



# HALPERNGATE

by JON HANNA

On January 13, 2006, at the LSD conference in Basel, MARK McCLOUD interrupted a lecture by JOHN HALPERN, accusing him of acting as a DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION (DEA) agent, and revealing that HALPERN was an informant on multiple occasions during investigations for the case of *UNITED STATES OF AMERICA vs. WILLIAM LEONARD PICKARD and CLYDE APPERSON* (i.e., the Kansas “missile silo bust”). The following article attempts to address some salient points in what has been called “Halperngate”: the widening circle of shock and recrimination following the incident in Switzerland.

Dr. HALPERN is the associate director of substance abuse research at HARVARD UNIVERSITY’S McLEAN HOSPITAL. He has had a strong interest in psychedelic drugs since the early 1990s. He worked under Dr. RICK STRASSMAN on the UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO MEDICAL SCHOOL’S infamous DMT study. He’s published on the topics of psychedelics in addiction treatment, the beneficial uses of peyote by NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH members, and the effects of MDMA on memory. Future studies he hopes to spearhead at HARVARD include the use of MDMA to treat anxiety related to terminal cancer, and the use of LSD or psilocybin to treat cluster headaches. His work in this field has been supported in part by the MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHEDELIC STUDIES (MAPS).

Before the LSD conference, JOHN HALPERN’S role as a “Cooperating Witness” for the DEA in the missile silo bust was not common knowledge in the wider psychedelic community, despite it having been peripherally mentioned in a couple of mainstream news articles. For reasons that are both understandable and problematic, neither HALPERN nor RICK DOBLIN of MAPS made any public statement regarding HALPERN’S role in the case. However, according to DOBLIN, all of MAPS’ major donors were aware of HALPERN’S past

cooperation with the DEA. (Accordingly, one such donor restricted his funds to non-HALPERN-related research.) And some individuals took it upon themselves to let other community members know, on an informal basis, that HALPERN had acted as a snitch. While DOBLIN’S viewpoint was that most people who needed to know about HALPERN’S past had been informed, the volatile reaction erupting in Basel when this news was more widely spread suggests that the larger community does not share DOBLIN’S opinion.



With McCLOUD’S address, the ad hoc containment of HALPERN’S sordid past was shattered. Emotions are surging, rumors are roiling, and a few falsehoods have been flying about. The only solution is a public acknowledgment of the truth, at least as much as is possible for fuzzy-headed humans. Other than some terse comments in Basel, HALPERN has not said anything in public about

this situation. He may not have spoken of the matter because his agreement with the DEA may require him to remain silent; perhaps he may be re-interviewed in the future to provide additional information related to the bust (particularly if there is another appeal hearing). DOBLIN has said that HALPERN has been unwilling to publicly address the topic on the advice of his attorneys. Had HALPERN’S role as a Cooperating Witness for the DEA been dealt with in a more forthright manner at an earlier date, the drama in Basel and afterwards might have been avoided.

## THE BUST

On November 6, 2000, CLYDE APPERSON was arrested, and the following day WILLIAM LEONARD PICKARD was arrested. Both men were charged with conspiracy to manufacture, distribute, and dispense LSD (TRAVIS 2000). Regardless of the extent to which these men were involved with the set-up





of an LSD laboratory or any actual LSD production, it is clear that the owner of the missile silo where the lab equipment was stored—GORDON TODD SKINNER—set them up for a fall. As a DEA “Confidential Source” (a.k.a. “Confidential Informant”), with immunity from prosecution despite his own involvement in illegal drug production, SKINNER ratted out APPERSON and PICKARD, spending nine days on the stand testifying against the two men (FRY 2003). APPERSON and PICKARD were found guilty on March 31, 2003. On November 25, 2003, APPERSON was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment without parole and PICKARD was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole (DEA 2003).

