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South Africa Cops Nab Hundreds of Kids in School Boycott

By JAMES F. SMITH
Associated Press Writer

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa - Police fired shotguns at black rioters in Cape province Friday, killing six and wounding 20, and arrested nearly 900 children for boycotting classes in Soweto.

Some of the children were only 6 or 7 years old. Bishop Desmond Tutu negotiated for their freedom, then used a bullhorn to tell hundreds of worried parents outside a police station: "All those under 13 will be released immediately with-

out being charged. Those over 13 - the police are taking their particulars and they will be released to their parents."

Police headquarters said Friday night that all but six of the 542 black children picked up Friday had been released and 339 detained on Thursday also were let go without charge.

Headquarters said the people killed and wounded were in crowds of blacks who threw stones at riot patrols in Aliwal North, a remote town of the eastern Cape province.

Police said the officers used shot-

guns and rubber bullets in the second day of turmoil there. More than 600 people have been killed, nearly all of them black, in a year of rioting against white rule.

Authorities confirmed the arrests of five leading opponents of apartheid from the Durban area, but did not confirm reports that seven others were picked up in Cape Town.

The five arrested, all members of the United Democratic Front anti-apartheid coalition, were identified as Dr. Farouk Meer, Billy Nair and Yunus Mohamed, who are classified as Asians, and blacks Noziswa Mad-

lala and Themba Nxumalo.

Police Brig. Jan Coetzee said the children in Soweto were arrested for violating rules against loitering outside schools under the state of emergency. He said he regretted the arrest of children under 10, and had ordered that it not be done again.

"I was playing with the ball inside the schoolyard, and the ball went out into the street. I went to get the ball and they took me away," said an 11-year-old boy who was freed after the intervention by Tutu, the black Anglican bishop of

Johannesburg who won the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize.

Armored personnel carriers descended on Soweto schools Thursday and early Friday, rounding up children near deserted schools and those hanging around outside school grounds. Armored riot vehicles packed with children were seen unloading them at police stations.

Coetzee is in charge of police in Soweto, the black city of 1.5 million outside Johannesburg that has been a center of black activism in the uprising against apartheid, the set of race laws that guarantees privi-

lege to South Africa's 5 million whites and denies rights to its 24 million blacks.

He had been quoted as saying on Thursday: "We are cracking down. We are going to bring the schools situation in Soweto back to normal."

The government says boycotting students become mobs that stone cars and clash with police and the army units that have occupied Soweto and other townships for weeks under the emergency imposed July 21.

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Vickers Suspended Following Indictment

By ED GEORGE and TOM TRYON
Staff Writers

Manatee County Commissioner Vernon Vickers was suspended from office at precisely 10:10 a.m. Friday, as a result of his indictment this week by a federal grand jury.

In his order of suspension, Gov. Bob Graham said, "It is in the best interests of the residents of Manatee County, Florida, and of the citizens of Florida, that Vernon E. Vickers be immediately suspended from the public office that he now holds."

Vickers and Bradenton businessman Carl Shepard were indicted Wednesday by a federal grand jury. Vickers is charged with conspiracy to make false statements to banks



Rick Doblin poses before tie-dyed African cloth, which provides convenient 'psychedelic' aura.

Spy-Chaser's Defection Rocks Bonn

Espionage Network Threatened

By NICK STAUDINGER
Associated Press Writer

BERLIN - A top West German counterparty has defected to the Communist East in a developing espionage case that threatens West Germany's network of secret agents.

Officials in Bonn warned of serious damage from the spy case, the biggest since 1974, when one of Chancellor Willy Brandt's top aides was exposed as an East German

newspaper Bild, quoting sources in Bonn, reported that two important West German agents in the East had fled to West Berlin because Tiedge was about to expose them.

The Express newspaper of Cologne, which has good contacts among government officials, said West German intelligence had been pulling its people out of the East in case Tiedge reveals their names.

Gerhard Jahn, a leader of the opposition Social Democrats, said

He Has a Drug in Mind

By BILL WISSER
Staff Writer

Rick Doblin wants to change people's ideas about drugs. He wants society to make a place for the psychedelic drug experience - a legal place where people can take MDMA, a potent mind drug.

Some people call MDMA "Ecstasy." The government calls it dangerous.

The debate is reminiscent of the 1960s and the fight over LSD, but it is also different.

In the '60s, it was Dr. Timothy Leary, a flamboyant Harvard professor turned "high priest" of a drug cult, who captured national attention. Now, it seems to be Rick Doblin, a 31-year-old sometime building contractor and New College student from Sarasota who is becoming a central figure.

At its core, Doblin's message is essentially the same as Leary's, and it is controversial: Both men say psychedelic drugs are powerfully good ways to help people get in touch with their feelings, break down barriers of communication and experience profound, even exquisite, insights.

"People should be educated," Doblin says, "to use drugs wisely."

