

August 11, 2013

Charles Krauthammer complains about the language distortions of the administration.

*Jen Psaki, blameless State Department spokeswoman, explained that the hasty evacuation of our embassy in Yemen was not an evacuation but “a reduction in staff.” This proved a problem because the Yemeni government had already announced (and denounced) the “evacuation” — the word normal folks use for the panicky ordering of people onto planes headed out of the country.*

*Thus continues the administration’s penchant for wordplay, the bending of language to fit a political need. In Janet Napolitano’s famous formulation, terror attacks are now “man-caused disasters.” And the “global war on terror” is no more. It’s now an “overseas contingency operation.”*

*Nidal Hasan proudly tells a military court that he, a soldier of Allah, killed 13 American soldiers in the name of jihad. But the massacre remains officially classified as an act not of terrorism but of “workplace violence.”*

*The U.S. ambassador to Libya and three others are killed in an al-Qaeda-affiliated terror attack — and for days it is waved off as nothing more than a spontaneous demonstration gone bad. After all, famously declared Hillary Clinton, what difference does it make?*

*Well, it makes a difference, first, because truth is a virtue. Second, because if you keep lying to the American people, they may seriously question whether anything you say — for example, about the benign nature of NSA surveillance — is not another self-serving lie. ...*

Larry Arnn, President of Hillsdale College tells the truth and gets into trouble.

Spencer Amaral, Hillsdale senior writes a defense in The American Spectator.

*When I recently heard that the president of my school, Hillsdale College, was in hot water for making racist remarks at a state hearing on education, I was stunned.*

*But upon learning the facts, it was immediately obvious that this was simply another case of liberal scandal-mongers scraping the bottom of the barrel to try to discredit one of the nation’s finest — and most conservative — colleges.*

*Hillsdale College President Dr. Larry Arnn was speaking at a Michigan Department of Education hearing in Lansing last Wednesday on his opposition to Common Core curriculum (which should be the real story here, but we’ve conveniently managed to cut that out of the conversation). Arnn presented his argument against state interference in education, and included a story of state officials visiting Hillsdale College in 1998 to inspect the school’s “racial diversity.” Arnn was outraged — as am I — that the state would act in such a blatantly race-based manner. Not to be Mr. Obvious here, but to have bureaucrats walking around the campus of a top-tier college with clipboards, taking notes on the skin color of the students they see, is by definition racist because it doesn’t recognize a person’s character or individuality, but only the color of their skin.*

*Arnn sought to express disgust at the backwards and dehumanizing actions of the state officials, which were revealed when he later received a letter from the Michigan Department of Education. The letter, he said, notified him that Hillsdale College “violated the standards for diversity because we didn’t have enough dark ones, I guess, is what they meant.”*

*“To that I told them, we are probably the first college in human history, certainly one of them, founded with a charter that says we will take black and white men and women without any discrimination,” Arnn said. ...*

According to **Ilya Somin** in Volokh, The New Yorker had a piece on asset forfeiture abuse. Or course, being the New Yorker they found some things to like in the public safety goobers out of control.

*... Despite such abuses, New Yorker writer Sarah Stillman writes that “The basic principle behind asset forfeiture is appealing. It enables authorities to confiscate cash or property obtained through illicit means, and, in many states, funnel the proceeds directly into the fight against crime.” I disagree. The idea that government can seize your property without ever having to prove that you committed a crime is deeply unjust, and creates dangerous perverse incentives for police, especially in cases where they or the local governments they work for get to keep the assets seized. The Texas jurisdiction discussed in Stillman’s article is particularly egregious, since it focuses its abusive behavior on out-of-town drivers who have little or no political leverage in the area, and face unusually high costs if they choose to contest the seizures.*

*A variety of reforms could help diminish asset forfeiture abuse. For example, police could be banned from keeping the proceeds, and state and local governments should give owners the right to contest seizures quickly and cheaply. In some states, current arrangements allow the authorities to hold forfeited property for many months without giving the owner any opportunity to challenge the seizure, thereby violating the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.*

*Ultimately, however, the best solution is to abolish civil asset forfeiture completely. ...*

Speaking of out of control public safety goobers, **Dr. Sanjay Gupta** has come to the conclusion he needs to reverse his position against medical marijuana. A position, mind you, he reached listening to DEA propaganda. Today, Sunday 8/11 at 8:00 you can see his CNN documentary titled "Weed."

