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DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST EFFORT TO INTERCEPT MARIJUANA SHIPPED INTO ALASKA THROUGH THE US MAIL



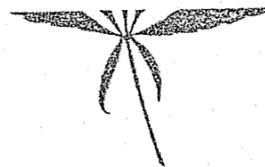
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by
The Office of the Statewide Drug Coordinator
Alaska State Troopers

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PREFACE

During the summer of 1984, a month-long cooperative effort by federal, state and local narcotics officers in Alaska was carried out to determine the extent to which the US Postal Service is being used as a means to ship marijuana into Alaska.

This report presents the background leading to the development of the project, how it was accomplished, an analysis of the results, the conclusions arising from the effort, and finally a series of recommendations pertaining to future seizures of drugs while in transit through the US mails.

Additional copies of this report are available from the office of the Statewide Narcotics Coordinator, Alaska State Troopers, P.O. Box 6188 Annex, Anchorage, Alaska 99502.

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ACQUISITION

I. BACKGROUND

Interdiction of illicit drugs while in transit from source areas to the ultimate users is a major tactic and objective in the campaign against drugs and narcotics in the United States.

Drugs are moved from one place to another by a variety of means, including personal couriers, vehicular traffic upon the highways, by fast forwarding freight services, by airplane and boat, the U.S. mail and in short, by any means available.

The transit of drugs presents certain opportunities for interdiction. Aircraft entering United States airspace must be identified, ships coming into waters face surveillance by the United States Coast Guard, vehicles and mail crossing international boundaries face Customs Service searches, personal drug couriers may be profiled by police officers at airports, and so on.

One of the most cumbersome and time consuming of these methods involves the interdiction of drug shipments occurring through the U.S. Postal Service. A combination of highly restrictive laws, regulations and policies, some dating back to the Revolutionary War, combined with a lack of sufficient numbers of Postal Inspectors in Alaska plus the fact that decisions concerning intercepting mail parcels thought to contain drugs must be made in Seattle and ultimately California, have all resulted in difficulties in the interception of drugs before they reach their destination.

As a result, law enforcement officials in the State of Alaska have thought for some time that the United States mails have been utilized for the shipment of controlled substances to Alaska. This belief derives from the knowledge of Alaska's unique geographical position and through intelligence gained from previous drug investigations.

The reasons why use of the mail for drug shipments may be greater in Alaska than elsewhere stems from several reasons. Reliance upon the mail for transportation of goods occurs to a greater extent than in other states due to the distances involved and the complete lack of any ground

transportation in almost all rural areas of the state. Sending parcels via Air Parcel Post and Express Mail puts the consumer only a few hours to a few days from the supplier in the "Lower 48" states.

The average age of Alaskas residents is one of the youngest in the nation, and perhaps as a consequence, more interest in drugs.

Alaska also has liberal marijuana laws. Alaska was the first, and thus far the only state to decriminalize up to four ounces of marijuana for personal use, notwithstanding federal laws to the contrary. This conflict of state and federal provisions concerning marijuana is confusing to the public and in part is the reason that very few marijuana cases have been prosecuted by either state or federal prosecutors during the past several years.

Restrictive Postal policies are the biggest stumbling blocks to the interception of drugs along with some regulations and law. These include:

1. (Postal Inspection Service Policy) Prohibition against a scent detection dog being allowed to operate within a postal facility.
2. (Federal Law) Prohibition against anyone, including postal employees from divulging the contents of sealed mail, that has been damaged in such a way as to partially reveal its contents, such as Marijuana.
3. (Federal Law) Prohibition against permitting the execution of a search warrant from a state court, by a state officer on U.S. Mail while in Postal Authorities control.
4. (Postal Inspection Service Policy) Necessity for a Postal Inspector to be present during the lawful opening of a piece of mail.
5. (Postal Inspection Service Policy) Necessity for a Postal Inspector to be present during a controlled delivery of a piece of mail.
6. (Postal Inspection Service Policy) Refusal of the Postal Service to allow random searches of mail by scent detection dogs. (All mail to be checked by the dog must fit the profile of packages thought to contain Marijuana.)

