

Somebody Isn't Going To Mexico

At the outset, it should be understood this writing proposes no advocacy for or against the growing of marijuana. It is not clearly understood at this time what should be done to enliven anyone's interest in particular, regarding the abiding or the enforcement of any kind of law.

'Somebody Isn't Going To Mexico This Winter.'

'On a scale of one to ten, where would you put the growing of pot as a crime?', he had asked the officer. Without waiting for an answer, he asked, 'On a scale of one to ten, where would you put breaking and entering (with the object of stealing) as a crime?'

These are merely rhetorical questions. They are meant to suggest that enforcement of law, such as it is, becomes a matter of convenience. It is the author's viewpoint that it is far more criminal for 'anyone' to violate another person's privacy, than it is to grow pot, whether it is law enforcement exercising the nebulous justification of 'probable cause', or some thief entering one's home, RV, boat without the consent of the owner. And that law enforcement is far easier to effect as concerns the growing of pot than it is to apprehend a thief; even a serial thief.

The author is not attempting to say that the one act excuses the other, that is, that a B&E is far more serious a crime than the growing of pot. In a B&E a thief can steal all the family jewels, the family keepsakes, and anything else of value which could amount to millions, or the thief could get away with only a TV set. Zero tolerance is the operative regarding this 'criminal' activity, although with the low rate of interdiction, you would imagine this not to be a serious crime. Whereas there are some subtleties in 'criminality' of pot growing. A big 'grow-op' that produces thousands of plants at a whack is a more culpable 'crime' because it represents a larger infusion of an illegal substance into the hands of others, from 'cartel' operators (racketeers), to traffickers, to pushers, and to users; and perhaps the most culpable aspect of it from the government's point of view, 'money laundering', and the avoidance of taxation. In the U S of A, and places like Singapore, one hears of Zero Tolerance regarding any production of an illegal substance. In Canada, law enforcement (the RCMP) very often makes distinctions between those who grow for local consumption, and those who engage in an organized criminal activity. There is no definition of local consumption; its a judgment call, often overlooked. Since law enforcement resources are limited, going after the little 'criminal' (little grower) is not 'cost effective', especially since there are so many individuals willing to risk detection whether larger or smaller operators. In effect, in Canada,

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there is no Zero Tolerance as far as growing dope is concerned. Where the product is grown in the open, easily visible from the air, and depending on how effective (or successful) those law enforcement officers engaged in 'search and destroy' operations have been, they may elect to go or not go after someone who is growing ten plants, or many more, for that matter. In some cases where they are not successful at all they have been known to exercise their operative of 'probable cause' to enter someone's private property, and enter their homes, without warrants. Most of the search and destroy (eradication of marijuana) so called 'raids' are conducted without warrants. For example, in one community of 67 sites where marijuana was grown, time and weather, and other constraints allowed the raiding of only 26. And only one such raid involved a search warrant.

Can you imagine a law enforcement agency entering a private residence without a warrant, just on suspicion, albeit, 'probable cause', in order to apprehend a suspected thief. If the thief has 'fenced' all his 'product', the enforcement people would be in deep shit, and might still be in deep shit if they had proceeded without a warrant, even though they had found stolen product (e.g. a TV).

There are so many more ways of detecting the growing of dope whether out in the open, or underground, than there are ways of detecting thief (remembering that a thief has rights), so the author argues it is a matter of convenience that a grower gets 'busted' preferentially to the thief. Oddly, in Canada, a 'busted' dope grower is very often not charged with a crime. Or if charged, not prosecuted; or if prosecuted, and found guilty, given a nominal fine, and released. One individual, a middle-aged woman, the presumed grower of what amounted to ten plants, caught 'red-handed', or 'stumbling through the bush' was charged, prosecuted, found guilty, and fined \$100.00. She would not pay the fine (didn't have the funds, or didn't ask for any) serving time in jail instead. Even this was a token act on the part of the penalty phase of law breaking; it was an embarrassment to the law enforcement agency, and a kind of vindication (embarrassment of the agency) for the 'criminal' middle-aged woman to serve time..