Prior to the bust, JOHN HALPERN and LEONARD PICKARD were friends; HALPERN considered PICKARD to be a “father figure” (UNATTRIBUTED 2000; ROSENFELD 2001). The extent of HALPERN’s involvement in any LSD production scheme—if he was involved at all—is unknown. What *is* known is that HALPERN accepted at least \$319,000 [\$20,000 in Summer 1996; \$100,000 in January 1998; \$50,000 in February 1999; \$49,000 in May or June 1999; \$100,000 between September and October 1999] in cash from PICKARD (UNATTRIBUTED 2000; FRY 2003; HALPERN 2006). There has been speculation that PICKARD may have been paying HALPERN for his involvement in helping to have money laundered (UNATTRIBUTED 2000; ROSENFELD 2001). Whether due to his own involvement in the lab, laundering money, DEA threats of conspiracy charges, or simply from a fear of losing his medical license and/or his standing at HARVARD, HALPERN chose to cooperate with the DEA’s investigation. He made himself available for ongoing interviews, signing a total of nine DEA reports from December 4, 2000 through May 17, 2002 (NORA LYON & ASSOCIATES, INC. n.d.).

The DEA is said to have seized some of HALPERN’s past e-mails (DOBLIN 2006-a); the names that were on any seized correspondence are unknown, although the accusation made in Basel stated that ALBERT HOFMANN and SASHA SHULGIN were among those whose e-mails were obtained by the DEA.

On May 16, 2001 (post-bust, but pre-trial), the MIT FACULTY CLUB produced a “Mini-Symposium on the Chemistry and

Pharmacology of Hallucinogens,” featuring talks by JOHN HALPERN, DAVID E. NICHOLS, and ALEXANDER T. SHULGIN. At this event, HALPERN approached NICHOLS and SHULGIN and made a vague and general apology to them. Neither NICHOLS nor SHULGIN was clear at the time what it was that HALPERN was sorry about (DOBLIN 2006-b; NICHOLS 2006).

Another one of HALPERN’s friends from the late 1990s and year 2000, ALFRED SAVINELLI, was also at least peripherally involved in the missile silo operations. Via his incense business, SAVINELLI supplied solvents and glassware to PICKARD in order to repay a business loan. Shortly after the bust, SAVINELLI and his girlfriend each received phone calls from HALPERN. At the time, SAVINELLI suspected that the phone calls were being recorded, and this feeling was later bolstered by information regarding HALPERN’s cooperation with the DEA that SAVINELLI received. However, SAVINELLI has told *The Entheogen Review* that he has no hard evidence that the calls were taped. Around this same time, SAVINELLI also received a suspicious call from GORDON TODD SKINNER, whom he hadn’t spoken with for several years (SAVINELLI 2006).

## Part of Halpern’s cooperation with the DEA required him to surreptitiously tape-record phone conversations...

In January of 2001, SAVINELLI got an anonymous phone call directing him to a local coffee shop. SAVINELLI arrived to find only a cup of coffee and a sealed envelope with his name written on it. Inside the envelope were two documents: summaries of the initial interview that HALPERN had with the DEA, and an interview that a Confidential Source (presumably SKINNER) had with the DEA. An anonymous cover letter suggested that it would be best for SAVINELLI if he left the country. SAVINELLI speculates that the information came via an agent of PICKARD. In viewing the transcript summaries, SAVINELLI concluded that, far from being a peripheral actor in PICKARD’s doings, he was being set up by HALPERN as the fall guy. Shortly after obtaining these documents, SAVINELLI received a subpoena dated January 18, 2001, ordering him to appear in San Francisco before the grand jury on February 22, 2001. Concerned that he was being fingered for a level of involvement that he did not possess, SAVINELLI cooperated by providing approximately four hours of testimony for the prosecution during the trial.





Part of HALPERN's cooperation with the DEA required him to surreptitiously tape-record phone conversations with some of his associates who were suspected of having some involvement in the missile silo case. Presumably this occurred at one or more points during the near year-and-a-half that he was signing interview reports for the DEA. According to DOBLIN, HALPERN has stated that no aboveground researchers were ever recorded, and none of the people recorded were ever charged with crimes (DOBLIN 2006-a). Who was recorded, and the number of recordings made, has not been revealed.