Postal policy and regulations place heavy emphasis upon the Postal Inspector, who alone is responsible for investigating all cases of criminal activities of Postal employees, mail fraud, and mail theft, in addition to investigations concerning using the mails as a distribution system for illicit drugs and other contraband. Currently there are three Postal Inspectors for the entire State of Alaska, exactly the same number as existed shortly after statehood when the population of the state was about half the present level.

As a result of this general situation, numerous law enforcement agencies in the State of Alaska, principally the Alaska State Troopers, began making their feelings known to members of the Congressional Delegation of Alaska. The accumulation of law enforcement dissatisfaction resulted in a request from Senators Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski for a meeting between their Chief Counsels and the U.S. Attorney for Alaska. They in turn requested a meeting be held of the Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) drug subcommittee to study the problems so that they could be better prepared to address the issues. The Drug Subcommittee met on February 14, 1984 and committee members provided specific information concerning the use of the mail system for the transportation of controlled substances into Alaska and outlined specific postal service policies, which hamper law enforcement investigations. Later, the U.S. Attorney met with staff members of the Alaska Congressional Delegations and also met with the Postal Inspector in charge of the Seattle Division, and his Assistant.

Following those meetings, DEA arranged a meeting of law enforcement officials so that all interested parties could examine the problems and attempt to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Included in that late February meeting was the DEA, the Alaska State Troopers, several Alaska police departments, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Attorney.

Persons present at that meeting agreed that the Postal Service, appropriate Federal and State law enforcement agencies in the State of Alaska, would undertake a concentrated, four week operation to identify, search, examine, and conduct investigations on parcels entering Alaska via parcel post which contained controlled substances. Although any controlled

substances found would be seized, law enforcement officials were targeting Marijuana as the controlled substance to be intercepted, not because other drugs were not being sent through the mail, but because Marijuana was the only substance for which a reasonably reliable means had been developed to identify parcels in the mail that likely contain Marijuana.

The means of identifying packages probably containing Marijuana was the result of an very successful Marijuana interception project in four Hawaii Post Offices in late 1983 and early 1984.¹ All the parcels sized that did contain Marijuana were analyzed to determine common characteristics. These characteristics were developed into a "profile," or a composite of identifying aspects that made possible the determination of which parcels likely contain Marijuana.

The "Marijuana Profile" included the following aspects:

- * An odor of Marijuana.
- * Visible evidence, such as seeds and bits of leaves, caught in the tape used to seal the package.
- * Return address different from the postmark.
- * Package heavily taped, particularly on corners.
- * Package is very light for its size.
- * Priority or first class postage.
- * General Delivery address.
- * Use of "In Care of" for the addressee, or the sender.
- * Fictitious Return Address.

There are some major differences between the Hawaii program and the Alaska program. In Hawaii, the seizures were made at the point of origin, rather than enroute to the destination, as in the Alaska operation. Authorities were positioned inside the Post Offices in Hawaii to photograph the individuals mailing the parcels thought to contain Marijuana, other officers were outside documenting the use of vehicles to bring the Marijuana to the Post Office. Some Marijuana growers were known on sight to Post Office employees. Also certain persons were known to mail numerous packages every day and thus were possibly shipping Marijuana.

The major similarities were the use of the profile and drug detection dogs to sniff the parcels that fit the Marijuana profile. The reaction, or

1. In addition to the Marijuana, small amounts of Cocaine and pills were also seized, along with \$20,000 in cash, and 38 vehicles. Total value of the seizures was about \$7.7 million, according to press reports.

not, of the dog was used to support a "Probable Cause" request to the Court, that enabled authorities to obtain search warrants and open the parcels involved.

Although the major objective of the proposed Alaska operation was to interdict Marijuana shipments, there were other less visible objectives as well:

1. Obtain a verifiable estimate of the amount of Marijuana being sent to Alaska and the various details about such shipments.
2. Determine the statistically significant points of origination and destination for the Marijuana.
3. Determine the effectiveness of the profile and the narcotics detection dogs alerting to parcels containing Marijuana.
4. Develop the procedures and interagency relationships required by the operation, including whether state or federal prosecutors would handle the case.
5. Provide recommendations to the Postal Service and the Congressional delegation about reducing the amount of Marijuana being distributed through the United States Postal Service.

Alaska's effort began on June 4, 1984, and concluded on June 29, 1984. These dates were chosen because June coincides with the completion of the first, although the smaller, of the two Marijuana harvests in Hawaii.