Does the author propose to take sides in the defense of an illegal activity? The author is, on the surface, sometimes without deep conviction, a law abiding citizen. It should be noted, mostly out of convenience. The object is, 'not to get caught', because getting caught is sometimes a great matter of inconvenience. The author is capable of his own subtleties concerning the culpability of certain human actions not involved in law-breaking, simply because there are no laws concerning many aspects of human

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behavior; however, to be construed (by the author) as far more harmful to social equanimity than dope growing.

To answer a more pointed question, the author realizes that exposing the youth of the world to drugs, in any form, (without labeling them 'controlled substances'), may constitute a kind of culpability that each and everyone of us shares.

Somebody stuffed the pacifier into the squalling thing's mouth. Freud had informed us that our earliest years were blessed with defined milestones: oral, anal, and genital, mostly encompassing the first three years of our lives. It wasn't clear what was supposed to come after that; perhaps living down the first three years (or eating someone else's shit for the remainder of their lives). The desire for oral gratification never leaves us. From the real nipple to the fake nipple and then the pacifier. Of course, its more complicated than that and gets even more complicated. The desire for gratification or pleasure gained through the mouth never leaves us. While in the beginning it was at the head of the alimentary canal leading to the gut where hunger dwelled, the route was fixed in the stars for all time. Hence this appeal to the oral thing, both pleasure and sustenance gained thereby. Thumb sucking was discouraged; it deformed ones mouth; didn't look good; and indicated too much self-absorption. Ice cream, lollipops, Life Savers, Hershey's Milk Chocolate. Twinkies, Ding Dongs, Sugar Pops, Coke (a four letter word) and Gatorade, came on line as society's offerings for the aching palate. Chocolate cigarettes were in the wings. Sniffing horseshit was less desirable than sniffing glue. Which came first, the joint, or the fag? Did someone slip us a Mickey; a little THC with a little TLC brownie? Appealing to our taste buds to succor us? Are any or all of the above habit forming? It has been opined in "Supersize Me" that one can become addicted to 'fast foods' like Mc Donald's.

What were we after? Did we succumb to some peer thing? Or did we really like getting high, or just losing ourselves in some abstracted state. And why wouldn't we, in this shitty world?

And there was dad with his can of Bud, or his after hours highball, and mom with her wine; both of them articulating with smoking white cylinders. Not until you're older. Well, shit, not with this generation. Not with booze bulging the seams of every pub, tavern and liquor store. And tobacco even more ubiquitous. By god if'n I can be cannon fodder I sure as hail can drink, and smoke. And so on and so forth.

Mixing morality with pleasure never seems to work; as Sigmund discovered, 'fatefully inevitable'.

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At this point the author could add the litany of insidious mostly uncontrolled substances that are manufactured for pest and weed control that are infinitely more harmful to the environment and to humans than dope (and for that matter, many other controlled substances). Let us not fool ourselves on this one.

There had been much discussion about legalizing the stuff. Legalizing all the drugs. Like legalizing pesticides and herbicides.

Advantages: More access to the drug of your choice.

Those people who made their own drugs would not be in violation of any laws.

Accessibility would lessen the need to engage in property crimes like theft.

However, affordability and accessibility may still be in conflict.

Disadvantages: High cost of access to drug of your choice.

People who made their own drugs would be in violation of the law.

Lack of accessibility combined with high cost would lead to property crimes like theft.

Should all drugs be made available?

Is it possible to compare the legal availability of alcohol with the lack of legal availability of other drugs? Is this distinction to be made; that alcohol is a socially condoned drug, that the lawmakers advise that alcohol is to be esteemed everybody's drug of choice? After a certain age (when it seems more possible that one can control his predilection)?

Does that seem pigheaded? Or just plain uninformed? But socially acceptable for the majority? (Older people become alcoholics and DUI).

Does this seem the place to ask questions about nicotine, about the collusion between government (taxation) and tobacco companies?

Clear enough questions arise concerning the logic of any part of the rational for or against drugs.

Question: What would happen if drugs (controlled [by lawmakers] substances) were legalized? Would that lessen trafficking? Isn't it the lack of availability that drives the industry; that is, isn't it the lucrative part of the illicit drug trade that drives the industry?

