DRUG TRANSACTIONS:
THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A DEVIANT ACTIVITY

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1965

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of
ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

We accept this thesis as conforming to
the required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
May 1968
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Date **June 6, 1968**
ABSTRACT

Most investigations into the use of legally unavailable narcotics has been conducted by psychiatrists or psychiatrically oriented researchers. Consequently, there is little available data on the social aspects of the use of such drugs.

The majority of this study reports on some of the social activities performed by drug users and focuses in particular on those activities related to the buying and selling of drugs, i.e., drug transactions. The observable features of these transactions are seen as being shaped by the drug user's folk or commonsense knowledge of the law and the methods the police employ to enforce it.

A section of this study deals with the meaning of the term "drug addict". It is suggested that the answer to the question "What is a drug addict?" must consult the practices of those who are involved in activities related to "defining drug addicts".

This study is based mainly on observations made in a setting where heroin, a legally unavailable narcotic, could be purchased. Other observations were made of the work routines of the members of a police drug squad and the staff members of a narcotic addiction treatment center. As an adjunct to the observational data, interviews were held with drug users, drug policemen, and drug treatment officials.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Roy Turner for introducing me to this field of study and for providing me with much helpful criticism during the research and writing of this report.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The use of legally unavailable narcotics is very much a social activity. While it may be argued that this is obvious, it is obvious as well that existing sociological and psychiatric "theories or explanations" of drug use are not structured to deal with it as one.

For example, psychiatric research into drug use has proceeded on the assumption that it is to be understood specifically as a symptom or outward manifestation of an underlying, deeply rooted psychopathological state. Consequently, research efforts have most often been directed toward the delineation of the features of this state and the exposition of the environmental factors that can be invoked to "explain" or "account for" it. Thus, the social activities involved in the use of narcotics are more or less systematically excluded as topics of study.

Similarly, existing sociological explanations do not facilitate discussion of drug use as a social activity. Sociological attempts to deal with the use of illicit drugs do so mainly within the frameworks of general theories of deviant behaviour and explain the phenomenon as a means by which the actor escapes from the existential realities of his social situation.

Hence, it appears that as a consequence of the approach taken to the study of drug use by most students, there is little available data on its social aspects.
This report deals with the manner in which the law and its enforcement effects the social organization of illicit drug use. Discussions of this theme are available in the sociological literature related to drug use. However, those sociologists who have addressed it have mainly done so in a rather exhortative manner and have dealt mainly with such topics as the "unfairness" of legal proscription and its psychological consequences for the individual drug user. Although they have noted that legal proscription has "driven" the drug user into various behaviour patterns, they have not provided any data regarding the nature of these behaviour patterns.

The majority of this study reports on the activities performed by drug users and focuses in particular on those activities related to the buying and selling of drugs, i.e. drug transactions. The observable features of these transactions, the activities that drug users routinely perform immediately following a transaction, and the type of information that must be present before a person can participate in a transaction are seen as being "shaped" by the drug user's knowledge of the law and the methods the police employ to enforce it. The point is that drug users see the activities of buying and selling drugs as deviant activities and consequently attempt to "mask" or conceal them. Furthermore, their masking procedures take into account the "unmasking" procedures that the police employ.

The study is based mainly on observations made in a setting where heroin, a legally unavailable narcotic, could be purchased.
Other observations were made of the work routines of both the members of a police drug squad and the staff of a narcotic addiction treatment center. As an adjunct to the observational data, many informal interviews and discussions were held with drug users, drug policemen, and drug treatment officials. Material that appears indented and single-spaced in the text of the report is taken, unless otherwise indicated, from field notes that were either written in coded form "on the spot" or after the completion of the day's observations, or from tape-recorded interviews. In the Family Cafe, a newspaper folded open to the crossword puzzle served as a field-notebook.

The setting where the drug transactions were observed taking place is an "open all night" cafe located near the skid road area of a major Western Canadian city. Throughout the report, both the cafe and the city are pseudonymously referred to as the "Family Cafe" and "Western City", respectively.

The area around the Family Cafe could be called a "high drug use area" in that most of Western City's drug arrests take place there. The area's many cheap "walk-up" hotels or their unlocked bathrooms are often used by drug users as a location to administer heroin.

Some of those persons who work in this area of Western City expect to routinely encounter drug users. For example, the billiard parlour located near the cafe once displayed a sign that said: "No Dope Peddlers Allowed. Keep out". Similarly, the drug store a block away from the cafe stocks large quantities of small envelopes containing an inexpensive hypodermic needle, syringe, and a bottle cap for preparing heroin for injection.
These items cost fifty-three cents and can be obtained merely by asking the clerk for an "outfit" or a "machine".

The cafe itself is a sort of "social center" for heroin users and a base-of-operations for many drug peddlers. This is well-known by those who are in the skid road area for purposes of employment. For example, upon hearing that I was doing "drug research", taxi-drivers would often ask if I had visited the Family Cafe. Similarly, although the cafe is "handy" to a large office building, those who are employed there routinely avoid it and take their coffee breaks, lunches, etc., in a less convenient location. Furthermore, there is some data to indicate that new employees in this building are specifically instructed to practice this avoidance.

The following comments of a legal stenographer and a probation officer, both employed in the building, illustrate this:

When I first came here, Mr. Jones told me that I should get coffee at Fran's (a nearby cafe) and stay away from the Family Cafe. He said that just drug addicts go there.

On my first day at work the supervisor told me that the staff usually goes for coffee at either Fran's or the one across the street. He said they never go to the Family 'cause its a hangout for junkies.

Thus, for some, the probability that drug users will be encountered there is taken as a good reason for avoiding the Family Cafe. For others, this same probability is taken as a good reason for attending the cafe. Drug peddlers are an obvious example. "Undercover" narcotic enforcement officers are perhaps a less obvious example:
A member of the drug squad told me that undercover officers attempting to gather evidence for "trafficking in narcotics" (in this case, heroin) always centered their operations in the Family Cafe. He said it was "... the logical place to go because all the addicts and pushers hang around there".

Canadian law enforcement officials are permitted to use entrapment procedures to gather incriminating evidence and methods of this type are often employed to produce arrests for "trafficking in narcotics". In these cases, the undercover policeman will represent himself as a drug user in order to have others supply him with drugs and incriminate themselves in the process. Generally, those so incriminated are all arrested at the same time, which may be some months after the actual incident of incrimination. As many as 43 persons have been arrested in one of these "roundups". The occurrence of these events is "news" and is generally written up in considerable detail in Western City newspapers.

As well as being a center for "undercover" police operations, the Family Cafe is also the focal point of the day-to-day arrest-producing activities of a unit of the police drug squad. Both the day and evening shifts of the unit of the drug squad known as the "street crew" have one member who spends the entire work period observing the Family Cafe from a vantage point across the street from it. This "spotter" observes drug transactions taking place and radios the rest of the crew when a purchaser has left the cafe in "possession of narcotics". The street crew follows the drug-carrying person and later attempts to obtain the evidence necessary to warrant an arrest. Over 70 per cent
of all arrests for "possession of narcotics" (heroin) result from police observation of the Family Cafe (see Table I for details).

**TABLE I**

**Arrests for possession of narcotics (heroin)**
by manner in which police received initial information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Followed from Family Cafe</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>73.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information received (informers)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation re: drug activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation re: other activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street check</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>198</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The observations of the Family Cafe were made over a three month period. During this period, I "visited" the cafe almost every day. The length of the observational sessions ranged from half-an-hour to seven hours; these observational hours were fairly evenly distributed over a twenty-four hour day.

During this period, I came to be on familiar, first-name terms with many of the drug users who frequented the cafe. Most were unaware of the reason underlying my presence and merely regarded me as some form of "moval outsider":

Suzanne, a young prostitute, asked me if I would stand outside a hotel room door while she was engaging in sexual intercourse with a "customer". She said that she was worried that her "trick" might become violent and she wanted me to be able to intervene in the event of trouble.
After an absence of about half-an-hour, I rejoined Robbie in the cafe. She asked me where I had been and I told her that I was at a local department store. She said: "What did you steal?".

After my second observational session in the cafe, a drug-using acquaintance informed me that some persons thought I was an undercover policeman:

Hughie said that another drug user had told him that a new undercover policeman was "... hanging around the Family". Hughie said that the description he gave fit me perfectly: "It was you he was talkin' about. I told him that you were a friend of mine and he just said 'Oh'. So everything's alright".

Following this, I was seen in "Hughie's" company on several occasions and this probably eliminated most of the suspicions regarding my status. The drug user's general suspicion of "strangers" is discussed in Chapter 4.

At no point during the observational period was I asked specific questions regarding my status or the reason for my presence in the cafe. Thus, I never told anyone personally what I was doing. My drug-using acquaintance introduced me to two drug peddlers as "... a guy who's doin' a book on junk". This did not appear to pose any threat to them and on numerous occasions (before both were arrested for "possession of narcotics") I sat with them while they went about the business of selling drugs.

The data for the section of this report that deals with police procedures and routine police activities were collected during the course of observing a drug squad "at work". Portions of two consecutive evening shifts were spent with a unit of the Western City police - federal police drug squad.
On both these evenings I participated in investigations that were intended to produce arrests for "possession of narcotics". On several occasions I was called upon to assist the police by performing tasks such as holding a flashlight, holding a window open, or "boosting" one of them up a fire-escape.

The data which is represented in tabular form was obtained by coding reports of police investigations. This was done during the evening in the office of the Federal Police Force. Members of the drug squad were assigned to assist me in the endeavour and this created the opportunity for much informal interaction. The tables are based on arrests that occurred during a ten-month period.

An overview

Chapter 2 consists of a description of the Family Cafe - the setting where the majority of Western City's heroin transactions take place. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the categories of persons that drug users and others normally expect to be present in the cafe. Some data is presented to indicate that drug users see the category of "undercover policeman" as one that is available for those who cannot be classified in terms of the cafe's "special uses".

Chapter 3 treats the question "What is a drug addict?" as a problematic one and attempts to answer it by referring to the practices of those who are regularly involved in "defining drug addicts". Data regarding the procedural definitions offered by the members of a police drug squad and the staff members of a narcotic addiction treatment center are
presented here. The section on the police is especially important because their notion of what drug addicts "are" is taken as "shaping" the nature of heroin transactions. The section on the narcotic addiction treatment center discusses the organizationally relevant notion of the "normal drug addict".

Chapter 4 deals with the type of information that must be present before a person can purchase drugs and thus be procedurally defined as a drug user. The drug user's knowledge of the methods the police employ to gather the evidence sufficient to warrant arrests for "trafficking in narcotics" has created a situation wherein only those who are properly certified as drug users are able to purchase drugs or get information about them. The point is that drug transactions are structured in accordance with this knowledge.

Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of this folk or commonsense knowledge of the evidence involved in arrests for narcotic offences and the ways the police obtain it. It is suggested that drug users expect arrests to occur in a certain specifiable manner. The drug user's notion of the "normal drug arrest" is introduced here.

These are organizationally relevant events in the sense that the drug user's knowledge of the circumstances of their production serves as a basis for structuring drug transactions and drug-relevant activities in general.

Chapter 6 describes the activities that drug users routinely engage in following the purchase of a capsule of
heroin. These activities can be taken as the articulation in actual practice of the notion of the circumstances involved in the production of the normal drug arrest for "possession of narcotics".

Despite the precautions that drug users take, drug arrests nevertheless occur. Chapter 6 discusses their orientation to the occurrence of these events.
Footnotes

1. The validity of data produced by this type of research is subject to question for the following reasons:

(a) The general failure to distinguish between those personal-psychological characteristics which existed prior to drug use and those which emerged after the onset of drug use.

(b) The tendency of clinical personnel to assume in advance that addicted individuals possess psychic disorders; i.e., addiction per se is presumptive evidence of mental disturbance.

For literature supporting the former statement see:


Alfred R. Lindesmith, "Basic Problems in the Social Psychology of Addiction and a Theory", in John A. O'Donnell and John C. Ball (Eds.), ibid.


For information on the latter see:

Richard H. Blum and Lauraine Braunstein in the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, op. cit.

Alfred R. Lindesmith in John A. O'Donnell and John C. Ball (Eds.), op. cit.


3. Herbert Blumer's recent study is an obvious exception. See his *Add Center Final Report: The World of Youthful Drug Use*. Berkeley: University of California School of Criminology, 1967.


5. This is related to the social organization of policework and is discussed in Chapter 3.


7. It was originally planned that approximately one month be spent observing the police. However, on the second evening it became obvious that further observation would not be possible. What follows is a discussion of the events that lead up to the termination of my observations of the drug squad.

   I was introduced to the staff sergeant in charge of the Western City drug squad by the executive director of the narcotic addiction treatment center where I was employed at the time. The two had known each other for a number of years. He told the sergeant that the observations would be part of the treatment center's research program, and would enable me to "see the drug addict as the policeman does". The staff sergeant was quite receptive to this and said that on many occasions in the past probation officers, social workers, clergymen, etc., had accompanied the drug squad for this reason. One month was the agreed-upon length of the observational period. The sergeant told me to telephone him a few days before I wanted to begin the observations.

   A few weeks later I telephoned the sergeant and informed him that I was ready to begin observing. He said that he would "set it up" and told me to come to the drug squad office shortly before six o'clock the following evening.

   The next evening I reported to the office and introduced myself to the drug squad members who were already present. When I gave my name, one of them said: "That's very nice, but why are you here?". I explained my
presence and it was obvious that they had not been informed that I would be accompanying them. One of the policemen phoned the sergeant to ascertain the legitimacy of my presence. Following this, the evening's work began.

During the evening, I explained the purpose of the observations to them exactly as it had been explained to the staff sergeant by the executive director.

At the end of the evening, the officers I had accompanied looked surprised when I said that I would be seeing them "tomorrow".

During the next evening, one of the officers asked me how much time I planned to spend with them. I replied that I had received permission to spend approximately one month accompanying them in their nightly activities. At this point one of the officers said: "Well, we're going to get rid of you as soon as we can -- like tonight". I asked if I had been "getting in their way" or hampering them and I was assured that I had not. They suggested that I see the staff sergeant for an explanation. Following this, I was told that the squad had some "special business" to take care of and I was driven to my home.

The following day, the staff sergeant told me that further observation would not be possible. He said that if I was injured during the course of observation, the police department would "... never hear the end of it". I offered to have prepared a legal document which would relieve the department of responsibility for any injury I might incur. At this point he stated that there was also a "security" or "confidentiality" issue at stake: he felt that the "hypes" might one day read my "book" and find out how the drug squad operates. He had told me earlier that drug users were well aware of the arrest-producing procedures employed by the police and I reminded him of this. However, he maintained that more observations could not be made "anyway" and refused to discuss the matter further.

The decision to discontinue further observations seems to have been made not at the administrative level but at "working" or "squad" level. The reason could have been merely that the police did not "like" me (although one member did invite me to his home to listen to recorded music) or that I hampered the performance of some of their tasks (although I was helpful on some occasions). An alternate explanation is that the members of the drug squad engage in some activities that they do not want observed by an "outsider", i.e., the presence of an observer might interrupt some aspects of their normal routine.

There is often a certain amount of physical coercion involved in gathering the evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest for "possession of narcotics". (Indeed, at the
time of this writing a coroner's inquest is being held to ascertain whether or not the police are responsible for the death of a drug user who suffocated during the process of being "searched" for drugs. Similar incidents have occurred in the past). A public issue is often made of this coercion by Western City civil libertarians.

I felt that some of the questions the drug squad members asked me during the evening were attempts to locate me on a liberal-conservative continuum (e.g., "I don't think smoking marijuana is really such a bad thing, do you?"). Despite my non-committal answers, it is quite likely that due to my affiliation with a treatment center they saw me as a "liberal" and a person who might react negatively to some of their methods.
CHAPTER 2

THE FAMILY CAFE: A SETTING FOR DRUG TRANSACTIONS

This chapter discusses the physical setting of the Family Cafe, some of the scenes that are observable there, and the categories of persons that the population of the cafe is normally expected to include.

The setting and some observable scenes

The public portion of the cafe is dingy and poorly maintained. The walls are painted a light green colour reminiscent of the Chinese restaurants that could be found in Western City decades ago; in many places, the walls are either "peeling" or badly stained with grease. The ceiling is unusually high and two large unoperative "tropical-style" fans hang from it. The floor-covering, dark brown institutional linoleum, has been worn through to the boards in the areas near the door and directly behind the stools. The plastic material covering the stools and booths is similarly worn and in many instances the upholstery stuffing is visible. Behind the counter, and running its full length, is a cracked and grease-stained mirror; it reflects the tarnished images of the dated soda-fountain and coffee-making equipment. The counter is made of green "pearl" formica which has cracked and faded in some places; the several remote jukebox stations on it control the main unit located near the door. The two large windows which face the street are seldom clean. In general, the cafe has a somewhat dismal atmosphere. This is intensified by the poor overhead lighting; furthermore, most of these lights are
left off during the day.

The standards of cleanliness generally expected to prevail in food-serving establishments appear to be of little importance in the Family Cafe. For example, it is not unusual to receive a coffee cup bearing the last user's lipstick print and on numerous occasions waiters were observed selecting a "clean" saucer from a stack of used ones. Ashtrays are typically overflowing and the floor is often littered with cigarette butts, empty cigarette packages, candy-bar wrappers, etc.

Similarly, the staff often do not adhere to the standards of visible personal cleanliness generally expected of food-serving personnel. Although the male Chinese waiters (all of whom had some difficulty speaking English) wear white serving jackets, these garments are seldom clean: the same food and beverage stained jackets were observed being worn day after day. Furthermore, their "behind-the-counter" behaviour is sometimes of an "unappetizing" nature:

The waiter was standing behind the counter picking his nose.
One of the patrons accused a waiter of "staring" at him and threatened attack if he caught him doing it again. Presumably to prevent accidental eye-contact, the waiter became engrossed in a scab on his elbow.
A waiter sneezed and wiped his nose on his sleeve.
One of the waiters could be heard spitting in the sink near the rear of the counter.

As a setting located near the skid road area of the city, the Family Cafe is readily accessible to indigents of all ages and sexes. These persons frequently enter the cafe to eat or, more commonly, to attempt to solicit money, cigarettes, food, cups of coffee, etc., from those present. Many instances
of the latter type occurred during the period of observations. The following are examplary:

An elderly man was standing near the door asking people for "... a dime or a couple of smokes", as they left. Most ignored him. One drug user gave him a cigarette package. Upon opening it, the elderly man found it to be empty and threw it on the floor.