*Over the last year, I have been working on a new documentary called "Weed." The title "Weed" may sound cavalier, but the content is not.*

*I traveled around the world to interview medical leaders, experts, growers and patients. I spoke candidly to them, asking tough questions. What I found was stunning.*

*Long before I began this project, I had steadily reviewed the scientific literature on medical marijuana from the United States and thought it was fairly unimpressive. Reading these papers*

*five years ago, it was hard to make a case for medicinal marijuana. I even wrote about this in a TIME magazine article, back in 2009, titled "Why I would Vote No on Pot."*

*Well, I am here to apologize.*

*I apologize because I didn't look hard enough, until now. I didn't look far enough. I didn't review papers from smaller labs in other countries doing some remarkable research, and I was too dismissive of the loud chorus of legitimate patients whose symptoms improved on cannabis.*

*Instead, I lumped them with the high-visibility malingerers, just looking to get high. I mistakenly believed the Drug Enforcement Agency listed marijuana as a schedule 1 substance because of sound scientific proof. Surely, they must have quality reasoning as to why marijuana is in the category of the most dangerous drugs that have "no accepted medicinal use and a high potential for abuse."*

*They didn't have the science to support that claim, and I now know that when it comes to marijuana neither of those things are true. It doesn't have a high potential for abuse, and there are very legitimate medical applications. In fact, sometimes marijuana is the only thing that works. Take the case of Charlotte Figi, who I met in Colorado. She started having seizures soon after birth. By age 3, she was having 300 a week, despite being on seven different medications. Medical marijuana has calmed her brain, limiting her seizures to 2 or 3 per month.*

**Ray Kurzweil**, Director of Engineering at Google, has a blog. A recent post touted the brain saving attributes of chocolate. Pickerhead would rather they'd praised bacon.

*Drinking two cups of hot chocolate a day may help older people keep their brains healthy and their thinking skills sharp, according to a study published in the August 7, 2013, issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.*

*The study involved 60 people with an average age of 73 who did not have dementia. The participants drank two cups of hot cocoa per day for 30 days and did not consume any other chocolate during the study. They were given tests of memory and thinking skills. They also had ultrasounds tests to measure the amount of blood flow to the brain during the tests.*

*"We're learning more about blood flow in the brain and its effect on thinking skills," said study author Farzaneh A. Sorond, MD, PhD, of Harvard Medical School in Boston and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. "As different areas of the brain need more energy to complete their tasks, they also need greater blood flow. This relationship, called neurovascular coupling, may play an important role in diseases such as Alzheimer's."*

*Of the 60 participants, 18 had impaired blood flow at the start of the study. Those people had an 8.3-percent improvement in the blood flow to the working areas of the brain by the end of the study, while there was no improvement for those who started out with regular blood flow. ...*

**Andy Borowitz** reports Jeff Bezos of Amazon says he clicked on Washington Post by mistake.

*Jeff Bezos, the founder of [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), told reporters today that his reported purchase of the Washington Post was a “gigantic mix-up,” explaining that he had clicked on the newspaper by mistake.*

*“I guess I was just kind of browsing through their website and not paying close attention to what I was doing,” he said. “No way did I intend to buy anything.”*

*Mr. Bezos said he had been oblivious to his online shopping error until earlier today, when he saw an unusual charge for two hundred and fifty million dollars on his American Express statement.*

*After investigating with the credit-card company, he was informed that he had been charged for the purchase price of the entire Washington Post, which, he said, was “pure craziness.”*

*“No way in hell would I buy the Washington Post,” he said. “I don’t even read the Washington Post.”*

*Mr. Bezos said he had been on the phone with the Post’s customer service for the better part of the day trying to unwind his mistaken purchase, but so far “they’ve really been giving me the runaround.”*

*According to Mr. Bezos, “I keep telling them, I don’t know how it got in my cart. I don’t want it. It’s like they’re making it impossible to return it.”*

---

---

---

## Washington Post

### [War by wordplay](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

Jen Psaki, blameless State Department spokeswoman, explained that the hasty [evacuation of our embassy in Yemen](#) was not an evacuation but “[a reduction in staff](#).” This proved a problem because the Yemeni government had already announced ([and denounced](#)) the “evacuation” — the word normal folks use for the panicky ordering of people onto planes headed out of the country.

