

# Pentagon Shooter Pot Scandal Grows

By Cliff Kincaid

Left-wing California politicians have been talking about legalizing and taxing marijuana to save the state from bankruptcy. But thanks to the state's most notorious pothead, Pentagon shooter John Patrick Bedell, that vision may now go up in smoke. Bedell's easy access to "medical marijuana" in California is quickly becoming a scandal that threatens the well-funded movement to increase access to the weed by legalizing it statewide – and perhaps nationwide.

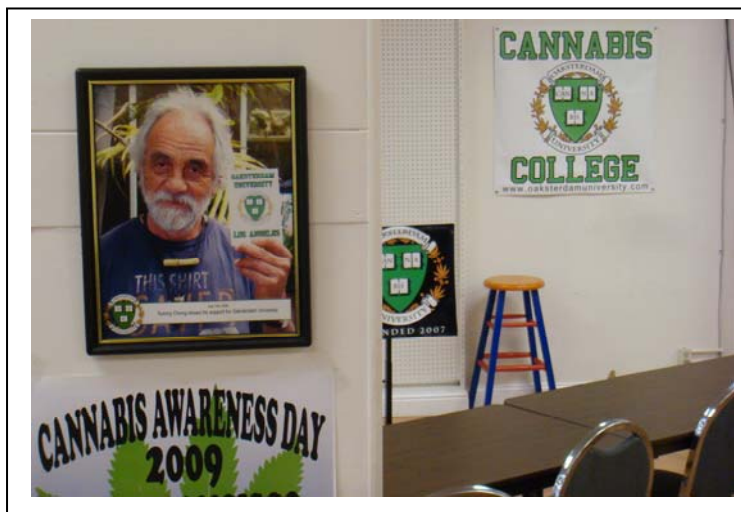
Bedell had a doctor's approval to get "medical marijuana" in 2006 and was reported by his father to have a "medicinal marijuana card" when he was declared missing in January of this year.

Facing a backlash over reports that Bedell was a psychotic pothead, the illegal drug lobby is accusing anyone who brings up anything negative about "medical marijuana" of engaging in "reefer madness," a term once

given to chronic marijuana use of the kind that ultimately resulted in Bedell's downward spiral and death in an exchange of gunfire at the Pentagon.

On top of the Bedell tragedy comes the apparent overdose of actor Corey Haim, who smoked marijuana at the age of 16 before moving on to other drugs, including cocaine, crack, stimulants and Valium.

Before Bedell brought discredit and attention on the "medical marijuana" movement, John Podesta, head of the Center for American Progress (CAP), had actually suggested on ABC News that the taxing and legalization of marijuana on a national basis could be a way to pay for Obama's health care plan. Podesta is considered to be doing the bidding of billionaire George Soros, the hedge fund operator who finances CAP and has funneled millions of dollars into the drug legalization movement.



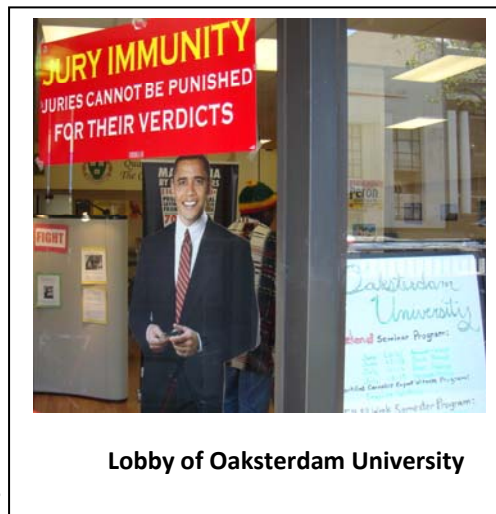
The Bedell case is starting to focus public attention on what has been happening in California, where Bedell got his “medicine” and posted bizarre Internet commentaries about the virtues of dope. Alluding to the refusal of the Obama Administration to use federal resources to combat the growing “medical marijuana” problem, Roger Morgan, the executive director of the Coalition for a Drug-Free California, said that, “It is unthinkable that the Commander-In-Chief, whose primary responsibilities are to protect people and our tax dollars, could allow the untenable situation that exists in California today with de facto legalization.”

The report, *Organized Crime in California Annual Report 2007-08*, prepared by the California Department of Justice, states that, “California is the largest producer of marijuana in the United States and law enforcement agencies believe that Mexican and Asian DTOs [Drug Trafficking Organizations] and white criminal groups are responsible for the majority of marijuana cultivation in California.”



The Bedell case, Morgan said, should serve as a wake-up call. “Since the potential for psychosis is heightened the earlier one starts smoking, the fact that we have more kids smoking pot than tobacco in some places, like San Diego, should give cause for concern to every citizen, particularly parents and politicians,” he said. “Marijuana is a factor in California's 24.2 percent High School drop-out rate, which costs taxpayers \$46.4 billion annually. We can certainly anticipate an increase in physical and mental health problems, as well as traffic accidents, welfare and crime, as more young people start smoking pot because of the contrived perception that it is medicine and legal. In turn, many more will inflict the disease of addiction and psychosis on themselves and society will bear the burden.”

