

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL IBOGAIN TREATMENT SYMPOSIUM

by Bob Sisko

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IN THE FIRST CONFERENCE of its kind, researchers from Holland,

Germany, Israel and the United States gathered in a rustic country inn just outside of Leiden, the Netherlands, to attend the first International Ibogaine Treatment Symposium. Once there, they were joined by another group of Americans who were also going to participate in the conference. They were the addicts, who had come from New York to be treated with an experimental drug which is still unavailable in the United States.

Also coming from New York was Dr. Robert Clark, of the Department of Psychiatry of Harlem Hospital, and Rommell Washington, Clinical Director of Reality House, Inc., a Harlem-based treatment facility. They were joined by University of Miami researchers Drs. J. Sanchos Ramos and Debra Mash, both of whom had previously filed an Investigational New Drug Application (IND) with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to commence Phase 1 clinical studies of the effects of ibogaine on cocaine dependent persons.

DURING the three week seminar, participants were able to observe the treatment of patients by the world renowned Dutch psychiatrist Prof. Dr. Jan Bastiaans, widely known for his work treating Holocaust survivors and victims of trauma with LSD-assisted psychotherapy. Despite his eighty-odd years, Dr. Bastiaans was still able to treat six patients, four Americans and two Dutch, during the conference.

Assisting Dr. Bastiaans was a round-the-clock team of trained para-clinicians and peer counselors, under the supervision of Howard Lotsof, President of NDA International, Inc, which sponsored the conference. It was Lotsof who first observed ibogaines' ability to interrupt drug dependency. He has since been awarded five United States patents for his discovery.

Two treatments per week were scheduled. Groups One and Two were Americans, and the third was Dutch. Of the Americans, three were male, one female. Two were addicted to free base

cocaine, the other two were in methadone programs but were also concurrently using cocaine and heroin and were unable to stop on their own. The methadone dosage range was from 30 mg. per day for the male patient to an astonishing 125 mg. per day for the female. Patients in Group Three, the Dutch, were both addicted to opiates, one to heroin and the other to methadone.

From the addict's perspective, ibogaine offers, without question, the most humane method of detoxification yet devised. It offers the addict the ability to detoxify rapidly, in just two or three days, without the pain and discomfort normally associated with narcotic withdrawal.

The treatments, which occurred in separate private rooms, were monitored on a closed circuit television system from a medical station set up in an adjacent room. The observers were given opportunities to speak with and examine the patients from time to time during the course of the treatment, but most of the observations were conducted from the medical station.

The conference, though small, attracted a lion's share of media attention. In between sessions, two German television crews conducted extensive interviews with doctors and patients alike. Not to be outdone by their European counterparts, ABC/TV, which is producing a special on ibogaine for its new Sunday newsmagazine, *Day One*, flew a crew to Holland to cover the event. They will also be conducting follow-up interviews with those treated and plan to air the show in late April or May.

For those present, it was a historic event. Although it had been reported for years that addict self-help networks were successfully utilizing ibogaine to detoxify their own; that ibogaine made recovery rapid; and that ibogaine eliminated the craving to use drugs, no group of American doctors or researchers had actually witnessed an ibogaine treatment from beginning to end, until January, 1993. In the next issue of the MAPS newsletter, we will present a summary of the case histories of the patients treated at the conference along with about six month follow-up data.

For information on attending the second international ibogaine conference

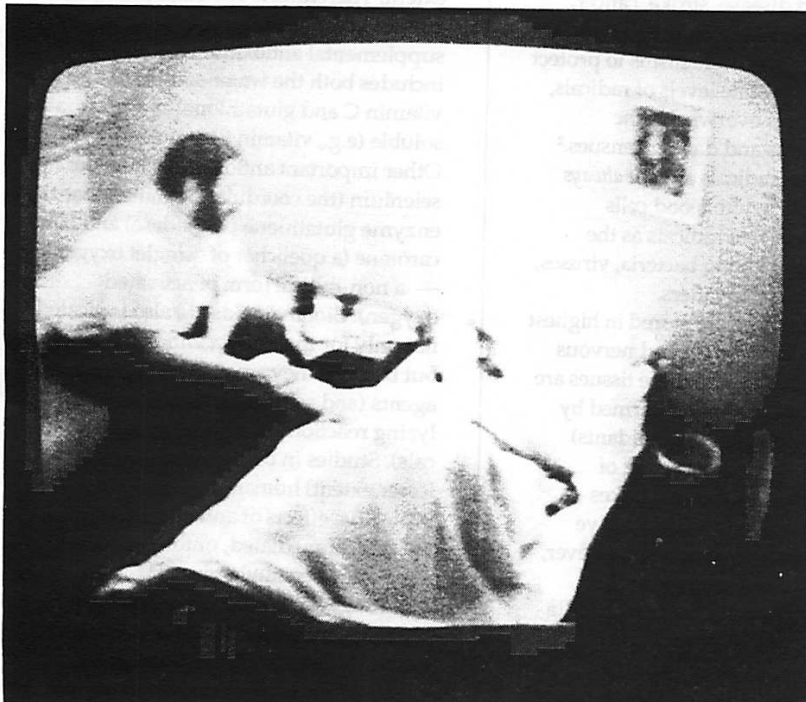
to take place sometime in late 1993, contact Bob Sisko (ICASH) or Howard Lotsof, NDA International, 46 Oxford Place, Staten Island, NY, 10301. (718) 442-2754.

Ibogaine Media Watch

ABC's new news magazine, *DAY ONE*, will feature Ibogaine's use in treating chemical dependency in April or May. Videotaping has already taken place in the United States, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. *DAY ONE* is broadcast nationally on Sunday at 8:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. Keep an eye out for this program. Our understanding is that *DAY ONE* will present a fair and balanced view of the research and present interviews with three chemically dependent persons treated with Ibogaine as well as with Professor Dr. J. Bastiaans (Dutch psychiatrist using Ibogaine to treat addictive disorders), Howard S. Lotsof (President of NDA International, Inc. - the corporation developing Ibogaine) and Dr. Frank Vocci (Director of the Ibogaine research program at the National Institute on Drug Abuse).

OMNI magazine will also be reporting on Ibogaine reseach in an issue appearing in the next few months. ■

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*American patient being treated with ibogaine, as observed through a closed circuit video system by conference participants.
Photo by Boaz Wachtel*