



(Tribune photo by Paula Paul)

Aerial view of Eldorado High School campus, with many features mentioned in the "Undercover Student" series identified

Building 'walls':

EHS drugs bountiful if you know right person

This is the third in a series of articles by reporter Leslie Linticum, who spent 11 days posing as a 17-year-old student, Leslie Taylor, at Albuquerque's Eldorado High School.

By LESLIE LINTICUM
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If you've got \$7 and 15 minutes, you can buy 10 "hits" of low-grade "speed" and one or two pipe bowls of marijuana at Eldorado High School.

And once you've "scored," it's easy to find a secure place to get high.

If you choose, you can stay on campus, lighting up along "Freak Wall," in a doorway of the Vocational Building or in a stall of certain student restrooms.

Or, if you have the time and inclination, you can cut across campus to Allsup's or a nearby shopping center and have a leisurely smoke strolling back to school.

"Getting a good buzz" is a popular quest at Eldorado.



During SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) one morning, a slim, dark-haired senior — a frequenter of the drug-oriented Freak Wall outside the Vocational Building — discusses his experience with "chocolate mescaline," a brown strain of the hallucinogen.

"I took it and I was walking home and I saw my whole house melt," he tells a shaggy, sweatshirted classmate.

The other student — also a senior — says he and a friend tried the drug recently and "just

sat there on the beds staring at each other all night."

"I don't like that," the first-student responds. "You just sit there like a vegetable." After a bit of thought, he decides psychedelic mushrooms give the best high.

"With mushrooms it's a body high," he says. "Mushrooms must be my favorite drug."

Marijuana seems to be the drug of choice for many students at Eldorado.

"Reefer" prices and quality are debated openly and often.

During one Independent Living class, a stocky, short-haired senior called out for someone to chip in with him on a marijuana purchase. While students struggled with a worksheet demanding that they multiply by decimals to figure interest rates, the instigator explained that he had all but \$2 of the \$8

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asking price and promised to stash the drug at his house as a service to any financier. He did not get a taker.

In civics class, while teacher Dennis Sanchez was updating his grade book, freshmen told me the trend is toward pot and cocaine, but that "coke" is too expensive to use frequently. It's generally reserved for the weekends.

A slim, blonde 14-year-old girl, who said she'd been going off campus to smoke marijuana every lunchtime for the past two weeks, said she was tired of cocaine, speed and other "hard drugs."

"I smoke pot when I can get it," she said. "It makes me feel relaxed. I'm a really hyper person."

A type of marijuana called "creep" is especially popular. It is called "creep," the girl explained, because its effects creep up on the user about an hour after it is smoked.

"I smoked it at lunch and it hit me in the middle of class," the girl said. "It was wild."

Speed (amphetamines) isn't as popular on campus as it is used to be, students say, but still it's readily available and inexpensive. Low-grade uppers run 10 for a dollar.

Marijuana sells for \$1.50 to \$2 a joint. The "lid," approximately an ounce of marijuana, is a passé quantity on the high school campus. "Bows," however — enough marijuana to fill a pipe bowl — are a frequently used measure. A slight freshman boy told me he sells "grams" of pot for \$8. Larger quantities costing \$50 or more are readily obtainable.

Student dealers are well established and well known. One widespread rumor is that a sophomore boy purchased his sports car from money earned selling drugs.

But I was warned by an acquaintance not to buy marijuana along "Freak Wall," because "sometimes the stuff isn't pure."

On a cold mid-morning I walk into the student bathroom in the Vocational Building and find three thin jeans-clad girls sharing a "joint" in the corner by the last sink.

They have the long, straight hair that distinguishes "Freak Wall" girls from their curled, blow-dried "Jock Wall" counterparts. They pass the marijuana cigarette and casually discuss the daily grind of school.

A few days later, two girls are more fortunate in the same bathroom. The only indications of their activity are four shoes visible under the last stall door and the pungent smoke wafting to the ceiling above.

I dawdle at the sink and mirror for about five minutes before leaving, but they don't emerge.

