



University
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Human & Social
Development

Reefer Madness

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Presentation Synopsis:

The independent US film, *Reefer Madness*, is a fictional full-length feature about marijuana use and selling that has grown in cult status since it was produced in 1936. Drawing from critical and feminist criminology, sociology, and cultural studies, this presentation provides an analysis of *Reefer Madness* and a number of other fictional films with a focus on marijuana. It is worthwhile to analyze films about marijuana, not just to explore the stigmatization of users, but to examine the social/political effects of these films, particularly the ways that certain kinds of negative images support drug regulation and its attendant policing. The significance of a century of film representations that reinforce a link between marijuana use, immorality, and crime is discussed. It appears that these themes are quite enduring.

Dr. Susan Boyd is a professor in Studies in Policy and Practice at the University of Victoria. She is the author of *Hooked: Drug War Films in Britain, Canada, and the U.S.*; *From witches to crack moms: Women, drug law, and policy*; *Mothers and Illicit Drugs: Transcending the myths*, co-author of *Raise Shit! Social action saving lives*, and co-editor of *With child: Substance use during pregnancy: A woman-centred approach*. Her research interests include: drug policy, maternal drug use, film and print media representations, women in conflict with the law, and research methodologies.

