

Hashbash Chuck Ream

Fight Back for American Moral  
Values!

Hashbash Speech 2005 DRAFT

Hi, My name is Chuck Ream. I am a 33 year kindergarten teacher, a 5 term elected official, a licensed counselor, a lifeguard, and chairman of the Washtenaw Coalition for Compassionate Care.

We have had great Michigan victories in our movement this year. The prohibition of Cannabis is finally beginning to crumble. I will come back to that.

Long before many of you were born I began to study this question - "How can cannabis be illegal when it is a natural herb that makes you feel happy and friendly and has no hangover. Why do they put people in jail and try to totally destroy their lives? Why don't **all** the scientific facts in **all** the major studies make **any** difference whatsoever?" The British medical journal "The Lancet" sums up the science on Cannabis in a dozen words "The smoking of Cannabis, even long term, **is not harmful to health**". The editors say it is **naive** to think that scientific truth will have any effect on public policy. But why?

I finally figured out what is happening.

We are in the middle of a vicious and anti - American cultural civil war. The coercive institutions of the state (police and prisons) have been hijacked by the right wing and used to **prevent cultural evolution** and to **rebuild racism**. By the end of the 60's the conservatives in this country were willing to invest in a plan to **snuff out** the troublesome blacks and the very rapidly growing - pot smoking - "counterculture".

We are now experiencing the nearly complete political triumph of a very radical right wing that threatens every moral principle that the United States of America is based on.

For a blatant anti American fascist like George W. Bush to use the word "freedom" all the time is fake and sick and "Orwellian". Americans have far less freedom than people in Europe, for instance. We are actually in the time of "The American Inquisition". American cannabis arrests have reached three quarters of a million people per year, the most ever.

Every 43 seconds one of our sisters or brothers is having their lives wrecked - because they are involved with the natural herb we cherish.

We are moving towards theocracy, religious government. "Ayatollah" George W. Bush **doesn't care** about the Constitution, or how many young soldiers he sacrifices for oil.

The far right **needs** the **controversy** and **division** of cultural war to gain power - they have to find a way to get large numbers of middle class voters emotionally charged up enough over some cultural issue that they will vote against their own economic best interests.

The war on drugs is **not about drugs**, it is about **cultural warfare** and **ethnic cleansing**. **That** is why facts mean nothing! The fear of blacks and hippies was taken care of with a gigantic drug war and a 500% prison expansion in the U.S. since 1971. **That's** domestic terrorism!



The right wing kept on pushing emotional buttons until they found “wedge issues” – like abortion (which is really about controlling females), or “tax relief” (which is really about killing social programs), or same sex marriage, the flag, school prayer or “creationism”. **The point is to create division** – they seem to want **religious war**.

Our founding fathers were acutely aware of European religious war, where each side slaughtered the other. That’s why they **insisted** on the importance of the **separation** between church and state. Now we see perverted, immoral leadership in Washington that **cultivates** religious extremism to hold onto power.

The Supreme Court of Chief Justice Rehnquist has demolished our Bill of Rights, but now our mad dog Justices Scalia and Thomas openly say that **our government** derives its authority from god – and that their god is more important than the Constitution or the law.

They **ignore** the Declaration of Independence, which says “Governments are instituted among men, deriving their **just powers** from the **consent** of the governed” and our constitution, which says that “We the people...do ordain this constitution”, and “No religious test shall ever be required”.

**Real Americans have** Ten Commandments, our Bill of Rights.

Now there is nearly nothing left of them.

The first amendment starts with the freedom to **exercise religion** but if I practiced my religion I would be arrested. My religion is old and simple. It is the religion of Nature, using the magical teaching plants as sacraments to help connect with Nature. Pleasure is good, and sacred, not bad. Right wingers know they could **never compete** with a **culture or a religion** that values **life and joy and freedom** - so they call our natural plants “**drugs**” and try to destroy us.

Freedom? Listen ...

**Everything** you own can be **secretly** searched and photographed by police who can break into your home and don’t have to tell you.

Police may enter your home by **smashing down the door with a battering ram** and **throwing a flash bang grenade into your living room**. If you move to protect your family you die instantly.

You can now be put on trial twice for the same crime.

Protection against self incrimination is **GONE** when you are required to give up your bodily fluids before you can get a minimum wage job.

**All** of your property can be **instantly seized** by the state without convicting you or even **charging you** with a crime.

You may now be convicted with the use of secret informers who are criminals paid to lie.

The government can keep you from having a good lawyer by taking away the money that you need to pay one.

Almost **no jury trials** happen in the drug war. Mandatory minimum sentences give prosecutors the power to put you in prison for decades unless you **sign the “plea bargain”**.

**Cruel and unusual punishment is standard**. You may be a medical patient in great pain and have your medicine, home and children stolen by the state and be put in jail for 90 years. In a cultural war no punishment is too great for those who want change.



The Federal government has now taken all real power unto itself, in total violation of the constitution.

**We are the real Americans**, the carriers of true American values like **fairness and honesty, integrity and equality, caring and community, and individual freedom with personal responsibility.**

The Drug War is **absolutely un-American** & means we will **always** have a police state here and abroad and **never** get the basic social services that people have in **civilized** countries. Drug war **prevents law and order** because it **creates crime and diverts** police resources away from solving **real crimes**. It corrupts law enforcement and creates distrust of police. Drug war damages families and destroys the chance to have a nation at peace that can begin to meet basic human needs. **It degrades our civilization.**

**We are the patriotic Americans who will never give up** until our great country regains freedom.

The herb we love is **good, not bad**. It is **medicine** for the body, mind, and soul. Stand up proudly for ganja!

At the Hash Bash last year I spoke of the Ann Arbor Medical Marijuana city charter amendment. I'm happy to report that medical cannabis won a resounding victory with Ann Arbor voters in November – more than 74% of voters said **yes** to the idea of allowing sick people to get the benefit of our magical, medical herb. This huge victory crossed all political lines. I'd like to thank all the Republicans and old folks and religious conservatives who voted with their conscience for medical cannabis. Any one of us may need it one day.

Ann Arbor voters passed strong language about medical cannabis. It included the **sale and cultivation** of cannabis, with a note from a qualified medical practitioner. Given the current political situation, however, we decided that we would **not** push the city hard – we just wanted them to acknowledge that they had heard the will of the voters.

**Then** the city attorney was quoted as saying that our new charter amendment was **“invalid”** and there would be **no change in policy**. That was **not acceptable**.

We began planning for demonstrations in the spring.

Then on January 7, we had a meeting with the city attorney and the police chief and worked out compromise language. Here it is. The city attorney said (quote) “the police and the attorney’s office do retain a certain amount of prosecutorial discretion”...(and) “the compassionate concerns underlying the charter amendment are concerns that are certainly understood by the police and the city attorneys office as this discretion is exercised.”

My quarrel is over with the city attorney. When the citizens of a town vote for something at a 74% level it is up to the mayor and city council to take the initiative and **do something**. I have ideas if they want them!

At one o'clock, when the sound here goes off, I invite you to walk with us to a **peaceful** demonstration at city hall – to remind the city of its responsibility to the voters who voted 74% for medical marijuana. We will meet at the rear of the diag, take these signs and have a disciplined 10 minute political demonstration at city hall, and come straight back to the Monroe street fair. Our theme will be “74% - Time to Do Something”. Join us – and fight back!

