

ANTI DRUG RESEARCH: JULY 24 and 25, 2002
TOPLINE REPORT

BACKGROUND

- One of the biggest challenges which has surfaced over the course of the anti-drug campaign is finding a way to communicate to the teen audience about the dangers of marijuana in a way that motivates them not to use the drug.
- Today's teens tend to be dismissive about the dangers of marijuana for a series of reasons:
 - Teens are in the midst of a life stage, which is all about separating from the authority figures in their lives. One of the principle ways to do that is to take risks. Experimentation with illegal substances such as marijuana is a natural way to exhibit risk-taking behavior.
 - Teens tend to view themselves as invulnerable, even when it comes to issues of substance abuse. They tend to adopt the belief that nothing can hurt them, particularly if they only use it "on occasion."
 - Relative to other substances, pot is viewed as benign. According to the typical teen point of view:
 - Harder drugs have more significant physical effects; can be more addictive
 - Cigarettes can cause lung cancer; are more addictive
 - Alcohol affects your judgment, is dangerous when driving, is more addictive
 - Marijuana, in contrast:
 - Is viewed as something they can control
 - Tends to mostly be associated with fun times
 - Is perceived to be used by role model peers (athletes, scholars, student leaders) with no apparent negative consequences
 - Appears to have limited social stigma, at least when it comes to casual use
- Past anti-marijuana advertising has faced a challenging audience among teens, who are a naturally skeptical audience given the deluge of advertisements, which have confronted them in their short lifetimes. In past research, teens have protested that anti-marijuana ads:
 - Attempt to paint a universally negative picture of marijuana, which contradicts their perceived reality
 - Adopt an unflatteringly preachy tone in telling them what to do
 - Don't tell them anything they don't already know

OBJECTIVES

- Given today's firmly rooted teen opinions about the lack of risks surrounding marijuana, the ONDCP/ PDFA team has identified the need to replace past advertising strategies with campaigns that:

- Talk to teens about the dangers of marijuana in a fresh, new way
 - Take into account the types of messages that motivate them
 - Acknowledge their current impressions of/experience with the drug
- In addition to motivating the teen audience, the ads should not have any unintended negative consequences (e.g., alienation, education) for tweens, who typically have less experience with marijuana, have faced fewer peer pressures to smoke, and are still negatively pre-disposed towards the drug.

METHODOLOGY

- Eight ninety minute focus groups with a mix of high and low sensation seeking teens in New York, NY, as follows:
 - Two groups with 7th graders (one group of girls, one group of boys)
 - Two groups with 8th graders (one group of girls, one group of boys)
 - Two groups with 9th graders (one group of girls, one group of boys)
 - Two groups with 10th graders (one group of girls, one group of boys)
- Exposure to eight executions from two different negative consequences campaigns, as follows:
 - Leo Burnett:
 - *Concert (TV)*
 - *Babysitter (Radio)*
 - *Street (Radio)*
 - McCann-Erickson (all TV):
 - *Pass Around*
 - *EPT*
 - *Test*
 - *Drop Off*
 - *Rolling*
- Other methodological notes:
 - Rotation of stimuli across groups
 - Discussion of overall campaign as well as individual executions for McCann work (reactions to the overall Burnett campaign were gathered in June)

KEY FINDINGS

Overall Assessment

- Developing an advertising campaign which convinces today's teens of the dangers of marijuana smoking remains a difficult, though hopefully not an impossible, challenge.

- Indeed, the two negative consequences campaigns we tested performed well among both teen and tween respondents. After seeing the ads:
 - Almost 75% of respondents reported that they were less likely to smoke marijuana
 - 25% said their views had not changed
 - None reported that they were more likely to smoke marijuana
 - There were no meaningful differences in these attitudes across the two age groups.
- The idea of producing a *range* of executions to support each strategy continues to appear to be a sound one, as respondents varied in their reactions to the executions and in their assessment of which situations motivated them not to smoke marijuana.
- Top priorities to be produced for each campaign are as follows:
 - Leo Burnett (in addition to recommendations from June research)
 - *Concert TV*
 - *Babysitter Radio*
 - McCann-Erickson
 - *Test*
 - *EPT*
 - *Rolling (could be switched to Pass Around, pending priorities, as described below)*