The government banned MDMA just last month on the hotly debated grounds that it may possibly

A Man From Sarasota Is the Guru of MDMA - Alias 'Ecstasy'

But Doblin financed a scientific study by a reputable laboratory, which said it found no brain damage. He now wants the government to study the health question more thoroughly.

If, after thorough testing, the drug gets a clean bill of health, Doblin and some of his allies want to launch a company to mass-produce the drug and legally distribute it at for-profit clinics under the supervision of doctors and therapists.

MDMA's full name is a tongue-twister: 3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine. Before MDMA was made illegal, psychotherapists who used it on their patients had dubbed the drug "Adam." Its more exciting alias, "Ecstasy," often written "XTC," seems to have been preferred by people who sold it legally in bars and on college campuses.

Doblin's claims for the drug are not so different from those made by Leary 20 years ago for LSD, with which scientists had been quietly experiment-

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Sarasota Man Is the Guru of Drug Called 'Ecstasy'

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ing for decades. After being kicked out of Harvard, Leary barnstormed the country with a pioneering light show and a pro-LSD lecture. When a worried Congress conducted hearings in 1966 on whether to make LSD illegal, Leary testified unsuccessfully on behalf of legal LSD therapy.

Doblin's style, however, is less outrageously theatrical than Leary's: The Sarasotan has no light shows, no flowing robes and no anti-establishment calls for youth to "turn on, tune in and drop out."

An amiable, low-key type who drives both a Porsche convertible and a beat-up pickup truck, Doblin emphasizes that he wants to work within the system.

Yet, despite, or maybe because of, his affable style, he has emerged as the dominant media personality - some might say salesman - in a loose-knit group of doctors, psychotherapists, university professors and others who say the government ban on MDMA must be re-thought and relaxed, if not removed.

Many of those arguing for MDMA, however, don't necessarily want Doblin's help. An example is Richard Cotton, the attorney for researchers who asked the DEA to relax its MDMA ban. Cotton insists that he has no connection with Doblin's projects, though Doblin listed Cotton as a proposed recipient of stock in an MDMA pharmaceutical company and says he had discussed the matter with Cotton. Doblin says, "I had caused others to feel threatened by talking to the press."

For the soft-spoken, but hard-driving Doblin, the MDMA cause - including the lobbying, the public relations and the fund-raising - has become the central focus of his life. It's his biggest effort since he built and sold six luxury homes in Sarasota, back when he dropped out of college and started a contracting business with a \$150,000 inheritance from his factory-owning grandfather.

"We hope this won't interfere with his studies," says Doblin's father, physician Morton Doblin, who heads The Care Unit, a drug-abuse treatment center at Skokie Valley Hospital near Chicago. "But we are supportive to the extent that he wants to find out the truth about this substance."

The controversy over Ecstasy involves serious questions about the validity of the government's claim that the drug causes brain damage.

As evidence, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration cites a government-sponsored University of Chicago study that "strongly suggests," but does not prove, that high doses of MDA - a drug similar, but not identical, to MDMA - caused some brain damage in laboratory rats.

The government admits that it has no study, at least not yet, showing any brain damage from MDMA. But because MDA and MDMA are chemically similar, the government says, it doesn't want to take any chances and is only exercising a healthy caution by banning MDMA.

The government's case is flimsy, Doblin and his allies charge.

The Earth Metabolic Design Foundation has financed a \$10,000 animal study in which researchers at Intox Laboratories in Redfield, Ark., said they gave enormous doses of MDMA to rats - and, using four

different tests, found no brain damage.

Doblin says that the foundation essentially consists of three people - two of whom are in California and are not too active. He is the third. He says that the foundation's funds are deposited in a Sarasota account under his control.

Scientists on both sides of the debate express respect for each other, but the only thing they seem to agree on is that more research is needed. So now, the government is testing MDMA (not its chemical cousin, MDA) on rats, while Doblin, declaring that he wants to "replace fears with facts," has hired the University of Arkansas to do an even more sweeping \$60,000 animal study.

Doblin spends hours writing letters to millionaires. The Apple computer on his desk holds the names of 401 people who have given to his foundation. Some had good drug experiences and gave tax-deductible donations as large as \$10,000, Doblin says. Before it was made illegal, Doblin distributed MDMA. But never for money, he adds.

"I always gave it away. Lots of times, I requested written reports. That was the basic exchange."

Doblin, who says he has used the drug 20 times, is trying to raise money for a new, for-profit pharmaceutical company. It would conduct MDMA research and, if it can convince the government of the drug's acceptability, the company would mass-produce the stuff for public distribution at company-owned clinics.

"Return on investment could be very significant in the long term," Doblin says.

He says that backers have pledged \$150,000 of the \$350,000 that he needs to pay for more animal studies, conferences and a stock offering.

Sarasota Palms Hospital may conduct MDMA research, if the government permits. After talking with Doblin, Dr. Steven Targum, the hospital's medical director, said, "MDMA potentially is a therapeutic tool. If it proves safe in animal tests, perhaps we can get involved in examining the physical, psychological and pharmacological effects in humans."

