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The fix clearly was. Not that there’s anything wrong with Burke personally, editorial-page writers grumbled. Martin made it clear she admires Burke. So did a lawyer friend I ran into on the el this morning—someone with no use for Burke’s powerful hus-
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A New Twist

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Would the court invite Burke to join the club and then insult her by overturning her? Does the court intend to welcome her by affirming her opinion? Even if the court decides Solaia before Burke formally joins in July, it knows she’s coming.

request for an interview. If the Solaia case isn’t settled before Burke joins the court in July, it will be decided by only five justices. Chief Justice Robert Thomas has already recused himself because he has his own defamation suit going on against the Kane County Chronicle. Justice Burke would have to recuse herself because she wrote the opinion the court is passing judgment on. Freedom of the press in Illinois would be redefined by a quorum.

The New Transparency

From recent pages of the New York Times, trailblazer in the movement to never use unnamed sources—except when you do: “The independent legislator spoke on the condition of anonymity because the sensitivity of the political struggle over Mr. Jafarri.” The associate spoke on the condition of anonymity because he said, Mr. DeLay had insisted that friends not talk to reporters about his legal troubles.” “They were guaranteed anonymity to encourage candor.” “Friends, colleagues and others directly involved in Ms. Couric’s decision-making described her discussions and experiences on the basis of anonymity because of the confidentiality of the negotiations.” “We had no doubt that they were guilty,” said Juror No. 12, a business-building safety officer from Long Island in his 50s who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he did not want the world to know what he had been up to for the last month.” “Some of those people, who were granted anonymity to describe conversations with the former mayor, say they have told him not to give up his comfortable new way of life for a campaign that might end in failure.” These Democrats, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because both men wanted to keep the meeting private, said there were no eruptions like the conflict at the last meeting.” “The buyer was Stephen A. Wynne, the Las Vegas casino owner and governor. He met with two people familiar with the transaction, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of being accused of betraying confidences.” “The official refused to be named because he was not authorized to discuss the issue.” To come: “The spokesman insisted on anonymity because he could tell from the expression on the reporter’s face that he sounded like an idiot.” “The senator’s friend requested anonymity because she didn’t want the senator to find out who I was.”

The Straight Dope by Cecil Adams

Though far from being an all-out pothead, I occasionally smoke a little smoke and, to the best of my knowledge, have never experienced any ill effects (aside from that way natty brownie I ate on my 18th birthday). I have however heard a ton of nonsense on the subject concerning brain cancer, sterility, mental disorders, and, thanks to one fanatically religious friend, death and damnation. Being a reasonably health-conscious guy, I was wondering, what serious physical or mental effects could smoking marijuana have on me?

Brian, Long Beach, California

I first wrote about the health implications of pot use in 1985. (Short version: Won’t kill you, but ain’t no mother’s milk either.) Since then a staggering amount of research has been done—a search for marijuana in PubMed, the federally funded online medical journal database—turns up close to 4,000 articles in just the last ten years alone. So starting up on the subject, though, and you quickly realize that however fine the wheels of science may grind, they sure grind exceedingly slow. Believe it or not, we’re not any of these guys are still arguing over whether weed causes nearsightedness. The latest: “Weed marijuana cause (cannabis psychosis)?” The classic horror story from the early days of the antimarijuana campaign was that smoke would turn you into a frottage maniac. In college we all thought this was pretty much a fact. It’s actually, that smoking large amounts of potent marijuana makes some people go nuts. Don’t believe it? Ask Chopa and Smith, 1974 told of 2200 Calculate psychiatrists hospitalized in the 60s for psychotic symptoms after major herb intake, including hallucinations, amnesia, paranoia, etc. The question remains, however, whether dogs (or maybe) triggers or exacerbates psychosis in people having some genetic or other predisposition thereto, or (b) causes otherwise perfectly healthy folks to flip out. In 2004, Australian psychologist Wayne Hall and associates argue that “evidence for there being a distinct ‘cannabis psychosis’ is weak.” (The argument against: the absence of a substantial increase in hospitalization due to marijuana use.) Other researchers (still hotly insist that dope is, or anyway might be, a mental health menace. I’m not claiming things have gotten to the level of Shilos vs. Sornes yet, but positional opinion is definitely splitting into two camps. This brings us to a related subject: marijuana good for you? Twenty years ago the reality’s view of pot was that, despite what 60s romantics liked to think, the stuff in some was combined the worst features of alcohol and tobacco—it could get you dangerously wasted, and it might cause lung cancer. That attitude has now been tempered by two related developments: first, a greater appreciation of the usefulness of marijuana in treating glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, appetite loss in cancer and AIDS patients, and other conditions; and second, the discovery of endocannabinoids, the cannabinoid chemicals that perform important regulatory functions in the body. Cannabis research is now a thriving industry, giving rise to pronouncements: not far removed from what you used to hear back in the days of love beads, e.g., “the endocannabinoid system (may be) nothing less than the body’s naturally evolved harm reduction system” (Melamede, 2005). Does marijuana cause memory loss, insanity, etc.? While these questions haven’t been settled (big surprise), scientific fans of cannabis now put a different spin on them. Getting stoned makes you forget? Hey, that’s not a bug, it’s a feature. Dissident Robert Melamede, author of the article cited above, writes, “Cannabinoids control the extinction of painful memories: what’s a blessing for those suffering from debilitating or life threatening diseases; cannabinoids may help them to forget their memories.” Cannabinoids also regulate nerve sensitivity, preventing early cell death due to overstimulation in other words, they make cells melt up as much as they do the whole organism.

So what about pot and cancer? (Couple points.) 1) While smoking inevitably introduces stuff into the lungs that isn’t doing you any good, there’s reason to believe that cannabis, unlike nicotine, may not be inherently carcinogenic—at any rate, it doesn’t cause the kinds of cancer tobacco does (Bishay et al, 1997). 2) Marijuana not only helps alleviate some side effects of cancer treatment, conceivably it could fight cancer itself. Research shows cannabinoids kill cancerous cells in cases of leukemia, lymphoma, breast and prostate cancer, etc.

Other issues quickly noted. All I see about marijuana and brain tumors is a study linking brain tumors in children to marijuana exposure during pregnancy—the link was said to be “borderline significant.” “Dope’s impact on fertility, meanwhile, remains controversial. As it said, we haven’t made much progress pinning down the facts about what the Eagles liked to call colloca. But we’ve definitely seen the emergence of a different point of view.

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Hot Type

turned him in.
The delegate spoke on condition of anonymity because his wife thought he’d spent that evening in Philadelphia.
The diplomat requested anonymity because the press was always spelling her name wrong anyway.
The society matron spoke on condition of strict anonymity because she really wanted to dish.
The congressional aide refused to be named because he didn’t see why it was anybody’s business.
The party insider spoke on condition of anonymity so he could get away with telling another reporter something completely different.

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Issue one of The Chicago Lifestyle Magazine offers a note from the publisher explaining that it’s the "first and only magazine in the city that curtails to Generation X/Y and Boomers alike, all of which are Chicago citizens that make our city thrive." A troubling launch, but it doesn’t spell curtains.
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