Thus continues the administration’s penchant for wordplay, the bending of language to fit a political need. In Janet Napolitano’s famous formulation, terror attacks are now “man-caused disasters.” And the “global war on terror” is no more. It’s now an “[overseas contingency operation](#).”

Nidal Hasan [proudly tells a military court](#) that he, a soldier of Allah, killed 13 American soldiers in the name of jihad. But the massacre remains officially classified as an act not of terrorism but of “[workplace violence](#).”

The U.S. ambassador to Libya and three others are killed in an al-Qaeda-affiliated terror attack — and for days [it is waved off](#) as nothing more than a spontaneous demonstration gone bad. After all, famously declared Hillary Clinton, [what difference does it make?](#)

Well, it makes a difference, first, because truth is a virtue. Second, because if you keep lying to the American people, they may seriously question whether anything you say — for example, about the benign nature of NSA surveillance — is not another self-serving lie.

And third, because leading a country through yet another long twilight struggle requires not just honesty but clarity. This is a president who to this day cannot bring himself to identify the enemy as radical Islam. Just [Tuesday night](#), explaining the [U.S. embassy closures](#) across the Muslim world, he cited the threat from “violent extremism.”

The word “extremism” is meaningless. People don’t devote themselves to being extreme. Extremism has no content. The extreme of what? In this war, an extreme devotion to the supremacy of a radically fundamentalist vision of Islam and to its murderous quest for dominion over all others.

But for President Obama, the word “Islamist” may not be uttered. Language must be devised to disguise the unpleasantness.

Result? The world’s first lexicological war. Parry and thrust with linguistic tricks, deliberate misnomers and ever more transparent euphemisms. Next: armor-piercing onomatopoeias and amphibious synecdoches.

This would all be comical and merely peculiar if it didn’t reflect a larger, more troubling reality: The confusion of language is a direct result of a confusion of policy — which is served by constant obfuscation.

Obama doesn’t like this terror war. He particularly dislikes its unfortunate religious coloration, which is why “Islamist” is banished from his lexicon. But soothing words, [soothing speeches](#) in various Muslim capitals, soothing policies — “open hand,” “mutual respect” — have yielded nothing. The war remains. Indeed, under his watch, [it has spread](#). And as commander in chief he must defend the nation.

He must. But he desperately wants to end the whole struggle. This is no secret wish. In [a major address](#) to the National Defense University just three months ago he declared “this war, like all wars, must end.” The plaintive cry of a man hoping that saying so makes it so.

The result is visible ambivalence that leads to vacillating policy reeking of incoherence. Obama defends the vast NSA data dragnet because of the terrible continuing threat of terrorism. Yet at the same time, he calls for not just amending but actually repealing the legal basis for the entire war on terror, the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Well, which is it? If the tide of war is receding, why the giant NSA snooping programs? If al-Qaeda is on the run, as he incessantly assured the nation throughout 2012, why is America cowering in 19 closed-down embassies and consulates? Why was Boston put on an unprecedented full lockdown after the marathon bombings? And from [Somalia to Afghanistan](#), why are we raining death by drone on “violent extremists” — every target, amazingly, a jihadist? What a coincidence.

This incoherence of policy and purpose is why an evacuation from Yemen must be passed off as “a reduction in staff.” Why the Benghazi terror attack must be blamed on some hapless Egyptian-American videographer. Why the Fort Hood shooting is nothing but some loony Army doctor gone postal.

In the end, this isn’t about language. It’s about leadership. The wordplay is merely cover for uncertain policy embedded in confusion and ambivalence about the whole enterprise.

This is not leading from behind. This is not leading at all.

## **American Spectator**

### **A Defense of Hillsdale and Its President**

by Spencer Amaral

When I recently heard that the president of my school, Hillsdale College, was in hot water for making racist remarks at a state hearing on education, I was stunned.

But upon learning the facts, it was immediately obvious that this was simply another case of liberal scandal-mongers scraping the bottom of the barrel to try to discredit one of the nation’s finest — and most conservative — colleges.

