

IV.A. Recognising Mandrax

Mandrax is a combination of drugs that used to be sold as a pharmaceutical sedative tablet. Mandrax must contain methaqualone and can contain either diphenhydramine (which is found in the sleep aid 'Nytol') or diazepam (a sedative sold under the brand name 'Valium').

Mandrax is usually sold in tablet form. Colours vary but generally range from a bluish grey to purple and pinkish shades, and the textures range from smooth to quite chalky. The tablets are usually about the diameter of an aspirin but thicker, and most tablets have some sort of imprint or logo. These imprints often involve something that looks like the letter 'M' with the central lines forming an 'x' (often referred to as 'golfsticks') (Figure 13). Other popular imprints include swastikas ('German marks') (Figure 13), stars (five and six pointed) (Figure 14), and imitations of the original pharmaceutical tablet, often including the letters 'RL' (for Roussel Labs) (Figure 15). Very large tablets, referred to as 'Titanics' have also come on the market from time to time. Mandrax can also be found in powder form, either after the tablets have been crushed or before they have been pressed into pill form, but it is rarely sold this way. Even in tablet form, Mandrax has a distinct smell, which can be similar to gunpowder.

Mandrax is generally smoked with tobacco and majat through a bottleneck (Figure 16). This is known as a 'white pipe'. A bottle is broken off just above the neck. A filter is made by rolling cigarette foil or other forms of paper. Cigarettes are broken up or other tobacco is combined with the majat and this is pressed into the bottleneck. The Mandrax tablet is crushed (the 'cream'), and the combination is ignited with a lighter while inhaling. Any of this paraphernalia may contain enough Mandrax for charges to be brought.

