

= She Shoulda Said No ! =

" She Shoulda Said ' No ' ! " (also known as Wild Weed ; Marijuana , the Devil 's Weed ; The Story of Lila Leeds and Her Exposé of the Marijuana Racket ; and The Devil 's Weed) is a 1949 exploitation film that follows in the spirit of morality tales such as the 1936 films Reefer Madness and Marihuana . Directed by Sam Newfield (using the pseudonym " Sherman Scott ") and starring Lila Leeds , it was originally produced to capitalize on the arrest of Leeds and Robert Mitchum on a charge of marijuana conspiracy . The film was issued under many titles ; it struggled to find a distributor until film presenter Kroger Babb picked up the rights , reissuing it as The Story of Lila Leeds and Her Exposé of the Marijuana Racket . Its relative success came only after the promotional posters were redone and a story fabricated that the film was being presented in conjunction with the United States Treasury .

= = Plot = =

Leeds ' character is " Anne Lester " , a young orphan who is trying to pay for her brother 's college education . After meeting Markey , a drug dealer , Anne begins to believe that she must smoke marijuana to fit in with her friends . She then goes to a " tea party " , where she tries the drug for the first time . She is unaffected by the initial experiment , and loses her fear of drugs as she continues to smoke .

Anne 's drug use results in the loss of many of her inhibitions , and the film shows her actions under the influence , including scenes implying sexual promiscuity . As the film progresses , she is fired from her job and begins selling drugs for Markey . Her brother hangs himself when he learns of her new job , and she is arrested and given a tour of the various psychiatric wards and jails that drug users end up in . Finally , after 50 days in jail , she is released , cleaned up and ready to cooperate with the authorities regarding Markey .

= = Production and marketing = =

The film itself is semi @-@ biographical , its story following what Leeds herself experienced . The film was inspired by the highly publicized arrest of movie stars Robert Mitchum and Leeds for marijuana possession . On September 1 , 1948 , the actors , along with two others , were arrested after being caught smoking marijuana at the home of Leeds in the early morning , and were charged with the felony of narcotics possession . Public empathy for Mitchum resulted in the charge being downgraded to the lesser one of conspiracy to possess marijuana , and his sentence of sixty days in jail was set aside in 1951 . Leeds , however , was sentenced to sixty days in prison and placed on probation for five years .

Upon her release , Leeds struggled to find work in Hollywood , and signed on to star in Wild Weed . During publicity for the film in 1949 , Leeds , who had been 21 at the time of the arrest , said that appearing in the picture would keep other people her age from trying drugs , but in 1952 she confided in Collier 's that she " only had one offer . . . which was an obvious attempt to capitalize on the Mitchum case notoriety . I took it . I was broke . " The film gained approval from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics to use the drug references , a standard practice at the time even though the Bureau had no power to censor the films . The film used its plot to push many of the beliefs of the time : that drug @-@ using youth would turn to crime and the theory of " marijuana as a gateway drug " . The latter was a leading argument for drug prohibition during the era , and an argument that Leeds herself made , based on her own history with marijuana and heroin .

Via Franklin Productions , Kay filmed the production in six days , a common occurrence given that most films of the era were shot with a quick turnaround . Eureka Productions initially distributed the film , but it struggled to find an audience until Kroger Babb 's Hallmark Productions acquired the rights for distribution . Babb initially marketed the film under the title The Story of Lila Leeds and Her Exposé of the Marijuana Racket , but failed to achieve success with that title and eventually changed it to " She Shoulda Said ' No ' ! " . He pushed the sensuality of Leeds with new promotional

photographs and a new tagline : " How Bad Can a Good Girl Get ... without losing her virtue or respect ? ? ? " , while sending letters to local communities falsely claiming that the United States Treasury Department implored Hallmark to release the film " in as many towns and cities as possible in the shortest possible length of time " as a public service . The square @-@ up misleadingly stated that the producers wished to " publicly acknowledge the splendid cooperation of the Nation 's narcotic experts and Government departments , who aided in various ways the success of this production If its presentation saves but one young girl or boy from becoming a ' dope fiend ' ? then its story has been well told . "

Babb , who gained notoriety for his various marketing gimmicks , occasionally had Leeds make appearances and give lectures at showings of the film . Babb often booked the movie as a midnight presentation twice a week in the same town ; David F. Friedman , who would later use the film in his own double @-@ billings , attributed the distribution plan to a film that was so low in quality that Babb wanted to cash in and move to his next stop as fast as possible .

= = Reception = =

According to Friedman , Babb 's presentations of the film made more money than any other film the same theater would showcase over a typical film 's full booking . While actual dollar figures are not available because of the nature of the genre (which was known for poor record keeping and unconventional distribution practices) , the general financial success of " She Shoulda Said ' No ' ! " prompted producers , in 1951 , to import a similar film from Argentina titled The Marihuana Story . That film , about a doctor who goes undercover into the world of drug addicts to learn about his wife 's death only to become addicted to marijuana himself , was not as successful as other exploitation @-@ style efforts as the public was more concerned about drug use by younger people .

" She Shoulda Said ' No ' ! " was not well @-@ received critically upon its initial release , with The New York Times saying " [n] ever did vice seem so devoid of enchantment . " Production and distribution of drug films slowed considerably following the film 's run until Frank Sinatra 's The Man with the Golden Arm forced changes to the Production Code , which was a studio @-@ based system which regulated various aspects of objectionable content in films .

The film achieved some attention due to its B movie status over the years , being featured in a number of film compilations while continuing to focus on the salacious material as a selling point . In 1993 , a VHS version was released as part of " David Friedman 's Roadshow Rarities " , the twenty @-@ ninth volume in the Something Weird video series . Alpha Video Distributors released the film on DVD in 2006 .

= = Cast = =

Alan Baxter ? Markey
Lyle Talbot ? Captain Hayes
Lila Leeds ? Ann
Michael Whelan ? Treanor
Mary Ellen Popel ? Rita
Doug Blackley ? Lieutenant Mason
David Holt ? Bob Lester
Don Harvey ? Lieutenant Tyne
David Gorcey ? Ricky
Jack Elam ? Raymond
Dick Cogan ? Edmunds
Knox Manning ? Narrator