The plan called for Postal Inspectors to physically meet each flight containing parcel post mail arriving in four Alaska cities - Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Ketchikan. Five Inspectors were assigned to Anchorage, two each to Juneau, Fairbanks and Ketchikan. Some 20 Alaska State Troopers and local police officers participated in the effort along with the postal authorities. A DEA agent was assigned to each community to coordinate activities between federal, state and local law enforcement and prosecution functions. The Inspectors examined each parcel to determine if it fit the "profile." Since Postal regulations stipulate that only Postal Inspectors could perform this task, a total of ten Inspectors were eventually brought in from the lower 48 states to supplement the three inspectors assigned in Alaska. Parcels meeting the profile were then set aside and examined by narcotics detection dogs provided by the Alaska State Troopers and local police departments. Those packages resulting in an

"alert" by the dog were detained while the others were put back into the mail stream and continued on their way. On the basis of the profile, and the dog alert, federal search warrants were obtained by the Postal Inspectors, the parcels opened, and the contents examined.

The entire operation in both Hawaii and Alaska was based upon the use of the profile to establish some basis for suspecting the parcel may contain Marijuana. It follows that any Marijuana not packaged in a manner to fit within the profile will not be identified and will likely reach its destination undetected. The Postal Service takes the position that absent some reasonable suspicion that a parcel contains narcotics, a dog sniff is an unreasonable search and therefore in violation of the fourth Amendment, even though the US Supreme Court and a majority of the Courts of Appeals have found a dog sniff not to be a search within the meaning of the fourth Amendment.²

Since the Juneau drug dog was not available, Juneau parcels meeting the profile were sent to Anchorage. The dog in Ketchikan was soon found to be responding to too many parcels without finding Marijuana. He was found to be unreliable and Ketchikan parcels were also forwarded to Anchorage. This dogs' unreliability was traced to the lack of ongoing training which is an absolute necessity for a drug detection dog. The obvious success of the drug detection dogs in the Hawaii program and the Alaska program overshadow Ketchikan's dog' problems and support the use of K-9's if combined with a proper training schedule.

Upon examining the parcels, federal, state and local police agencies decided whether or not to conduct an investigation (usually based on quantity of Marijuana) with the end result being one of the following:

1. Conducting a "Controlled Delivery" of the package to its addressee.
2. Seizing the controlled substances in the parcel and conducting a personal interview of the addressee to determine the sender.

2. Memorandum to William French Smith, the US Attorney General, from Stephen S. Trott, Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, pertaining to the use of drug detecting dogs to check the mail for Controlled Substances, Jan. 1984. 8pp.

3. Seize the parcel and notify the addressee by letter of the seizure.
4. Merely seize the controlled substance.

By prior agreement, the U.S. Attorney's office and the state District Attorney's agreed to prosecute individuals involved in cases resulting from this operation based on the evidence obtained for quantities of controlled substances below their normal quantitative criteria. Federal and state prosecutors agreed that the cases would be split between them rather than upon seizure criteria.

To fully understand the outcome of the postal interdiction program in Alaska, it is important to realize the limitations inherent in the effort, as follows:

1. The package profile has been developed only for suspected Marijuana parcels. No comparable profile has yet been developed for other drugs, if in fact it is possible to do so.
2. The profile has been developed based upon observable characteristics of parcels that contained Marijuana, rather than an examination of a representative sample of all parcels in the total mail stream.
3. Any marijuana that may have been in packages that did not fit the profile were of course, not set aside for the dog, and therefore continued on to their destination.
4. Media publicity attending the Hawaiian operation included reference to some of the profile characteristics. It would, therefore, not have been difficult for shippers to alter these aspects of their parcels.
5. Only parcel post packages were scrutinized by postal inspectors to see if they fit the profile. Express Mail parcels were included in Anchorage, however, fourth class mail, which constitutes the majority of parcels was not included.
6. The program was conducted in early summer which is not the height of the major crop harvest in Hawaii, or the other major Marijuana producing states.