An intoxicated native Indian woman sat next to me at the counter and asked if I would buy her something to eat. When I replied that I did not have any money, she moved on to the next person at the counter. He refused so she asked the next one. After a few more unsuccessful attempts she left the cafe.

An old man sitting near me at the counter asked me for a cigarette.

Occasionally, persons who appear to be of low economic circumstances will enter the cafe and attempt to sell certain objects to those present:

A shabbily-dressed elderly man was wandering around the cafe trying to sell a large can of apple juice. He approached a young female drug user with it and she said: "For Christ's sake fuck off with that god-damned thing. I told you before not to bother me with your stuff". After a few unsuccessful attempts, he left the cafe. Later in the afternoon he returned with a cellophane-wrapped piece of meat and a can of pork and beans. He was also unable to sell these.

An elderly man who was walking with a cane and not wearing any socks approached me at the counter. He held out three tattered picture postcards to me. In a barely-understandable scratchy voice he said: "Fifteen cents". I told him I did not want them and he left the cafe.

Some violence can frequently be observed in the cafe:

A member of the Devils Motorcycle Club entered the cafe, looked around, and strode purposefully toward a male seated in a booth near the back. He pulled the male into the aisle, punched him on the jaw, and left. Two waiters lifted the unconscious male from the floor and placed him in a booth. A few minutes later he regained consciousness and left the cafe.

Gail, a young prostitute, was sitting at the counter next to Frank and George. She appeared to be under the influence of barbiturates and was barely conscious.
A native Indian stopped behind her and started kissing her neck and fondling her breasts. She was in no condition to offer much resistance but nonetheless attempted to push him away. Finally, Frank got up and hit the Indian, knocking him to the floor. The waiter peered over the counter at the body and then went back to mopping the floor. Frank sat down and continued his conversation with George. The Indian remained on the floor for about five minutes. During this time several people entered the cafe and laughed at the body as they stepped around it to proceed to seats at the counter. The waiter asked Frank if the Indian was dead. He replied that he wasn't. The waiter threw a bucket of soapy water in the Indian's face; he got up from the floor and stumbled out of the cafe.

A group of people (including two waiters) were standing near the back of the cafe watching a young negro male beat an old man's head against the side of a booth. No one attempted to intercede. The old man staggered out of the cafe with his face covered with blood.

A native Indian on crutches entered the cafe and asked a white male of his acquaintance to buy him an ice cream cone. The white male said: "Fuck off, you dirty Indian cripple". The Indian hit him across the forehead with one of his crutches. The male fell into the aisle, apparently unconscious, and his assailant left the cafe.

Such incidents seldom involve drug users and are regarded by them as normal "for this part of town":

I asked Freddie if there were many fights in the Family Cafe. He replied that there were and added: "It's not the friends that cause the trouble, though. It's the drunks and other types that you get down there. People that drift in off the street.

The waiters in the Family Cafe havc come to realize that the population of the cafe will regularly include some persons who will be unable to pay for the food they have ordered. This is revealed by their general practice of not releasing a plate of food or a cup of coffee until payment for it has been received:

I was rather slow in producing the required change to pay for my coffee. During the time I was feeling in my pockets for the money, the waiter held the cup in his hand. He did not put it down on the counter until I had placed the money in his other hand.
The old man next to me at the counter had ordered a cob of corn. The waiter brought it on a plate and the old man reached for it. The waiter pushed his hand away and said: "Gimme money first". The old man gave him the money and the corn was placed on the counter in front of him.

Similarly, the waiters often demand that a person produce proof of his ability to pay prior to accepting a food or beverage order from him:

An elderly man entered the cafe and sat near the front of the counter. He called the waiter. The waiter approached him and the old man ordered a bacon sandwich. The waiter asked him if he had forty-five cents to pay for it; he replied that he did and the waiter asked him to show it. The old man did this and the waiter went to the kitchen to order his sandwich.

A young native Indian girl sat at the counter and ordered a doughnut. The waiter asked her if she had any money. She replied that she did and the waiter asked her to show it to him before he delivered the doughnut. As she was unable to, the waiter left. When he passed by a few minutes later, the girl held out a man's watch to him. The waiter replied that he didn't want her watch and continued on his way. Tears came to her eyes and she put her head down on the counter. She left the cafe about ten minutes later.

In the above example, the girl was not asked to leave the premises when it was discovered that she was not qualified to be a customer. This point becomes relevant in the following discussion of the waiters' expectation that a second variety of customer will be frequently encountered.

Generally, mere presence in a cafe is sufficient to define a person who has entered specifically for the purpose of partaking of the food and beverages that the establishment has to offer. Furthermore, the approach of a waiter is usually taken as an opportunity to place an order. In the Family Cafe, this is not always the case:
A male entered the cafe and sat at the counter. The waiter approached him, apparently to take his order. The male looked up at the waiter and said: "What the fuck do you want, asshole?".

The waiter in the above example was a new employee. One drug user spoke of his behaviour as follows:

"Look at that asshole. He comes up to you as soon as you walk in. He'll learn what's goin' on pretty soon".

The waiters in the Family Cafe have come to realize that some of those present in the setting will not be interested in purchasing anything. Of these persons, some indicate their detachment by sitting in such a fashion that it is virtually impossible to engage in visual interaction with the waiter. These persons are characteristically not asked to place an order. When the waiters do approach a person who may be a legitimate customer, they do so in a manner that allows for the possibility that he may not be on the premises in this role. The following are examplary:

After I had been sitting at the counter for about five minutes, the waiter approached me and said: "Do you want anything?". I replied that I didn't and he returned to the rear of the counter.

Waiter: Do you want anything?
Male: Yeah, I want you to fuck off and die, Chink.

Thus, by asking "Do you want anything?", the waiter allows for the possibility that one may not be a customer "after all". Furthermore, a negative reply to this question is a legitimate one in that a person who gives it is not required to vacate the premises. Consequently, drug users are able to use the setting as a place to wait for a drug peddler to arrive and drug peddlers are able to use it as a place to transact business. Hence, the following "day" in the Family
Cafe is possible:

There were about twenty people in and around the cafe. Some were sitting at the counter or in the booths, others were standing in the open doorway or near the jukebox; a few were outside the cafe, leaning on the window. None of these people were eating or drinking any of the fare that the cafe had to offer.

The drug peddler entered the cafe and proceeded directly to a booth near the rear. Everyone present gathered around him at the booth, "scored" and then left the cafe either singly or in pairs. Minutes later, the drug peddler and myself were the only non-employees who remained on the premises.

During the next hour, two persons entered the cafe, joined the drug peddler and "scored", and then immediately left the premises. Neither of them purchased anything other than the heroin. The drug peddler left with the second person; I was the sole remaining "patron".

Eleven people entered the cafe during the hour that followed. Two sat at the counter, had coffee, and left. Of the other nine, two sat at the counter, two stood looking out the window, two stood leaning on the jukebox, and three sat in a booth; none of them ordered anything to eat or drink. One of the man standing by the window turned and said: "Here he comes", and Don, a drug peddler, entered the cafe. He joined the three men in the booth and the other six persons on the premises gathered around it. Each one "scored" and left alone. A few minutes later the three original occupants of the booth left; the drug peddler and myself were the only non-employees in the cafe.

Thus, the drug user is not oriented to the cafe as a food serving establishment, but rather as a setting where legally unavailable narcotics can be purchased. That the cafe is not viewed primarily as a food-serving establishment, is also evidenced by the activities of those female drug users who are prostitutes.

Many female drug users earn their drug money through prostitution. During the evening hours, many of them use the cafe as a "home base" for their streetwalking activities.
Prostitutes can often be observed entering the cafe "resting" for a few moments, and then leaving to seek clientele:

About half-a-dozen times during the evening a young prostitute entered the cafe, sat at the stool nearest the door for a few moments, and then left. At no time did she order anything to eat or drink. On one of these occasions, the waiter approached and asked her if she wanted anything. She said: "Fuck off" and the waiter left. At this point, the male drug user next to me said to her: "Business pretty slow tonight, Suzanne?". She said: "Yeah, there's no tricks on the street". A few minutes later she got up and said: "Well, I guess I'll go out and have another look".

Furthermore, there is some evidence to indicate that drug-using prostitutes view the cafe as a place where "customers" as well as drugs may be found:

Alice, a young prostitute, looked around the cafe and said: "It's sure easy to see there's no tricks in here tonight".

The male and female drug user's disregard for the Family Cafe as a place where food can be purchased is further evidenced by the practice of "going out to coffee" to other restaurants:

Robbie suggested that we go to the cafe down the street for coffee. I asked her why she didn't want to stay in the Family and she said: "Aw, lets go to a real coffee shop . . .".

Similarly, some drug users note that they prefer not to eat in the cafe:

"I wouldn't eat in that fuckin' place for all the money in the world. It's just a place to score, that's all".

When food is eaten in the Family Cafe, it is often "brought in" from other restaurants or stores:

A couple were sitting at the counter eating grapes and bananas from a bag.

Robbie returned to the cafe with a box of french fries that she had purchased from a cafe down the street. She sat at the counter and ate them.
Frank entered the cafe with a hamburger and a milkshake. He joined two addicts at the counter. One of them nodded to his milkshake and said: "Jesus that looks good. I think I'll get one". He started to leave the cafe and the other addict said: "Pick me up a chocolate". A few minutes later the first addict returned with two milkshakes.

Alice and Gail were sitting in a booth eating doughnuts from a box.

The pairs of uniformed, walkie-talkie carrying policemen who regularly patrol the street routinely enter the cafe as part of each tour of duty. Generally, they merely walk around the cafe, look inside both male and female bathrooms, and leave without incident. Their appearance is regular and frequent enough not to be taken as an indicator of "trouble" or a "special occasion":

The first time I saw the uniformed policemen come into the cafe I asked Hughie, a drug user, why they had come. He said: "Don't worry about them. They're in here about a hundred times a day. Mostly they're just lookin' for drunks".

However, under certain circumstances the appearance of the uniformed policemen is taken as a matter worth anticipating. For example, there occasionally exists an outstanding warrant for a drug user's arrest. These are mainly for failing to pay fines for minor violations such as jaywalking, etc. At any rate, apprehension could mean a two or three day period of imprisonment. Such apprehensions are often made by the uniformed policemen who regularly enter the cafe:

The uniformed policemen entered the cafe, questioned a young male drug user, and left with him. I asked Robbie, who had been sitting with him, what had happened. She said: "The bulls had a warrant for him for not paying a jaywalking ticket".
With possible apprehension in mind, then, a drug user who knows there is an outstanding warrant for his arrest will often watch for the police patrolmen and leave the cafe as they approach:

When we arrived at the cafe, Hughie said: "I gotta watch for the harness bulls. I got a ticket for speeding and my old lady's car and I haven't paid it." We stood outside the cafe; when Hughie saw the policemen coming down the street he said: "Here they come" and walked away from the cafe.

This section has presented data on some of what is observable in the Family Cafe. Some of the scenes that can be observed there may be attributable to its location in the urban structure, i.e.: near the skid road area of the city. For example, some violence, intoxicated and indigent persons are characteristic features of skid roads.

There are other observable scenes, though, that are only understandable in terms of the cafe's special character as a setting where legally unavailable narcotics can be purchased and the drug user's orientation to it as such.

Normal participants: insider's views and outsider's views

As a food-serving establishment, the Family Cafe has "room" for only two categories of person: staff and clientele. However, it has been indicated that the cafe is a setting where many activities go on other than those related to its 'official' definition. In this sense, there is "room" for many categories of participant: tricks, prostitutes, drug users, drug peddlers, bums, etc. The intent of this section
is to present some data on the categories that are available for persons seen in the Family Cafe. Discussion will proceed from two points of view: that of the drug user who is an habitue of the cafe and that of the outsider, i.e., the person who is not an habitue of the cafe.

a) A view from the outside

Although the Family Cafe is a public place, it is expected by those who enter that certain categories of person will be found there. Some persons entering may respond to the cafe's location in the urban structure, i.e. near "skid road", and merely categorize those seen as "moral outsiders" or "persons who are likely to be engaged in illegal activities":

Stan, a fellow with whom I'd had coffee on two occasions, entered the cafe and joined me at the counter. After we exchanged greetings he handed me a two inch by three inch piece of paper and said: "This is worth money, m'boy". The slip of paper bore the following carefully printed message:

FOR ANY STOLEN GOODS
CONTACT
STAN JACQUES
ROOM 107
PYRAMID HOTEL

He said: "Are you a pretty good booster?". I replied that I didn't boost and he said: "Well, spread the word around. It's 50-50 with me. You bring the stuff to me and I take it to the fence . . . . sweaters, rings, suede coats, suede coats especially. (name of store) suede coats. Mostly good stuff. Tell some of your friends, okay?". I told him that I would; he assured me that I would see him soon and left the cafe.

It should be noted that his question, "Are you a pretty good booster?", presumes involvement in illegal activities.
His concern was with my competence in those activities, not with whether or not I was involved. Furthermore, the reply that I "didn't boost", was taken to mean that I pursued other illegal endeavours and not that I was a law-abiding citizen. On the two occasions I had encountered "Stan" prior to this one, he neither requested nor received any information on my background, activities, attitudes, etc. (In actual fact, I had met him prior to our initial encounter in the Family Cafe: while I was working in a prison I once interviewed him for a period of about half-an-hour. It is perhaps significant that he did not recognize me). Hence, all he "knew" about me was that I was a person who frequented the Family Cafe. This was apparently enough for him to feel that I could make use of information about where stolen goods could be sold.

Others, on entering the cafe, may know that it is a place where sex may be purchased and define those seen as "whores" and "pimps".

A male in his mid-twenties entered the cafe and sat next to me at the counter. After a few minutes, he passed me a note which said: "I can't speak or hear. It's a nice day, isn't it?". I nodded in agreement. He passed another note: "Is this place whorehouse?". I gave a negative reply. At this point, I left the counter and stood at the front of the cafe near where Gail was sitting. Later, I joined Gail in her booth. The deaf mute left shortly thereafter.

He returned four or five hours later and again sat next to me at the counter. This time he wrote: "I'm looking for a fuck. Can you help me?". He wrote: "You're a pimp, aren't you? . . . I saw you sitting with that lovely looking female (Gail). Is she your whore?".
Some persons entering the cafe may have specific knowledge of its special character as a setting where legally unavailable narcotics can be purchased and thus classify those already present as "drug users":

A fellow dressed in working clothes was sitting next to me at the counter. When the foot patrolmen entered the cafe for a routine check, he turned to me and said: "Jesus, they come in here regular. When you get a couple of naive ones in here though, that's when you get the trouble. They start to look around too much". I told him that I didn't understand what he meant and he said: "Oh fuck, I'm not stupid. I know what's happening. You don't have to pretend with me that there's nothin' goin' on. I been here before. You fuckin' dope fiends think that nobody knows nothin'!"

A visibly intoxicated male in his mid-thirties entered the cafe and sat next to me at the counter. He asked me how to go about getting some service and I suggested that he call the waiter. Later, when he had received his coffee, he said: "A plastic spoon? Why the fuck do they bring a plastic spoon? This is the only place I've had coffee with a plastic spoon. I bet they think you guys could be stealin' them if they were the ordinary kind". I told him that I didn't understand what he meant and he said: "Fuck, for schmeck. For the old arm (makes mocking injection gestures). Don't play it so fuckin' secretive. I've been around here before . . . Y'know, you fiends are all the same. You're fuckin' unsociable. You fiends never want to talk to anybody you don't know"

A shabby looking old man sitting two seats away from me asked me for a cigarette. I told him I didn't have any. He muttered to himself: "Fuckin' dope fiend".

For those who know the character of the setting, the cafe and "around the cafe" are taken as a unit. Thus it is possible to be identified as a drug user merely by being in the general area of the Family Cafe.

Hughie and I were leaning on a car parked in front of the cafe. The driver of the car appeared and said: "You fuckin' dope fiends. What's the matter . . . you too fuckin' hopped up to stand up straight?" Hughie told me that he had never seen this man before.
In this example, my companion and I had been outside the cafe for long enough to safely assume that the person who identified us as drug users had not seen us leave. There is a possibility that he may have seen "Hughie" before but, since this was my first visit to the Family Cafe, it was most unlikely that he had seen me prior to this occasion. Hence, his identification was probably based on his knowledge that "drug users are in and around the Family Cafe". On a similar occasion I was identified as a drug user by the police:

I was standing outside the cafe when a police car stopped in front of it. One of the officers called me over and told me to produce some I.D. After checking my I.D. and writing my name in his notebook he asked: "What kind of trouble have you had with the police?" I explained my purposes to him and he said: "Oh yeah, I've seen you hanging around here associating with addicts and talking to addicts and I figured oh-oh, there's a new one".

The policeman's question: "What kind of trouble have you had with the police?" presumes that I have had prior legal difficulties and is indicative of the "type" of person that officials expect to be around the Family Cafe.

b) A view from the inside

Although the Family Cafe is a public place and therefore a setting that is available to all who choose to enter, those drug users who frequent it on a regular basis expect that only certain categories of person will be normally present.

As in the case of "normal trouble", the presence of some persons is regarded as normal merely by virtue of
the cafe's location near the skid road area of Western City. For example, in an earlier section it was reported that indigents (such as native Indians and elderly "homeless" men) often enter the cafe to eat or, not uncommonly, to attempt to solicit money, cups of coffee, etc., from those present. The appearance of such persons is taken as characteristic of "this part of town":

An old man who smelled of bay rum had asked Hughie to buy him a cup of coffee. He refused and the old man left. Hughie said to me: "Jesus I wish this place was somewhere else. In this part of town you get all the fuckin' bums and drunk Indians comin' in".

Similarly, the drug user regards the frequent appearances of uniformed policemen in the cafe as normal for "this part of town":

"The harness bulls don't come in here (the cafe) just 'cause its a hangout for fiends. They come in because its on the street and more things happen on this street than anywhere else in town".

The drug user normalizes the presence of some persons in the cafe by referring to the time of the day at which they characteristically appear. For example, when the beer parlour next door closes (at midnight) the cafe often becomes crowded with intoxicated persons. The presence of such persons is expected, and hence normal, at this time:

Hughie asked me why I never brought my wife with me to the cafe. I told him that I had never really thought about it before and he said: "Well, if you ever do, just make sure you never bring her down around eleven-thirty or twelve at night. The place is full of fuckin' drunks then and I wouldn't want her to get a bad impression of us dope fiends".

