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Dying to Get High: Marijuana as Medicine

Wendy Chapkis, Richard J. Webb

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Dying to Get High with Susie Bright on Boing Boing!

Warring Wines; 'You Want to Fight?'; Nurse Mary Jane in Santa Cruz

High Times interviews the authors

Alternet excerpt of the book ("How Pot Became Demonized")

Discussion from the Santa Cruz Metro

Marijuana as medicine has been a politically charged topic in this country for more than three decades. Despite overwhelming public support and growing scientific evidence of its therapeutic effects (relief of the nausea caused by chemotherapy for cancer and AIDS, control over seizures or spasticity caused by epilepsy or MS, and relief from chronic and acute pain, to name a few), the drug remains illegal under federal law.

In *Dying to Get High*, noted sociologist Wendy Chapkis and Richard J. Webb investigate one community of seriously-ill patients fighting the federal government for the right to use physician-recommended marijuana. Based in Santa Cruz, California, the Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM) is a unique patient-caregiver cooperative providing marijuana free of charge to mostly terminally ill members. For a brief period in 2004, it even operated the only legal non-governmental medical marijuana garden in the country, protected by the federal courts against the DEA.

Using as their stage this fascinating profile of one remarkable organization, Chapkis and Webb tackle the broader, complex history of medical marijuana in America. Through compelling interviews with patients, public officials, law enforcement officers and physicians, Chapkis and Webb ask what distinguishes a legitimate patient from an illegitimate pothead, good drugs from bad, medicinal effects from just getting high. *Dying to Get High* combines abstract argument and the messier terrain of how people actually live, suffer and die, and offers a moving account of what is at stake in ongoing debates over the legalization of medical marijuana.

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