However, after California passed Proposition 215 legalizing medical marijuana in 1996, media celebrities such as Bill Maher, dubbed one of the top ten “celebstoners” by the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), began to vigorously promote the weed. “The only thing bad about marijuana is it makes you eat cookie dough,” he joked.



Lobby of Oaksterdam University

But after Bedell’s shooting rampage, which resulted in two guards being shot and wounded, no one is laughing.

NORML reports, “Maher made pot a big part of his late-night TV talk shows - first on *Politically Incorrect* and now on HBO's *Real Time with Bill Maher*. Also a stand-up comic, he's given

speeches at NORML and MPP [Marijuana Policy Project] conferences (he's on their boards) and hosted a NORML benefit concert in Los Angeles in 2004. *Real Time* received a 2006 Stony Award for Best Cable-News Series."

A "Stony Award" is given by *High Times*, a magazine that glorifies the drug culture and claims that the "Golden State" is actually "pot paradise" and home to 250,000 residents with "proper state documentation" to obtain "cannabis medicine."

The January 2010 *High Times* has an article headlined, "Cannabis Cures Cancer."

For Bedell, however, the drug was a disaster. Before he showed up at the Pentagon, he was pulled over on February 1 by the Washoe County (Nevada) Sheriff's Office for erratic driving and a failure to signal when turning, and then busted for unlawful possession of marijuana and driving under the influence of drugs. Bedell told the police he hadn't smoked dope for weeks but wreaked of the weed when ordered out of his car. He had 2.6 ounces of the drug and a pink marijuana pipe.



Even before it was revealed that Bedell had shot two Pentagon guards and was a marijuana addict/psychotic, questions were being raised about how doctors in California were approving access to the drug. The state medical board has investigated a number of doctors for being overly lax in issuing recommendations for the weed.

It turns out one "medical marijuana" card, in the form of a "physician's statement" from Dr. Roger Stephen Ellis, was issued in 2006, entitling Bedell to access to marijuana for one month. It is not known who provided the marijuana card Bedell's father said he had earlier this year.

Ellis, known as the "potdoc," was the subject of an official inquiry in 2002 into how he was practicing medicine. According to a document posted on his own website, the inquiry was closed, on the condition that he would be in compliance with the state statute regarding the care and treatment of patients. Assurances to this effect were made on his behalf by his legal counsel, who told Ellis that he would be "bulletproof" to any complaints as a result

According to the physician's statement signed by Ellis, Bedell was given access to the dope for "chronic insomnia," when insomnia can itself be a symptom of marijuana withdrawal.

Charles Lane of the Washington Post writes that, "By the time of his appointment with Ellis, Bedell was already exhibiting troubling signs of mental illness, according to recent published interviews with his family and friends. He was also using marijuana excessively. Bedell's loved ones' anguish at his death may be compounded now by the knowledge that, at one important moment in his troubled life, a doctor gave him help obtaining more marijuana -- as opposed to real help."

With a marijuana card, people can go to various California “dispensaries,” where they disappear into a back room and return with marijuana of their choosing in brown paper bags. Oaksterdam University, also known as “Cannabis College,” holds classes for “students” on how to grow high-quality marijuana and meet the demand.

Lane is one of the few, perhaps the only, mainstream media reporter willing to publicly take on the notion that smoking crude marijuana somehow has beneficial “medical properties.”

Lane says that “the legalization of physician-recommended pot in California is a prescription for disaster because it authorizes the ‘treatment’ of a wide range of real maladies with a spurious ‘medicine’ -- marijuana -- that might be ineffective or actually harmful.”

Pot advocates are accusing Lane of “reefer madness” and pooh-pooh the notion that marijuana is linked in any way to health problems.



However, journalists who are interested in the truth can witness what happened when British journalist Nicky Taylor decided to experiment with the drug by smoking it on a daily basis. She reported a frightening experience of panic and paranoia. “At one point during her investigation, scientific tests proved that, thanks to the drug, she had developed a level of psychosis well above that seen in individuals with schizophrenia,” a British paper reported.

Some of her experiences in Amsterdam, where marijuana is legal, were captured on video. Taylor, who said she had tried marijuana in college, reported, “This is really disturbing. It’s worse than being blind drunk. I’m scared. I seem to have worked myself into a bit of a panic attack and I don’t know why.”

Later, she said, “I have to say that was the worst day ever, ever, ever of my whole life. Inside I was absolutely petrified. At one point I was even too scared to get out of the chair. It was like a massive, massive panic attack. I got this stupid feeling that it sort of unlocked some sort of paranoia in my head and forever I am going to be paranoid.”

In this context, it makes complete sense that John Patrick Bedell believed that the government was out to take his rights away, including his right to smoke pot. His marijuana use fueled his paranoia and made him susceptible to accepting other bizarre conspiracy theories, such as the 9/11 “inside job” nonsense made popular by such figures as radio show host Alex Jones and CAP senior fellow Van Jones.