II. RESULTS

1. AMOUNTS OF DRUGS SEIZED

The total amount of controlled substances contained in the 32 parcels seized is as follows:

	Drug	Amount Seized
A.	Marijuana	11,270 grams
B.	Cocaine	123.25 grams
C.	Hashish	3 grams
D.	Valium	83 tablets

2. DESTINATIONS OF DRUG SHIPMENTS, AND POST OFFICE OF ENTRY

A. Anchorage (through Anchorage Post Office)

1816 gr. Marijuana,
83 tablets of Valium,
119 gr. of Cocaine, and
3 gr. of Hashish

Total 10 parcels

B. To Other Communities Through the Anchorage Post Office

- (1) Dillingham
302 gr. Marijuana, four parcels
- (2) King Salmon
87 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
2.5 gr. Cocaine, one parcel
- (3) Homer
1,050 gr. Marijuana, two parcels
- (4) Cordova
2,376 gr. Marijuana, two parcels
- (5) Nelson Lagoon
119 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (6) Willow
205 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (7) Kenai
348 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (8) Soldotna
560 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (9) Togiak
94.5 gr. Marijuana, one parcel

- (10) Alakanuk
111 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (11) Yakutat
31 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (12) Sand Point
3,664 gr. Marijuana, one parcel
- (13) Port Moeller
9 gr. Marijuana, one parcel

C. Ketchikan (through Ketchikan Post Office)
21.5 gr. Marijuana in two parcels
.75 gr. Cocaine in one parcel

D. College (through Fairbanks Post Office)
476 gr. Marijuana, one parcel

Totals:

- a. Destined to Anchorage, through Anchorage Post Office (31.2')
1816 gr. Marijuana, 83 tablets Valium and 3 gr. Hashish in ten parcels
- b. Destined to Fairbanks through Fairbanks Post Office (3.1')
476 gr. Marijuana in one parcel
- c. Destined to Ketchikan through Ketchikan Post Office (9.4')
21.5 gr. Marijuana and .75 Cocaine in three parcels
- d. Destined to balance of state, through Anchorage Post Office (56.2')
8957 gr. Marijuana and 2.5 gr. Cocaine in 18 parcels

3. URBAN VS RURAL DESTINATION OF MARIJUANA

City	1983 Population	Amount (Grams)
Anchorage	230,846	1816
Urban Fbks(College)	65,311	476
Ketchikan	14,314	21.5
		Total Population=310,471
		Total Marijuana=2,313 gr.

Dillingham	1896	302	
King Salmon	220	87	
Homer	865	1050.5	
Rural Cordova	2307	2376	
Nelson Lagoon,	100 (est.)	119	Total population=17,284
Willow, unincorp.	500 (est.)	205	Total Marijuana=8,957 gr.

Kenai	5721	348
Soldotna	3353	560
Togiak	545	945
Alakanuk	546	111
Yakutat	462	31
Sand Point	889	3664
Port Moeller	100	9

4. Estimated Street Value of the Drugs, at their Destination

<u>Anchorage</u>	1,816.5 gr. of Marijuana @ \$ 10.00/gr.	= \$ 18,165
	119.0 gr. of Cocaine @ 125.00/gr.	= 14,875
	3.0 gr. of Hashish @ 10.00/gr.	= 30
	83.5 tablets of Valium @ 30.00/100	= 25
		<u>Total \$ 33,095</u>

<u>Ketchikan</u>	21.5 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 215
	3/4 gr. of Cocaine @ 125.00/gr.	= 95
		<u>Total \$ 310</u>

<u>King Salmon</u>	87 gr. of Marijuana @ 12.00/gr.	= 1,044
	2.5 gr. of Cocaine @ 150.00/gr.	= 375
		<u>Total \$ 1,419</u>

<u>Dillingham</u>	302 gr. of Marijuana @ 12.00/gr.	= 3,624
<u>Homer</u>	1,050.5 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 10,505
<u>Cordova</u>	2,376 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 23,760
<u>Cold Bay</u>	9 gr. of Marijuana @ 15.00/gr.	= 135
<u>College</u>	476 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 4,760
<u>Nelson Lagoon</u>	119 gr. of Marijuana @ 15.00/gr.	= 1,785
<u>Willow</u>	205 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 2,050
<u>Kenai</u>	348 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 3,480
<u>Soldotna</u>	560 gr. of Marijuana @ 10.00/gr.	= 5,600
<u>Togiak</u>	94.5 gr. of Marijuana @ 15.00/gr.	= 1,417
<u>Alukanuk</u>	111 gr. of Marijuana @ 15.00/gr.	= 1,665
<u>Yakutat</u>	31 gr. of Marijuana @ 15.00/gr.	= 465
<u>Sand Point</u>	3,664 gr. of Marijuana @ 15.00/gr.	= 54,960

