

ALBUQUERQUE CRIMINAL LAWYER BLOG

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A Surprising Source of Reason in the Marijuana Debate

It is estimated that drug violence has claimed over 16,000 lives in Mexico during the past three years. These deaths have resulted from a virtual war between the Mexican government and the drug cartels. The cash crop is marijuana.

The cartels are turning increasingly to child runners. Mexican drug gangs are recruiting children as drug runners and mules. The Texas Department of Public Safety refers to the child recruitment campaign as "scare and awe." The awe comes in the form of the promise of easy money and status while the fear comes in the form of torture and death.

Several states now have medicinal marijuana programs, including New Mexico. It is estimated that California has up to 2000 medical marijuana dispensaries. There is now even a Cannabis University, Oaksterdam University, that teaches people how to grow and dispense weed. Yet New Mexico, and Albuquerque in particular, continues to prosecute possession very aggressively. God forbid, you have over 8 ounces in your possession because you will likely then be charged with distribution.

Lives continue to be ruined on both sides of the border as a result of the war on drugs and the prosecution of marijuana possession. Thousands of lives have been lost, children are exploited and even tortured, immigrants are deported routinely for marijuana possession, people are hauled into court for minor possession, and those with more than 8 ounces can face 2nd degree felony trafficking charges carrying up to 9 years in prison.

No amount of reason has worked thus far to alter the enforcement of the marijuana laws. Perhaps, reason simply lacks the persuasive force of profits. This is particularly so when the insurance industry is involved. Due to the explosive growth of the medical marijuana industry, a new cottage insurance industry catering to the needs of the medical marijuana industry has sprouted up. Insurance is now available for everything from standard worker's compensation to crop theft insurance.

Medical marijuana is becoming big business California leads the country with as many as 2000 medical marijuana dispensaries. Colorado is a distant second with 60. However, the number is growing in the states that have legalized medical marijuana. You can bet the industry is growing when the insurance industry has taken note.

The insurance industry is generally much maligned and for good reason. Maybe, the very greed that is generally so repulsive in the insurance industry will lead to positive social change as the medical marijuana industry takes root. Perhaps, similar profit motives will dictate more enlightened marijuana policies across the board as the insurance industry spots new profit centers. Where the logic of saving lives, saving children from exploitation and torture, saving immigrants from deportation for minor possession, and saving otherwise law abiding citizens from often harsh and inhumane prosecution has fallen on deaf ears, the logic of capitalism will hopefully carry the day. This is a rare occasion when I am pulling for the insurance industry to make more money.

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