Whether the work is done at Palms or not, Targum said, "it's critical that we view it in a balanced way and insist the research be done."

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In Geneva, Doblin lobbied the U.N. World Health Organization last year to keep MDMA legal in other countries. He failed, but did get a committee of the organization to say it found MDMA "intriguing" and favored further research of "this interesting substance." Last month, in Kansas City, Doblin presented results of his foundation's first animal study to DEA scientists attending a federal hearing on whether the U.S. ban on MDMA should continue.

Doblin wants the ban lifted and drugs like MDMA made easily available to those he describes as seekers of self-knowledge, heightened communication or transcendental experience - those who would be trained in what Doblin considers the proper and safe use of psychedelics.

"I don't think people should be put in jail (for possession) just because they don't happen to be doctors," he says.

But he said he realizes that his do-your-own-thing attitude is too liberal for the government or the public

to accept now. In fact, it's too liberal for many of his medical and academic allies. Even those who privately agree are unwilling to say so in public.

So, for now, Doblin is working not to abolish government regulation of MDMA, but only to lighten it. Even so, his enthusiastic efforts must send shudders through those who feel the drug is dangerous.

MDMA "seems to produce psychotic reactions in certain types of people," DEA deputy assistant director Gene Haislip says. To substantiate that claim, the DEA points to eight emergency room mentions of the drug during four years. By comparison, alcohol was mentioned 21,701 times in just one year at the same 741 emergency rooms whose records the government surveyed.

Two deaths involving MDMA are known, the DEA and Doblin say. One involved a heart attack; the other, epilepsy. No one knows how much MDMA has been consumed in the U.S., but Doblin said he estimates, based on talks with underground chemists and distributors, 1.5 million doses in 10 years. The government gives no total estimate, but says it has confiscated 60,000 doses.

MDMA was developed and patented in 1914 by the Merck pharmaceutical company in Germany, apparently as an appetite suppressant, though there is no evidence that Merck ever marketed it. The drug sur-

The government says there is no accepted use unless a drug has been tested and accepted by the Food and Drug Administration. Doctors and researchers who have been using MDMA legally - and, they claim, successfully - in their work for as long as 15 years say that it is up to the medical profession, not the government, to decide what is accepted medical practice.

What Doblin and the drug's other proponents ask is that MDMA be placed in Schedule III: drugs that have an accepted medical use and somewhat lower potential for addiction and abuse. A number of prescription diet drugs and barbiturates are now in Schedule III.

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While the doctors and lawyers argue the intricate medical-legal questions in the broader court of public opinion, some advocates are cheerfully promoting the drug as an aphrodisiac.

Leary, for instance, did not exactly discourage that notion in an article he wrote in last month's Chic magazine.

"The XTC drugs are not genital aphrodisiacs. The extraordinary sensuality of the experience is generalized over the body. At the height of the session, caressing is the standard mode of communication, and after three or four hours, sexual relations may be in order."

Leary went on to describe "a typical XTC experience" involving himself and his wife, Barbara. "Our bodies were glowing," he wrote.

While the Food and Drug Administration was not quite so incandescent, it did report that MDMA produces "a heightening of mood and an increase in acoustic, visual and tactile perception."

Some unpleasant side effects also have been reported. The drug causes a tightening of the jaw in some people. For many, it is hardly noticeable, but it is so acute for others that they put rolled-up rags in their mouths to keep their jaws open.

Nausea is also reported by some of the drug's users. None of this discourages the Leary. He writes that the nausea "usually passes quickly. If not, you heave, pass Go and proceed onto Nirvana."

Leary and Doblin met last year at a convention of psychologists. The veteran psychedelic guru gave Doblin his blessing and a bit of fatherly advice. Doblin recalls him saying, "Rick, cut your hair."

Though Doblin's locks are still longish, his soft-sell, let's-work-within-the-system tack seems more in tune with the times than Leary's sensational rock-'em, sock-'em countercultural schtick.

Yet, like Leary, Doblin has become "a good interview," that is, a quotable expert to whom the media turn again and again. In fact, he may be on the verge of celebrity. Doblin has been quoted in The Washington Post, Newsweek, and New York Magazine and mentioned in Life magazine.

In the soaring \$120,000 cedar and granite home that Doblin designed and built for himself in Sarasota, his phone keeps ringing: A magazine writer from England wants to do an article; a TV talk-show producer from Philadelphia wants him to fly up to do a show.

"Good and bad is not in the drug," he says to one reporter. "It's how you use it. I'm against drug abuse. I'm pro-medicine."

'People should be educated to use drugs wisely.'
... Rick Doblin

The emergency ban is only temporary. To make it stick, the government still has to make its case before a federal administrative judge, who will decide whether to make the ban permanent.

The hearings, now in recess, feature a legal debate over what is an "accepted medical use."