Total \$114,206

Grand Total \$149,030

5. Drug Values and the Percentage each Represents of the Total Drugs Seized

Marijuana	\$133,626	which represents	89.67%	of total Seizures
Cocaine	15,345		10.30%	
Hashish	30		.02%	
Valium	25		.01%	
Total	\$149,026		100 %	

6. Number of Parcels Seized by State of Origin and as a Percentage of Total Seizures

<u>State</u>	<u>Number of Parcels</u>	<u>Percentage of Seizures</u>
Hawaii	12	37.50%
Washington	9	28.12%
California	7	21.87%
Oregon	2	6.25%
Florida	1	3.13%
Arizona	1	3.13%
Totals	32 Parcels	100.00%

7. Quantity of Drugs Seized, by State of Origin, as a percentage of Total Seizure

A. Marijuana (Total Seizure - 11,270 grams)

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Amount Seized</u>	<u>Percent of Seizure</u>
Hawaii	8,815.5 gr.	78.22%
Washington	1,573.5 gr.	13.96%
California	552 gr.	4.90%
Oregon	102.5 gr.	.90%
Florida	115 gr.	1.02%
Arizona	112 gr.	.99%

B. Other Drugs (Total Seizure 122.25 gr. Cocaine, 3 gr. Hashish, 83.5 Tablets Valium)

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Amount Seized</u>	<u>Percent of Seizure</u>
Hawaii	.75 gr. Cocaine	.6 % of Cocaine
Washington	2.5 gr. Cocaine	2.04% of Cocaine
California	119.0 gr. Cocaine	97.34% of Cocaine
	3.0 gr. Hashish	100.00% of Hashish
	83.5 Tablets Valium	100.00% of Valium

8. Number of Parcels Seized, by Quantity of Marijuana and as a Percentage of the Total Seized

<u>Number of Parcels</u>	<u>Quantity Increments</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
15	1 gram to 112 grams (four ounces)	50.0%
4	113 grams to 24 grams (eight ounces)	13.3%
1	225 grams to 336 grams (12 ounces)	3.3%
1	337 grams to 348 grams (1 pound)	3.3%
6	1 pound to 2 pounds	20.0%
1	2 pounds to 3 pounds	3.3%
0	3 pounds to 4 pounds	None
1	4 pounds to 5 pounds	3.3%
0	5 pounds to 6 pounds	None
0	6 pounds to 7 pounds	None
0	7 pounds to 8 pounds	None
1	8 pounds and above	3.3%
30 parcels		

9. Amounts of Marijuana Seized in Excess of Four Ounces, by State of Origin, Destination, and the Post Office of Entry in Alaska

Since possession of up to four ounces of Marijuana is legal in Alaska under state (but not federal) law, this quantity provides a reasonable dividing point for amounts of Marijuana shipped through the mail. Amounts in excess of four ounces (more than 112 grams) may therefore be described as "quantitatively significant".

III. CONCLUSIONS

Amount (grams)	Origin	Destination	Post Office of Entry
142	California	Anchorage	Anchorage
454.5	Hawaii	Anchorage	Anchorage
205	Washington	Willow	Anchorage
348	Hawaii	Kenai	Anchorage
115	Florida	Anchorage	Anchorage
560	Hawaii	Soldotna	Anchorage
992	Washington	Homer	Anchorage
3,664	Hawaii	Sand Point	Anchorage
559	Hawaii	Cordova	Anchorage
260	California	Dillingham	Anchorage
1,817	Hawaii	Cordova	Anchorage
490	Hawaii	Anchorage	Anchorage
119	Washington	Nelson Lagoon	Anchorage
429.5	Hawaii	Anchorage	Anchorage
476	Hawaii	College	Fairbanks

- A. Of the total of 30 parcels containing Marijuana, 15 of them contained four ounces or less, and 15 contained more than four ounces.
 - B. Of the 15 parcels with more than four ounces, nine originated from Hawaii, three from Washington, two from California, and one from Florida.
 - C. Although only half of the parcels contained more than four ounces, these same parcels accounted for 10,631 grams, or 94.33% of the total Marijuana seized.
 - D. Although the destinations of these parcels vary, all but one entered Alaska through the Anchorage Post Office, which represents 93.3% of the parcels.
 - E. Equal numbers of parcels were sent by first class mail and by Priority Mail. One is unknown.
10. Postmark versus Return Address

One of the elements of the package profile developed by the postal authorities is the high probability of the parcel having a different postmark than the one shown on the return address, if indeed a return address is used.

