"The Number One problem we face..." U.S. News & World Report 132F 191

Dust Ecstasy MPTP Crystal China White

Researchers, narcotic detectives, physicians, underground

chemists, black market dealers, and users speak out.

Crack

drug worthy enough to be tested by the government as a potential agent to turn hostile civilians into purring pussycats? Ecstasy! a.k.a. "XTC" a.k.a. "Adam" and also known as MDMA to researchers, the medical community, and a group of black-market chemists and users familiar with the drug from the 1960s. Originally synthesized in the early 1900s, MDMA is considered the licit parent (and illicit daughter) of MDA (the "love drug") and methamphetamine ("speed"). It was a drug considered for use as an appetite suppressant but

never manufactured because it gave you the heaves. A drug surfacing, then disappearing during the 1960s counterculture because LSD-25 was delivering ten times the punch and you didn't have to get sick to enjoy it. A drug popular among psychotherapists during the 1970s and 1980s because it was remarkably similar to LSD-25 in small doses and was, most importantly, legal. A drug that a handful of

clever California entrepreneurs decided to resurrect, christen, package, market, distribute, and advertise. A marketing million dollar baby. Ecstasy. Interview: Large man. Late thirties. Well-known stage and televi-

I do Ecstasy twice a month. I take two hits in the space of eight hours. For example, I'll take one at 4 P.M. Saturday and then one at 8 P.M. Taking two or three over the course of Saturday P.M. to Sunday A.M. can be dehydrating, so I take minerals and vitamins during that time despite a lack of appetite. The residual effect is and vitamins are important.

debilitating-not unlike the lag after a coke run, so the minerals There are various realms of abstraction which depend heavily on the individual. I never hallucinate. Some of my friends do. The more far out the artist or the creative, the more pronounced the hallucinogenic effect. It goes with the territory. A certain intensity in the experience gives the illusion of substance to the alter ego.

it to be incredibly true.

too easy to abuse.

Designer Drugs

the trip.

deral government.

Generally speaking, there is a fundamental good feeling. It's fun. There is an empathy. A calmer understanding. You feel kind and loving. An aphrodisiac, very sensual feeling. Recently, since I've been divorced, I haven't used it in a number of weeks. I've cut down mainly because my new boyfriend would rather I didn't do any drugs at all. That's one of the nice things about Ecstasy. You can quit without any regrets. Would I recommend it to my kids? I don't want my kids doing any drugs. Mature

Gary Trudeau captured that in his "Doonesbury" cartoons. I find

April 1986 Nothing New

In 1576, Lobelius in his Plantarum Seu Stiripium Historia

ecorded for the first time nutmeg's hallucinogenic effects on a

pregnant English lady who, having eaten ten or twelve nutmegs,

became deliriously inebriated." (Nutmeg may have at that time

responsible adults can decide for themselves. Not kids. The stuff's

Los Angeles

indeservedly earned the reputation of being an abortifacient.) In 829, Purkinje, a famous biologist, ate three nutmegs and found the uphoria strikingly similar to Cannabis (marijuana) intoxication. A imilar insight was later shared by Malcolm X while in prison. In his autobiography, he tells of dumping a matchbox full of nutmeg into

glass of water and drinking it-the equivalent (for Mr. X) of moking four reefers. Freshly grated nutmeg will produce a profound ntoxication and a variety of visual, auditory, and tactile hallucinaions depending on the individual.

I got two hits. A gift from my son. He's been dealing Ecstasy.

We're having some problems with him. But, uh, I mostly

remember my jaws were wired shut. Not my idea of a great high. My favorite drug of all time is DMT-dimethyltryptam-

ine. Imagine standing 100 yards away from a tree and seeing

the leaves as if they were inches away-every living vivid detail and the rushing freight train sound of them shaking in the

wind! Writer/actor Hollywood, California March 1986

speech in these people that seems to persist for a long period of time \_ \_ They have muscular-difficulties, coordination difficulties, especially in speech. I'm talking about pushing the dose up to 300, 400, 500 milligrams . . . But let's say 135 is being used . . . we're looking at some very toxic effects. We're looking at nausea, vomiting-that's a message from the alkaloids that are starting to poison you while it's turning you on. Most drugs will give you an altered experience, an altered state

of consciousness just before they poison you—that's part of

Underground literature on MDMA claims that Alexander Shulgin as the scientist who invented Ecstasy; that he was paid by the CIA develop the ultimate truth serum; and that Ecstasy was his

ntribution. Shulgin, in fact, is a specialist working in areas related

mescaline and is credited as the initial synthesizer of STP and

MDA. In 1962, Shulgin first recorded the effects of MMDA and

ses. It was declassified in 1967, and first published in the scientific

The DEA first identified MDMA in the illicit drug traffic in 1970. number of black-market chemists had synthesized it during the

