

Evidence for the Unmerited Scheduling of Cannabis to a Schedule I Drug

John Daniel Ehrlichman (/ˈɜːrlɪkmən/^[1] March 20, 1925 – February 14, 1999) was counsel and Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs under President [Richard Nixon](#). He was a key figure in events leading to the [Watergate first break-in](#) and the ensuing [Watergate scandal](#), for which he was convicted of [conspiracy](#), [obstruction of justice](#), and [perjury](#) and served a year and a half in prison.

War on drugs^[edit]

Writing for *Harper's*, journalist Dan Baum described a meeting he had with Ehrlichman in 1994 while researching a book about the politics of drug prohibition. Ehrlichman cut through Baum's questions and gave his story about the real reason for Nixon's war on drugs: "The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."^{[18][19]} Three former Nixon administration illegal-drugs policy officials -- Jeffrey Donfeld,^[20] [Jerome H. Jaffe](#) and [Robert DuPont](#) -- responded, sending a statement to [The Huffington Post](#) that opened: "The comments being attributed to John Ehrlichman in recent news coverage about the Nixon administration's efforts to combat the drug crisis of the 1960's and 70's reflect neither our memory of John nor the administration's approach to that problem." Saying "[s]ome of us worked with John and knew him well", the statement speculated that if the quotes were accurate they may have been an example of Ehrlichman's "biting sarcasm." The *Huffington Post* noted other factors from the Nixon administration record that diverged from the statement, specifically the President's racially specific and caustic language on tape -- "the 'little Negro bastards' on welfare [who] 'live like a bunch of dogs'" -- and the 'no-knock' searches initiated under the [Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970](#) which echoed Ehrlichman's words in *Harper's* about raiding the homes of blacks and hippies.^[21]

18 Baum, Dan, "[Legalize It All: How to win the war on drugs](#)", *Harper's*, April 2016.

19 [Jump up](#) ^ Aggarwal, Sunil Kumar, MD PhD, "[Health Scientist Blacklisting and the Meaning of Marijuana in the Oval Office in the Early 1970s: ... Schedule I](#)", *Medium.com*, July 1, 2015.

20 [Jump up](#) ^ "[Jeff Donfeld – 'Nixon's Youth Corps'](#)", *60s Survivors*. Retrieved 2016-04-14.

21 [Jump up](#) ^ Hanson, Hilary (2016-03-25). "[Nixon Aides Suggest Colleague Was Kidding About Drug War Being Designed To Target Black People](#)". *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved 2016-04-10.