Strengths of the Campaigns

Both campaigns:

- Tapped into strong emotions by linking marijuana to consequences that are important to young people
- Gave them new reasons not to smoke marijuana, often by showing how smoking can hurt other people besides themselves
- Conjured up images of letting their parents down, which has proven to be a powerful motivator against drugs
- Intrigued respondents with their narrative “twists”
- Mostly utilized realistic teen settings

Leo Burnett’s campaign:

- Provided young people with a new way of thinking about marijuana
- Built credibility by acknowledging the widely-held teen view that in certain situations, marijuana *can* be harmless
- Planted a seed of doubt by showing that even if marijuana is harmless *most* of the time, smoking can lead to serious negative consequences
- Showed teens respect by posing a *question* (“Harmless?”) rather than issuing a directive

McCann-Erickson’s campaign:

- Provided the majority of young people with new information about marijuana (not an easy feat!)
- Cast marijuana in an unflattering light by linking it to other, widely recognized teen issues such as driving under the influence and unplanned pregnancy
- Utilized a convincing teen voice and a collaborative tone, as expressed in the tag line “It’s more harmful than we all thought.”
- Attached a compelling value (“Knowledge”) to the anti-drug campaign.

Weaknesses of the Campaigns

- Clarity (more of an issue for younger respondents)
- Believability (some executions were deemed more realistic than others)
- Modeling (younger respondents occasionally mentioned that some of the ads might make young people more interested in smoking marijuana...however, none claimed the ads made *them* more interested)

Intended Messages

Leo Burnett

- Most respondents took away the message that smoking marijuana can be harmful and lead to irresponsible behaviors.
- The more sophisticated (generally older) respondents also got the message that, although everyone talks about how much fun marijuana can be, you never know when you might have a bad experience with it.

McCann-Erickson

- Most respondents got the message that marijuana smoking can lead to a series of negative consequences, for you and sometimes for those around you.

Reactions to Specific Executions

Leo Burnett

Concert (TV)

- *Concert* had a number of strong supporters (particularly older respondents) but was confusing to some of the younger respondents, who misinterpreted its format and assumed that the entire scene was happening again and again.
 - Given the clarity around the Burnett executions in last month’s research, this confusion appears to be an anomaly. Any risk of confusion would also likely be reduced with finished executions.
- Respondents who understood the format of the spot were enthusiastic about it. Consistent with earlier research, they praised the spot for:
 - Recognizing the commonly held perception of pot as relatively harmless...
 - *It’s recognizing that, 4 out of 5 times nothing might happen.*

- *You can do it and get away with it, most of the time.*
 - *They're showing people having fun, which most of the time they do.*
- ...then planting a seed of doubt, by introducing the notion that marijuana is more dangerous than it might appear to be (here, because of the risk of being busted)
 - *People think it's not bad. Then you show them getting caught.*
 - *It's funny at the beginning, but in the end something bad is going to happen.*
 - *No matter how safe it seems, there's always someone around to catch you.*
 - *It's saying there's always a chance that one time, you are going to get busted. And you ruin your hopes and dreams over one little thing. It's useless.*
 - *Just an ordinary day in a bathroom stall. Their lives are fine one second, and the next, they're not. It's saying, 'This can be you.'*
- The primary negative consequence in the ad, being busted, resonated strongly with most respondents.
 - *It can go on your permanent record, and then it's with you forever.*
 - *If you have dreams and expectations for your future, this will always be there*
 - *You don't want to get busted. Yeah, it's a good reason not to smoke.*
- Without prompting, most teens took the idea of being busted and translated it to the notion of their parents finding out. This consequence, as we have heard in past research, turned out to be significant for them.
 - In spite of all of the inherent tension in the parent/teen relationship, today's teens often view their parents as important role models.
 - As children of predominantly dual income or single parent households, they tend to recognize the sacrifices their parents have made for them.
 - Given these strong emotions, the idea of letting their parents down is a stress-provoking thought for most teens.
 - *As one girl explained, I would lose all the trust that my parents put in me. I would be like, 'I'll never do it again', but it would be too late. I would have already lost their trust, after they tried so hard to raise me well.*
 - *And another: I'd feel like I let them down. Right now they have me on a pedestal. They really expect the best of me.*
- Most respondents praised the spot for its realistic setting and situations. Indeed, concerts are a favorite teen pastime (they are a way to “escape” the strictures of parental control) and are also a logical venue for substance experimentation (they're a melting pot for teens of different ages and levels of sophistication, with relatively dispersed adult supervision.)
 - *This seems really realistic. Most people our age go to concerts.*
 - *Yeah, I've smelled marijuana at concerts. Sometimes it's in the crowd but it can also be in the bathroom.*