60s but found LSD and MDA to be more profitable. Because ere was little street abuse of the drug, it was not scheduled by the

Even the people who have unlimited supplies of it, the

will go way out there. They have a hard time articulating because I've found that there's a continuing problem with

distributors and the traffickers, are afraid to take a lot of it to test the limits. We do have some brave explorers that always

s written extensively on the subject. In 1953, the U.S. Army covertly tested MDMA, code name EA-75, as an "experimental agent" at its Edgewood arsenal in aryland. Although never tested in man, it was found to be highly xic to monkeys and dogs, causing convulsions and death in large

Dr. Ronald Siegel

October 1985

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

In the mid-1970s a group of entrepreneurs/chemists decided to set a lab in Marin County, California, to manufacture MDMA. arketing ideas and a variety of salable names were discussed. Designer Drugs Don't eat for at least eight hours . . . drink only pure distilled

or mineral water. Do not mix it with alcohol or any drugs

(such as marijuana, cocaine or downers), or anything else . . .

them for special occasions and the right circumstances and the

The best experience for Ecstasy results from when you save

right people . . . taking it to get yourself out of bad moods

only intensifies those moods . . . If you take it with someone

you feel uncomfortable with, it may intensify that discomfort

please be extremely careful about when, where and with whom

to an unbearable degree. Therefore, when you do Ecstasy,

you do it. Ecstasy: 21st Century Entheogen In 1976, the lab known to be producing MDMA was distributing approximately 10,000 doses per month throughout the United States. By 1984, the same lab had escalated production to 30,000 doses. By mid-1985, a combined distribution among the flourishing number of distributors was estimated to be nearly a half-million doses per month. At that time, the drug was available in at least twenty-one states and Canada. Areas of concentration were California, Texas, Florida, New York, and New England. Distribution was said to have reached Portugal and Spain and parts of South America.

News stories in Newsweek (April 1985), New York Magazine

(May 1985), Time (June 1985), and Life (August 1985) published claims about MDMA's psychotherapeutic benefits. A sudden demand for the drug for which there was no supply was met instead by street

hustlers eager to cash in on the trend. PCP was sold in Chicago as

Ecstasy. MDA was sold in New York as Ecstasy. Elsewhere

throughout the country, a variety of other drugs were misrepresented

as Ecstasy, including caffeine, LSD, ephedrine, and DOM. After the article in New York was published we were getting calls on our Hotline from people wanting to know where they could buy "Ecstasy"! Dr. Mark Gold Fair Oaks Hospital Summit, New Jersey November 1985

I only heard about one bad case with MDMA. The only

reason I heard about it, some guy called up here [High Times] saying he'd taken MDMA a couple weeks before and now his vision was a little weird. I recommended him to the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic. They're great people. I got treated for clap by the Haight Clinic first year it was in existence. I was a hippie in 1966. Reporter High Times November 1985 I have never seen a case from an MDMA type of drug and I include MDA or nutmeg or anything like that-I have never seen a case come in for clinical treatment.

By July 1, 1985, the DEA had placed MDMA into Schedule I of

he Controlled Substances Act alongside heroin, LSD, MDA,

narijuana and other drugs considered to have high potentials for

abuse, no accepted medical use, and no safety standards accepted by

he Food and Drug Administration. The emergency measures made

rafficking in MDMA punishable by fifteen years in prison and a

3125,000 fine; and possession, a misdemeanor punishable by up to

One of the things we have to advise users about is the legal

risks. They are very dangerous to your health. Getting caught.