The presence of a large number of intoxicated persons at an earlier time is taken as "unusual":
Four visibly intoxicated males were sitting in a booth. One of them was singing an obscene song. Freddie said, "Jeez, its a bit early for that, don't ya think". It was about 9.30 p.m.

Ultimately, however, the fact of the presence of intoxicated persons, regardless of the time of their appearance, is "explained" by reference to the cafe's location. In this particular case, the reference is specific; as one drug user noted:

"There's lots of drunks in here late at night - the beer parlour's right next door, y'know".

However, those persons whose presence is seen as normal by virtue of the cafe's location "in this part of town", are generally readily identifiable as "bums", "drunks", "policemen" and the like. In those cases where this easy identification is not possible, the drug user may employ as a basis for categorization his knowledge of how the setting is used and the characteristic reasons people have for entering it. Thus, strangers, until further information is received, may be viewed as persons who have entered the cafe in search of an illicit sexual encounter:

The middle-aged woman sitting two stools away moved over next to me and offered me half-an-hour of sexual entertainment in exchange for fifteen dollars. Although I told her I wasn't interested, she spent a couple of minutes expanding on the nature of the services she would be willing to provide, how much she needed the money, etc. During her discourse, an acquaintance of mine, a well-known drug addict, entered the cafe and sat next to me. After a brief exchange with him I left my seat to play the juke-box. As I rose, the woman addressed my acquaintance: "Hughie, is that guy a friend of yours?", he replied that I was and she said: "Shit, I should have known I was wasting my time with a fiend who was putting me on".
A young girl entered the cafe, looked around and took the stool next to mine. She tapped me on the shoulder, and said: "Hey, y'wanna see a girl? Y'wanna go out for a good time?". I told her that I wasn't interested in a girl and she asked me if I was "waiting". I replied that I was and she said: "Oh yeah. Sorry I didn't recognize you at first. It's just that every unfamiliar face is a trick to me, y'know".

In both of these cases, a process of reclassification took place, i.e., from potential trick to drug user. In the first instance, being seen on familiar terms with a drug user was sufficient to warrant reclassification. The girl in the second example was able to invoke the category "drug user" because by establishing the fact that I was "waiting" (for a drug peddler) she was able to attribute a rationale to my presence in the cafe. Had a drug peddler been present at that time, the category may not have been available. The following is an example of an occasion when a "stranger" could be placed in neither "trick" nor "drug user" categories:

The young girl sitting next to me at the counter] offered me a package of matches to light the cigarette I was holding. (My actions prior to her offer of the matches had made it fairly obvious that I was out of them). I accepted her offer, lit the cigarette and returned them with thanks. At this point she said: "I haven't seen you here before. Is this your first time down here?". I replied that it wasn't, whereupon she said: "I'm down here almost every night and I've never seen you. How long have you been comin' down?". I told her that I had been frequenting the cafe for about two weeks.

A few minutes later, she engaged a drug peddler who was just leaving the cafe in a conversation about when he would be returning with his evening supply of narcotics. After he left, she asked me if I knew him; I replied that I didn't. Then she said: "You're not lookin' for a girl, are you?". I told her that I wasn't. Shortly after this, she left me and joined some drug users who were sitting near the
rear of the counter. I left the cafe and stood outside.

When I returned to the inside of the cafe a few minutes later, I was able to overhear the following conversation that the girl was having with a male drug user:

Girl: Do you know that guy with the beard? He said he's been comin' down here for a couple of weeks. I don't think he uses. (Peripherally, I could see her point to me).

Male: I don't know him, but I've seen him sittin' around here. I don't know what he does.

At this point, Robbie, a lesbian of my acquaintance, approached me and said: "Jesus, it's slow tonight". The girl and the male drug user continued their conversation as follows:

Male: Well, Robbie knows him.

Girl: Yeah.

The male left the cafe and stood outside; the girl returned to her seat near the front of the counter.

In the above example, it appears that the girl made every attempt to categorize me in terms of her knowledge of how the setting is used. Given that there were no drugs in the cafe at that time, she could legitimately entertain the possibility that I was indeed a drug user. However, she was able to eliminate this possibility by noting the fact that I did not know the drug peddler. In the event that the drug peddler had indicated that he knew me, or had I said that I know him, the girl's categorization problem may have been solved. Having established that I was not a drug user, her knowledge of the characteristic reasons persons have for entering the cafe lead her to attempt to place me in the category of "trick": "You're not lookin' for a girl are you?". My negative response to this question apparently exhausted the categories of
persons who are normally expected to be present. Hence, my presence immediately became suspect: "He could be a bull". (It is interesting to note that the category of merely "customer" is not available).

The above example also indicates that the suspicion surrounding my status was suspended, at least for the moment, when I was seen to be on familiar terms with a drug user. This point becomes more relevant in a later chapter.

This chapter has presented data on the setting of the Family Cafe, some of the scenes that can be observed there, and the categories of person that are expected to be present there. It was illustrated that the population of the cafe regularly includes some persons who are oriented to it as a place where legally unavailable narcotics can be purchased rather than as a food-serving establishment. Many of the observable scenes are explainable in terms of the drug user's expectation that narcotics are or soon will be available for purchase there.

The "special uses" to which the cafe is put can be taken as structuring the categories available for those seen in the cafe by both habitues and "outsiders". In this regard, when a person displays no symbolic detachment from the setting's "special uses" and yet cannot be categorized in
their terms, he may be seen as a policeman. The drug user's notion that some of those seen in the cafe may turn out to be policemen, is central to the manner in which drug transactions proceed and is the topic of a later chapter.
According to the World Health Organization, a person is dependent upon drugs, i.e. a drug addict, when the following conditions exist:

(a) strong psychic dependence, which manifests itself as an overpowering drive (compulsion) to continue taking the drug and to obtain it by any means for pleasure or to avoid discomfort;

(b) development of tolerance, which requires an increase in dose to maintain the initial pharmacodynamic effect;

(c) an early development of physical dependence, which increases in intensity, paralleling the increase in dosage. This requires a continuation of drug administration in order to prevent the appearance of the symptoms and signs of withdrawal; withdrawal of the drug, or the administration of a specific antagonist, precipitates a definite, characteristic, and self-limiting abstinence syndrome.

The W.H.O. thus defines "drug addiction" in medical, psychological, and pharmacological terms. The Organization further suggests that the "... use of the term be confined to conditions where such a definition applies". However, in daily life, the term is used independently of medical, psychological and pharmacological referents.

For example, establishment of a person's psychological and physical dependence on a narcotic does not always constitute grounds for defining and treating him as a "drug addict". In the course of medical treatment some terminally ill hospital patients become addicted to narcotics; however, while such persons may die addicted, in a sense they never "lived" as drug addicts. Similarly, in the case of medical
personnel who are addicted to drugs, the mere fact of their addiction does not always warrant talk and treatment of them as "drug addicts":

An official of a narcotic addiction treatment center told me that only one or two "professional addicts" had ever been to the center. He added that if and when the "next one" appeared he would receive a different, "special" form of treatment: "We couldn't treat a doctor or a professional person the same way we treat the addicts that generally come here".

Furthermore, despite their "addiction" and illegal use of drugs, such persons may be exempt from police attention and consequently be eliminated from statistical representations of "drug addiction":

A city drug squad member told me that they (the drug squad) knew that there were doctors who were illegally using drugs and in many cases addicted to them but they "didn't bother with them . . . because they don't steal and damage the community like the hypes do".

On the other hand, some who are not "drug addicts" in the medical and pharmacological sense may be apprehended by the police, classified as "drug addicts" and subsequently be enumerated in official "drug addiction statistics":

Hughie nodded in the direction of a young male sitting at the counter and said: "See that guy? He's a university student. He's on remand right now. Got pinched on about the second or third time he ever scored. Wasn't even wired up". (i.e., addicted).

Thus, it appears that what a drug addict "is" cannot be decided a priori. At any rate, medical, pharmacological and psychological definitions do not appear to be adequate.

In this chapter the point of view is taken that the question "what is a drug addict?" must be formulated as a problematic one and the material included in its answer must
consult the practices of those who are regularly involved in the task of defining persons as "drug addicts". This chapter examines some of the defining practices of the members of a police drug squad and the staff members of a drug addiction treatment center.

The police are specifically concerned with defining "drug addicts" and the results of their definitions are eventually included in statistical representations of "drug addiction". The initial section of this chapter presents some data on their practically organized work situation and some of the considerations they refer to when selecting persons to be the subjects of investigations which could result in arrests. Essentially, this section can be taken as an essay on the assembling of official statistics.

The second section deals with the notion of the "normal addict" held by members of a drug addiction treatment center. It is suggested that the features of this stereotype serve as a basis for organizing "treatment" and other activities.

The police: assembling official statistics

Before a person can become a "registered drug addict", i.e. one known to the Division of Narcotic Control, and subsequently be enumerated in annual "drug addiction statistics", he must first be identified as such by officials. In Canada, cases of "drug addiction" become officially known in a variety of fashions; however, the great majority
of cases are brought to official attention by the police and their reports of arrests for narcotic violations constitute the major source of data upon which "drug addiction statistics" are based. In this sense, the police are "definers" of "drug addicts" and "producers" of official "drug addiction statistics".

The defining activities that narcotic enforcement policemen engage in are problematic in the sense that their explication can provide the sociologist with a clearer understanding of what official statistics actually represent and hence what a drug addict "is" officially. Thus, this section addresses the general question "what is a drug addict?" by examining the considerations the members of a drug squad refer to in the performance of their daily occupational tasks of defining those who will ultimately be included in statistical representations of "drug addiction".

In Western City, narcotic enforcement is the joint responsibility of the city police drug squad and the drug squad of the federal police force. The two work "as a team" in most endeavours.

With the exception of their common task, the two components of the "team" bear little similarity to one another: the federal police force members are typically younger, better trained, have greater career opportunities, and a more "professional orientation" to law enforcement. Also, despite allegations of "equality" by city police officials, the federal force clearly has the "authority" in
narcotic enforcement: when evidence is obtained, they are responsible for holding it and, furthermore, they have the certification to obtain it in the first place.

Under the provisions of the Narcotic Control Act, some members of the federal force are granted a special "Writ of Assistance". Essentially, this document gives its holders the authority to enter and search any place in which they reasonably believe there is a narcotic and to do so without a warrant.

It should be noted that the legal situation in the United States is entirely different: Constitutional guarantees limit police evidence gathering procedures. The Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution deals with the right of the people to be secure in their properties, persons, etc.; as such, one of its requirements is that legal officials are not to conduct a search of property or person without first stating to a magistrate their reasons for such a search and obtaining his consent in the form of a warrant. Warrantless search, except incident to arrest or with the permission of the suspect, is prohibited.

Hence, while in the U.S.A. the focus is on the legality of search, in Canada it is on the reasonability of search. Being able to provide "reasonable grounds" is attended to, in theory if not in practice, as a matter of some seriousness:

The officer-in-charge of the Western City police section of the drug squad said: "My men have to be able to justify everything they do. They just can't break into any old house or stop anybody on the
street. They have to have reasonable and probable grounds for their actions".

However, there is some evidence to indicate that "reasonable and probable ground" are often after-the-fact, retrospective interpretations of an event that are written in such a manner as to satisfy examining officials:

A federal drug squad member told me that in the event of a non-resultant search, i.e.: one in which a dwelling was entered and searched but no drugs were found, one of the participating members in possession of a Writ of Assistance must file an "affidavit of justification" specifying the grounds for "reasonably believing" that drugs were on the premises. Eventually, it is sent to the Department of Justice, but prior to this it is scrutinized by the squad staff sergeant and then the commanding officer of the division. If either of these officials feel that it is not written in such a manner as to satisfy the "reasonable grounds" section of the Narcotic Control Act, the officer who prepared it apparently hears about it "... in no uncertain terms". Following its "approval" the document is sworn before a federally appointed "Commissioner of Oaths".

Operationally, the drug squad is divided into three units: the "trafficking squad", the "pot squad" and the "street crew". The trafficking squad's concern is not with the street-level drug peddler, but rather with the heroin "wholesaler" or "backman". The number of arrests produced by this unit is small in comparison with the "pot squad", which focuses on the marijuana user, and the "street crew" which focuses on the heroin user. This section is concerned with the operations of the latter.

The street crew includes personnel from both the Western City police force and the federal force. On the evenings of observation the crew was composed of five members (one
federal, four city), but a number greater than this is apparently not uncommon. The crew is organized into two shifts: 8.00 a.m. - 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. - 2 a.m. The choice of these hours is based on the density of traffic: after 4 p.m. the traffic is too heavy to permit the often complex driving involved and after 2 a.m. it is so light that even the unmarked police car would be obvious. The day shift's week is from Monday 8.00 a.m. to Friday 4 p.m., the night shift's week is from Sunday 6.00 p.m. to Friday 2.00 a.m. They are plain-clothes officers and appear at work in very casual attire.

The street crew's primary responsibility is the production of arrests for "possession of narcotics". The procedure they follow to do this is as follows:

One of the members of the crew serves as a "spotter". The spotter remains in a location somewhere across the street from the Family Cafe for the duration of the evening's work. (The police would not specify the exact location: "If the hypes found out where we were, they might burn the place down."). From this vantage point he is apparently able to observe all the activities that take place in the cafe. When he "sees" a person purchase heroin and leave the cafe in possession of it, he radios a description of the person, the direction he is proceeding, etc., to the crew via walkie-talkie. (Each member of the crew carries a walkie-talkie costing approximately $1,000 and having a range of about 2 miles). The crew awaits his advice in two unmarked cars. One is located in an alley south-west of the cafe, the other in a parking lot north-west of the cafe. (Most of the walk-up hotels often chosen by drug users to "fix" are west of the cafe). When the spotter radios the direction a heroin-possessing person is proceeding in and his means of travel (i.e.: on foot or in a car), the crew responds appropriately. If the suspect is traveling in a car, the police cars follow it jointly, a practice which both makes for a more efficient "tail" and minimizes the probability that a single car will be spotted.
Example: Car 1: "It's out of sight at X and Y (streets). You should be able to pick it up going north on Z (street)".

Car 2: "Okay, we'll try and pick it up here".

Walkie-talkie contact is maintained at all times. If the suspect is proceeding to his destination on foot, one of the members will leave the car, follow him and advise the other members regarding his whereabouts. When the squad reaches the suspect's destination, they enter the building in as inconspicuous a fashion as possible (e.g., fire escape), wait outside the door until they hear the "signs" that indicate the drug is being prepared (and thus easily available) and then forcibly enter the room (e.g., by using the sledge hammer carried in the car). Alternatively, they may apprehend the suspect en route to his destination, and attempt to extract the heroin from his mouth.

The spotter is not able to actually "see" a heroin transaction but relies on "signs" that are taken as indications of its occurrence:

A member of the drug squad told me that the spotter watched for the "signs" of a drug transaction. He said the following were taken as indicators: money changing hands, rolling an object between the hands, placing the hand to the mouth.

Some of these "signs" are common to other activities and mistakes may be made:

An inmate of a borstal home told me that he had previously frequented the Family Cafe and although he knew many drug users, he was not one himself. He said that on one occasion he entered the Family Cafe and paid a drug user some money that he owed him. They engaged in a brief conversation and the inmate put a piece of chewing gum in his mouth. He left the cafe and went to the beer parlour down the street. Apparently the police "jumped" him while he was there. He felt that they must have seen him put the gum in his mouth and assumed that it was a capsule of heroin.

The spotter obviously plays a central role in determining who will be followed, arrested, and included in
official "drug addiction statistics". Each shift of the "street crew" has a permanent, full-time spotter. His task is clearly a decisional one:

A narcotic enforcement officer characterized the spotter's job as follows: "He sits up there and picks out the hypes we're going to tail".

Furthermore, the character of his decisions is seen as affecting the number of arrests the crew will make on any given night:

As the spotter was leaving the drug squad office, one of the detectives said to him: "Pick us some good ones tonight, Fred. It's been a slow week".

The spotter who was working during the evenings of observation was of a higher rank (sergeant) than the rest of the crew (detectives); hence, his decisions have a certain legitimacy. The following is an example of a "spotter's decision":

One of the detectives informed the spotter that the crew would follow the next person who purchased heroin and left the cafe. The spotter said that Berkowitz had scored and would probably be leaving the cafe soon. However, he noted that Berkowitz lived in [a city about 30 miles from Western City] and a trip there and back would take the crew away from the downtown area for too long a period of time. The detective agreed.

A few minutes later the detective called the spotter again and asked him to inform them when Berkowitz left the cafe because they were going to follow him "anyway". The spotter agreed to advise the crew on the subject's activities.

After half-an-hour had passed without word from the spotter, the detective radioed him and said: "What's happened to Berkowitz?" The spotter replied that the subject left the cafe about twenty minutes ago and he had not advised the crew "... because it would've been a trip to [city] for sure and we might've missed something down here".
Perhaps this accounts for the fact that arrests for "possession of heroin" are differentially distributed throughout Western City and occur mainly in the area around the Family Cafe. (See Tables II and III for details).

**TABLE II**

**ARRESTS FOR POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS (HEROIN)**

**BY CITY OR MUNICIPALITY OF OCCURRENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western City</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities adjoining Western City</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE III**

**ARRESTS FOR POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS (HEROIN)**

**IN WESTERN CITY BY CENSUS TRACT OF OCCURRENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census tracts</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area around Family Cafe (5 adjacent census tracts)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of Western City (52 census tracts)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evening during which the above incident occurred was considered by drug squad members to be a "slow one":

One of the detectives remarked that it was a shame I had to be with them "tonight" because there was so little action. He said that they were usually "much busier". Another detective wondered aloud, "... where everybody is tonight".

Immediately prior to one detective's announcement (to the spotter) that the crew would follow the next person who
left the Family Cafe, the other had said:

"God, it's getting boring just sitting here".

At this point the first detective informed the spotter of their desire to follow the "next one". The mere fact that they had to tell the spotter that they "wanted" the "next one" may indicate that under ordinary circumstances, i.e. not a "slow" night, the "next one" might not necessarily be the one followed. Below is an example of an incident wherein some "next ones" were allowed to leave the cafe in possession of heroin while the drug squad was waiting for an "easy one":

The spotter advised the crew that "the guy who usually drives the motorcycle was just dropped off by a blue-and-white Ford". One of the detectives replied: "We'll take him. This should be an easy one -- we've got the key to his place. If he goes there we'll get him for sure".

