

Should drug abuse excuse serious crimes?

Jake Notman, age 30, killed his girlfriend by multiple stabbings, strangulation, then running her over. This followed his eating a cannabis brownie, so he pleaded diminished responsibility due to a psychotic reaction: the court agreed that this is manslaughter, not murder (*Metro*, 25/11/21).

There is much to question here. The major reason that cannabis remains illegal is because it is well-known to sometimes precipitate psychosis (this is particularly true of the skunk variety). Cannabis users are rarely prosecuted yet should, surely, be responsible for the decision to take it and then any consequences that follow.