

A  
MARIHUANA  
DICTIONARY

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Words, Terms, Events,  
and Persons Relating to Cannabis

*ERNEST L. ABEL*

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# INTRODUCTION

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Marihuana came of age in the United States in the 1960s.

Not that it was any new discovery. Marihuana, hashish, charas, kif, pot, grass, or whatever it was called had been around for thousands of years before it came to America.

Marihuana was introduced to Americans as a drug at the turn of the century, concealed in the little *mota* bags Mexican workers carried with them across the border. Before that, marihuana was called “hemp,” and it was no stranger to the United States.

The hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*, was brought to the New World by the early colonists, and both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were hemp farmers. In those days, hardly a household in America didn't own something made of its tough, durable fibers. In some colonies hemp was so highly valued it was even accepted in place of money!

But for some unknown reason, Americans didn't think of chewing or smoking the leaves of the hemp plant until quite recently.

By the 1920s, marihuana had spread from the Mexican to the black communities of the South, and when Mexican and black workers migrated north in search of jobs, so did marihuana. By the 1930s, all the big cities had their marihuana “dealers” and buyers.

Worried that the drug might incite violence and sexual deviance, lawmakers around the country passed laws making it illegal. In 1937 Congress passed the Marihuana Tax Act, and marihuana went underground. Use of marihuana became a felony offense. In many states, conviction carried a long prison sentence; in some, a convicted marihuana user could be sentenced to death.

By the 1960s, however, white middle-class college students began using marihuana, and the lawmakers were faced with a personal predicament: Enforce the law and put their own sons and daughters in jail or change the law. By the 1970s, the laws against marihuana began to change. Marihuana still remained illegal. Now it was just less illegal.

Because of the fear of discovery and the consequences of such discovery, marihuana users had to find ways and means of keeping their drug usage secret. A key element in this clandestine effort was the development and refining of a special language—a lingo—by which users could communicate with one another and identify who was a user and who was not.

Lingos or argots, as students of language call them, have always been around. Every group has one. Doctors, lawyers, athletes, railway workers, musicians, and so on, all develop, refine, and perpetuate their own language within the general language. These lingos are passwords. They say “I belong.”

Lingos are not developed to hide behind. Instead, they evolve as a way of fostering group solidarity. Those who use a particular lingo derive pleasure from it. They take pride in using it. They judge others by their knowledge of it. A lingo promotes camaraderie and cohesiveness because it reflects and embodies the thinking and life-styles—the attitudes, values, habits, concerns, fears, aspirations, and activities—of the group.

Like all slang, however, marihuana lingo is constantly changing. As soon as various terms become widely known to and used by the public, they are dropped and are replaced by new terms. Certain terms also tend to be regional. The same term may even have a different meaning in different parts of the country. But even with the ephemeral quality of much of the lingo, there always seems to be a core of terms that is perpetuated through generations as if it were a cultural heirloom. This colorful, cryptic heirloom is the main subject matter of this marihuana dictionary.

Marihuana lingo seems to intrigue both scholars and the general public. Scholars are fascinated by this language within a language because it offers new insights into America’s drug culture. The general public seems just as fascinated by the colorful language, as witnessed by the

many pop songs, movies, magazines, and books that contain marihuana jargon. Often these terms are used without any explanation on the assumption that they are so well known that no explanation is needed. At other times, however, it's very difficult to know what is being said without being a member of the drug culture.

One of the questions that invariably pops up whenever anyone talks about the language of marihuana is where terms like marihuana, pot, and grass came from or when they first began to be used. Unfortunately, the etymology of many of these words is lost. However, whenever possible, I have tried to provide the earliest citations for the terms that appear in this dictionary so that at least the history is documented. Many of the terms that refer to marihuana or marihuana usage also are recognized as having evolved from narcotics slang. However, only when the term clearly referred to marihuana was the entry included.

To make this dictionary more thorough, I also have included terms referring to hemp that were once well known but are now obsolete. Most of these terms refer to the use of the marihuana plant as an important source of fiber—especially in ropes used to execute people. I also have included information concerning some of the better-known people who have contributed in one way or another to the history of marihuana and concerning important events associated with the drug. Some basic information about marihuana as a plant and drug, along with some basic terms about drugs in general, also is included. Finally, an appendix is included that lists various terms for marihuana in foreign languages, along with the names and ingredients of various candies and beverages made with marihuana throughout the world.

