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## THE ARGOT OF THE UNDERWORLD DRUG ADDICT\*

ALFRED R. LINDESMITH†

The argot of the American underworld addict is of such recent origin that it can scarcely be said to have a history at all. Practically all of the words and idioms used by this group have acquired the special meanings attributed to them so recently that the examination of collections of underworld languages which were made in the past do not give any help in understanding current usage among the addicts or "junkers" of today. This topic has been given virtually no attention by contemporary sociologists or linguists despite the fact that special languages of this type are of undoubted significance to both.<sup>1</sup>

It is significant that although drug addiction existed in this country many decades before 1850 no body of argot began to develop until a couple of decades after the middle of the century when opium smoking was introduced into the American underworld as something in the nature of a fashion.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese who immigrated to this country in large numbers in the decade of the fifties and thereafter, not only introduced the habit to the American underworld of the Barbary Coast, but they also left their influence upon the language which was employed by American initiates to describe the paraphernalia and experiences which are associated with the smoking of opium. This influence is still obvious today in the number of words collected in this paper which are derivations from the Chinese or corruptions of it.

The opium smokers of the later decades of the nineteenth

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\* This compilation of argot was made in connection with a study of drug addiction conducted in Chicago under the direction of Dr. Herbert Blumer.

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of excellent pioneer work that is now being done by D. W. Maurer of the University of Louisville. Maurer has published a couple articles on addict argot and several others on other underworld argots. The criminologist will find it very instructive to examine these articles, which appeared in *American Speech*. He approaches this subject from the linguistic viewpoint.

<sup>2</sup> An anonymous writer who had been a deputy sheriff in the Black Hills during the seventies, referred in 1888 (*Chamber's Journal*, vol. 65, p. 654) to such terms as ((joint," "long draw," "rolling opium," "hit the Pipe" and "fiends." This indicates that the argot was already in process of formation at that early date.

century and the first two decades of the twentieth were among the elite of the underworld. They first learned the habit and the ritual associated with it from the Chinese, and it was this group that first developed the lingo which is now used by virtually all types of underworld narcotic users. When smoking was stamped out, and the old pipe smoker was compelled to resort to the needle or to the sniffing of the drug, he applied the language which he at first applied only to opium smoking to his changed circumstances. Other persons who used the drug in other ways found, when they merged with the ex-smokers in the underworld, that there was already a lingo in existence among this latter group which served to meet the expressional needs associated with drug addiction and with the maintenance of a "habit." This lingo was impressed upon addicts all the more by reason of the fact that the pipe smoker enjoyed prestige in the underworld.

The shift in the opium smoker's language from a body of argot applying at first only to opium smoking to one which applied to the use of opiates in any form may be easily traced in the shifting meanings of a number of words. Thus, the term, "yen," no doubt a derivation from the Chinese, or a corruption of it, was first used to designate the opium smoker's desire for his drug during withdrawal distress.<sup>3</sup> It is now used in a general sense for the desire for any opiate during withdrawal distress regardless of how the drug is used. The terms "gowster" and "hop-head," which used to refer only to opium smokers, may now be applied to any drug user. Instances of this kind are numerous.

It is sometimes thought that underworld lingos, and the addict's lingo represent a desire for secrecy. It is assumed that the addict, wishing to communicate with a fellow addict in the presence of non-addicts, invents an argot to meet this purpose. Nothing could be further from the truth than this notion. The surest means an addict could employ to make his identity known would be to use the argot. To the narcotic agent this would furnish an unmistakable clue. The addict who wishes to conceal his identity, like the criminal in the same situation, uses the everyday language of people in legitimate society.

The real causes which account for the origin of a special argot are deeper and are probably akin to the causes of all language development. The addict's argot represents a need for a special

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. J. Masters, "The Opium Traffic in California," 25 *The Chautauquan* (N. S.) 54-61 (1896).

form of expression which arises out of the peculiar experiences that are associated with the use of opiate drugs. This need is felt and becomes effective in the creation of the argot only when the persons who have these experiences become, in some sense, united and integrated into a single social unit. Addict argot arises out of the common experiences of addicts living in association with one another. As long as the drug addicts in our society were scattered throughout legitimate occupations, each one more or less unknown to others, no argot developed. In England today, where this is approximately the situation, there is apparently no argot in existence. It is only when they came together, as in our underworld, bound together by common interests and above all by the necessities of obtaining a daily supply of the drug and of outwitting the police, that a special language emerged.

We have tried to limit ourselves in this glossary to terms and phrases with special meanings for the drug-user. We have excluded those terms which are general in the underworld and are used by addicts without any meaning that is specifically connected with addiction. A number of phrases and words associated with the use of cocaine have been included because of the fact that a large proportion of opiate users have, at one time or another, used cocaine alone or in combination with an opiate. Individuals who use only cocaine are rare. Similarly, a few terms, which the addict uses exactly as they are used in the underworld generally, have been included for special reasons. Thus, we have included the verb "to boost" (to shop-lift) because this form of activity is extremely common among addicts.

We have not attempted to account for all the possible variations which can be introduced into the usual language of the addict by systematic changes such as those represented in what is known as "pig-latin" and other such devices. We have included "amdray" (pig-latin for "dram") only because it seemed to be more generally used than other "pig-latin" products. We have not taken into account the so-called "Australian" lingo nor the device which makes "mizake the mizan" from the phrase "make the man."