He told the spotter to advise them when the subject had scored and left the cafe. About fifteen minutes passed between this time and the time he entered. During this period the spotter mentioned the names of three other persons who had purchased heroin and left the cafe in possession of it.

This case was regarded as an "easy one" because the police had information about where the subject lived and furthermore, a key to his home. While they were waiting for him to purchase heroin and leave the cafe, a number of other drug users "went free", so to speak. Others as well are able to "escape" arrest:

The spotter radioed that a person had purchased heroin, left the cafe, and hired a Checker cab. The crew followed the taxi but eventually lost sight of it. The detective told the spotter to telephone the taxi company dispatcher and find out where car No. 78 had taken his last fare.
The spotter radioed the address a few minutes later and said that the cab driver believed it to be a "hippy hang-out". He said to "lay off", i.e., not enter, if it happened to be the hippy newspaper office. The detectives agreed that this would be advisable. I asked one of them why a "lay off" would be necessary if this was the case and he replied that entering such premises would probably result in unfavourable publicity.

The newspaper in this case had recently been the subject of a civic licencing "scandal" which had resulted in considerable publicity regarding the manner in which Western City officials were dealing with "hippies".

The data presented thus far have provided some information on how the police go about defining "drug addicts" and some of the considerations they refer to when deciding who should be so defined. What follows is a discussion of the law as it relates to "possession of narcotics" and how the law and the policeman's handling of it effects statistical representations of "drug addiction".

The Criminal Code of Canada specifies what it means to be in possession of something:

(a) A person has anything in his possession when he has it in his personal possession or knowingly:
   (i) has it in the actual possession or custody of another person, or
   (ii) has it in any place, whether or not that place belongs to or is occupied by him, or the use or benefit of himself or another person; and

(b) where one of two or more persons, with the knowledge and consent of the rest, has anything in his custody or possession, it shall be deemed to be in the custody and possession of all of them.

Thus, under these conditions a person may be legally arrested for "possession of narcotics" and subsequently appear in an official tally of "drug addicts" merely by being
discovered by the police in a room where drugs are found. The following is a female drug user's description of such a situation:

This old guy had a room down on [name of street]. He liked all the kids so he let us use his room to fix in. Well, one day me and another girl were up there with him and the bulls came in and pinched all three of us. The poor old guy hardly knew what was goin' on, but there he was, charged with possession of narcotics just like us. He did six months on that beef too, I think. The judge said that he was just as guilty as we were because he knew that drugs were being used in his room. He had knowledge of it and gave consent, so the old bugger got time.

Similarly, a situation frequently encountered in the prison is one in which a person is admitted to serve a sentence for a conviction on a narcotics offence, routinely classified as a drug addict by records officers, and is found, upon later interview to be a victim of circumstance rather than a drug user. The following instance is exemplary of many "remembered" from my experience as a prison employee:

Upon interviewing an inmate who was in prison for "possession of narcotics" and had been classified as a "drug addict", I discovered that he was not even a user of drugs. He was a logger and one of his campmates occasionally used heroin. Apparently the two came to Vancouver and took a room in a hotel near the skid road area of the city. The subject stayed in the room and got drunk. His friend went to the Family Cafe, purchased a capsule of heroin, and returned to the room with it. Minutes later, the police arrived, found the heroin, and arrested them both for "possession of narcotics". The subject claimed he had never used drugs in his life. Later, it was medically established that he was not addicted to drugs.

Hence, there is evidence to indicate that at least some of those who are charged with narcotic offences and represented
in official "drug addiction statistics" may not even be users of narcotics.

Drug users know that there is a certain element of risk involved in merely being in the presence of narcotics and avoid situations where drugs are being used unless they themselves are doing the using. One drug user commented as follows:

"Only an asshole would go watch somebody fix. For one thing you'd get yenny. And if the bulls came through the door, you're pinched just for bein' there. They always pinch everybody that's around".

There is some evidence to indicate that the charging of everyone present in a drug-using situation with "possession of narcotics" is seen by the police not only as something they are legally able to do but also as something that is "sensible", i.e.: practical to do:

"We generally charge everybody that's in the room. If we don't, one of them can take the Act, say it was his junk, and get the whole works off".

The "Act" the above quoted narcotic enforcement officer was referring to is the Canada Evidence Act. Under its protection, a person who has not been charged with committing an offence can appear as a witness in the trial of those who have, testify without fear of prosecution that he is the proper offender, and thereby "free" those who have been charged with "his" crime. Those who are present at the time of a narcotics arrest and not charged are in an excellent position to do this. Thus, if the police discover two persons in a drug using situation and arrest only one of them, the possibility is recognized that the other may claim ownership of the drug in court and have the case dismissed as a
consequence. Narcotic enforcement officers regard such occasions as a waste of time and effort:

"If this happens [i.e.: if somebody testifies under the Canada Evidence Act], then all the work we put into making the arrest and the time we spend in court is just wasted".

On the other hand, if both had been charged and one "copped out", i.e., pleaded guilty, the police would still have a conviction to their credit. One member of the drug squad commented as follows:

"If we arrest three or four hypes for possession, one of them will probably cop out. But that's better than not arresting them all and having one of them take the Act. At least we get one of them".

This section has presented some data on the social organization of police work and its relationship to official statistical representations of "drug addiction". The police are not concerned with apprehending "drug addicts" but rather persons who violate laws by "being in possession of narcotics". However, those whom they apprehend come to be included in official "drug addiction statistics". In the course of structuring a work routine in terms of practical considerations, i.e., selecting persons to follow on the grounds of ease of arrest, anticipated publicity of arrest, etc. and regarding the law in practical terms, the police produce an "official" population of "drug addicts". Thus, official statistical representations of "drug addiction" can only be understood in these terms, and not in terms of the medical-psychological-pharmacological definition offered by the W.H.O.
The next section discusses the manner in which "drug addicts" are procedurally defined by the staff members of a narcotic addiction treatment center in Western City.

A narcotic addiction treatment center: normal drug addicts

Perhaps the most persistent controversy in the literature of "drug addiction" is the one relating to whether it should be regarded as a "crime" or as a "disease". On one hand, there are those who see the drug user as a veteran moral outsider whose use of drugs is only incidental to the fact of his criminality. In these terms, an individual's use of drugs is not seen as initiating his separation from legitimacy, but merely enhancing it. Central to this argument, though, is the notion that those who become addicted to drugs are responsible for their own state of affairs:

His sickness was not contracted unintentionally but by design. Undoubtedly he knew that the possession of drugs was illegal and realized the demoralizing and debilitating effect that their use could have on the human body. Then, disregarding the obvious dangers, he started to use drugs in direct opposition to the normas of society . . .7

In the early days drug abuse was mostly as it is almost entirely today, a vice of the underworld or of delinquency which must be deliberately and voluntarily acquired by a person seeking a new pleasure, a new release, a new experience.8

On the other hand, there are those who see the drug user as an essentially "sick" person whose use of drugs is a "symptom" of a "disease" over which he had no control:
All the research done on drug addiction within the last two generations indicates that addiction is . . . a symptom of personality defects which, if they did not lead to drug addiction, would lead to difficulties of other types.9

The decision of officials to regard drug addiction either as a "crime" or as a "disease" has real consequences for drug users:

. . . those who espouse the disease theory of drug dependency tend to be determinists who advocate non-punitive handling; those who see men as responsible and self-directing, who see men as capable of foresight and self-control, they are the advocates of punishment as a deterrent and of incarceration as the means to self-correction.10

The narcotic addiction treatment center that will be discussed in this section officially supports the "illness" definition of drug addiction. Its published literature deals with drug addiction wholly as "... a symptom of emotional disturbance" and suggests that since persons take drugs "... because of their anxiety-ridden or disturbed personalities", they should be viewed as "... sick persons (both in mind and body) who require medical attention". The orientation to drug addiction as an "illness" is further evidenced by the manner in which objects and events are "named", for example, the drug users who report to the center are referred to as "patients" (hence, "patients washroom", "patients coffee machine", "patients fund"); the social work programs such persons enter into are called "treatment" or "therapy"; those who stop using drugs are said to be "cured".11

When drug users come to the center seeking "treatment", they follow a specified "treatment" routine. One part of this
section describes some of the general features of the "treatment" routine and in doing so indicates how drug users are defined in actual practice, as distinct from the treatment center's "public" definition. The other part discusses the organizationally relevant notion of "normal drug addicts".

a) "Treatment" routines

This treatment center is distinguished by the fact that it dispenses liquid methadone, a synthetic opiate, to relieve any physical distress that the drug user may experience during "withdrawal" from his drug habit. Also, most drug users are assigned to social workers or "counsellors".

Each drug user coming to the center for treatment must submit a specimen of urine for laboratory analysis. In the case of new "patients", i.e., those appearing at the center for the first time, and those whose files have been "re-opened" after a period of absence, the purpose of the urinalysis is to establish the quantitative and qualitative aspects of "addiction". Those who are attending the center on a regular basis are required to submit a urine specimen so that the laboratory can ascertain whether they are taking drugs other than those that have been prescribed to them.

Establishing a person's addiction" by chemical means is seen as necessary because in the past non-addicted
persons had come to the center and obtained withdrawal medication either for a "kick" for themselves or to provide to drug-using friends:

A social worker at the treatment center said: "Now that we've got the lab we won't get these guys coming in here, saying they're addicts and getting methadone for nothing. Some of them didn't need it and just took it for kicks or else gave to people they knew who were already coming here".

Furthermore, of those who attend the treatment center on a regular basis, it is expected that some will occasionally "supplement" their withdrawal medication by using legally unavailable drugs:

A social worker said: "We had no idea how many (of the "patients") were fixing on the side. We figured the number was quite high, knowing addicts, but now that we've got the lab, we'll know for sure".

Thus "checking" on a "patient's" adherence to a treatment program is seen as something that must be done. If it is found that a "patient" is not following the program, he is not allowed to receive further treatment for a period of 30 days.

When a "patient" gives a urine specimen, he is "accompanied" to the lavatory by a staff member (male or female as the case requires), hired to supervise such proceedings. The reason for requiring "patients" to provide a specimen under supervision is to ensure that the urine they are supplying for laboratory analysis is indeed their own:

The clinical director said at a meeting that the "patients" had to be watched very closely to make sure that they gave a specimen of their own urine.
He felt that some might bring bottles of other's urine with them and thus avoid detection of drug use.

Prior to the hiring of these persons, another system of "checking" was planned. Although it is not known to most staff members, the bathroom where urine specimens are given is equipped with a "two-way mirror":

A research worker who was present during the construction of the specimen lavatory told me that a two-way mirror had been installed. He showed me where the "other side" of the mirror was located .. behind a small, locked door in an alcove off the laboratory. He told me that "get up close" to the mirror in the lavatory and by doing so I could see that it had an unusual depth to it. Later, I asked the chief lab technician what was behind the small door. He said that he couldn't tell me because it was "top secret". I asked him if the lavatory was visible through the door and if it did indeed conceal the "other side" of a two-way mirror. He replied that I could make up my own mind about it but if I wanted to know for sure I should ask the clinical director . . . "he's got the only key to it". He added that even if there was a mirror behind the door, it wouldn't be used because people had been hired to supervise the giving of specimens.

The out-patient clinic is open from Monday to Friday; its hours of operation are 8.30 a.m. to noon, 1.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. A sign advises "patients" to telephone the in-patient clinic for after-hours or emergency service. Theoretically, then, service is available to "patients" at all times. In actual practice, however, this is not the case: "patients" who request after-hours service are most often denied it and regarded as "demanding".

While I was at the in-patient clinic during the evening, a drug user phoned, said he was very ill and wanted to be admitted. The male nurse who answered the phone told him that nothing could
be done "at this time of the night", said "go to hell", and hung up. Following this, he said to me: "Jesus, some of these bloody addicts are demanding. They think they can call you at any time of the night, just like that, and get you to cow-tow to their demands".

Similarly, "patients" who are unable to pick up their medication during working hours are regarded and treated as "irresponsible":

The receptionist told the person who was dispensing the medications that a "patient" had phoned in to say that he had a job and would be unable to pick up his medication at the usual time. The "patient" wanted to know if it would be alright for him to pick it up at the in-patient clinic that evening. The medication dispenser got on the phone and asked the "patient" who he thought he was and "what kind of a place do you think this is, anyway?" Finally, he reluctantly agreed to let him pick up his medication at a later time. Afterwards, he remarked on the general "irresponsible nature" of drug addicts.

To facilitate "cleaning up", the pharmacy closes at 4.00 p.m. Thus, "patients" who arrive after this hour are not given their medication and are told to return "tomorrow":

A "patient" came to the treatment center pharmacy just as it was closing. He remarked that he was "just on time". The pharmacist's assistant informed him that he was not on time and that he couldn't have his medication because he was late.

At lunch-time, from noon to 1.00 p.m., a female receptionist who handles incoming calls, etc., is often the only person at the treatment center. During this one hour period, the center is locked and "patients" are not permitted to enter; they can often be seen sitting on the steps waiting for the doors to re-open. On one occasion, the receptionist let a male "patient" into the center prior to the official re-opening hour. An executive of
the center returned from lunch early, saw the "patient", and subsequently had the receptionist "talked to" by the office manager. The following is an account of this incident:

The receptionist told me that she was given a severe "talking to" by the office manager because she had allowed a "patient" into the building before 1.00; thus creating a situation where she and the "patient" were the only two persons on the premises. She said "[The executive] said that I should know by now that these people are criminals and you never know what they are liable to do".

On another occasion I arrived at the center half-an-hour before its official opening hour of 5.30 and noticed a male "patient" sitting in the waiting-room. A female staff member who regularly arrived at work early, approached me and said she was "glad to see me" because "[the executive] doesn't like the girls to be alone when there's a male patient here. I didn't know whether I should turn him out or what".

The data presented thus far has illustrated some of the routines and situations that drug users encounter when they come to the center seeking "treatment". What follows is a discussion of the persons for whom those routines are constructed — "normal drug addicts".

b) Normal drug addicts

A psychiatrist employed by the treatment center noted that the drug users who appear for treatment at the center form a "stereotype":

"The group we are familiar with at the [treatment center] form a stereotype and have many factors in common which distinguish them from other addicts..."

In the course of routinely interviewing, examining and "treating" drug users, staff members become familiar with their "typical features" and "typical careers" and like Sudnow's public defenders, are able to provide detailed characterizations of the "normal case". The following is taken from one of the center's publications and is exemplary of the characterizations that members can give:

"Let's take a brief look at John Doe, Addict, Vancouver. He was born in the East End during 1946 or 1947. His father had returned from the war and he was the result of the reunion. But during the war, his parents were forced to go their separate ways, and after the war, there were no mutual interests and sharings to make the home atmosphere a happy one. The home was torn by strife, bickering and nagging. John quite often was the cause, severely chastised by his father, but over-protected by his mother. John did not love his mother, but she afforded a convenient means of support, both financial and emotional, whenever John was in trouble. His troubles started in school, spread to the playground, the neighbourhood, and soon he was shunned by his former playmates and began to associate with a group of similar rejects. Drinking, dancing, joy-rides, girls etc., were their main forms of entertainment. Minor skirmishes with the police were encountered. School was a bore and John dropped out as soon as it was legally allowed, not, of course, without having played truant as often as possible. He eventually got a job as a car-hop; but he missed his friends for evening play, so he chucked this overboard. Besides, it didn't pay enough. One evening, being thoroughly bored, he visited some friends who had "turned on" a few weeks ago and were glowingly telling him what the stuff did for them. At first John was a bit reluctant to try, but he then resolutely went half on a cap (e.g. paid $ 2.50) and stuck out his arm and got his first mainline fix of heroin. Initially, he was violently ill up to the point of vomiting. But after a few hours he felt very well. All was at peace, the boredom gone, nothing bothersome anymore, including his family."
$2.50 was not really too much to pay for this kind of pleasure.

On from here he continued, first increasing his dosage from a half capsule to one capsule a day, then 2 capsules a day, etc. He had no job, indeed did not want to work, so the only means for getting money were illegal ones. Pretty soon he became a pretty good booster (shop-lifter), graduated to being a thief and burglar. He also discovered the money making skills of certain girls and since he was nicely built and generally a good guy, the girls were quite willing to work for him. By this time, he had moved away from home and began living with the girls who "turned tricks" for him, who in turn, would eventually get apprehended for soliciting and prostituting (Vagrancy Charges).

One day John was caught stealing and was apprehended. His first serious contact with the police brought him to jail. Since there were no drugs in jail, he got violently ill and was told that he was sick because he did not have drugs. And so the fact of unpleasant experiences and not having a drug was firmly established in his mind. John got a year, served half time and found a job out of town through his parole officer. He worked quite well at it, but it was a seasonal job and eventually he returned to the city and his old associates. He had no money, no friends outside the addict sub-culture, and life at home was still as unpleasant as ever. The association of unpleasantness - no drugs - grew stronger and stronger and soon John had to have the drug to make life bearable. Pretty soon nothing but the drug mattered. The cycle of drugs - work - jail had started and with variations was repeated over a number of years with the work periods becoming shorter and the jail sentences becoming longer. Not so long ago, John had just turned 25 or so, the stuff (heroin) was very poor for a while, but then by some mistake some good (i.e. not too much adulterated) heroin came into town. John's dosage was quite high - 6 capsules per day, 2 to a fix. He tried the new stuff, which was rather strong, but not knowing this, John took an overdose and consequently died. His body was found in a dark alley on skid road. Not many mourned his death since his only associates were those involved in drugs on skid road.

Those drug users for whom the staff members can provide a characterization of "typical features" or "typical careers" shall be called "normal addicts". The treatment
facilities and practices outlined in an earlier section are organized around the expectancy that individuals of this "type", i.e., those with features and careers similar to the above, will constitute the majority of the treatment population.

The following are some general features of "normal addicts".  

1. Characterization of normal addicts can be given without referring to the specific biographical details of a particular case that can be "remembered". Thus, when preparing a "John Doe case" like the one cited above, a staff member would not have to use an individual's file material as a guide. Similarly, if asked what drug addicts were "like" a staff member would begin his discourse with "drug addicts are like . ." and not "Fred Smith was like . ." 

