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Arcata Police report rash of bad LSD trips

John Driscoll/The Times-Standard
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WARNING: This story contains graphic content.

A recent rash of what appear to be bad acid trips has caught the attention of the Arcata Police Department, which is warning people who may use the drug.

It started on April 18, when officers responded to a residence to help Arcata-Mad River Ambulance personnel with a 31-year-old man who had just castrated himself. Medics and officers couldn't find the man's testicles, according to APD, and he later told police that he'd flushed them down the toilet because they contained "monsters."

Then, beginning on May 8, the incidents picked up. A 21-year old man took LSD and wandered from his home without adequate clothing or shoes and without saying where he was going. The man wandered in the forest for two days while his family and friends looked for him. He returned two days later, according to police.

The next day, police were called to Mad River Hospital to assist with a combative 19-year-old man reportedly undergoing flashbacks -- two weeks after he took LSD.

On May 12, officers found him struggling with three friends trying to get him to go to the emergency room. The friends asked officers for help, and they detained the subject and held him for psychological evaluation by Humboldt County mental health workers.

On May 11, officers were dispatched to the 900 block of H Street where an 18-year-old man under the influence of LSD was throwing himself on the ground in the middle of the street,

APD said. He was arrested and taken to jail. The same night, Arcata police helped Humboldt State University police arrest a subject on LSD. Another officer reportedly made contact with two other people having flashbacks, both of whom were cared for by friends and family.

Arcata Police Chief Tom Chapman said the department has not recovered any samples of acid in relation to the incidents, and could not say whether the recent events are due to contaminated LSD or a sharply increased usage of the drug.

"I hate to call it a bad trip," Chapman said, "but they're having a bad trip."

Chapman said people using the drug can become a danger to themselves and others, and that its use can trigger a mental health "break" in someone with underlying mental health issues.

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