As far as contamination and could you get Parkinson's disease

from MDMA-I don't know of any cases. And even if there

were, that isn't going to be the probability. Probability is that

you'll get busted and someone will make an example of you

The worst and second most popular form is powder form-

either white or yellow-brown with a lot of cut. Usually the

dealer will get pure white Ecstasy [ten doses in a gram] and add about a third of a gram of procaine to give a strong

addict hooked]. Anyway, after they're done stepping on it,

they have about 1.3 grams of shit, which they cut into 1-12

doses which will probably get your kid sister or a dwarf off, but for the everyday drug taker you'll have to take two doses

kage inserts: "Ecstasy, Everything Looks Wonderful When

're Young and On Drugs," "Flight Instructions for a Friend ng XTC," "How to Prepare for an Ecstasy Experience," and

When purchased directly from the lab, it is a white powder in its

is \$30 in LA now. That is a yuppie drug! . . . You have to buy

500 to get the price down to \$10. And that's still expensive.

-more positive mood, feelings, and attitudes toward self and

-increased ability to effectively work on problems and

-increased emotional warmth and love and greater ease in

The XTC drugs are not genital aphrodisiacs. The extraordi-

nary sensuality of the experience is generalized over the body. At the height of the session, caressing is the standard mode of

communication, and after 3 or 4 hours, sexual relations may

-involuntary teeth-clenching and biting inside of cheek

-decreased sensitivity to physical pain (care should be taken

with chewing or swallowing or any vomiting in case debris

depressed."X" lag is pretty substantial for such a toy flip-out.

A long run for a short slide. TUNE IN. TURN ON. GO TO

THE OFFICE LATE ON MONDAY.

(relieved by placing damp washcloth between teeth and

accepting both positive and negative expressions.

nummie effect [one dealer told me it's supposed to get the coke

because they want to come down on MDMA.

Dr. Ronald Siegel

Dr. Ronald Siegel

"Users Speak Out"

High Times

October 1985

Dr. Ron Siegel

October 1985

Dr. Timothy Leary

Chic Magazine

P.J. O'Rourke

Rolling Stone

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

October 1985

October 1985

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

ive years in prison.

signer Drugs

to get off.

treet names for MDMA include "XTC," "Adam," "Ecstasy," DMA," and the "Love Drug." Initially, MDMA was sold with

estasy: 21st Century Entheogen."

ysical Properties, Adulterants

est form, tends to have a strong medicinal taste, and is often kaged in clear gelatin capsules. In that form it is rare and ensive, exceeding \$35 a dose. We have a hard time confirming them [street samples] pharmacologically because the price is so high. People don't want to part with the samples for analysis. The street price for MDMA

MDMA has been sold as a yellowish or white pill weighing one m and nine-tenths cut with speed, caffeine, ephedrine, or other phetamine cut. It has most recently been available as a white tab Designer Drugs

-enhanced alertness and mental clarity;

conflicts in lives and relationships; and

otential Positive Effects

others;

be in order.

tential Adverse Effects

cheek);

—dehydration;

90 Designer Drugs

—muscle tightness;

-muscle aches and pains (can persist for six weeks); -restlessness: —shaking in the jaw; -eyes become dry enough to cause swelling around eyes and blurred vision;

-intermittent rapid eye movement;

roes down your windpipe);

psychedelic drugs besides MDMA.

effects.

Doonesbury

TO CONSIDER, STAN, ARE

ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF CON-

RIGHT HERE ON OUR LOVELY

DUCTING YOUR MIDMA RESEARCH

WHAT I WANT YOU

BABY DOC CAMPUS!

BUT, SIR, DO WE HAVE THE

94 Designer Drugs

RIGHT FACILITIES HERE, THE

nausea with or without vomiting;

Drowsiness and mild depression can accompany the delirium and last as long as three days. MDMA vs Other Psychedelics Dr. Ronald Siegel, psychopharmacologist at UCLA School of

Medicine, has been conducting government-sponsored research on more than 170 MDMA users over an extended period of time. He is

quoted at length throughout this chapter, his comments edited from

a talk he gave at a conference on designer drugs held at UCLA in

October 1985. He has also done extensive research on a variety of

I think that with mescaline where we have a lot of experience,

identical to the doses of MDMA on the street now. When we

gave 400 and 800 milligrams of mescaline, we were getting so

many physical complaints that the subjects were being dis-

tracted from the intensified mental effects and were preoccu-

pied with the nausea and the vomiting. The nausea especially

which just never went away and stayed for like 16 hours into the trip. Same thing happens with nutmeg. You increase the dose, you increase the physical effects as well as the mental

AMONG OTHER THINGS, ASGUE

YOU COULD SYNTHESIZE

H, HELL, HONE)

CAN!

