arrested Paschal for “possession of hypodermic needles” — holding them up dramatically and announcing “is this what you want downtown?” to those nearby.

Paschal is diabetic and uses the needles for injecting insulin, and had his diabetic charm necklace on him at the time. Baker also arrested Paschal for marijuana possession — though he uses it medically with a doctor’s letter.

While no charges were filed for that arrest, Paschal, fearing a New Hampshire warrant would be discovered, gave a false name. He pled guilty to that charge and served 10 days in jail. In all, Baker and the SCPD arrested or cited Paschal seven times in less than a year.

A VICTIM OF THE DRUG WARS

The New Hampshire warrant was issued in a 1996 case in which Paschal was convicted of selling a half-ounce of marijuana to an undercover officer. He has already served two-and-one-half years in New Hampshire for felony sale of a controlled substance. That heavy sentence for a small amount of marijuana marks Paschal as a victim of the drug wars.

New Hampshire has no medical marijuana law. Paschal has been a brittle diabetic since the age of 18 months, an epileptic, and is bi-polar. All three conditions are helped by marijuana.

Following the latest arrests in Santa Cruz, Judge Arthur Danner III ordered Paschal held for 30 to 90 days in the Santa Cruz County Jail if he accused of the violence.

A MOTHER FIGHTS FOR HER SON

Jan Paschal, Jason’s mother, is a former Clinton appointee to the federal Department of Education. She has continued to support her son. In a telephone interview, she described her son as intelligent and talented.

“But he decided to go a different way than I had hoped,” Jan Paschal said. “I used to have a cookie-cutter approach for what I wanted for him. And the part that sort of amazes me as someone who doesn’t believe in the legalization of drugs, but Jason is really helped by using marijuana. He is much better off when he uses it. I can see that.”

Although it may not be what she had wanted for her son, she described Jason’s life as a traveling teacher, preacher, and tarot card reader as “harmless and what he wants to do with his life.” In Redfern’s Sentinel article, Jan Paschal said of her son, “He is a son of America. He’s not a throwaway person. But someone like Jason’s doesn’t believe in the legalization of drugs, but Jason is really helped by using marijuana. He uses it. I can see that.”

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Despite the heavy sentence for a small amount of marijuana, Paschal says he is much better off when he uses it. I can see that.”

Paschal’s three brief hunger strikes (undertaken for short periods of time because of the delicacy of his medical condition) were dismissed as “manipulative, acting out” behavior. He was kept in solitary confinement for 23 out of 24 hours each day.

Paschal, a Sufi Muslim, claimed the jail staff continually fed him pork, which is outlawed by his religion. Paschal’s unashamed cultural response has been to throw the pork against the wall, and greet deputies with loud shouts and kicks to the bulletproof glass of his cell. While this may give authorities more rope to hang the “mental case” label around his neck, Paschal sees it differently.

“This is my resistance,” he told activists recently at a jailhouse visit. “And if they try to transport me to New Hampshire, I will go on a longer hunger strike. They will have to transport me with my precarious medical condition and in an uncooperative manner as well.”

SANTA CRUZ OFFICIALS SUPPORT LAWSUIT FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA

On April 23, Valerie and Mike Corral of Wom'en's Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM) filed suit against the DEA for seizing their pot plants in a raid on September 5, 2002. Both Santa Cruz Mayor Emily Reilly and County Board of Supervisors President Greg Woods endorsed at a far higher level.

Paschal reports he has been the victim of racist hate-crime assaults on the mall for his ethnicity (“they spit on me and called me ‘nigger’”). Police, he said, refused to cite those he accused of the violence.

Instead, Paschal himself was arrested by Jackson’s Shoes “No hackey-sack on the mall” petitioner Candi Jackson.

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