

Smith is the direct descendant of the first generation of acid-culture creators around the Stanford University Institute for the Study of Human Problems, including Dr. Richard Blum, author of *Utopiates: the Use and Users of LSD 25*, Dr. Richard Alpert who "dropped out" to head an Eastern mystical cult, and Dr. Joel Fort, director of "Fort Help," a San Francisco community mental health center frequented by the United Prisoners Union, a support group involved in the creation of the Symbionese Liberation Army.

Publications

The newest addition to the pro-drug lobby is a group of magazines devoted to pushing counterculture and advising its readers on the best quality marijuana, cocaine, and other narcotics and their uses. The largest of these is

High Times a creation of one Tom Fourcade, a former controller of the "Zippies," the group of anarchist provocateurs who helped provoke the riots at the 1972 Democratic Party convention in Miami. Secondary drug magazines include *Flash*, *Head*, and *Rush*, the latter two owned respectively by the pornographic magazines, *Club* and *Swank*. A composite sampling of the recent headlines from these magazines include: "Mind Shattering Dope and Mayan Death Gods," "Is Driving High Really Dangerous?" and "Free, Legal Backyard Dope."

The Drug Abuse Council has funded the creation of a monthly newspaper directed at physicians entitled the *U.S. Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. This publication has taken as its task in depth coverage of ongoing developments in drug decriminalization and is being distributed free of charge to contractors of the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

A Physician Takes Aim At The Pot Lobby

The following is an interview conducted by Ned Rosinsky, M.D., with Dr. Gabriel Nahas of the Department of Anesthesiology at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. Dr. Nahas, who at the time of the interview had just returned from a pre-meeting of the United Nations Commission on Narcotics conference now underway in Geneva, has spent the past 25 years engaged in laboratory studies of the effects of drugs on the human body. He has become an expert on the effects of marijuana, publishing the book Marijuana: Deceptive Weed, and his most recent, Keep Off the Grass (Readers Digest Press, 1976). This work summarizes and documents the harmful mental and physical effects of mari-

juana.

Dr. Nahas was initially asked to comment on an article by Dr. Norman Zinberg of Harvard University which appeared in the latest edition of the magazine Psychology Today. On the confidence provided by a few carefully selected studies, Dr. Zinberg in effect recommended widespread use of marijuana, dutifully refraining from any mention of the proven deleterious effects of the drug on the brain, sex glands, and cell reproduction processes. As Dr. Nahas commented just before the interview began, the article's effect, and perhaps, its intention, is to make a pot-head of any high school student who reads and believes it.

Dr. Nahas: The first thing about this article is to stress that Dr. Norman Zinberg is a member of the advisory board of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, and I don't think that he is really competent to write an objective article on this matter. He is acting as judge and party. And I think that *Psychology Today* has shown, in asking Dr. Zinberg to write this paper, that they are profoundly biased towards the use of marijuana, and are pushing the use of marijuana among the American people. And I think they made a great mistake there and this is what I wrote them after reading this article. The author has always pioneered the general idea that marijuana is not a harmful

substance. On the other hand Dr. Zinberg has been exceedingly intolerant of all those who state opinions which are opposite to his own, which should really be a welcome attitude for any scientist. For instance, Dr. Zinberg has claimed, and I quote, that all I have written on marijuana, including my book, *Marijuana: Deceptive Weed*, was 'meretricious trash', and nobody should read it — instead of welcoming an opposite viewpoint.

Q: Has Dr. Zinberg done any research on drugs other than marijuana?

Dr. Nahas: He's not a researcher. Dr. Zinberg is a psychiatrist. He has never gone into a research laboratory

and has never worked on a bench. He is like many of those who are promoting marijuana today under the guise of science. They are mostly psychiatrists who just go from their impression, their gut feeling about the subject. And he's certainly not qualified to write about the pharmacology of marijuana which he has attempted to do in this article.

Q: What are some of the problems with research which alleges to show that marijuana is not harmful?

Dr. Nahas: In a letter to *Psychology Today*, I rebutted a few of the more blatant errors Dr. Zinberg made in his "review of the field," especially on the doses of marijuana which were used by different investigators. He claims that the amount of marijuana which was given to certain subjects amounted to 50 to 100 cigarettes a day, and this was emphasized in the article. Well, this is not true. The amount of marijuana which was given in those experiments which he quoted amounted to about 10 cigarettes a day.

Q: Which experiment is this?