DOONESBURY, by Garry

Trudeau. Copyright, 1985, G.B. Trudeau. Reprinted with

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STERILIZED,

OF COURSE

ALL HE NEEDS IS

YOUR COMPOUNDS IN TOTAL

HAIRY ARM OF U.S. JUSTICE!

SAFETY, FAR FROM THE LONG

we see that doses of 100 and 200 milligrams are virtually

MDMA is considered dangerous to anyone with a medical history

of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, epilepsy, hypoglycemia,

glaucoma, psychotic episodes, or to anyone, as one doctor put it, "stupid enough to take multiple doses in their search for Nirvana."

So the MDMA users have kept the dose real low, and by keeping the dose real low they think they have a unique drugthey don't. In fact, I can make an argument pharmacologically

ELABORATE SET-UP REQUIRED AN OLD GARBAGE FOR PURIFYING PHARMACEUTICALS?

drug has worn off.

-Alertness is not impaired and insights are retained after the -There is a marked heightening of the patient's suggestibility ... the judgmental attitude of the patient toward the experience itself is diminished. This can be helpful, for insights are accepted without reservations and seem much more valid than under nondrug conditions. The fact that MDMA is now on Schedule I along with marijuana and all the other hallucinogens doesn't prevent research . . . There's hundreds of researchers and therapists licensed to work with marijuana in this country. That's what happened in 1966 when lots of people were sending away to Sandoz for free LSD . . . it was readily dispensed in a lot of therapeutic communities. When it became . . . a street problem, the government . . . said we're going to set up machinery to control all of this . . . so we can control these supplies and protect the rights of the subjects and insure that science will be done properly . . . Most of the people weren't interested in

doing this kind of research. Instead, they went around the country saying that the government's down on LSD research-

they're not supporting it. They won't let us do it. What they

wanted to do was just continue to dispense it to their patients

patients cocaine and heroin because they certainly would feel

better and if we took it with them, we would certainly agree

proceeds and medical research proceeds. We need some kind

of better description of what's going on here. The machinery exists for doing that-it's tedious as hell. I shuffled papers for

a year and a half to get through that. But if you really want to

because their patients said they are better. If that was the

criteria, then we would give all of our psychotherapeutic

that it was improving things. This is not the way science

do it, it can be done.

discarded.

way:

Dr. Ronald Siegel, speaking at the Designer Drug Conference at UCLA in October 1985, summed up the Ecstasy controversy in this

in the search for ecstasy and altered states.

Unless you want to defoliate the entire planet and pave it over and outlaw the science of chemistry and cooking, you'll probably never stop the use of synthetic drugs or natural drugs

controlled studies using MDMA in rats. He concluded after treating rats with multiple or single injections of MDMA that MDMA shows a greater depletion of serotonin after repeated doses. A single injection of MDMA may not be as toxic as MDA, but chronic

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

Dr. Ronald Siegel

October 1985

treatment with MDMA appears to be more toxic than MDA. This study is controversial because it extrapolates from rats to humans. Other evidence suggests that substantial depletion of serotonin may result in chronic depression-depression manifested not only by subjective feelings but also by adverse changes in sleep, appetite, sexual activity, and activity in general. A central media figure in the Ecstasy year-old RickeDoblin a building contractor, none Sarasona- clouds Like Timothy Leary, he is dedicated to establishing the safe use of psychedelics for "seekers of self-knowledge." He has taken MDMA at least twenty times and freely distributed it. He is raising money for a new pharmaceutical company that might conduct research on MDMA with hope of convincing the federal government that Ecstasy is not brain damaging. Should he receive a clean bill of health, his company would mass-produce MDMA for public distribution under the watchful eyes of doctors and therapists. "Return on investment could be very significant in the long run," says Mr. Doblin.

Given that Ecstasy isn't much of an aphrodisiac and doesn't pack the wallop of any number of other party drugs, it seems possible that it will be little more than a passing fad among "recreational" users—an ultimately disappointing street drug, something tried once because of all the hype and then Joe Klein New York Magazine May 20, 1985

understanding that you are going to have a beautiful, relaxed experience, that your heart is going to open totally to feelings of love, that you will not have any anxiety actions, that you will alter your consciousness in such a way that when the experience is over you will take something from the experience that will enrich your life, and that you can expect to have virtually no physical sensations that will in any way impair you or make you feel uncomfortable. You will have

You should go into your first Ecstasy sharing with the

Ecstasy: 21st Century Entheogen (Underground pamphlet distributed by

In late 1984 and early 1985, word of a new magical elixir swept the country promising to assuage life's emotional ills. It could mend marriages, cure alcohol and cocaine addiction, help the dying face death, console rape victims, remove writer's block, and allow

What was this twenty-first-century nepenthe? This new "hug drug" to promote world peace through blissed-out intimacy? This

that the big buys are for the movie and record people.

