

November 12, 1968

Dr. Stanley Yolles
Director
National Institute of Mental Health
5454 Wisconsin
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Dear Dr. Yolles:

I am writing to ask your assistance in legally making available supplies of marijuana for experimental research.

In May, 1967 I was invited to a meeting at the National Institute of Mental Health at which studies of marijuana and cannabinoids were discussed. Following that meeting I obtained the necessary certificates, filed various forms, protocols and applications to NIMH, appealed to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and attempted to obtain supplies of marijuana through legal channels.

Through the cooperation of Drs. Efron and Levine of the Psychopharmacology Research Branch, 50 ampules of THC, 10 mg each, were made available this summer. Since an essential question to be answered was the comparison of the effects of marijuana and this THC product, I deferred the studies of THC, awaiting a response from the appropriate committees at NIH. I answered the requests of Dr. Scigiliano and filed the appropriate forms. In late August I received a detailed inquiry from his committee, which I immediately answered. I have not heard from that committee since August 23. I deferred undertaking the studies of THC, hoping that the Committees in Washington would respond in some direct fashion - either denying my request, or providing me with some answer which was reasonable. I have not heard from them and on frequent occasions I have called and received no reply.

Recently, Mr. Kavanaugh, responding to requests from your office, inquired of Dr. Freedman whether our programs were under way. At Dr. Freedman's urging, we began our studies of tetrahydrocannabinol on November 1. Unfortunately, the supply of THC is severely limited, since six of the fifty ampules arrived in a damaged condition, leaving us with 440 mg as our total supply.

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Having no response from the Committee or Dr. Scigliano for some months, I would be grateful for a forthright reply from your office or that Committee.

In the event that supplies of marijuana for research are not available from the National Institutes of Mental Health (and having been told by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics that it is only through the National Institute of Mental Health that legal supplies can be obtained) can you advise me as to an alternate route, within the law, that would allow us to continue this research program?

So far, I have hesitated to write to your office, but I am encouraged to do so by your assurances in June and your recent assurance to Professor Freedman that we may turn to you when the situation no longer appears tenable.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

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