- *This whole concert setting, and being busted...this is real life.*
- *They're acting stupid, clueless, and immature. That's exactly how people act when they're smoking marijuana.*
- Younger respondents (who admittedly had spent far less time at concerts than older respondents) tended to be more skeptical...
 - *I don't think you would do that...go in a room and smoke.*
 - *There are cameras and stuff that would videotape it.*
 - *Why would you pay for a concert, then go in a room and get stoned?*
- A handful of respondents expressed concern that the more “positive” scenarios might give viewers the impression that pot is fun, although they said they *personally* interpreted the “fun” aspect of pot within the context of the “Russian roulette” message. Although they were the minority, their concerns should be investigated in future copy testing.
 - *The second and third ones, when they were laughing. Kids might look at those and think it's fun and they'll try it.*
 - *The message I got at the beginning was that marijuana feels good. It feels good, then not so good.*
 - *They show that you can get away with it...the first three.*
- “Harmless?” was viewed as a powerful ending to the commercial by almost all respondents.
 - Most correctly viewed the word as a sarcastic, thought-provoking question related to the multiple scenarios, even if they did not initially see the question mark.
 - They seemed to appreciate the idea of ending with a question, which left them to draw their *own* conclusions about what they had seen.
 - A few respondents commented that the word seemed overly “scornful”, but acknowledged that they still preferred a *question* to a statement telling them what to do.
- The bottom line: *Concert* is a strong addition to the lineup of ads tested in June (*Drive Through*, *Den*, and *Couple*).
 - Given the intent to expose teens to a *series* of negative consequences in the hope that at least one will influence them in some way, the campaign should feature a broad range of possible scenarios and settings.
 - *Concert*, like *Couple* and *Drive Through*, dangles the possibility of teens getting into trouble with pot in “everyday” settings or situations. These spots were a nice compliment to *Den*, which portrayed a more unusual scenario, coupled with a starkly negative outcome of pot smoking.

Babysitter

- This execution was one of the hardest hitting across the two campaigns. Its main point of difference was the startling behavior of the two protagonists, who abandon a coughing baby after getting high. The idea of shirking such an important

responsibility resonated strongly with this age group, who tend to place tremendous value on the accountability they gradually earn during their teen years. Almost to a person, respondents had strong, emotional, almost visceral responses to this ad:

- *How could I do that? I told the mother I'd take care of the baby, and instead I abused her! She probably isn't even a year old.*
 - *If you didn't want the responsibility to take care of the kid, you should have said that first.*
 - *That's just messed up. These parents will never trust a babysitter again.*
 - *Not only are they hurting their own lives; they're hurting a baby!*
 - *This is a very strong message...because, who would want to hurt a little baby?*
- Respondents also pointed out other irresponsible behaviors the babysitter exhibited, such as exposing the baby to second hand smoke, failing to hear him crying, and inviting a friend into the neighbor's home, presumably without asking. These behaviors reinforced the message that marijuana smoking can lead to a whole host of undesirable actions.
 - Several respondents immediately put themselves into the parents' shoes and imagined how they would react. Role-playing such as this typically indicates that the ad has struck a strong emotional chord. Comments included:
 - *If I were the parent, I would haunt them. I'd snipe a rifle.*
 - *I'd slap them if I found out they were smoking a bong at my house with my kid there.*
 - *I'd bust them the minute I smelled the stuff or found the cigarette burns.*
 - Other respondents imagined a host of negative consequences for the babysitter, all of which they claimed gave them good reasons not to smoke pot:
 - *You'd lose your babysitting job...but much worse, you'd lose your reputation.* (In the early teen "transition" years, reputation is vitally important. Teens are typically entering new schools and are introduced to a whole new set of social pressures. The idea of tarnishing one's reputation at this stage in life is particularly powerful.)
 - *If the kid dies, they're screwed. They could be sued.*
 - *No one (their parents, their parents' friends) would ever trust them again.*
 - This research identified only a few issues with this execution:
 - For a couple of respondents, the storyline was so dramatic that it lacked credibility
 - *Would she really bring someone into the house? What if the parents walked in?*
 - *I do babysit. Even if I did drugs, that is not the place where I would do them. It's a big responsibility, and you don't know for sure that the parents will be out til midnight!*
 - A few respondents voiced concerns that the ad might inspire some teens to smoke marijuana while babysitting. (However, when pressed, they admitted that they themselves felt no such inspiration.)