2. Normal addicts are those which staff members frequently encounter at the treatment center. Such persons are officially referred to as "criminal addicts" or "street addicts". While staff members are able to give general, "John Doe" characterizations of biographies, etc., of these persons, they are unable to provide material of a similar form for "medical addicts" or "professional addicts". Generally, when asked what these latter categories are "like" the staff members will either refer to the details of a specific "remembered" case or cite a literary example.
3. Characterizations of normal addicts are specific to time and place. Thus, the treatment agency's staff members are above to speak of what addicts are like "here" as compared to what they are like "there". For example, the difference between "New York addicts" and "Western City addicts" is one that is commonly noted:

The majority of New York's addicts if from social and ethnic minority groups; most of Western City's addicts are white, anglo-saxon protestants. The majority of New York's addicts is a product of the New York slums; the majority of Western City's addicts was not born in Western City but had congregated here from all over the country. New York addicts' age range is narrower than Western City's. Here, the white opium smoker - changed morphinist - changed heroin addict (depending on the drug available) still exists in small numbers past the age of 50.16

Similarly, staff members of long tenure are able to speak of what addicts were like "then" as compared to what they are like "now":

"When I first came here, most of the patients were older, case-hardened types. Now they're a younger bunch".

4. Characterizations of normal addicts are structured to include biographical material that will "account for" a person's use of drugs in the terms of the currently operative "theory" of drug addiction that prevails in the treatment center. Thus, when drug addiction is conceived as a symptom or outward manifestation of an underlying personality disorder, the characterization will include the factors that the current state of knowledge relates to the production of that disorder, e.g., "broken home", "disorganized neighbourhood".
5. Characterizations of normal addicts include characterological assessments of the individual which are unrelated to the conception of drug addiction as a "disease". Thus, while the normal addict can be talked about as a "sick" person, he can also be talked about as an "immoral" person, a person "who can't be trusted", etc., the following examples are illustrative of this:

An executive of the treatment center said that ". . . the addicts who come here are at the bottom of the barrel, morally. They don't think of the things that normal members of society do".

A lab worker told me that an executive of the treatment center told him not to have anything to do with the addicts because they were all liars and cheats and would try to use him to their advantage at every opportunity.

A social worker told me that two addicts were planning to get married. She added that she thought this was funny because "... usually they don't bother with the formalities. They just shack up together and move on to the next one when they get bored of each other".

The following characterization, offered by a chief of police, also illustrates this:

"Some authorities will tell you that drug addicts are nice people, but it is the police experience that this is far from being the case. We find that an addict does not care about his parents, his wife or children if any, his best friend, his health, his cleanliness, nor his clothing and personal appearance. He does not care about society, nor does he lead a useful existence. He does not drink intoxicating liquor, and he does not get along well with others unless, of course, he is under the influence of narcotics. He does not work, in fact will not work unless he is forced to do so to prevent being arrested for vagrancy. When an addict is under the influence of drugs, his sense of well being is such that work does not interest him in any way, and then when he needs drugs, his physical condition is such that his craving for drugs makes it impossible
for him to concentrate for any length of time on any task, no matter how light or menial. The drug addict has no morals, no principles, and very seldom tells the truth. 

The accuracy of the features attributed to "normal drug addicts" is not an issue here. The point is that the notion of what drug users are "like" serves as a basis for structuring and organizing treatment activities. The "plans" for such activities as those described earlier have been formulated in accordance with the expectation that a certain "type" of drug user will routinely appear at the treatment center.

In the introduction to this chapter it was indicated that some features of the treatment routine may be altered in the event that a "professional addict" (e.g. physician, nurse) came to the center seeking treatment. The following is an example of some of the ways in which the routine is modified for a person who is taken as other than a "normal drug addict".

An 18 year old female drug user came to the treatment center accompanied by her parents. Apparently, either the girl or her parents had telephoned earlier and made an appointment to discuss a treatment program with the relevant officials. The receptionist was aware of this and promptly escorted the trio to the staff library to wait. A social worker and a research worker joined them there soon afterward. During their discussion other staff members were not permitted to use the library. At the end of the discussion, I heard the social worker discreetly inform the girl that she would be required to leave a urine sample. However, I later learned that she was allowed to do this privately rather than in the company of the female staff member generally assigned to supervise the procedure. Before the girl and her parents left, the social worker said that in the future he would deliver
the medication to their home and do the necessary social work while he was there. In other words, the girl would not have to come to the treatment center to receive treatment.

Later, I asked the social worker why these "special arrangements" were being made for the girl. He said: "She's just a kid from a nice family. She's gone a little bit wrong but she'll turn out okay. [Girl's first name] is different from the type of person that usually comes here".

In the above example, the girl was not "seen" as a "drug addict" and consequently was not required to follow the routines that "drug addicts" do.

This section has examined some of the routines that take place in a narcotic addiction treatment center and has illustrated how drug users are procedurally defined by the center's staff members. Drug addiction is viewed as a medical-pharmacological-psychological state of affairs (indeed, doctors, medicine, and counselling are all part of the treatment routine) and drug addicts are referred to as "patients". However, "drug addicts" are primarily regarded in moral terms and this is seen as colouring the whole "treatment" process.

This chapter has presented some data and discussion on officials' notions of what drug addicts "are". It was illustrated that the police and treatment officials only define "criminal" or "street" drug addicts as "drug addicts". In the procedural sense outlined in this chapter, the term "drug addict" cannot be used to describe a physician or
nurse who uses or is addicted to a narcotic. In the case of the police, this is especially important. Their notion of what "drug addicts" "are" provides at least a partial explanation for the relatively small number of "reported cases of professional addiction". Furthermore, the investigative activities that are based on this notion, can be taken as "shaping" the nature of drug transactions. This will become more evident in the chapters to follow.
Footnotes


2. World Health Organization, ibid., p. 4.

3. Under Canadian law, it is not a crime to be addicted to drugs. Consequently, the police are not concerned with "drug addicts" but rather with "persons in possession of narcotics", "persons trafficking in narcotics", etc. However, the persons the police arrest for these offences are "counted" as "drug addicts" merely because they have been arrested for narcotic violations. Whether or not they are "drug addicts" in the terms of the definition proposed by the W.H.O. cannot be assumed merely by the fact of their arrest, as the above example indicates. Furthermore, persons arrested for offences involving narcotics are included in statistical representations of "drug addiction" for a period of ten years following their arrest, even if no further violations are reported.


6. For information on the legal framework within which U.S. narcotic enforcement officers work, see Jerome Skolnick, Justice Without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society, New York: John Wiley and Sons (Science Editions), 1967.


11. All quotations in this paragraph are taken from the treatment center's "educational" publications.

12. This is an excerpt from a critique of a research project.


14. This is taken from a treatment center publication.

15. The notion of the "normal addict" is taken from Sudnow's notion of the "normal crime". See David Sudnow, op. cit.

16. This is taken from a treatment center publication.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT IS A DRUG ADDICT?

PROCEDURAL DEFINITIONS II: DRUG USERS AND DRUG PEDDLERS

The last chapter examined how a "drug addict" is procedurally defined by enforcement and treatment officials. It was indicated that what a drug addict "is" cannot be decided a priori in medical, pharmacological or psychological terms; rather, the answer to the question "what is a drug addict?" must consult the practices of those who are regularly involved in activities related to "defining drug addicts".

What a drug addict "is", is further explored in this chapter. This chapter discusses some aspects of the business of selling drugs and in doing so provides some data on the procedural sense in which the term "drug addict" is used by drug users and drug peddlers.

Purchasing an illicit commodity is in many ways different from purchasing a legally available one. In the case of drugs, Blumer notes the following:

It is not possible to buy drugs in the same way that one would buy shoes; one cannot just go into an open, available source and make a purchase. It is necessary to know people who have drugs, and one must be able to establish connections with them in order to obtain drugs for use.

While knowledge of a source and an ability to establish connections are indeed required to participate in transactions involving illicit commodities and in a sense differen-
tiate them from those involving legally available ones, it is another point-of-difference that is of interest here.

Merely purchasing a legally available commodity generally defines one as a user of it. However, in the case of an illicit commodity there is some data to indicate that one must be defined as a user before being able to purchase it. In this regard, Skolnick has provided some data on an elaborate procedure that some prostitutes use to certify that those who claim to be customers are indeed what they claim to be prior to being allowed to purchase sexual services. Similarly, Cavan notes that even information about where commercial sex can be purchased is only made available to those who are able to certify themselves as bonafide, "accredited" customers. In these cases, both "illicit sex" and "information about illicit sex" are seen as items which, if given to the police, could be used as evidence to incriminate the person involved.

Transactions involving legally unavailable narcotics proceed in a similar fashion to the "illicit sex" transactions outlined above: persons must be certified as "drug users" prior to being able to purchase drugs. This is discussed in the second section of this chapter. The first section deals with "access to drugs" as a feature of the procedural definition of a drug user.

Access to drugs

Before a person can use or become addicted to legally unavailable narcotics, he must first be able to obtain them.
In this regard, Cloward and Ohlin note the following: 5

... drug addiction and participation in sub-cultures organized around the consumption of drugs presuppose that persons can secure access to drugs and knowledge about how to use them.

While it may be argued that this is in a sense obvious, it is obvious as well that such drugs are not uniformly available to all who may wish to use them. Kessler counts access to drugs among the factors explaining both a person's use and non-use of them: 6

... a person ... must first secure drugs before he can think of actually using them. Ready access to drugs is a factor in addiction; the average person does not have ready access to drugs. This is the roadblock on the highway to addiction for many persons.

Becker notes the limited availability of marijuana and relates it to the drug's illegality per se: 7

A number of potent forces operate to control the use of marijuana in this country. The act is illegal and punishable by severe penalties. Its illegality makes access to the drug difficult, placing immediate obstacles before anyone who wishes to use it ... Marijuana use is limited ... by laws making possession or sale of the drug illegal. This confines its distribution to illicit sources not easily available to the ordinary person.

In a recent study, Blumer noted that certain "types" of person were systematically denied access to drugs: 8

... early adolescent rowdies are largely excluded from getting close to or participating in the "drug market" that exists to serve the early adolescent world ... The explanation ... is that the rowdy, because of his reckless and irresponsible behaviour, is far too great a risk to those who deal or sell in this market and to most of those who consume drugs obtained through this market. Dealers and users would unnecessarily expose themselves to apprehension and arrest by trafficking with the rowdy types. Thus, it is difficult for the rowdy to get hold of marijuana, even though other youngsters usually have a steady supply available ...
Juveniles who are "rowdy" do not often have the opportunity to use marijuana. Very few adolescents in the cool set will risk "turning on a rowdy dude". His conspicuous behaviour and tendency toward violence is the first indicator of who not to hang around. Young drug users in the cool set do not merely shy away from rowdy youth; they are careful to reject conspicuous people and cautiously select their associates.

Similarly, Schasre notes that some former heroin users stopped using the drug because they were unable to obtain it after losing their initial connection. They made systematic but uniformly unsuccessful attempts to regain access:

... The intensity of these quests varied from two or three inquiries over as many days, to fairly extensive efforts lasting two or four weeks before "giving up" or "losing interest".

The two primary reasons cited for failing to procure the narcotics necessary to resume use were ignorance about who might constitute a new source of supply and the refusal of known narcotics pushers to sell to people who were too young.

Access to drugs appears to be something that is granted to persons.

Granting a person access to drugs includes the act of selling drugs to him, buying drugs for him, and providing him with information about where drugs can be purchased. As it is used in this chapter, granting a person access to drugs by performing these acts is the procedural aspect of defining him as a drug user. Decisions as to what persons shall be granted access to drugs (and thus procedurally defined as drug users) are made by those already involved with them, i.e.: drug users and drug peddlers, and can be viewed as the results of assessment procedures. In the light of the drug user's knowledge of both the evidence sufficient to
warrant an arrest for "trafficking in narcotics" or conspiracy to commit this offence and the typical means the police employ to gather this evidence, the accuracy of the assessment upon which a procedural definition is based, is seen as a matter of utmost importance: undercover narcotics enforcement officers are believed to represent themselves as drug users in order to be treated as such and the acts of "treating" or defining by procedure are seen as constituting evidence. Thus, in terms of what drug users know about the law and its enforcement, to procedurally define a policeman as a drug user is to make oneself liable to be arrested for "trafficking" or "conspiracy" and as a consequence become eligible for punishment that includes life imprisonment as a maximum penalty.

Hence, in order to minimize the probability of providing evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest for "trafficking in narcotics" or "conspiracy" the drug user of drug peddler must avoid procedurally defining as drug users those who would prove to be other than drug users. That is, drug users and drug peddlers must minimize the probability that:

(a) information about where drugs can be purchased is provided to persons other than drug users;
(b) drugs are purchased for persons other than drug users;
(c) drugs are sold to persons other than drug users.

Lindesmith has suggested that this is done by only dealing with addicts or those who are able to prove addiction: ¹⁰

To eliminate the possibility of selling drugs directly to a narcotic agent, many pushers refuse to have business dealings with anyone who is not an addict
and they may require proof of addiction from a new customer.

This formulation, of course, leaves unanswered the question of how one proves that one is an "addict" or that one is "addicted".

On being known

This section presents some data to suggest that when deciding who shall be procedurally defined as a "drug user", those who are already involved with narcotics, i.e.: drug users and drug peddlers, refer to the following decisional rules:

1. Attend to the possibility that for exploitative reasons some persons in the environment will present themselves as something other than what they "really" are:

   Hughie told me that undercover policemen were frequently in the cafe: "There's always bulls around tryin' to get in and score.

2. Do not treat appearances, presentations of self, etc., as indicators of what a person "really" is:

   Hughie nodded in the direction of a man sitting at the counter and said: "See that guy over there? I think he's a bull". I replied that he didn't look much like a policeman and Hughie said: "How can you tell what a bull looks like? If a guy looked like a bull he wouldn't get the job of coming down here, would he?"

   In the course of a conversation a young female drug user said that she thought I was a policeman. I asked her if I looked like one and she said: "You don't have to look like a copy to be one. They come in all shapes and sizes".

   In the "early stages" of drug use, an individual generally obtains his supply of narcotics from other drug users and not directly from a drug peddler:

   "I was using off and on for 6 months before I ever even seen a pusher".
To be able to purchase drugs "on his own", the neophyte must be "introduced" to the drug peddler by a person who is already a user of drugs:

When I wanted to start scoring for myself, the guy who'd been fixing me took me down and introduced me to a couple of pushers. [Do you remember what he said when he introduced you?]. Just that I was alright, that's all.

Generally the drug peddler wants to know "for sure" that the neophyte has used drugs and that the "sponsor" has seen him do so:

"And the pusher'll say: 'Did you see him fix?', and I'll say: 'Yeah, I saw him.' And he'll say: 'Are you sure you saw him?', and I'll say: 'For Chirst's sake yes. I put the fuckin' needle right into his fuckin' arm. I told you he used with me and he's okay.' Once he knows that I've seen a guy use, then he feels better about the whole thing and he knows the guy's not a bull 'cause an undercover bull'll never use. That's fuckin' true. If you see a new guy use then you can be fuckin' sure he's not a bull. But if I tell the pusher I scored for a guy and he took his share and buggered off, well he'll just say to me: 'Fuck off, mac, you don't know what you're doin'.'

If a guy takes his share and wants to leave with it. 'No, no, let's jimmy right now', I'll say. I mean, I gotta protect myself. If a guy turns out to be a bull, then I'm set up for a conspiracy rap myself".

The alleged "character" of the sponsor is also important:

Nancy a young drug user, entered the cafe in the company of two bearded, long-haired males; they stood near the jukebox and she joined Don, a drug peddler who was sitting in a booth near the rear of the cafe. The following conversation took place:

Nancy: Those two guys at the front -- they're okay. I've fixed with them.

Don: Fuck off, Nancy. I don't want anything to do with you or the assholes you hang around with.

Nancy: They're okay, I . . . (cut off by Don).

Don: Just fuck off, Nancy. Okay?

Nancy returned to the two males at the front of the cafe. Don addressed the other occupants of the booth: "I wouldn't trust that bitch as far as I could fuckin' throw her".
In this case, it was rumoured that "Nancy" had, on a previous occasion, "sponsored" an undercover policeman into the drug world.

Thus, in order to be able to purchase narcotics a person must be "introduced" to a drug peddler by someone who is known to be both a drug user and a person that can be trusted. All drug peddlers do not know all drug users and in cases where the latter is unknown, there is some difficulty in making a purchase:

[Did you ever try to score off a drug peddler that didn't know you?] Yeah, in (name of city) at the City Cafe. I went up to the guy -- he was sitting in a booth -- and sat down across from him. I said: "I hear you got some stuff". He said, "Yeah, I got some stuff, but I don't know you, so go away". I knew the guy behind the counter -- his name was Bobo. So I called Bobo over. I said, "Bobo tell this guy I'm alright". He said, "Sure, Lou's alright". Then I scored and left. If Bobo hadn't been around I don't know what I would've done.

[Did you ever try to score off a drug peddler that didn't know you?] Well, I'm pretty well known down there and I know pretty well everybody. I've been using since the 1930's. In a town where you're a stranger, it's tough sometimes, but after you get to know a few people in the places and you split a few caps, you can get somebody to stand up for you. [Do you have to get somebody to stand up for you?] Well, nobody's gonna sell to a stranger. God knows who you may be.

[Did you ever try to score off a drug peddler that didn't know you?] Well, there's always somebody around that we both know so somebody can put him straight on me. You just don't score if he doesn't know you.

The following examples clearly illustrate this:

George, a drug peddler, was sitting next to me at the counter. In the hour I spent observing him he "put out" heroin to nine people. At one point, a middle-aged male approached him. The following conversation took place:
Male: Hey, George. Is that stuff y'got white?

George: I don't know you and I don't know what the fuck you're talkin' about (to himself) Cock sucker.

George returned his attention to the newspaper he was reading prior to the male's approach.

Male: Hey, George. Gimme a piece of paper. I got nothin' to put it in.

George: Nothin' to put what in? Fuck off, for Christ's sake.

The male shrugged his shoulders and left the cafe.

George turned to me and said: "Who the fuck was he?"