I first started taking Ecstasy five years ago with one other person.

Today, there are four or five of us who consistently use it. Those

are the only people I personally know about. Word of mouth is

Different personalities react differently. The "controlled" type of

guy always throws up. If you resist, you'll throw it up. You see a

pretty expensive evening. The people I know don't abuse it. When

Los Angeles November 1985

Girlfriend of writer/actor

The First Book Of Sacraments

Narcotics detective

December 1985

Ecstasy 81

Female, late twenties Lake Arrowhead, California

Ecstasy: 21st Century Entheogen

All Ecstasy does is open the doors to your higher self, and

sometimes, people don't like what they see. Even though they

Why sell LSD as MDMA when the LSD's a quality product?

We confiscated just last month 60,000 hits of 4-way Mickey

Mouse acid. We were buying sheets [that] broken down were

maybe 37 cents a hit. 60% purity. Excellent LSD. Bunch of

Grateful Dead freaks had it made for their own little group.

When MDMA became very popular we had a lot of samples in

MDA available were calling their stuff "Adam" and "Ecstasy" and we analyzed them and maybe that's how MDMA got the rap where there were three deaths involved with it. Those really

have to be questioned because it seems like maybe those deaths

Delusional, paranoid, rapid heartbeat, prolonged depression

We've dropped three to five doses at a time either eating or whiffing our last dose when we start coming down. It's like

Anyway, after two peaks [doses], we all agree it starts getting

. . . these people had taken 5 to 15 hits of MDMA.

might have been due to MDA instead of MDMA.

the Haight [Ashbury District] of MDA-chemists who had

Paper blotter lab. One guy. No phone. Out in the boonies.

Never, never catch him. Who wants MDMA?

January 1986

Ecstasy 83

State narcotics agent

Dr. Darryl Inaba

Dr. Darryl Inaba

"Users Speak Out"

DEA group head Clandestine Labs

Dr. Ronald Siegel

October 1985

Ecstasy 87

Graphic artist

February 1986

Ecstasy 89

Toluca Lake, California

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

West Coast

October 1985

High Times

Ecstasy

November 1985

October 1985

October 1985

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

San Francisco, California

October 1985

West Hollywood, California

of the Church of the Tree of Life

Hollywood, California

March 1986

marketers of MDMA)

4 "Ecstasy"

no aftereffects such as a hangover type of feeling, or a buzz in your head the next day. In fact, the day after Ecstasy is perhaps even more pleasant than the actual experience because you feel like you are floating like a butterfly the whole day, and yet you are very much in tune with what you are doing and the work that you are doing that day compared to your average workaday world, because you are more in tune with your body, your mind, and your senses.

Million Dollar Baby

lot of tensing. A lot of grinding teeth. Some can't get to sleep. I can. The high lasts four to five hours. The availability is there. Price keeps me from buying now. After its scheduling, it shot up in price. I was paying \$8 to \$25. Now it's up over \$30. That makes a

the price goes up, they refrain. It's just not that important. Of course, there will always be the group who abuses-be it food, alcohol, or drugs. Just because they are greedy and irresponsible, why take it away from the rest of us? I know nothing about quality control, I have no idea how many milligrams I'm taking. I trust a friend. I don't ask questions. I

thousands of self-serving yuppies to empathize.

know it comes from Texas.

Interview: Woman in her late thirties. Creative director in fashion advertising.

I've been taking Ecstasy probably ten years. I buy directly from a lab which relocated mid-1985. It's pharmaceutical Ecstasy and I sell it uncut. I sell it for what I pay for it. I'm not dealing. Just a

connection for good friends. I always send cash. Usually \$1,000 or more. Always through the mail.

"X" makes me feel like I'm twelve years old again. That's the best description I can give. A gentle, innocent state of mind. A week's worth of stress at work, problems at home with bills, the kids, even the marriage suddenly aren't taken so seriously. Life becomes simple again. On the average, I'd take it every three weeks. I can't really do it more often because I'm exhausted for three days after each experience. The only bad experience I know about happened to a friend of mine. It was the first time she took it and she was sicker than a dog all night. I should have told her to take half a tab.