Hillsdale College President Dr. Larry Arnn was speaking at a Michigan Department of Education hearing in Lansing last Wednesday on his opposition to Common Core curriculum (which should be the real story here, but we’ve conveniently managed to cut that out of the conversation). Arnn presented his argument against state interference in education, and included a story of state officials visiting Hillsdale College in 1998 to inspect the school’s “racial diversity.” Arnn was outraged – as am I – that the state would act in such a blatantly race-based manner. Not to be Mr. Obvious here, but to have bureaucrats walking around the campus of a top-tier college with clipboards, taking notes on the skin color of the students they see, *is by definition racist* because it doesn’t recognize a person’s character or individuality, but only the color of their skin.

Arnn sought to express disgust at the backwards and dehumanizing actions of the state officials, which were revealed when he later received a letter from the Michigan Department of Education. The letter, he said, notified him that Hillsdale College “violated the standards for diversity because we didn’t have enough dark ones, I guess, is what they meant.”

“To that I told them, we are probably the first college in human history, certainly one of them, founded with a charter that says we will take black and white men and women without any discrimination,” Arnn said.

The committee members immediately took offense at the use of the term “dark ones.” Such stunning adeptness at bending over backwards to find offense in a statement by ignoring the plainly-stated context — which had just been declared literally right in front of them moments before — is truly astonishing, and depicts either a mind-hobbling willful ignorance or a frightful ineptitude of the English language. Never mind that the term was only meant as an ironic slam against the hypocrisy of state officials who preach the virtues of a color-blind society, and then measure students by skin color alone. The point was clearly so above the committee members’ heads that it almost took out a satellite.

Who has time to listen to what the man said when you could be taking offense?

The Michigan Department of Education originally denied any such visit and letter, [only to recant](#) and acknowledge the episode on Thursday. In the meantime, Arnn and Hillsdale College have issued [clarifying statements](#) to apologize for any offense taken because of Arnn’s remarks.

Anyone who seeks to advance the cause of civil rights, racial integration, and social diversity in the U.S. would do well to recognize that Hillsdale College has always been one of the foremost proponents of racial equality in America’s history. It was the first American college to ban discrimination based on race, religion, or sex in its charter, and it was founded by Freewill Baptists in 1844 in fierce opposition to slavery. Hillsdale’s founders were also instrumental in creating the Republican Party as an anti-slavery party soon after, leading to the election of Abraham Lincoln as president in 1860.

As a current senior at Hillsdale College, I know that the school’s legacy as a bastion of liberty and classical education is still honored and upheld by its student body and faculty, with a determination rooted in an understanding of and dedication to the principles of freedom that Hillsdale was founded to defend. This is especially true of Dr. Arnn, who has been an exceptional representative of the college since he became its president.

Now you may understand my total shock and exasperation to hear the accusations against Dr. Arnn. But sadly, we already know that liberals aren’t used to letting facts get in their way. So go ahead: Accuse one of the first colleges on the planet to grant degrees to African Americans and women of harboring racism and bigotry. Good luck with that.

## **Volokh Conspiracy**

### **[New Yorker Article on Asset Forfeiture Abuse](#)**

by Ilya Somin

The *New Yorker* has [an interesting article](#) on asset forfeiture abuse, describing how law enforcement authorities routinely use it to seize property from people who have never been convicted of any crime, and often have not even been charged:

On a bright Thursday afternoon in 2007, Jennifer Boatright, a waitress at a Houston bar-and-grill, drove with her two young sons and her boyfriend, Ron Henderson, on U.S. 59 toward Linden, Henderson’s home town, near the Texas-Louisiana border....

Near the city limits, a tall, bull-shouldered officer named Barry Washington pulled them over....



The officers found the couple's cash and a marbled-glass pipe that Boatright said was a gift for her sister-in-law, and escorted them across town to the police station. In a corner there, two tables were heaped with jewelry, DVD players, cell phones, and the like. According to the police report, Boatright and Henderson fit the profile of drug couriers: they were driving from Houston, "a known point for distribution of illegal narcotics," to Linden, "a known place to receive illegal narcotics." The report describes their children as possible decoys, meant to distract police as the couple breezed down the road, smoking marijuana. (None was found in the car, although Washington claimed to have smelled it.)