- There were dramatic differences between younger and older respondents when it came to familiarity with bong. While all tenth graders claimed to be knowledgeable, almost none of the seventh graders and only a handful of eighth and ninth graders were aware of bong. The use of an unfamiliar device could hamper their understanding of the ad, or at a minimum, distract them from the richness of the storyline.
- The bottom line: this execution is grounded in a typical teen situation (babysitting), has the potential to catch teens' attention with a range of disturbing scenarios, and ultimately adds a powerful disincentive to the lineup of reasons not to smoke marijuana.

Street

- This ad was generally not well received. It's most often-cited weakness was the age-inappropriate slang, which respondents said made it feel off the mark and as if it was "trying too hard."
 - One detail which *was* praised was the first kid mocking the other and calling him "rookie". This felt very true-to-life for respondents, as it reminded them of real life peer pressure to smoke marijuana.
 - Another element which generated discussion was the flying monkey in the third vignette. Some respondents liked the reference to hallucinations, commenting that that they'd learned in school that this was a side effect of marijuana. Others countered that such a thing would "never happen after two minutes of smoking."
- The setting in this execution got mixed reviews. Many respondents thought the outdoor/alley setting was realistic (*I believe they'd go someplace like this, with no one around. I also believe they'd get caught. Cops are all over places like that.*) Others hypothesized that people are more likely to smoke in a park or public area, where it's easier to blend in.
- The bottom line: the concept of kids being busted in some type of outdoor urban location could be an addition to the lineup at a later phase of the campaign. However, the script and scenarios would need to be modified in order to resolve the issues described above.

McCann-Erickson

Test

- *Test* tapped into a significant teen issue (drunk driving) and turned it on its head to incorporate the effects of marijuana.
 - *I liked this one because not only does it have something you can relate to; it shows the consequences. It shows that not only drunk driving causes accidents. You never see that...high drivers.*
- Teens found the notion of getting pulled over while under the influence of marijuana to be surprising, but believable.

- *When I saw it, I thought he was driving drunk. Then, it was a zero on the Breathalyzer and I was like, 'wow'. Then, I saw it was marijuana.*
 - *I liked this commercial because I never knew (that marijuana could cause such behavior) ...I always thought it was because of drinking.*
 - *I bet it happens a lot. Not everyone gets caught but a lot are out there doing it and every now and then someone gets busted.*
 - *I didn't know marijuana could make you not drive straight. I thought it was only alcohol.*
- The car, a long-standing teen icon, heightened the impact of this spot:
 - The car is a symbol of emerging freedom and responsibility to teens
 - The thought of wrecking it is a frightening one (given all of the emphasis on the dangers of drinking and driving)
 - The thought of losing their driving privileges is almost as bad for teens, as it robs them of their freedom
- This spot was the only one in the McCann series that showed the real-time *effects* of marijuana, rather than portraying someone who was just lighting up or dealing with it after the fact. Several respondents praised it for this:
 - *They usually say that marijuana fries your brain...but this really shows you what it does to you..*
 - *I liked this one. You really saw how out of control he was as a result of his actions.*
- A few respondents commented that, relative to some of the other executions (particularly *EPT* and *Rolling/Pass Around*) the consequences in this spot did not seem to be particularly drastic:
 - *You go to the police station...big deal. I mean, it IS a big deal, but the other ones have bigger consequences.*
 - *Maybe they could make it more powerful. Have him hit the pedestrian or something.*
- Most respondents agreed that it would be a big deal if their parents found out...
 - *I'd feel sorry for myself. When I got home, I'd be in biiiig trouble.*
 - *Home?? You wouldn't GO home!*
 - *They'd take your car, take your permit or license.*
 - *If they caught me doing this, they would never do anything else for me. They might kick me out of the house*
 - *They would lose trust. Everything would be supervised..*
 - *They trusted you to drive a car. That's a huge deal. Then you go and mess up your priorities.*
 - *I'd feel like she raised me right...and I let her down.*
- ...and a few pointed out that, if you were pulled over, it could go on your record... or worse.
 - *This kind of thing would follow you around forever.*