I hallucinated. I didn't know Ecstasy made you hallucinate. Little people up on the bookshelf. And my jaws felt wired shut too. All night long. I kept wondering when do I get to make love? His son apologized. Said it was cut with speed. He didn't realize I don't do a lot of drugs.

A person under the spell of nutmeg is likely to find himself unable actually to sleep, but also incapable of being really awake. Sleepless stupor is the most apt description of nutmeg narcosis . . . The aftereffects are usually quite unpleasant: aching of the bones and muscles, soreness and aching of the eyes, running nose, tiredness, depression and possible headaches. One of the best things that can be said about nutmeg intoxication is that it is too unpleasant to be addicting.

Whether derived from the oils of nutmeg, sassafras, mace, saffron,

calamus, crocus, or parsley, or synthesized in a laboratory, MDMA is a psychoactive drug with hallucinogenic and amphetaminergic

properties. Its chemical structure, 3,4 methylenedioxy-methamphetamine, is molecularly related to nutmeg and two synthetic drugs, MDA and methamphetamine. It is chemically similar to mescaline and the nasal decongestant Sudafed (Pseudoephedrine). Gays are doing a lot of crystal and now and then a little MDMA. You'll bust one with so much methamphetamine and

maybe a little MDMA. When they do them together, they aren't prepared for the combined stimulant and hallucinogen and sometimes it freaks them out. In 1914, E. Merck, a German pharmaceutical firm, synthesized MDMA as a possible appetite suppressant. It was never manufactured because of the drug's potential physical liabilities.

"Empathy" was seriously considered, as the drug seemed to elicit a user's more compassionate nature. "Ecstasy" was selected for having a bit more pizzazz. Our friends do it on the weekends. They feel very special and

think nobody-can tell they are high. Bullshit. They glide around like Mr. and Mrs. Perfect, real quiet, real mellow. So when you go out to eat or have them over for dinner you don't have to worry if there's going to be enough food to go around because they're never hungry! Also, if you're short cash for the movies, you can ask 'em for the extra bucks and they'll never remember loaning it to you! The lab operated for five years before relocating. The drug was marketed with package inserts, some of which included unverified scientific research and an abundance of 1960s mumbo-jumbo.

have a beautiful first experience with Ecstasy, the next day they say, "Well that wasn't the real me!" and they totally invalidate the beautiful experience they had because it is not something that they are familiar with, or comfortable with, or willing to deal with . . . The greatest benefit of Ecstasy is the clarity of vision you have about yourself, and that clarity comes with enough psychic energy to make the necessary changes for increased health and loving relationships in your life. Surprisingly good advice on the "safe" use of the drug was given, including an adamant warning against using it in combination with other drugs or alcohol, using the drug sparingly over an extended period of time, and being extremely cautious about the environment and the people with whom the drug is taken-guidance not unlike that which the Indians offered their own people when using peyote for ceremonial consumption.

It was during this period of Ecstacy frenzy that an estimated 500 MDMA-related crises were reported at emergency rooms and drug abuse clinics involving severe anxiety reactions, paranoia, depression, and a few well-publicized psychotic episodes and deaths.

levels [climbing stairs] taking three to four doses at once. Just when you think you've peaked, you peak again, then againeach hit a "peak"—three hits equaling three "peaks," get it?

intense, not like a calm Ecstasy trip, more like a horror movie.

supply available now to this laboratory. So for the next two years, they'll be able to handle production without any interference from any legislative controls.

After the scheduling, the price of Ecstasy shot up and the purer forms of the drug became scarce. Price increased from an average of \$100 per gram to \$300 per gram. Black-market entrepreneurs continued selling adulterated versions or misrepresenting altogether different drugs.

or pill. In April 1986, MDMA was selling at 100 hits for \$350 in the Midwest (most probably adulterated). At the same time on the West Coast, adulterated versions were selling for \$10 a dose and the

to twenty-seven reports from across the country for LSD. Many of the drug seizures and samples tested at drug abuse clinics indicate that doses of MDMA on the street are low-as little as fifteen A friend just offered me ten hits at ten bucks apiece. I didn't buy it. I mean she's got a really good source but, you know, I just can't afford to be out of it even for two days. I've got too much work to do right now. I did some coke last night-two

big profit margin.

stinking lines and now I'm totally congested. Really pisses me THE CONTRACT OF STREET STREET, STREET,

Effects on Users At low doses, MDMA is mildly intoxicating, nonhallucinogenic, and has few physical liabilities. Toxic effects become noticeable at 100 to 200 milligrams. The following list of benefits and adverse effects is taken from the informed consent forms for people taking MDMA in psychotherapeutic sessions.

