

In my business there's no shortage of customers. Each year about 700,000 are busted for pot – mostly personal use. Read this column. Maybe you won't have to call me.

The laws about drug use and privacy are both simple and complicated. By simple I mean the rules for avoiding arrest are simple. Here's Rule Number 1:

Be smarter than a fish. A fish knows if it keeps its mouth shut, it won't get caught. It's a remarkably simple rule. Of course, it won't cover all situations, but, if you were to remove from my clientele all those who screwed themselves by trying to talk their way out of trouble, I'd only have half as much business.

There are lots of ways to get yourself in trouble by opening your mouth. One frequent problem: lots of folks in the pot world have some ego happening. I wish I had just one quarter for every person who's told me that his or her dope is the best there is. If you are telling me, you are probably telling someone else, who, given enough pressure, may just decide to trade their cage for yours. Don't tell your secrets to friends, lovers, business associates, or strangers. Keep a piece of tape in your wallet. When you feel your resolve slipping, pull it out and put it over your mouth.

Another way to get in trouble by running your mouth is to speak to a cop who is hell-bent on finding some reason to bust you. Do you really believe it when they say "it'll go a lot easier if you just tell us about it?" Sure, easier for them. Whatever you say, if it's not what they want, they'll twist it. When you see the report, you won't recognize your words. But you'll be stuck with the choice of eating them, or taking the witness stand against your lawyer's advice and calling that cop a liar. This one is a no brainer. Try these three simple steps when confronted by a cop who wants to ask you any question. (Remember, there are no "innocuous" questions. If they were innocuous, the cop wouldn't be asking)

Step 1: When the cop asks a question reply (politely) "What's this about?"

Step 2: No matter what the reply, the next statement is "I want to speak to my lawyer."

Step 3: Unless you are allowed to call your lawyer on the spot, inquire if you are free to go. If you are, do. If not, repeat step 2 over and over.