The county's district attorney, a fifty-seven-year-old woman with feathered Charlie's Angels hair named Lynda K. Russell... told Henderson and Boatright that they had two options. They could face felony charges for "money laundering" and "child endangerment," in which case they would go to jail and their children would be handed over to foster care. Or they could sign over their cash to the city of Tenaha, and get back on the road. "No criminal charges shall be filed," a waiver she drafted read, "and our children shall not be turned over to CPS," or Child Protective Services....

Later, [Boatright] she learned that cash-for-freedom deals had become a point of pride for Tenaha, and that versions of the tactic were used across the country. "Be safe and keep up the good work," the city marshal wrote to Washington, following a raft of complaints from out-of-town drivers who claimed that they had been stopped in Tenaha and stripped of cash, valuables, and, in at least one case, an infant child, without clear evidence of contraband....

In general, you needn't be found guilty to have your assets claimed by law enforcement; in some states, suspicion on a par with "probable cause" is sufficient. Nor must you be charged with a crime, or even be accused of one. Unlike criminal forfeiture, which requires that a person be convicted of an offense before his or her property is confiscated, civil forfeiture amounts to a lawsuit filed directly against a possession, regardless of its owner's guilt or innocence.

Despite such abuses, *New Yorker* writer Sarah Stillman writes that "The basic principle behind asset forfeiture is appealing. It enables authorities to confiscate cash or property obtained through illicit means, and, in many states, funnel the proceeds directly into the fight against crime." I disagree. The idea that government can seize your property without ever having to prove that you committed a crime is deeply unjust, and creates dangerous perverse incentives for police, especially [in cases where they or the local governments they work for get to keep the assets seized](#). The Texas jurisdiction discussed in Stillman's article is particularly egregious, since it focuses its abusive behavior on out-of-town drivers who have little or no political leverage in the area, and face unusually high costs if they choose to contest the seizures.

A variety of reforms could help diminish asset forfeiture abuse. For example, police could be banned from keeping the proceeds, and state and local governments should give owners the right to contest seizures quickly and cheaply. In some states, current arrangements allow the authorities to hold forfeited property for many months without giving the owner any opportunity to challenge the seizure, [thereby violating the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment](#).

Ultimately, however, the best solution is to abolish civil asset forfeiture completely. If a person is convicted of a crime, he or she can be duly punished, including in some cases with financial penalties. Stolen or illegally acquired property can then be returned to its rightful owners. But there is no good reason for the authorities to be able to seize property merely because they



suspect it might have been used in some illegal transaction. Moreover, once such a system is established, it turns out to be very difficult to prevent it from becoming highly abusive. As a practical matter, most of the people victimized by asset forfeiture abuse are poor, lacking in political influence, and unable to bear the expense of prolonged litigation. For these reasons, there is little political pressure to prevent the sorts of abuses documented in Stillman's article and elsewhere. And there is similarly little incentive for higher officials to monitor police and prosecutors' use of asset forfeiture to curb this kind of behavior. A categorical ban on civil asset forfeiture would be easier to administer than piecemeal reforms, and therefore more likely to succeed.

## CNN

### [Why I changed my mind on weed](#)

by Dr. Sanjay Gupta

*Watch Dr. Sanjay Gupta's groundbreaking documentary "WEED" at 8 p.m. ET August 11 on CNN.*

**(CNN)** -- Over the last year, I have been working on a new documentary called "Weed." The title "Weed" may sound cavalier, but the content is not.

I traveled around the world to interview medical leaders, experts, growers and patients. I spoke candidly to them, asking tough questions. What I found was stunning.

Long before I began this project, I had steadily reviewed the scientific literature on medical marijuana from the United States and thought it was fairly unimpressive. Reading these papers five years ago, it was hard to make a case for medicinal marijuana. I even wrote about this in a TIME magazine article, back in 2009, titled "[Why I would Vote No on Pot.](#)"

Well, I am here to apologize.

I apologize because I didn't look hard enough, until now. I didn't look far enough. I didn't review papers from smaller labs in other countries doing some remarkable research, and I was too dismissive of the loud chorus of legitimate patients whose symptoms improved on cannabis.

Instead, I lumped them with the high-visibility malingerers, just looking to get high. I mistakenly believed the Drug Enforcement Agency listed marijuana as a [schedule 1 substance](#) because of sound scientific proof. Surely, they must have quality reasoning as to why marijuana is in the category of the most dangerous drugs that have "no accepted medicinal use and a high potential for abuse."