Dr. Nahas: This is the experiment in which subjects were given some marijuana by mouth, and presented, following three weeks of such treatment, some definite withdrawal symptoms.

Q: I see, so it was a test of addiction.

Dr. Nahas: A test of addiction, yes. So there is a definite dependence on this drug. Also a profound modification in behavior and general attitude of these people was observed during that time. So, Dr. Zinberg claims, you see, that the amount of THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol) that they took which was 210 milligrams a day amounted to 50 to a 100 cigarettes. It's not true. This dose amounts actually to about 10 cigarettes a day. That seems already high; however, it's an amount of marijuana which is smoked by heavy marijuana users. For instance, here at Presbyterian Hospital, we studied marijuana smokers under controlled conditions and let them use as many as they wanted. So did experimenters in Boston. And in our studies our subjects smoked anywhere from 5 to 25 cigarettes a day, and tolerated them perfectly well, being aware when they were spoken to and certainly not being completely unaware of their surroundings.

Q: Does Dr. Zinberg refer to these studies?

Dr. Nahas: No. Dr. Zinberg does not refer to these studies, because they are not of those that support his view. But let me also finish indicating other gross mistakes in his article. Another gross mistake in his paper is that Dr. Robert Heath used, in animal experiments, doses which were too high. The experiments of Dr. Heath are very important. They show that following heavy marijuana smoking in monkeys, there are actual cellular alterations in the brain stem and permanent alterations in the brain waves indicating that marijuana has induced permanent brain damage. Dr. Zinberg claims that the doses used by Dr. Heath were much too great, and he quotes the opinion of Dr. Axelrod. In reality Dr. Axelrod made a mistake, like many scientists do, in evaluating the work of Dr. Heath, in claiming that the doses were much too high and never approached the

levels of human consumption. When one looks carefully at the work and one calculates the dose, one can see that the dosages used in those experiments are reached in human consumption, and this is something that any careful scientist could find out. Instead of that Dr. Zinberg, when he was writing this article, made the wrong evaluation, and on the basis of this erroneous evaluation discarded a very important piece of work.

Now, the third gross mistake in this paper by Dr. Zinberg is that he discards the "stepping stone" hypothesis, which claims that the use of marijuana in a certain number of people will be the first step to the use of more destructive drugs, such as amphetamines, heroin, and barbituates. And in this, Dr. Zinberg is absolutely mistaken because there is a statistical progression from alcohol and tobacco onto marijuana smoking, and from marijuana smoking onto the use of more destructive drugs. The most recent study on this aspect of marijuana use has been very clearly documented by one of our co-workers here at Columbia, Dr. Kandel. Dr. Kandel studied 5,500 high school students in the state of New York, grades eight to twelve, and showed this progression statistically. To give you the exact figures, 26 percent of all heavy marijuana users went on to stronger drugs, which is a considerable fraction of heavy marijuana users, especially when you consider it over the short period of time of only four years, between 14 and 18 years of age. This of course doesn't mean that all heavy marijuana users are going to progress to harder drugs. Even the majority will not, since 74 percent will not. However, taking this problem scientifically and statistically you can see that there is a definite association between marijuana and other drugs, and a dangerous one because 26 percent of a population is a very large fraction of the population.

Well, all of this which can be found out by any careful observer was completely discarded by Dr. Zinberg, showing that he has an axe to grind, that he doesn't want to listen to the facts. And the study of Dr. Kandel was, as a matter of fact, published in *Science*, December of 1975. I could go on about all the points that Dr. Zinberg makes, they're all made very superficially. Somebody went to the library, took all the publications on marijuana, had an axe to grind, and just took from those publications what indicated that marijuana was harmless. Another very important point that Dr. Zinberg forgets and completely discards is that marijuana products accumulate in the body. The half-life of marijuana in the body is eight days, which means that it takes eight days for 50 percent of the marijuana to be eliminated.

Q: You mean THC?

Dr. Nahas: No, not only THC, but all of the marijuana products which come from biotransformation of marijuana in the body, some of which are not psychoactive. In comparison, half-life of alcohol is about six hours. Why is that significant? It is because these substances accumulate in some of the more important tissues of the body, particularly in the brain and the sex glands. What do all these marijuana products do in the body? They have a fundamental effect, which is to slow down cell division. The fact that marijuana products in very small amounts slow down cell division by preventing the formation of

DNA, of RNA, and of protein, which are essential for the proper division of our cells, is a fundamental fact which has been observed by dozens of scientific workers both here and abroad.

