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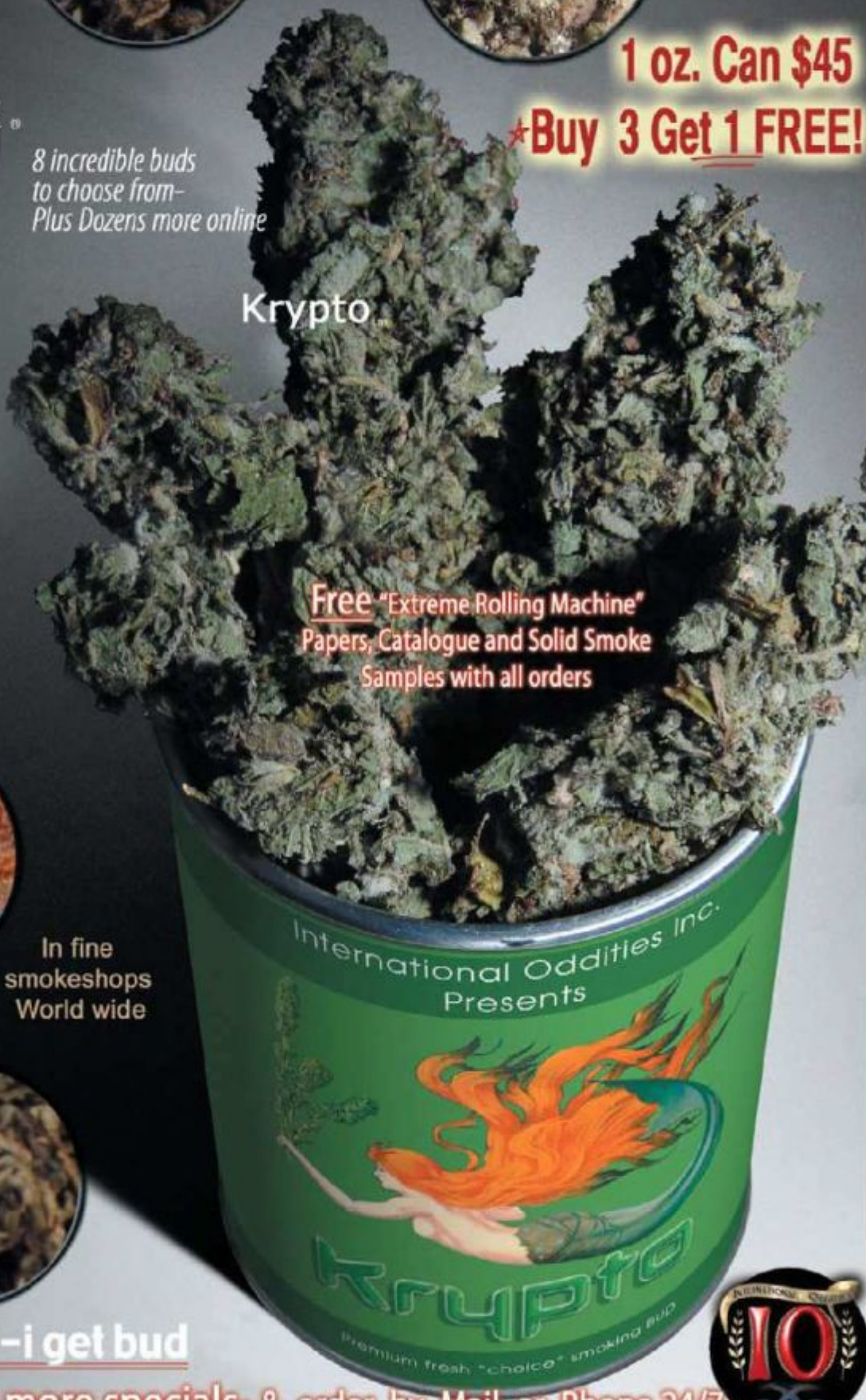


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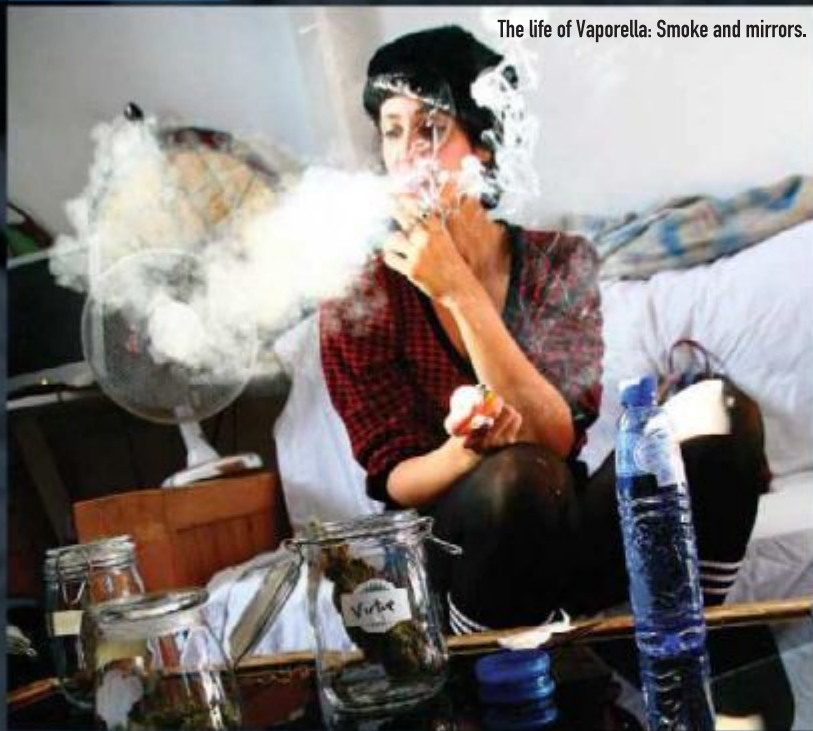
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DAN SKYE

VAPORELLA'S TOP 10 BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING A CELEBRITY JUDGE

10) Not knowing you're a celebrity judge until you step foot onto Amsterdam soil. (It makes for quick jet lag recovery.)

9) Revealing your preferred methods for judging over 80 seed companies, coffeeshops and imported and exported pot and hash strains fairly and thoroughly only to realize that your decision, while indirect, is going to make someone a million dollars richer, technically makes you something of a demi-god.

8) Having your likeness painted onto a tarot card. Even if it is as a naked chick playing with water.



7) Having the people in charge ensure your continuous smoking abilities with unlimited Red Bull, catered lunches, Dutch chocolate and bottled water. (Still *and* sparkling.)

6) Getting free goodie bags complete with grinder, lighter and lighter leash, rolling papers, filters and smoking pouch. You put your weed in it.

5) Watching Ina Mae and Steven Gaskin take notes on *your* thoughts on the hallucinogenic qualities of all the various pot strains.

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3) *Sativas*.

2) Because having Redman pass you an endless supply of personally rolled blunts never, *ever* gets old.

1) Getting absolutely, wall-staringly stoned out of your mind and being able to truthfully (and legally!) say that you are "working."

See you next year!

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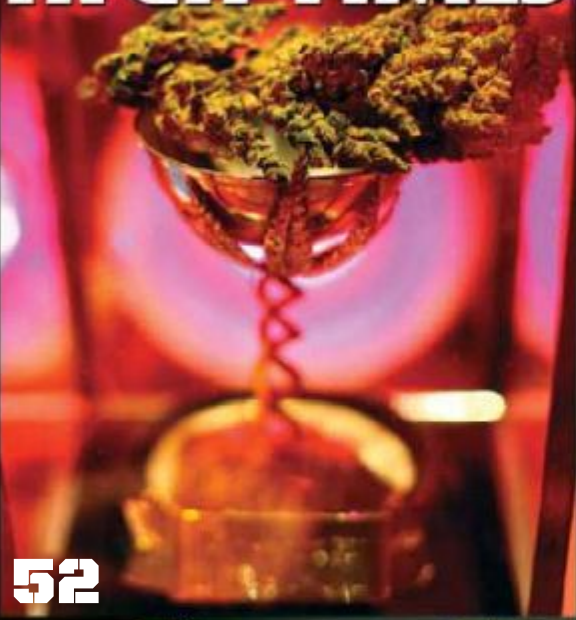
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HIGH TIMES



features

36 HOLLAND'S HIGHEST HIGHS

Cannabis breeders have been hard at work creating new and unique strains for ganja growers looking for potency, flavor and favorable growing characteristics. Danny Danko picks six of his favorite varieties from the 20th Annual HIGH TIMES Cannabis Cup.

42 THE TRUE STORY OF THE BILDERBERG GROUP

by Daniel Estulin

Imagine a private club where kings, presidents, prime ministers, international bankers and generals rub shoulders and plan their global strategies.

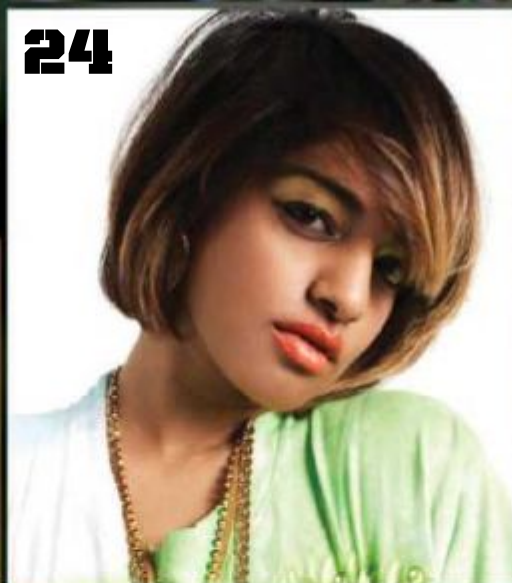
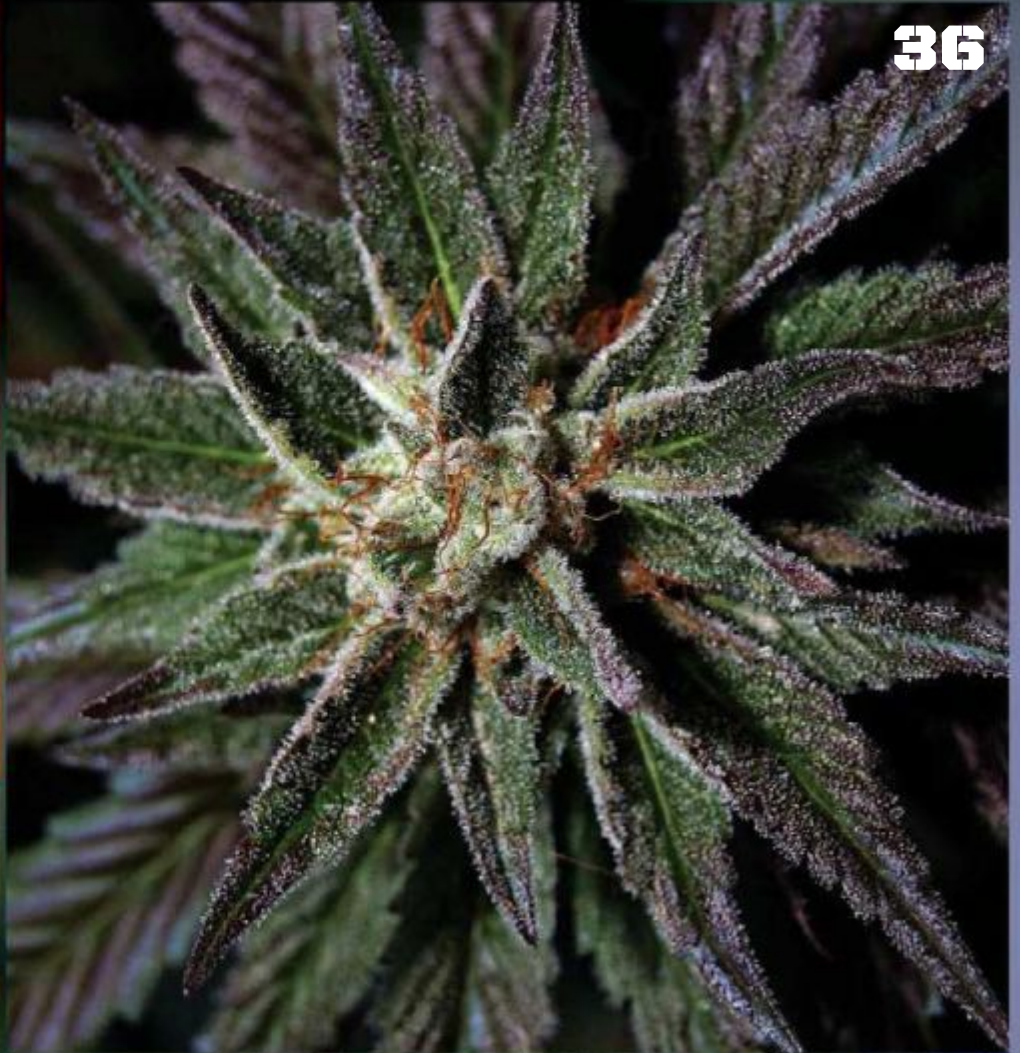
52 20TH CANNABIS CUP: FRICTION, FOG AND CLOGS

by Steven Hager

The founder of the Cannabis Cup reveals his personal theories on the function of ceremonies, provides some seminal dates in Cup history, discusses the importance of improvisation, and creates a matrix for connecting to our cannabis collective unconscious. He also rates his peak moments of the 20th Cannabis Cup.

72 THE DEFENSE NEVER RESTS

Radical defense attorney Tony Serra returns to the pages of HIGH TIMES after a 22-year absence and fresh off a 10-month stay in federal prison. With a joint in his lips and MMJ cases on his mind, Tony talks with HT about government set-ups, legal strategy and the benefits of pot.



departments

06 page six

12 highwitness news/buzz

EDITED BY DAN SKYE

Cannabis convent; Hamas burns weed; Teens and pot; What voters smoke; Tobacco vs. marijuana; The Meatball Files; Top grossing movies; We love Ziploc; Vaporstar; Showbuzz; More THC medical miracles; Drug Policy Alliance conference; Election Day results; Herer starts a new petition; the Gary Ross saga; Don Duncan of ASA; NORMLizer; Freedom Fighter; Ask Dr. Mitch; M.I.A.; Three Inches of Blood; Reviews; Brain Damage Control; Almost Infamous; Miss HT; Munchies.

81 growworld

EDITED BY DANNY DANKO

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110 next month

116 pot 40

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CUP FEEDBACK

I just wanna thank HIGH TIMES for putting on a great event. At the Expo, it seemed that people were constantly handing me free vape bags. The only thing I was disappointed by was that I didn't get to try the strain from those guys, Oookie & Kabookie.

Saralope

Good work by the DNA boys! Chocolope was by far the best choice!

Sean

This was our first Cup, and the experience was incredible. Barney's won as a result of their friendly staff and the time and money they invested.

JMC

My best friend knows a guy, who knows a girl, who has a sister, who used to date this guy named Sonny. Sonny knows the brother of the guy that heard Steven Hager speaking about selling the Cup to Barney's.

Ziggy

I got news for those fools, Oookie & Kabookie. Most of us have killer weed in the States, but we all can't stuff an ounce in our crotch and jump on a plane to claim we're the best. Not only that, but you just outed yourself to any Feds who may have been attending the show. Nice work!

The Real Deal

Liked the Opening Ceremonies. Loved moe. Loved the 420 Comics show. (Doug Benson is the coolest.) Liked CS Travel. (Cool apartment at the Bulldog, cool staff.) Disappointed with the trip to PowerZone. (Please have the Expo in the city.) Enjoyed G-13. (Voted for it last year, too.) Thanks, HT, for another year.

My2Cents

I've been coming to the Cup for 10 years and always have a wonderful time. The entertainment this year with moe., Redman and Honky-Tonk HomeSlice was the best since I started coming to the fest. Next year, Amsterdam may have a smoking ban. I'll be there.

mattynamsterdam

Why does Bobby Black pose in every picture like it's a cover shoot for his next album? Can't he just stand there like a normal person?

PC

My wife and I had a blast. Greenhouse saved us the first day by letting us use their cell phone and computer to find a room. Barney's sure went out of their way to make everyone happy. Abraxis, WOW, you rock. We decided to



vote for the best coffee shop instead of the best weed. Amsterdam, thank you.

MustangWilly

I knew immediately upon smoking that violator ice-o-lator that it was going to win the Nederhash Cup. Without a doubt the most chronic hash and it should be approached with caution.

Jig\$ Fisher

TIME FOR AN UPGRADE?

Your Web site sucks. I'm a relic of the '60s, and I think I remember seeing this Web site on a bad trip around 1969 or earlier.

Denny

Denny,
Visions of the internet in 1969? The acid couldn't have been that bad. I do have some good news—in between grueling sessions of joints and bong-hits, the HT staff is feverishly working on a new Web site. Keep your eyes open for an April 20th, 2008 relaunch of hightimes.com.

—HT Admin

GREEN TONGUES

A few friends and I were recently pulled over and searched. The arresting officer and his partner asked all of us if we'd been smoking, so naturally we lied and told him no. Then they asked us to stick out our tongues. The officer told us that we were lying because our tongues had a green tint to them. I was wondering if you could tell me whether this is actually a sobriety test or the officer was completely full of it.

Josh B

Did you consent to the search? Sounds like you were had.