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Question: Would the ubiquity of drugs further or lessen, or would drug addiction remain the same?

Question: Would the ubiquity of drugs lessen the rate of street crime or domestic violence? Or is it inherent that any kind of drug use, alcohol included, will increase street crime and domestic violence? What are the statistics for all drug use?

Question: If the lucrative part of the drug trafficking is removed, would that lessen the availability of product? Who would pick up the slack? Or, will the greater availability of product only reduce the take of the big traffickers, and increase the take of the small traffickers. And would more availability make for more usage?

Question: Why is it the government's business to be involved in the alcohol business? Its lucrative! The government is not held responsible for alcoholism. Why is it not the government's business to be involved in the drug business? Would that not also be lucrative? Or is the government in the alcohol business to provide the people with some kind of narcotic? For a fee? Why not more options than alcohol? Of course, we know, from example, what happened when alcohol was prohibited. The prohibition involving controlled substances echoes what was learned during Prohibition. Is there any particular wisdom to be garnered from this juxtaposition? What is it that government is attempting to deny? Its own potential take from the trade? The happiness of the people? Drug addiction? What do we know about drug addiction? Even though all narcotic drugs, except alcohol, are not available at the 'drug' store, not without prescription, somehow the people who want the stuff find it, and steal, and even kill to obtain the wherewithal to further obtain the drug of their choice.

Question: On the subject of addiction. Would there be more of a social problem if all drugs were made available? As long as society was in good repair, that is, as long as the government allowed its citizens to be happy in their homes, in their work, looked after their other needs, and created a society of free people, would that not lessen the need for substances that tend to be used when these things are lacking? Is that the government's wisdom in allowing alcohol, as a lesser of the evils; that is, alcoholism is easier to treat than some drug dependency? Is that true? Is government somehow acknowledging that the people need something, because this is a shitty world, without remedy? The government foresees no alternative to prevention; albeit eradication/interdiction, and punishment.

Question? What is the purpose of life? To be happy? If the ingestion of a controlled substance helps to create the illusion of happiness, how have we offended the precept? Is it wrong to be addicted to happiness, or the illusion of happiness? Can a person

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be happy without narcosis? Or is happiness, no matter how achieved, the real narcosis? Being in love with love, so to speak?

The author takes no particular position with respect to the notion that 'some laws are mean to be broken'. The first Five of Moses Ten have been broken repeatedly without anyone the wiser, but the individual and his conscience. Only the Sixth, Eighth, and Ninth have been incorporated into modern law, with severe punishment assigned in the event of their violation. In some nations the violation of the Seventh is penalized with death, whereas in others it is an accepted part of social intervention. As pertains to the Eighth, in Texas, and other ruthless nations, the Death Penalty is carried out with vengeance. And the Tenth suffers no laws with regard to coveting. And the star of stage and screen who portrayed Moses has been the president of the NRA, which is, in effect, a blanket organization for the National Hand Gun and National Assault Rifle Association, since there is no longer any purpose for ordinary rifles, except shootin' varmints. Killing wildlife ought to be a crime, but it ain't (ai not).

When the law came in their helicopters to perform their annual raid (eradication of marijuana raid) a sympathetic voice was overheard to say: "Somebody isn't going to Mexico this winter".

The very next year, the person who spoke so sympathetically became the one who didn't get to go to Mexico that winter. But it was worse than that for the sympathetic one. Although the law did not press charges, the exposure, the embarrassment, becoming the focus of other people's sympathy, being identified, along with the loss of revenue producing a serious strain on the budget, was a new experience. Previously this person had been a successful grower, for several years, without being raided. It is not known whether the operation had not been detected in previous raids.

When one is a successful grower, the revenue derived from such activity is sometimes sufficient to provide the wherewithal to take wintertime vacations to Mexico, Costa Rica, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, to name a few. After a few years of a successful operation one becomes accustomed to the easy money, and the easy living that comes with it. One no longer worries about money; one squanders it on all sorts of things, or at least, that is what the sympathetic raided one told me. Nothing had been put aside for the future.