How damning was HALPERN's cooperation with the DEA? This is impossible to determine without having access to his signed statements and without knowing the terms of his agreement with the DEA. To date, no one has been willing to provide that information.

When art historian MARK MCCLOUD addressed HALPERN in Basel, he read from a seven-point list that he had been anonymously given at the event. Describing how HALPERN had cooperated with the DEA's case against PICKARD, the list disturbingly implied the possibility that HALPERN might *currently* be leaking information to the DEA. Since MCCLOUD had not heard about HALPERN's past before receiving the document, he checked with several other people at the conference before going public. Was the information on the seven-point list true? The answer he got from those who knew about HALPERN's past was that the list was more-or-less accurate.

One problem in attempting to nail down which parts are "more" accurate, and which parts are "less" accurate, is that JOHN HALPERN has largely remained quiet on the issues, other than appearing to use the presumably inaccurate parts and his recent unrelated aboveground research as a blanket denial for everything.

At the conference, HALPERN stated: "If half of what was said was true, probably—if *half* of it was even true—I'd bet there would be a lot of people who actually *did* know this. I'm doing work." (To which someone in the audience scathingly quipped, "*They're doing life!*") Unfortunately, it seems as though more than half of what the list presents is true. But it is also now clear that some of the points made on the list are incorrect. (A video clip depicting a portion of the exchange in Basel between MARK MCCLOUD, JOHN HALPERN, and RICK DOBLIN, and related documents, can be located via a link at [www.erowid.org/halpern\\_john](http://www.erowid.org/halpern_john).)

## THE LIST AND COMMENTARY ON ITS POINTS

*Re: John Halpern*

1.) *Within 2 weeks of the 2000 laboratory seizure, Halpern had negotiated complete immunity from prosecution in exchange for his cooperation with the government. This immunity agreement extends through any time in the future where his services or testimony may be required, e.g. at retrial.*

Exactly when HALPERN made his deal with the DEA is unknown, but since the bust was November 6 and HALPERN's first signed statement was December 4, it happened in less than a month. HALPERN apparently received a "proffer agreement" from the government, due to his help as a Cooperating Witness (SAVINELLI 2006). A proffer agreement is not nearly as comfortable as a total "immunity agreement." (For more on the distinction between a proffer agreement and an immunity agreement, see: <http://library.findlaw.com/2005/Feb/21/138691.html>.) While HALPERN has stated that he currently has no immunity from future prosecution (HALPERN 2006), DOBLIN has indicated that this would only be true if HALPERN refuses to cooperate in the unlikely event of any future trial related to the missile silo case. If that were the situation, then HALPERN would risk being charged for any past crimes for which he had secured immunity from prosecution due to his cooperation (DOBLIN 2006-c).

2.) *After receiving complete immunity and agreeing to act as a government witness at trial, Halpern was interviewed at length by DEA, personally signing his interview reports at the conclusions of at least nine meetings with DEA in Boston and San Francisco on December 4, 2000; December 8, 2000; February 26, 2001; March 28, 2001; April 17, 2001; July 31, 2001; September, 2001; May 31, 2001; and May 17, 2002 (see attached transcript, p. 1389–1390, quoting the prosecutor and defense counsel).*

HALPERN did provide signed interview reports in cooperation with the DEA and he agreed to take the stand if called. It also appears that he was not charged with any crime himself.

3.) *The government forced the defense attorneys to photograph the reports of Halpern rather than providing photocopies (p. 1390 ln 17).*





This seems true based on the conversations reflected in the court transcripts (NORA LYON & ASSOCIATES, INC. n.d.).