- *You don't want to spend the rest of your life in jail for attempted homicide.*
- The bottom line: this spot offers a new twist on a commonly held fear—that of the dangers of drinking and driving—but makes marijuana the culprit in a credible way. In so doing, it may help to reverse commonly held perceptions that marijuana is a benign substance.

EPT

- This execution, similar to *Test*, credibly linked marijuana with an important teen issue: unplanned pregnancy. Pregnancy avoidance is a powerful motivator to today's teens, who generally:
 - Are just beginning to dream about, and plan for, their own futures
 - Are finally beginning to break away from their own parents, and don't want to be forced to grow up too fast
 - As respondents explained:
 - *It brings the marijuana thing to teen pregnancy....that was good. I'd never thought about it (the link) before.*
 - *I thought this one was the most powerful. People are really worried about getting people pregnant.*
- The ad was equally effective with boys and girls (probably because of the significant emphasis on safe sex among both genders). However, each group put its own spin on the story...

The Girls' Perspective

- *It sort of makes me scared. You don't want to wake up one morning and throw up, and then find out you're pregnant. Then you might wonder if you have AIDS.*
- *You don't know what would happen. Your mom could drop you.*
- *If you're young and you have kids, it's hard.*
- *The parents can get over it. But she has to deal with a baby in her teenage years. And she has to deal with that forever.*

The Boys' Perspective

- *If you get someone pregnant, it's your problem, too.*
- *You have to take responsibility.*
- *He'll have to pay child support if he doesn't want to marry her. Or he'll have to get out of the country or something.*
- *He's too young to take care of a baby. It's terrifying!*

- Asked to imagine themselves in this situation, most respondents said they'd do as the girl did, and tell their parents....
 - *At first I'd be really scared but I'd have to tell them.*
 - *I'd try to be as truthful as possible. They'll find out eventually!*
 - *It's a big responsibility, and I would need their help.*
 - *I'd tell them I didn't mean it...*

- ...but they were almost universal in their anxiety about their parents' reactions (similar to the comments about Burnett's executions and *Test*)
 - *What would they say? 'Get a job. Get out of my house.'*
 - *They'd say, 'If you can handle yourself to get a woman pregnant, than you should support yourself...and the baby.'*
 - *I'd know I really disappointed my parents. They trusted me not to go around and smoke drugs, and now I pull something like this.*
 - *My mom is worried about how other people view her, so this would be a BIG deal.*
 - *My father wouldn't be able to look at me.*
 - *They would be upset but they'd also want to help me.*

- And, many respondents pointed out that the spot had even greater impact because the girl's actions had consequences for others besides herself.
 - *This couple is in their mid 30's. THEY should still be having babies. It makes me mad at the girl. And the guy had better get a job. He'll have to support the kid.*
 - *It points out that it doesn't just affect your life when you smoke pot.*
 - *I like how they show the whole family...because everyone's going to have to deal with it in some way.*
 - *I wonder how this is going to affect the baby, that she's pregnant and she's a pot smoker.*

- While some respondents found the storyline confusing...
 - *I was confused. Why are the older people taking the test?*
 - *I thought it was an unprotected sex commercial.*

- ...most praised the unexpected "twist"...
 - *I like when there's a twist in something that you wouldn't expect. Like here, you thought it was the parents and then instead it was HER baby.*
 - *I was kind of confused at first, like, ok, they don't want a kid...but then they showed the daughter and I got it. It held my attention.*

