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DRUG ABUSE IN ASHINGTON

The resignation of White House drug abuse adviser Peter G. Bourne over charges that he personally abused drugs deserves to tie with Presidential assistant Hamilton Jordan's reported expectoration at a woman in a bar several months ago as the year's most embarrassing joke at the exoense of the Carter Administration.

Less laug ab1e is the evidence that Bourne's allegec cocaine-sniffing is considered a normal activity among the W2shington e1ite. Bourne 1-iimself said there is a "high incidence" of marijuana use as we11 :>s occasional cocaine use by the White House staff, and seven junior sta f members subsequently admitted to smoking marijuana regularly.

-.-he spectacle of Presidentia: a-ldes' pass·:ng joints and "snow" around posh Georgetown nightclubs should raise serious doubts about their pro+essional competence. The use of marijuana or cocaine ·:s a crimina1 offense in the District of Columbia, and the medical hazards of bot dr gs have been substantiated by scientists such as Columbia University's Gabr e1 G. Nahas and Oxford University's
W. D. Paton.

The White House has in the past av-gued that the ct.r-·re'1t punishmen.t for use of "recreationa1 drugs" does not fit the crime and tra·: such drugs should be "decriminalized," if not legalized. Several states have ,"1ready decriminalized marijuana.

Nevertheless, until the District of Columbia lawmakers see 1t to do likewise, government officials who are "high"-up in more than one sense are committing a criminal of ense. Highly paid o1itica1 appointees who disobey the law and imperil their mental facu1ties are ill equipoed to advise the President or the rest of the country what to do.

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Delinquency in the White House is nothing new. What is unusual about this latest discovery of lawbreaking by public officials is that it required a blunder in writing by Bourne -- the phony prescription -- for news of drug abuse in Washington to surface.

According to some news reports, the use of marijuana and cocaine "is thought to b so common in Washington that its prevalence is rarely commented on." Even so, one would think that Washington's Woodsteins, who eagerly pounce on politicians' transgressions relating to campaign tactics, personal finances, sex, or alcoholism, would report it w en White House appointees sniff cocaine in front of them.

Yet when Bourne reportedly did just trat at a party for 600 last December sponsored by the National Organization for :he Reform o Marijuana Laws, none of the attending reporters mentioned the incident until seven months later.

Studies of marijuana and cocaine consumption across the country reveal that their use is heaviest among young, a fluent profess1onals, who went through college in the drug-ridden 1960s and early 1970s. Washington offices are heavily populated by that class of people. A high income is essential to support a taste for cocaine, which costs about $10 for a "mild buzz."

Some say that Washington's most-abused drug is alcohol. Witness the spectacular downfalls of politicians such as former Congressman Wilbur Mills. Despite Carter's personal disapproval of hard liquor and his attack on the business tax deduction for the "three-martini lunch," social drinking at lunch is very prevalent among Washington's officialdom.

Our nation's capital is known as a city with three political parties: the Democratic, the Republican, and the cocktail party. One Congressman's aide recently complained, "It's not uncommon for oeople to have three stiff drinks at lunch. I don't know how they go back to their offices c1_11d get anything done."

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