*4.) At the interviews, Halpern cooperated in great detail, even to the point of discussing a shoplifting episode by his wife some years earlier and referring DEA agents to other researchers and individuals.*

In copies provided to *The Entheogen Review* by SAVINELLI of a summary transcript from HALPERN's first interview report, nine individuals were mentioned by name (UNATTRIBUTED 2000). We have no idea if the salacious, irrelevant point of a shoplifting episode by his wife was brought up to the DEA, but it is clear that HALPERN did cooperate in great detail.

*5.) During this period, according to reports released by the government, Halpern also:*

*a.) privately tape-recorded his telephone conversations with numerous individuals about the seizure and provided these tape-recordings to his controlling DEA agents.*

According to RICK DOBLIN, HALPERN has admitted that he surreptitiously taped some phone conversations.

*b.) complained to DEA agents about not being reimbursed for the cost of the tape recorder.*

No idea if this is true, but it is perhaps not relevant either way.

*c.) provided DEA with all emails between himself and Albert Hofmann, Sasha Shulgin, and other researchers.*

It has been suggested by DIETER HAGENBACH, producer of the LSD conference in Basel, that ALBERT HOFMANN has no e-mail address (DOBLIN 2006-a), so that portion of the assertion made above must be incorrect. The statement has been made that the DEA seized HALPERN's e-mails (DOBLIN 2006-a); if such a seizure happened against HALPERN's will, then it must have occurred prior to him agreeing to cooperate with the DEA. In any case, the DEA did obtain some of HALPERN's e-mails, and that correspondence may have included messages with some researchers.

*6.) The extent of his continuing cooperation remains unknown at this time, but he is still under the immunity agreement and will be indefinitely. It is unknown if his grant for LSD research was influenced by these events, although*

*any DEA review of the grant would meet with no objection as long as he continues to cooperate under the terms of his immunity agreement.*

It is true that the extent of HALPERN's continuing cooperation remains unknown. HALPERN did not receive a government grant for LSD research; presumably this point meant to refer to his \$1.8 million grant for MDMA research from the NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE (NIDA). It is highly unlikely (and counter to the safeguards established to prevent political interference in the awarding of NIDA research grants) that any agreement that HALPERN had/has with the DEA would influence what grants are awarded by NIDA.

*7.) Halpern was not required to testify at trial, although subpoenaed by the government to be on notice to testify. Some months after the defendants were sentenced to life and 30-year sentences, Halpern received his LSD grant from the government.*

It is true that HALPERN did not testify at the trial. On May 29, 2003—two days before PICKARD and APPERSON were found guilty—HALPERN submitted his grant application to study MDMA (not LSD) to NIDA. The grant was approved by NIDA in late September of 2004 (DOYLE 2004), about ten months after PICKARD and APPERSON were sentenced. While the chronology in point #7 is correct, the implication that HALPERN's cooperation with the DEA influenced his receiving a grant from NIDA is, again, highly unlikely.

## WHY DOES MAPS SUPPORT HALPERN?

Following MARK McCLOUD's outburst in Basel, RICK DOBLIN justified his decision to have MAPS work with HALPERN, remarking to the crowd gathered at the conference:

*"I had an opportunity to speak to LEONARD from inside prison. And I spoke to him on the phone and I said, 'LEONARD, what do you think about MAPS working with JOHN, working to try and develop psychedelic research?' And he said that he understood what we were trying to do and that he was supportive of our efforts. So that, for me, was sufficient."*

DOBLIN has expressed his hope that folks, particularly those involved with the psychotherapeutic community, might give HALPERN a second chance and consider the good work that he is currently doing. Yet even if it is true that PICKARD publicly supports a MAPS/HALPERN collaboration, and despite





DOBLIN's admirable stance on the possibilities of forgiveness and redemption, it is clear that the larger community still has problems with this arrangement.

