

MDMA transcript: Judge considers history's view

In the Nov. 18 issue of *B/MB*, we reported on the recent hearings in Washington on the proposed placement of the substance MDMA in Schedule I by the Drug Enforcement Administration. Attorney Rick Cotton of Dewey & Ballentine, the law firm representing researchers and clinicians who want a milder scheduling, recently gave us an excerpted transcript.

Two surprises of the hearings were the pro-MDMA testimony of a government witness and the seriousness of the administrative law judge, an employee of the DEA, in maintaining his independence.

John Docherty, a psychiatrist who was for many years chief of the Psychosocial Treatment Research Branch at the National Institute of Mental Health, was called as a witness by the DEA. Docherty, who had left government employ 10 days before, testified:

"It is an interesting compound, one of potentially great importance to the field, that ought to be investigated within a research framework."

"One of the important developments in the field [of psychotherapy] has been the moving together of psychopharmacology and psychotherapy and their combined use to relieve psychiatric problems. A drug that could particularly enhance the psychotherapeutic process is the next stage from a scientific development point of view. . . . [MDMA] represents a drug that could have an impact on the psychotherapeutic process itself. . . . It points the field where it ought to be headed."

"MDMA is an agent that offers the possibility of moving us into an under-



standing of some disturbance in interpersonal processes, an important aspect of psychiatric disorder not addressed specifically with our drug treatment."

"The anecdotal reports on the effect of MDMA on what I would call attachment behavior, the degree to which two people form some kind of a bonding between them. . . is the aspect that may have psychotherapeutic importance."

Francis Young, the administrative law judge, challenged the DEA attorney's position that he was precluded by law from considering evidence that Schedule I makes research difficult if not impossible.

"You're saying OK, we're on this island here, and this decision will be based only on the factors stated in this very small island, and a vast sea of reality that surrounds us is not to be considered."

When Young returned after a recess he said: "Ladies and gentlemen, just one comment further. . . . You know, it could very well be that this matter of the difficulty of researchers with Schedule I substances is just the way it has to be and ought to be. But I want to be satisfied with respect to that."

"There was a time when all the established wisdom and the best available scientific knowledge said the world was flat, and

Falling boulder kills Esalen's Dick Price

Dick Price, co-founder of Esalen Institute, was killed Nov. 24 by a falling boulder in a nearby Big Sur canyon.

Price had failed to return from a hike into the canyon to check on rising water levels, an Esalen spokesman said. Although his body was found partly in a creek, he died instantly from a blow to the head.

Price, 55, had started the world-famous institute with Michael Murphy in 1962. He played a major role in the operation and programs of Esalen throughout its history.

Murphy described Price as "irreplaceable" and "beloved by everyone around here. This is a tremendous blow. His vitality and vision played a great role in Esalen's success." He was a practitioner of the techniques and processes offered at Esalen, "a learner who set an example for everyone." Price is survived by his wife, Christine, and a daughter, Jennifer.

Mr. Columbus, you're out of your mind. And there was a time when all the established knowledge said to Galileo that he was out of his mind.

"You know, I just want to see to it that people do not look back at us a hundred years or so down the road in the same way that we now look back at the Holy Inquisition in Spain. . . ."

Sometime next spring Young will make his scheduling recommendation to the DEA administrator, who is not bound by the judge's findings.

In "The Scheduling of MDMA: A Pharmacist's Perspective" (*Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 3: 167-171), June Riedinger urged the study of the benefits of MDMA "with a possible specific use in depression and autism. . . ."

"In light of the fact that MDMA seems to constitute one of a new class of drugs, [it] may warrant the creation of a whole new scheduling category."

UPCOMING

Asilomar New Year's Retreat with Sun Bear, Joan Halifax, Willis Harman, Al Huang Dec. 27-Jan. 1, Monterey Coast, Calif., (213) 823-9352. . . . Pregnancy as Healing workshop Jan. 24-26, Tucson, (602) 327-3081. . . . Biocentric Institute Psychotherapy Intensive Series Jan. 24-26, Los Angeles; Feb. 7-9, NYC; (202) 544-1103. . . . Advanced Bio-Therapy Workshop Jan. 19, Costa Mesa, Calif., (714) 955-2402. . . . Under-standing Dreams film festival Jan. 11-12, San Francisco, (415) 771-8080. . . . Introduction to Psychosynthesis with Vivian King Jan. 25-26, Feb. 23, Pasadena, Calif., (818) 441-4626. . . . Earth Ascending pilgrimage to Mayan Mexico with Jose Arguelles Dec. 28-Jan. 10, (415) 663-8318. . . . Health Care Professional Delegation to Tibet, China, focusing on "body-mind relationship in traditional medicine," June, apply by Jan. 1, (213) 829-6072. . . . Inside Secret Egypt March 14-29, (714) 731-6938.

Fourth annual Los Angeles Whole Life Expo Feb. 7-9, Pasadena, exhibit information, (213) 395-7701. . . . Educational Kinesiology Courses beginning Feb. 5 and 6, Pasadena and San Diego, (818) 794-1181. . . . Action Linkage National Conference with Bob Theobald Feb. 13-17, Tucson, (602) 299-2561. . . . Second International Congress on Psychiatry, Law and Ethics Feb. 16-21, Tel Aviv; Box 394, Tel Aviv 61003, (03) 650862. . . . A Study in Excellence, creative management symposium with Robert Schuller, Mary Kay Ash, others Jan. 15-17, Garden Grove, Calif., (714) 971-4133.

News of the Holographic recording process, a breakthrough technology based on an insight into how the brain locates sound in space, was first described in *B/MB* in 1983. In our 1984 poll, when we asked readers to tell us which stories they most wanted followed up, Holographic Sound tied for first place with Rupert Sheldrake's M-field theory.

People were obviously even more interested in hearing the startling sound than in reading about it. In response to that interest and our own enthusiasm, we recently produced a tape in partnership with inventor Hugo Zuccarelli. "Holographic Live!"—an audio cassette with sound effects and music—is available for \$15 plus \$2.20 postage and handling from Box 42211, Los Angeles 90042. (No additional postage for multiple orders to the same address. Holiday gift orders can be sent direct to recipient.) Credit card orders by phone: (213) 223-2500.

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