

# A Personal Amount of Marijuana Burns down 2 Million Dollars' Worth of Homes

by Aida and William Spencer  
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While a hopped up teen with a blow torch was lighting up what some consider Massachusetts' favorite past time, toking marijuana, he managed to ignite several brand new houses[1] including damaging the hard-earned home of one of our school's young Christian professors and endangering the lives of his wife and three young children. Medical use of marijuana has been legalized in Massachusetts along with "personal use," according to the police, making it all the more difficult to enforce the misuse of it. The selling point to voters was that marijuana alleviates the discomfort of cancer and Crohn's disease. Since the present authors have survived both cancer and chronic Crohn's disease, we know smoking marijuana not only was not necessary, it would have harmed us with its high content of tars and nicotine.[2] Rather than valid, all of the arguments for legalization appear to have been a ruse to line the pockets of those with a seared conscience. The production and selling of marijuana is big business. For example, a June 2013 report from the Office of the State Auditor in Colorado finds that only 12 physicians had certified half of the 108,000 registered patients, and one had registered more than 8,400. Dr. Ronald Dunlap, president of the Massachusetts Medical Society, questioned whether doctors should be allowed to set up practices that provide access to one particular drug: "You can't have a clinic that just gives out one substance...That is not medicine." [3] Massachusetts has sown the wind. The home-destroying fire is an example of it reaping the whirlwind, demonstrating that marijuana breaks parents' hearts and destroys the future of their children. The young person is being held without bail on 10 counts of arson, 13 counts of malicious destruction of property, breaking and entering with the intent to commit a felony and trespassing. Proponents of marijuana claim the drug itself is only bad if it leads to something worse—but, we believe, it is bad in and of itself. For example, who would ever light a cigarette with a blow torch unless they had lost all sense of perspective? Just as it distorts one's ability to drive, cannabis distorts all sense of proportion in other areas of judgment.[4]

This past week we returned from Medellin, Colombia, where we were both invited to speak at a conference for empowering women and against abuse of women.[5] Medellin is full of wonderful Christian people trying to rebuild their city after being in thrall to years of intermittent civil war, dictators, and warring political parties, and an economy ultimately undergirded by marijuana and cocaine smuggling into the United States, culminating in the strong-arm rule of the notorious Pablo Escobar, supposed champion of the poor but a ruthless drug runner who held presidents in his pocket and created poor enslaved by addiction. Rid of him in the early 2,000s, the city has been trying to eliminate the last vestiges of an economy built on drugs, rising in population (up to 3 million now), in a legal economy, and away from the violence with which it has been plagued and with which it is still associated in the global mind.

Imagine our disappointment in returning to a state where marijuana is legalized in “personal amounts” and for “medical reasons” to discover 2 million dollars’ worth of damage to 11 homes and a car in our area, including one of a young friend, by a 19 year old hopped up on cannabis, illegal now in Colombia, under pressure by the United States of America, but legal in Massachusetts of the United States of America.

Bill and Aida

[1] Paul Leighton, “Teen Held on Arson Charges,” *The Salem News*, 18 July 2014:1.

[2] According to the *Grolier Wellness Encyclopedia 3*, a marijuana cigarette has 3 times the amount of tar and 5 times the amount of carbon monoxide inhaled than a tobacco cigarette. Five joints/week have the same effect on the lungs as 112 tobacco cigarettes. Marijuana contains more carcinogens. Marijuana has adverse effects on the immune system (“Opiates, Marijuana, and Hallucinogens” (Guilford: Dushkin, 1992).

[3] Liz Kowalczyk, “Doctors open offices to prescribe marijuana: But niche marketing approach raises concerns,” *Boston Sunday Globe*, 16 March 2014: A1, 13. See also Kay Lazar and Shelley Murphy, “DEA targets doctors linked to medical marijuana,” *The Boston Globe*, 6 June 2014, accessed 20 July 2014 at [www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/06/05/drug-enforcement-administration-targets-doctors-associated-with-medical-marijuana](http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/06/05/drug-enforcement-administration-targets-doctors-associated-with-medical-marijuana).

[4] Under the influence of marijuana, a user becomes illogical, forgetful, and clumsy. “It is demonstrably dangerous to operate motor vehicles or other machinery while using marijuana.” It impairs short-term memory, causes lapses in attention, a feeling of unfamiliarity with one’s surroundings, and sensory disorientation. Heavy doses loosen emotional and social restraints and bring stronger distortions of space and time. It tends to modify perception. The most common side effects are paranoia and anxiety even in mentally healthy people. Long-term use results in apathy and lack of motivation (“Opiates, Marijuana, and Hallucinogens,” *Grolier Wellness Encyclopedia 3* [Guilford: Dushkin, 1992).

[5] See [cbeinternational.org](http://cbeinternational.org).