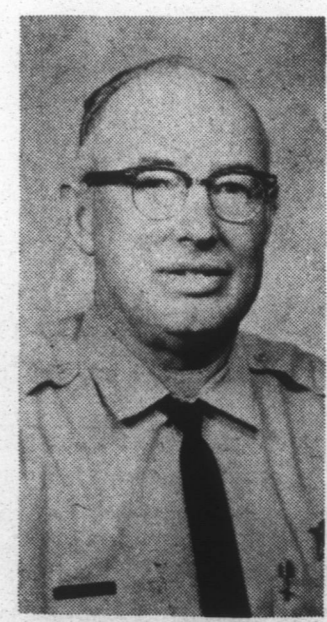


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