ERRATA

In Jorge's Rx (HT, Feb. '08), Jorge suggested hesi.com as a good online resource for fertilizer. But the correct URL for the site is actually hesi.nl. We apologize for the confusion.

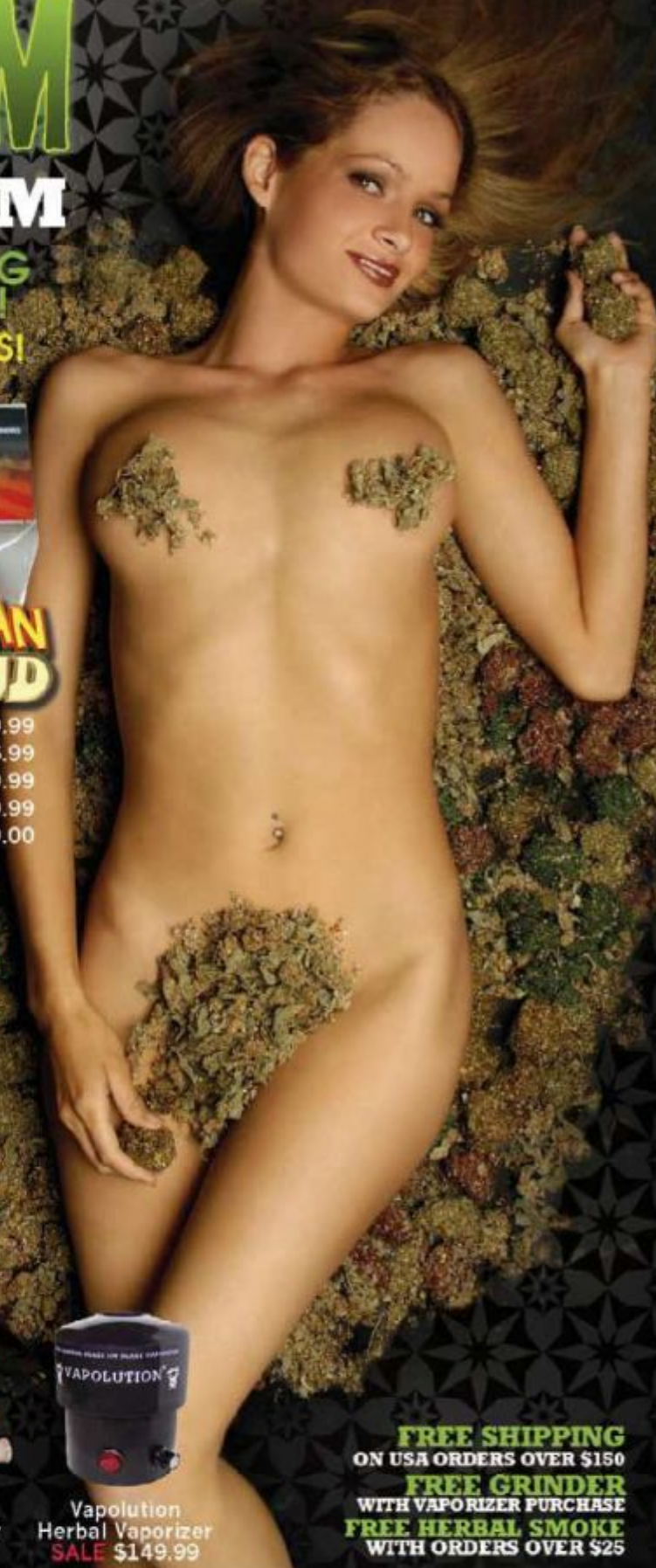
In the interview with Anndrea Schorzman-Hermann ("THC Tester," Feb. '08), the legal limit for THC in hemp was incorrectly cited. It is .3%, not .03%.

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On the Gaza Strip, pot and pills go up in smoke.

In Gaza City, the principal city and administrative center of the Gaza Strip, Hamas decided to flex its muscles for the international media. The occasion? A public burning.

No, not that kind. The Islamist movement known as Hamas set fire to \$3 million worth of illegal pot and pills which, it claims, was transported via underground tunnels from Egypt.

Hamas seized political power in the Gaza Strip last summer and is eager to show the world that it's bringing security and stability to the territory. Palestinians must feel safer already.

NO WAS HAMAS

LAW AND ORDER: THE MEATBALL FILES



A New York City cop is suing to get his job back after failing a drug test. Counterterrorism officer Anthony Chiofalo, a 22-year veteran of the NYPD, was suspended in 2005 after testing positive for marijuana.

But Chiofalo insists that his wife spiced up his meatballs with the addition of pot as an ingredient. His wife corroborated this explanation, claiming that she wanted him to fail a drug test so he would be forced to retire. She didn't want him to "die of a heart attack or get killed," she said, and she "wanted him to be around to help raise my son."

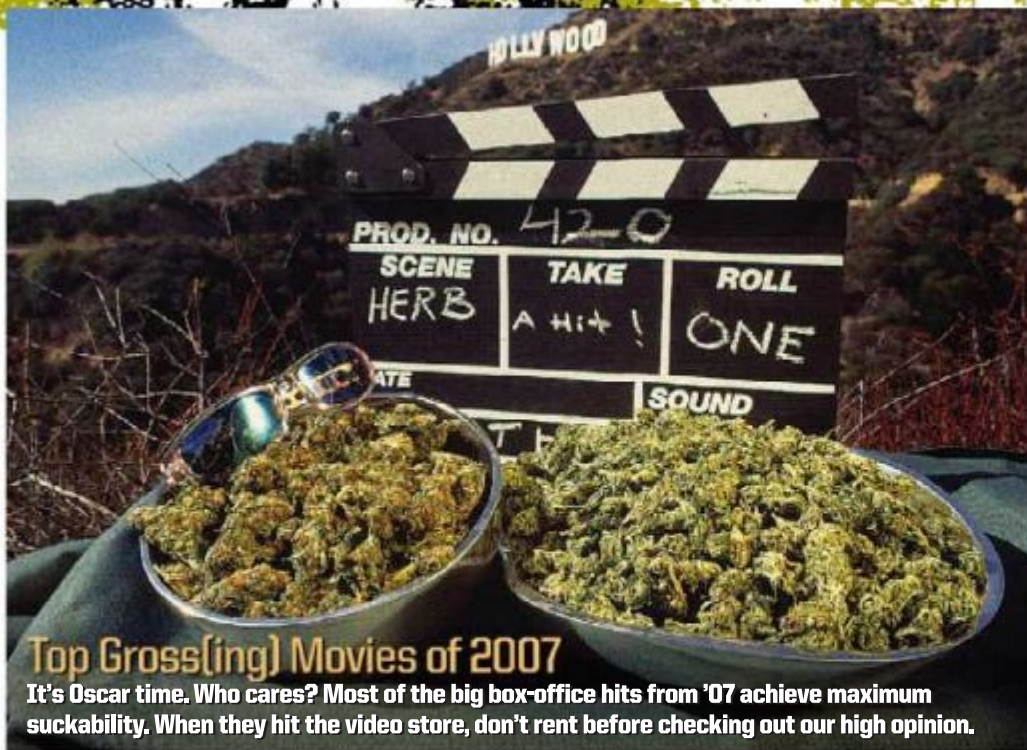
Husband and wife both passed lie-detector tests, and an administrative judge recommended that Chiofalo be reinstated. But Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly rejected that opinion and fired him anyway; the NYPD called the story "not credible." Now an ex-cop, Chiofalo has taken his case to the Manhattan Supreme Court.

Cannabis Convent

A few months back in Greece, two helpful gardeners arrived at the doors of a Greek Orthodox convent and asked two elderly nuns if they could offer assistance with their garden. The nuns happily accepted the offer and, in a few weeks, 30 robust plants were in bloom. Although unfamiliar with the new flora, the nuns were pleased by the "large, decorative plants," as they later described them. However, Greek cops weren't nearly so happy: Acting on a tip, they raided the nunnery, which is located in the village of Filiro, near the northern port city of Thessaloniki. The police didn't arrest the nuns, but they did launch a hunt for the gardeners, who, no doubt, have taken a vow of silence.



Greek nuns grew a Garden of Weeden.



Top Gross(ing) Movies of 2007

It's Oscar time. Who cares? Most of the big box-office hits from '07 achieve maximum suckability. When they hit the video store, don't rent before checking out our high opinion.

Film	Basic Plot	Stoner Appeal
<i>Spider-Man 3</i>	The guy who obtained superhero powers after being bitten by a spider now gets a boost from some alien life form delivered via meteorite causing his suit to turn black and making him act like a dick.	New costumes, bright colors, epic battles, and a plot that lends itself to lengthy smoke breaks because even if you were there, you probably wouldn't really have any idea what the hell was going on anyway.
<i>Shrek the Third</i>	The ogre doesn't want to be king so he finds some dweeb played by method actor Justin Timberlake to take the throne in his place. A bunch of crap happens but, in the end, everything works out fine.	If you're bored with your coloring book, consider <i>Shrek the Third</i> a viable alternative. Note: A thorough knowledge of the previous <i>Shrek</i> installments prior to a <i>Shrek the Third</i> screening is unnecessary.
<i>Transformers</i>	Don't know. Something about robots. Some of them are good. Others are evil. They can become cars and cell phones and stuff. Things blow up.	Unless you're clutching your mint condition Transformers lunchbox while reading this, you'll be wasting your money and your buzz.
<i>Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End</i>	Umm...Jack Sparrow's in trouble (again). Various seafarers want to kill him (again). But he escapes (again) and has adventures (again). Plenty of action sequences (again) and half-assed quips (again).	Eye candy aside (Knightley, Depp and Bloom), the utter incoherence of this movie combined with a 2 hr. 50 min. run-time will have stoners praying for short-term and long-term memory loss.
<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	What is this friggin kid, 30 now? We're so goddamn tired of this crap. We get it. You're a friggin wizard. Enough already! How many of these goddamn movies do we have to endure?	Stoner parents should seriously stone themselves before hitting the theater with the kids. Otherwise, you'll be contemplating a hit on J.K. Rowling to make her stop.
<i>The Bourne Ultimatum</i> <i>Supremacy</i> <i>Identity</i> <i>Conspiracy</i> <i>Discrepancy</i>	Once again, Bourne battles evil CIA operatives while recovering from amnesia. Like a greased pig at a county fair, no one can catch Jason Bourne. Maybe the bad guys would be better motivated to kill Bourne if Ben Affleck was in the title role.	Redundant? Sure. But, c'mon. The <i>Bourne</i> films are pretty sweet. Spies, action, car chases, intrigue, crazy-ass fight scenes that leave you dizzy, Plus Julia Stiles and Matt Damon. No complaints here.
<i>300</i>	Greasy/absurdly muscular Greeks battle equally greasy/muscular Persians. Tons of people die, including all 300 greasy/muscular Greeks but not before saving Greece and preserving democracy... or something.	<i>300</i> played a touch on the homoerotic side, but epic gore-fests, bizarre creatures and unique graphic-novel effects are tailor-made for stoners. Side effects may include the desire to wrestle your roommate or join a gym.
<i>Wild Hogs</i>	Over-the-hill actors looking for a payday made a motorcycle movie. Well, actually, Travolta and William H. Macy agreed to make the movie and Tim Allen and Martin Lawrence agreed to quit their jobs delivering pizzas.	If you liked this movie, we hate you.

A THOUSAND WORDS

Here's the mug shot of 17-year-old Zachary Lafrennie, who was arrested last summer in Collier County, FL. A deputy busted Zack and three friends picking magic mushrooms in a cow pasture. The four foragers were charged with trespassing, but Zack got the worst of it with a possession of a hallucinogenic drug charge.



High harvest for Zack.



SMOKING LIES

Late last year, Drug Czar John Walters announced that smoking a joint is as bad for your lungs as consuming five cigarettes. But is it true? Does one joint do the same amount of damage as five cigarettes?

Um... nope. In fact, of the many categories taken into account in the study, marijuana was determined to be two and a half to five times worse than tobacco in terms of only one category: "airflow obstruction." But the Drug Czar took this solitary aspect of the research and told America that a single joint is as bad for your lungs as five cigarettes.

The real indicator for danger is how the lungs process smoke. Obviously, contracting emphysema or lung cancer is a smoker's greatest concern. However, emphysema was detected in only one of the cannabis smokers (1.3%), as opposed to 15 of the cigarette smokers (16.3%) and 17 of the combination smokers (18.9%). (For non-smokers, the rate was zero.) Moreover, new studies indicate that marijuana might actually help fight lung cancer: Harvard researchers have found that THC impedes the spread of lung cancer and cuts tumor growth in half.

Don't expect the Drug Czar to mention this anytime soon.

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In Ziploc-land, the Big Bag is recommended for clothing, bedding, holiday decorations, sports equipment, sleeping bags, books, photo albums, as well as school and office supplies. Uh-huh.

But Big Bags are also good for storing, say, about 10 pounds. As Ziploc says on its Web site: "Organize, protect, and transport—anything, anywhere."

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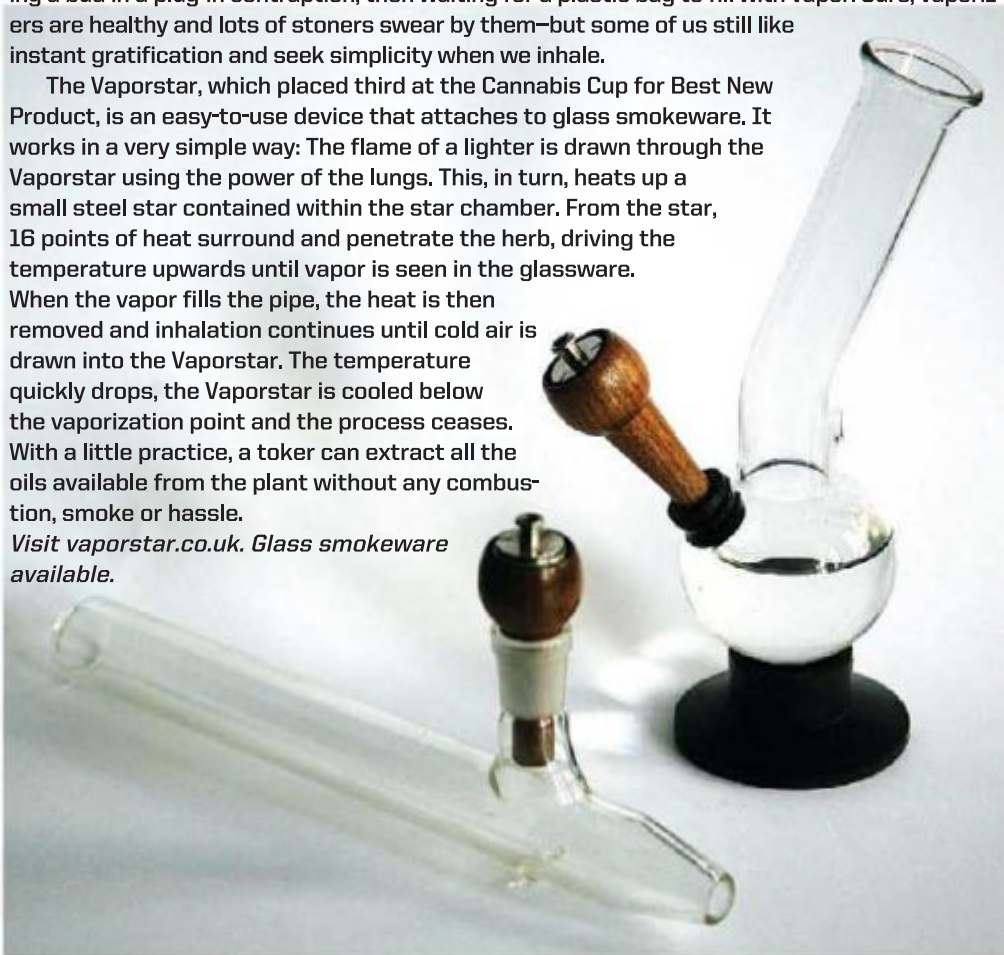
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VAPORSTAR-STRUCK

Many stoners prefer a good old-fashioned joint or a simple hit on a pipe to the hassle of placing a bud in a plug-in contraption, then waiting for a plastic bag to fill with vapor. Sure, vaporizers are healthy and lots of stoners swear by them—but some of us still like instant gratification and seek simplicity when we inhale.

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Visit vaporstar.co.uk. Glass smokeware available.



this month in SHOWBUZZ

STEVE UH-OH

A true pot lover drops everything he's doing at 4:20, grabs his pipe, fills the bowl and synchronizes his hit with that



Steve-O observes 4:20.

sacred stoner time. Last November, Steve-O of *Jackass* fame demonstrated his faithful adherence to pot-smoking etiquette by rushing out of *Ivy*, the popular celebrity hangout in Beverly Hills, CA, and firing up in front of some surprised fans.

Duck, Donald!



TAKE THAT BACK!

Howard Donald of Take That, the mega-selling pop boy band of the '90s who reunited two years ago, recently stated what all stoners

already know: "Cannabis should be legalized. I know it's a touchy subject. But if more people went out stoned than drunk—which a lot of people are on the weekend—I think there would be less fighting, less trouble and less violence."