Several persons were standing near the rear of the cafe waiting for their turn to buy heroin from Frank and his partner. A negro male in his late teens was at the end of the "line". The following conversation took place when he tried to purchase a capsule from Frank:

Negro: I want one.
Frank: (to partner) Do you know this guy?
Partner: No, do you?

Negro: C'mon.
Frank: (to negro) I don't know what the fuck you're talkin' about, sonny. (to partner) If you don't know him he's gettin' fuck all from me.

A person who is not "known" to be a drug user is not able to purchase narcotics, even though he may be able to present "physical evidence" of drug use such as scarred veins, etc.:

[Did you ever try to score off a drug peddler that didn't know you?] Sure, I've tried it lots of times.
[How have you made out?] Well, sometimes okay, sometimes not at all. I tried it just a few months ago up in Edmonton at the City Hotel. I went up and told the guy I wanted to score and he said no, 'cause he didn't know me. I showed him my arms though and even that didn't do any good.

[Did you ever try to score off a drug peddler that didn't know you?] Oh yeah, quite a few times. But there was always somebody around who knew me. I mean, I'd see a guy puttin' out and I'd go up and say: "Gimme one". He'd say, "I don't know you", and I'd say, "Well, a lot of people around here do". He'd call somebody over and say, "Hey, do you know this guy", and the guy'd say: "Oh yeah, he's Hugh what's
his name. He's alright". And then I'd score. But if it was in a place where nobody knew me, well, I'd show him my arms, mention a few names of people I knew. But 99 out of 100 there'd be somebody around that I knew. If there wasn't though, it's be pretty tough to score a cap, even if I had a snake right up my arm.

[Did you every try to score off a drug peddler that didn't know you?] Sure, once. We went down to the corner . . there was no stuff in [name of city] so we had to go into Western City -- and we saw a guy in the Family puttin' out so we went and told him we wanted to score. He told us he didn't know who we were or what we were talkin' about. Said he'd never seen us before and he hadn't. We got all our staff in [name of city] and never had to go into Western City. We showed him our arms but that didn't do any good either. I guess you can't really blame a guy. The Narco Police will do almost anything to set a guy up for a pinch.

The data of appearance are not taken by drug peddlers as necessarily indicative of what a person "really" is. Furthermore, drug users realize that those who do trust it are likely to be arrested eventually:

[Did you ever try to score off a pusher that didn't know you?] Oh yeah, lots of times. [How did you make out?] Usually pretty good. I mean I scored. But if the guy wouldn't let me score 'cause he didn't know me I'd just say: "Well, for Christ's sake, I know almost everybody in this fuckin' place. They can vouch for me". Or sometimes they aren't as careful as usual. A guy might be sick himself and want to get rid of the last few caps and get out so he can fix. Or he might think you "look" okay -- that's how come they get caught, though, so you don't often get that. They have to be pretty careful. Who wants to do about ten years on a trafficking beef?

The police are well aware that "being known" is the only way an undercover officer will be able to purchase drugs: \(^{11},^{12}\)

It is a popular misconception that drug peddlers seek out and attempt to interest people in the use of drugs. This is definitely not the case. Undoubtedly the drug trafficker -- would like to increase his profits by increasing his customers and there is no question of
scruples or morals involved in his lack of effort in that direction. But the drug peddler is a shrewd, ammoral (sic) criminal who, as they say, "plays all the angles". They know that the police are constantly attempting to penetrate their organization; dealing with newcomers is risky and would lead to rapid arrest. Therefore, they attempt to sell only to addicts who can be vouched for. This is one of the facts that makes enforcement work difficult.

One thing that has been learned from . . . undercover operations . . . is that the street peddler . . . are most wary of dealing with newcomers and will invariably supply him through a known addict until the newcomer has associated for some time with other known addicts.

Consequently, the notion of "being known" is included in their "undercover" procedures:

A federal police officer who had previously worked "undercover" told me that before he went to the cafe he would learn the names and faces of the various drug peddlers so he could call them by name. "That way," he said, "They'll think they know me from somewhere".

Hence, to be able to purchase narcotics from a drug peddler, one must be known to him as a drug user. However, before a purchase can be made, a drug peddler must be located. As noted in a later chapter, drug peddling is not an especially visible activity. Consequently, there is often some confusion regarding exactly who is selling drugs at a given time. During the day, a drug peddler may be locatable simply because he is one of few people in the cafe sitting in a booth. During the busy evening hours, though, locating the drug peddler may be problematic:

A man entered the cafe and asked the man next to me who the current drug peddler was. He said that he thought Woody "had" but upon approaching him found out that he didn't. He said: "Somebody's got, but I don't know who. I'm lookin' myself, let's ask around."
Information about drugs and where they can be purchased is carefully managed:

Alice and I had left the cafe and were about fifty feet away from it when a young male walking in its direction spoke to her: "Hey Alice. Is anybody there?" She said: "Joe was, but he sold out". The male did not hear Alice and indicated that he wanted the statement repeated. He had continued walking and by this time was outside normal voice range. Alice said: "Never mind, you'll see." She turned to me and said: "Does he think I'm gonna yell it so everybody can hear?"

As noted earlier, the act of providing an undercover policeman with information about where narcotics can be purchased is regarded by drug users as constituting sufficient evidence to warrant arrest for "conspiracy to traffic narcotics". Consequently, only "known" persons who ask for such information are provided with it. The following examples, and especially the final one, illustrate this:

A male approached me and said: "Who's got?" I told him that I didn't know. He asked drug users the same question before he left the cafe; neither supplied him with the information he requested, although both were aware that a drug peddler was operating in the cafe at that time.

Three teenage males were wandering around the cafe asking various people where they could obtain some drugs. Nobody directed them to the drug peddler who had been on the premises for a few hours.

While I was standing near the jukebox with Freddie, a young drug user, a male entered the cafe, looked around, and addressed us: "Has anybody got?" Freddie said: "Nobody's got" and the male left. I asked Freddie why he hadn't directed him to the drug peddler who was sitting in a booth near the rear of the cafe and he replied: "I don't know him".

Furthermore, of those who request information regarding the location of narcotics some may be denied it:
Frank purchased a capsule of heroin from Harry, the only drug peddler in the cafe at that time, and returned to his seat, next to mine, at the counter. A middle-aged man approached him. Earlier in the evening, this fellow had presented himself in a manner which indicated his unfamiliarity with the workings of the drug world. He addressed Frank: "I'm looking for some dope. Have you got?" Frank replied: "Nope. Nobody's got . . . ." After the man had left, Frank turned to me and said: "These fuckin' bums".

When a drug peddler employs a "stoorer" to "advertise" his location to prospective clients, the stoorer gives this information only to those he recognizes as drug users:

A regular drug peddler had employed Hughie to "steer" for him. Hughie's job was to stand outside the cafe and inform prospective customers that a pusher was inside. This information is typically conveyed by using the phrase "Are you lookin'?" as a greeting. He greeted the people passing by in this fashion and when he got an affirmative response he escorted the person to the drug peddler. Occasionally, Hughie would leave the front of the cafe, walk toward an approaching person, greet him and, if need be, direct him to the pusher. At one point he started to do this, got halfway, and returned. He said to me: "Fuck me. I almost asked that cocksucker if he was lookin' and I don't know him. Holy shit. He could've been a bull or anybody".

When you're steering -- well, say you go into the Family and you're a hype, the pusher's down in the booth with the stuff and I'm standin' up at the front by the door. I'm steerin' so as soon as I see you comin' by I say, "Hey, if you're lookin', look over there at so-and-so (the pusher). Just like a front man. You gotta be careful to only steer guys that you recognize as hypes, though. Definitely. A lot of times bulls that you don't know walk in. You know, undercover guys. If you steer a cop, it's lights out.

Thus, information about where drugs can be purchased is only given to those who are known to be drug users. Furthermore, those who are known not to be drug users, are not expected to be in possession of any information regarding drugs:
Robbie joined me in a booth. After an exchange of greetings she said: "Are there any bombers in here Kenny?" I told her that I didn't know and she replied: "Oh yeah, you don't use anything, do you".

Hughie entered the cafe, looked around, and joined me at the counter. He told me he didn't have enough money to score and in a thinking-aloud fashion said: "I wonder if anybody's got any bombs?" I told him that nobody did; he gave me a rather puzzled look and asked how I knew. I replied that a few minutes earlier I had heard someone else get a negative answer to the same question. He said: "Christ, I was wondering how you'd know, not being a user".

Nor can such persons legitimately request the provision of this information:

I said to Robbie: "Who's got?" She replied: "What do you want to know for? You don't use".

When a drug user is unable to purchase narcotics because the drug peddler does not "know" him, he may attempt to get another user to "score" for him. However, as noted above, purchasing heroin for an undercover officer is taken as sufficient grounds to warrant an arrest for "trafficking in narcotics". Consequently, drug users will only purchase narcotics for those whom they know are drug users:

[Have you ever scored for anybody you didn't know?] No, I wouldn't do a stupid thing like that. You'd have to be an asshole. That's a good way to get yourself pinched, if the guy happens to be a narco bull. And if you don't know the guy, how do you know whether or not he's a bull?

However, there are circumstances when a drug user will purchase narcotics for someone he doesn't know. Generally, this can happen when a drug user is "sick" and is willing to take a chance to get a portion of the drug for himself. After purchasing, however, attempts are made to make sure the person is a user:
[Have you ever scored for anybody you didn't know?]
Yeah, once when I was really sick. But when I do
that I always make sure I fix with the guy so I'll
know he's not a bull.

Drug users who are known by drug peddlers to be indiscrimi-
minate in their dealings with "unknown" persons often have
difficulty making purchases:

A male who appeared to be in his early sixties joined
a drug peddler and myself in a booth. The following
conversation took place.

Male: Gimme one, Jake.
Drug peddler: Get outa here old man.
Male: I got the money. See (displays a ten-
dollar bill and a five-dollar bill).
Drug peddler: I don't give a shit what you've got.
Fuck off.

After the male had left the booth, the drug peddler
turned to me and said: "That old bugger would score
for anybody that asked him. I wouldn't have anything
to do with a guy like that. It's not worth the risk."

William Burroughs (writing under the pseudonym
"William Lee") provides a literary example of this: 13

I knew . . . that he was scoring for other people, but
I did not know who they were. I should have known
better than to have dealings with anybody like Nick,
who was sick and broke all the time and therefore
liable to pick up anybody's money. Some people need
an intermediary to score for them because they are
strangers in town or because they have not been on
junk long enough to get acquainted. But the pusher
has reason to be wary of people who send someone else
to score. By and large, the reason a man can't score
is because he is known to be "wrong". So he sends
someone else to score who may not be "wrong" himself,
but simply desparate for junk.

This chapter has presented some data regarding the
procedural definition of a drug user and the information
which must be present before a person will be treated as a
"drug user" by other drug users and drug peddlers. It was suggested that in this context what a drug user "is" is only meaningful in a procedural sense: a drug user is a person who is able to secure access to drugs, i.e.: he is able to buy drugs or have drugs bought for him, and able to obtain information about where drugs can be purchased. The drug user's knowledge of the evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest for "trafficking" or "conspiracy" creates a situation where only those who are "known" to be drug users are procedurally defined as such. To be "known" as a drug user means that a legitimate, trustable drug user can testify as to the legitimacy of the status you claim. This could be called an "accreditation procedure".  

The next chapter discusses the drug user's folk or commonsense knowledge of law enforcement methods. In its terms the use of the accreditation procedure is seen as a necessary feature of drug transactions.
Footnotes


2. I am grateful to Roy Turner for calling my attention to this point.


14. This term is taken from Sherri Cavan, *op. cit.*
CHAPTER 5
NORMAL DRUG ARRESTS;
COMMONSENSE KNOWLEDGE OF POLICE PROCEDURES

One of the outcomes of the "labeling" theory of deviance has been an interest in treating the rates of deviant behaviour as data produced by officials and subsequently explaining this data by examining the methodology that was employed in its production. The area of "victimless crimes" appears to be a fertile field for investigations of this type. The nature of victimless crimes, i.e., those involving the sale of a legally unavailable commodity to a willing customer who has no interest in becoming a complainant, requires that all investigative activities leading to arrests be initiated by the police. Furthermore, arrests for victimless crimes are seldom random, chance "happenings"; more often, they are planned, systematically - executed "events", i.e., literally "produced" by the police through the employment of some form of enforcement strategy. Knowledge of "how a person comes to be arrested", i.e., the production techniques the police use, could provide the sociologist with valuable alternatives to theories of deviance that treat police procedures as non-problematic.

However, while an understanding of the arrest producing process is a matter of general theoretical concern to sociologists, it is a matter of immense practical concern to another category of persons -- those who are, by virtue of their engagement in rule-breaking activities on
a regular basis, the focus of the arrest producing process. Bookies, prostitutes, bootleggers, and drug users are obvious examples. Their concern with the process is for "purposes of living", i.e., carrying on with life - as usual in a "normal", albeit "deviant", fashion. The point here is that one of the qualifications for the continual, regular performance of a deviant role is an understanding of the specific law enforcement strategies currently being employed.

The last chapter illustrated how the drug user's expectation that some of those who desire to purchase drugs may be policemen creates a situation wherein drugs are only made available to those who are properly certified as drug users. This is clearly a result of the drug user's knowledge of the type of evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest for "trafficking in narcotics" and the methods the police employ to obtain this evidence.

The task of this chapter is the exposition of the drug user's commonsense knowledge of sufficient evidence and police methods of obtaining it for two offences: "trafficking in narcotics" and "possession of narcotics". The point is developed that drug users expect arrests for these offences to occur in a certain specifiable manner and in accordance with a predictable pattern.

Normal drug arrests

Participants in a community organized around the pursuit and consumption of heroin frequently witness, hear
accounts of, or are involved in arrests for "possession of narcotics" and, to a somewhat lesser extent, "trafficking in narcotics". As such, they become familiar with both the nature of the evidence sufficient to warrant arrests for these offences and the typical methods the police employ to obtain this evidence; consequently, drug users, when required, are able to provide characterizations relevant to these topics. For example, the following are exemplars of the drug user's notion of the types of evidence that the police can obtain to lay charges of "possession" and "trafficking" respectively:

Most guys who get pinched for possession get caught with a cap. But they can pinch you for anything that analyzes. It doesn't matter what it is — a machine, a spoon, or what.

Guys get nailed for trafficking by puttin' for a bull . . . But if there's a bull around and you so much as tell him who's got, you're unable to get yourself pinched for conspiracy.

Thus, according to the drug user's characterization, possession of a tangible object which is seen by the police as something that can be chemically analyzed to show the presence of heroin is sufficient evidence to warrant an arrest for "possession of narcotics". The evidence that can be obtained to lay a charge of "trafficking in narcotics" or "conspiracy to traffic in narcotics" can be either tangible, i.e., drugs, or intangible, i.e., information about where drugs can be purchased.

The methods the police typically employ to obtain evidence of a person's "possession of narcotics" are characterized as follows:
They've got a guy sittin' up in that fuckin' mission across from the Family. Sometimes you can see him movin' around. He sees when ya score and tells the rest of the narco bulls over the walkie-talkie. They follow you to where you're goin' to fix, then wait for you to start to cook up. Then bam -- down comes the fuckin' door and about a dozen of the cocksuckers pour in after you . . .

Every time you score at the Family you're takin' the chance of gettin' followed when ya leave. The bulls are across the street watchin' it with a telescope. When ya leave the place they go into action with their fuckin' walkie-talkies. Sometimes they'll jump you right on the street, but usually they wait until you get to where you're goin' to fix. Then they can beat the shit out of you without anybody seein' it . . . They'll follow you there and knock the door down just when you're gettin' ready to fix.

They're always watching the Family Cafe 'cause they know that's where most everybody scores. They'll try and follow you when you score and then bust in when you've got the stuff out.

The drug user is also able to provide similarly detailed characterizations of the procedures involved in obtaining the evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest for "trafficking in narcotics".

What they do is they get a young bull and fill him in about dope -- all the words and terms. Things like that. Then he comes down and starts hangin' around the Family. He's in plain clothes and all and he looks just like an ordinary guy, so how's anybody gonna know he's a bull? . . Pretty soon he'll try and get people to put out for him and as soon as that happens he's making pinches.

They send guys down to pass themselves off as fiends. The undercover guy'll try to get in with people so he can score . . . As soon as somebody puts out to him though, he's pinched. He'll get as many people to put out to him as he can and then there'll be a big roundup of all the guys that he's got pinched for trafficking. Sometimes an undercover guy'll be down there for months, like Smith was last year.

For these events the drug user is able to provide a "typical" enforcement strategy, i.e., one that is usually
employed. For example, the police are seen as producing arrests for "possession of narcotics" by observing the arrestee purchase heroin in the Family Cafe, following him to the place he has chosen to administer the drug to himself, and either "jumping" him en route or forcing entry at a point in time when the evidence can be clearly connected with him. The production of an arrest for "trafficking in narcotics" is seen as involving the entrapment of the arrestee by an unidentifiable "undercover" policeman who employs an "addict-like" presentational strategy in order to purchase the necessary evidence.

These are normal drug arrests: those whose typical features, i.e., the nature of sufficient evidence and the methods the police use to obtain it, are known by the drug user.³

The following are some general characteristics of normal drug arrests:

1. Normal drug arrests are produced by police procedures that the drug user is able to characterize in terms of the general offence category instead on only in terms of specific past arrests that can be remembered. Thus, the drug user can describe how persons come to be arrested for "possession of narcotics" or "trafficking in narcotics"; in characterizing the means the police employ to produce normal drug arrests he does not find it necessary to invoke data on particular arrests, e.g.:
"This is the way Charlie was pinched", or "This is the
way they got George".

2. The police procedures involved in the production of normal drug arrests are specific to the time period and geographical region in which the drug user is currently living. Thus, older drug users are able to speak of "how the police used to operate" in comparison with how they operate "now":

Most guys around now don't know what it used to be like before they started really cracking down. It used to be that you could just score a cap of dope and go home and fix with no worries. It's not like that now . . .

A lot of things have changed since they started usin' all that fuckin' electronic equipment to help them pinch guys. They're got everything goin' for them now, y'know.

The bulls work different now than they did when I first started using.

Similarly, drug users who have visited or lived in other localos are able to compare "how the police operate "there" with how they operate "here":

There's no comparison between here and the States. For one thing there's different laws. In the States the bulls gotta have a search warrant before they can bust in or search you. Here they can pretty well do what they fuckin' please any time they want to.

