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Argot of the Underworld Drug Addict

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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.1

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.2 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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1With 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.
2An 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. 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. In-
stances 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 unmistak-
able 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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(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 kick.
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 con-
rolled by addicts.
Big-shot connection: One who peddles large amounts. The law is par-
ticularly 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 hyps, 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 be 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 driper.
Fake-a-loo: See driper.
Figure-eight: A wing-ding or feigned spasm of some kind for the pur-
pose 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
bundle, 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.

Goner: See stick.
Goner: 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: See 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, leapin’, 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, coties, 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, snecker, 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 dripper: 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.
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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 blewed 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 bindle.

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 habituées 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 satch’d. 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 of 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, smack, 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 wretching 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, mainliner, 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.