



Art Buchwald

# Every White Rat in the Lab Would Rather Switch to Pot

THE KEY to man's survival on earth seems to be the white rat. Most experiments being conducted these days to see what effect our environment has on human beings are first conducted on white rats.

Nobody has bothered to find out how the rats feel about this. In man's ever-questing search for truth, I visited a large government laboratory the other evening around midnight and recorded what the white rats were saying to each other.

"Zelda, you look so thin."

"They've had me on cyclamates. I must have lost 3 ounces in a week. What have you been doing?"

"I've been taking monosodium glutamate. It's tasty, but it gives me headaches. Oh, Horace, will you stop coughing!"

"Ack, ack, ack. I can't help it. They've got me smoking a pack of cigarettes a day."

"Why don't you give them up?"

"I'd like to, but they won't let me."

"What on earth is Sheldon doing? He's staggering all over his cage."

"HE'S INVOLVED in the marijuana experiments. He goes on a trip every night."

"That's what I call luck. How can I get off cyclamates and in the pot program?"

"You have to know somebody. Every rat in the lab wants to go on pot."

"I don't. I feel you have to face reality and not seek escape. That's why I'm proud to be associated with the air pollution project."

"How can you stand it?"

"It's not bad. Everyday they drive me around New York City and I just breathe. If I die, they know the air pollution count is too high. If I live, I get to see the city."

"You're probably right, Bettina. I volunteered for air pollution, but some computer assigned me to water pollution. I'm getting sick of drinking dirty river water every day."

"What's the matter with Whitney. He seems awfully quiet tonight."

"He's been eating grapes with DDT on them for a week, and I guess it's finally getting to him."

"Where's Alvin?"

"Didn't you hear? Yesterday transplanted his heart into Hazel. Hers gave out during the automobile exhaust tests."

"Poor Alvin."

"HE DIDN'T seem to mind. He was involved in the tranquilizer experiments, and when they asked him for his heart, he said he couldn't care less."

"Who's crying?"

"Sandra. They have her taking the birth control pill. She wanted babies in the worst way."

"Well, at least she's having some fun, which is more than I can say for what I'm doing."

"What's that, Carlton?"

"I'm working for NASA to see the effects of weightlessness. I vomit all the time."

"I guess Sampson has the best job of any of us."

"What is he doing?"

"They put him in front of a color television set all day long to see how much radiation he absorbs. He's the only white rat I know who gets to watch 'Laugh-In'."