

Update from William for 'Talking About Cannabis' website

9 May 2007

As I write this piece now at 19, I'm currently trying to assess my own life and my views on cannabis. I hope for it to serve as a helpful piece of writing for those whose lives are affected (to very various degrees, though more often now to be quite extreme) by cannabis.

I know to most who read the website I'm merely just another 'rich' kid who lost all ambition through smoking weed and this then stemmed to petty crimes and a broken home. My previous piece in the Daily Express would back that up as I lay blame at the hands of my parents, and defend smoking as a completely separate entity to my behavioural problems throughout my teens. However it's not that simple, I believe that the problems of adolescence are inevitable - you simply are not going to be able to avoid them but skunk is a tool of destruction within a generation.

A few years ago it would have been unheard of for me to denounce weed as 'a tool of destruction' indeed as it would have many of my friends but the case is far different today. I find it very rare for those in my age group to boast about how many spliffs they have or have needed to smoke, there's an acute awareness that smoking skunk is an addiction and not a clever thing to do. I have witnessed a very large range of opinions on skunk, from those of all ages, and the older weed smokers become, the warnings to those who are growing up in a new dawn of easily available skunk, cross bred and grown with hydroponics with such intense levels of THC that these 'pro-smokers' are waving a white flag. They will desist to be the customers for skunk as they learn through experience (as I have) it's not possible to function with those levels of THC in your body and the problems and feelings that adolescence normally bring will be enhanced as all drugs affect your mind. Let alone a drug which can be smoked as easily as a cigarette and is believed by a large demographic to be only about as equally as harmful as that.

If by some chance there is a weed smoker reading this I know what you're thinking. Either your thinking 'this guy needs to chill out' and that the things I write of are case specific (to me) or you're thinking: he's right but you're not going to stop the masses smoking weed. At times I still thing along both these paths, anxious not to voice my problems as I believe them to be affecting only me in isolation (at least to the extremity it has). However I am now a hundred percent certain that what I write is relevant for all those who smoke weed

regularly, and for those who love them and find that their lives are being ruined by skunk. I'm currently trying my hardest to find the reasons that people smoke weed everyday, from the estates to the posh schools. I have experienced most social climates and the role that weed plays within their lives. I hope to assist my mother on her work, but I still feel strongly that the progress for stopping the young from exposing themselves to skunk should be from my young people to young people. This goes for all drugs. My mother wishes to single out skunk (as do I) due to silent damage caused by society underestimating the damage it causes. This does not mean to say that focus should be taken off other addicts, more that no one should be left behind.

I think there also needs to be some serious guidance for parents to be able to spot when your child might have a problem, and of course how to limit the damage it does to your child's life. I personally believe that as the eldest child and one who had previously found success to be a natural part of life, it was very difficult for my parents to accept me going through difficult but natural changes. My parents were no nonsense about the house rules, and I found myself very distanced because I was becoming naturally rebellious. I used to stay out a lot at other people's houses, witnessing homes of extraordinary leniency in comparison to mine and coupled with this as I was away from home more and more, the more I began to smoke. When I came home I couldn't hide my despondency with my parents' strict adherence to rules and became embarrassed as my friends would take the mickey out of me for having such awkward parents. It wasn't their fault; they had a game plan that they were going to stick with but I felt less and less a part of anything. Meanwhile I smoked more marijuana and spent more time away from home.

I hold no blame for anyone for how I am, I'm merely trying to find answers for others in the experiences I have, that's the only way I believe that I can use negative parts of my thought processes to be advantageous for others. As I try to pin-point my own stages of thinking through the days and months that brought me to where I am, I feel that as you become more distanced from your children the morals that you tried to instil in them are lost as they live for the moment, and long term thinking is non-existent and therefore as is all logical thinking. Skunk enhances this feeling tenfold. Sometimes I don't even know how've survived. I've had so many lows that waiting for the next high always seemed to be the only natural thing left to do.