But his logic didn't sit well with Gail McCann of Mothers Against Drugs. "Anyone who tells you cannabis is perfectly safe is talking rubbish," she fumed. "It can cause psychosis and paranoia. I'd like Take That to see the work we do and ask if they'd like to donate some of the millions they earn to drug treatment."

Good sales pitch, Gail! First trash the guy, then ask for his money.

AMY, AMY, AMY

In November, soul rocker Amy Winehouse appeared to snort something up her nose during a live performance at Brixton Academy in London. Fans observed her taking a parcel from her bra and holding it up to her nose between songs. Winehouse tried to obscure this nasal activity with a scarf, but whatever she was up to, she vigorously rubbed her nose afterwards. Regardless, the audience was pleased with her performance.



Amy—as always.

Then, in early December, Winehouse was photographed wandering outside a friend's house in London in just a bra and jeans, "disoriented, bleary-eyed and very upset." She was also busted for pot possession last year and overdosed on an alleged smorgasbord of pills and "powder."



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GRAND OLD POTSMOKERS

A recent Gallup poll found that 33% of Republicans have toked up, while only 31% of Democrats have tried pot. Yet somehow, past experience doesn't translate into support for cannabis: Only 21% of Republicans favor freeing the weed, compared to

37% of Democrats. So what gives? Did the GOP end up with a bunch of seeds and stems?

For the record, Republican presidential contenders Mitt Romney, Rudy Giuliani and John McCain continue to maintain that marijuana has no medical value whatsoever. But Gary Johnson, the former Republican governor of New Mexico, actually supported legalization and even made this distinction during his first campaign: He didn't *experiment* with the sticky icky, he smoked it—and enjoyed it! Meanwhile, Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul strongly believes in ending the Drug War and legalizing marijuana. And mega-conservative poster boys William F. Buckley Jr. and Milton Friedman have long viewed marijuana's legalization as fiscally responsible.

WELL-ADJUSTED TEENS ON POT

A recent Swiss study showed that teens who smoke pot are just as likely to get good grades, and *more* likely to maintain healthy relationships with friends and play sports, than students who abstained. In fact, the study even found that they were no more likely to be depressed than their straightedge counterparts. But everything you read in the papers or watch on television in the US conveys the exact opposite message. If only someone could put this study in perspective for America. Ah. Here we go!

"It's really outrageous. I'm appalled," said Democrat Peter Koutoujian, chairman of the Joint Committee on Public Health in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. "This is a perfect example of academics gone wild."

Koutoujian also has a beef with the Marijuana Policy Project, one of the nation's premiere pro-cannabis organizations. MPP would like to use the study to open "an honest discussion" of the data, given the federal government's penchant for using anti-pot rhetoric to scare the crap out of mom and dad. MPP spokesman Bruce Mirken readily admits: "No one wants to encourage teens to smoke marijuana. Studies like this show associations, not cause and effect. But the Drug Czar's office regularly uses

a tale of two cities

Denver, CO, and the small town of Hailey, ID, passed pro-marijuana measures last November, joining the growing number of municipalities that are reducing or removing penalties for pot smoking.

In Denver, voters approved making marijuana possession the "lowest law-enforcement priority." The city joins Alaska to become only the second place in the nation that allows a pot smoker to walk away free if caught with less than an ounce.

In Hailey, a town of 8,500, three of the four pro-marijuana measures on the ballot were passed. Hailey voters legalized medical pot and decriminalized both smokeable cannabis and industrial hemp. A measure that would have completely legalized marijuana in all its forms failed to garner enough votes. But early in the year, city officials delayed acting on the initiatives. Idaho's attorney general said the initiatives conflicted with state law. Court challenges are expected.

San Francisco, Oakland and Santa Monica in California, along with Seattle, WA, and Missoula, MT, have already passed laws that make pot

possession "lowest-priority" offenses for law enforcement. However, these measures still conflict with federal law, under which the possession of even a small amount of pot is a misdemeanor punishable by one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000.



Denver, CO



Hailey, ID

associations between marijuana use and problems like poor grades to frighten parents."

Representative Koutoujian readjusted his blinders and proceeded to condemn MPP for bringing the study to the public's attention in the first place. "What this study does is send a very bad message," he said. "This only damages their cause, because it's salacious and baseless."

He also called it irresponsible, because the study only provides "a snapshot in time" rather than following the students over several decades to determine the long-term effects of drug use. "In another 10 to 20 years, where will these young people be?" Koutoujian asked.

In the voting booth, we hope-getting rid of you.

NEW MJ MEDICAL MIRACLES

A recent US study found that marijuana has therapeutic value at a medium-dose level for neuropathic pain in patients with HIV/AIDS, diabetes or shingles.

Researchers at the University of California at San Diego found in a placebo-controlled study of 15 subjects that a low dose of marijuana showed no effect, while a medium dose provided moderate pain relief and a high dose increased the pain response. The study used capsaicin, an

alkaloid derived from hot chili peppers that is an irritant to the skin, to mimic the type of neuropathic pain experienced by patients with HIV/AIDS, diabetes or shingles: a flash of brief, intense pain following by a longer-lasting secondary pain.

The study, published in the journal *Anesthesiology*, found a decrease in pain at the medium dose. There was also a significant correlation between blood plasma levels of THC and decreased pain. It took about 45 minutes for the pot to have an impact on the pain.

Also in the world of pot medicine, a new study conducted by the California Pacific Medical Center Research Institute found that cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive, naturally occurring compound in the cannabis plant, inhibits the activity of breast-cancer cells in vitro and also in animals.

WE ♥ DUTCH COPS

At the start of the year, the Dutch police officers' union announced plans to file a court challenge against the new regulation in Amsterdam requiring cops to abstain from pot use at all times. Union president Hans van Duijn explained that police officers should be able to live by "the same rule applied to all Dutch citizens." He stated that since police officers are not paid 24 hours a day, off-hours toking shouldn't be banned.

ON THE BATTLEFRONT

It was called "Working Toward a New Bottom Line." In New Orleans, the International Drug Policy Reform conference kicked off with opening remarks by Ira Glasser, the former director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a co-sponsor of the conference. Glasser rattled off statistic after shocking statistic about illicit drugs in the United States: While 80% of drug users are white (and 13% are black), two-thirds of all people incarcerated for drug offenses are black. And in New York, 92% of drug offenders doing time are black or Hispanic. "It is long past time to end [the Drug War], and it is long past time to be patient about ending it," he said.

So began four days of panel discussions, talks, networking and strategizing on how to end the madness. Panel discussions on marijuana policy included "Reefer Madness: Cannabis Law Enforcement," "The DEA's War on Medical Marijuana," "Northern Exposure: Cutting Edge Research from Canada," "National Marijuana Policy: New Directions," "Marijuana and Health: Risks and Benefits" and "Medical Marijuana Implementation State-to-State."

Harry Levine, PhD, of New York's Queens College, headed the Reefer Madness panel. Dr. Levine used his speaking time to offer an interpretive dance illustrating the number of people arrested by New York City Police Department on marijuana charges over the past 10 years: an average of 100 people every single day.

Steph Sherer of Americans for Safe Access (ASA) spoke on the National Marijuana Policy panel and expressed optimism: "We have an opportunity to effect change in the new administration. It is our job to articulate the policies we want. The medicalization of marijuana is not the same as legalization."

The "Marijuana and Health: Risks and Benefits" panel long-listed the benefits and short-listed the risks of smoking marijuana. Mikki Norris made the observation that "It's time we stop blaming pot for our problems. We need to take responsibility for our pot use."

Other panels focused on ibogaine, tobacco, methamphetamine, psychedelics, sex work, syringe exchange, harm reduction, the Higher Education Act Drug Provision and the mobilization of religious groups to effect drug policy change.

While there was much excitement and hope for a solution, Drug Policy Alliance Director Ethan Nadelmann knows that the apparatus of prohibition is enormous. "It will take decades to end the Drug War," he said. ✨



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JACK'S BACK

A new California hemp/marijuana initiative aims for the '08 ballot.

Jack Herer is

at it again. The activist legend who wrote *The Emperor Wears No Clothes*, the book that launched the

modern hemp movement, is collecting signatures for a new, comprehensive ballot initiative. The Cannabis, Hemp and Health Initiative 2008 (CHHI) would legalize marijuana both medically and recreationally for those 21 and older and legalize hemp for industrial purposes. Personal use would be distinguished from commercial production by a limit of 99 flowering female plants and 12 pounds of dried bud per individual.

Additionally—and, inevitably, more controversially—the CHHI eliminates testing for inactive and/or inert cannabis metabolites for employment or insurance purposes as well as for determining intoxication or impairment. Another provision sure to be contested by the nation's drug warriors is a grant of amnesty to all prisoners currently incarcerated for marijuana-related offenses.

The signature-gathering for the initiative commenced at Thanksgiving and wraps up in the spring. Fittingly, the signatures are due on the high holy day of 4/20/08—perhaps a good omen. The CHHI requires 434,000 valid signatures from the state's registered voters to be placed on the 2008 ballot.



Herer, the legend, at work collecting signatures.

Jack Herer (who also has an award-winning strain of *sativa* named after him) has plenty of experience organizing initiative drives in several states over the past 35 years. For this cause, he has teamed up with activist Ronnie Smith, better known as marijuana standup comic Roland A. Duby.

"We've got 25 cannabis dispensaries on board so far, and they're all willing to collect signatures," Smith notes optimistically. "We eventually hope to get all the dispensaries in California on board. Jack and I will personally gather 100 signatures a day."

The two are also considering the use of a professional signature-gathering service. Smith says that such a service can deliver the necessary total at the cost of only one dollar per signature; if they can raise the money, they plan to hire one. Since the signatures are subject to challenge, Smith estimates that a total of 750,000 signatures has to be collected in order to provide a decent margin of error and guarantee that the legally required number of 434,000 valid signatures is met.

Bay Area cannabis advocate and author Chris Conrad calls the CHHI a great initiative. "Economically, it would be profound," he says. "It extends an eco-friendly opportunity to what is already the country's most expansive agricultural economy here in California." Conrad also believes that a legal cannabis marketplace would greatly benefit the state's inner-city areas and break the cycle of prison and recidivism.

But Dale Gieringer of California NORML is less than optimistic about the CHHI's chances for passing. Jack and his crew would have to raise a minimum of \$1 million to get the initiative on the ballot and defend it against the inevitable right-wing attacks. Gieringer also wonders whether the amnesty provision will fatally damage its chances of passing.

Even if hemp is legalized in California by the CHHI, the state is likely to encounter the same federal resistance that prospective hemp farmers are facing in North Dakota, which has already passed five pro-hemp laws. But before the CHHI can be defended, it first has to be passed—which means that it needs to appear on the ballot.—Mark Miller

To volunteer to gather signatures in California, visit jackherer.com/initiative.html.

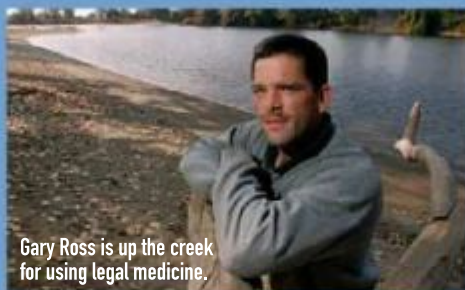
FIRED, BUT FIRED UP!

A landmark medi-pot case hits the California Supreme Court.

It was inevitable from the day Proposition 215 rendered medical-marijuana legal in California that a case involving workplace drug testing and medi-pot would land in court. Gary Ross, 45, is an information-technology professional and medical-marijuana user who was fired for failing a drug test by RagingWire, an IT solutions provider in Sacramento. Ross's suit against his ex-employer for discrimination now resides in the hands of the California Supreme Court after a hearing conducted in November 2007.

Ross, a military veteran who was injured in 1983 serving his country in the Air Force, suffered painful back spasms for over a decade and a half—until he discovered the efficacy of medical marijuana in 1999.

In 2001, Ross was hired as a lead administrator by RagingWire, then fired 11 days later when he failed a drug test by testing positive for THC. Prior to that test, Ross had openly informed the company that he was a medical-marijuana patient and provided his doctor's recommendation.



Gary Ross is up the creek for using legal medicine.

Ross doesn't use cannabis during the workday, only medicating in the evenings—after work—to manage his back pain and spasms. If he experiences severe pain and spasms in the morning, he calls in sick.

Ross's attorney, Joe Elford of Americans for Safe Access, said that under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, a company cannot fire an individual who is exercising his constitutional rights. Therefore, Ross's right to use medical marijuana under Prop. 215 has to be accommodated by an employer, just as if he were using Vicodin, OxyContin or Marinol.

"His termination was a violation of state public policy," Elford flatly declared, "and if the State Supreme Court rules in his favor, that will send a clear message to employers across California that they can't fire someone for being a medical-marijuana patient."

Elford also alluded to evidence suggesting that RagingWire has made it next to impossible for Ross to find other work in the IT industry, in one instance by allegedly pressuring another firm to refrain from hiring him for a similar position in a de facto black-balling. Ross has been forced to support himself by taking a job as a camp counselor—a position considerably below his skill level.

Elford said he expected a ruling sometime in February and predicted a split decision either way. But he is confident that one justice absent from the November hearing, Carol A. Corrigan, may very well side with Ross. If they lose, Elford said they will petition the State Legislature to amend the Fair Employment Act to accommodate medical-cannabis users.—MM



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.com

DON DUNCAN: THE QUIET CRUSADER

Don Duncan, 36, is a vital medical-marijuana advocate (he prefers the term to "activist") on the front lines of the federal war on medi-pot in Southern California.

The Texas-born Duncan was introduced to the medical-marijuana movement in 1996, when he collected signatures for Proposition 215, the Compassionate Use Initiative that legalized medi-pot in California. In 2002, while living in Berkeley, Duncan co-founded, with Steph Sherer and others, Americans for Safe Access, now the nation's largest member-based medical-marijuana organization. He then moved to Los Angeles in 2004 and formed one of the first medical-marijuana collectives in West Hollywood, the Los Angeles Patients and Caregivers Group. Eighteen months later, he formed the California Patients Group, which was raided and shut down by the DEA in July 2007.

In early 2008, Duncan is expected to be voted in as the executive director of the Americans for Safe Access Foundation. He is low-key and self-possessed, belying his determined pursuit of legal marijuana for patients throughout the Golden State.

What is your reaction to the most recent series of DEA raids of LA-area dispensaries?

We keep seeing DEA raids at Los Angeles medical-marijuana providers and on growers, despite the fact that the city of Los Angeles is working to regulate this activity right now. Council member Dennis Zine, a Republican who is also a veteran of the LAPD, has made a motion to adopt an ordinance to regulate collectives and convened a working group that is in the process of writing the ordinance.

Describe the experience of being on the front lines when a raid goes down.

On July 25, 2007, I was on the phone with reporters while being right out in front of the raid at California Patients Group in Hollywood. We had gotten word at a City Council meeting that the raid was taking place. We returned to the dispensary to find the block was sealed off by the DEA, and a group of protesters was already gathered out in front, chanting and waving signs.

That particular raid was particularly difficult, because that was the collective I co-founded and still worked at. I had deep roots there. It's difficult to see your personal work torn down like that. It's a terrible thing.

Why do you think there is such strong federal resistance to medical marijuana?

Most of the opposition to medical marijuana is a culture of resistance in law enforcement that results from the failure to distinguish between medical use and drug abuse. If that law-enforcement resistance would drop away,



Don Duncan has become a crucial force on the California cannabis scene.

we could move forward nationwide on medical marijuana. The best way to change law-enforcement bias is through public education and effective local regulation.

How would you respond to those who say the war on medical pot is just part of the larger-scale federal War on Drugs?

I think all the states should be free to choose medical marijuana and the federal government should stay out of that decision. The War on Drugs itself is a questionable policy, but that has nothing to do with a relationship between a patient and a doctor.

How has ASA fared? Is it stronger than ever, or have the raids weakened it?

ASA finds itself at a crossroads, like the medical-marijuana movement itself. There are tremendous opportunities we are uniquely poised to take advantage of, but our constituency is under direct attack by the DEA, and that's a tremendous challenge for us. Our goal in the state of California is to implement Prop. 215 at the city and county level wherever it's possible. At the federal level, the goal is to harmonize the federal law with the laws of the state of California and the 11 other states that allow for medical marijuana.

I anticipate that I will be elected executive director of the Americans for Safe Access Foundation, which is the public-education arm of Americans for Safe Access. ASAF is the portion of ASA that provides direct legal support for medical-marijuana patients and does extensive media work to turn the tide of public indifference and media

bias on the issue. Public education is important, because it's easier to change laws than it is to change people's minds. The foundation doesn't do lobbying to change laws: We only work on public education of patients, doctors, researchers, elected officials and concerned community members.

The reason I'm transitioning now to full-time work with ASAF is that ultimately we have to implement our state law so that the patients and providers can be safe. To me, safe access means no arrests, no confiscations, no prosecutions and no harassments in general.

What makes a good medical-marijuana advocate?

The key is persistence when it comes to all advocacies. The struggle for social change is a long one, whether it be medical marijuana or any cause, so an advocate can't get discouraged a few years into it. It's very important that an advocate speaks to people wherever they are in their lives—even if they're Republicans or religious people. It's critical because we need to communicate our message to people who don't agree with us or are unsure of our message.

What's the landscape for medical marijuana in California and across the nation in the next five years?

I suspect that we're going to have a very rough year for medical marijuana in California. We haven't seen the last of the federal raids. But ultimately we're going to succeed in securing safe access in the state, and the other states will follow.

