

LSD Users A Portrait

THE DRUG SCENE

By Mike McCulley

Before presenting some LSD case histories, another aspect of LSD must be considered. This is the disturbing missionary quality that develops in many of its users. Many LSD users are so affected by the drug that it becomes impossible for them to be objective when discussing its effects. Unfortunately, this lack of objectivity has extended to some researchers in the field, researchers who also are LSD users. There is a great deal of apostle-like insistence on the part of users that other persons must share the same kind of subjective awareness that they experience.

There have been mothers who have given LSD to their infants, brothers who encourage their sisters to take LSD, and individuals who have taken their life's savings and purchased LSD in order to distribute it free to complete strangers.

WHERE IS IT OBTAINED

All legitimate manufacturers of LSD have terminated production. With this cessation, illegal bathtub chemists have attempted to fill the needs of the LSD market. Home manufacturers can synthesize LSD from lysergic acid amide with relatively crude equipment and a fairly good knowledge of chemistry. The yield of LSD from the lysergic acid base in a clandestine lab is generally quite low and the product impure. The more sophisticated covert producer can achieve better yields when a trained chemist uses suitable equipment and facilities.

LSD is considered an investigational agent and can be handled only under the most carefully controlled conditions. It cannot be prescribed as medication.

LSD EXPERIENCES

The following cases have been summarized from reports related in the press, in police investigations, and by researchers. The author gratefully acknowledges the use of material from Riverside City College (Calif.) Police Science courses.

A 17-year old juvenile from the West Los Angeles area ended up on the beach at Venice (Calif.) after indulging in the use of LSD at an "acid party." This youngster was observed by residents to be walking on the ocean front banging his head in the sand. It took several citizens to restrain and hold him while another called an ambulance and police.

He was hospitalized and subsequently interviewed. He stated he knew all the time what he was doing while on LSD. He knew he was banging his head against the buildings, but he felt no pain. He did this because this was the urge he felt within him. He said something compelled him to bang his head and then try to bury it in the sand.

He further stated that about a half-hour after he had ingested

LSD, he felt wonderful. The feeling was beautiful, a euphoric feeling that would, he said, be impossible to describe. Colors appeared everywhere. Music could be seen coming from the stereo and the air was covered with colored dust particles that would fall in prisms of a rainbow. He stated the feeling of well-being then suddenly changed to horrifying, grotesque visions. He felt the urge to go to the beach. The youth's face was covered with abrasions and concussions from his activity.

In a high school case, a 15-year old drank orange juice which was spiked with LSD. When interviewed, he provided the following synopsis: "About 20 minutes after I drank the juice, I got a sick feeling in my stomach. I went to the nurse's office; on the way, I stopped in the restroom and vomited. The nurse had me lie down and I closed my eyes."

"About 10 minutes later, I got up thinking I was getting sick again. I looked in the mirror and saw that my eyes were dilated. I looked at the walls and they looked like they were made of melting wax. I could see many odd figures in fluorescent colors. I looked up at the ceiling, and it appeared as if I was looking down from the ceiling into an operating room. I could see people walking around. They looked like they were going nuts. I yelled at them and they wouldn't answer. As I yelled, the words would come out in block letters. I could actually see the words coming out of my mouth."

"If I'd mention a color, the whole room would turn that color. It was very weird. At the hospital, I began to get violent. It seemed to me that people were going to experiment on me or that someone was playing a trick on me. I thought the police officer was a Union Army soldier. I saw the Confederate Army on the

front lawn shooting cannons. I could see volcanoes erupting on my hands, and I could make my hand change colors. It was a very frightening experience and it took me several days to get completely over it."

MORE TRIPS

A young man 18 years old, arrested for intoxication, told the arresting officers he was on a "trip." In somewhat disjointed sentences, he stated he thought he was "a frog being eaten by the officer;" he was going to kill the officer at the first opportunity; he wanted to go to a mental hospital for help; his mind was "blown" on this "trip;" he was a rocket ship blasting off for hell, and that he had "flown to the restaurant."

"Sex man, sex is all I want. We love you baby, love, love, love. That LSD is a party man, a party, party, party. Green, blue, red, man. Purple man, purple." This is the statement from a 14-year old girl who, with her 16-year old girl friend, had been restrained after several attempts to run in front of moving vehicles.

Police officers received a "prowler now" call, and on arrival were told by the victim that a nude man had been looking in her window. While talking to the victim, the officers heard a voice coming from the branches of the tree above them. Upon shining their lights into the tree, they saw a nude man perched on a limb. The man refused to come down and the police had to climb up the tree to get him. Later, the man admitted taking LSD.