No word list of this kind can be complete nor can it be correct in all details for all parts of the country at once. Addict argot changes rapidly and varies from one section of the country to the next. The list which follows is substantially the argot of the Chicago addict at the time of our study. All of the words and phrases in the list that follows, with the exception of about forty which were

taken from Maurer's work, have been checked with addicts for authenticity and for correct definition. No doubt some errors still remain. The examples cited are, in practically all cases, actual utterances of addicts with whom we came in contact.

**Abb:** An abscess usually caused by bad drugs or by an unsterilized needle. While the addict is using the drug these abscesses heal slowly but when he quits they quickly disappear.

**Add:** An addict. This term is not very commonly used. See *junker*.

**Amdray:** A dram of narcotics. (An example of what is known as "pig-latin," wherein the syllables are inverted.)

**Around the turn; To be around the turn:** To be through the severest part of the withdrawal distress, which usually comes about three days after the last dose of the drug. See *hump, to be over the*.

**Away from one's habit:** To have quit using drugs. Example: "A fellow still feels pretty rotten when he is only a month away from his habit."

**Back up, to:** See *bring up*.

**Bamboo:** See *stick*.

**A bang, or to bang:** An injection of drugs is often called a bang. To *be banging up* is to be giving oneself a shot. See *shot*. Also used as synonym of *kick*, as in "I got a whale of a *bang* out of the pipe." Also for a small amount of drugs as in, "Can you spare me a *bang*?"

**Beat the gong:** To smoke opium.

**Belt:** See *kick*.

**Bendin' and bowin':** Full of drugs. See *loaded*.

**Bernies:** Cocain contained in a remedy put out by a doctor named Bernie.

**Big Man:** The distributor of drugs who handles large amounts and seldom goes to jail. The upper branches of the traffic are not controlled by addicts.

**Big-shot connection:** One who peddles large amounts. The law is particularly anxious to get the *big-shot connection* but the bigger he is the more apt he is to be well protected against the law. Example: "It isn't the *big-shot connection* that does the time in the pen; it's the bird-cage hyp."

**Bindle, a:** A small amount of drugs, perhaps a couple of grains, done up in a paper. Also, *a paper, a deck, a go, a check, cigarette paper*.

**Bing, a:** A dose of the drug. See *shot*.

**Bingo, a:** See *shot*.

**Bird-cage hyps:** The poorer class of addicts. Also, *boots, boot-and-shoe fiends*. Example: "*Bird-cage hyps* have trouble supporting their habits."

**Bird's eye, a:** A very small quantity of drugs. Example: "When Whitey brought the cap I took just a tiny little bit—a *bird's eye*—and gave the rest to him."

**Bizz, the:** See *joint*.

**Black stuff:** Opium.

- Blow:** to *blow a shot*: To waste a shot by spilling the drug or, if a vein-shooter, to miss the vein.
- Blowing:** Taking drugs via the nostrils. Also *sniffing*, *snorting*.
- Boo Gee:** The paper used to make the end of the medicine dropper fit snugly into the hypodermic needle.
- Boost:** To shop-lift. Also to *clout* or *make a clout*. One of the most common ways of making a living among addicts. *Boosting* is the act or profession of shop-lifting which is also referred to as the *derrick*, the *clout*.
- Boot, a:** See *kick*.
- Boots, or Boot-and-shoe dope-fiends:** The poorer class of addicts. Also *bird-cage hysps*, *dugout*. Example: "The Black Maria took almost thirty boots out of the Legion yesterday to the bandhouse."
- Break, to; to break the habit:** To quit using the drug. May also be used as follows, "I *break* my habit in the stomach," meaning that the chief withdrawal symptoms are gastric.
- Brick:** See *brick gum*.
- Brick gum:** Raw opium. Also called *leaf gum*, *mud*, *gum*, *brick*, *leaf*.
- Bring up, or back up, the veins:** To cause the veins to stand out by tying up the arm or leg between the place where it is desired to make the injection and the heart. A little massaging also helps.
- Brody:** See *wing-ding*.
- Bug, to:** To inject coal oil, tobacco juice, or some other substance into oneself with a view to causing a sufficient poisoning so that a shot of drugs may perhaps be obtained.
- Build up one's habit, to:** To increase one's dosage.
- Bull-horrors:** Delusions of a person who have overindulged in cocaine and is led to believe that he hears police talking about him outside his door, or hears them trying to climb into the room through the window or the transom, etc. In general, delusions of pursuit by the law. See, for related term, *Steve*.
- Bunk-habit:** One who likes to lie around a *lay-out* is said to have a *bunk-habit*.
- "C":** Cocaine. To camouflage a sentence like "I want some 'C,'" an addict might say, "I'm looking for Charley"; or "I'm anxious to see some collars." Also called *snow*, *coke*. See "H", "M".
- Canned stuff:** Commercial smoking opium. Also known by the name of the company as *Lem Kee*, *Li Young*, etc.
- Carry, to, or to be carried:** To be supported by the drug is *to be carried* by it. Also to *hold* or *he held*. Example: "This shot will *carry* me for six hours."
- Cartwheel:** See *wing-ding*.
- Cat-naps:** Short snatches of sleep which the addict may get during withdrawal. Also as verb to *cat-nap*.
- Caught, to be caught up:** See *fold up*.
- Cap, a:** A capsule containing drugs. They come in various sizes and at various prices. See also, *a go*.
- Cement:** Any kind of drug as it passes into commerce rather than when it is used by the addict.