This fundamental fact is completely ignored by Dr. Zinberg. This work was reported in 1975 at an international conference in Helsinki, the proceedings of which were published in 1976 by Springer-Verlag. It's a 600-page book in which all these papers by scientists from many countries are reported. This book was completely ignored, not only by Dr. Zinberg, but by the media. There was a press conference to announce this book in the United States in April of 1976, and Associated Press put out a release. Not a single newspaper in the United States picked up that press release, which referred to all of these basic science findings.

Now, when Dr. Zinberg speaks of chromosome damage, birth defects, or immune response, he is talking about the actual clinical expression of the slowing down of DNA and RNA production. If, for instance, you put very small amounts of cannabis products in a test tube with cells, not enough DNA will be produced, so that when the cells start dividing, the chromosomes will not function properly and will break. This shows that Dr. Zinberg is a very superficial type of, I couldn't say scientist, but of physician, because he doesn't go to the bottom of things, he doesn't try to find out the "why," as the scientist should. There is a general thread in all of the deteriorating effects of marijuana. It is a slow impairment of the production of DNA, RNA and protein in cells. All our cells are like factories, which must continuously manufacture protein and DNA, whether they are the brain cells or any other cells of the body, and what marijuana does is to slow down this basic physiological process. This explains many of the effects of marijuana on the brain and on the body. This basic point, which will be more and more evident as time goes on, was missed by Dr. Zinberg.

It is very simple to present what I just said to the public. On the question of psychosis, although many deny that marijuana can produce psychosis, it is very important to stress that all psychiatrists, including Dr. Zinberg, are in agreement that marijuana should not be used by anyone who has a psychological problem which could eventually develop into a serious mental illness such as true psychosis. In point of fact, when we performed our studies on marijuana smokers at the Psychiatric Institute of the State of New York, we were informed by the psychiatrists there that no marijuana should go to patients who were in the same wards as our marijuana smokers, because it had been observed that these patients who had a psychosis and were being treated for it were very vulnerable to marijuana. If ever they took a little marijuana they became very rapidly worse. Marijuana should therefore be kept away from any person who may tend toward psychosis.

Much has been published on this. The latest reference is by Roy Hart, *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Neurology*, October 1976. This article not only mentions the danger of psychotic break, but goes further and claims that people who were perfectly healthy mentally, after prolonged marijuana use present symptoms of mental illness which are related to psycho-

sis. I'm speaking of those young people today who have psychological problems, who smoke marijuana and who will get into a full-blown psychosis, who should never touch marijuana, especially since the number of cases of schizophrenia is on the increase in this country. A national survey in Rochester indicated that in the next five years, one should expect a 25 percent increase in schizophrenia. The schizophrenic population now is about 200,000 in this country, and there are certainly thousands of young people who might have schizophrenic breaks as a result of this drug.

Q: Much of the literature on marijuana is concerned with something called the "amotivational syndrome." Is this a useful category, and if it is, then, what is the evidence concerning this?

Dr. Nahas: "Amotivational syndrome" is a term which was coined by some American sociologist who did not want to be judgmental in describing the long term deteriorating effect of marijuana on physical and psychological abilities of people. In the old days one used to

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simply call this mental and physical deterioration, which of course had judgmental overtones, but the sociologists today do not want to have any such moralistic attitude. It has been reported in the literature for hundreds of years, ever since the Arab scholars of the fourteenth century described the symptoms of marijuana, that prolonged marijuana use was accompanied by physical and mental deterioration, which I think describes very clearly what happens. It is a detachment of the individual from all of his tasks, as is said by some of the Arab historians; it affects the person in his personal appearance, in his family life, in his social disciplinability, and in his religious activities, all of them being more and more neglected. I think this is clear. And it seems clear to me that in America today, there is a new generation of young people who smoke a lot of marijuana and who fall in this specific category of mental and physical deterioration. They don't care about their physical appearance; they don't care too much about their jobs; many of them are on welfare or on unemployment; their family structure is certainly very loose; and their social activities rather limited. I think today there is an amotivational syndrome which is completely ignored by psychiatrists who only believe in a relativistic approach to human behavior. 'Do your own thing, it's okay.'

Q: What do the studies which supposedly measure "amotivational syndrome" actually consist of, and how would you go about investigating this?