A detailed index is provided at the end of the text that lists the dictionary entries. In addition, there are cross-references to synonyms in the text to facilitate explanation of terms. These synonyms, which are defined separately, are indicated by the symbol (\*).

If readers are familiar with earlier citations of terms, if they know of other derivations for cited terms, or if they know of additional terms, they are invited to submit this information to me for possible inclusion in future editions of this book.



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A  
MARIHUANA  
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# THE DICTIONARY

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## A

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**A(tom) Bomb.** Cigarette made of a combination of drugs, for example, marihuana and heroin. *See also* Candy a J.

1962: "My name is Emp and I pay thirty for atom bombs." (Pritchie, *Savage Kick*, p. 24).

1965: "Sometimes marihuana cigarettes are dipped in heroin ('A-bomb') by the smoker, as one way of getting more of a 'charge' from it." (Winick, "Marihuana," p. 236).

**Abuse.** 1. Use of a drug for nonmedical purposes. 2. Drug usage in excess of approved medical or social practice, usually resulting in emotional or physical damage and/or antisocial behavior.

**Acapulco Gold.** Potent form of marihuana originating near the tropical resort town in Mexico; golden brown in color. Formerly known as Gold Leaf.\*

1965: "This is a special grade of pot growing only in the vicinity of Acapulco. The color is either brownish gold or a mixture of gold and green. This grade has a potency surpassed by few of the

green varieties and usually comes at slightly higher prices or in short weight." (*Marijuana Newsletter*, January, no. 11).

1966: *Acapulco Gold*. Title of a song recorded by Rainy Daze.

1967: "The all-time supersmoke is the top cut of Mexico's vintage grass called Acapulco Gold." (*Newsweek*, July 24, p. 48).

1967: "'Very good stuff,' he said, 'comparable to Acapulco Gold.'" (Simmons, *Marihuana*, p. 34).

1968: "Because of this 'Acapulco Gold' and 'Panama Red' have become very popular." (Bloomquist, *Marihuana*, p. 190).

1969: "Acapulco Gold . . . supposedly the all-time supersmoke of the many different varieties of marihuana tobacco." (Geller and Boas, *Drug Beat*, p. xv).

1974: *Acapulco Gold*. Title of book written by Edwin Corley.

1979: "They want to be able to drop heavy names like Acapulco Gold." (Goldman, *Grass Roots*, p. 36).

**Acapulco Gold Papers.** Cigarette papers made from marihuana fiber.

1974: "Their Acapulco Gold papers much improved." (*High Times*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 5).

**Acapulco Red.** Like Acapulco Gold\* except the color is reddish brown.

**Ace.** Marihuana cigarette (1930s-1940s). Term evolved by analogy with the playing card, which is the "highest" in the deck.

1938: "An ace is a single stick and sells for fifteen cents." (Berger, *New Yorker*, March 12, p. 43).

1944: "I smoke an ace and it makes me high." (Marcovitz and Myers, "Marihuana Addict," p. 384).

**Action.** Any activity; a "happening"; the purchase or sale of drugs.

See Bag Action, Box Action, Grass Action, Lid Action, Pound Action, Tin Action.

**Acute.** Of short duration, in contrast to chronic.\*

**Addict.** "Any individual who habitually uses any narcotic drug so as to endanger the public morals, health, safety, or welfare, or who is so far addicted to the use of narcotic drugs as to have lost the power of self-control with reference to his addiction." (*Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970*). Inappropriately applied to marihuana users. See also Addiction.

1931: "Approximately one out of every four persons arrested in this city is addicted to mariahuana." (Fossier, "Marihuana," p. 249).

1931: "Addicts are commonly termed 'muggle heads.'" (Stanley, "Marihuana," p. 255).

1938: "The hard-working father of a family of eight was injured to the extent of a fractured skull by a marihuana addict." (Cooper, *Here's to Crime*, p. 336).

1938: "Over two hundred children under fourteen are believed to be addicted to the marihuana habit." (Walton, *Marihuana*, p. 29).