First, it was not only PICKARD who was hurt by HALPERN's cooperation with the DEA; there are others who feel personally burned by HALPERN, even though they did not end up in prison. One person affected clearly does not want to revisit this situation, yet he remarked, "It's a long road from hubris through humiliation to humility." HALPERN's former friend, ALFRED SAVINELLI, was willing to speak up in more detail, despite the obvious pain that discussing his memories caused him. SAVINELLI has stated that his own son basically had a nervous breakdown due to HALPERN's actions. And as for himself, SAVINELLI has remarked, "JOHN HALPERN ruined my life." (For more about the effect that HALPERN's cooperation with the DEA had on SAVINELLI, see ERIK DAVIS' "The Bad Shaman Meets the Wayward Doc" at [www.tripzine.com/listing.php?id=650](http://www.tripzine.com/listing.php?id=650).)

Second, it is clear that one way in which underground societies protect themselves is by maintaining specifically tailored ethical norms. Such norms provide a basis for the society to remain healthy. Within a society focused on illicit drugs, it might be said that the golden rule is "thou shalt not snitch." Snitching is a big deal, and a snitch's actions in the past have consequences in the future. Any person's total emotional rejection of a snitch, which is clearly a commonplace reaction, is an entirely fair initial response when one considers the need to sustain subcultural mores.

Third, there is the concern that HALPERN could still be providing the DEA with information that results in future arrests. Even if this concern is unwarranted, there is the worry that history could repeat itself; if HALPERN's past response under pressure was to protect himself at the expense of others, he might do the same again in the future.

Those involved in underground activities should always practice discretion in their conversations. But without *knowing* about HALPERN's past work as a Cooperating Witness for the DEA, and only knowing of him through his association with the pro-psychedelic organization MAPS, some less-than-cautious individuals could implicate themselves or others in HALPERN's presence. Such opportunities have been more likely during those times when HALPERN has intimately mingled with the underground community, such as at the recent LSD conference in Basel, or at BURNING MAN, where HALPERN has worked in the SANCTUARY psychedelic crisis tent.

Among those members of the psychedelic community who have now heard of HALPERN's checkered past, there has been a wide range of responses. A minority have expressed their support for DOBLIN's decision to work with HALPERN. Many feel they need to withhold judgment until they learn more details about what HALPERN told the DEA, and the extent to which he may still be required to report back to that agency. Some have expressed the feeling that, before they would even consider forgiving HALPERN's past and supporting his present or future work, they would need him to personally admit to exactly what he *did* do. Or at the very least, they would need him to actually *ask* to be forgiven—something that to date has not happened, and which appears unlikely to happen. Still others are entirely opposed to MAPS' association with HALPERN. Those who have had their own legal trouble—or who have been close to people who have had legal trouble—have characteristically been less forgiving of snitchery. Some have stated that they will not renew their MAPS memberships, in protest of the HALPERN connection.

In a community of outlaws who know that their safety could be tripped up at a moment's notice by one "friend" who wishes to save his or her own skin, *trust* is the most precious commodity. Undoubtedly there are some people who feel that DOBLIN/MAPS has broken that trust by not being more forthcoming about HALPERN's past. So far as the issue of funding goes, DOBLIN has stated: "If anyone who has donated to MAPS wants their money back because they feel I violated their trust because of our work with JOHN, they can have it. Just ask me" (DOBLIN 2006-d). DOBLIN is clearly trying to do the right thing with regard to MAPS' supporters, although some may feel as though money is not the main issue at hand.

DOBLIN's stated position about why he has not more widely spread the details of HALPERN's past is that such an action could be detrimental to the prospect of getting approval for future research involving HALPERN. There's no good way of informing the larger underground psychedelic community without also notifying those organizations opposed to such research, or those mainstream media sources who could stir up bad publicity. DOBLIN also considers HALPERN to be a friend, and he does not view him as being a current threat to anyone in the underground community. Of course, many (if not most) people are not comfortable with DOBLIN making that call *for* them.