- Channel, in the:* In a vein. See *vein shooting*. Example: "He can't get it in the *channel*."
- Charged, to be:* See *loaded*.
- Check:* See *bindle*.
- Chef:* The person who prepares the opium for smoking. This is something of an art and one who understands it thoroughly is in demand. Also known as *cook*.
- Chicken-shit habit:* See *chippy*.
- Chinaman; To have a Chinaman on one's back:* To have a drug habit or to be suffering withdrawal distress.
- Chinese needle work:* The handling or use of narcotics.
- Chippy:* A *chippy* is one who uses a little bit now and then. It is about the same as pleasure user. See *play around, dabble, chicken-shit habit*.
- Chuck-horrors:* A state of the addict after quitting his habit when he cannot get enough to eat and will eat anything at any time. It usually develops after about a week of abstinence.
- Cigarette paper:* A small amount of heroin or other narcotic. See *bindle*.
- Circus:* See *wing-ding*.
- Coasting:* Refers to the feeling of euphoria produced by a dose of drugs in the initial period of use or after a period of abstinence, or from an unusually large dose. Example: An addict points to another addict lying on the bed and says, "He's just *coasting* along."
- Coke:* See "C."
- Cokie:* A cocaine user. Also, *coke-fiend, snow-bird, cokomo, coke-head*.
- Cokomo:* See *cokie*.
- Cold-turkey; to kick a habit cold turkey:* To quit using drugs without tapering off or without drugs to relieve the withdrawal. See *kick the habit*.
- Connection:* A drug peddler or distributor. Also, *pusher, shover*. See also *big-shot connection*. Example: "My connection got knocked off (arrested) last night and I'm looking for another one."
- Connection-dough:* See *score-dough*.
- Connector:* One who acts as go-between, between the drug user and the peddler—for a price. See *on the send*.
- Cooker:* The receptacle in which the drug is dissolved and heated prior to being drawn into the medicine dropper.
- Cook:* See *chef*.
- Cookie:* Opiate addict. See *junker*.
- Cotics:* Narcotics. See *junk*.
- Cotton, the:* A small piece of cotton through which the drug solution is drawn up into the medicine dropper so as to strain out material which might cause needle trouble. *To ask for the cotton* is to attempt to borrow an addict's cotton and wring it out to get a little of the drug solution. *To be using one's cotton* is to have difficulty in making enough money to buy a sufficient supply of drugs. This is also expressed by saying, "*I'm down to the rinsings*."

- Cotton brothers; M. & C. Cotton:* Used in reference to the cotton used in giving an injection. It absorbs enough drugs so that in a prison, for example, it will be in popular demand by addicts for the purpose of wringing it out and injecting whatever solution is obtained. Example: "Where are the *Cotton brothers*?" "Is *Charley Cotton* around?"
- Cotton habit:* A small habit often sustained or partially sustained by begging more prosperous addicts for their *cotton*. See *cotton, rinsings*. Addicts who are too poor to afford a capsule by themselves may club together with another addict who, let us say, furnishes one half of the price of a capsule and has a *joint*. If the other addict had no *joint*, the *cotton* might be used in payment for the rental of the *joint*.
- Croaker:* A doctor. Also *blood-sucker*.
- Cube, a:* A cube of morphine (heroin comes in caps) containing perhaps two or three grains. Referred to as a *block* in some localities.
- Cut, to:* To adulterate drugs. Morphine, which ordinarily comes in cubes, is *cut* before being put up in cubes, whereas heroin, which is usually sold in capsules in powder form can be *cut* almost indefinitely. It is said that much of the heroin sold on the streets of Chicago is only between 10% and 20% actual heroin. Morphine is sometimes sold in capsules in some localities.
- Cutered pill:* A strong and unpalatable pill obtained when the bowl of the opium pipe becomes too hot or too full of yenshee.
- Dabble:* See *play around*.
- Deadwood:* To be arrested by a narcotic agent directly rather than through the intervention of the stool pigeon.
- Deck, a:* See *bindle*.
- Dinghizen:* See *dripper*.
- Dingus:* See *dripper*.
- Dope:* Drugs. This term is seldom used in this way by drug addicts. *Junk* and *stuff* are preferred. See *junk*.
- Dope-fiend:* A drug addict. Also *gowster, junker, hophead, smecker, user, cookie*, etc. See *junker*. On first use of term see *pipe-fiend*.
- Dope-hop:* A term sometimes used in prison for drug addict.
- Do-right Johns:* See *square-john*.
- Do-right-people:* Non-addicts.
- Dream-stick:* See *stick*.
- Dripper:* An eyedropper or medicine dropper. Also called *dingus, fake, fake-a-loo, dinghizen*. Example: "The *dripper* leaked and I blew the shot."
- Drive:* See *kick*.
- Drive in, to:* To get narcotics to an imprisoned addict.
- Dugout:* An addict who has come to the end of his resources. See *boot-and-shoe dope-fiend*.
- Dynamite:* Unusually strong drugs.
- Engine:* Outfit for smoking opium. See *lay-out*.
- Eye-opener:* The first injection of the day, sometimes taken before getting up. This injection produces more marked effects than any

