

community." The rural community isn't what it used to be, he declared, due to mechanization of farming and homemaking; scientific agriculture that has brought bigger and better crops and livestock; advances in (See Column 5, Back Page, This Section)

But the jury received the case only after an afternoon of testimony replete with many of the elements of a Grade-B movie scenario. Such elements as: A thief dropping into a darkened elementary school was dismissed from the force. The charge against him was conduct unbecoming an officer. He confessed he made them speed up their crossing by peppering their behinds with an air rifle. (See Column 6, Back Page, This Section)

Joseph, now is pastor of the Campbellville Presbyterian church; Elizabeth, now Mrs. Lyman V. Ginger of Lexington, was a school teacher before her marriage; William Jr. is an engineer at a Lexington industrial plant; Ruth, Mrs. (See Column 4, Back Page, This Section)

**Casebook Narcotics—II**

# Barbiturates—Potential Disaster When Abused; Contrary To Belief, They Are Habit-Forming

**Sleeping Pill Addiction Can Be Worse Than True Narcotics, Says Authority; 'Don't Like It,' Comments A 'Patient' Who Would Rather 'Kick' Morphine**

By Jack Lewyn

Despite a popular belief that barbiturates, or "sleeping pills," are not habit-forming, their abuse stands as even more of a threat to society than narcotics addiction. From a personal standpoint, a chronic addict to barbiturates actually may suffer as much as, if not more than, a person on the habit with true narcotics—opium, its derivatives and similar drugs. The abuse of barbiturates is dangerous, and can have tragic consequences, said Dr. Harris Isbell, director of the Research Division, a unit of the National Institute of Mental Health, at the U. S. Public Health Service hospital here. If barbiturates are taken over a long period of time and then abruptly stopped, the addict can suffer convulsions and temporary psychosis, Dr. Isbell emphasized.

The barbiturates most commonly used by addicts in the United States are:

1. Pentobarbital (nembutal), called "Yellow Jackets" or "Goofballs."
2. Seconal, dubbed "Red Bird."
3. Amytal, slanged "Blue Heaven."

These are short-acting, hard-hitting drugs whose popular-parlance terms result from the colors of the capsules.

Less commonly used are the milder, longer-acting barbiturates such as phenobarbital, or, in the addicts' parlance, "Idiot Pill," and barbitol, the oldest of the series.

Once widely used, said Dr. Isbell, was chloral hydrate, or the old-fashioned "Mickey Finn," and paraldehyde, another potent, though unpleasant hypnotic drug.

Addicts will take any of the compounds in the barbiturate class, he added, but they usually prefer pentobarbital (nembutal), seconal and amytal.

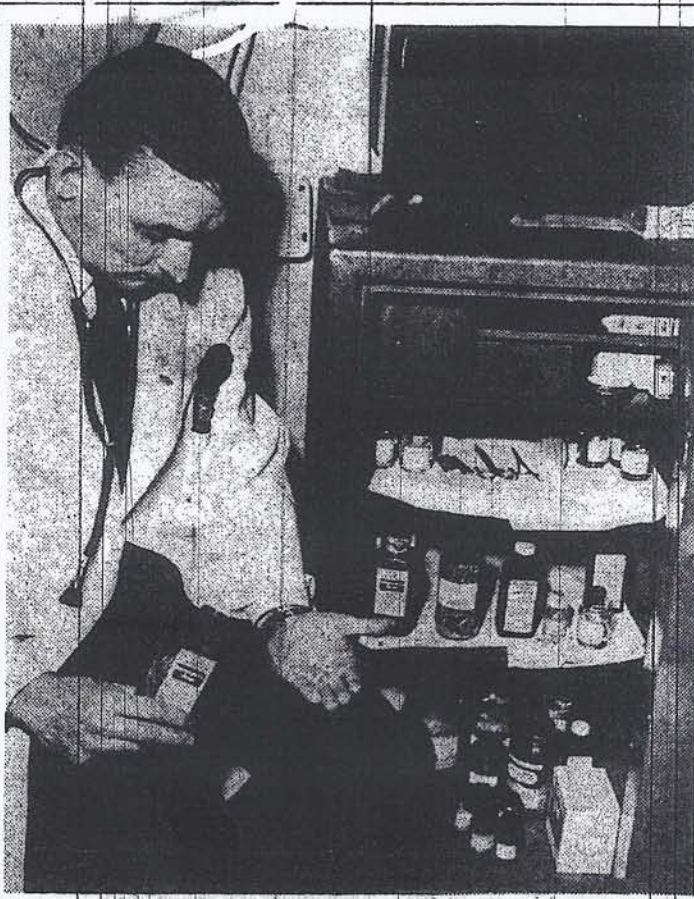
In the United States and England, barbiturates are not regarded as addicting, but this idea, Dr. Isbell explained, is usually based on an erroneous belief that no abstinence symptoms occur after abrupt withdrawal from an individual who has been chronically intoxicated with those drugs.

**Definitely Addicting**  
They are definitely classed "as an addicting drug under the terms of our definition," he said.

Addiction to barbiturates, from a physical point of view, "is more undesirable than is addiction to any of the opiates, but it is yet unknown whether barbiturate addiction represents as severe an emotional catastrophe as does opiate addiction," Dr. Isbell continued.

He said the effects of barbiturates are somewhat similar to those of alcohol. Both produce "a short-lived relief from emotional tension which, to people with susceptible personalities, seems to offer a solution for many of life's difficulties."

"Some individuals who use barbiturates appear to be motivated



Dr. Isbell Examines Barbiturates. —Herald Photo

by a desire for complete unconsciousness," he noted.

A chronic addiction to barbiturates "always causes marked social and emotional deterioration," said Dr. Isbell.

**Addicts Become Neglectful**  
"Barbiturate addicts neglect personal appearance and are unable to work or care for them-

selves adequately. They are rejected by their families, lose their jobs and their friends.

"Barbiturate addicts often smoke in bed and may start serious fires. They may commit crimes and not remember them."

Their behavior, he explained, "resembles the behavior of chronic alcoholics and appears to be in-

fluenced to some degree by their basic personality makeup and by the mood prevailing on any given day.

"A barbiturate addict may be hilariously amused one day and depressed and weeping the next. Loss of emotional control frequently occurs and addicts are likely to fight over minor matters. Some individuals become infantile, weep easily, and manage to have other persons attend their bodily needs."

Others, he said, may develop "paranoid ideas and in this state are somewhat dangerous. Tendencies to depression are accentuated by chronic barbiturate intoxication, and certain patients begin to verbalize vague desires for death.

"Hallucinations and delusions are uncommon as long as the addict is continuing to take the drug, but weird dreams occur frequently."

A voluntary research patient at the hospital who had completed an addiction and withdrawal cycle on barbiturates described their effects in terse, knowing language.

"Makes you plenty drunk," he said. "I couldn't walk, talk or write very good."

The patient, who entered the hospital to shake the morphine habit and who did shed it, elaborated:

"I was pretty sick for quite awhile. I think I had a couple of convulsions, and I know I blacked out a time or two."

He spoke in terms of his experience in becoming addicted to barbiturates for six months and then undergoing withdrawal, the acute stages of which last for two weeks.

But, he said, it has taken him "three or four months" to recover to a normal, or near-normal, state of health.

His opinion of the barbiturate habit?

"I don't like it at all."

He was emphatic.

The patient said he, like a chronic alcoholic and appears to be in-

(See Column 8, Back Page, This Section)

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