That part is sad, and earns the author's sympathy in a general sort of way, the sadness over the human condition. And a mother with two young children, with a man, the father of the children, not employed. Suddenly the mother is tending bar, picking grapes,

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weeding gardens, doing what she can to stay on the island, to keep her children, and to keep her children well, and in school. But, perhaps, ever the optimist, she claims to be glad to be out of the house, out in the community, while the father of the children looks after the young ones. When I inquired whether she would attempt to grow another crop just to try to get some wherewithal to set aside, the question seemed intrusive. Perhaps the thought had occurred to her, but was not the foremost of her concerns.

Waiting to hear whether or not she had been charged had been an immediate worry. She had only just learned that charges would not be pressed. She was elated, and I think, voluble. As it turned out it was more likely that her mate would have been charged with possession *and/or trafficking in a controlled substance*.

Without my asking she began to tell me things I had only suspected and had not made my business to know.

I was first introduced to the reality of the growing of 'dope' on the island shortly after I had arrived. It seemed the island was a hotbed of such activity that had in fact polarized the community. Those for and against hydro (electric power), those for and against a vehicular ferry, those for and against telephone poles to replace the underground phone lines; those for and against road improvements, and for and against development; for and against the issuance of a pub license; and for and against the use of 'Crown Lands'. The polarization also affected the political climate of the island. The pot growers were against development, of any kind. They wanted to keep the political balance in their favor. Newcomers looking for some kind of haven were a threat if they were squares, backing hydro, ferries, road improvements etc., and as such were potentially friendly to the other side.

Of course, being a 'pot' culture in the main, dope was readily available; 'joints' were passed around upon nearly every social occasion; and 'brownies' as substitute or augmentation. In another place and at another time, I had had my brief fling with dope and hashish, finding neither one contributing to my mental stability, or heightening it to any degree that was not also clouded, and not clearly memorable. In that other place, it seemed not difficult to obtain dope; it was a symbolic drug of the hippie anti-Vietnam War sympathies. It was also a time when graduate students in Chemistry manufactured LSD in the Chem. Lab hoods, and others obtaining undenatured 95% ethanol from the Chemstores to redistill into an even more pure and potent alcoholic 'beverage'. Commonly referred as Lab. Alcohol, often served in punchbowls also laden with 'dry ice' at lab parties (A practice frowned upon by the University authorities). Even then!

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I suspect the drug culture on the island was fairly active concurrently with those days, because many of the new arrivals on the island were the draft dodgers (Anti-Vietnamers) from another nation. So by the time I had first arrived on the island the culture had already been in existence for at least ten years. The growers were not all foreigners. What is lucrative is lucrative without involving nationalities.

My first exposure to the plant *cannabis sativa*, sometimes referred as Hemp, came a few years later, during my first year as a caretaker of a farm property while its owners, strangely enough, would go to Mexico for two months in the late fall, after the (legitimate) crops were harvested and the garden put to rest. I circulated a little bit, mostly out of curiosity, and at times because I was invited to people's homes. One day it so happened I arrived at a household when its occupants were in the process of bagging their crop. I was shown a plant enclosed in a plastic bag. Both the size of the plastic bag and the plant were impressive. An approximate six foot plant in a six foot bag. I was told the plant was worth approximately \$1,600.00. In those days the leaves were dried and packaged, one ounce/plastic bag @ \$100.00 per bag. They showed me a small pile of one ounce bags. I felt this exposure, also exposed me to a certain kind of danger because the pot trade always seemed a furtive and clandestine activity. The fact that I had seen something, that may not have been preventable without stirring a lot of suspicion, did involve me in some accessory way. Keeping Silent, implicitly.

After this introduction, it seemed I associated mostly with people who did not grow, although this was not necessarily by choice. It was my belief that there existed a secret society that protected itself by not being friendly with unknowns, and people who tended to associate with the opposition, regardless of any reason. Since I was not a user, I did not ask certain kinds of questions. I was always eager to hear who were the growers and who were not; it always held a fascination.

But the world moved on, I did other things, and eventually acquired a 'piece of the rock' with which to do something. Doing something with the property took up most of my time, none of which involved growing or acquiring dope.