- because the effects of the drug have worn off during the night and the addict wakes up "sick."
- Fake, the*: See *dripper*.
- Fake-a-loo*: See *dripper*.
- Figure-eight*: A *wing-ding* or feigned spasm of some kind for the purpose of getting drugs. See *wing-ding*.
- Finger-of-stuff*: A finger stall filled with drugs, usually for smuggling purposes. The drugs cannot become damp and the stall may be concealed by swallowing, for example. This is the standard method of concealing drugs smuggled into prison. A condom may also be used.
- Fire, to*: To inject drugs hypodermically. See *shoot*.
- Fire-plug*: See *high-hat*.
- Fix, to*: The act of taking drugs in any manner. Also *get the habit off*. Also to take enough drugs to restore the addict to what he regards as his normal state. Example: "Let's stop in the hotel and *fix*." "I drank enough Paregoric to halfway *fix* me." Also, to get one's *yen* off.
- A *fix*: See *shot*. Also of more general application to the act of taking drugs in any form. See *to fix*.
- Flipped or to flip*: To knock unconscious with a dose of some sort of drug—narcotics or others. The *hot shot* kills the victim; it does not *flip* him.
- Fold up, to*: To quit using drugs. *To be washed up, to be caught up, to be on the up-and-up*.
- Frame a twister*: See *wing-ding*.
- Full of poison*: See *loaded*.
- Geed up*: See *loaded*.
- Gee-fat*: The lining of an opium pipe.
- Gee-rags*: Used to make the bowl of the opium pipe fit tightly into the saddle.
- Geezer, a*: See *shot*. A *geezer* is usually a small shot.
- Get the habit off*: To alleviate withdrawal and the accompanying desire for the drug by a dose of it. See *to fix*.
- Go, a*: A small amount of drugs or an amount sufficient for an injection. It may also refer to a *cap* (capsule) or a *paper* of drugs. See also *bindle, short go, deck, a bird's eye, a bang*.
- God's medicine*: the drug. A term which is used chiefly in the West. See *stuff, junk*.
- Going in the skin*: See *skin-shooting*.
- Gonger*: See *stick*.
- Gonger*: opiate derivative drugs. A term which is used chiefly in the West. See *stuff, junk*.
- Gongola*: See *stick*.
- Goods*: Drugs. A term used by big dealers. Also *merchandise*. Big dealers always use these terms in speaking of narcotics.
- Cow*: See *hop*.
- Gow-head*: See *junker*.
- Gowing*: See *Yenshee-gow*.

- Gowster:** A drug addict. May also be used to designate an opium smoker only. It was first used this way exclusively and later extended to addicts in general as opium smokers turned to the hypodermic needle. See also *junker*, *dope-fiend*, *hop-head*, *user*, *smecker*, *cookie*, etc.
- Grease:** Set *hop*.
- Green ashes or green mud:** Ashes left from incompletely burned opium.
- Grocery boy:** A hungry addict not particularly in need of drugs.
- Gum:** Raw opium. See *brick gum*.
- Gun:** hypodermic outfit. See *joint*. A *gun* is also a pickpocket or cannon.
- Gutter:** An addict who injects the drug intravenously.
- "H":** Heroin. To camouflage a sentence like, "Where can I buy some 'H'?", an addict might say, "Where can I find Harry?"
- Habit, a:** Addiction to drugs. Also used to indicate the sickness caused by the lack of drugs; "my *habit* is on," or "my *habit* is coming on," or "I'm beginning to feel my *habit*."
- Harpoon:** The hypodermic needle. Also called *spike*, *the point*, *Bay State*, *nail*, *luer*.
- High:** To be excessively full of drugs. "He is *high*," or "He is *higher* than a Georgia pine." "She is as *high* as a steeple." See also *lit up*, *geed up*, *polluted*, *full of poison*, *steppin' high*, *leaping*, *leapin' an' stinkin'*, *purring*, *purrin' like a cat*.
- High-hat:** A large pill of smoking opium (*hop*). Also called a *fire-plug*.
- Hip, to be on the hip:** To be smoking opium. See *laying on the hip*.
- Hipped:** To have had one's hips become of unequal size through long continued smoking of opium in the reclining position.
- Hit the gow, or hit the stuff:** To be addicted to narcotics.
- Hit, to, or to be hit:** Refers to the effects of a shot as they begin to be felt. Example: "That shot *hit* me like a ton of brick."
- Hitch up the reindeers:** To be about to use cocaine. Also *to go on a sleigh ride*.
- Hitting the stuff, or hitting junk:** To be using narcotics.
- Hocus:** The drug in solution.
- Hold, to:** To support. As in, "Two one grain shots a day will *hold* me."  
Also, *to carry*.
- Holding, to be:** To have drugs to sell on one's person. Thus an addict who wishes to buy some will inquire, "Are you *holding*?", of the peddler from whom he wishes to buy.
- Hooked, to be:** To be addicted, or to have used drugs long enough so that when one stops the withdrawal illness will ensue. Thus, if one has been given drugs in ignorance and does not know what the withdrawal sickness is caused by, an addict might say, "You're *hooked* and don't know it." It may also be used in reference to relapse, as "One shot is enough to get a *junker hooked* again." It means that for one who has once been addicted one injection is sufficient to cause him to continue to use it until he is "really *hooked*."

