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## Sharon Jefferson, 25 years old. Unemployed

*Jefferson volunteered in experiments with Psychamine™ at Yale University. She took the drug 15 times in a controlled environment.*

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I was involved in the first human experiments with Psychamine. At first I was merely asked to try the drug and then tell how it affected me. Well, the first experience was quite something. I have taken a lot of drugs in my life, and I was kind of psyched, wondering what could happen, so I sat there fidgeting, waiting for the sensation to come on. I don't actually remember when it started affecting me. All I know is that I just started feeling calmer and just okay, you know? Like the world was a fine place, and I was a fine person, and sitting there scribbling on the paper was a fine thing to do.

They tried me on higher and higher doses to see what would happen—if people could overdose. And the same thing happened, no matter how much they gave me, so I guess there's no way to get any real high off it, or into any trouble, either. Mellowed me, that's all. It wasn't like pot, which makes me giggly most of the time, except when I get paranoid. And it wasn't like acid, which trips me out and makes me hallucinate. It didn't really do anything. It just kind of enhanced whatever it was I was doing, or thinking, or feeling. Made it better. It made me feel—I don't know the word for it, maybe clearer. More capable and more easy-going at the same time.

I heard they tried it out on depressed people, too, and they felt better. Not happy, just okay, just normal. Those were later experiments. For a while I was following up on what was happening with the drug because I liked it. I found I didn't really care so much about taking the kinds of drugs I'd taken before. They picked me, I guess, because I, um, had a lot of *experience*. You know, I'd tried just about

everything, though I'm basically straight now. I guess they figured I had experienced about as many drug-induced altered states as a human can, and that maybe I could, well, put this one in its place. I'd say it was a good place.

After a while the experiments got more structured. They wanted to see how folks on Psychamine did under stress. In one experiment they had me on one of those machines—you know, you put in a quarter and they flash a picture of a cat running down a road, dodging traffic. Another time I was performing a simple task—tightening a bolt on a conveyor belt. Both times I did OK. I mean, I usually panic under those situations, but on Psychamine I could slow things down. I could actually slow them down and make better decisions about what to do. On the conveyor belt they kept speeding the pace up. When I was straight, I had a fairly hard time at it. The steady movement of the conveyor belt made me nervous—a little panicky. I was afraid I couldn't keep up with the bolts. And being afraid made me do worse than I could have.

On Psychamine I lost this nervousness and, like I said, I could keep up because I didn't get all wired. Since I wasn't worried about performance I actually did better, at certain speeds. And I found I could do it for hours, and feel just fine. I never got bored, although I wasn't really interested, either. But at the really high speeds I simply gave up, sat down, and said hell with it. Who needs it? I didn't do that when I was straight, but then I would get bored at a regular speed, and I got so worked up at high speeds I only managed to tighten two bolts out of three.