I do not write from a 'holier-than-thou' premise, or as a 'law-abiding' citizen. I was not interested in dope (tetrahydrocannabinol) for myself, or as a source of supplemental income. With my immediate neighbors I shared the rumors of the day concerning who did what, where, and how, not necessarily involving the counterculture activity. But, very often the known and suspected dope growers and drug traffickers became the subject of

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conversation; sometimes quite heated conversation. The farmers for whom I was caretaking were angry with purported friends of theirs whom they strongly suspected of using their swamp to grow dope. Somebody had crossed the line. And one of them went so far as to label them 'cheaters'. And that same one was really angry about drugs finding their way into the hands of youth. But was willing to make allowance for 'local consumption'.

One day in the fall, after we had acquired our property, and were building a home of our own, living in a trailer while doing so, of an evening, dusk already settled into darkness, in leaving the trailer to descend toward the sea, I saw a brightness next door, which I quickly assumed to be fire, imagining the neighbors house on fire. I quickly returned to the trailer to call the fire department. Only to learn the fire chief was not answering the phone. I called someone else who might know how to get hold of the chief. I informed them of the problem, and they assured me they would try to pass on the information. Meanwhile I left the trailer to go over to my neighbor's. When arriving there I saw a huge bonfire, outside the house. In passing the fire, a twiggy looking conflagration, I detected the odor very characteristic of marijuana. I went to the door of the house to let the occupants know that I had called the fire department. They in turn informed me they were burning some old clothes and bedding. I only sort of believed them, but on the next day, in visiting the people whom I had called to contact the fire chief; they looked very shamefacedly upon my innocence, declaring, "They were burning their bunk!". I soon was educated into the practice of disposing of the hempy chaff.

So, more or less, I knew that my neighbors were growers, a fact which they would not reveal, even when I had given them the opportunity at a later time, when I chose to tease them about the material that they were burning in their fire. They told me they would not grow dope, they had families to support, mortgages to pay. They claimed they could not afford to become involved with the law under such circumstances, fearing the confiscation of their property etc. That all sounded like a very plausible denial, but did not dissuade my suspicions. Later confirmed.

In some ways the whole dope thing came to a head when an islander responded to an editorial in the rag that served the community across the way on the big island. The editorial implicated the island in a nefarious trade, the growing of marijuana. Editors often get away with slander whether or not it is true. The islander who responded however made it somewhat clear that the community in which the bitching editor lived was a direct beneficiary of the revenue earned from growing dope on the island. Wrong move. A slap in the face of the constabulary whose task it

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was to interdict the traffic in drugs. (illegal substances). Hence began the annual raids, first by Hovercraft, and then by helicopter when the Hovercraft were taken out of service.

The growers were indignant to say the least. They were getting raided, and losing revenue. And their children and livestock were being frightened (chickens wouldn't lay, cows and goats wouldn't milk, children wouldn't eat). Some were being hauled into court, others charged, and burdened with attorneys fees to keep them out of court, and out of jail. And the island was being subjected to law enforcement in other ways, like being cited for not having their vehicles licensed. Because of the reverses and the apparent harassment the islanders were grating on both sides. Then the media took further interest. The TV news aired a segment on pot growing in the province for each night for one week. The network came to the island to interview some people. It was easy enough to pick out the growers, they turned their head aside away from the camera, or would disappear behind a door; and would not answer questions. Whereas the others were willing enough to talk, and let the interviewer know how the pot trade affected them. And the island became News, evening News. Not very flattering. The island had an image crisis. So it called a community meeting at the community hall to address its image; moderated by an individual who disappeared behind the door on camera.

The meeting drew from both sides of the controversy. Accusations were made, near threats were tendered, and individuals departed from the meeting before it ended, in a rage. The pot growers didn't have a leg to stand on. They did not improve their image. Their defenders were users; their opponents, one's pissed off at the negative publicity, and the cops citing unlicensed vehicles for the first time in the island's history. The lawyer present, the drug lawyer, on the transom of whose boat one found the epithet "Crime Pays", informed the community that the police could invade their very body and soul if they came armed with a writ of assistance; they could dismember their home, board from board, leaving it flat, without a whimper. Or if they came armed with a search warrant with a named object, and not finding it, yet found something else unrelated, but culpable, they could file charges at a later time, for the apparent violation of law. Doubtlessly a word of caution from the man who should know. And finally the very dry incantation, or benediction, from the Anglican Reverend, a man who didn't know, but who observed that the island was a microcosm of the larger world. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. And damned few of the King's men were interested in putting him back together again.

