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A letter from the PUBLISHER

Henry Luce III

SIX months ago, TIME ran a cover story on "Drugs and the Young," which analyzed the new and disturbing pot culture among the youth of today. This week, the cover deals once again with drugs and the young, but now the subject is the rapid rise of heroin use—in-finitely more powerful than marijuana, appallingly addictive, horrifyingly lethal. It is not a story that any one correspondent or bureau could provide in the detail that TIME demands. The reports to Writer Keith Johnson, Editor Jason McManus and Researcher Mary Kelley were the work of 16 correspondents and stringers throughout the U.S. For all, it proved a difficult, delicate and shocking assignment.

Correspondents in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Wash-ington and Boston interviewed phys-icians, psychiatrists, criminologists and sociologists. Perhaps the most revealing part of the task was talk-ing with youngsters about their ex-periences with "smack," "horse," or "the big H"—and persuading parents to tell their side of a hor-ror they hardly begin to com-prehend. In San Francisco, Re-porter Chris Andersen found the problem frighteningly close to home when a good friend was able to sum-mon "a talkative, nonrepentant he-roin addict." For Chicago's Sam Iker, it became "a crash education—perhaps too much to take in one massive dose."

Meanwhile in New York, where so much of the ugly action takes place, Correspondent Karsten Pra-ger interviewed ten youngsters at Odyssey House where ex-addicts en-courage newcomers as young as twelve to kick the habit. John Aus-tin spent a chilling evening in sub-urban Westchester County, N.Y., with middle-class high school stu-dents who talked freely about police officers, teachers and even doctors who know but don't care about the

kids' problem. Other expertise was supplied by Douglas Gasner, whose experience as TIME's Medicine re-porter was invaluable for the box on symptoms parents should watch for.

Much of the story deals with the drug suppliers, the not-so-fur-tive street-corner pushers and the vast syndicates behind them. That was the province of the New York Bureau's Sandy Smith, who has made the Mafia his beat since the early 1950s when he was with the Chicago Tribune and during his

KEN REGAN—CAMERA 5



JOHNSON, PRAGER & FRIEND

years on LIFE. Since coming to TIME he has specialized in stories about the mob, gambling, crime in general. Sandy drew on his sour-ces in Washington and New York in tracing the role of organized crime in heroin traffic. Says Smith: "The pusher—especially to kids—is lousy, but even he isn't as low as the gangster who finances it. Or-ganized crime is the absolute low-est level of society. With drugs they're making everyone as scummy as themselves."

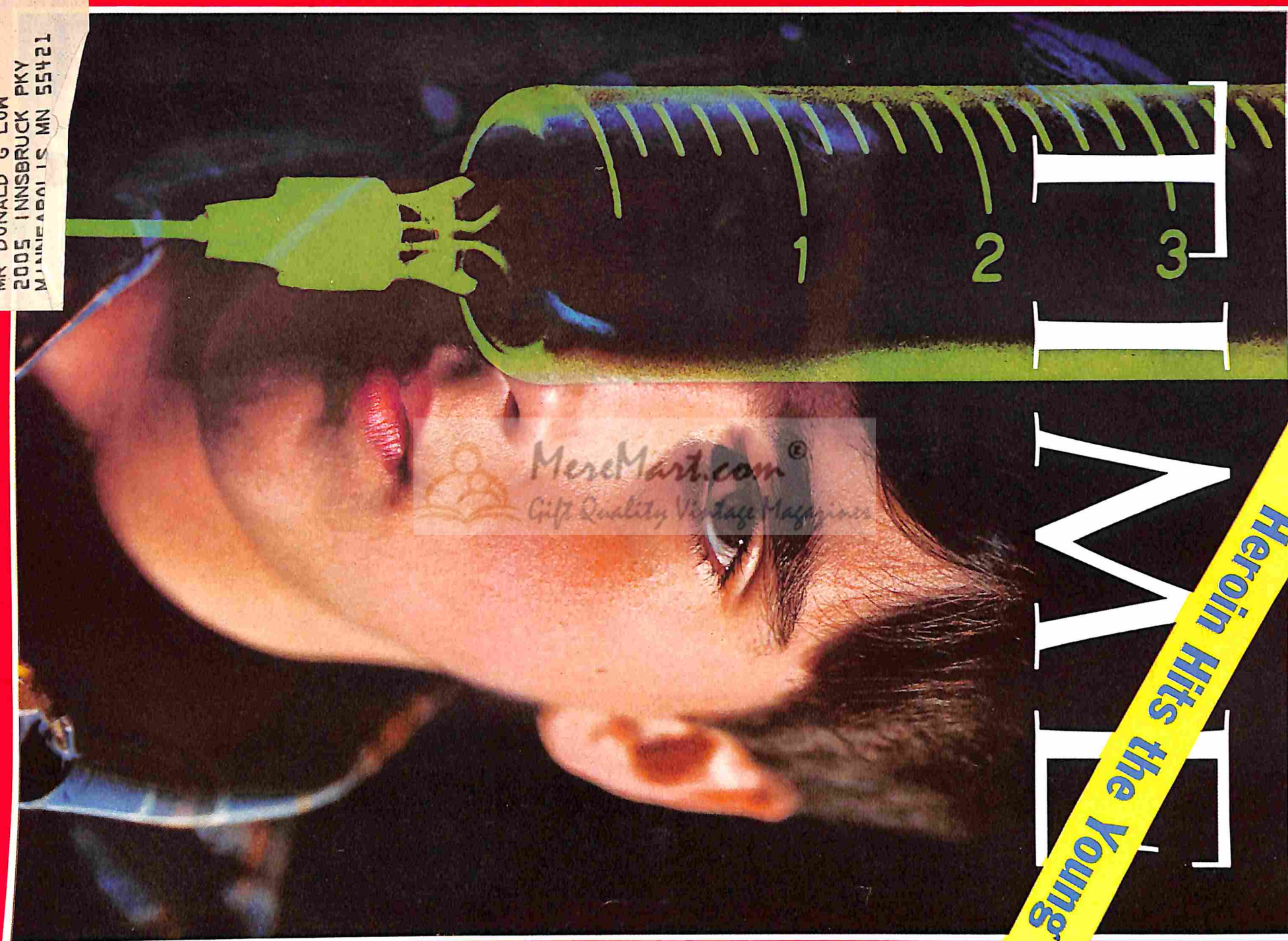
The Cover: Design and photog-raphy by Robert S. Crandall. The boy who served as the photogra-pher's model is not an addict.

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