Of the 30 parcels containing Marijuana in this postal intercept operation, 12 (or 40%) had the same postmark as the return address, 11 (or 36.6%) had a different postmark than the return address, and 7 (or 23.3%) either had no return address or the data available was not adequate to make a determination.

The data changes dramatically however when considering only those 15 Marijuana parcels containing four ounces or more. Only three had the same return address and postmark (or 20%) while eight (or 53.3%) were different, and an additional four (or 26.6%) either had no return address or the data available was not adequate to make a determination.

- 1. The postal intercept operation in Alaska was in effect for 24 days, yielded 32 parcels containing various drugs, including 25 pounds of Marijuana, with a total street value of about \$150,000. To the extent these data are representative of the amount and value of drugs being distributed in the mail throughout the year, the projected annual figures would total some 485 parcels containing about 380 pounds of Marijuana, a little over four pounds of Cocaine, with a total street value of \$2,235,000. By comparison, all State Troopers narcotics seizures, plus those of local law enforcement agencies for all of 1983, (including a few postal seizures), had a total street value of \$4,067,000. Marijuana seizures by the State Troopers alone only totalled 188 pounds in all of 1983.³ Viewed in this manner, the conclusion can only be that the amount of drugs coming into Alaska by mail is substantial indeed. This conclusion must be viewed as a conservative one since the fourth class mail, a known means of distributing drugs was not included in the operation, and the "profile" was only for Marijuana. Therefore any Cocaine or other drugs, were intercepted only by chance.
- 2. Since 83% of the Marijuana entering Alaska through the Anchorage Post office was destined to small communities, the effect of the Marijuana seizures at the Anchorage Post Office has been to assist the smaller police departments, rural Alaska State Trooper Detachments and communities by intercepting the Marijuana before it reached its destination. This is particularly important because a given amount of Marijuana coming into a small community is far greater on a per capita basis than that same amount in a large community like Anchorage. In addition, some small bush communities have little or no local law enforcement, and the use of an undercover operative which is the most effective means of drug enforcement, is usually unworkable in a small town where everyone knows each other.
- 3. The Anchorage Post Office is the single point through which almost all Marijuana parcels must flow before spreading out to their numerous destinations through-out the state. Interception at that point therefore, must be the most efficient and cost effective way to seize the drug, compared to seizing the individual parcels at their diverse destinations.

3. 1983 Annual Drug Report to the Alaska Legislature, the Alaska Department of Public Safety, p.36

4. The number of packages that actually contained controlled substances(s) was only about 2% of the packages that fit the profile of those likely to contain Marijuana. This low percentage means that the profile is still an inexact mechanism to use to determine parcels likely to contain Marijuana. Implicit in this observation is the fact that there may be other drugs getting through the mail in addition to Marijuana, because only those fitting the Marijuana profile are referred to the dog, and the profile is only for Marijuana. However, there is no question that properly trained dogs are successful in locating drugs in parcels.
5. Using information about the parcels containing drugs and Marijuana seized by Alaska's postal intercept operation, it is possible to construct a profile of these parcels, as follows:

"Almost every parcel will be sent by Priority or First Class mail, from primarily Hawaii or Washington. Half will be mailed from the Post Office serving the return address. Practically all parcels will enter Alaska through the Anchorage Post Office, but most will be destined beyond Anchorage. Almost all parcels will contain Marijuana, but only about half will contain more than four ounces".

