

IV.C. Recognising the Mandrax vendor

Different groups of people sell Mandrax in South Africa. Aside from ex-inmate and gang members described above, Nigerian nationals also import and sell the drug. Recent large busts of Mandrax originated in China. Within the Indian community, importers and dealers may be less conspicuous, and often extended families are involved, operating out of suburban neighbourhoods.

Docket research reveals that in Gauteng coloureds and Indians were disproportionately likely to be arrested for possession and sale of Mandrax, but that blacks comprise the largest number of cases. For example, Orlando in Soweto contributed the largest number of Mandrax cases to the study.

Half the arrestees in the study were over the age of 30. Just under half had a confirmed prior arrest, but there were few cases of resisting arrest or being armed. Most of the arrestees were resident in the area where they were arrested.

About half of all Mandrax on South Africa's streets is manufactured locally, from imported chemicals. The main ingredients of Mandrax are anthranilic acid and orthotoluline. If these chemicals are found in the possession of a suspect, they may provide the basis for a charge under Section 3 of the Drugs Act. Other corroborating evidence might include the presence of industrial mixers, mixing vats, multiple stove plates, laboratory-type glassware, a pill-pressing machine (Figure 17), or dies containing Mandrax-type logos used in pressing pills (Figure 18). Mandrax paste may be tied in cloth and hung in a tree to dry.



Figure 17



Figure 18