The best things that patients can do right now is to be good neighbors when they visit their collectives. By that I mean obey the rules, don't divert the medicine, and respect the neighbors of the collectives.

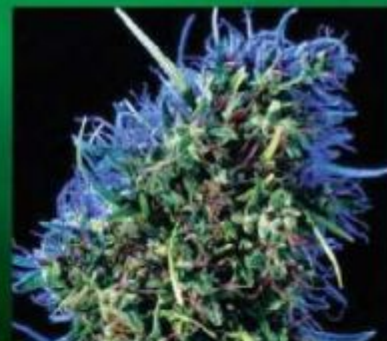
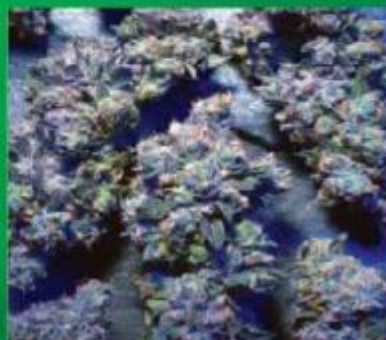
I believe we could change federal laws and truly implement our state laws in less than five years, but what we need to do is get grassroots support and resources to counter law-enforcement influence over the politics of medical marijuana. Law enforcement has a bias against medical marijuana, which is understandable—but it has to change. By changing the minds of the public at large about medical cannabis, we're going to be breaking down those barriers with the police.

How can that best be achieved?

It will be a natural process. As the community becomes more tolerant, the police department will become more tolerant. The police are citizens too.—Mark Miller

The implementation of measures like Prop. 215 depends on local cities and counties adopting legislation that facilitates safe access instead of preventing it. For more information, visit the ASA website at americansforsafeaccess.org.

2009 ULTIMATE GROW CALENDAR



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OCTOBER 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 10/1 10/2 10/3 10/4 10/5 10/6 10/7 10/8 10/9	2 10/11 10/12 10/13 10/14 10/15 10/16 10/17 10/18 10/19	3 10/20 10/21 10/22 10/23 10/24 10/25 10/26 10/27 10/28 10/29 10/30 10/31	4 10/1 10/2 10/3 10/4 10/5 10/6 10/7 10/8 10/9	5 10/11 10/12 10/13 10/14 10/15 10/16 10/17 10/18 10/19	6 10/20 10/21 10/22 10/23 10/24 10/25 10/26 10/27 10/28 10/29 10/30 10/31	7 10/1 10/2 10/3 10/4 10/5 10/6 10/7 10/8 10/9

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MARIJUANA MOMENTUM The re-legalization movement grows larger.

Despite several decades of campaigning to establish a taxed and regulated market for adult cannabis use, such a market does not exist anywhere in the US. Moreover, a majority of Americans do not yet express—nor have they ever expressed—support for such a market. As a result, the marijuana-law reforms that have been enacted over the past 30 to 35 years have been limited in scope.

Yet despite soaring cannabis arrest and incarceration rates, eye-popping costs to taxpayers and countless government-sponsored anti-cannabis organizations that have pumped out Drug War propaganda for decades, the pro-cannabis movement is making remarkable strides. Twelve states and numerous municipalities have decriminalized the possession of cannabis. These regions of decrim represent one-third of the US population. Thirteen states have some form of legal protections for medical patients who use physician-recommended cannabis—one-fifth of the US population.

Amorphia and NORML began as the nation's only drug-policy reform groups in 1970. But today, there are dozens of organized and incorporated drug-policy reform groups working for change, such as NORML, the Drug Policy Alliance, ASA, MPP, SDDP, VoteHemp, DRCNet, the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation, FAMM



Legal marijuana, like this OG Kush in California, could become the norm nationwide.

and LEAP. (And let's not forget the efforts of groups like the ACLU.)

Progressive-minded scientists, public health officials and scientific journals—while struggling against the government's monopoly on psychedelic- and cannabis-centric research—are currently and genuinely in the vanguard of cutting-edge biopharmaceutical and herbal therapies, as well as in the industrial-material sciences and the development of bio-fuels.

Cannabis-law activists are completely dominant

in the so-called culture wars. Every measurable indicator of popular culture is anti-prohibition. Whether it's film, TV or music, popular entertainment consistently demonstrates itself in favor of drug-policy reform. Dozens of drug-policy and cannabis-themed Web sites consistently rank in the top tier of popularity on the Internet.

Cannabis consumers are clearly demanding change: witness the columns, editorials and letters to the editor in the daily papers, as well as the court cases, state and federal legislation, popular voter initiatives, blogs, vlogs, newscasts and listservs. Despite the lack of official endorsement, the re-legalization movement gains strength daily.—**Allen St. Pierre, Executive Director of NORML**
Visit norml.org or call (888) 67-NORML.

Ask Dr. Mitch



Dr. Mitch, Besides marijuana tea, are there any other non-alcoholic cannabis beverages?

B. Steer

Hey B., Several people wrote to emphasize that marijuana tea boiled with butter or oil will have a chance to extract THC, but plain water won't do the trick. Bhang, another popular non-alcoholic beverage, comes from India. It contains herb ground with almonds, rose water, cloves, cinnamon, ginger and cardamom boiled gently in milk. Folks serve it during certain religious festivals. Sounds like a tasty, multicultural treat.

What's the story with marijuana and sperm count?

Nat Macon

Hey Nat, One study back in the '70s showed that men who smoked eight joints a day for 30 days in a row had fewer sperm that were less mobile as well. However, pot isn't birth control: The subjects' sperm count and mobility were still in the normal range, and both returned to previous levels once the men took a month off from the plant.

I use marijuana for pain. Sometimes it works great and sometimes it actually makes things worse. Can you help me figure out what to do to make it work best? And please don't tell me to switch to aspirin—my liver can't take it.

Ben Der

Hey Ben, Marijuana's impact on pain varies with dose. Experiment and you'll see: More isn't always better. Relaxation and distraction can also help. Taking a few deep breaths, kicking back in a favorite chair with some mellow tunes or thumbing through your favorite magazine can really take your mind off minor aches.

Did the guy who wrote *The Three Musketeers* smoke pot?

Jacques Ivre

Bonjour Jacques, Alexandre Dumas, who penned *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, hung out at the Hashish Club with other French artists of the mid-1800s. Baudelaire, Balzac and Flaubert allegedly made appearances there, too. They didn't smoke, though: They ate *dawamesc*, a combination of hash, sugar and spices. Keep reading those classics!

Dr. Mitch Earleywine, Ph.D., is an associate professor of psychology at SUNY Albany and the author of *Understanding Marijuana and Pot Politics: Marijuana and the Cost of Prohibition*. Got a question for Dr. Mitch? E-mail him at 420research@gmail.com.

FREEDOM FIGHTER

ROBINSON'S CRUSADE A professor reveals the Feds' statistical lies.



Dr. Matthew Robinson

Dr. Matthew Robinson didn't plan on becoming a leading voice in the academic community criticizing the War on Drugs. However, when his research as an associate professor of criminal justice and criminology at Appalachian State University brought him into contact with the Office of National Drug Control Policy and its statistics, he soon noticed that the government was being somewhat disingenuous in its reporting.

He was outraged enough to write a book on the subject, *Lies, Damned Lies, and Drug War Statistics*, (co-authored by Renee G. Scherlen), which systematically disproves the figures that the ONDCP uses to justify its existence. In the wake of the book's release, Robinson presented the keynote address at the 2007 NORML Conference in Los Angeles, educating

marijuana-law reformers from around the country on the government's tactics.

"ONDCP is consistently dishonest in its Drug War claims-making," Robinson insists. "It presents selective data on some drugs rather than on all drugs. It focuses on short-term drug-use trends rather than long-term trends. It ignores data that run counter to its argument that the Drug War is effective, and it now presents literally no data whatsoever with regard to deaths and illnesses associated with drug abuse."

Dr. Robinson continues: "ONDCP doesn't present data on trends in prices, purity and availability of drugs, nor does it consider the costs of the Drug War. It makes false claims, such as that 'Just Say No' worked and drug testing works. It claims to be balanced and compassionate, when only a tiny amount of Drug War spending goes to treatment and prevention.

"Essentially," the good doctor concludes, "ONDCP lies with statistics. Its strategy reports are thus not useful for honest policy evaluation."—**Ron Fisher, NORML Outreach Coordinator**



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I AM M.I.A. HERE'S THE RAW

By John Fortunato

Gifted Sri Lankan refugee M.I.A. (a.k.a. Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam) has faced savage bloodshed, racial tension and hurtful injustice her entire life. But that heartbreakingly scandalous turbulence only provided serious ammunition for the foxy, dark-skinned artisan.

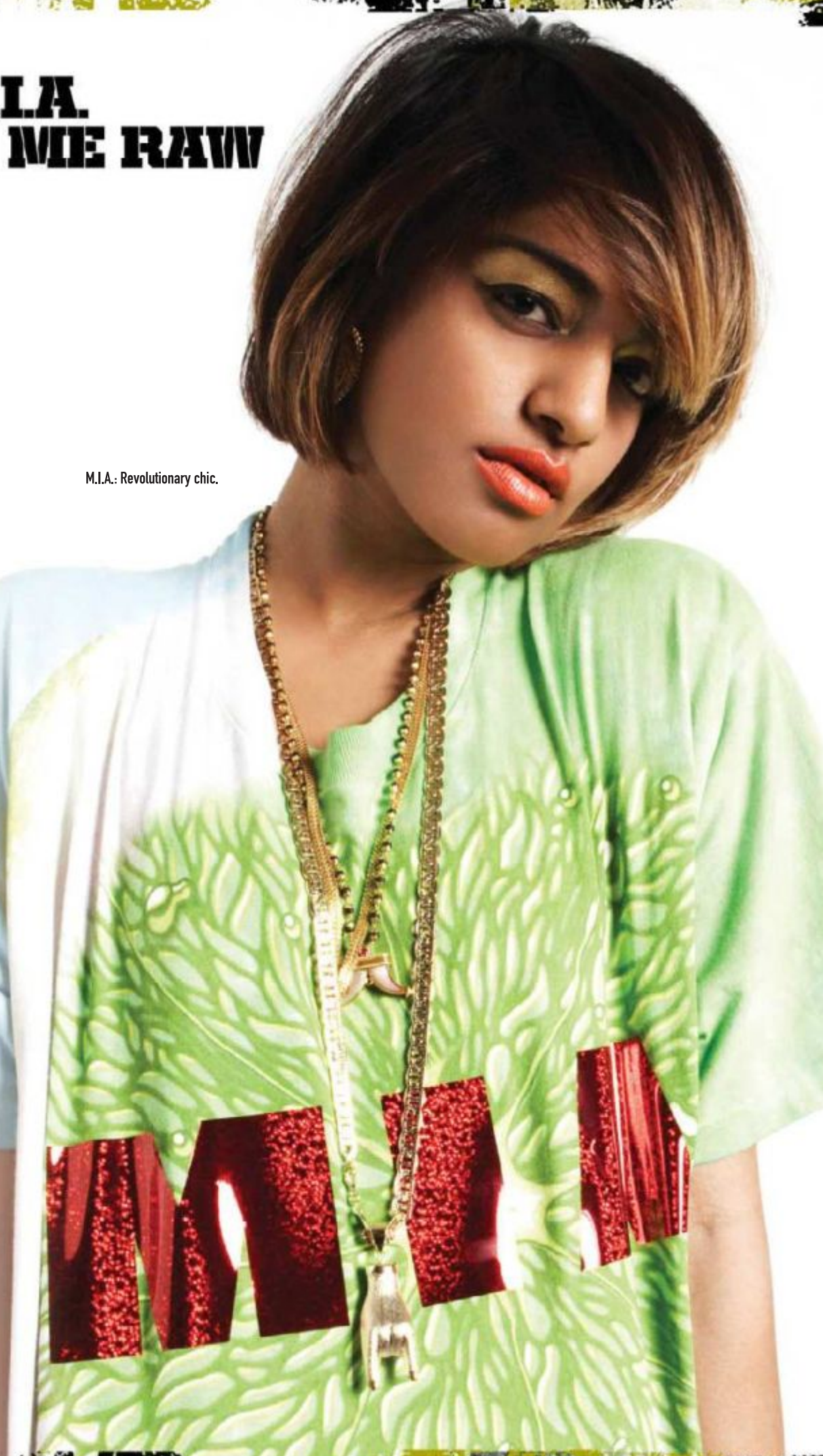
Alongside her mother, M.I.A. fled to England's lower-class council estates at her renegade father's insistence, escaping the war-torn nation of Sri Lanka for the less violent segregationist subclass of London's poverty-stricken Surrey section. Graduating from the prestigious Central St. Martins College, where she studied film and created graffiti art, M.I.A. soon acquired a cheap '80s-derived Roland TR-505 beat machine and began to cut and paste minimalist, dub-style, dancehall-related hip-hop while reluctantly becoming an exotic fashion plate.

M.I.A. received underground praise, then worldwide recognition for her exhilarating, multi-culti electroclash playground rhyme, "Galang," the highlight of her compelling, Caribbean-accented, Bollywood-styled debut album, *Arular* (2005).

Born in the United Kingdom and raised in Sri Lanka and then in nearby India, M.I.A. appropriated the nickname of her father, Arul Pragasam, as album-title fodder. A militant guerrilla battling the majority Sinhalese Buddhists as the leader of the autonomous Eelam Revolutionary Organization, Arul thereafter aligned himself with the larger secessionist Tamil Tigers sect of northern Sri Lanka, fighting for equal rights while resisting the unfavorable federal settlements that have oppressed the native Hindu minority for decades. Resorting to roadside suicide bombings and other violent acts, the Tigers' vicious terrorist tactics are intended to combat the inequity of heavy-handed government enslavement. Unlike radical Islam, the Tamil Tigers fight for sovereignty and independence, not tyrannical subjugation à la the fundamentalist murderers of the Taliban. However, in recent days the controversial Tigers broke a 2002 cease-fire agreement, launching a few deadly air attacks on the military from M.I.A.'s hometown of Jaffna, blowing up a civilian bus and bombing the Sri Lankan capitol, Colombo, in 2007 alone.

"I feel sad the Sri Lankans that make it out can't talk about [the troubles]. There were two million military soldiers against 5,000 Tigers—which is now only 2,000.

M.I.A.: Revolutionary chic.



Something's seriously wrong," M.I.A. insists. "The week I got my graduate certificate from art school, someone said my cousin, whom I'd copied off in school, was dead. It was devastating."

M.I.A. attempted to enlighten the outside world about the subjugation and repression she witnessed firsthand via a documentary, but fearful ultraconservatives lynched the anticipated film while absurdly aligning her with the terrorist uproar.

"I was constantly harassed by the police; I had to register at police stations just to get a hotel room. Tamil people are lined up like herds of animals in 100-degree heat. The army empties their goods into the mud; the babies are all gonna be dead by age five. They were disposable—it felt horrible. The Tamils are banned from census reports. The government could wipe out the whole race and there'd be no account. If you're talking about terrorists, the group is as good or bad as the government they're struggling against."

M.I.A.'s combative, Cockney-cadenced lyrical discontent contrasts with *Arular*'s primal upbeat sway and crackling tropical riddims. Sure-handed Philadelphia DJ Diplo, her old flame, provides a few stomping beats and talented collaborators. A tone-deaf wild child with no prior musical skills, the scrappily resourceful M.I.A. became—startlingly—a universal superstar.

"What I did with *Arular* was a test, with a bunch of questions that came from all angles—the media, immigration, the government, certain magazines and television stations," she explains. "I had to have consequences and side effects. Sri Lankan Sinhalese rioted at venues where I performed. They tried boycotting. I got hate mail. I'm not doing this to be ignorant and precious, or angry and negative. It's interesting to see the edges of these problems. I've seen Sri Lankan monks killing people and children. How do you allow it to go on? I went to British, Christian and Hindu schools. The army would come down to the Tamil convent [I attended], put guns through holes in the windows and shoot. We were trained to dive under the table or run next door to English schools that wouldn't get shot. It was a bullying exploitation."

M.I.A. initially found her groove after finishing college, while vacationing on the tiny Caribbean island of Bequia, where gospel music and Diwali jungle rhythms piqued her interest. She had no love for pop and dismissed punk because of its skinhead associations, but started assimilating her newfound Carib influences with the underground rap infiltrating Surrey's poorest populace.

"I went to Bequia with a friend who wanted to get away from hard times," she recalls. "I started going out to this chicken shed with a sound system—you buy rum through a hatch and dance in the street. They convinced me to come to church, where people sing so amazingly. But I couldn't clap along to

"Hallelujah—I was out of rhythm. They stopped the service and taught me to clap in time. It was embarrassing."

Then she got stoned at night and wrote the swaggering rogue flaunt "M.I.A.," procuring the appellation as her stage name and dedicating it to her former London gang association with Missing In Acton.

"I'd never smoked weed," she admits. "At the time, it helped kick-start and focus my obsession with music. But it's not productive if you're completely reliant on it. I'm constant—the same high or not."

M.I.A. adds a small disclaimer: "Getting high is like losing control, and these days women have too much on their plate—raising kids, working, looking good, being on MySpace."