Two questions have repeatedly come up from those opposed to MAPS working with HALPERN: 1) Why can't some other researcher at HARVARD do these studies? and 2) Why must





this research happen at HARVARD? To the first question, DOBLIN has answered, “I know of no other HARVARD doctors interested in conducting psychedelic research.” As far as the second question goes, the answer involves the prestige gained by having this work conducted at the oldest institute of higher learning in the United States. It would also be a symbolic triumph for the psychedelic movement to restart such studies at HARVARD, which hasn’t hosted psychedelic research since 1965. It would signal what DOBLIN calls “the beginning of the post-LEARY era.”

Considering the concerns of the larger psychedelic community, DOBLIN’s controversial choice to work with HALPERN has been hotly debated over the past three months. Many feel that MAPS should cut all ties to HALPERN, particularly if no additional information on the topic is forthcoming. Not one who likes being told what to do, DOBLIN dug in his feet and strongly defended his decision to work with HALPERN in several messages posted to a clandestine e-mailing list.

Ironically, the underground community may have found an unlikely ally who also supports a split between MAPS and HALPERN—albeit not for reasons related to protecting the future of those involved with illicit activities. The new president of McLEAN HOSPITAL, Dr. JACK M. GORMAN, recently decided that he would not allow any psychedelic research to go forward at HARVARD if it was funded by MAPS. GORMAN, author of *The Essential Guide to Psychiatric Drugs* (among other publications), is apparently not a fan of DOBLIN, and he objects to MAPS’ pro-legalization stance.

In order for the MDMA treatment of anxiety from terminal cancer study and the LSD/psilocybin treatment for cluster headache study to go forward, MAPS had two options: 1) Move the studies to another university, which would likely require finding different researchers to run them, or 2) Withdraw MAPS’ official support for the studies, allowing them to continue at HARVARD, pending GORMAN’s approval and necessitating other sources of funding.

DOBLIN’s decision was to withdraw MAPS as the funding organization and attempt to persuade GORMAN that the studies should be continued at HARVARD without MAPS’ involvement (provided that funding can be raised from some less controversial source). This approach seems to have worked: GORMAN has agreed to allow HALPERN to continue his psychedelic work at HARVARD sans MAPS. Although an unintended consequence, this approach also appears to largely get DOBLIN “off the hook” from those who feel that MAPS should not associate with HALPERN.

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Slogging through the various opinions, misunderstandings, and emotional responses to this charged topic has not been easy for me. It has repeatedly revealed the difficulty and frustrations that can be involved in effective communication. Although I do not agree with DOBLIN’s choice to work with HALPERN, I do admire his commitment to the ideal of redemption and his loyalty to his friend.

With HALPERN conducting research at HARVARD, it may be that—at some point in the future—his past actions will still have a negative impact on how this work is viewed in the court of public opinion. When results from his controversial studies are published, mainstream news media may again

dig into the salacious details of HALPERN’s history, casting a shadow on the research results.

HALPERN’s past association with figures in the underground had a high price when he decided to cooperate with the DEA. To keep his job at HARVARD, and/or to stay out of prison, HALPERN betrayed his friends. This incident shows how important it may be for responsible aboveground researchers to limit their contact with the underground. If HALPERN wishes to continue research in this field, he owes it to everyone on both sides to cut his ties to the underground. Without any *knowledge* of illicit activities, he poses little threat.

A single positive result from recent discussions is that HALPERN will not be attending BURNING MAN in 2006. At a time when MAPS plans to celebrate its 20-year anniversary





by holding a psychedelic conference at BURNING MAN, there are speakers who have decided that they wouldn't present talks at this event if HALPERN was in attendance. Many members of the underground community are not yet willing to extend their trust to HALPERN, regardless of the actual risks (or lack thereof) that he may pose. If HALPERN continues to keep his distance from those in the underground, if he can realize how *important* it is to this community that he doesn't frequent events geared toward heads, maybe someday he might regain their respect for his aboveground work. ☉

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For more details on the missile silo bust, see the articles: ROSENFELD, S. 2001. "William Pickard's Long, Strange Trip: Suspected LSD trail leads from the Bay Area's psychedelics era to a missile silo in Kansas," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 20); WILKINSON, P. 2001. "The Acid King," *Rolling Stone Magazine* (Issue 872, July 5); as well as the many articles that appeared in the *Topeka Capital-Journal*, locatable via a web search; and the book *Lysergic* by K.A. COLE (DOG EAR PUBLISHING, 2005).