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The editor and publisher of the Tea Cosy Times, the man with the humorous streak who proposed that a five day a week ferry instead of seven day a week ferry reduced the opportunity for the In Laws visiting the island by 28%. He had originally been considered a big grower, but whose ways were suddenly changed by a new woman, and more, and a new batch of children. He recanted his former ways, and now admonished the drug community with exposing the youth of the world to drug addiction. He had seen the light, rebel turned reformer. Or so it seemed. There were those who didn't believe him. They resented a sermon from a sinner.

However, all admonitions put aside, the dope growing continued, the raids continued. Growers came, some remained, while others left. Some of the growers were having an internal problem; theft of buds by other growers, or by users in the know.

Might be interesting here to give a rundown on the shift from outdoor to indoor growing, the cultivation process from cuttings taken from the mother plant, the nurturing process, the maturation process, the trimming process, and the curing process, and the packaging and marketing process.

There's another angle to this whole adventure, the police angle. When the police came to the island to a community meeting scheduled just for them, the key to the meeting was not the eradication of marijuana, it was more, "What can we do for you?" Five officers came to the meeting. They were bombarded by islanders with the impact of their raids. The police were not apologetic. They merely reaffirmed their intent to continue the raids, and do whatever was necessary to carry out their mandate which was the interdiction of drug traffic. What else can we do for you? 'Stay away, we do not need policing', was the majority response.

A second meeting which had been scheduled much later in time was intended to address the issue of low flying aircraft, presumably engaged in police activity. Again part of the island community considered the aircraft intrusive, and unwarranted. But, in the interim, just four days before the meeting, the police raided. A somewhat unusual raid which saw the police repelling from helicopters without warrants onto private property, and entering and searching homes. In the process of one such repel they found something of interest, and phoned for a warrant.

You might imagine how the meeting fared for the three officers who had the courage to come. First they had to answer a very angry public concerning the press release from the local police

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detachment which accused the islanders with trafficking, using marijuana for currency, and for operating an organized crime syndicate; 'a marijuana growing mecca'. They had to answer to the indiscriminate property damage, illegal entries, and once again, their unbridled tactics. Their excuse of 'eradication of marijuana' fell on very deaf ears.

In considering the meeting, more like a confrontation, the hundred or so residents showed remarkable restraint. Only one individual spoke vehemently using very foul language; the community as a whole waved him down, silencing him. It became obvious that the public did not want a pound of flesh, what it wanted was a fair shake. There was no organized crime; there was no trafficking or using marijuana as currency. There were a lot of people who grew dope for theirs and their friends use, there were a few who grew to obtain supplemental income to raise their family and pay their taxes. The police reminded the island that one place grew far more crop than would answer these descriptions. And they believed there were others who fit that description. And they reminded everyone that it was illegal to grow.

The police were asked to remove the stigma that their press release placed upon the island.

And the lawyer took to the airways, allowing himself to be interviewed on a talk show, the day after the police visit. He amplified the gist of the meeting, and the hopeful result of the meeting. The police have yet to do their part in answering the charge of stepping over the line. The police did apologize on the face of the complaints, subject to internal review.

The lawyer did not deny that marijuana is grown on the island, but he does not know which of his neighbors, if any, grow the stuff. People tend to mind their own business. They do not invade each other's privacy. And they would strongly resent anyone invading their privacy. He admitted it was just a gut reaction, but he believed that the police would not find any organized crime on the island. And that violating a person's privacy in order to find some damned thing to charge them with is anathema to our perceived rights as free citizens.

The interviewer indicated that David Letterman has publicized that the island grows the best dope in the world, to which the attorney rejoined. "That may be true."

The attorney wanted to make it clear to callers and the interviewer alike that if the police flew over their houses a number of times at low elevation with a helicopter they would be alarmed just as were the residents of the island. And they would want something done about it.