-pulse and blood pressure fluctuation; -sugar level fluctuation; and -occasional visual hallucinations with geometric patterns, trails of moving objects. I will relate to you an experience that I had when I tested a

still in my system. I felt okay but was a little disoriented, like I was in the next room and couldn't quite hear me . . . On the second day, all effects were gone, but I was tired and

continue unhampered.

him to express his irrational feelings.

power to enhance sexuality and give the user a feeling of peacefulness

and conviviality. This is why it became known as the "love drug." Consequences of the lesions inflicted by the drug on the serotonin terminals in the brain are unknown. In the research we have available, the human treatment of "Adam" and "Ecstasy," you have a lot of data on toxicity, the adverse effects, the problems that we're seeing in patients; and this data is well presented by everybody who's promoting this drug as a new and wonderful drug and something that was available in treatment. But it's sort of glossed over when they make their legal presentations or media presentations . . . I'm

What's on the Street After the scheduling, several distributors withdrew from th market. Labs were shut down by the DEA in Texas and Florida One lab was intercepted on its way to Mexico. According to underground sources, the major distributors relocated and th original distribution network operating since the 1970s continue supplying the "Consciousness Circle" of users: users in their thirties experienced with psychedelics, and not prone to abuse of the drugs. Precursor for MDMA is isosafrol, which is also used for MDA. In Texas, we'd been watching for years and years the sale of isosafrol for MDA production. It is highly unlikely that manufacturers stockpiled isosafrol without DEA knowledge. They may possibly be making the isosafrol. There's still one major lab that produces Ecstasy . . . There was a lot of stockpiling of the precursor chemicals because one of the strategies now in the Administration's war on drugs is to try and proscribe the precursor chemicals . . . The chemicals that are necessary to make MDMA have been gathered up from around the world and stockpiled. There's a two-year

quality MDMA for \$20 or more. It is interesting that by April 1986 only three reports of MDMA were noted in High Times, compared

A segment of organized crime was said to have been approached by the California marketers of Ecstasy to act as distributors. The "bikers" are known to have a monopoly on the methamphetamine market throughout the country. The marketers of MDMA thought their drug could be plugged into this already established network. The bikers refused for three reasons: (1) MDMA is not addictive and cannot guarantee repetitive use; (2) users of the drug were too exclusive (not ubiquitous like speed and cocaine users); and (3) no

dose of Ecstasy that was thirty times the recommended

amount. I had profuse sweating, body tremors, sensory changes such as blurred vision, multiple imagery, vibration of objects, increased passage of time and increased contrast . . . My psychic phenomenon was the loss of thought control,

extreme elation, difficulty in expressing myself precisely, floods

of thought or blankness of mind and ease of distraction. At no time during the overdose period was I alarmed or panicked,

Ecstasy: 21st Century Entheogen

Male fashion model

Los Angeles

Ecstasy 91

Dr. Mark Gold

October 1985

Ecstasy 93

Ecstasy 95

Alcoholism & Addiction

December 1985

and my wife was never concerned enough to ask me would I

To me it felt like a very sophisticated, extremely well-buffered

bad parts of the buzz are a mad passion for cigarettes and that

speed. You get the glow without the jitters (or the energy to write term papers). Once any discomfort has passed the only

grimy feeling on the skin common to many drugs . . . there have been claims that Ecstasy provides 'instant psychoanalysis'

. . . Myself, I didn't come up with a unified field theory or

anything. To really enjoy drugs, you've got to want to get out

of where you are . . . But what drug will get a grownup out

of, for instance, debt? . . . I slept fretfully, getting up every single hour to go to the bathroom. The next day the drug was

that LSD and psilocybin are much safer than MDMA because

paucity of physical effects with psilocybin. Psilocybin is univer-

we have a paucity of physical effects with LSD. We have a

A prestigious group of researchers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and lawyers demanded that MDMA be placed in the less restrictive Schedule III, which allows medical use and research. They argue

that it should be left up to the medical profession and not the

Experts from prestigious medical schools are again saying there

is no proof of dangerousness [as they did for cocaine]. New

safe and effective, but this policy, which has saved America

medicines are normally assumed to be dangerous until proven

from hundreds of Thalidomides, is lost when it comes to drugs of abuse. New drugs are peculiarly exempt from medical logic

and viewed as safe until proven dangerous . . . MDA, MDMA

and MMDA should be viewed on the basis of studies with

These drugs clearly produce self-administration.

