

Marijuana Dealing — The Hoods Take Over



By **BUDDY NEVINS**
Alternative Features Service
HOLLYWOOD, Fla.—A recent outbreak of murders in the drug underworld has vividly supported police claims that the nation's marijuana trade is fast falling into the hands of hoodlums.

Marijuana is now a multi-billion dollar business, involving more money than all but the largest industrial combines, and it is only natural that so much tax-free cash attracts organized crime.

The large scale marijuana dealer in the past was generally a college or graduate student

with no criminal background. These amateurs made money supplying their local campuses with a few kilos of the illegal weed smuggled in from South-of-the-Border.

But with the explosion of marijuana use the small time smuggler is being forced out of the market by giant criminal organizations. Not only do these new breed of smugglers have vast sums of money to invest but many of the principals involved, like prohibition barons of old, think nothing of shooting down rival dealers.

"With so much money involved in pot," said a U.S. Customs official,

"there is bound to be casualties."

South Florida, where a large proportion of the nation's grass supply enters the country, has seen some "pretty tough customers" take over the business, according to an area police spokesman. Broward County (Fort Lauderdale) Sheriff Ed Stack, whose jurisdiction covers acres of swamp land favored by smugglers for airplane drops, said that his deputies have noted an upswing in the number of shotguns, carbines, machineguns and large caliber revolvers taken from drug distribution suspects.

In early fall, Stack said, his deputies raided a house near the edge of the Everglades where they found more than 1,000 pounds of freshly cut marijuana recently smuggled into the area and bound for the Deep South and Midwest. As they attempted to rush the front door, the sheriff said, a slight, 25-year-old girl from South Carolina opened up on them with a .30 caliber carbine.

"Much to our distress," Sheriff Stack said, "we have found grass pushers inevitably armed to the teeth with weapons we identify with organized crime."

A major portion of the marijuana traffic in the Eastern half of the United States is now attributed to a group of felons with loose connections to organized crime. The Dixie Mafia, as police call them, smuggle grass through South Florida and distribute it as far north as New York City.

Miami police contend the group's marijuana activities were responsible for the recent execution-style murder of a former organization member, ex-convict Jackson Smith. Two teenage companions who happened to be accompanying Smith and who were the daughters of a politically prominent Louisiana family were also slain.

Miami Police Department homicide Sgt. Mike Gonzalez reported that the shootings were done by "professional mob men" under-

scoring the ominous new trends in the marijuana racket.

The violence connected with the mob takeover of the marijuana business is not peculiar to South Florida. A few weeks ago another alleged member of the Dixie Mafia, Charles Christian, surrendered to police in Savannah, Ga., because he claimed he was marked for death by gangland executions.

A mustachioed young man identified with the marijuana trade in New York City was found decapitated in Brooklyn. His murder was tied in with territorial disputes among the grass dealers of the city only after his head was found in a garbage paid near Fifth Avenue.

In Detroit and Chicago police have seen a surge in violence connected with marijuana dealing. "Unfortunately," said one police official, "this trend is spreading and is not an isolated situation. This is what happens when the mob gets its fingers in anything."

Police are now worried that gang warfare may break out on the nation's campuses, where much of the grass is used. Anything from attempted rip-offs by the local college dealer to youthful collegian capitalists trying to cut out their own segment of the market without permission could bring Mafia-type gunmen out on the scene. And schools would turn into battlefields like speakeasies and breweries of 50 years ago.

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Laird On The Way Out As Nixon Reorganizes Cabinet

CAMP DAVID, Md. (AP)—President Nixon said today announcements of sweeping Cabinet changes will begin Tuesday. He also said Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird will leave government service.

The chief executive, appearing briefly before a dozen newsmen at his mountain retreat, said his aim in reorganizing the federal government is to find ways "to do a better job with fewer people."

The largest personnel cuts, he promised, would be made in the White House staff which he said has "grown like Topsy."

The President, who spoke shortly after George Romney announced his resignation as the secretary of Housing and Urban Development, eliminated from speculation about future appointments the names of two prominent political figures, former Democratic Gov. John B. Connally of Texas and Republican Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York.

Nixon said either man would have made a very valuable addition to the Cabinet but said each has told him that he would prefer "not to take a permanent job at this time."

Laird had made no secret of his desire to resign as Secretary of Defense. However, there had been some speculation he might take some other federal post. Nixon said Laird wanted to leave government service.

The President, who told reporters he will be spending increasing amounts of time at Marine-guarded Camp David during his second term, also disclosed that Caspar Weinberger will be leaving his post as director of the Office of Management and Budget. He said Weinberger would get another top level assignment.

The chief executive said the first Cabinet change will be announced Tuesday—he apparently referred to his choices for Cabinet posts rather than resignations of incumbents—and estimated all Cabinet changes would be announced by Dec. 15.

New Recreation Courses Available

The Department of Recreation and Parks will offer three new undergraduate courses for the first time during the spring semester, according to Dr. Leslie M. Reid, department head.

"Recreation for Special Populations" — carrying three hours credit, will be taught by Dr. H. Douglas Sessoms. The course is designed to study the provision of recreation services for special groups especially the handicapped, the aging, economic and culturally deprived, youth and rural disadvantaged populations. One of the texts to be used in the course will be a newly-published "Recreation and Special Populations."

Dr. Clare A. Gunn will teach "Tourist and Resort Development" also a three credit course. Tourism and recreational travel is emphasized with special note on the nature of resort development and its effect on generating tourist flow to and within regions. Dr. Gunn also plans to stress the relationship of resource characteristics and resource ownership and control to the characteristics and economic importance of state and national resort industries.

"Recreation Research and Analysis" — will be an introduction to current recreation research emphasizing specialized research methodology, adaptive techniques and methods of research review useful to the recreation professional. Miss Margot Unkel will instruct this three credit course.

The first two courses have no prerequisite, the last needs approval of the department head for registration. Additional information may be secured from the Department of Recreation and Parks, 845-5411.

Bryan's Women's Club will hold its annual Flea Market from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday at the old Woolworth Building, 202-208 N. Main.

Toys, Christmas decorations, flower arrangements, furniture, books, lamps, clothes and bric-a-brac will be among the items for sale. A new feature for this year's Flea Market is a "Boutique."

importance of state and national resort industries.

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