I've heard that in the east they leave the addicts alone and mainly go after the guys who are puttin' out.

The cops here have had a lot of experience with fiends. You go to some place like [name] where they haven't seen too many junkies and they're not as wise.

They don't have a narco squad up in [name]. The ordinary bulls know that there's dope around but they don't know what to do about it.
3. Normal drug arrests are for offences which the drug user frequently encounters, i.e., hears about or is involved in. Thus, while the drug user is able to give detailed descriptions of the typical ways that people come to be arrested for frequently occurring violations such as "possession of narcotics" or "trafficking in narcotics", he is unable to provide a similar characterization for an infrequently occurring violation like "importing narcotics". With regard to this offence, one drug user noted the following:

Me and another guy made a run to Mexico once. I was scared shitless all the way. I'd never do it again, I don't think . . . You never know what those customs bulls are liable to do.

Furthermore, when a drug user is able to describe the manner in which a person comes to be arrested for an offence which is infrequently encountered, he will do so in terms of a particular "remembered" incident;

George got it for smuggling junk once. I think somebody in Mexico tipped the bulls off and they got him at the border.

One of the ways social actors "solve" the problem of social order is by constructing and employing categorical types: types of people, situations, etc. Through the process of typification the actor introduces structure into his social life and makes orderly interaction possible.

The concern of this chapter was with typifications of events. They are events in social life that are known in
their typicality and hence are "explained" merely by "naming" them. Included in the member's knowledge of typical events is some notion of how they come to be, i.e. the circumstances that lead up to them.

It was suggested in this chapter that for drug users, the drug arrest has the character of a typical event. As such, it will be illustrated in a later chapter that drug users can engage in orderly conversations about these events in a condensed, parsimonious fashion: the details of occurrence, i.e., "how it happened", etc., need not be specified on every occasion because the drug user is in possession of such knowledge in its typical or "normal" form.

The next chapter deals with the articulation in actual practice of the drug user's notion of the normal arrest for "possession of narcotics".
Footnotes


3. The notion of the normal drug arrest is based on Sudnow's notion of the "normal crime". See D. Sudnow, *ibid.*
In the last chapter it was noted that drug users have a certain "folk" or "commonsense" knowledge of the methods the police employ to produce drug arrests and are able to provide characterizations of these methods in their typical, "normal" form. The accuracy of these typifications is not an issue here. The point is that this knowledge of the typical manners in which people come to be arrested constitutes the basic conceptual equipment that the drug user employs in organizing and interpreting many of the everyday social scenes that he participates in and sees.

Cicourel has noted that "how actors define situations as 'real' suggests how they 'prepare' the scene for further inference and action". This chapter reports on how drug users "prepare" or "construct" a scene in accordance with their knowledge of the procedures involved in the production of the normal arrest for "possession of narcotics".

According to the drug user's characterization, possession of a tangible object which the police assume can be chemically analyzed to show the presence of heroin is sufficient evidence to warrant an arrest for possession of narcotics.

The drug user's characterization of the method the police employ to produce normal arrests for the possession of narcotics is as follows: The police (a) observe the drug
user purchasing heroin in the Family Cafe, (b) follow him when he leaves with the drug in his possession, and (c) either (1) stop and search him en route to the place he has chosen to administer the drug to himself, or (2) wait until he gets there and force entry at a point in time when the evidence can be clearly connected with him. Hence, the drug user's problem is one consisting mainly of being regularly in possession of narcotics without having the police apprehend him with them.

The practical techniques

In the terms of the drug user's typification, police observation of a heroin transaction is the initial event in a series of events that could lead to arrest for the possession of narcotics. The Family Cafe is regarded as a setting that is being continually observed by the police; as such, a certain public character is attributed to the drug-related activities that take place within it. One drug user commented as follows:

Scoring in the Family is like scoring in a glass cage. The bulls are always watchin' the place. They even had T.V. cameras up there one time so they could sit back in the office and see what's goin' on.

Hence, the drug user is a social actor in the literal sense of the term: much of what takes place in the cafe has the character of a performance being played to an audience enforcement officials. The drug user is concerned to present an appearance that will not provide the police with information that will make him a candidate for being
followed. As such, he is concerned with presenting what might be called a "normal appearance". This is especially evident after the drug user has purchased heroin and left the cafe in possession of it:

Freddie continued with his depiction of how he would go about getting arrested: "Then I'd go outside and look back and forth up and down the street. Like I was nervous. Then just to make sure they saw me, I'd run. They'd figure I had junk for sure and follow me".

As Robbie and I were leaving, the front of the cafe she said: "Don't look up there like that. The fuckers are liable to think we've got".

Furthermore, there are sanctions available for those who are unable or unwilling to present this appearance:

In the course of a conversation, Jake mentioned that he had recently gone half with Mary, but would "never do it again". I asked him why and he said: "She was so fuckin' nervous its lucky the cops didn't pick up out for havin' junk right away".

Freddie nodded in the direction of a young man standing near the juke box and told me that he was "... a bad type to have around because he thinks junk is a big thing and plays the man when he's got it".

However, the apparently successful presentation of a "normal" appearance is not taken as constituting a guarantee that one has not been selected as the subject of an investigation intended to produce an arrest for a narcotics violation; it is the articulation of only one element of the typification and serves only as a means to minimize the probability of selection. The activities that the drug user routinely performs following his departure from the cafe are based on the assumption that he indeed has been selected and are in accordance with his knowledge of the
structure of possibility. For example, after leaving the cafe the drug user attends to that portion of the typification that says he may be followed to the location he has chosen to administer the drug to himself. A comment from a taxi driver working in the area around the Family Cafe is relevant here:

Whenever I get dope fiends in the car they act like they're scared shitless. They'll get in and keep on lookin' around behind all the time. You'll go by a car with the parking lights on and one of them'll say "there they are, there they are". They're suspicious of everything they see.

The procedural aspect of this element of the typification involves the taking of a non-direct, devious route to the destination chosen:

Freddie told me that it had cost him four dollars to take a taxi from the Family Cafe to his home. He added: "It usually only comes to about a buck seventy-five but I had junk so I had to get the driver to wheel around a bit.

A taxi driver told me that he often picked up fares from the Family Cafe. Many of these, he said, were "...dope fiends goin' somewhere to shoot themselves with the stuff". He commented as follows: "They always think the cops are after them. You'll be driving along and one of them'll say 'turn up here', or 'go down this alley' or 'stop here and turn around'. It's enough to drive you nuts".

A taxi driver commented as follows: "I stay right away from Zone 5 (i.e. the taxi stand located near the Family Cafe). You get junkies comin' out of that Family Cafe in you cab and you're just asking for trouble. They want you to do all kinds of fancy driving to keep ahead of the cops".

However, regardless of whether the heroin-possessing individual proceeds to his destination on foot or in an automobile, he attends to the element of the typification that says the police may stop and search him en route. That
this possibility is taken into account is clearly indicated by the practices that the drug user regularly and routinely follows immediately after the purchase of a capsule of heroin:

Six persons purchased heroin from the drug peddler during the half-hour I spent with him . . . Each customer's post-purchase behaviour followed a characteristic pattern: after receiving the capsule, the drug user would place it in a small piece of silver foil paper, roll the two together in his hands, and put the small package in his mouth. This procedure was followed in each case.

These practices of "wrapping" and "mouthing" take place following every heroin purchase that occurs in the Family Cafe and are independent of time of day, day of week, or reported volume of police activity. One drug user commented on them as follows: "It's all part of scoring a cap of dope".

That the drug user is expected to perform these after-purchase activities on a regular basis is evidenced by the preparations made by the drug peddler. For example, drug peddlers often anticipate their customers needs and keep a supply of silver foil "wrappers" on hand:

George, a drug peddler, had torn the silver foil liner of a cigarette package into small square pieces and placed them underneath the remote control jukebox on the counter in front of him.

The drug peddler came to the counter and addressed the woman who was sitting two stools away from me: "Mary, have you got any silver?" She gave him the silver foil liner from her cigarette package. He returned to his booth and tore the paper into small pieces; these were placed under the rim of an ashtray.

Or, on occasion they may provide "pre-wrapped" capsules:

Harry had scored and returned to the counter. He told me that George was selling capsules that were already wrapped in silver paper.
Freddie asked Jake, a drug peddler, why he didn't wrap the capsules in silver paper as he had done in the past.

Drug peddlers employ a similar technique. Their supply of drugs is secreted in the mouth in a small, water tight, knotted balloon. At the point of sale, the drug peddler removes the balloon from his mouth, unties the knot, and extracts the desired number of capsules. Twenty-five is the usual number of capsules carried. Such a package is approximately one inch in diameter.

The silver foil paper (or the balloon) serves the function of sealing the heroin-containing gelatin capsule(s) in an impermeable, water-tight package; thus it can be removed from the mouth at an appropriate time and unwrapped intact, ready to use (or sell).

Hughie asked: "Have you ever noticed how many dope fiends smoke Export cigarettes?" I replied that I hadn't and he said: "They do 'cause they've got the only real silver paper. It's best for keepin' the cap dry".

By placing the "prepared" capsule in his mouth, the drug user gives himself the opportunity to transform an incriminating situation into a no-case situation. He does this merely by swallowing the capsule, i.e., "destroying" the evidence.

In an interview, John told me that he had narrowly escaped being arrested the evening before. He said: "Yeah, I just got it down in time before they grabbed me".

Thus, if the drug carrying individual encounters the police en route to his destination, he is able to prevent them from obtaining evidence to warrant an arrest.
If the drug user is unable to swallow the capsule or if he feels he is unable to swallow it, he will enlist the assistance of another:

Two lesbians sitting near me at the counter had decided to "go half" on a capsule of heroin. Just before they went to make the purchase, one said to the other: "Honey, will you pack it? You know I can't swallow".

A young male entered the cafe and called Hughie away from the counter. They talked for a moment, then joined the drug peddler in his booth. Hughie purchased a capsule of heroin and both of them left the cafe. When Hughie returned he told me that his friend was very nervous and feared that he would be unable to swallow the capsule if he encountered the police. Hughie said: "He's done favours for me, so I packed it for him".

After arriving at the location he has chosen to administer the injection, the drug user attends to the possibility that the police may have followed him there and may be waiting outside for an appropriate time to enter. His first use of defence is to prevent them from entering by barring the door of the room with a chair, bed, etc.:

A police officer told me that when they attempt to enter a drug user's room they generally find the door both locked and blocked with a bed, armchair or other object.

The second line of defence is of a more elegant nature. The typification says that the police will attempt to enter the room when the evidence is easily obtainable, i.e., when the drug user is preparing the narcotic for injection. Hence, the drug user is concerned to create the impression that such preparations are being made:

Just in case the bulls are outside the door you make some noises so that they'll think you're cookin' up. Then if they're gonna bust in they'll do it while you
can still swallow the cap . . . Strike a few matches or click a lighter, run some water — things like that.

Thus, the drug user allows himself a further opportunity to avoid arrest by temporarily "destroying the evidence".

This chapter has discussed the manner in which the drug user employes his knowledge of the structure of possibility. The behaviours described are seen as being carried out in accordance with knowledge of the procedures involved in the production of normal arrests for "possession of narcotics". 4
Footnotes


2. Taking a taxi is seen as a more efficient way of avoiding the police than taking a bus. With the exception of walking, this is the most common means of transportation to the location selected to administer drugs. Few drug users own automobiles.

3. Once the capsule has been swallowed, it cannot be retrieved by the police through the use of stomach pumps or emetics.

CHAPTER 7
ORIENTATIONS TO ARREST

In Western City, arrests for offences involving the narcotic heroin are events that occur with considerable frequency. During a ten-month period, slightly more than 300 persons were arrested -- an average of approximately one per day. The city's heroin using population is estimated to be in the region of 1,500. Of these, at any given time some 300 will be in jail. Thus, a calculation reveals that approximately 25 per cent of those heroin users not in prison will be arrested in any ten-month period.

Earlier chapters discussed the knowledge that drug users have of how persons come to be arrested and the preparations they make to avoid arrests. The intent of this chapter is the depiction of the manner in which drug users regard the occurrence of these events. The chapter begins with a discussion of the preparations officials make for the arrest of drug users.

Preparing for arrests: officials.

In Western City, arrests for violations of the Narcotic Control Act occur with such frequency and regularity that special arrangements are made for them by officials. In this sense, some Western City officials could be said to be oriented to the frequent and regular occurrence of drug arrests.

This orientation is clearly seen in the establishment of a specialized legal apparatus for handling drug cases and
the reservation of an official setting where their details can be heard.

Violators of the Narcotic Control Act are regularly prosecuted by a group of lawyers employed by the federal government's Department of Justice; they perform this task on a full-time basis. Prior to this, the Department of Justice was in the practice of appointing a politically-favoured local attorney to the office of "special prosecutor for drug cases". Under this system, the incumbent prosecuted all drug offenders and was remunerated on a pro rata basis. The appointment was considered by Western City lawyers to be an especially lucrative one.

Each afternoon of the working week, the details of arrests for offences involving narcotics are heard in a courtroom of the city's public safety building which has been set aside, during this time period, specifically for this purpose. Unless the defendant elects to be tried in a higher court, his case is disposed of by the presiding magistrate. In all cases, though, a drug offender's first court appearance is in this setting.

Thus, while those arrested for such offences as theft, rape, gambling, etc., are assigned to courtrooms and resident prosecutors on a presumably ad hoc basis, violators of the Narcotic Control Act are dealt with in a specially reserved courtroom by prosecutors who have been employed to prosecute them specifically. As such, there is a location that can be legitimately referred to as "drug court" and a
group of persons called "drug prosecutors"; most categories of crime cannot be used as a prefix in the naming of either a setting or the persons employed there. In terms of the setting, "drunk court" and "traffic court" are obvious exceptions; however, these are, like drug arrests in Western City, part of a category of events that occur with such a frequency that it is appropriate to make preparations for them in advance of their actual occurrence.

The expectancy that drug users will be frequently arrested and convicted for narcotic and non-narcotic violations is further evidenced by the preparations made by prison officials. Thus, there is some data to indicate that drug users are expected to constitute, at any given time, a major proportion of the prison population. This orientation is clearly seen in the organizing and socializing activities that take place in the local penal institution. For example, incoming inmates are routinely questioned regarding their status with respect to the use of drugs. Also, a special wing of the prison, constituting approximately 25 per cent of its physical plant, has been set aside to accommodate and "treat" convicted drug users during their period of incarceration.

The educational program designed to acquaint prospective guards with the major facts of prison life includes lectures on such topics as "the causes of drug addiction"; in the "on the job" portion of his training the fledgling prison officer will become familiar with such practical techniques
as "how to tell when drugs are being used on a tier", "how to search a cell to find drugs", and "places where drugs are usually hidden", etc.

In the prison and in the courtroom, drug users are encountered with such frequency that it is considered proper to prepare both staff and facilities prior to their arrival. Thus, there is, amongst officials, a certain expectancy that events called "drug arrests" and "arrests of drug users" will occur with considerable frequency and regularity. That these events will occur is presumed; their occurrence is understood as providing the rationale underlying the establishment of special settings, agencies, etc., and the organizing practices of institutional personnel.

The remainder of this chapter is given over to the explication of how the drug user sees the occurrence of arrests for narcotic offences. The section immediately following this deals with the drug user's notion of arrest as a normal experience, i.e., one that is expected to occur at some point in the biography of a normal member. The next section examines some of the arrest-related activities that drug users perform in the course of their daily life and suggests that drug users are oriented to the occurrence of arrest as a routine, always-possible event. The final section discusses the drug user's usage of the term "pinch".

**Drug arrests: normal biographical experiences.**

One of the things that members of a society "know" is what type of events the lives of "normal" members are
expected to include. As such, social actors are typically able to characterize their life cycle in terms of the events they will experience, the circumstances they will become involved in, etc. For example, little girls speak of growing up, getting married, having children, etc. That such events will occur is presumed, taken for granted.

Depictions of the unfolding of the life cycle can be taken as data regarding the member's notion of the course that "normal" life is expected to take, the kinds of experiences that "normal" members are supposed to have, and the instances when sanctions may be applied for not experiencing "proper experiences". "Old maid", "drop-out", and "draft-dodger" are part of the derisive nomenclature available to those whose lives have not included "normal" events.

The drug user's characterization of the course his life is expected to take is formulated in accordance with the expectancy that arrest will occur or arrest will occur "again". The following quotations are examplary:

As soon as I get pinched I'm gonna quit.
Next time I'm pinched I'm gonna go to (a training institution) so I can take a course.
I'm really gonna get hit hard on my next pinch. The bulls want me bad.
One time when I get pinched I'm gonna get so much fuckin' time that I'll come out with a fuckin' long grey beard.

Thus, "getting arrested" is regarded as an event that life is expected to include as a normal state of affairs. However, there is some data to indicate that under certain
conditions the event can be excluded from one's life:

In the course of a discussion Hughie told me that on two occasions the police had attempted to "make a deal" with him: "They said that if I'd give them information about where people are goin' to score and things like that, they'd leave me alone. I told them I would but then I just fucked off to the cafe and told everybody about it".

If members of a society have knowledge of the events that are expected to be included in the lives of "normal" members and knowledge of the conditions under which these events can be excluded, they will, in the case of exclusion, infer the existence of these conditions. For example, inferences regarding the psychological or biological adequacy of middle-aged "unmarrieds" or childless "merely marrieds". Similarly, drug users whose "failure" to be arrested is noticed may be taken as "finks" or "informers":

If you use junk, you're gonna get pinched. That's all there is to it. It may take them a while to catch on to you, but sooner or later you'll get it. The only people that don't get pinched are the finks, the guys that are keepin' out by workin' with the bulls.

A fink is a person who doesn't get arrested 'cause he helps the bulls get other fiends.

Hence, when a set of circumstances is commonly defined as one in which "normal" members will imminently become involved, a member's non-involvement may be taken as evidence of his abnormality.

There is obviously a temporal consideration here: just as members know the character of the events that are expected to occur, they are also aware of how these events are to be scheduled. Thus, as there is a point in time when "sowing
wild oats" is redefined as "irresponsible behaviour", so is there a point where drugs users attribute "not being arrested" to "police co-operation" rather than "good fortune":

Hughie told me to keep away from Suzanne because she was suspected of being a police informer. I asked him why she was under suspicion and he said: "Anybody who can go for that long without taking a pinch has to be a fink".

