

# NARCOTICS TRAFFIC UP IN CONNECTICUT

## Young Addicts in Suburbs Come Increasingly From Upper-Income Families

### AND THEY BEGIN EARLIER

#### Rise in 'Mobility' Is Called a Factor—Users Said to Be Seeking More Variety

By **MARTIN TOLCHIN**  
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DARIEN, Conn., Nov. 22—A slow but steady increase in narcotics traffic in the commuter belt of southern Connecticut was described today by law-enforcement officers and social workers.

This suburb, where three high-school students were among nine youths seized yesterday on charges of possession of marijuana, is by no means highly unusual.

The youthful, well-to-do addict has been experimenting in a number of communities with an increasing variety of narcotics, according to the authorities. He has also been starting younger, sometimes while still in elementary school.

Young people have been arrested for possession of marijuana, hallucinatory drugs, pep pills, glue for sniffing and barbiturates in Westport, Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport, as well as Darien.

The state narcotics control officer, Robert C. Grieb, has said he found "a change in status going on in the use of narcotics from the lower classes to the middle and upper classes."

#### 'Short Car Ride to New York'

Last year only 28 per cent of narcotics cases involved low-income families, which formerly produced 60 per cent of narcotics violators. Mr. Grieb has called the change a "product of greater mobility of today's youth." He said "availability is as close as a short car ride to New York."

Last March some elementary school children in Westport were caught with barbiturates stolen from their mothers. The incident took place at the time of publication of a six-week study of narcotics traffic by the Westport Town Crier.

The newspaper reported two cases of marijuana possession and several cases of glue sniffing, but "no serious problem."

Marijuana smoking by students in the yard of the Stamford Junior High School has been reported by teachers in Westport. In nearby schools other youths were said to have smoked marijuana between classes.

#### 13-Year-Old on Barbiturates

"One mother called up to tell us her 13-year-old daughter was strung up on barbiturates," said a staff member of Synanon in Westport.

"There's so many different things they're trying out—psychedelics [hallucination-inducing drugs] I've never heard of, and I've been in this business 16 years."

Synanon is a private organization devoted to the rehabilitation of narcotics addicts.

In Darien the high school principal and the superintendent refused to talk to reporters. An assistant superintendent said he had never before heard of a marijuana case in the town.

However, in November, 1964, four local youths were arrested on charges of marijuana possession. One of them, Michael

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Grieg, then 18 years old, was then living with Michael B. Smith, who was one of those arrested yesterday.

Another, William G. Alpert, then 20, is a brother of Thomas B. Alpert, 19, who also was picked up in yesterday's raid.

The arrests were discussed today at Darien High School in some classes, such as on contemporary social issues, as well as at lunch tables and in the schoolyard and corridors. Teachers expressed shock over the arrests.

Dr. Stuart Atkinson, the high-school principal, said: "I have nothing to say whatsoever. The newspapers are trying to crucify these children. They're only interested in selling newspapers."

Students said, "Here we go again" and "We're glad the police caught them" and "It's mostly a personal matter—some people are far out enough to think it's cool."

They emphasized their belief that other towns also were involved in narcotics traffic.

A social worker who specializes in the treatment of suburban addicts said that most began taking narcotics at about the age of 16, and were not apprehended until their habit led them to steal, drive recklessly or otherwise break the law.

"In the suburbs the overprivileged kids are getting disassociated from the tools of living," he said. "They're not being taught to fend for themselves, to make their own way."

"Are the parents saying to the kids: 'It's important to be educated, to be creative'? The father is working all hours, the mother is bored to the eyeballs, and the family eats TV dinners, watches TV and then goes to bed."

Parents are not always to blame, however, he declared. Some youthful addicts come from homes where parents care deeply about their children, but the young people find the wrong company and succumb to the temptation to be one of the gang, the social worker asserted.