- Hoosier fiend*: An inexperienced or ignorant addict or an ex-working-man who has become addicted.
- Hop*: Smoking opium. Also called *grease*, *skamas*, *gow*, *tar*. Also used as general term for *opiates*.
- Hop-head*: Originally used to designate opium smokers only, but now sometimes used for addicts in general. See also *hop*, *hop-joint*. See *junker*.
- Hop-joint*: A place where opium is smoked. See *lay-down joint*.
- Hop-toy*: Any opium container regardless of size.
- Hot-shot*: An injection of a poison in place of the drug. An informer who begs for a shot may, for example, be given strychnine in place of heroin.
- Hump, to be over the*: To be passed the severest part of the withdrawal symptoms. Also *to be around the turn*.
- Humming-gee bowl*: The bowl of an opium pipe which is said to be made of a piece of human skull.
- Hyp* or *Hypo*: Addict who uses a hypodermic needle. Also called, *jabber*, *hyposmecker*. Also an abbreviation for "hypodermic" as it is used in hospitals, as in the sentence, "When I took the cure they gave me sterile *hypos* for three days after I was off junk."
- Ice-tong doctor*: An illegal practitioner who also sells dope.
- Iron cure*: To kick the habit cold turkey in a jail or prison. The Chicago Bridewell sent addicts to work in the stone quarry when they were kicking their habits. This practice is variously spoken of as the *iron cure*, *the steel and concrete cure*, or the *quarry cure*.
- Ice-cream habit*: See *week-end habit*.
- Jab, to*: To use drugs hypodermically. Also *to shoot*. Example: "I've smoked and I've *jabbed*."
- Jaboff*: The feeling of exhilaration following a *vein shot*. Refers to the immediate physical impact. See also *hit*.
- Jabpop*: See *shot*.
- Jabpoppo, a*: See *shot*.
- Jam*: An over dose of dope.
- Jammed up*: See *high*.
- Joint*: A hypodermic outfit. It usually consists of a medicine dropper, a hypodermic needle, a small receptacle such as a spoon or the top of a tobacco can in which the drugs are dissolved and cooked, and a little piece of cotton through which the solution is drawn up into the medicine dropper so as to strain out any material which might cause needle trouble. Also called, *lay-out*, *factory*, *machinery*, *gun*, *artillery*, *the works*, *the business*, *the bizz*. Also refers to opium smoking equipment. See *lay-out*.
- Jolt, a*: An injection of drugs. See *shot*.
- Joy-pop*: A shot taken by a person who has not been addicted or by one who has been addicted and intends to take one or two shots and then quit. See *pleasure-user*.
- Joy-popper*: See *pleasure-user*.
- Junk*: Opiate derivative drugs and cocaine. Also *stuff*, *dope*, *smeck*,

- hocus, gee, gow, cotics, mo-jo.* *Junk and stuff* are the preferred terms.
- Junker:* The most commonly used term for drug addicts in general. Other terms for the same are *gowster, dope fiend, hop-head, smecker, user, gow-head, cookie, dope-hop, yenshee-quay.*
- Junk hog:* An immoderate user.
- Keyster plant:* A finger stall with drugs in it concealed in the rectum. Any drugs so hidden are in a *keyster plant.* See *finger of stuff.*
- Kick:* The sensation derived from the use of the drug. Also *drive, boot, belt.*
- Kick-back:* The addict's relapse into his habit after a period of abstinence.
- Kicking the gong around or kicking it around:* Smoking opium. See *laying on the hip.*
- Kick the habit:* to quit using drugs. Example: "They threw me into a cell in the band-house and I kicked her cold turkey."
- Knocker, a:* A person opposed to the use of drugs.
- Lamp-habit:* One who likes to see the lamp lit all the time (the lamp used in opium smoking) is said to have a *lamp-habit.*
- To laugh and scratch:* To use drugs. Refers to the fact that large initial doses of drugs, and especially if taken intravenously, cause an itching sensation.
- Lay-down joint:* A place where one can go to smoke opium, and where all necessary apparatus is supplied—for a price. Also *hop-joint.* Sometimes abbreviated as *lay-down,* as in, "Let's find a *lay-down.*"
- Laying on the hip:* The act of smoking opium. Also spoken of as *kicking the gong around, puffing, kicking it around, rolling the log.*
- Lay-out:* An outfit for smoking opium. Also *joint, the factory, the engine, business, saddle, and bridle.* Also refers to a hypodermic outfit. See *joint, factory, gun, artillery, the works, the business, machinery, the bizz.*
- Leaf gum:* See *brick gum.*
- Leapin' and stinkin':* See *loaded.*
- Leaps:* Experiencing of hallucinations from the excessive use of cocaine.
- Lemon-bowl:* The bowl of an opium pipe which has a lower half consisting of half of a scraped out lemon. An orange may be used in place of a lemon, in which case it is an *orange bowl.*
- Lipping the dropper:* To test the medicine dropper by sucking the air out of the dropper and making it stick to one's lip.
- Lit up:* To be excessively full of drugs. Example: "At the trial the stool-pigeon was *lit up* like a church." See also *high, geed up, polluted, full of poison, loaded.*
- Loaded:* Full of drugs. Example: "Have you got your *load*?" "You're *loaded* to the gills." Also *geed up, high polluted, leapin', steppin' high, full of poison, charged, lit up, purrin', purrin' like a cat, leapin' an' stinkin', bendin' and bowin'.*
- Lobb:* See *lobby-gow.*
- Lobby-gow or Lobb:* One who hangs around and runs errands.

