

Doctors have had to learn the medical benefits of pot from their patients' testimony, which they're routinely taught to question. They also fear the government – and for good reason: Even in states that have legalized medical marijuana, it requires real courage for physicians to recommend cannabis to a patient, when officials at the highest levels of the federal government threaten to exclude them from Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, to rescind their licenses to prescribe government-approved drugs, and thus, practically speaking, the loss of their right to practice their profession, and to prosecute them for federal crimes.

*Who are these potheads, and why have they wasted their lives?*

Perhaps you remember something I said in the Preface: that I wasn't telling you my story to blow my own horn, but to show you that, far from being a detriment, pot can be a source of creativity, healing, solace, passion, and success. (If you've forgotten, I do understand. After all, that was a lifetime ago!) Along the way I've told you stories of many other men and women I've met whose lives were enhanced by their use of cannabis. There have been many others I haven't met who would tell you the same.

One of thousands of super-successful “potheads” was the world-renowned astronomer, Carl Sagan, professor at Cornell University. Sagan died December 20, 1996, after a two-year battle with a bone-marrow disease. He credited cannabis for inspiration in his lectures and his popular science books, among them *Cosmos*, *Contact*, and *The Dragons of Eden*. Sagan was perhaps the world's greatest science educator, reaching millions of people through newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts. His Emmy- and Peabody-award-winning series *Cosmos*, was the most-viewed series in the history of public television, and was watched by more than 500 million people in 60 countries. The accompanying book, *Cosmos*, was on The New York Times bestseller list for 70 weeks and was the best-selling science book ever published in English.

Sagan also credited cannabis for his inspiring essays and scientific insight, as well as for helping him write university commencement speeches, and for improving his sex life. Lester Grinspoon, M.D., professor at Harvard Medical School, now retired, kept the secret of

Sagan's marijuana use until after the death of his friend.

Dr. Grinspoon also smoked, after a rather late start: he didn't try cannabis until he was 44 years old. After years of research he courageously wrote *Marihuana Reconsidered*, and *Marihuana: the Forbidden Medicine*. His son Danny died from leukemia. During bouts of chemotherapy, his constant vomiting ceased after a few puffs of pot, and he asked for a submarine sandwich. Danny died peacefully in 1973.

A few other notable cannabis users who have admitted their use: the Beatles, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison, Ringo Starr; trumpet player extraordinaire Louis Armstrong; actor, singer, and prolific songwriter Willie Nelson; crooner Bing Crosby (almost), actor Woody Harrelson; former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson; Vice President Al Gore; Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt; U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell; Congressman Newt Gingrich; and President Bill Clinton.

Then there are a few million other well-known, respected Americans who have put pot to their lips, including major motion picture stars. Many still prefer not to be identified. And how about the 83 million other Americans who have smoked pot, and are doing just fine? It's my hope that this book will encourage others to open the closet door and take pride that cannabis increased their health and creativity. I will never "out" anyone. They must make that decision. My goodness, what *would* the government do if, tomorrow, 83 million Americans stood up together and said, "Yeah, I've smoked pot – *and I inhaled!*"