6. The larger shipments of Marijuana (560 gr. to Soldotna, 992 gr. to Homer, 3,664 gr. to Sand Point, 1,817 gr. to Cordova, etc) prompts the conclusion that the recipients are likely redistributing the drug. To the extent this is true, the interception of the Marijuana while in transit occurs closer to the source than would be the case if interception occurred at the user level.
7. Regardless of the degree of success as perceived by law enforcement agencies and postal authorities about the Hawaii and Alaska intercept operations, the existence of the Hawaii operation has had a substantial negative impact upon Marijuana growers. The local media there report plummeting prices, growing stockpiles, decreasing numbers of parcels in the mails, rumors, and general apprehension. Therefore, the success of these intercept efforts extends beyond aspects of amount of seizures, valuations and costs to participating agencies.

8. As the result of the ultra-conservative position of the Postal Service in conformance with its policies and regulations which restrict the use of the narcotics dog to sniffing only those parcels fitting the "drug parcel profile", it appears that neither the Hawaii or the Alaska drug intercept program can be deemed to be an objective measure or determination of the actual amount of controlled substances being distributed through the U.S. mail. Such determination can only be accomplished, at least through the use of a dog, when the dog is permitted to sniff representative, random samples of all packages flowing through the Post Office, including fourth class mail.
9. The relatively small amount of Marijuana coming from California, Oregon and Washington may reflect the fact that the main Marijuana crop had not yet been harvested. Therefore the number of parcels from those states may well increase later on during the year.
10. Although trafficking and transporting Marijuana are illegal, the fact that half of the parcels contained four ounces or less of Marijuana suggests an effort to possess no more than the amount permitted by state law, or is a very calculated effort to circumvent the law by obtaining no more than four ounces and betting that they will not be prosecuted if they are apprehended. The fact that far more senders of four ounces or less included a return address which matched the postmark than those who sent more than four ounces tends to support the conclusion they may believe they are within legal limits based on state laws, not understanding the federal violations.
11. The fact that 10 Postal Inspectors had to be borrowed from other states for the intercept operation at only four points in Alaska prompts the conclusion that postal authorities in Alaska do not have the manpower to conduct such operations on their own. That problem is compounded and made worse by the restrictive postal policies and regulations that prohibit the use of state and local law enforcement personnel from providing certain assistance.
12. Although the postal intercept operation in Alaska has proven the U.S. mail is a significant means of distributing drugs, the operation itself has not resulted in any changes or modifications of any of the cumbersome and often time consuming postal policies and procedures that must be followed to intercept controlled substances being sent through the mail. The narcotics dog is still not permitted in the Post Office, mail may still not be randomly sniffed by the dogs, a Postal Inspector still must be present when parcels are opened, accompany the parcel for a controlled delivery, and so on. In short, there has been no policy change, nothing has changed procedurally nor has there been any increase in manpower for postal related investigations as the result of this postal intercept operation.

4. "Legalities Vague on Dope-sniffing Dogs", West Hawaii Today, March 13, 1984.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Since concern by law enforcement agencies resulted in this initial effort to intercept Marijuana in the mail, it appears that the same concern will continue until long term, permanent solutions are developed by the Postal Service to reduce the flow of drugs in the mail destined for Alaska.

1. The results of Alaska's first postal intercept operation have shown that substantial amounts of Marijuana are entering Alaska through the facilities of the U.S. Postal Service. It is therefore recommended that intercept operations be continued, unannounced, at various times in the future with the following refinements:
 - a. Future intercept operations, in cooperation with the DEA, Postal Inspectors and State Troopers should be conducted at only the Anchorage Post Office, in recognition that almost all parcels containing Marijuana enter through the Anchorage Post Office.
 - b. Parcels intercepted that contain four ounces or less should continue to not receive formal processing, recognizing Alaska's tolerant attitude toward Marijuana. However, official letters should be sent from the DEA, the Troopers and the Postal System advising the recipient and the sender (if known) that their Marijuana has been seized, that they are in violation of federal statutes and postal regulations and that future shipments may result in formal action.
 - c. Future operations be timed to coincide with the major Marijuana harvests in California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington.
 - d. Future postal intercept operations should, in addition to the data already kept, carefully note the physical condition of the parcels intercepted regardless of quantity of contents, and the degree to which the parcels match the existing postal profile in order to validate and refine the existing profile.
 - e. Future postal intercept operations should include profiling of packages sent via fourth class mail.
 - d. Significant media coverage should follow future drug interception efforts. Clearly, not all parcels with drugs will be identified with even the best efforts. However, extensive media coverage after future postal interceptions will serve to keep both user and supplier off balance, and generally raise their apprehensiveness level.
2. A joint effort by the DEA, and the State Troopers, augmented by assistance from the Congressional delegation, should be undertaken

with the Postal Service to increase the number of Postal Inspectors from three to five, making one a full time narcotics investigator.