- Log*: See *stick*.
- "M"*: Morphine. An addict speaking to another addict and desiring to camouflage might say, "I'm waiting for Martha"—meaning "I'm waiting for some morphine." This device is at once understood by practically any addict and is used with many variations. See "*H*".
- Main-line*: A vein. To *main-line* a shot: To make an injection intravenously. Example: "If you can *main-line* a cube of the stuff I put out you can have it. It will be on the house."
- Make a spread*: See *spread the joint*.
- Margin men*: Dealers or runners who have no money invested in the goods but use some other person's bank-roll. They will make a trip with drugs on a short margin. They have nothing at stake but their liberty, which, of course, is not a small item.
- Mark a connection, to, or mark for a connection*: To take note of an individual who is peddling drugs so that one may in the future resort to him.
- McCoy*: Chemically pure drugs.
- Medicine*: The drug. Sometimes spoken of as *God's medicine*. Example: "Do you want to take your *medicine* here?"
- Meter, a*: See *wing-ding*.
- Meet, a*: An appointment. Example: "I have a *meet* with a connection to score."
- Miss Emma*: Morphine.
- Monkey*: a habit, as in "I have a *monkey* on my back." Usually used when one is sick for lack of drugs. Also, I have a *Chinaman* on my back.
- Mount Shasta, to be from*: To be addicted to drugs.
- Mouth habit*: An oral drug habit. See *scoffing*.
- Mud*: See *brick gum*.
- Nail*: A hypodermic needle. See *harpoon*.
- Narcotic-bulls, narcotic coppers*: Narcotic officers.
- Needle-fiend*: A hypodermic user. See *Hyp*. Also, one who likes to dally with the needle when making an injection or who has a desire to prick himself with a needle or be given sterile hypos after he is off the drug.
- Needle-habit*: A hypodermic drug habit. May also be used to designate the desire which drug addicts sometimes express, immediately after having been taken off the drug, to merely prick themselves with a needle or to be given sterile *hypos*. This desire may also be called a *needle yen*.
- Needle-shy*: To be squeamish about inserting the needle into oneself or about watching the process. This state of mind may be permanent or just a temporary revulsion.
- Needle-trouble*: To have trouble with the hypodermic needle in making injection, as, for example, to have it stopped up with foreign material or to have it break off. See *point-shot, cotton*.
- Needle-yen*: See *needle-habit*.
- Off, to be*: Not to be using drugs.
- Oil burning habit*: A big habit.

*On, to be:* To be using drugs.

*Orange-bowl:* See *lemon-bowl*.

*Paid off in gold:* When an under cover narcotic agent has persuaded an addict to sell him some of the drug and has then flashed his badge he is said to have *paid him off in gold*.

*Panic:* Scarcity of drugs, usually caused by the arrest of a big peddler.  
Example: "The heat's on. Connection blowed up. There's a *panic on*."

*Panic-man:* An addict suffering from withdrawal distress and therefore desperately in need of the drug.

*Paper, a paper of stuff:* See *bundle*.

*Peter:* Knock-out drops which are given an addict when he is *flipped* or *taken*.

"*P. G.*": Paregoric. A drug store preparation containing about 1.9 grains of opium to the fluid ounce, used by addicts in case of a shortage of heroin or morphine. They usually drink it and sometimes they boil it down and inject the concentrated residue with a hypodermic outfit.

*Picked up:* Under the immediate influence of narcotics.

*Pick-up:* A pick-up is an injection of drugs. See *shot*. *To pick up* is to give a shot. Example: "He didn't feel right because he missed his morning *pick-up*." "I will *pick you up*."

*Piddle:* Hospital. Also *poggy*.

*Piece, a:* An ounce of drugs. Also *half a piece*, *fourth of a piece*, *an eighth*, etc. Also, *O.Z.* or *just O*. Example: "Give me three *pieces* and an *eighth*." or "He's a *piece man*."

*Pill:* Opium as it is consumed on the bowl of the pipe. Also *yen-pok*.

*Pin-shot:* An injection of drugs made by simply using a pin or other sharp instrument to make a large enough wound so that the end of the medicine dropper may be inserted directly when the injection is made. This is known as a *penitentiary shot*.

*Pin-yen:* Opium. A term presumably derived from the Chinese.

*Pipe-fiends:* See *smokers*. Opium smoking originated in the United States as an underworld practice, or fad, approximately in the 1850's and the term "fiend" appears to have been employed to designate the habitués almost from the very beginning. It was later extended in application to all addicts.

*Pipies:* See *smokers*, *pipe-fiends*.

*Plant:* A concealed supply of drugs or of equipment for using them.  
Also *stasch*.

*Playing around:* When an addict has been off the drug and begins to use a little now and then, usually with the intention of being very careful not to get hooked, he is said to be *playing around* or *dabbling*. In the vast majority of cases such a person becomes addicted again. See also *chippy*. Examples: "I know a man who works in the City Hall who used to be hooked on the pipe and has *played around* for almost ten years." "Don't *dabble* with it or you'll wake up some morning with a *yen*."

*Playing the nod:* To doze or go to sleep from over-indulgence.