*I shared a draft of this article with RICK DOBLIN and JOHN HALPERN, inviting them to comment. HALPERN was unwilling to provide any written response for publication. DOBLIN's March 22, 2006 response is printed below. In this response, DOBLIN suggests the possibility that my article may have factual errors, and that the individuals cited in my article "have their own biases and agendas." It is true that everyone has their own biases and agendas, including DOBLIN and HALPERN. However, while it is possible that some data presented is in error, I have done my best to report the facts of this tale as accurately as possible. Both DOBLIN and HALPERN were given every opportunity to correct any errors of fact. The remaining disputes about content primarily relate to whether the article leaves the wrong impression about HALPERN's past actions or downplays the involvement of others in the missile silo case. This article was never meant to be a deep investigation of that case. Rather, it looks at the issue of a key MAPS-supported researcher who was accused of cooperating with the DEA, betraying his friends to save himself, and then essentially remaining silent on the issue. — JON HANNA*

## RICK DOBLIN RESPONDS

I'm writing to respond to criticisms of my decisions to have MAPS 1) work with Dr. JOHN HALPERN at all, and 2) work with JOHN yet not publicize the fact that he cooperated with DEA in the missile silo case, and 3) work with JOHN "in the field" at BURNING MAN and other events, thereby causing

some people to feel that they were put at personal risk of being informed upon to legal authorities. I will briefly respond to these criticisms, concluding by mentioning the research that MAPS and JOHN have worked on together, so that my decision to work with JOHN can be more comprehensively evaluated.

To begin, I believe in the principle of accepting whatever punishment may unfortunately come one's way for being involved in any way with the manufacture, distribution, and/or use of illegal drugs, rather than cooperating with the authorities and giving them information about others. Clearly, JOHN did not act according to this principle. However, I also believe in the principles of forgiveness and redemption. We should not all be defined by what we have done during our weakest moments; to be so limited would be a tragic waste of human potential.

After JOHN's cooperation with DEA began, I saw that he was motivated even more than before to work to end the suppression of scientific research with psychedelics, despite such research potentially being met with disapproval by DEA. JOHN is a highly trained physician/researcher with a healthy measure of courage. I saw that he was committed to proceeding with integrity and an unwavering allegiance to the scientific method, to designing research with rigorous methodologies and then following the data wherever it leads. Also, JOHN was uniquely positioned at HARVARD to make progress that nobody else was willing to even attempt. I therefore decided that MAPS would begin working closely with JOHN on trying to pull back the veil of ignorance related to psychedelics that DEA and the Prohibitionists seek to sustain to maximize the effectiveness of their fear-based messages, exaggerating risks and denying benefits. In retrospect, I continue to believe this decision to work together was correct, as evidenced by JOHN's expanding research.

Did MAPS have a responsibility to highlight, promote, or publicize JOHN's prior cooperation with DEA? At first, this was common knowledge, or so it seemed after the media articles came out. But, as time went by, many people came into this field who had no knowledge of JOHN's history, and some people whom I thought would have known all along informed me that they had missed the media articles and ensuing discussions, or had forgotten about them.