Then again, she's on board for marijuana-law reform and legalization: "Going to the Caribbean the first time, it was like Sri Lanka without the war and ugliness—real beautiful and natural. People were chill; no stress. If

'AT THE TIME, WEED HELPED KICK-START AND FOCUS MY OBSESSION WITH MUSIC.'

weed makes people passive, content and happy, it's fine. Of course, America has the best weed; in England, it's garbage. No one takes time to cultivate the land. Besides, the sunshine's better in America." Furthermore, she claims, "I did a show on mushrooms in Japan. Thought it was the best show I'd ever done, even if that wasn't the case. It was amazing—I felt like laughing the whole time as the lights were going around and it got real trippy. Everything felt like it was going in slow motion."

Dropping much of the political rhetoric on her equally fine '07 follow-up, *Kala* (named in honor of her mother), M.I.A. deals more with the politics of dancing than with war.

M.I.A. offers the following explanation: "*Arular* was immersed in politics; it was on the street corner and TV. I was outraged. This time, I had to work out where I was. Did I wanna be a pop star or an artist? There are so many options—that's the downside. I had to find a place that gave me more space to grow. People are wrong to judge me as someone who's shoving a manifesto in people's faces and saying, 'Live like this.' We all saw Saddam Hussein hung on YouTube; people have seen how that situation panned out. I thought it was important to teach people to find balance in their life. Find happiness in

what's around you. I'm on the verge of being a super-Americanized version of a musician, but I could've stayed humble, got married, had kids and said, 'I've done it once—why try again?'"

Perhaps the forthcoming apocalypse could be put on hold, as the carousing *Kala* truly gets the party going in a ceremoniously footloose manner. M.I.A. celebrates Ecstasy-laced rave culture on the bustling "XR2," cunningly inquiring, "Where were you in '92?/Took a pill/Had a good time."

"An XR2's a shitty hatchback Ford and the easiest car to break into. All the kids I hung out with back then were in little gangs that fought; one gang had an XR2," she says. "We were the first ones to break out of the stupidity and the violence and start going out to parties and raving. We were more into music, dancing, fashion."

This type of bohemian levity won't solve the planet's staggering tribulations, but its escapism is addictive. Though she may remain skeptical about the success of the Tamil Tigers' fierce, fanatical intimidation, M.I.A. understands how difficult and tricky the Sri Lankan situation still is, especially since juvenile labor and child soldiers continue to exist.

She concludes: "My work constantly opens minds for debate on the Tamil Tigers. What makes good and evil? I felt uncomfortable broaching it. People won't give me the benefit of the doubt. If you're a citizen and get shot or bombed, you should be able to tell anyone if you have a microphone in your face. The politics of war changed the course of my life. I'm eating a burger talking to you, but I could've been in Sri Lanka with eight kids running an electric shop selling TV's and baking cakes for neighbors. But I've come this far. If you care about the issue of child soldiers, look towards Africa—every other soldier's a child. Every country has these rebels popping up.

"The Brits fucked up the Tamils, who were smart, educated, middle-class civilians. When the Brits gave power to the majority Sinhalese, they made the Tamils laborers and farmers. In Jaffna, we had electricity. Eelam, my father's group, came out of that. They'd been abroad, knew international politics, theology, and had a manifesto. They were into nonviolent protest. But the Tigers wouldn't have it. Their kids, moms and grandparents were butchered. They had no arms or ammunition; they had sticks, stones and knives—objects used to cut fish. My dad's group was outnumbered. That's how the Tigers became the biggest representatives of the Sri Lankan struggle."

Happily, M.I.A. has overcome many arduously complex and frightening circumstances to develop into one of the choicest young artists in contemporary music. She's candid, intelligent, liberated, opinionated, strong-headed and raw—a proven commodity in a wearily wired world. ✨

3 INCHES OF BLOOD



3 Inches of Blood vocalist Cam Pipes and guitarist Shane Clark bring the metal at Ozzfest '07 (left), then fire one up after the show (above).

Do you remember the first time you got high?

SC: Yeah—I was about 15, at a high-school party. I bought a couple of joints from a dude on my hockey team and got fuckin' cooked. We were listening to "Hot for Teacher," and I thought it was the most amazing thing I'd ever heard.

Did you smoke a lot in high school?

SC: Yeah... and I did acid and mushrooms a lot, too. This one time I threw a party at my house in Port Moody. The big thing back then was to make a batch of mushroom chocolate and pour it into ice-cube trays. Usually they had about one and a half grams in each, but this particular batch had *three* and a half grams, which I didn't know. I eat one, I'm hanging out drinking 12-year-old whiskey, and my buddy says, "That kicking in yet? Here, have another one." So I eat some more, and I end up doing like eight or nine grams. It hit me like a dump truck—I was seeing this energy grid in front of me, I'd totally lost my decision-making and communication skills... I was flipping out and basically thought I was going to die. I locked myself in my room and called 911, but I couldn't talk, so I just hung up.

Well, they called me back. "Are you okay?" they asked. All I could muster up was, "I'm... too... high." "On what?" "On mushrooms." So they patch me through to poison control, and they say, "Okay, well, just lie back and try to go to sleep." Click.

Meanwhile, no one could find me, people are knocking on the door, and I'm totally freaking out. So I climbed out the window and circled the block until I'd walked it off. It sounds funny now, but it was horrible.

Do you still trip?

SC: I don't touch hallucinogens anymore because it's too overwhelming. But actually, we all dropped acid this one night while recording the album. It was so funny—our manager has this extensive Rolodex, so I started phoning up different record labels pretending to be people from other bands. Everyone was on the floor, dying laughing.

Any favorite strains up in Vancouver?

SC: We don't pay too much attention to strain names. There's always some dude who's like, "Dude! I got the fuckin' Dr. Thundercat's Ice Mountain!" And we're just like, "Cool... let's smoke it."

CP: We're spoiled—in Vancouver, you either get really good weed, or *really fuckin' good* weed.

Anything you'd like to say to your fans?

CP: Yeah—if you see us at one of our shows, come get us high! 🍌

Learn more about the band at 3inchesofblood.com and myspace.com/3job.

Over the past couple years, BC-based metal band 3 Inches of Blood have conquered America with the ferocity of a Viking horde. After a victorious performance at last year's Ozzfest, vocalist Cam Pipes and guitarist Shane Clark fired one up and spilled their guts to *HIGH TIMES* about smoking, tripping and coming up with the inspiration behind their latest epic, *Fire Up the Blades*. By Bobby Black

HT: Your falsetto vocal style is often compared to Rob Halford. Does it bother you to be called "retro metal"?

CP: Not at all. We all grew up listening to that stuff—Priest, Maiden—and we wear our influences on our sleeve. I call bullshit on people who deny or won't give thanks to their influences. You can tell immediately when a band is insincere, when they're doing a flavor-of-the-month kind of thing. You won't see us performing with shit-eating grins and puffy pirate shirts on trampo-lines. We want to kick you in the nuts, not put on some fancy show.

Where do you get your lyrical inspiration?

SC: Mostly fantasy stuff, obviously—swords and magic, but also some ideological, anti-religious stuff. Like, we have a song about hellish demons riding necrotized goats. It's very much escapist; it's none of that "Fuck that chick 'cause she screwed me over" stuff. You're not going to have a bad day, come to our show and hear about *our* bad day.

Where did the title *Fire Up the Blades* come from?

SC: We were staying with friends in Tacoma, WA, while we were writing the album, and every day we'd wake up and someone would say, "Okay—let's fire up the blades, burn some nugs and then go write."

So "firing up the blades" refers to smoking weed?

SC: Yeah—doing hot knives. Much like people do with hash, but we did it with nugs 'cause we're poor. When it came time to name the record, we went through lots of ideas, but nothing really kicked us in the balls. Then Justin said, "Let's just call it *Fire Up the Blades*."

CP: And Justin very rarely smokes weed. He's one of those guys who thinks he's stoned for like two days after one tok.

So weed is part of your creative process?

SC: Absolutely—every rehearsal. I was always obsessed with playing guitar, but when I started smoking weed, creative doors just opened up for me. You want to write some killer songs? Just smoke some pot and jam.

FRANK WHITE



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REVIEWS

A LITTLE HELP! FROM MY FRIENDS

HELP!

Directed by Richard Lester
(Capitol/Apple)



CAN'T BUY ME LOVE

By Jonathan Gould
(Harmony Books)



While critical consensus maintains that the Beatles' second feature film, *Help!*, is inferior to their debut, *A Hard Day's Night*, the passage of time and the diminishing quality of both popular film and music has contributed to the movie's status as a comedy classic. Spectacularly witty and clever, it's also subversive: The plot revolves around a malevolent Hindu cult's efforts to retrieve a ring sent to Ringo by a fan who cannot be sacrificed without it. The script's premise would be unfilmable in today's culturally oversensitive clime. "I don't subscribe to your religion!" an angry Ringo scowls at a villain, though George would soon subscribe to Hinduism in real life. Royalty, law enforcement, science, celebrities and Beatlemania itself are lampooned as well with scathing disrespect. Ah, those were the days, my friends!

What did you put in that ciggie, Ringo?



recalls that "John offered me a joint," and the Fabs' factotum, Neil Aspinall, remembers "red eyes everywhere." I took the DVD for a cannabinoid test run and, 43 years after its release, *Help!* passes with flying hilarity and psychedelic primary colors.

Concurrent with *Help!*'s reissue is arguably the finest biography ever writ about the Boys. *Can't Buy Me Love*, by Jonathan Gould, is subtitled "The Beatles, Britain and America" and thusly explains the historical context of the Beatles' overriding achievement: They proved that a pop group could change humanity's trajectory for the better.—Michael Simmons

DUB TRIO

Another Sound Is Dying
(Ipecac)



When describing the sound of Dub Trio, it's easier to list the rock subgenres the Brooklyn band *doesn't* explore. Over the course of their new hour-length album, the ironically titled *Another Sound Is Dying*, this instrumental triumvirate of established session musicians alchemically blends metal, reggae, ambient, prog, punk, psyche and dub (duh), all teeming with liquid dexterity.

The Trio prioritizes music with a capital M, recalling numerous landmark bands in their infancy—the spacey reggae of the nascent Police, the precise aggression of the early Tool, and the prolonged distortion that evokes *Paranoid*-era Sabbath.

Opening track "Not for Nothing" immediately establishes the rhythmic legitimacy of bassist Stu Brooks and drummer Joe Tomino, while guitarist D.P. Holmes embodies the band's versatility. "Bay vs. Leonard" combines an indie hook with serious dub interludes, while "Felicitation" is the biggest departure—a hard intro veers into ethereal optimism. Producer Joel Hamilton is an honorary fourth member, and given the quality of *Dying*, it's justified.

Only the expected emotional conventions from "Respite" fall short. But redemption comes quickly in the tempo-shifting "No Flag," featuring Ipecac label chieftain Mike Patton on guest vox, opening creepy and sinister before traveling through realms both prog and hardcore. "Agonist" is denser still, with echoing dub and psych adhered to the math-thrash. The album fades with the experimental "Funishment"—perchance a glimpse of more abstract offerings to follow?—Mark Miller



WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw 2008 featuring ECW

Yuke's Future Media Creators
(THQ)



Another year, another *SmackDown! vs. Raw* game is released.

This time, however, it's pretty damn good. Granted, I haven't been a fan of wrestling for a little while now, but I still appreciate a fun game about the world of sports entertainment.

The controls are sweet—very easy to get the hang of, and while they operate smoothly, they are actually quite complex. There are multiple move styles to choose from, and most wrestlers get to have a combination of two sets. For example, one character can be a "showman" and a "high-flyer," while somebody else can be a combination of "showman" and "hardcore." To actually describe this stuff would take way more words than I have space for in this review, but believe me when I say that it is very in-depth and pretty cool.

The character creation is pretty grandiose and gives you a really sick amount of options to customize, from hair and tights to logos and fan signs. You can give your wrestler mouth grills and colored contacts, just to name a few options. It has a lot to it, so this mode may be more for the hardcore player than the casual gamer.

The music, on the other hand, is god-awful—I think there may only be like five or so tracks to hear, and they all sound the same. But this is an easily forgivable flaw when you factor in the great online play and super-long 24/7 mode. If you like wrestling even a little bit, then get stoned, make yourself a character and try this game out; it has a crapload of match options and other things to do.—Lex Eskobar



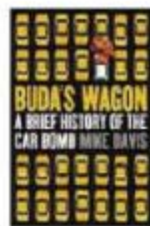
BUDA'S WAGON:

A Brief History of the Car Bomb
Mike Davis
(Verso)



This interesting little book looks at the devastating phenomenon of the car bomb, from its embryonic debut, when Italian anarchist Mario Buda packed a horse-drawn wagon with dynamite and exploded it on Wall Street in 1920, to its subsequent adoption by the Viet Cong, the IRA, Hezbollah and the Medellín cartel, up to its present-day use by the Tamil Tigers, Al Qaeda (9/11 was basically four car bombs with wings) and Iraqi militants. Nicknamed "the poor man's air force," the car bomb is a powerful equalizer for outmanned and outgunned movements that are willing to overlook the moral and ethical issues (i.e., a massive potential for civilian casualties) that arise when setting off high explosives on public streets. Perhaps they should call it "the poor man's guided missile," because a bomber with a few hundred dollars' worth of explosives and a stolen vehicle can surreptitiously deliver his payload to the doorstep of his target. Compare that price tag to Uncle Sam's favored cruise missiles, which cost around \$1 million each.

Author Mike Davis has done his research and remains objective throughout, allowing the blood-soaked history of this device to speak for itself. The car bomb continues to evolve, and Davis doesn't shy from predicting its inevitable, cataclysmic future—namely, 18-wheelers packed with ammonium-nitrate fuel-oil bombs that could take out a city block, or radioactive "dirty" bombs that could render a part of town the size of Greenwich Village uninhabitable for generations. Welcome to the future of guerrilla warfare.—Chris Simunek





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NORMAN MAILER'S FORESKIN

BY PAUL KRASSNER

When I originally launched my countercultural magazine *The Realist* in 1958, I requested an interview with Norman Mailer. He declined, but in 1962, after I published an interview with Joseph Heller when *Catch-22* was published, Mailer called me. He was finally ready. We met at his home in Brooklyn Heights. Mailer sat in a chair, poised like a prizefighter. And I was his sparring partner.

In 1963, when I performed stand-up at Town Hall and introduced Heller in the audience, somebody else—a friend of his—stood up. But since the audience didn't know what Heller looked like, they applauded. "That's not Joseph Heller," I said from the stage. "This is right out of *Catch-22*."

Then I spotted Mailer and introduced him, and again somebody else stood up. This time it was a young woman. "I'm a friend of Norman's," she called out. "He couldn't come tonight."

"That's the story of his life," I responded. It was a cheap shot, but I couldn't resist. "He's writing another book about it," I added.

In my interview with Mailer, we had been talking about the mating process of two individuals. "It's mutually selective," he said. "You fall in together or go in together." Little did I dream that I would "fall in together" with that young woman in the audience, Jeanne Johnson. We got married at Mailer's home and had a daughter, Holly.

The last time I saw Mailer was in 2005 at Wordstock, the first annual Portland (Oregon) Book Festival, where I was invited to open for him.

"The thing I most admire about Mailer," I said, "is a combination of his courage as a writer and how much he respects the craft. He writes in longhand with a No. 2 pencil, he told me once, because it puts him in more direct contact with the paper that he's writing on. And I felt so guilty, because I was still using a typewriter at the time. You remember typewriters. In fact, I have a niece who saw a manual typewriter, and she said, 'What's that for?' I explained, and she said, 'Well, where do you plug it in?' 'You don't have to plug it in, you just push the keys.' And she said, 'That's awesome!'"

"Anyway, one aspect of Norman Mailer's

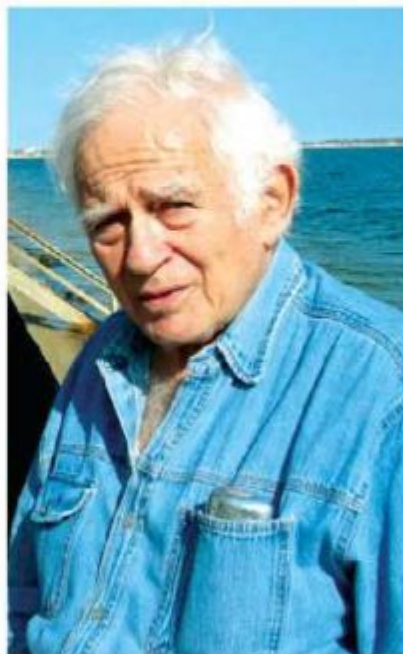
craft is that he chooses his words very carefully. Or, as he would say, 'One chooses one's words very carefully.' The thing that I recall, the words that he chose most carefully, of all the books he's written, was something that he said [43 years previously] when I asked him how he felt about circumcision. He thought for a moment, then he chose his words carefully and, with a twinkle in his eye—one of his main characteristics—he said, 'Well, I believe that if Jews didn't have circumcision, they would punch their babies in the nose and break them'"

When Mailer came onstage—walking with the aid of two canes because of a severe arthritic condition—he received a standing ovation. He eased himself onto a high chair behind the podium.


"Gee, Paul, I didn't know how to start tonight," he said, "but maybe you got me going. Now, if I ever made that remark—that the reason Jews get circumcised is to keep them from breaking their babies' noses—all I can say is that I must have been down in the lower depths of a very bad marijuana trip. But I think, even at my worst, I couldn't really have said that. Paul is a master of hyperbole. He loves hyperbole, as for example when Lyndon Johnson 'attacked' the wound in JFK's head.