A 19-year old juvenile female in Hollywood sold 2 ounces of marijuana to an undercover police officer. At the time of the sale, she gave the officer a capsule of LSD as "a Christmas present." The female, psychologically addicted to LSD, has since committed herself to a mental institution.

A University of California coed

was under the influence of LSD when she plunged nude through a closed window to her death. Her boy friend, 19 and a student at Merritt Junior College in Oakland, told police both he and the girl had taken the drug in the hours before her leap. Police said they found notes in her room suggesting she had reached some new plateau in life but still felt guilt for something in her past.

A 22-year old man was formally sentenced to death for the murder of a 52-year old man. During his trial, he claimed he was under the influence of LSD at the time of the crime. The victim had been beaten to death shortly before midnight as he approached his home.

Berkeley (Calif.) police reported a 20-year old youth jumped three stories to his death while "flying high on LSD." He had taken his first and last dose of LSD at a "trip party" held by his next-door neighbors. It was difficult to determine what occurred as the only witnesses were "pretty high on LSD, too." However, it was learned that the youth "was in touch with reality one minute; and the next, he lost control."

A former medical student was sent to the hospital for mental observation after being accused of killing his mother-in-law while "flying" on LSD. The victim's throat, hands, chest, and thighs

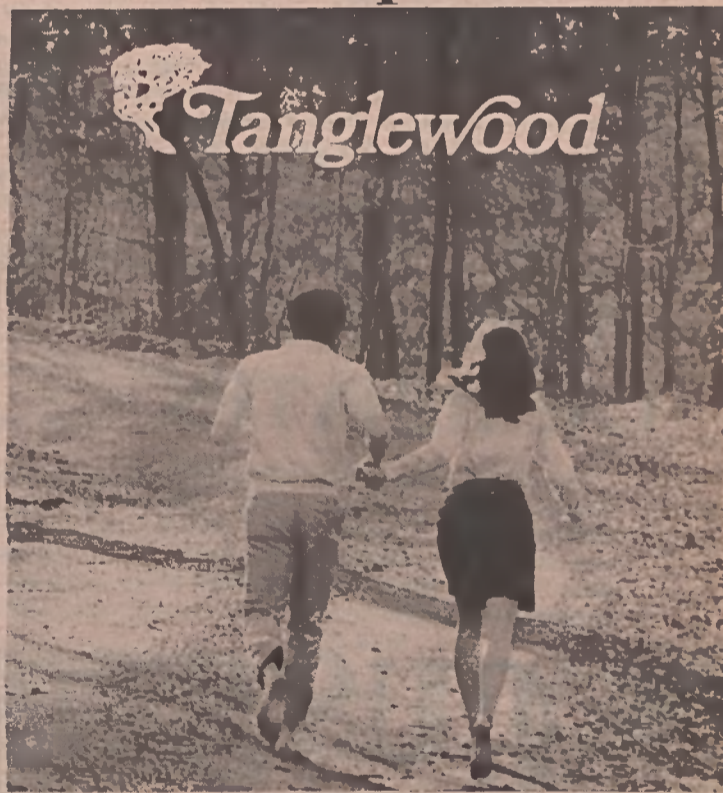
had been slashed. She was found lying in a pool of blood, clad in a nightgown. Taken before a criminal court, the man, 30, broke into tears and pleaded: "Please put me in the hospital, please. I don't know what happened. If I did, I'd be happier." His lawyer told the court his client had previously been treated at Bellevue Hospital for taking LSD. After his arrest, he was quoted by police as saying, "What am I here for? Did I rape anybody? Did I kill my wife? I've been high on LSD."

SOME CLOSING NOTES

As previously stated, the bad effects of LSD are publicized because only those "bad trips" come to public attention. Whatever the arguments for or against LSD, its status as a relatively unpredictable and potentially dangerous drug is a fact. As with marijuana, extensive research is necessary to firmly establish the positive effects of the drug, if any, and to determine control from the side effects or "bad trips."

This series was undertaken to inform. Hopefully, some measure of enlightenment has been the result so knowledgeable decision-making in today's drug scene can occur. If questions have arisen, they can be anonymously presented in writing to the JOURNAL via sealed envelope given to the Union Desk or placed under the door of Union B-4. Your replies will be researched and placed in the Letters to the Editor column. In this way, the JOURNAL hopes to provide a fact-seeking method for those wanting answers and to be of service to the students.

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