*Dr. Sanjay Gupta is a neurosurgeon and CNN's chief medical correspondent.*

They didn't have the science to support that claim, and I now know that when it comes to marijuana neither of those things are true. It doesn't have a high potential for abuse, and there are very legitimate medical applications. In fact, sometimes marijuana is the only thing that works. Take the case of [Charlotte Figi](#), who I met in Colorado. She started having seizures soon after birth. By age 3, she was having 300 a week, despite being on seven different medications. Medical marijuana has calmed her brain, limiting her seizures to 2 or 3 per month.

I have seen more patients like Charlotte first hand, spent time with them and come to the realization that it is irresponsible not to provide the best care we can as a medical community, care that could involve marijuana.

We have been terribly and systematically misled for nearly 70 years in the United States, and I apologize for my own role in that.

*WEED: A Dr. Sanjay Gupta Special*

I hope this article and upcoming documentary will help set the record straight.

On August 14, 1970, the Assistant Secretary of Health, Dr. Roger O. Egeberg wrote a letter recommending the plant, marijuana, be classified as a schedule 1 substance, and it has remained that way for nearly 45 years. My research started with a careful reading of that decades old letter. What I found was unsettling. Egeberg had carefully chosen his words:

"Since there is still a considerable void in our knowledge of the plant and effects of the active drug contained in it, our recommendation is that marijuana be retained within schedule 1 at least until the completion of certain studies now underway to resolve the issue."

Not because of sound science, but because of its absence, marijuana was classified as a schedule 1 substance. Again, the year was 1970. Egeberg mentions studies that are underway, but many were never completed. As my investigation continued, however, I realized Egeberg did in fact have important research already available to him, some of it from more than 25 years earlier.

## High risk of abuse

In 1944, New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia [commissioned research](#) to be performed by the New York Academy of Science. Among their conclusions: they found marijuana did not lead to significant addiction in the medical sense of the word. They also did not find any evidence marijuana led to morphine, heroin or cocaine addiction.

We now know that while estimates vary, marijuana leads to dependence in around 9 to 10% of its adult users. By comparison, cocaine, [a schedule 2 substance](#) "with less abuse potential than schedule 1 drugs" hooks 20% of those who use it. Around 25% of heroin users become addicted.

The worst is tobacco, where the number is closer to 30% of smokers, many of whom go on to die because of their addiction.

There is clear evidence that in some people marijuana use can lead to withdrawal symptoms, including insomnia, anxiety and nausea. Even considering this, it is hard to make a case that it has a high potential for abuse. The physical symptoms of marijuana addiction are nothing like those of the other drugs I've mentioned. I have seen the withdrawal from alcohol, and it can be life threatening.

I do want to mention a concern that I think about as a father. Young, developing brains are likely more susceptible to harm from marijuana than adult brains. Some recent studies suggest that regular use in teenage years leads to a permanent decrease in IQ. Other research hints at a possible heightened risk of developing psychosis.

Much in the same way I wouldn't let my own children drink alcohol, I wouldn't permit marijuana until they are adults. If they are adamant about trying marijuana, I will urge them to wait until they're in their mid-20s when their brains are fully developed.

## Medical benefit

While investigating, I realized something else quite important. Medical marijuana is not new, and the medical community has been writing about it for a long time. There were in fact hundreds of journal articles, mostly documenting the benefits. Most of those papers, however, were written between the years 1840 and 1930. The papers described the use of medical marijuana to treat "neuralgia, convulsive disorders, emaciation," among other things.

A search through the U.S. National Library of Medicine this past year pulled up nearly [20,000 more recent papers](#). But the majority were research into the harm of marijuana, such as "[Bad trip due to anticholinergic effect of cannabis](#)," or "[Cannabis induced pancreatitis](#)" and "[Marijuana use and risk of lung cancer](#)."

In my quick running of the numbers, I calculated about 6% of the current U.S. marijuana studies investigate the benefits of medical marijuana. The rest are designed to investigate harm. That imbalance paints a highly distorted picture.

## The challenges of marijuana research

To do studies on marijuana in the United States today, you need two important things.

