

## "CRACK" COCAINE

HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
PERMANENT  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS  
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. . . had some people what, wave in trouble with some form of cocaine, but it was not until the introduction of smoked cocaine that they had really serious problems and tremendous numbers of admissions to psychiatric hospitals, with people who were insane with the use of cocaine with people whose parents, and whole community had given up on them because there was nothing that could be done for them. They seemed to be incurable. And this is in a country where cocaine was always available. The difference is in the form of the drug, and the route of administration.

Dr. Schuster has pointed out the form of the drug is a free base. That term may not be understood. It is a word, but it is not so understandable. The usual kind of cocaine is a salt. It is cocaine with hydrochloride next to it. It is like salt, sodium chloride. Here this is no chloride attached to it. Free base is just plain cocaine. Alkaloids are basic and so cocaine alkaloid is a free base.

The difference between this material and the material that was available before is that if you heat it to about the temperature of boiling water, it goes off into a vapor. If it goes into a vapor, you

can inhale it into your lungs, and you can take a lot of cocaine into your lungs. You can pack your nose only so far, but you can keep breathing for a long time. As long as you can keep breathing cocaine vapor, you can get more of a dosage into yourself. That is the reason why crack, or cocaine free-base, is so dangerous. There is an unlimited amount that can go in.

The speed of that material going to the brain is very rapid. It goes into the lungs, and immediately goes through the heart and it is pumped up to the brain. Then you get an intense change in the mood of the individual. which initially is extremely pleasant, and someone wants to repeat it. But because it has gone in so fast, the levels drops down quickly, and with the level dropping down, somebody feels terrible. The Peruvians would call it *anguista*, the anguish of the pain, and it is a painful feeling of the fall off of that drug blood level. So you take some more.

When you take some more. you realize that this is going to get you a bit edgy, so you take alcohol along with it. Multidrug abuse is very common. Taking alcohol or marijuana along with crack is just about standard. In Peru, it was almost always alcohol and tobacco. Taking heroin or smoking heroin along with crack is fairly common.

So here we have a substance which is tailormade to addict people. What do we graft on to it? We graft on, first of all, this gigantic import industry of many billions of dollars. Second, our own American marketing methods. It is as though Ray Kroc had invented the opium den, because what we have here is the fast food solution. It is not that McDonald's hamburgers are necessarily better, although I am sure they are better to some people, it is the fact that they are already prepared, they are ready to go, and they come in a little package. Here suddenly, we have cocaine available in a little package, in unit dosage, available at a price that kids can

pay initially.

So an intensely desirable substance, available in a unit package,  
pushed by a billion dollar marketing industry, and we are going to  
hand out booklets. Gentlemen. I think that we are faced with some-  
thing that requires a really major response, and it requires our . . .