Dr. Nahas: The studies which were done here in this country consisted in gathering a group of marijuana users and asking them to press a button a certain number of times in order to get a certain number of cigarettes. Their motivation was the drive that they had for the drug.

Q: I'd imagine that marijuana would probably increase your ability to press buttons.

Dr. Nahas: As a matter of fact, this is within the general outlook of the psychiatrists doing these studies, who are very behavioristically inclined, and tend to consider people like rats, you know, the rat who was taught to press a lever to get his reward. It's the same thing. I think these people are corrupt.

Q: What can we say, then, about the actual deteriorating effects of marijuana?

Dr. Nahas: Anyone who travels in the Middle East where marijuana is prevalent will observe these general symptoms of deterioration which I have mentioned. And it is for those social reasons of deterioration of performance of large segments of the population that these countries have banned marijuana usage from their population. It's not for medical reasons.

Q: Which countries are you speaking of?

Dr. Nahas: Turkey, Egypt, India, many other underdeveloped countries, which are trying to get out of this vicious cycle of poverty breeding more poverty.

One more point in the medical effects which I would like to stress, before going further into the social effects, is the effects of marijuana on the germ cells of the user. These germ cells in man are produced at a very great

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rate, and it is relatively easy to study their rate of production, since hundreds of millions of germ cells are produced daily, particularly in young men. When we did this study we showed that as a result of the impairment of DNA production in cells in general, the sperm cells in these men were affected during the period of heavy marijuana smoking. We studied 16 young men under such conditions of heavy marijuana smoking which lasted one month for smoking, then one month of withdrawal. Following the month of heavy smoking they presented on the average about a 60 percent decrease in sperm production. Furthermore, the quality of the sperm was mark-

edly altered. There was less DNA, more abnormal forms of sperms. This could lead not only to sterility, but also result in children who are retarded, or who have "minimal brain damage" syndrome. These symptoms may be apparent only later in the development of the child, when he reaches puberty. This is what we are speaking about, the possibility of long-term genetic damage which can only be assessed in a decade or two. It is especially dangerous if women smoke marijuana, because unlike men, women have only a limited number of eggs in their ovaries, 400,000, and no more from day of birth until death, and if ever any of those eggs get impaired it will be impaired permanently. By permanent impairment, I'm not speaking of massive impairment because such an egg will be destroyed by the body. Slight impairment is what is dangerous. There is no question that there is a genetic danger there over a long period, and this has been completely ignored by those pushing for legalization, and this is completely irresponsible of these people.

This idea of long term effects is very important, because as Dr. Zinberg says, there has not been observed any increase of infections or other frank medical disease with marijuana usage, but all these studies are over the short term. Remember that it took 60 years to prove the connection between tobacco smoking and lung cancer. We have to make the decision now, not in retrospect. Are we going to take the risk, or are we going to be careful and cautious?

Q: How did you ascertain that the drug was directly causing the metabolic changes, such as decreased DNA production?

Dr. Nahas: That was done with isotopic studies. The mechanism is very simple. Marijuana products are very fat soluble substances, and dissolve in the membrane of the cell, which are made up mostly of lipids or fatty substances. There, in the cell membrane, they prevent the uptake of the precursor of DNA, thymidine; of RNA, which is uridine; and of one of the precursors of protein, leucine. This has been found by a dozen authors, but you won't find this in *Psychology Today*.

Q: So the cell starves for the building blocks of DNA, RNA, and protein, because the THC which has attached to the cell membrane won't let them through?

Dr. Nahas: Precisely. But we have so many cells in the body, trillions and trillions, many of the damaged cells can be eliminated and we may not notice much difference. But in the long term, there is progressive erosion. And even in the brain the neurons must make enzymes, which are proteins, to make neurotransmitters, and these can be affected.

Q: We've discussed the psychological and social affects of marijuana on the youth of the country. What about the affects of the drug on our matured workforce, particularly the skilled workers? What is the affect on the ability to do intellectual work?

Dr. Nahas: The studies we have done indicate that the higher the intelligence and ability of the worker, the more the impairment produced by marijuana. The greater the education, the more one has to lose. Some of

these studies were done by Mustapha Soueif, Professor of psychiatry at Cairo University. It is natural to think that the mere process of cutting sugar cane or digging a ditch might not be very much impaired by marijuana, when you essentially only have to perform mechanical work without any imagination or special skill, just repeating the same gesture again and again. However even in this instance it has been shown especially in Jamaica that under the influence of marijuana, the farmers there work with much less efficiency, meaning that they had to exert greater physical activity to harvest the same area of

“Mr. Carter’s representative... proposed that marijuana users be encouraged to grow their own in their own backyards... When this news hit the UN delegations, they didn’t know where they were...”

land or to hoe or dig out the same area of field. They expended about 25 percent more energy doing the same amount of productive work as when they were not smoking marijuana. This was a study done by Rubin for the National Institute of Drug Abuse last year.