- Pleasure-smoker*: One who smokes the pipe now and then but is not addicted. Ordinarily in order to be classed as a pleasure smoker it is necessary that one smoke irregularly for a long period of time without becoming addicted or that one has never been addicted. See also, *three-day habit*, *week-end habit*, *pleasure-user*, *joy popper*.
- Pleasure user*: One who uses now and then for pleasure only and is not addicted. Usually the term is restricted to those who have never been addicted and who continue to use irregularly for some time. Thus, "I was a *pleasure-user* for five years before I finally got hooked." When an addict relapses or begins to use a little after having quit the drug for a period of time he is not ordinarily spoken of as a *pleasure user*. See *dabbling*, *playing around*. See also *chippy*, *Saturday-night habit*, *ice-cream habit*, *chippy habit*, *week-end habit*.
- Poggy*: See *piddle*.
- Point shot*: An injection of drugs made with the broken off point of a hypodermic needle or of a sewing machine needle. The *point* is inserted into the skin or into the vein and the medicine dripper is then slipped over it and the injection made. This sort of shot is used when a hypodermic needle has been broken and can not be replaced at once or when the addict is in prison and there is no hypodermic outfit available and sewing machines are available. A *point shot* is not the same as a *pin shot*. See also, *tom cat*, *penitentiary shot*, *pen shot*.
- Poison Act*: Harrison Narcotic Act passed in 1914 and effective in 1915.
- Polluted*: See *loaded*.
- Pop, a*: See *shot*.
- Prod, a*: See a *shot*.
- Puffing*: Smoking opium. See *laying on the hip*.
- Purrin', or purrin' like a cat*: Over-charged with the drug. See *loaded*.
- Push, to, or to push shorts*: To peddle small quantities. Also *to shove*, or *to shove short*, or *to pitch*. Example: "Go and score from Jim; he's *pushing* for me."
- Quarry cure*: See *iron cure*. This is a local term referring to the fact that in the Chicago Bridewell drug addicts were sent to work in the stone quarry while they were suffering withdrawal distress.
- Ration*: The addict's regular dose, the size of which depends upon how long he has been using it and how high he has built his habit up.
- Reader*: See *scrip*.
- Register, to*: Refers to the practice of permitting the blood to appear in the medicine dropper before making the injection so as to be sure that the needle is in the vein. See *verification shot*.
- R. F. D. dopehead*: A drug addict who travels about in the country or in small towns and obtains his supply from doctors.
- Right-croaker*: A doctor who will sell or give an addict drugs. Also known as a croaker who will *sail*, or one who will *turn*, or one who will write *scrip*, or give one a *reader*.
- Rinsings*: See *cotton*.
- Rolling the log*: See *laying on the hip*.

- Rolling stuff*: To be transporting narcotics.
- Rooster brand*: Cheap bootleg opium refined from *yen-shee* or *green ashes*.
- Saddle and bridle*: Sometimes used to refer to the opium smoker's lay-out. See *lay-out*.
- Satch, to*: To saturate any article which will absorb the drug solution. When the saturated article is nearly dry it is ironed to take the wrinkles out. This device is used in smuggling drugs into prison via the mail, for example, when paper is *satched*. The drug is taken out of the satch by chewing or by getting it back into solution by putting it into water and heating the water. A quantity of drugs concealed in this manner is called a *satch*.
- Saturday-night habit*: See *week-end habit*.
- Saxophone*: See *stick*.
- Scoffing*: Taking the drug orally. Also called a *mouth habit*.
- Score, to*: To buy drugs. Also to *connect, make a connection*. Example: "I *scored* in the loop yesterday."
- Score-dough*: Money with which to buy drugs. Also *connection-dough*. Example: "I had a nigger on the send for me and he ran off with my *score-dough*."
- Scrip*: Prescriptions for drugs. Also *reader*. *To write scrip*: to write prescriptions.
- Send, to have someone on the*: To send someone out to buy drugs from a peddler so as to avoid the risk of arrest. Also to be *on the send*, when the speaker is the one who does the buying for someone else.
- Shoot, to*: To inject hypodermically. Also to *fire*. Example: "They are beginning to *shoot* sodium amytal on the coast"; or, "Be a man and get *shot up*." Also to *jab, to put poison in one's arm*.
- Short-go*: A small amount of drugs for the money.
- Shot*: An injection of drugs. Also called, *jolt, a pop, a pick-up, a fix, a prod, a bang, a bing, a bingo, a jabpop, a prop, a jabpoppo, a geezer*.
- Shove, to, or to shove shorts*: To peddle small quantities of the drug. See to *push*.
- Sick or to be sick*: Suffering from lack of the drug. *To feel one's habit, have a habit coming on, to have a monkey on one's back, or to have a yen*.
- Skamas*: See *hop*.
- Skin-shooter*: One who uses the drug subcutaneously.
- Skin-shooting*: The act of injecting drugs subcutaneously. Also *going in the skin*.
- Sleigh-ride*: See *hitch up the reindeers*.
- Smecker*: See *junker*.
- Smokers*: Opium smokers. They may also be called, *pipes, pipe fiends, gowsters, hop heads, yenshee boys*.
- Sniffer or snifter*: One who uses the drug nasally. This practice is reported to be coming back into prominence in some places because of the increasing penalties being placed upon possession of the needle outfit. See also *blowing*.
- Sniffing*: See *blowing*.