1948: "The marihuana addicts are prone to awake afterwards with a feeling of ravenous hunger." (Wolff, "Marihuana," p. 14).

1951: "We saw them serve drinks after hours and cater to fairies of all shades, female white thrill chasers, and Negro reefer addicts." (Lait and Mortimer, *Washington Confidential*, p. 71).

**Addiction.** A condition resulting from repeated drug use, consisting of an overpowering urge to keep using it and to get it by any means.

Tendency is to increase the dosage. The condition involves both tolerance\* and withdrawal symptoms following abstinence. The condition does not apply to marihuana, although marihuana users were often labeled as addicts by antimarihuana crusaders. *See also* Addict.

1952: "In the rituals of reefer addiction . . ." (Oursler and Smith, *Hooked*, p. 36).

**Afghani.** Hashish from Afghanistan; hash oil.\*

1976: "There seem to be many different types of hash oils being marketed today . . . Afghani. . . ." (*High Times*, July, p. 16).

**African Black.** Potent form of hashish from Africa; blackish in color.

**Airplane.** *See* Jefferson Airplane.

**Alcott, Louisa May (1832-1888).** American novelist. Author of popular *Little Women* (1868). First (1869) American writer to use hashish as a plot device. In her short story *Perilous Play*, Alcott describes some of the effects of hashish for nineteenth-century Americans:

"A heavenly dreaminess comes over one, in which they move as if on air. Everything is calm and lovely to them: no pain, no care, no fear of anything, and while it lasts one feels like an angel half asleep."

"But if one takes too much, how then?"

"Hum! Well, that's not so pleasant, unless one likes phantoms, frenzies, and a touch of nightmare, which seems to last a thousand years."

**Alice B. Toklas Brownies; Hash Brownies.** Cookies baked with marihuana or hashish. From Alice B. Toklas, female companion and cook for expatriate author Gertrude Stein, during the 1920s and 1930s in Paris, who used hashish in fudge recipe (*Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*, 1929).

Recipe inspired movie, *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas*, about effects of brownies baked with marihuana.

1969: "I was warned to be careful if I mixed pot in food—Alice B. Toklas brownies or 'apple turn-on.'" (*Time*, September 26, p. 73).

1976: "If grass is smoked or baked in the oven (Alice B. Toklas Brownies). . . ." (*High Times*, May, p. 13).

**All right on the hemp.** An expression current before the American Civil War meaning "to be held accountable." Equivalent to modern expression, "put your money where your mouth is." During the pre-Civil War era, it literally meant that you were willing to hang someone as proof of your conviction that you were right and he was wrong. Hanging ropes at that time were made of hemp—the fiber of the marihuana plant—hence the expression. *See* Hemp.

1857: "In the northern districts, the piece of hemp was the more customary mark of those who were ready to use the halter in proof of the soundness of their views. 'Neither give nor take quarter,' and 'all right on the hemp' were their two pass words." (Gladstone, *Englishman in Kansas*, pp. 255-56).

**Amok, Amuck.** Uncontrollable behavior, generally involving violence. "To run amok" means to run about in a frenzy, attacking everyone encountered. Phrase originated in Malaya and was associated with marihuana usage.

1893-1894: "The Inspector-General of Police in the Central Provinces states that 'running amok' is always the result of excessive indulgence in hemp drugs; but under cross-examination he says: 'I have never had experience of such a case. I only state what I have heard.' " (*India Hemp Drugs Commission Report*, pp. 258-59).

1936: "In Malay, where it is eaten as hashish, the murderous frenzy in which the native dashes with a weapon into a crowd screaming: 'Amok! Amok!' (Kill! Kill!) is due to the drug, according to some travelers. Our common expression 'to run amuck' is derived from this source." (Wolf, *Popular Science Monthly*, p. 119).

**Amorphia.** California-based lobbying group for legalization of marihuana. Founded in 1969 by Dr. Michael Aldrich, the membership primarily was made up of marihuana users. The group succeeded in placing a referendum to legalize marihuana on the California ballot in 1972 (not passed). The group disappeared after 1974.

**Amotivational Syndrome.** Term coined to describe a loss of interest in conventional goals as a result of chronic marihuana use. *See also* Canabinomania.