- A few detractors commented that the spot lacked credibility, but they were the minority.
 - *It's farfetched. You don't hear that people get pregnant because of pot.*
 - *Marijuana doesn't make you do that. Cocaine and ecstasy, they make you doped out and you do crazy things...but you know what's going on with pot.*
 - *There are lots of reasons for unprotected sex. It's not just marijuana.*

- Respondents were unanimous in their praise for the tagline ("It's more harmful than we all thought") in this as well as all other executions.
 - The use of the teen voice, while it was not a big discussion point, appeared to be appropriate and to establish the ad as coming from a credible, relatable source (a peer).

- There was no evidence of literal or narrow interpretations of the word “harmful”. Rather, respondents were comfortable attaching the word to all of the McCann executions, regardless of whether there was evidence of pot causing bodily harm.
- The bottom line: this spot ups the stakes of smoking marijuana by linking it to a negative consequence that’s equally appalling for both genders, and has long term implications for teens as well as those they care about.

Rolling and Pass Around

- These ads, while not as universally appealing as *Test* and *EPT*, found a solid audience among a subsegment of respondents, mainly because they conveyed a startling new piece of information: that marijuana contains four times as much cancer-causing tar as cigarettes. As respondents explained:
 - *I didn’t know that marijuana can cause cancer. I always thought cigarettes were worse for you.*
 - *If you can make pot seem more harmful than cigarettes, it’d be better.*
 - *We always hear how bad cigarettes are, from the Truth ads. Now this is telling me that marijuana’s actually worse.*
 - *So, if cigarettes can do this to them (the men in the clinic), what about marijuana?*
- The two ads tended to do well with different respondents (*Pass Around* skewed younger and *Rolling* skewed older) as a result of their different approaches:
 - *Pass Around* emphasized the *results* of smoking marijuana (tweens, who live in a more rule-based world than teens, tend to appreciate seeing the potential consequences of their actions); *Rolling* visually highlighted the mathematical difference between cigarettes and marijuana.
 - *Pass Around* encouraged teens to look into the future and imagine what might happen to them; *Rolling* showed a present-day teen smoking, and conveyed the impact of smoking marijuana instead of cigarettes.

Other Comments on *Rolling*

- Respondents praised the true-to-life executional elements of this ad...and claimed they could identify with the protagonist, simply because of his age.
 - *It’s realistic. He’s locking his door.*
 - *People who smoke might open windows, so their parents don’t smell it.*
 - *If you’re going to smoke, you’ll often do it in your room.*
 - *This one would make more sense to me, as a teen myself, than the one with all the old men.*
- Not surprisingly given teens’ visual nature, the technique of showing the conversion from four cigarettes to one joint was effective, and really brought the message to life:
 - *A lot of people think that one cigarette is bad enough. If you see that a joint is FOUR cigarettes, that’s REALLY bad.*

- *It just shows how real it is...that you could take four cigarettes and it is just like marijuana.*
 - *It's telling me that each time you smoke a joint, you are smoking four cigarettes. Even if you're under peer pressure and you just take one puff, it's much worse than you think!*
 - *This one is better than (Pass Around.) You can see all that tobacco and say, 'That's a lot!'*
 - *It shows exactly how much you are smoking and the other one you don't know. They aren't being specific.*
 - *People our age will just get this one better. It's easier to understand.*
- Detractors pointed out two main issues with *Rolling*:
 - The risk of modeling (although there were very few quotes on this)
 - Its lack of focus on results
 - *The one with the old men is better, because this one isn't telling you what can happen.*
 - *The other one shows what can happen in the future with what you do now.*