- Snorting*: See *blowing*.
- Snow*: Cocaine. See "C".
- Speed-ball*: A combination of cocaine and morphine. Also called *whiz-bang*, *twister*.
- Spike*: A hypodermic needle. See *harpoon*.
- Spread the joint*: To get a *lay-out* ready to use. Also to *make a spread*.  
Example: "He invited me to his house and *made a spread*" or "*spread the joint*."
- Square or square-john*: A non-addict. Also *do-right-john*, *do-right people*.
- "S. S.": A skin-shot.
- Stasch*: A place where drugs are kept. Also a plant.
- Steel and concrete cure*: See *iron cure*.
- Stem*: An opium pipe.
- Steppin' high*: See *loaded*.
- "*Steve*": A mythical character who is said to pursue persons who have over-indulged in cocaine, referring to the paranoid delusions these persons often have. Frequently this takes the form of what is called *bull horrors*. Example: "Jack is being chased by *Steve*."
- Stick, the*: The pipe used in smoking opium. Also called *gonger*, *log*, *bamboo*, *dream-stick*.
- Stool, to*: To betray a fellow addict to the law.
- Stool-pigeon*: One who is himself usually an addict or a peddler, or used to be, who gives information to narcotic agents to assist them in making arrests. This information is given in exchange for money, for release from arrest, for a short sentence, and sometimes for drugs and other favors or privileges. The term implies some sort of identification with the persons being sought by the law. Thus a narcotic agent who conceals his identity in attempting to make an arrest or in seeking information would *not* be a *stool-pigeon*. Addicts in general regard stool-pigeons as traitors, and stool-pigeons themselves are not inclined to boast of their connections with the law. Ordinarily the police apply the term stool-pigeon and frequently regard the informer with as great contempt or hatred as the underworld does. The term for stool-pigeons in polite literature is *Government informer*. Addicts refer to him as *rat*, *long-tailed rat*, *fink*, *louse*, *mouse*, *stool*, etc.
- Stools*: See *stool-pigeon*.
- Student*: An individual who has difficulty establishing the habit. (It is usually quite easy.)
- Stuff*: Opiate derivative drugs and cocaine. This and *junk* are the most commonly used. Also *dope*, *smeck*, *gow*, *hocus*, *gee*.
- Suey-pow*: A wet sponge used to cool off the bowl of the opium pipe. A powder puff may be used as a *suey-pow*.
- Tar*: See *hop*.
- Tchi*: To roll a pill of opium and prepare it for smoking.
- Thin-hips*: An old-time opium addict who has smoked so long that his hips are of unequal size.

- Three-day habit*: See *pleasure user*. Might also mean that a person had been suffering from withdrawal for three days.
- Tom-cat*: An improvised hypodermic needle made of a power sewing machine needle in prison.
- Torture chamber*: An institution where dope is not available for the addict.
- Trained nurse*: Narcotics smuggled into prison or jail by an addict to "take care of him" while he is there.
- Turkey*: A bindle of bad dope or a capsule containing only chalk, etc.
- Turn, to*: To consent to business with. See *right-croaker*. Example: "A big-peddler will not *turn* for a bird-cage hyp." "He won't *turn* for me so you'll have to score." "Not all croakers will *turn*."
- Turn in, or to turn up someone*: See *to stool*. Example: "Stool pigeons are ordinarily given a commission for everyone they *turn in*."
- Twister*: (1) Same as *wing-ding*. (2) Violent wrenching and vomiting during the withdrawal illness. (3) Same as *speed-ball*.
- Up-and-up, to be on the up-and-up*: See *fold up*.
- "V. S.": A vein shot.
- Vein-shooter*: One who takes the drug intravenously—that is the most common method at present. Also called, *main line shooter*, *main liner*, *gutter*. The practice of injecting into the veins is referred to as *going into the sewer, in the line, in a vein, or taking it main*. Thus, "Do you *take it main* or are you a *skin-shooter*?"
- Washed up*: See *fold up*.
- Week-end habit*: The use of drugs for a day or two a week or irregularly without becoming addicted. Week-end habits usually eventually become steady or end up by making an addict of the person who indulges in them. Also, *Saturday-night habit*, *chippy-habit*, *ice-cream habit*, *chicken-shit habit*. See also *dabbling*, *play-around*.
- Whiskers*: Law enforcement agents. Also *fuzz*, *The "G"*, *bulls*, *hacks*, *harness*, *flatties*, *gazer*, *the man*.
- Dr. White*: A term used to camouflage a reference to drugs, as in "Only *Dr. White* can help me out."
- White nurse*: Drugs.
- Whiz bang*: See *speed-ball*.
- Wing-ding, to throw a wing-ding*: An effort on the part of an addict to get drugs by pretending to be suffering from some pain or disease, or by deliberately injuring himself. Also spoken of as, *to throw a twister*, or *to throw a meter*.
- Writing*: A letter or note on a paper saturated with drugs and ironed out.
- Writing, to be*: To be making out prescriptions for narcotics. Example: "A croaker in Peoria is *writing* for me."
- Yen*: The desire for narcotics. This is most intense immediately after the drug has been withdrawn during the withdrawal illness. This word was borrowed from the Chinese from whom the smoking habit was acquired by the underworld. To get one's *yen* off. To obtain relief from withdrawal illness by using narcotics in some form. *To fix*. It is not exactly correct to speak of the *yen* in cases of

- relapse because it is usually limited to the withdrawal illness. A man may relapse when he feels no *yen* in this sense at all.
- Yen-hock*: A large needle used to prepare opium for smoking.
- Yen-pok*: See *pill*.
- Yenshee*: The residue or ash which forms inside the bowl when opium is smoked. It can be re-cooked and smoked again, although it is usually mixed with fresh opium as it is bitter by itself and also difficult to prepare. It can be used as a substitute for opiates in case of shortage of other forms. See *yenshee-gow*.
- Yenshee baby*: A difficult bowel movement after a period of constipation caused by the drug.
- Yenshee boy*: An opium smoker.
- Yenshee-gow*: An instrument used to clean out the inside of the bowl of an opium pipe. The process of cleaning is spoken of as "*gowing it out*."
- Yenshee quay*: Originally meant an opium smoker but has been extended to all addicts. It is said to be derived from the Chinese. See *junker*.