Q: What kind of additional research should be done in the area?

Dr. Nahas: We should do more studies on long term marijuana users, especially in Jamaica or Morocco, with emphasis on studies of lung, gonadal and immunological functions. Furthermore, I believe that these studies should be performed under the aegis of an international group of scientists, instead of only under the direction of psychiatrists, social scientists, or cultural anthropologists. Also, I believe that an international group of scientists should be selected to evaluate the research reports which have been published so far on long term, or chronic, marijuana users. Such scrutiny would not only point out the methodological shortcomings of these studies, which were not only performed in Jamaica, but also in Costa Rica, but also the pertinent areas which are to be explored and which I have mentioned to you. Needless to say, the U.S. federal government is quite satisfied with the existing reports from Jamaica, so hopefully we can get some funding from an outside source. The United Nations Commission on Narcotics, for instance, is interested in doing more studies, and is very worried about the possibility of legalization.

Dr. Bourne and Dr. DuPont, both recently in Geneva for the meeting of the Commission, are now making a retreat from their former pro-legalization positions. Prior to going to Geneva, Dr. DuPont stated that a possible remedy to the problems of illegal distribution of marijuana is for users to grow their own in their backyards. This would give him some marijuana of proper potency

and purity. When this piece of news hit the United Nations delegations, the delegates just didn’t know where they were, since the 1961 Convention clearly states that cultivation has to be banned, and they even decided that marijuana cultivation should be eliminated from the face of the earth within 25 years. That was in 1961, so in 1986 there shouldn’t be any more marijuana growing on the surface of the earth. So, when we see Dr. DuPont saying that in America, people will be growing marijuana for their own use, you wonder what is happening. And you can imagine the loss of prestige for the United States in all those countries who just don’t want it.

Q: Who seems to be behind the marijuana push?

Dr. Nahas: I’m very surprised to see that some of the major foundations, the Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations, are giving millions of dollars to fund the Drug Abuse Council (DAC) in Washington, which was headed by Dr. Tom Bryant, who is also on the advisory board of NORML. The DAC just came out with a report stating that not only should marijuana be decriminalized, but that one should also take a second look at other drugs, claiming that there are about a million users of heroin in this country who are able to use it with discrimination without it preventing their productive activity or damaging their health. The same report also commented favorably on cocaine. It is extraordinary to see the output of the Drug Abuse Council. After five years, they came out with a report that drugs should be made freely available, and this was with money from the major foundations. Maybe I am a naive scientist, but such things defeat my imagination.

Q: As you know, Dr. Bourne will be coming up for Senate confirmation as presidential advisor on drug abuse pretty soon. Do you have any comment on this?

Dr. Nahas: Bourne is, of course, pushing for legalization of marijuana. This must be fought.

Q: How has the media treated the marijuana question?

Dr. Nahas: The media has been extremely reluctant to publicize any evidence that marijuana is either medically or socially dangerous. For instance, my book *Keep Off the Grass* has not received any coverage whatsoever from any of the TV shows, despite repeated attempts to get on those shows. So I am very concerned that the media has boxed these points with silence, and has prepared the American public to accept decriminalization. And of course, once it is decriminalized for those over 18, as NORML is pushing for, then it will be impossible to keep those under 18 from using it.

Q: What about use in the military?

Dr. Nahas: You can imagine that since the armed forces are recruited among young people 18 years of age and older, there is a lot of marijuana usage in the army. What this does to the awareness of the members of the armed forces is a question which has not been thoroughly discussed by the responsible people in the army. However, it is germane to bring up the fact that some armies in the world, where there was heavy marijuana usage, have met with the most stinging defeats in history, for instance, the Egyptian Army. It is a well known fact that

there was a lot of hashish use in the Egyptian Army, especially before the Seven Day War, and that was a contributing factor to the extraordinary victory of Israel. It is pretty well known, as a matter of fact, that the general-in-chief of the Egyptian Army, Marshal Amer, committed suicide following that defeat, and he was a well-known hashish user and even a user of heavier drugs. So were many of the other officers in that army. So, in any type of activity which requires continuous awareness the use of marijuana is a serious problem, and it has never been discussed and aired thoroughly by the responsible

leaders in this country, military or otherwise. This is a very serious problem, because if marijuana is legalized it will be found in the PX's along with tobacco. Here, in military duty, marijuana is infinitely more dangerous in the performance of duty than tobacco or liquor. In World War II, we smoked pipe tobacco, drank wine moderately but regularly, but we never even thought of taking any narcotic drug. It was unthinkable, it would have been a disaster in that type of situation and we knew it. It is ridiculous to classify these substances together as equally "harmless."