Other Comments on *Pass Around*

- While respondents were mixed about the effectiveness of a long term consequence such as throat/larynx cancer, a surprising number commented that the severity of the consequence made it compelling, even if it was something that wouldn't affect them for several decades:
 - *Pass Around was my favorite. Why? Because I want to be able to talk!*
 - *Some people think they are young now and it doesn't matter. But with something like this, I'd know it'd come back to (haunt) me.*
 - *If you're a really outgoing person, what are you going to do?*
 - *This one makes me feel really sad. You don't want to grow up and be in their position.*
 - *Why enjoy it now, when you're going to really suffer when you are older?*
 - Ultimately, the consequence portrayed here turned out to be a serious one for most respondents, who are in the midst of a particularly social phase of their lives and therefore were troubled by the idea of not being able to speak.
- Some respondents reacted positively to the four men, for a variety of reasons...
 - *These old men are in a clinic and they can't talk without that box. That hits me..makes me feel teary-eyed..*
 - *I liked the fact that there were several of men in the ad. It makes you feel more like it could happen to anyone.*
 - *They all seemed to agree that they wouldn't do it (smoke) again.*
 - The favorable reactions to the old men were a contrast to what we typically hear from teens, who usually prefer to see people of their own age. However, part of the issue with older people is that they have a tendency to be viewed as non-credible ("how do they know what I'm going through?") or preachy. This group was neither...they were assumed to be actual cancer sufferers, so

they understood the effects better than their teen viewers. *And* they didn't preach...they just stated the facts.

- On the other hand, there were several weaknesses with the *Pass Around*:
 - Predictably, some respondents protested that they were less likely to pay attention to a long term consequence such as this
 - *Compared to some of the others, I just don't think it would scare people that much.*
 - Several expressed doubt that an ad featuring men in their fifties would catch their eye...
 - *I would listen more to ads with people my own age...not with older people.*
 - ...and a few pointed out that, if they limited themselves to casual usage, they would face a low likelihood of throat cancer
 - *Even if you were worried about it, you'd just say, 'I'll try it once and not lose my voice.'*
- While the majority seemed to associate the mens' condition with either cigarettes or some combination of cigarettes and marijuana, some respondents were left confused as to what accounted for their lost voices.
 - *The ad is good but a little confusing. I don't know what the problem comes from. It would make me think 'what are they trying to say'?*
 - *It took me a while to make the connection that drugs/marijuana are the reason for the voice boxes. I don't know if kids will get that.*
 - *It'd be better if they showed 15 kids passing around the joint, then showed the adults 40 years later passing around the voice thing.*
- Respondents unanimously assumed (and recommended) that the ads feature real cancer sufferers, rather than actors.
 - *It would make it a much stronger message.*
 - *If they're just actors, they may not really know how it feels to be in that situation.*
 - *I wouldn't like someone to lie to me about something like this. That wouldn't get me not to do it! I'd be like, 'Why are they doing that?'*
- The bottom line: Both executions performed surprisingly well, and indicated that, for at least a segment of teens, the cancer consequence can be compelling when paired with hard facts about what's driving the disease. Given what we know now, we recommend moving forward with *Rolling*, given:
 - The fact that it tended to be preferred among older respondents (the campaign's core target)
 - Its fit with everything we know about effective teen advertising in general (the use of visuals to illustrate a fact, the teen protagonist, the credible setting)
 - However, if there are significant concerns about the risk of modeling (there was little evidence of it in these groups), *Pass Around* also appears to be an acceptable execution for this target group.

Drop Off

- This ad got mixed reviews, earning relatively high marks from tenth graders and generating skepticism from most other respondents. The main points of difference between the age groups appeared to be:
 - Images of the treatment experience (younger kids tended to aggrandize it)
 - The degree to which they believed they had something to lose (e.g., their freedom, their reputations) by spending the summer in treatment
- Older respondents generally agreed that the possibility of being sent to treatment was a good reason to avoid smoking pot
 - As they progress into their high school years, teens have just begun to get a taste of their independence. So, unlike younger kids (who are accustomed to being under their parents' rules) older respondents had a palpable sense of what they were losing by being sent away.
 - *This is basically taking away his freedom. It (the summer) is the one time he can feel happy.*
 - *I can't imagine this. You'd be away from your friends. Inside all the time.*
 - *You don't want to be stuck listening to someone else all day. You want to be doing your own thing.*
 - *I'd be devastated. I'd probably kill myself.*
 - *This was a good ad. His summer got ruined.*
 - As teens get older, they also become increasingly concerned about their futures. *Drop Off* conjured up fears of the impact that treatment would have in the long run...
 - *This will be on your record. That's scary.*
 - *Something like this follows you wherever you go.*
- Younger respondents, while they acknowledged that they would prefer to stay home, seemed to imagine treatment as a neutral to positive experience...like a safe haven or even summer camp. Their relatively benign impressions were likely partially driven by the hypothetical nature of the situation for them (Most younger respondents, like others their age, were anti-marijuana by nature. As a result, they likely did not seriously consider the possibility that they would really ever be *sent* to a treatment facility.)
 - *He's going to be with kids his own age, who will have a good effect on him. He's not going to be out there trying all different kinds of drugs.*
 - *Some people would love to be at a place like that. It's better than being at home.*
 - *Kids your age? You might look forward to going there!*
 - *You're away from your own friends, but eventually you'd make new ones.*
 - *The words they used...like, 'Kick it' ...make it sound enjoyable.*
- Although some younger kids said the ad was effective, their main takeaway seemed to be *praise* for treatment centers as a constructive solution, rather than desire to