1969: "Scientists are now trying to assess what some call the 'amotivational syndrome.' " (*Newsweek*, April 21, p. 110).

1969: "The regular use of marihuana may be followed by an 'amotivational syndrome.' " (*Time*, July 25, p. 65).

**Angola Black.** Potent marihuana from Angola; dark in color.

**Ann Arbor Ordinance.** First (1971) local law in the United States decriminalizing marihuana use from a felony\* offense to a misdemeanor\* with a maximum sentence of ninety days in jail and/or a \$100 fine.

**Anslinger, Harry Jacob (1892-1975).** Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics\* (1930-1962). Anslinger is the law enforcement official most closely linked with antimarihuana laws in America. He was the driving force behind the enactment of the Marihuana Tax Act of 1937\* and an advocate of strong antidrug laws and stiff penalties for violation. Prone to exaggeration, hyperbole, and distortions when discussing marihuana, and calling it "as dangerous as a coiled rattlesnake and twice as deadly," he said, "If the hideous monster Frankenstein came face to face with the monster marihuana he would drop dead of fright." Anslinger retired as bureau chief in 1962 but served as U.S. representative on the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board until 1970.

**Antiparaphernalia Law.** Law banning the sale of paraphernalia associated with drug taking, including marihuana, for example, marihuana cigarette papers. The first (1977) statewide law was passed in Indiana. *See* Head Shop.

**Anywhere.** Possessing or smoking marihuana.

1953: "Are you anywhere?" (Burroughs, *Junkie*, p. 14).

**Aphrodisiac.** Substance that increases libido. It does so by reducing inhibitions or increasing local genital irritation. Marihuana is often regarded as such.

1939: "... reefers, i.e., the aphrodisiac made from the crushed leaves and seeds of the marihuana plant." (*Fortune*, July, p. 60).

1949: "Marihuana can be a strong aphrodisiac and for its users there is usually no such thing as normal sex relations." (Wilson, *Collier's*, June 4, p. 53).

**Arabian Nights (also known as Thousand and One Nights).** Collection of stories from Arab-speaking countries, some of which are more than a thousand years old. These stories tell of daily life in Arab countries, and some refer to hashish and its effects, especially on sexuality. The



stories were the first introduction to hashish and its effects for most Europeans.

“Know that the most delicious thing that my ear has ever heard, O my young lord, is this story that came to me of a hashish eater among hashish eaters.”  
(from *Tale of the Hashish Eater*).

“There was once, my lord, crown of my head, a man in a certain city who was a fisherman by trade and a hashish eater by occupation.” (from *Tale of the Two Hashish Eaters*).

**Ashes. Marihuana.**

**Assassins.** Name given to a terrorist group operating during the eleventh through thirteenth centuries in the Middle East. The group was founded around A.D. 1050 by Hasan-ibn Sabah, known to the Crusaders as the “Old Man of the Mountain.” Their base of operations was initially Persia, but their influence spread as far as Syria. The group allegedly used hashish. By association, hashish became identified with violence and murder by Westerners.

1936: “(The word) ‘assassin’ has two explanations, but either demonstrates the menace of Indian hemp. According to one version, members of a band of Persian terrorists committed their worst atrocities while under the influence of hashish. In the other version, Saracens who opposed the Crusaders were said to employ the services of hashish addicts to secure secret murders of the leaders of the Crusades. In both versions, the murderers were known as ‘haschischin.’ ” (Wolf, *Popular Science Magazine*, p. 14).

1937: “The members were confirmed users of hashish, or marihuana, and it is from the Arab ‘hashashin’ that we have the English word ‘assassin.’ ” (Anslinger, *American Magazine*, p. 9).

**At.** Where something is taking place. “Where’s it at? Where’s the pot party?”

**Atharva Veda.** Religious text from India dating back to 2,000-1,400 B.C. containing earliest written reference to marihuana (as “bhanga”).

**Aubert-Roche, Louis (1808-1878).** French physician. Aubert-Roche practiced medicine in Egypt between 1834-1838. He wrote “The Use of Hashish in the Treatment of the Plague” (1840), which dealt with beneficial effects of hashish in the treatment of typhus.

**Aunt Mary. Marihuana.**