Later that day, during lunch hour, two boys wearing black leather jackets and heavy black boots light a pipeful of marijuana in a doorway outside the Vocational Building. One with shoulder-length hair sticks his head out of the doorway occasionally to check for authorities. Dozens of students smoking cigarettes along the way glance at the pot smokers unweaved.

One day at Freak Wall, a boy was caught by Assistant Principal Howard Anderson with a plastic bag of pot.

A nearby group of students chanted, "Kill the narci! Kill the narci!" as Anderson led the boy away. Later in the day Anderson de-

flected taunts of "kill" as he passed groups of students.

Toward the end of my time at Eldorado, I cut my fourth-period class and was hanging out at "Freak Wall," talking to a young campus aide, as the walkie-talkie-toting keepers-of-the-peace at Eldorado are called.

He warned me that I was breaking school rules and should have been off campus, in the cafeteria or in the library — anywhere but outside a class building — while classes were in session. Because I was new on campus, he said, he would let me remain lounging outside.

He lit up a cigarette and talked about the Super Bowl betting pool that had been circulating among teachers.

Four boys approached. They were Sandia High School students and dropouts, they said, so the security guard asked them to leave campus.

"We just want to sell some grams and then we'll book," one of the group told him.

The guard knew them — they had been on campus before — and he chatted for awhile about whether they would go back to school eventually, work toward a graduate equivalent degree or get jobs. He warned them again to leave.

The boys joked about trouble with their parents and getting kicked out of the house and bragged about their leisurely lifestyle since no longer going to school.

Two hours later they were still on campus and were overhead negotiating a drug deal with an Eldorado student.

Next: Rape, the school bond election and the dangers of "vegetating" are the subjects of lessons at Eldorado.

Alcohol — a hot topic among EHS students

Wild Turkey and Pepsi on the way to school, "keggers" on the weekends, chugging parties on Wednesday nights.

Alcohol — its acquisition, consumption and effects — ranks among the top topics at Eldorado High School.

The youths obtain booze through "friendly" off-age suppliers. A Sandia High School graduate is one regular source. Older brothers and sisters frequently can be counted on to provide liquor for under-age siblings and friends. Some older-looking Eldorado students even use fake identification cards at liquor stores.

One Friday afternoon, a woman — apparently an Eldorado graduate — was on campus chatting and catching up on gossip with students along "Freak Wall."

"I'll talk to you later," a leather-jacketed boy said as she turned to leave. "I wanted you to buy me some beer sometime."

"After school," the girl suggested.

"OK. I'll drop by your place," the boy

agreed. It was just in time for the weekend.

Any house without parents and with a keg of beer is considered a party. Parties are ranked by the amount of beer available: one-keggers, two-keggers or three-keggers.

At parties, chugging games are popular. "Quarters" is a favorite. The game involves bouncing a quarter off a table into a glass of beer. If you hit the glass, you get to chug.

"That really gives you incentive to aim good," one blonde freshman girl in a civics class assured me.

A group of senior boys even has formed a regular Wednesday-night "Quarters Club" styled after the poker or bridge leagues of their parents.

There is evidence that the bottle sometimes sneaks onto campus, too.

Alcohol was on the breath of some youths at a school-sponsored, mid-morning pep rally. There was gossip of two girls who drank Wild Turkey mixed with Pepsi on the way to school in the morning and of girls who smuggled a

Thermos of hot chocolate mixed with Jack Daniels onto campus. One boy supposedly tipples from a bottle of Everclear he keeps in his car.

Booze and automobiles mix often. At a school-sponsored dance at the Graham Central Station nightclub, four "Jock" boys sped into the snow-slicked parking lot, jumped out of a large, late-model car swiveling from cans of beer and veaved their way up to the entrance, obviously intoxicated.

When it becomes difficult or old hat to drink in Albuquerque, trips to Mexico or Texas, where the legal age is two years younger than New Mexico's 21, provide drinking excursions.

One girl — an upperclassman — described plans to travel to El Paso and Juarez for the weekend. She was driving down with school-age friends.

"I'm going to stay drunk from Friday to Sunday," she said.