First of all, you need marijuana. And marijuana is illegal. You see the problem. Scientists can get research marijuana from a special farm in Mississippi, which is astonishingly located in the middle of the Ole Miss campus, but it is challenging. When I visited this year, there was no marijuana being grown.

The second thing you need is approval, and the scientists I interviewed kept reminding me how tedious that can be. While a cancer study may first be evaluated by the National Cancer Institute, or a pain study may go through the National Institute for Neurological Disorders, there is one more approval required for marijuana: NIDA, the National Institute on Drug Abuse. It is an organization that has a core mission of studying drug abuse, as opposed to benefit.

Stuck in the middle are the legitimate patients who depend on marijuana as a medicine, oftentimes as their only good option.

Keep in mind that up until 1943, marijuana was part of the United States drug pharmacopeia. One of the conditions for which it was prescribed was [neuropathic pain](#). It is a miserable pain that's tough to treat. My own patients have described it as "lancinating, burning and a barrage of pins and needles." While marijuana has long been documented to be [effective for this awful pain](#), the most common medications prescribed today come from the poppy plant, including morphine, oxycodone and dilaudid.

Here is the problem. Most of these medications don't work very well for this kind of pain, and tolerance is a real problem.

Most frightening to me is that someone dies in the United States [every 19 minutes from a prescription drug overdose](#), mostly accidental. Every 19 minutes. It is a horrifying statistic. As much as I searched, I could not find a documented case of death from marijuana overdose.

It is perhaps no surprise then that 76% of physicians recently [surveyed](#) said they would approve the use of marijuana to help ease a woman's pain from breast cancer.

When marijuana became a schedule 1 substance, there was a request to fill a "void in our knowledge." In the United States, that has been challenging because of the infrastructure surrounding the study of an illegal substance, with a drug abuse organization at the heart of the approval process. And yet, despite the hurdles, we have made considerable progress that continues today.

Looking forward, I am especially intrigued by studies like those in Spain and Israel looking at the [anti-cancer effects of marijuana](#) and its components. I'm intrigued by the neuro-protective study by Lev Meschoulam in Israel, and research in Israel and the United States on whether the drug might help [alleviate symptoms of PTSD](#). I promise to do my part to help, genuinely and honestly, fill the remaining void in our knowledge.

Citizens in 20 states and the District of Columbia have now voted to approve marijuana for medical applications, and more states will be making that choice soon. As for Dr. Roger Egeberg, who wrote that letter in 1970, he passed away 16 years ago.

I wonder what he would think if he were alive today.

## Kurzweil Blog

### [Chocolate may help keep brain healthy](#)



Drinking two cups of hot chocolate a day may help older people [keep](#) their brains healthy and their thinking skills sharp, according to a study published in the August 7, 2013, issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the [American Academy of Neurology](#).

The study involved 60 people with an average age of 73 who did not have dementia. The participants drank two cups of hot cocoa per day for 30 days and did not consume any other chocolate during the study. They were given tests of memory and thinking skills. They also had ultrasounds tests to measure the amount of blood flow to the brain during the tests.

“We’re learning more about blood flow in the brain and its effect on thinking skills,” said study author Farzaneh A. Sorond, MD, PhD, of Harvard Medical School in Boston and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. “As different areas of the brain need more energy to complete their tasks, they also need greater blood flow. This relationship, called neurovascular coupling, may play an important role in diseases such as Alzheimer’s.”

Of the 60 participants, 18 had impaired blood flow at the start of the study. Those people had an 8.3-percent improvement in the blood flow to the working areas of the brain by the end of the study, while there was no improvement for those who started out with regular blood flow.

The people with impaired blood flow also improved their times on a test of working memory, with scores dropping from 167 seconds at the beginning of the study to 116 seconds at the end. There was no change in times for people with regular blood flow.

A total of 24 of the participants also had MRI scans of the brain to look for tiny areas of brain damage. The scans found that people with impaired blood flow were also more likely to have these areas of brain damage.

Half of the study participants received hot cocoa that was rich in the antioxidant flavanol, while the other half received flavanol-poor hot cocoa. There were no differences between the two groups in the results.

“More work is needed to prove a link between cocoa, blood flow problems and cognitive decline,” said Paul B. Rosenberg, MD, of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, who wrote an editorial accompanying the study. “But this is an important first step that could guide future studies.”