"At any rate, if I did say it, I would forgive myself now for having said it, because circumcision happens to be something that every Jewish male thinks about every day of his life. It makes us obsessive for a very simple reason: We don't know if it's an asset or a liability. And I'm not speaking of it lightly. I'm speaking of psychic castration that may make us smarter, or it may not. We worry about things like that. So I will say categorically that in my head, and to the best of my marijuana memory, I never made it. I want to thank you, Paul, for making that up and giving me a beginning tonight, and for warming up this audience"

One night a couple of years later, I had a dream that Mailer died. When I woke up, I decided to send him a note to let him know that my daughter Holly was getting married. But then I heard on NPR that he *had* died, and it was too late. ✨




Norman Mailer, 1923–2007.





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Damn! Why is everyone who agrees with me so full of shit?





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—Thomas Jefferson

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The Left is Stupid.



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Knight of Cups

The Marijuana Magician divines that Love is in the cards at the 20th Anniversary Cannabis Cup.

Typically when my boss, Steve Hager, summons to me to his office, it's to ask me whether I've dealt with some contract or edited some story he's sent me. But on this particular autumn day, Hager had magick on his mind.

"Bobby—you have tarot cards at home, right?"
"Four different decks, actually...why?"

"Bring them in—I need them for reference. I'm designing a High Times tarot deck. You're going to be the Magician." His plan was to assign each staff member to one of the Major Arcana cards, bring the cards to the Cannabis Cup and use them for our spiritual ceremonies.

"Well that's an interesting idea, Steve," I responded skeptically as I glanced over at the calendar, "but it's November 7th. There's no way you can get a custom deck made up by next week."

But I was proven wrong—one week later, when I arrived at the Temple Dragon HQ in Amsterdam, I found artist Sweet Bryar Ludwig painting a set of cards and making fast progress. I also discovered that the 21 coffeeshop strains awaiting me as a celebrity judge—as well as the 21 *sativas*, 18 *indicas* and 11 hashish varieties that I would be receiving over the next two days—had all been encoded with the names of tarot cards. High Priest Hager was casting his spell.

This being my 12th Cup (third as a celebrity judge), I was no stranger to evaluating copious amounts of cannabis in a short time. As I smoked



strains like Sexuality and the Devil, but toward more romantic strains such as Poetry, the Fool and the Lovers. Was the weed trying to tell me something? Apparently so, because after a single hit of the strain dubbed Love...

"Ah...ah...AHCHOO!"

By the time awards day rolled around, I discovered I'd lost my ability and desire to continue judging. The tastes and aromas of the strains all began to blur together. It seemed the more I smoked, the less high I got. So I went back to smoking the strain that had given me the most tingle, the one that had made me sneeze—Love. Sure enough, it broke through the haze and I was high again. I wandered into the Green Room at the Powerzone and found Sweet Briar still hard at work on the almost completed deck. As I gazed down at the cards all laid out before me, this muddled Magician finally made the connection: The Cannabis Cup wasn't just a trophy—it was the Chalice, the divine feminine, a suit of the tarot symbolizing the west, water, intuition, artistic expression, emotion and love. That's what the High Priest was up to...what the altar with the Cups and candles, the whole event was all about. It was like I'd suddenly cracked some hippie DaVinci code and realized the Holy Grail had been right under my nose the whole time.

When I got back to my hotel room that night, I pulled out my Aleister Crowley deck, shuffled, cut and drew a card: The Knight of Cups. I looked up its meaning online: "He is regarded as the lover of the cards...he is attracted and attractive to women and enjoys basking in their company. This card sometimes indicates a mood shift or change of mode...particularly the period where a man falls in love."

I looked over at the woman sitting on my bed smoking, whom I'd met at last year's Cup—the woman with whom I'd crossed the water from the west, whom I'd spent the past year and a day getting to know and—dare I say—falling in love with, and it all fell into place. The cloud of smoke and apprehension suffusing my skull suddenly dissipated, and I could see the future as clear as trichomes through a 420scope.

Sure, there are lots of sweet strains out there. Hell, a guy could spend his whole life going from coffeeshop to coffeeshop trying to sample every single one. But if you're lucky enough to find a strain that really makes you tingle—that makes you sneeze—why bother? Why waste your time with all those others, when all you need is Love? After all, I'm the Magician—not the Fool.

AH...AH...AHCHOO!

See the Almost Infamous podcasts, galleries and links at hightimes.com/bobbyblack.

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my way through jar after jar of fragrant, fuzzy weed, there was but one concrete criterion that I sought: If it didn't make my nose tingle after a toke, it simply wasn't a contender. My mantra was: If it makes you sneeze, it's sure to please.

Contrary to what my image and reputation might suggest, I found myself drawn not toward



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MUNCHIES

THE TURKEY Goose up your bird any time of the year!

Everybody makes mistakes, especially in the kitchen. The important thing is that we learn from our mistakes without causing serious gastrointestinal damage to our loved ones.

Take my husband's grilled Thanksgiving turkey, for example. It evolved by default from a potential salmonella outbreak to a cherished family recipe.

Since my mother doesn't cook, I never actually handled a real live frozen turkey until a few years ago. Did I believe that a 22-pound bird needed more than eight hours to thaw?

No.

Did I think to measure or test the minuscule, non-functioning World War II-era oven in which I intended to roast it?

Nope.

Did I want to battle with the neighborhood raccoons over 22 pounds of raw turkey rotting in my garbage for six days until the trash was collected?

No. Raccoons are adorable from a distance, but when they're clawing out your eyes over a bloody drumstick—well, not so much.

So we improvised. My machete-wielding better half recovered a three-legged, vine-covered grill from the backyard, while I periodically poured various liquids over the enormous poultry-shaped block of ice and cursed it vehemently. When that didn't work, I took a big, smooth rock from Lake Erie, repeatedly heated it in the coals with tongs, and shoved it into the onion-lined cavity of the grilling gargantuan.

Sometime between nightfall and St. Patrick's Day, we had a heap of smoky succulence that looked like it belonged on a grocery-store flyer. We'd found the Holy Grail of Turkeydom. Out of my mistakes, a tradition was born. But over the years, we've tweaked the process a bit. The grill has been upgraded, the turkeys have been downsized, and sometimes I even allow them to thaw properly. We soak hickory chips in wine to add flavor to the smoke, and we've injected our birds with everything from maple-chipotle marinade to white wine.

Last Thanksgiving, my husband injected one with a bud-laced butter and made ganja gravy from the drippings. This novel endeavor was reduced to a quivering carcass within nanoseconds of its arrival at the table.

This is a serious centerpiece for any celebration, so don't wait for Thanksgiving to try it. A goose prepared in the same fashion would be incredible for Easter—and besides, grilling with ganja is a year-round sport. —Ashley Boudreaux



This turkey will roast you!

MAGIC MARINADE

- 1 12-lb turkey
- 3/4 oz. ganja
- 12 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 bottle injectable marinade

Simmer ganja, butter and marinade in a crock-pot on low for three hours. Strain before injecting the turkey. Inject the marinade throughout your bird in equal amounts. (Note: The marinade will cause the outside to be darker and the meat to be pinker.)

Bank two charcoal piles on either side of a space large enough to fit the bird. Prep coals before setting bird in the center. Don't put direct heat on the bird. Do put a large aluminum pan with a little water in it elevated on bricks underneath to catch the drippings. Add a handful of coals and wood chips to the fire every 20 to 30 minutes. When the thigh meat reaches an internal temperature of 180°F, remove the turkey from the grill and let it sit for 10 minutes before carving. This marinade is great for roast chicken, too!

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Our cultivation editor chooses six top picks of the best pot strains at the 20th Annual HIGH TIMES Cannabis Cup.

By Danny Danko

HOLLAND'S HIGHEST HIGHS

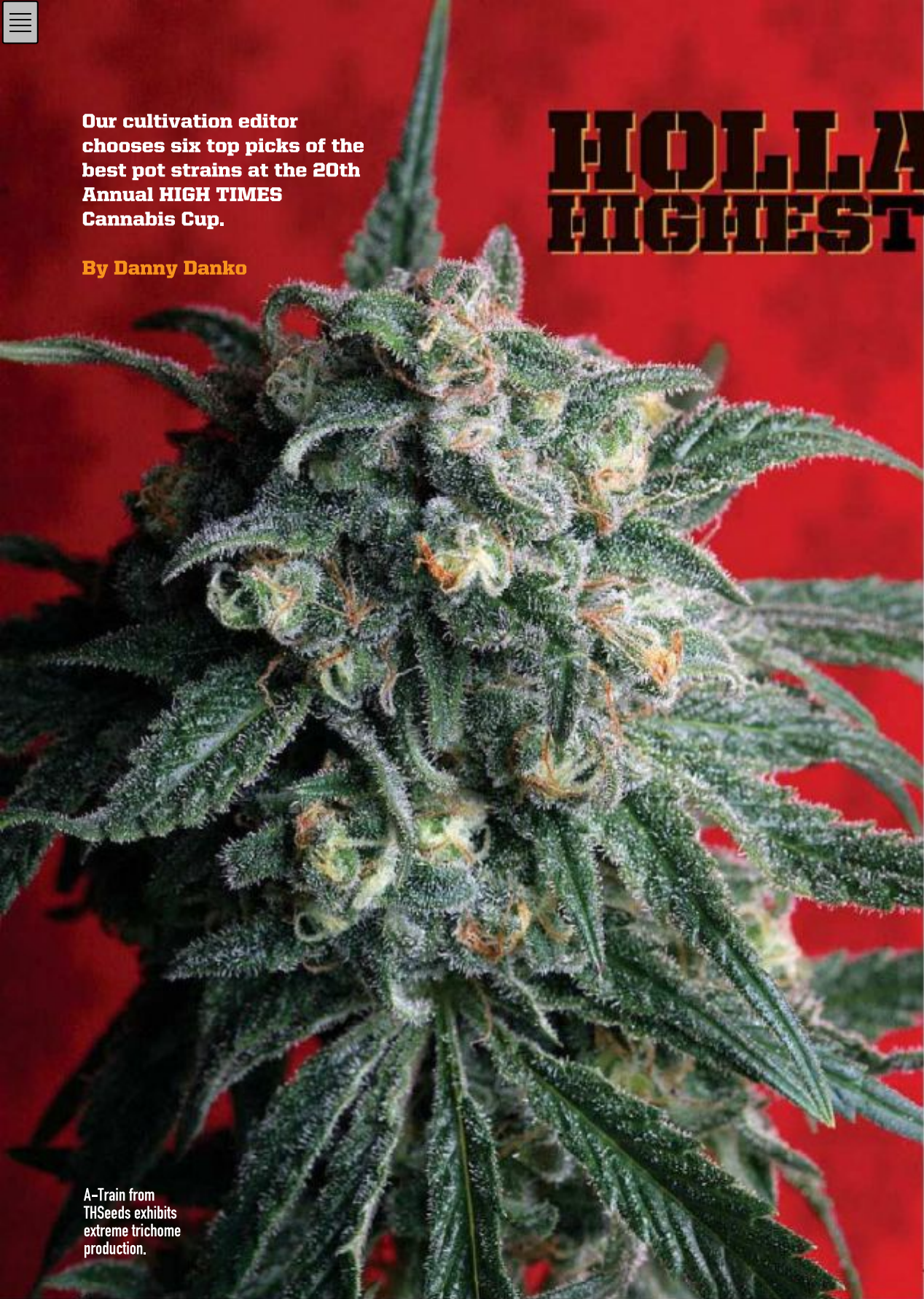
LA CONFIDENTIAL

DNA Genetics

The DNA Genetics crew was out in full force at this year's Cup, giving away gram after gram of their excellent **Chocolope**, which ended up winning second place overall for the DNA boys and the Grey Area coffee shop. Their Cup party featured some of the best buds, hash and pot food available in Amsterdam: We especially enjoyed their cannabis-infused ice creams (Hashio Pistachio and Chocolope Chocolate), with popcorn with hash oil and sprinkles made up of unpressed trichomes as the whopping topping.

These guys know how to throw a party, and they also know their breeding. They've been bringing over Southern California's finest clone-only strains and infusing them with some of Holland's best male stock to create crosses that really satisfy our craving for the classic Kush taste and high. Their LA Confidential is a pure *indica* with power and flavor to boot.

The boys crossed their classic OG Los Angeles-based Affy with a potent Afghani for an uplifting and truly lung-expanding smoke. With an eight-week flowering time and tons of sticky resin glands oozing with essential oils, this multiple-award-winning strain belongs in the mother-plant quiver of any grower looking for power and production.



A-Train from THSeeds exhibits extreme trichome production.

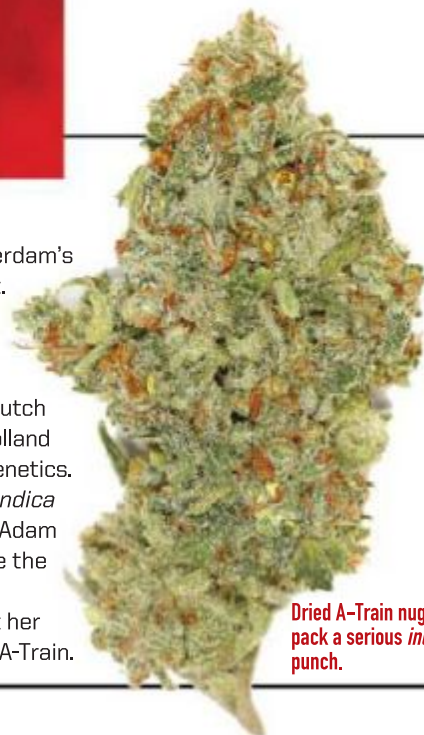
A-TRAIN THSeeds

The THSeeds juggernaut rolls on and on, these days encompassing a world-renowned seed bank, Amsterdam's best hemp-products outlet, and their own line of hip hemp clothing that's quickly taking over the planet. Their annual fashion show is always one of the most highly anticipated events at the Cup—this year's featured a bevy of beautiful models rocking the latest in hempwear as well as an incredible performance by Redman. Finally, hemp products stylish enough for the streets!

But it's their wonderful line of pot strains that keeps these California transplants firmly rooted in the Dutch seed scene. Varieties such as SAGE, MK-Ultra and their own Kushage bring a taste of the West Coast to Holland and provide the kind of long-lasting potency that's sorely lacking at times in some of Amsterdam's tired genetics.

The THSeeds *indica* entry this year, A-Train, continues their tradition of dominance, with a powerful *indica* stone that's a distinct characteristic of the mountainous region of its heritage. Head THSeeds breeder Adam told me that he used a Mazar-i-Sharif Afghani male (the same dad as their Chocolate Chunk) to pollinate the famous Arcata Trainwreck female (nicknamed "E-32") to produce this incredible strain.

Adam also said that she's not a heavy feeder for an *indica* and should be fertilized sparingly to exhibit her true characteristics. A mentholated flavor and powerful buzz await anyone who chooses to grow out the A-Train.



Dried A-Train nuggets pack a serious *indica* punch.



Purps nuggets turn more lavender as they mature.



THE PURPS

BC Bud Depot

A lot has been said, both good and bad, about purple strains, and people seem to either love them or hate them. Personally, I love their candy taste and sweet scent, and I'm willing to compromise a bit on potency at times in order to smoke a really flavorful cannabis variety. Luckily, growers and breeders have been hard at work developing purple strains with both bag appeal *and* the strength to stand up against the world's best pot.

The boys from BC Bud Depot traveled to Amsterdam for the 2004 Cup and shocked the cannabis community with an improbable *Indica*-Seed Company Cup win for their awesome God Bud. While there, they were gifted the original (and infamous) Mendo Purps strain. They promptly returned to Vancouver Island to refine this selection and create stable seeds. Thanks to their efforts, now anyone can produce these beautiful, lavender-colored buds. The short flowering time (seven to eight weeks), combined with a dense yield of perfect nuggets that taste like Fruit Loops, ensure that The Purps will earn more accolades and converts over the next few years. Growers and smokers alike love strains like this that seem to "sell themselves" with a strength and beauty that will surely change some people's opinions on pot that turns purple.



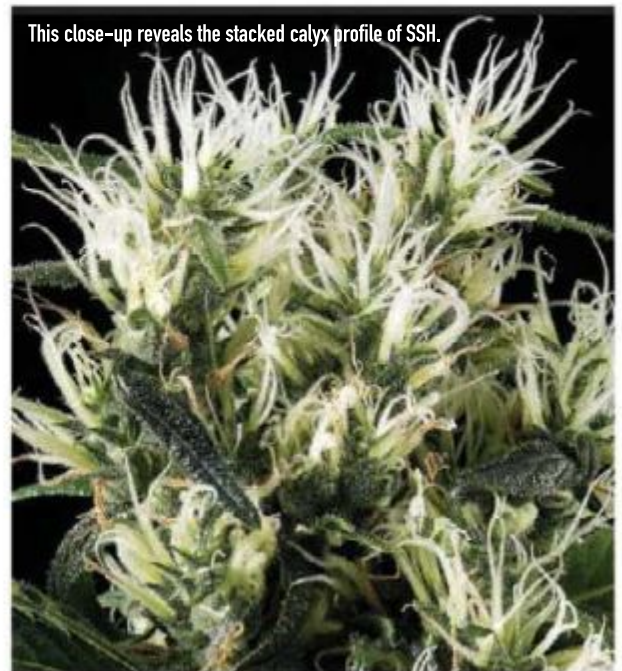
Super Silver Haze fills out quite nicely for a *sativa*.