avoid the treatment experience by not smoking pot. In other words, *Drop Off* did not clearly elicit anti-drug motivations among younger respondents.

- *It shows the good things...like if you smoke, you'll get help.*
 - *If you are bad or not focused, you can still get back on track.*
 - *It's not good to be there, but it'll help you get off drugs.*
 - *There would be all these supportive people to talk to about it.*
- Perhaps because of their impressions of the way their own parents would react if they were caught smoking marijuana, respondents seemed unsettled by the mother's behavior towards her son. Only a few picked up on the idea that she was simply making the best of the situation and being supportive of him.
 - *I think she would have been harder on him. This wasn't realistic.*
 - *It's weird the way she's smiling.*
 - *She was too giddy to get rid of him. 'It's good you're getting away...from ME.'*
 - *I think she's already been mad, and now she's calmer.*
 - Respondents were mixed in their assessment of whether the intended-to-be-new information (that there are treatment facilities just for marijuana, and that 79,000 teens are currently in these facilities) was really "new news".
 - Given their high degree of exposure to substance abuse (in everything from school to the movies) today's teens tend to view the idea of treatment as relatively commonplace. As one respondent explained, *They have facilities for everything.*
 - However, the number 79,000 struck many respondents as higher than they would have expected.
 - The bottom line: *Drop Off's* biggest challenge revolves around the need to showcase the downsides of treatment without stigmatizing the experience. Given the difficulty of striking the appropriate balance, and the relatively favorable reactions to the other spots, we would not recommend pursuing this execution.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Without a doubt, there continues to be a significant need to educate teens about the dangers of marijuana.
 - Past advertising has not given teens persuasive reasons not to smoke marijuana.
 - Social pressures to experiment with illegal substances are as strong as ever, particularly as young people move into their “transition” years.
 - Continued emphasis on the negatives of other substances (such as portrayed in the *Truth* campaign) threatens to make marijuana appear even more benign.
- This research offered the hope that it is possible to talk to teens about the dangers of marijuana usage in a more compelling way.
 - Teens and tweens were generally open to the idea of new messages about marijuana, provided the messages provided new information and addressed them in an appropriate tone.
 - Most of the ads we showed resonated with them and, according to the majority of respondents, lessened their likelihood of smoking marijuana.
- Both the Leo Burnett and the McCann-Erickson campaigns fared well, and appeared to deliver their intended messages in a convincing way. As a result, given the strategy of exposing the target audience to a variety of anti-marijuana perspectives and rationales, we recommend moving forward with both campaigns (subject to copy testing results and consideration of the recommendations below).
- Our recommended executions, in combination, painted a compelling series of reasons not to smoke pot:
 - Because you risk getting busted (*Concert, Test*)
 - Because you’re hurting others besides yourself (*Babysitter, EPT, Test*)
 - Because you’ll let your parents down (*EPT, Test*)
 - Because you never know when marijuana may harm you (*Concert, Babysitter*)
 - Because there are long term consequences (*Rolling/Pass Around*)
 - Because you could damage your reputation (*EPT, Babysitter, Concert*)
 - Because you’ve worked too hard to earn your freedom to let one little incident take it away (*all executions*)