The study was supported by the National Institute on Aging and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The cocoa was provided by Mars Inc.

## **Borowitz Report**

### **[Amazon Founder Says He Clicked on Washington Post by Mistake](#)**

by Andy Borowitz

SEATTLE ([The Borowitz Report](#))—Jeff Bezos, the founder of [Amazon.com](#), told reporters today that his reported purchase of the *Washington Post* was a “gigantic mix-up,” explaining that he had clicked on the newspaper by mistake.

“I guess I was just kind of browsing through their website and not paying close attention to what I was doing,” he said. “No way did I intend to buy anything.”

Mr. Bezos said he had been oblivious to his online shopping error until earlier today, when he saw an unusual charge for two hundred and fifty million dollars on his American Express statement.

After investigating with the credit-card company, he was informed that he had been charged for the purchase price of the entire *Washington Post*, which, he said, was “pure craziness.”

“No way in hell would I buy the *Washington Post*,” he said. “I don’t even read the *Washington Post*.”

Mr. Bezos said he had been on the phone with the *Post*’s customer service for the better part of the day trying to unwind his mistaken purchase, but so far “they’ve really been giving me the runaround.”

According to Mr. Bezos, “I keep telling them, I don’t know how it got in my cart. I don’t want it. It’s like they’re making it impossible to return it.”









AL-QAIDA IS ON THE RUN...



AL-QAIDA IS MERELY A SHELL OF ITS FORMER SELF...



AL-QAIDA'S LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN DECIMATED...

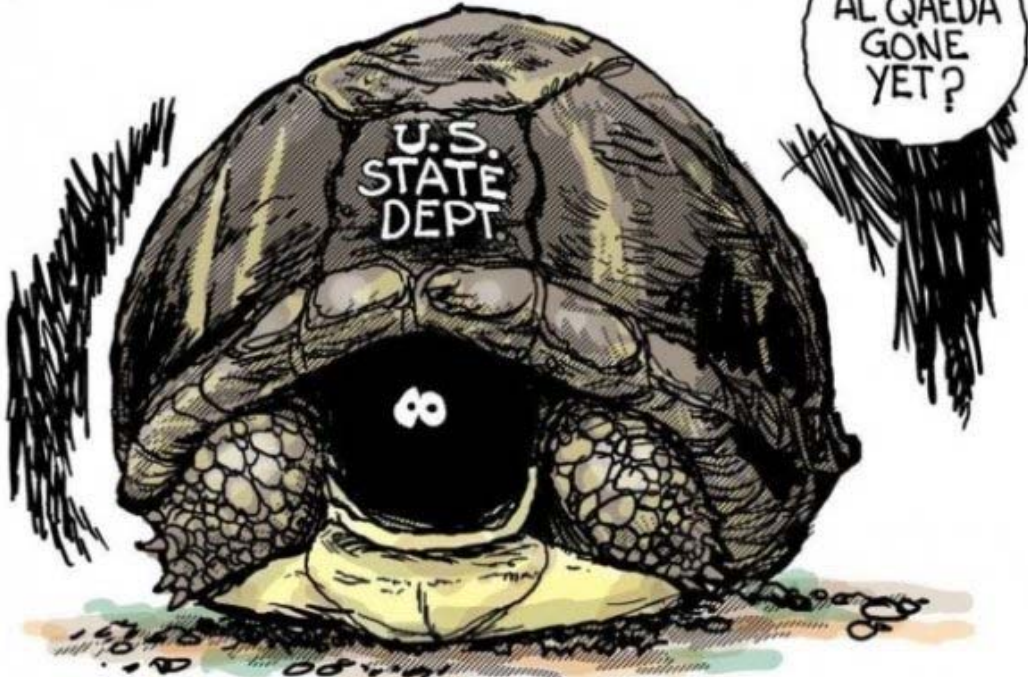


AL-QAIDA SPENDS MORE TIME THINKING ABOUT THEIR OWN SAFETY THAN PLOTTING AGAINST US.



*Gary Varvel*  
THE INDIVIDUAL IS GREAT  
©2013 Gary Varvel.com

garyvarvel.com



LEADING FROM WAY, WAY, WAY BEHIND.





***Breaking News***

**LIVE** Man too stupid to use hat

**TWN**  
EXCLUSIVE