SUPER SILVER HAZE **Green House Seeds**

Despite the online backlash and false accusations, Green House Seeds somehow continue to rack up the awards, having won many Cannabis Cups as well as blind breeder tastings all across Europe (IC 420 Cup, High Life Expo Cup, etc.). Perhaps it's because their strains actually *do* produce keeper genetics with real stability and power: Anyone who's tried properly grown White Widow, Hawaiian Snow or Silver Pearl knows that Green House is for real.

Arjan used the original Haze genetics developed by the legendary breeder Nevil and later refined by Shantibaba to create Super Silver Haze, a classic frosty Haze that packs a real pedigreed punch. Skunk and Northern Lights genes bring the flowering time down to a manageable 10 to 11 weeks and also provide potency and flavor for this tasty and hardy selection.

Super Silver Haze and many other offerings from Green House Seeds are now available in feminized form to save time and money for the grower. Grow them out yourself and you'll find out why Green House is considered the champion of champions.



This close-up reveals the stacked calyx profile of SSH.

HIGH TIMES

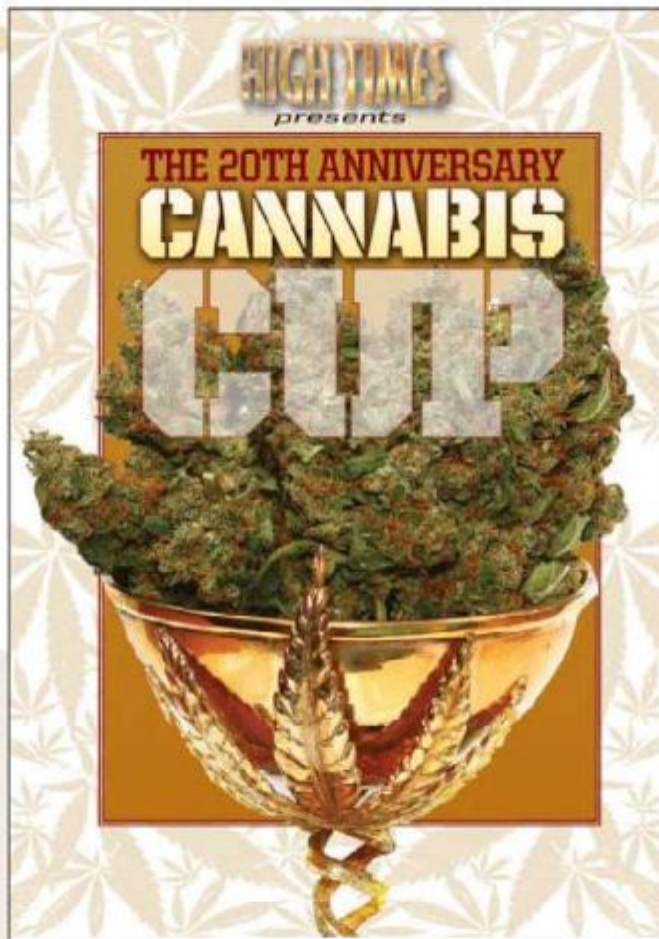
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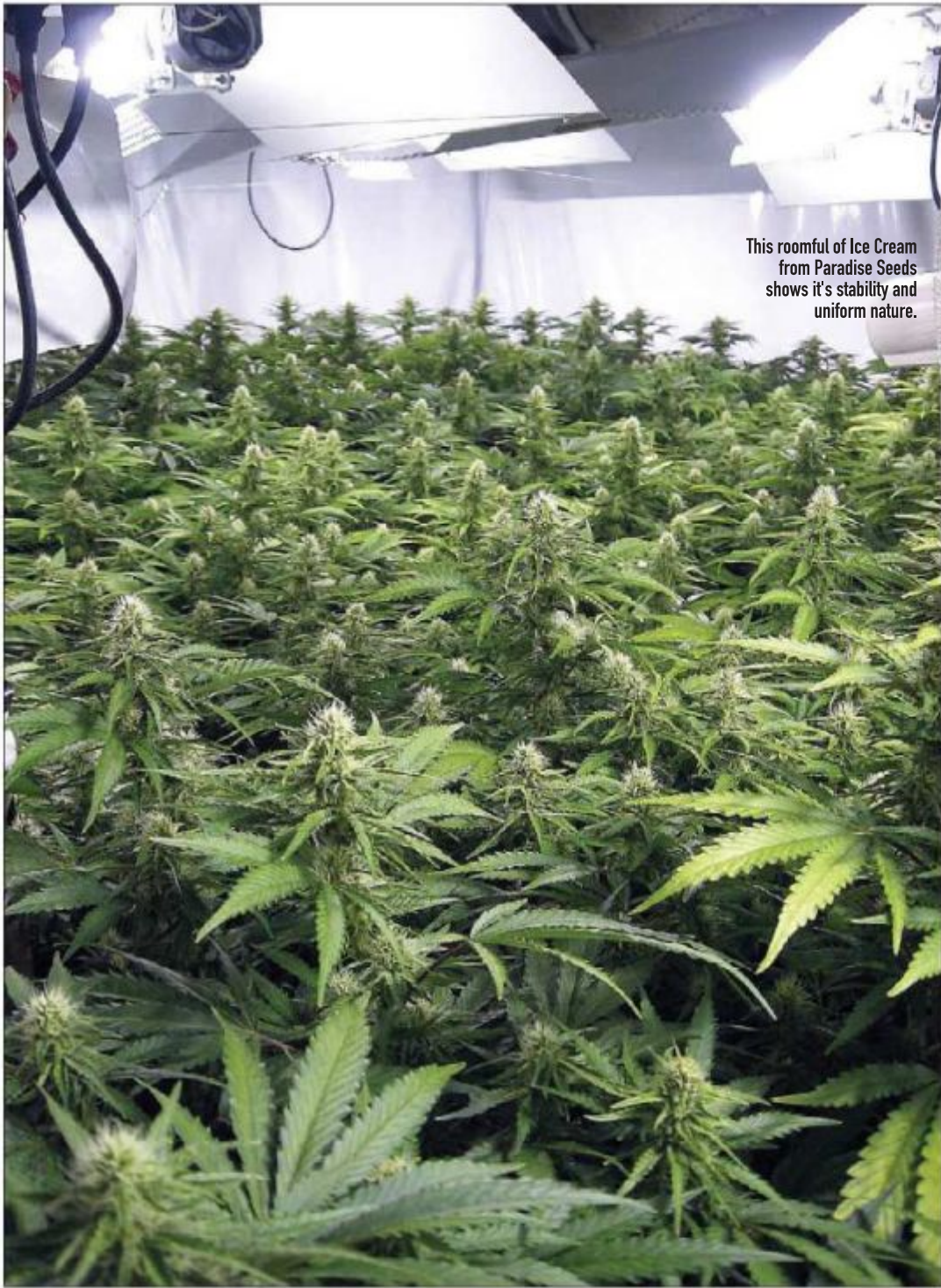
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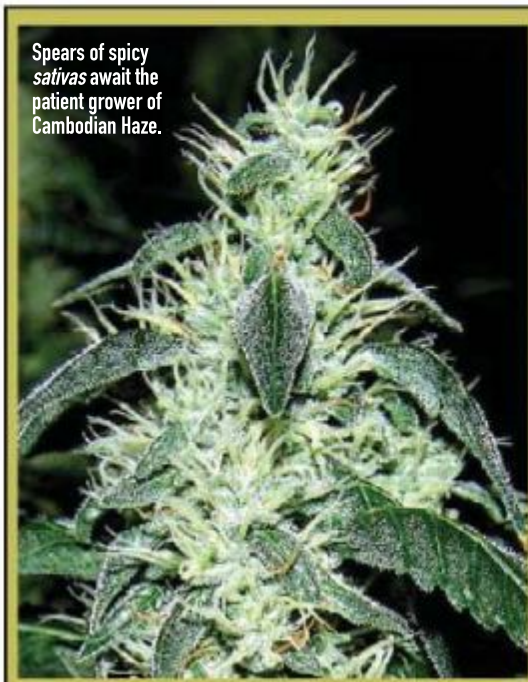
We all scream for Ice Cream!

ICE CREAM Paradise Seeds

Responsible for such quality genetics as the Sensi Star and Opium, Paradise Seeds continue their mission with the new frosty selection called Ice Cream. We really love the aroma and flavor on this one, with its hints of vanilla and cinnamon and a creamy profile that truly tastes like a scoop of fancy ice cream.

Ice Cream is slightly on the *indica* side of things, with a 60/40 *indica/sativa* ratio that makes for a fast-growing plant with plenty of branching and an astonishing amount of glandular trichomes, thick stalks and large, resin-filled heads. The *sativa* side comes out in the complex yet smooth taste and a truly euphoric buzz. There are several phenotypes that will grow out from a pack of Ice Cream seeds, so choose a mother plant that exhibits the characteristics you prefer.

Luc and company have been hard at work providing great seeds to the public, and in the past few years they've launched a whole new line of feminized versions of all their varieties. Try any of the amazing strains from Paradise Seeds and you'll know why they were chosen as one of the inaugural members of the HIGH TIMES Seed Bank Hall of Fame (Dec. '07).



Spears of spicy *sativas* await the patient grower of Cambodian Haze.

CAMBODIAN HAZE

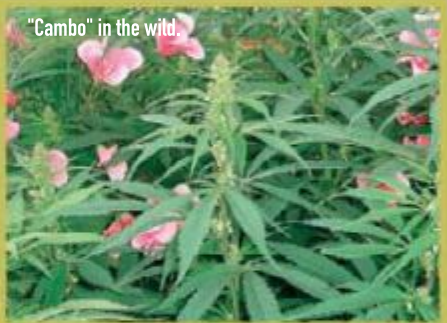
Soma Sacred Seeds

The legendary breeder Soma, a refugee who fled the American Drug War years ago—and, in the process, single-handedly saved many strains from extinction—continues to provide quality seeds in what he refers to as his mission to spread this sacred plant and potentially heal the world. Strains such as Somango, Buddha's Sister and Lavender have firmly established his reputation as a true grower's breeder, who always encourages people to use natural organic techniques to get the best potential from their plants.

Well-known as a *sativa* lover and true cannabis connoisseur, Soma combined Southeast Asian and Jamaican genetics with his legendary G-13 male stock to create Cambodian Haze, a spicy and sweet plant with a long-lasting buzz. Soma tells me that the "Cambo" produces large, long and heavy colas and is a personal favorite of his.

The high from Cambodian Haze must be felt to be believed. The complex flavors and effects do take a little extra time to develop—this Haze finishes in the 13th week of flowering—but it's well worth the wait, with a soaring, euphoric high that seems to have no ceiling. Keep smoking or vaporizing the Cambodian Haze, and the wonderful effects on your head and body keep rising ever higher!

Part two will appear in next month's issue (May 08) and feature cultivation reporter Nico Escondido's six favorite varieties from the 20th Annual HIGH TIMES Cannabis Cup.



"Cambo" in the wild.

COURTESY OF PARADISE SEEDS (2), COURTESY OF SOMA SACRED SEEDS (2)

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THE TRUE STORY OF THE BILDERBERG GROUP

Imagine a private club where presidents, prime ministers, international bankers and generals rub shoulders, where gracious royal chaperones ensure everyone gets along, and where the people running the wars, the markets and Europe say what they never dare say in public. This is the Bilderberg Group, and it is the most secretive of any organization worldwide. The reason that no one is willing to break the group's conspiracy of silence or stand up to it is revealed in the words of French broadcaster Thierry de Segonzac: "The Bilderbergers are too powerful and omnipresent to be exposed." By Daniel Estulin



The Grand Hotel in Stresa, Italy, site of the 2004 conference.



My involvement with the secret society called the Bilderberg Group began on a fall day in October 1992, with a telephone call from a Russian émigré based in Paris. He had read an earlier story about my family's plight in a New York-based Russian daily newspaper, written on the 10th anniversary of our forced exile, and he wished to meet to discuss "a certain matter of great importance." Several weeks later, we met at Segovia, a well-known Spanish restaurant in Toronto.

I arrived at Segovia first, ordered a drink, planted myself in the corner against the wall and waited. Ten minutes later, Vladimir appeared—tall, lanky, elegantly dressed. He had twinkling eyes. As he walked by me, he placed two light fingers upon my shoulder, glanced down and motioned to a waiter. "Whiskey," he uttered in a hardly noticeable Russian accent, the mark of someone who had spent a considerable portion of his life abroad. He sat down in front of me. With the tip of his pen, Vladimir brushed an orange thread off his heavily starched white shirt. I realized at once that this was no typical Russian émigré.

"Listen," he said as he pulled himself closer to the table's edge. "How well do you know the guy who runs this place?"

"He is a good friend," I replied. "That's why I wanted us to meet here."

Vladimir hastily nodded and looked hopefully at me. Down at the

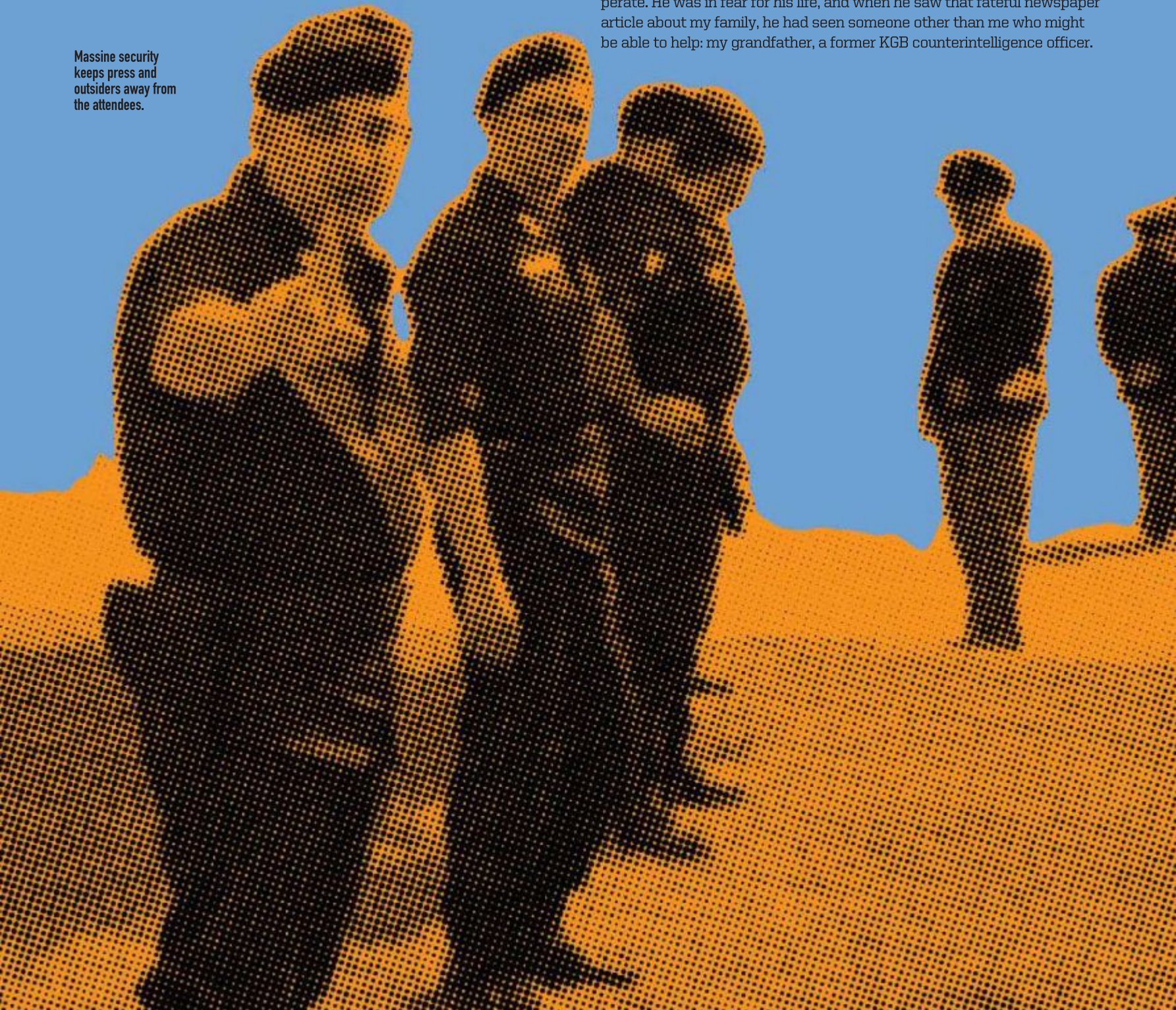
other end of the room, an overweight businessman with a handkerchief tried to seduce a sleek young woman.

Vladimir pulled out a heavy, worn black leather briefcase and set it carefully on his lap. Two barely noticeable clicks opened the lock. With his elongated thumbs, he carefully pushed it open. It was full of papers that were neatly kept in multicolored folders. In turn, these had been carefully stored in the false bottom of his briefcase.