CBS Up In Carter Appointments, Down In Viewer Ratings

The Carter administration is unofficially reported to be considering two CBS-TV bigwigs for top ambassadorial appointments...

CBS State Department reporter Marvin Kalb has refused to deny rumors that he may be the Carter team's choice for ambassador to Israel. Kalb certainly ought to know how step-by-step diplomacy is conducted... having sedulously followed the Kissinger waddle back and forth across the Middle East for CBS. In fact, Kalb might be described as Kissinger's personal Boswell... he and his brother, Bernard, CBS's Defense Department reporter, have co-authored one laudatory biography of Henry already, and Marvin reportedly has another Kissinger book on the way...

Prior to his detachment to Dr. Kissinger, Kalb was CBS's Soviet correspondent... and received his academic training in foreign policy at Columbia University's school of Russian studies, formerly headed by Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Kalb's latest exploits involve a series of events beginning with the State Department Press Association's decision to expel one of its members, news commentator and Episcopalian Father Les Kinsolving, accused of paid agency for the South African government. Numerous broadcast situations found Father Kinsolving defending the South African racist regime in a fashion above and beyond the call of "objective news reporting" duty. Kalb, however, objected so strongly to the Kinsolving expulsion that he resigned from the elite press club in protest. One week later, his name turned up in well-

informed Washington gossip circles as the leading choice for the Israeli diplomatic post.

Former CBS broadcasting president Arthur R. Taylor is similarly reported under consideration for the post of ambassador to Japan. CBS chairman William S. Paley, known for his OSS background and his dictatorial way, fired Taylor from the network's presidency last year while retaining him on the station's board of directors. Taylor recently travelled to the Soviet Union as a CBS negotiator for U.S. television rights to the 1980 Olympics in Moscow ... in which CBS lost out to NBC. Diplomatic sources have it that Taylor may reject the ambassadorial position in order to remain at CBS for the upcoming transition of power from the aging Paley to his as yet unnamed successor.

Taylor's career credentials include memberships on the Rockefellers' Trilateral Commission, the New York Council on Foreign Relations, the United Nations Association and numerous other Rockefeller-connected banking and international institutes.

Prospects of new glory for CBS in the Carter administration, however, did little to lighten the "somber" scene reported from CBS network's meeting with its broadcast affiliates in Miami Beach last week. The occasion for sobriety was current broadcasting president Robert D. Wussler's report to the affiliates... CBS, long number one in the ratings, has fallen to third place, behind its competitors NBC and ABC.

Conservatives To Buy Washington Star?

The Washington Star, D.C.'s only afternoon newspaper and the sole competitor to the *Washington Post*, may be acquired by conservative publisher John McGoff. McGoff is president of the sizable Panex chain of news dailies and weeklies in Michigan, plus the southern California daily Sacramento Union newspaper. When McGoff showed up in Washington last week, present Star owner Joseph Allbritton's name suddenly disappeared from that paper's masthead.

Numerous explanations have been offered Allbritton's move to re-designate himself as chairman of the board — and no longer publisher of the Star — including the idea that Allbritton is trying to "scare" his unionized newspaper workers into accepting a third year without wage

increases at the financially troubled paper by feigning a sale. Allbritton himself has offered "no comment."

Texas banker Allbritton bought the paper in 1974 from D.C.'s Kauffmann family, he has since been under pressure from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to divest his Washington media holdings of either the near-bankrupt Star or its less prestigious but more profit-making broadcast affiliates, WMAL-TV and radio.

A possible clue to the situation: John McGoff himself forced the FCC to invoke its little-used divestiture penalties against Allbritton after McGoff had lost a competitive bid with Allbritton to buy the Star from the Kauffmanns. Given the FCC's current actions, an offer from rival McGoff may now look good to Allbritton.