



Narc-Speak

The language of the federal government has changed, but not its anti-cannabis policies.

Allen St. Pierre is the executive director of NORML. Visit norml.org.

Sometimes a subtle change in language can have profound effects. Sometimes language is changed to inform, other times to mislead. So when the federal government—which has fought to maintain cannabis prohibition for over eight decades—recently started to replace its old argument (“There is no such thing as so-called ‘medical’ marijuana”) with a new one (“You don’t smoke medicine”), was it a sign that the Feds have finally become willing to acknowledge, however grudgingly, the safety and efficacy of cannabis as a medicine? Or are they simply setting up cannabis consumers for the “second phase” of prohibition?

It’s a question that occurred to me when viewing the federal government’s anti-drug websites and brochures, which have recently been scrubbed of their long-held pronouncements against medical cannabis in favor of a new one that seems to invite another 75 years of government prohibition. We should be wary of this new phase, one in which the Feds will allow for patented, FDA-approved cannabinoid medicines available by prescription, while simultaneously doubling down on enhanced criminal and civil penalties for cannabis consumers in general—specifically targeting millions of cultivators, sellers, and patients who prefer to smoke or ingest edibles. Such a change tacitly opens the door for



the drug companies to produce a wide array of patented cannabinoid pharmaceuticals—while, amazingly, the federal government still labels the cultivators, sellers and consumers of cannabis as “criminals.”

Predicting this sad scenario particularly makes sense when one observes that the only current political holdover from the Bush era serving in the Obama

administration (aside from FBI director Robert Mueller) is Michele Leonhart, head of the DEA. Combine this fact with Leonhart’s ongoing relationship with former Office of National Drug Control Policy deputy administrator Dr. Andrea Barthwell, now one of the principal lobbyists for GW Pharmaceuticals, the company producing the cannabinoid-based pharmaceutical Sativex. Then throw in the federal government’s own pursuit of proprietary patents for select cannabinoids, and the future looks cloudy for cannabis consumers, the free market and personal liberty.

While the Feds, in some respects, have cried “Uncle!” and seemed to scuttle their

reprehensible and scientifically indefensible position on the remarkable therapeutic qualities of cannabis, the actions of the Obama administration—including orchestrating over 200 SWAT-like raids on dispensaries in California, Colorado, Montana and Washington, all states with medical marijuana laws—speak far louder than any recently revised narc-speak. Visit norml.org. 🌿

FREEDOM FIGHTER

by Erik Altieri, NORML communications coordinator

CASPER, THE FRIENDLY HOST

Casper Leitch celebrates two decades of cannabis activism.

Casper Leitch’s entry into the cannabis movement occurred in 1990, when he was hired by the Hemperor himself, the late Jack Herer, to run his office and head up Help End Marijuana Prohibition. While working with HEMP, Casper launched a public-access cable TV series titled *Time 4*

Hemp, the first series in the history of broadcasting to focus strictly on the topic of cannabis. When the show first aired in 1991, it was shown in 22 cities across 19 states—the first community cable series ever to debut in so many areas at once. In its first three weeks, *Time 4 Hemp* also became the first community cable program to go both national and international.

The show’s website went live in



1999 and was one of the first to offer free audio and video downloads on cannabis-related topics. It remains an excellent reference source thanks to its vast archive of interviews.

Casper resides in Portland, OR, and worked tirelessly on the campaign to pass Measure 80, the state’s bid to legalize and regulate cannabis.

Upon the advice of the revered cannabis activist Gatewood Galbraith,

who passed away earlier this year, Casper took *Time 4 Hemp* into the podcast format in 2007. Over a very short period of time, the show drew a large number of faithful listeners—so many that by 2009, American Freedom Radio (americanfreedomradio.com) approached Leitch with the idea of doing a live radio show to air not only on the Internet, but on AM/FM stations as well. The show now airs Mondays through Fridays from 10 to 11 a.m. (PST).