

# Parents, Where Are the Kids?

This is a warning by Dr. George S. Benson, president of the National Education Program, Searcy, Ark., to all parents who think drugs can't happen to them.

A local TV station in Little Rock opens its 10:00 p.m. news program each evening with a challenging question to parents viewing it: "Do you know where your children are?"

The implied question is "Do you know what your children are doing?" In the American of today this is the \$64 question. The impulse of all parents is to say, Yes.

The tragic fact is, probably half the parents of teen-age and college-age youngsters are unable to answer or cannot give a true answer to the implied question.

The other night we watched and listened as a tall, skinny 17-year-old youth, his black hair flopped down over his forehead in the "Mod" sheepdog manner, stood before an audience of 500 PTA parents at a school in North Little Rock (Arkansas).

"Eight months ago," he said, "if my father had been told that

I was regularly using LSD, he would have been outraged at the suggestion, he would have bet his life it wasn't so. He would have lost

I was on acid (LSD), and continued to be on it until a month ago. In between "trips," I smoked Maryjane (Marijuana). I smoked opium and peyote in a pipe." He knows he faces recurring "bad" reactions from LSD "for perhaps 20 years."

## Are You Mistaken?

He showed the audience a very small porcelain pipe. He asked the mothers and fathers of school-age youngsters "Have you got a drug problem in your family? Hold up your hands, please." Not a hand showed among the 500 parents.

The boy shook his head. "Unfortunately a great many of you are as mistaken as was my father. I have come here to tell you that your children, every day and

every night, are prime targets of the drug avalanche — if they are not already hooked. No family is immune."

He estimates that 65% of the youth population is experimenting with Marijuana or other drugs.

"Bart," as he was introduced by Narcotics Agent Tom Davis of the Pulaski County (Greater Little Rock) Sheriff's Office, had been apprehended in the midst of the central flow of a far-reaching drug traffic which, in 1969, made Little Rock a "Midway" point in the nation. He was "pushing" (selling drugs) to finance his own expanding drug "needs."

Sheriff Monroe Love gave the bright and sincere boy a choice when he was arrested — a penitentiary sentence or a challenging mission. The mission: To help reach Pulaski County's half million citizens with the shocking facts gathered through his experience as an addict and pusher.

## Warnings From Two

"Bart" whom Sheriff Love

identified as "the son of one of Arkansas's most prominent industrialists" ("Bart" is not his name), chose to dedicate his life to combating the drugs and the illicit and dangerous forces now flooding the United States (every community in the nation) with an amazing variety of the deadly chemicals. In three weeks, he has made about 20 talks.

The sheepdog hair over his forehead is a disguise of sorts. He wears a wig. "This boy's life is in jeopardy," Narcotics Agent Tom Davis said. "He has been in touch with some of the bigger suppliers."

"Bart" wore bell-bottom trousers of denim, a denim jacket over a light T-shirt.

The Sheriff's party also included another youth — "Tom." He was a powerfully built fellow with bulging tattooed biceps. He was dressed in denim. The jacket was elaborately decorated with symbols, there was a big colorful decoration on his T-shirt, and little chains hung from his jacket, his neck, his trousers; there were even chains on his shoes.

This young man had been, as he said, "in serious trouble with narcotics." He said: "When you see a person dressed like this, he is either already hooked on drugs or is a prime target for every drug pusher that sees him."

"I've been in trouble for several years," he said. "I was hooked on the needle at age 17. I have had the most horrible withdrawal experiences you can imagine. I've been on pills, goof balls, mainline needles, the whole package. I've been in the penitentiary. I'm trying now to extricate myself from the awful way of life of the addict, and prepare myself to be of help to the youth of America by 'telling it like it is.'"

"Like it is," he said, "is this: Every child in every household in America is susceptible to the danger of drugs. Parents must face this fact."

So what to do (this was the question spontaneously asked from the audience)?

Create a stable atmosphere in the family. In everything they do, parents are setting an example for their children, good or bad. Show evidence of love and confidence toward the children.

Go to church — as a family. Get busy NOW learning all there is to know about the drugs of disaster.

Communicate, parent to child, child to parent. Join in a nationwide crusade to combat the spread of drug abuse.

Will you enlist?

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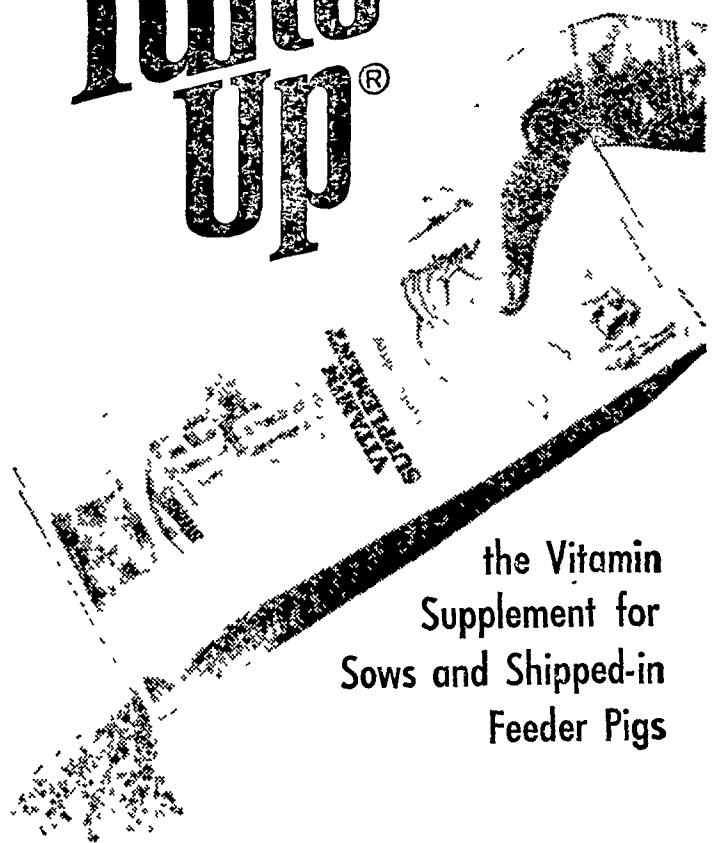
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