3. The non-controlled substances that the narcotics dogs alerted to should be compiled and analyzed by the top narcotics dog handlers in Alaska to determine what, if any, implications exist concerning the need for present or future training of the dogs, and/or any changes that appear appropriate to the curriculum of the training program for the dogs. Such information should then be forwarded to the dog training centers through out the country in an effort to make the training of the dogs more effective. Further standards should be set for all drug detection dogs causing all law enforcement agencies to have a level of competence within their dog program to assure the least possible number of false alerts.
4. The law enforcement community in Alaska has traditionally helped and assisted each other regardless of the level of government, or the agencies involved. It is recommended that the Postal Inspector(s) in Alaska become more involved with law enforcement throughout the state for a mutual benefit of all parties.
5. Although a short-term postal intercept operation is an effective way to interdict drugs shipped through the mail, an on-going effort at little or no cost can be accomplished by postal employees reporting the presence of suspicious parcels to the proper authorities. It is therefore recommended that if regulations permit, a training program be developed by postal authorities to enhance employee understanding of the characteristics of parcels likely to contain Marijuana, or other drugs, who to report the information to, and other appropriate aspects.
6. Presently federal law and postal regulations provide sanctions against only the sender of controlled substances, but not the receiver unless it can be proved that the receiver "caused" the narcotics to be mailed. Alaska's postal intercept program and any similar efforts in the future will continue to be directed against the receivers, simply because state authorities cannot control enforcement efforts in other states against Marijuana senders. Postal laws should therefore be expanded to provide broader sanctions against receivers as well.
7. Historically, major decision-making in the Postal Service in Alaska has occurred in Seattle or beyond. However in the past several years, in response to Congressional concern, the portion of the Postal Service in Alaska responsible for mail delivery was given substantial autonomy and is now able to exercise far greater local decision making and consequently increased service to the state through the establishment of the Alaska Postal District. This same autonomy however did not extend to the Postal Inspection Service. To increase the ability of Alaska-based Postal Inspectors to undertake future

intercept operations, it is recommended that they too receive the authority to exercise increased decision-making in Alaska by establishing a management position in Anchorage. At present all Inspectors in Alaska are directly controlled from Seattle. This lack of on site management authority can not be over emphasized. In contrast, virtually every other federal law enforcement agency in Alaska has a level of management in the state.

8. From the results of the postal intercept operations in Hawaii and Alaska, the Postal Service appears to be a potential resource agency in terms of information of great significance to the law enforcement community regarding drug enforcement. It is recommended that the Postal Service in Alaska join with other federal, state and local agencies in membership in the Western States Information Network (WSIN). This agency serves as both a repository and a source of narcotics related information. Established by Congress in 1981, WSIN responds to the narcotics intelligence needs of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington, and has within its membership the major law enforcement agencies in these states as well as numerous federal law enforcement agencies. WSIN membership by the Postal Service in all WSIN states would enhance narcotics-related investigations by Postal Inspectors, as well as postal service information helping in investigations by other federal, state and local police agencies.
9. Since there are indications that a significant portion of both senders and recipients of Marijuana limit their shipments to four ounces or less, thus possibly indicating that sender and recipients think that sending and receiving four ounces is completely legal, an educational-public information effort is recommended to alert the public that possession of any amount is against federal law, if not state law, the details of the state law, plus applicable postal regulations that prohibit shipment of drugs through the mails.
10. The results of the Alaska postal intercept operation (perhaps in conjunction with the Hawaiian operation) should be made available to law enforcement agencies on a national basis, so that they may undertake similar efforts. This could be accomplished through articles in national law enforcement-oriented publications.
11. In conjunction with the DEA, the State Troopers, postal authorities, the Alaska Congressional delegation, and perhaps the US Attorney General's office, a committee be formed to make recommendations to the Postal Service and the Congress to change existing policies that now inhibit interdiction of drugs sent in the mail, while still maintaining the integrity of the Postal system. Such a committee would probably be most successful if developed by the Congressional delegation, as they determine appropriate.

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