Fred told me that he hadn't been to jail for sixteen months and added: "If I don't get pinched soon, people are gonna start gettin' suspicious of me. They'll figure I'm a fink or something".

A drug user who appeared to be about fifty years old (A) and a younger one (B) had the following discussion in the waiting room of the narcotic treatment center:

A : I was using for three years before I got pinched. For three years I didn't so much as see a fuckin' mountic.

B : Is that right.
A : Yup, three years.
B : Jeez, to stay outside that long these days you'd have to be workin' for them.
A : That's right. Things sure have changed.
B : Yeah.

Knowledge of the circumstances normal members are expected to become involved in is of practical significance to those who are concerned to have others see them as normal. Homosexuals who marry as a heterosexual front are an obvious example. A perhaps less obvious example is the undercover narcotics enforcement officer:

A drug user told me that the police often deliberately "picked on" undercover drug policemen "just to make them seem like the rest of us down here".

This section has dealt with the drug user's orientation to arrest as a normal biographical experience. As such, it is expected to occur at some point in the life cycle of a
normal member; hence, its occurrence can be used in deciding a member's normality. The next section discusses the drug users' orientation to arrest on a day-to-day basis.

Drug arrests: routine, always-possible events.

It was noted earlier that in Western City events called "drug arrests" occur with considerable frequency and regularity. As a consequence drug users regularly and frequently perform certain activities related to arrests. Such activities include "reporting arrests", "discussing arrests", "preparing for arrest", etc. This section examines some of these arrest-related activities and suggests that drug users are oriented to arrest as a routine, always-possible event. Hence, in this section the focus is on the procedural definition of an event: the member's understanding of an event's nature is revealed by the practices they follow when dealing with it.

The drug user's notion that arrests are events that can be more-or-less expected to occur on a regular, frequent basis is revealed by the fact that they are taken as events that can be legitimately "asked about". For example, in the Family Cafe it is not uncommon to hear one drug user inquire about the welfare of another in terms of whether he has recently been arrested or made the subject of a police investigation intended to produce an arrest:

Ed greeted Robbie in the following manner: Well, how are you doin' Robbie? Have the bulls paid a call on ya lately?"
Hughie and I entered the cafe and joined Frank at the counter. Frank said: "Well Hughie, how's it goin'? The bulls been treatin' you okay?"

Similarly, if a drug user has been absent from the local drug scene for any length of time, he may, upon his return, request an account of the events that took place in his absence. Such requests are often given in terms of the expectancy that some persons will have been arrested:

Joe and I were joined at the counter by Woody, a drug peddler who had just returned from a three week holiday in the U.S. Joe asked Woody how he enjoyed his holiday and he said: "Great, it was great to get away from this fuckin' place for awhile. Who got pinched while I was gone?" Joe replied: "Harry was last night. I guess he was up this morning". Woody said: "Anybody else?" Joe replied "Oh yeah, but I can't remember".

In the two examples prior to this one, inquiries about police encounters were made in a routine fashion within the context of an ordinary greeting conversation. The above example indicates both that a number of arrests are expected to occur in any given time period and that when they do occur they are attended to as other than memorable events. As such, arrests appear to be taken as ordinary everyday occurrences, i.e., routine events.

This aspect of the drug user's orientation to arrest is further revealed by the manner in which news of their occurrence is reported. Generally, incidents of arrest are not announced as events of any special interest, significance, or curiosity. That a person has been arrested is an item that is most often mentioned in the course of an ordinary conversation and attended to matter-of-factly as a routine
occurrence. The following reports are exemplary:

A: They got Freddie last night.
B: Jeez, that's too bad. He wasn't out too long this time, was he?
A: About three months, I think.
B: Huh . . .

A: What's new?
B: Fuck all.
A: I hear that Marty was pinched a couple of days ago.
B: Yeah, so I hear.

A: Jake was pinched this afternoon.
B: Is that right. Poor old Jake.

Furthermore, the above examples indicate that arrests are not subjects that generate much "talk" amongs drug users. This topic is addressed in more detail in the next section.

The drug user's orientation to arrests as events that are always possible is clearly evidenced by the set of activities performed following a drug transaction. These activities, as noted earlier, include preparing the capsule of heroin for the purpose of transporting it to the location where it will be administered. At the moment of purchase, the drug user wraps the capsule in a small piece of silver foil paper and places it in his mouth, thus allowing himself the opportunity to swallow it in the event of an encounter with the police. The foil paper effectively "seals" the capsule so that it can be removed from the mouth at an appropriate time and unwrapped ready to use; if the situation requires that it be swallowed, it can later be regurgitated or salvaged from excreta in a usable condition. Hence, it
is not uncommon to see a drug user remove the silver foil paper from a discarded cigarette package, fold it neatly, and place it in his pocket for later use. Similarly, drug peddlers often anticipate their client's needs and keep a small stock of foil squares nearby.

The practices of "wrapping" and "mouthing" the capsule are carried out immediately following every heroin transaction. Their performance is independent of the time of the day, day of the week, or reported volume of police activity. Thus, a noticeable decrease in the number of arrests that occurred in any period of time would not be taken as sufficient warrant to discontinue these activities.

The fact that these practices are followed with such regularity can be taken as data relative to the manner in which the drug user regards the possibility that he will become the subject of a police investigation. In this sense, involvement in such a situation appears to be regarded as an extremely likely possibility and therefore one that is properly prepared for in advance of its actual occurrence.

Furthermore, as events that are regarded as always possible, the occurrence of arrests can be legitimately inferred on a variety of occasions. For example, one drug user can infer the possibility of another's arrest from his absence from the Family Cafe for what is taken to be a longer-than-usual period of time.

The two males sitting next to me at the counter were discussing the recent absence of a drug peddler:
A : Where's Woody these days? I haven't seen him around.
B : He took a trip down to the States.
A : Oh, I thought he might've been pinched.

Hughie told me that he hadn't seen Freddie "around" for a few days and he thought that he might've been arrested.

Similarly, that an arrest has occurred is an inference that can be made if a drug user (in this case a drug peddler) does not appear at the cafe in accordance with a previously announced schedule:

A drug peddler had informed some of the people in the cafe that he was leaving to pick up his supply and would return in half-an-hour. An hour passed and he had not returned. Some concern was being expressed about his lateness: "Jeez, where's Jake? I bet he's pinched". "I bet they got him when he picked up". When he finally arrived, one drug user said: "Holy fuck, Jake, Where were ya? We thought you were pinched for sure".

This section has focused on the manner in which the drug user procedurally defines arrest. An examination of everyday activities such as "reporting arrest", "preparing for arrest" reveals that the drug user regards arrests as routine, always-possible events. The next section deals with some of the "understood and understood to be understood" features of the conversational activities related to arrest.

"Pinched": its intended meaning.

McKinney has noted that language is a typifying medium for transmitting socially derived knowledge:

The vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named objects (things or events). Any label or name delineating an object implics a typification and generalization referring to the relevance system prevailing within the social system which found the named object significant enough to provide a specific
symbol for it. In this sense the everyday language of the members of a social system includes a veritable treasurehouse of typifications or types symbolically representing their relations to their object world.

In the segments of conversation reported in earlier sections of this and other chapters, the term "pinch" and its grammatical variants were used with considerable frequency. Some of the available data indicates that drug users employ this term assuming that it will be understood as denoting an arrest for a narcotics offence and, moreover, an arrest that has taken place in accordance with the "normal" form discussed earlier. Thus, this section analyzes the specific meaning the drug user intends this term to have.

1. When drug users report the occurrence of an arrest or an investigation intended to produce one, it is assumed that if the offence is not specified, "possession of narcotics" will be understood as the "reason why" the arrest or investigation took place. Thus, although drug users are regularly involved in a variety of illegal activities to provide funds for the purchase of heroin and are therefore liable to be arrested for any number of offences, to merely say that one has been "pinched" is to say that one has been arrested for the possession of narcotics.

In the course of a conversation I questioned Hughie regarding the whereabouts of Harry, a drug user I had met in the cafe. Hughie told me that he had been "pinched". I asked what he had been arrested for and Hughie replied: "For junk. What did ya think?"

Hence, an unspecified "pinch" is taken and meant to be taken as "an arrest for the possession of narcotics". When
reporting an arrest for a violation other than this one, the drug user specifies the offence:

Lynn's been pinched for vag.

Neil got pinched for boosting the other day.

2. When drug users infer that someone has been pinched and subsequently verbalize this inference, it is assumed to be understood that what has been inferred is an arrest for an offence involving narcotics:

Hughie and I were in the Family Cafe waiting for his father, who was also a drug user. He was over an hour late and Hughie was expressing some concern over his whereabouts. At one point he said: "Shit, I bet the old bugger's been pinched". I knew that his father was regularly involved in a variety of illegal activities so I asked Hughie what it was that he thought he might've been arrested for. Hughie replied: "You know I mean junk".

3. When drug users either request the provision of an inventory of recent "pinches" or called upon to provide such an inventory, it is assumed that what is called for or provided is understood as "an inventory of recent arrests for narcotic offences". Thus, while drug users are often arrested for non-narcotic violations, e.g. theft, prostitution, arrests for offences not involving drugs are not expected to be included in these inventories:

During the course of a conversation Hughie asked me if I'd been to the Family Cafe recently. I replied that I had and he said: "Anybody been pinched?" Earlier in the week I had heard that Lynn, a young lesbian, had been arrested for vagrancy. I replied: "I heard that Lynn was". Hughie expressed some surprise and said: "Jeez, I didn't know she was using". I told him what she had been arrested for and he said: "Oh, I meant for junk".
4. When drug users report the occurrence of a drug arrest, or an investigation intended to produce one, it is assumed that the circumstances of the event are understood. Thus, reports typically do not include detailed descriptions of "what happened", "how it happened", etc. Reports of arrests are generally given in a parsimonious fashion with minimal reference to the particular circumstances. For example, both "They got Freddie last night" and "Jake was pinched this afternoon" are typical of reports that are given when an arrest has occurred. Detailed accounts of routine events are not provided; nor is it expected that such accounts have to be provided:

Earlier in the evening I had heard that John had been arrested for a narcotics violation. I mentioned this to Robbie and she said: "Yeah, so I hear". I asked: "How did it happen?" and she replied: "What the fuck do you mean, how did it happen? The same way they all happen, I guess".

Knowledge of how persons come to be arrested for drug offences is presumed, taken for granted, something that every drug user knows; as such, the details of a particular arrest, e.g. "how it happened", etc., are not topics of conversation, that naturally occur amongst drug users. Furthermore, there is some data to indicate that there are sanctions applied to those who treat such details as legitimate points of discussion:

Freddie came to the office just as Joey, a neophyte drug user whom I'd been interviewing, was leaving. I asked Freddie if he knew Joey; he replied that he did and added the following: "That is one asshole I don't care if I ever see again for the rest of my fuckin' natural life". He proceeded to explain that
two evenings ago Joey had spent "... about an hour and a half" relating to him "... all the fuckin' details of a pinch he took. It must've been his first one. He said: 'Well I figure the cops must've been watchin' me', and 'Jeez, they broke the door right down". He added: "Nobody wants to hear that shit". I asked him why this was so and he replied: "Because it's so fuckin' boring. Same old story all the time. Everybody knows how the bulls work".

The exposition of the content of the drug user's knowledge of the arrest producing procedures employed by the police was the task of an earlier chapter. In this context it is sufficient to note that drug users attend to such procedures in their typicality. Hence, when a drug user hears a report that a person has been "pinched", he does not need explanations of "how it happened", etc., to enable him to reconstruct the event and its circumstances; details are superfluous and are dealt with as such. Only when a drug arrest is produced by unexpected means or has special circumstances surrounding it is it raised to the status of an announcable event or a legitimate topic of discussion. In these cases, details of "how it happened", etc., become matters worth reporting:

About a dozen people were in the cafe. Two addicts, Joe and Freddie, were talking near the rear of the counter. Joe stood up and in a very loud voice said: "Hey. Did anybody hear what happened to Shorty last night?" Without waiting for a reply he proceeded to describe a rather unusual incident of arrest that had taken place the evening before. Apparently, Shorty had purchased a capsule of heroin on behalf of a woman. The police found the drug in her possession and she named Shorty as the supplier. They later picked Shorty up for questioning. It appeared that Joe's remarks were attended to by most of those present. Several made comments like: "For Christ's sake", "How about that", etc. A few minutes later a male drug user entered the cafe and sat at the counter. Another approached him and said: "Did y'hear about Shorty?" After receiving a
negative reply, he related the details of Shorty’s encounter with the police.

Thus, the details of arrests that are produced in other than the "normal" or usual fashion are "announcable" and "discussable", etc. Similarly, the details of arrests for infrequently occurring offences or those for which there is no known "normal" form can be legitimately related or inquired about.

While the above may be taken as a rather tedious discourse on a trivial matter, it is necessary to establish the point that when the drug user characterizes his life cycle in terms of being "pinched" and performs the everyday activities of "reporting pinches", "inquiring about pinches", etc., he is referring specifically to arrest for an offence involving narcotics.

The drug user's world is one composed of frequently occurring legal events called drug arrests or "pinches". This chapter has dealt mainly with the drug user's orientation to these events. It was suggested that they are regarded as normal experiences in that they are expected to be included in the biographies of normal members. An examination of some of the activities related to "pinches" indicated that drug users also regard them as routine events (in the sense that their occurrence can be reported, etc., in a characteristic
fashion) and as always-possible events (in the sense that it is considered proper to make preparation in advance of their occurrence etc.). Furthermore, particular pinches are only memorable, announcable, and discussable in their particularity when they have occurred in an atypical fashion or have special circumstances surrounding them: When a "pinch" is reported in a routine fashion, it is understood that it took place in the "normal", "typical", "usual" manner. An earlier chapter dealt with the background of normal occurrences in whose terms the character of any individual arrest is decided.
Footnotes

1. Tables I, II and III are not based on numbers of persons arrested but on numbers of arrest-producing actions made by the police. In some of these, more than one person was actually arrested. The 198 arrest-producing actions resulted in the arrest of 331 persons during the ten-month period.

Most of this study has reported on the activities that are observable in a setting where heroin can be purchased and has focused in particular on those activities that are related to the buying and selling of this drug. It was suggested that drug transactions and the behaviour that drug users routinely engage in immediately following such transactions are to be understood in terms of their knowledge of police procedures.

By taking police procedures into account, drug users decrease the probability that the police will be able to obtain the evidence sufficient to warrant an arrest for "possession of narcotics" or "trafficking in narcotics". In doing so, they have made activities related to the buying and selling of drugs more or less invisible to all but socialized observers. In this regard, one drug user described the Family Cafe in the following manner:

It looks just like an ordinary everyday cafe. Just like a lot of places. Guys sittin' around havin' coffee and shootin' the shit. The average guy'd never know what was goin' on. I mean, fuck, he could be sittin' right in the middle of it all and he'd never know that there was anything to do with dope goin' on. The thing is, if you're not part of it you just don't have any idea that anything's happening, that's all.

The user's or trafficker's discrete management of his drug relevant behaviours consists mainly of a set of practical actions which are regularly and routinely performed with the objective of counteracting police evidence-gathering procedures. However, these routine performances have an important ancillary effect in that they tend to limit access
to drugs and even awareness of drug relevant behaviours to bonafide drug users only. Hence, while the drug user's practical actions are intended as elements of a methodology designed to minimize the risk of arrest, they also must be understood as exercising a sort of regulatory effect on new admissions to a drug using pattern.

One question that has not been addressed thus far is that which asks why, given their knowledge of police procedures, drug users continually purchase heroin in the Family Cafe. As noted earlier, drug users "know" that the Family Cafe is observed by the police and their observation of a heroin transaction taking place there is the initial event in a series of events that could lead to an arrest for "possession of narcotics". In terms of this knowledge, it would be reasonable to expect that drug users would be concerned to frequently change their place of purchase.

Quite obviously, drug users go to the Family Cafe to purchase drugs from the drug peddlers they expect to encounter there. However, this merely raises the question of why there are drug peddlers in the cafe in the first place.

One possible answer to this question may be obtained by viewing drug peddling as a business activity. Its nature prohibits conventional "advertising" and consequently it would be difficult for drug peddlers to inform drug users of continual relocations. Thus, the Family Cafe serves as a sort of "permanent premises" for drug peddlers. Also, the cafe is a relatively "safe" place for drug peddlers to be. They are
seldom arrested in the cafe:

[Have you ever seen a drug peddler arrested in the Family Cafe?] It hardly ever happens. The harness bulls got a guy about a year ago, though.

Such events are "memorable" and "countable". Some further discussion of the social organization of police arrest-producing activities will perhaps clarify this.

As noted earlier, the drug squad has established a relatively permanent "observation post" across the street from the cafe. The majority of their operations are based on the assumption that drug transactions will take place there. As they are "set up" to operate in this fashion, they have a certain practical interest in ensuring that this will continue to be the case. For example, there is some data to indicate that the drug squad specifically instruct the uniformed policemen who routinely enter the Family Cafe not to interrupt drug peddlers as they go about their activities:

A member of the Western City drug squad told me that they discouraged the uniformed policemen from "grabbing" drug peddler in there and attempting to obtain their supply of drugs as evidence. He said that if the uniformed policemen did "grab" peddlers, it would "mess up" the drug squad's work for the whole evening.

One of the uniformed foot patrolmen told me that they only attempt to "get" a drug peddler in the Family Cafe when they have a "100% chance of getting his stuff". He indicated that if they tried and missed, they would be informally sanctioned by the drug squad members.

Thus, in a sense, drug peddlers are "left alone" so they can supply persons with heroin and consequently "produce" a continuous supply of "candidates" who may be arrested for
"possession of narcotics".

The drug squad is only "set up" to observe transactions that take place in the Family Cafe. Thus, they have a certain practical interest in ensuring that most of them take place there:

A member of the Western City drug squad told me that they always "heard" (via informers) when drug peddlers were operating in public settings other than the Family Cafe. He said that on these occasions a couple of squad members go to the cafe or beer parlour and merely "frighten" the drug peddler by their presence. The purpose of this procedure is to make the drug peddler swallow his supply of heroin and thus "... put him out of operation for the night". He said that if they can't properly observe drug transactions occurring, they are legally unable to take arrest-producing action.

Thus, in a sense, police practices can be seen as influencing not only how drug transactions and the activities immediately following them will take place but where they will take place as well.
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