Hotly contested is the issue of whether the DEA prematurely

scheduled a drug that was presumed to have great therapeutic value, a drug whose potential could not be realized unless research could

similar drugs and research work with these drugs in animals.

government to decide what is or is not accepted medical practice.

I used to take it. My girlfriend does it every weekend and throws up every time. I prefer mushrooms. Psilocybin. I can function, I laugh, have a good time, and I know nobody's been messing with my stuff cuz I grow my own. I honestly don't know why she likes it.

like to go to the hospital.

sally loved by everyone we gave it to and on the street, too. It's a very popular street psychedelic. You can grow your own. You know it's pure because the spores are sold through the mail and you can cultivate your own little mushroom garden. MDMA has a long recovery period. The effects are long. And it drains people.

Scheduling vs Research

can be.

similar liabilities. dopamine in rat brains.

There has been much speculation about the neurotoxicity of MDMA because of its chemical similarity to MDA and methamphetamine. MDA has been shown to destroy the serotonin-producing neurons in the brain. These cells play a direct role in regulating aggression, mood, sexual activity, sleep, and sensitivity to pain. MDA's effect on the serotonin system helps explain its purported one methyl group different . . . both drugs have the same type of effects when you equate their doses . . . similar toxicity,

October 1985 Methamphetamine has been shown to damage the cells producing On October 4, 1985, Dr. Lewis Seiden of the University of Chicago submitted to the DEA preliminary results of the first Ecstasy 97

Greer and Grinspoon and that other fellow from Massachusetts-they mean well. They are compassionate, professional. Maybe a little naive. They don't want to have to go through FDA and get permission. Dr. Frank Sapienza DEA chemist Washington, D.C. November 1985 Drugs stay in your body. I only did MDMA once. Six hours with my girlfriend, then we went out to dinner. I don't do a lot of drugs because I don't know enough-they could be f-ing you up in ways nobody knows. They shouldn't stop research on drugs like MDMA. It's only by research that people really know. Otherwise you think when they tell you not to do it that they're on some punishment trip and only goonies will be affected. Had I known about all the bad effects of coke and some of the other drugs, I'd never have taken them. I've seen successful people, intelligent people lose their businesses, their homes, their families, wife and kids because of cocaine. Just making a drug taboo won't stop people from using it-hell, it just makes it more exciting. Like alcohol, people have to know the facts and just how dangerous drugs Member of Devo (rock band) Los Angeles November 1985 Many of the claims made about Ecstasy's psychotherapeutic benefits were similarly made about LSD-25. At a 1965 conference on LSD, Dr. Sidney Cohen summed up those claims: -The patient's defensiveness is reduced and repressed memories and conflicting material are allowed to come forth. The

> still-and I really apologize to professionals involved with this because many of these professionals are my mentors, my predecessors, my professors at UC Medical Center who are involved in the testimony for these things-and looking at them and accepting and understanding what they're talking about—the pharmacology, the optical isomers and all that—I can understand what they're saying. But on a clinical standpoint for me who sits there and has to deal with sometimes what we call the casualties of substance abuse . . . I don't see that much difference between MDA . . . and MDMA which is

> > Dr. Darryl Inaba

Designer Drug Conference, UCLA

In another hundred years, perhaps, we'll have that world that Robert Silverberg envisioned. We'll be able to have a safe aspirin, a good five-cent intoxicant out there. Something better than alcohol and tobacco and marijuana and cocaine and Ecstasy. We don't have it now, but that's what the alchemists are looking for. And there is pharmaceutical research going on, even though they will deny it, for that kind of drug.

I've been in discussions with very prestigious jurists in America, Supreme Court Justices and law enforcement authorities at the highest levels who have recognized that we have a problem in that we are saying yes to alcohol and tobacco, which are the worst, and to coffee and caffeine and no to things like

recall of these events is improved and the abreaction is

-The patient feels closer to the therapist and it is easier for