Since I knew that JOHN's involvement with DEA was limited to some of the people associated with PICKARD, I didn't feel it was my responsibility to proactively let everybody else





know about JOHN's past. I realize that other people had fewer windows into JOHN's activities than I did, and I should have taken that more fully into account. I also feared that the more such information was publicly available on an ongoing basis, the more that it could be used by opponents of JOHN's research to create controversy to try to stop us from conducting our studies. Unfortunately, I was correct that this information would be used in that way, since an opponent of JOHN's recently wrote to the McLEAN administration in what seemed to be an attempt to damage JOHN's career (regardless of whether that stopped the research). Fortunately, JOHN has always been open about his situation with the McLEAN administration. As a result, this issue had already been addressed and JOHN's research is still moving forward. I now see that my fear of the consequences of having this information be more available to all concerned was mistaken, and that much fear, misinformation, and distrust could have been avoided if I had emphasized transparency, which is a guiding principle for MAPS.

Did MAPS place other people at legal risk when JOHN participated with the support of MAPS at BURNING MAN and other events? JOHN is not a DEA agent or source for any investigative agency. Nevertheless, some people say that they will always consider JOHN a risk. I do not. My evidence is that nobody who JOHN has encountered at BURNING MAN or other conferences or events has gotten in trouble as a result of these encounters. Nor do I think anyone ever will. Yet reasonable people can have differing opinions. To encourage a period of calm reflection, I have asked JOHN not to join us this year at BURNING MAN.

I first invited JOHN to BURNING MAN to have the substantial benefit of his medical expertise, and to offer him the training of peers and mentors also working at SANCTUARY. I feel his presence working at SANCTUARY has been instrumental in helping to make our efforts there a success and has been of substantial benefit to him personally. Nevertheless, I realize that other people who knew about JOHN's past—but were without the multiple sources of information that I had available—felt more at risk, and that some people who learned recently of JOHN's history feel they should have been made aware at a sooner date. To those of you who feel this way, I apologize. This report by JON HANNA provides information that will now be permanently available. However, I would caution people to not automatically conclude that the report is accurate in all respects, since the sources for JON's report also have their own biases and agendas.

MAPS is proud to have supported the research efforts of Dr. JOHN HALPERN over the past five years, having donated over \$94,500 to date to McLEAN HOSPITAL, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL. The work that MAPS and JOHN have collaborated on includes: 1) Research into the neuropsychological consequences of the use of peyote by members of the NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH (no neurocognitive problems were found), 2) Research into the neuropsychological consequences of the use of Ecstasy (supposedly but frequently not MDMA) that has led to a \$1.8 million five-year NIDA grant to Dr. HALPERN for the most methodologically well-designed study ever conducted into this issue (a pilot study found no effects in subjects with 50 exposures or fewer, minimal effects in heavier users), 3) A fully-approved study of the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in subjects suffering from anxiety associated with advanced-stage cancer (study to start soon), and 4) In association with Dr. ANDREW SEWELL, who JOHN arranged to work at McLEAN HOSPITAL, a case report series of people who have used LSD or psilocybin to treat cluster headaches (a paper about the case report series has been accepted for publication and the protocol for a planned clinical trial has been developed).

MAPS has now ended all further direct financial support for JOHN's research, although this has not occurred because I feel it is important for MAPS to sever connections with JOHN. Rather, it is because McLEAN HOSPITAL administrators feel that it is important for them to sever connections with MAPS, in part because of our stance against Prohibition, and in part so that the research that JOHN and ANDREW are conducting won't be dismissed as biased. This strikes me as incredibly ironic. I hope over time that MAPS' scientific integrity will enable the McLEAN administration to feel comfortable with MAPS renewing its formal support for JOHN's research. I also hope that the psychedelic community will come to see that the risks from MAPS' working with JOHN that have been feared have not materialized and will appreciate the benefits that flow from JOHN's research. What is even more difficult to assess are the risks of not trying boldly to restart psychedelic research in these turbulent times. Those are the risks that I am unwilling to accept. — RICK DOBLIN, PhD, MAPS

EDITOR'S NOTE: On March 28, 2006, the 10TH U.S. CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS upheld the sentences against LEONARD PICKARD and CLYDE APPERSON. See [www.cjonline.com/stories/032906/loc\\_lsd.shtml](http://www.cjonline.com/stories/032906/loc_lsd.shtml).

