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## Fred Chaffin, juvenile officer, New Haven Police Department

*Chaffin had exposure to adolescent use of the drug, when he arrested a group of juveniles who had stolen a batch from the Yale laboratories where*

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This stuff is an absolute menace. I'd keep it strictly out of the reach of kids, for one thing. They can't handle it. It makes them forget about the important things in life and do really stupid things. A little kid who took the drug might just run out and play in traffic—you never can tell. I tell you, it's deadly!

My experience has been with teenagers using the drug. Now teenagers are basically irresponsible anyway, in my book. They haven't learned right from wrong yet. Taking drugs like this is the easy way out. So you have a problem, why worry about it? Just pop in a little pill and your problem dissolves. Goes away like that. But who's kidding who? Problems don't really disappear. You just forget about them—temporarily—and while you're busy forgetting, they're busy growing worse and worse. I had one kid, for instance, who was having a hard time dealing with school. He was also in trouble with the police for stealing a car. The day of his hearing I find him on the streets, high on this Psychamine stuff. I ask him why he didn't come to court—I was really planning to help the kid get off easy—and he tells me he feels fine right there on the street corner, talking to his friends. Doesn't see any *need* to show up.

But I think he's using it to escape from reality. He took the stuff because his friends told him it was a "*mood elevator*," you know, something that would bring him out of the dumps. And what's the result? Now he's in worse trouble than when he started.

I also hear it can make people dangerous. They're so mellow they're not paying attention. You know, not looking where they're going, creating a public nuisance, and all that stuff. This dope is dynamite—and I don't mean that in the sense that the kids today use the word. I mean it is dangerous with a capital 'D.'

I'm not sure I'd ban it altogether, though. It just needs to be controlled. Responsible adults, who really need a temporary escape from their problems—when their problems get too big for them. I mean if a doctor prescribed it, and if it was all legal and that kind of thing, so that you weren't breaking the law or anything, I can see a use for it. I wouldn't mind some myself sometimes. I tell you, there are days when I get home from work and my head feels like it's going to burst. I have a hundred kids and a hundred trials on my mind. I'm worried about a drug bust we're going to make, and I can't pay the bills or something like that. I wouldn't mind a little pill to calm me down some. Mind you—I'd take it and stay home, in bed, in the safest of environments. I don't see any harm in that—if it's OK with the doctor.