Over the course of the next two hours, Vladimir took me through a series of events that forever shattered my cozy universe. The documents I saw erased all doubts about the gist of his story. His openness and honesty, as well as his willingness to answer any questions I threw at him, endeared him to me. It was all there: how the Trilateral Commission had orchestrated the removal of Ferdinand Marcos as president of the Philippines; the minutes of secret meetings discussing JFK's assassination; the Club of Rome's Dec. 5, 1980, meeting in Washington, DC endorsing and accepting their "Global 2000 Report," a blueprint for global genocide; the KGB's "Kissinger" files; etc.

Years later, I found out why Vladimir had come to me. He was a double agent who worked for the KGB and MI5. (Or was it MI5 and the KGB?) Somewhere along the line, his cover was blown, and he had become desperate. He was in fear for his life, and when he saw that fateful newspaper article about my family, he had seen someone other than me who might be able to help: my grandfather, a former KGB counterintelligence officer.

Massive security keeps press and outsiders away from the attendees.



THE TRUE STORY OF THE BILDERBERG GROUP

This gambit, Vladimir hoped, just might help him bluff his way back into the game. He had tried to shake off his controllers, and now they were after him. He needed something to trade with those who were trying to silence him. He felt that I, or rather my grandfather, could be his conduit, as I knew enough press people in Toronto to persuade them to run with his story, while my grandfather still held enough influence to keep the MI5 people at bay.

I heard back from Vladimir a week later. Our telephone conversation was insanely weird. Again, I found myself in that parallel universe, where nothing makes sense and every phrase is spoken in code. The only thing that I managed to remember from the barrage of numbers and dates he threw at me was UP AR 340-18-5. My intelligence contacts were able to trace it to the highly classified Operation Watchtower, a secret US government drug-trafficking operation that financed anti-Communist activities between 1975 and 1984. It also dealt with surveillance.

Maybe he was trying to tell me that he was being watched, I wondered. I waited anxiously for him to call back, but he never did.

Instead, Vladimir vanished. But that murky universe of secret societies and off-the-book government operations didn't. His description of the Bilderberg Group turned my world upside down and changed my life forever. I converted into one of them, flitting between raindrops and disappearing at the first sight of danger: a shadow dancer.

The secrecy of the Bilderbergers captured the imaginations of novelists Robert Ludlum and Gayle Lynds. Their books loosely model covert organizations based on the few facts published about the Bilderberg Group. These novels illustrate the fact that whenever a regime change is needed—anywhere—it only happens when a world body of power brokers decides to address the issues and posts them on its agenda.

The Netherlands' late Prince Bernhard subscribed to the belief that severe economic dips like the Great Depression could be avoided if responsible and influential leaders could actually manage world events behind their necessary public posturing. For this reason, he was asked to organize the first meeting in 1954 of "like-minded" representatives from all facets of the world's economic, political, industrial and military realms. They met at the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, Holland, between May 29 and 31. At the end of that meeting, the attendees agreed to form a secret association.

Most reports contend that the original members named their alliance the Bilderberg Group after the hotel where they made this covenant. Gyeorgos C. Hatonn, however, discovered that German-born Prince Bernhard was an officer in the Reiter SS Corps in the early 1930s and was on the board of an IG Farben subsidiary, Farben Bilder. In his book, *Rape of the Constitution: Death of Freedom*, Hatonn claims that Prince Bernhard drew on his Nazi background in corporate management to encourage the "super-secret policy-making group" to call themselves the Bilderbergers after Farben Bilder, in memory of the Farben executives' initiative to organize Heinrich Himmler's "Circle of Friends"—elite wealth-building leaders who amply rewarded Himmler for his pro-



Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands (center) heads the second richest royal family in Europe.



David Rockefeller (left) may be the most powerful man in the US, but where does he stand in the Bilderberg pecking order?



Security guard walks behind (l to r) Henry Kissinger, Indra Nooyi and Donald Graham. Nooyi runs PepsiCo, while Graham runs the *Washington Post*.

tection under National Socialist programs, from the early days of Hitler's popularity through to Nazi Germany's defeat. The Dutch royal family discreetly buried this part of Prince Bernhard's history when, after the war, he became a top official in Royal Dutch Shell, a Dutch-British conglomerate. Today, this rich European oil company forms part of the inner circle of the Bilderberg elite.

Since 1954, the Bilderbergers have represented the elite and the absolute wealth of all Western nations—financiers, industrialists, bankers, politicians, business leaders of multinational corporations, presidents, prime ministers, finance ministers, state secretaries, World Bank and International Monetary Fund representatives, presidents of world media conglomerates and military leaders.

Every US president since Dwight Eisenhower has been well represented at the Bilderberg conferences. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has attended, as have most of the principal members of the British government. Even Canada's high-profile former prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, was a member. Past Bilderberg invitees include Alan Greenspan, former chairman of the Federal Reserve; Bill and Hillary Clinton; John Kerry; Bill and Melinda Gates; and Richard Perle.

Other members include the people who control what you watch and read—media barons like David Rockefeller, Conrad Black (the now disgraced ex-owner of over 440 media publications around the world, from the *Jerusalem Post* to Canada's newest daily, *The National Post*), Edgar Bronfman, Rupert Murdoch and Sumner Redstone, the CEO of Viacom, an international media conglomerate that touches virtually every major segment of the media industry. They have protected the secrecy of this secret society, and this may be why the name "Bilderberg" is new to you.

It is certainly curious that no mainstream-media outlet considers a gathering of such figures—whose wealth far exceeds the combined wealth of all United States citizens—to be newsworthy, when a trip by any one of them on their own makes headline news on TV. This is the conundrum that I have pondered. Yet it is important to recognize that neither people nor organizations are absolutely "evil," just as no one is absolutely "good." There are powerful people in the world guided by higher ideals, principles and beliefs than those of this manipulative secret club. The efforts of the original members to better our world were based on a "father knows best" autocracy similar to the Roman Catholic Church's paternalistic form of Christianity. Their intent was noble, at first.

In May 1996, I was in Toronto covering the annual Bilderberg meeting, but this time on my home ground, in my adopted land of Canada. It felt good to be back, and it reminded of so many reasons why I love that country.

The Toronto media and news services had first been alerted to this meeting by a series of faxes, phone calls and memos from me and journalist Jim Tucker, especially after it became known to me from deep undercover sources within the meeting that the 1996 conference was to be used as a staging ground for the imminent breakup of Canada. This was to be secured through a Unilateral Declaration of Independen-

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THE TRUE STORY OF THE BILDERBERG GROUP

dence in Quebec, to be launched in early 1997. The declaration would fragment Canada, with the aim of achieving "Continental Union" with the US by 2000—a date which has been pushed back at least twice since then.

Though Bilderberg meetings are rarely mentioned in the media, since the mainstream press is fully owned by the Bilderbergers, the veil of secrecy was abruptly torn off on May 30, 1996, the first day of the conference. A front-page story ran in one of Canada's most widely read and influential newspapers, the *Toronto Star*, under the headline "BLACK PLAYS HOST TO WORLD LEADERS." John Deverell, a business reporter for the newspaper, noted that Canadian publisher Conrad Black was now "the host for a four-day, closely guarded meeting of world leaders and royalty just north of Toronto."

Deverell named some of the more than 100 hand-picked attendees from around the world from the list we had supplied him: "US Defense Secretary William Perry; Prime Minister Jean Chrétien of Canada; former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; Giovanni Agnelli, Honorary Chairman of Fiat; Finance Minister [and later Canadian Prime Minister] Paul Martin; Mario Monto, European Commissioner; David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank; George Soros; a Belgian prince, the queens of the Netherlands and Spain, as well as other business, political and academic elites."

At 7:45 that morning, 680-NEWS's legendary radio journalist Dick Smythe, who had the widest metro Toronto audience, presented the following report, which was re-aired at intervals as part of the station's news schedule:

Dick Smythe: Well, this sounds like the plot from a conspiracy movie, as the world's movers and shakers meet in secret. Conrad Black is holding his annual Bilderberg Conference. Here's 680's Karen Parsons ...

Reporter: About 100 notables, including the queens of the Netherlands and Spain, along with Henry Kissinger, the US Defense Secretary William Perry and our prime minister, have gathered for the conference. Also along, the heads of Ford Motor Company, Xerox, the Bank of Commerce and Reuters. Black says there is a ban on reporters, so discussion will be intimate and candid. He says, "Exchanges can often be quite heated." Participants are required to take a vow of silence. Last year's conference was held in three mountaintop luxury hotels in Switzerland. This year, it's at a \$60 million luxury spa in King City. The Canadian press has also distributed a brief report on the previously secret meeting, which was published today by, among other newspapers, the *Toronto Sun*, with over 350,000 subscribers.

This was the first time in the history of the Bilderberg conferences that they had ever been scrutinized in such a fashion. Bilderbergers are not accustomed to having to provide explanations to anyone. However, 1996 was no ordinary conference. The Bilderbergers do not typically plot the overthrow of their host country's government during their meetings.

When the principal news outlets began checking our information through their own government and private sources, it became clear that Canada, one of the world's wealthiest countries, was scheduled to be ruthlessly partitioned by the Bilderbergers and the New World Order. These luminaries should have known that when personal freedom is at stake, no amount of ownership of the press would prevent secretaries, copy editors, writers, investigative journalists and, indeed, the management of Canada's television, radio and print media from disseminating the truth for public consumption.

The press coverage became so intense that Kissinger was overheard by one of the staff reporters screaming at the Canadian prime minister, Jean Chrétien, that he would be damned if someone was going to screw this up for him. David Rockefeller pulled Conrad Black aside during a break to ask him if he could "lean" on some people in the press to get them to "shut up about this." Even then, the now disgraced and bankrupt Conrad Black was in way over his head.

On June 1, "Big Jim" Tucker and I, along with a small cadre of part-time Bilderberg chasers, celebrated what was turning into an extraordinary success story. Every major newspaper in the country wanted an interview, television stations were constantly looking for updates, and radio stations were following us all over the city.

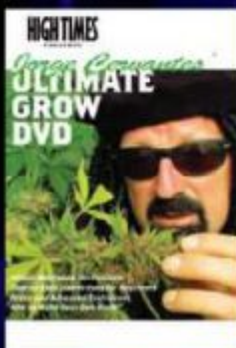
We gathered at the Horseshoe Tavern on Queen Street, Toronto's version of New York's Soho district. The Horseshoe Tavern, now some 60 years old, is one of the city's original music venues, the famous bar where

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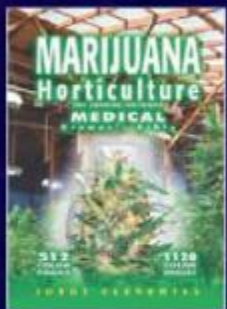


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Canadian singing legends Stompin' Tom, Blue Rodeo, the Tragically Hip and the Watchmen got their first breaks. In September 1997, the Rolling Stones would kick off their "No Security" tour there with a 75-minute live show for MTV. A good place to have a good time, and we felt well deserving of it.

As the festivities began to wind down, I pondered the approaching appointment with one of my sources, who wanted urgently to see me. We had agreed to meet in less than an hour, and I decided to walk to the appointment through Kensington Market. It was Saturday, which is the busiest day of the week, when the market becomes a bustling open-air bazaar. If anyone were to follow me, I would surely lose the tail in this matrix of busy streets and densely packed crowds.

Rounding a corner, I could see my source browsing the newspaper stand. After a chance eye contact, and without acknowledging each other's presence, we moved silently towards the revolving entrance of the Canada Trust Tower, where a friend who worked for the real-estate developer had arranged a room overlooking the city skyline on one of the top floors.

I walked into an elevator, nervously glancing behind me. My contact was to follow me five minutes later. As I entered the posh suite, the splendor of one of North America's most beautiful cities opened up and stood majestically before me. From 800 feet above ground, the city stood still. I was shut off from the bustle and sounds of this great metropolis by sound-proof windows.

My reverie was interrupted by a discreet knock on the heavy wooden door.

"Come in," I replied, only slightly raising my voice.

"You stopped them this time around," said my source, weighing every syllable as if even a slight alteration in the register might have transmitted a different meaning. Despite his words, he projected an aura of resignation. "The break-up of Canada will go ahead as planned. It is only a matter of time."

He pulled out hand-written notes—or rather scribbles that I despaired of deciphering on my own—from the magazine he was tightly gripping with his right hand.

"I thought note-taking wasn't allowed," I quipped, displaying a full smile at him.

"Note-taking is discouraged, my friend," he corrected me.

I glanced at the page. The familiar hand of a fountain pen had left a blotchy imprint here and there, but overall, I realized that I could understand it. I knew the writing quite well: his faint Ts and crooked Rs, diligently drawn out within the confines of the lined paper. I reflected momentarily upon what this courageous person was risking in meeting me and handing me this priceless information.

"I have to go," my source said quietly, without looking up.

I mechanically extended my open hand in his direction, but just as he was about to clasp it with his outstretched palm, I found myself giving him a bear hug instead.

"I won't waste your time thanking you, because no amount of thanks can be enough for what you have been doing for us."

He looked away. "I have to leave."

"We'll leave as we came up," I said, "in five-minute intervals. I'll go down first."

"Don't bother. I left my car in the underground parking. We can take the elevator down together."

Pulling on his leather gloves, he pressed the elevator button. A blue light shone through its transparent surface. I could hear the whooshing sounds of the hydraulic lift speeding towards us from the bowels of the building at six levels per second, and I turned toward my informant.

"When will I see you next?"

With the sound of the bell, the doors opened, and I took a step in that direction. "Watch out!!" screamed my source, grabbing my arm and yanking me back.

I stared at the elevator. In front of me, a chilling spectacle: an empty elevator shaft, with certain death awaiting me hundreds of feet below, had my friend lacked the reflexes to pull me back from the abyss.

"The floor," I muttered, barely perceiving. "Where is the floor?"

On June 1, 1996, I was about to turn 30, which seemed too young to die.

Fuck them, I thought. This is far from over. We can still win this. ✦

Excerpted from The True Story of the Bilderberg Group. @Daniel Estulin, Published by True Day, 2007.

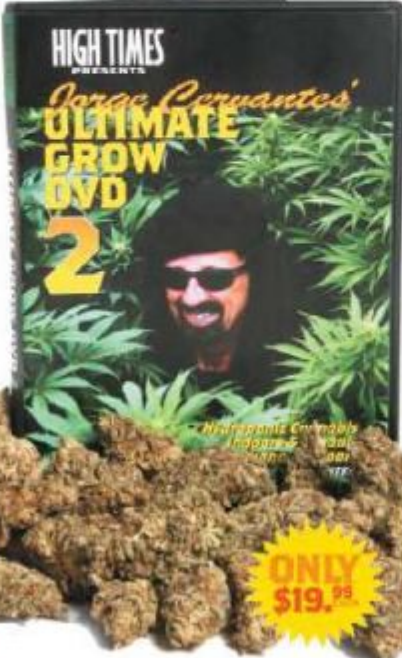
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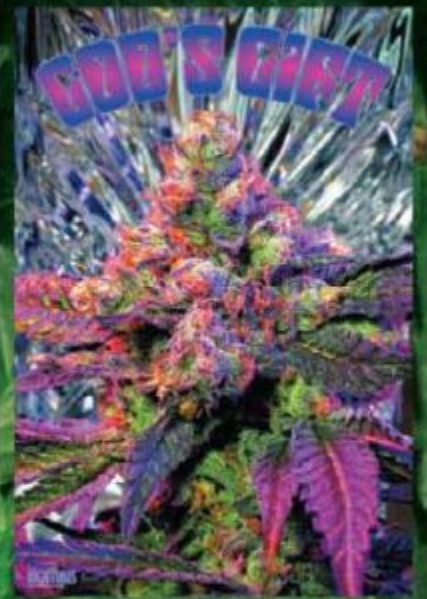
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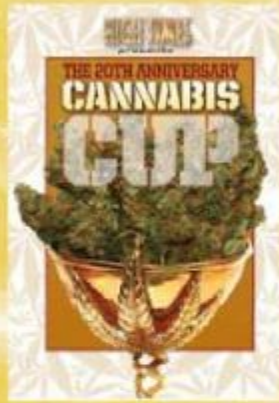


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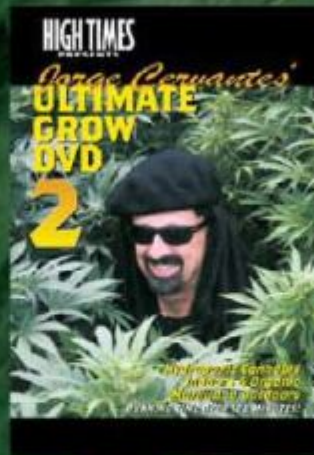
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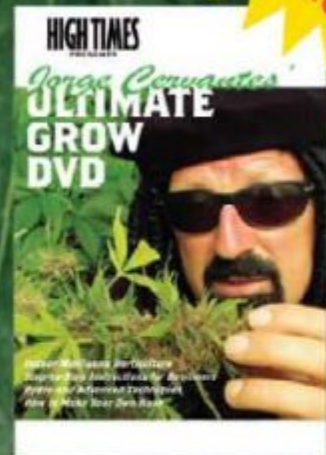
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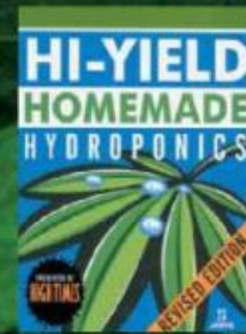
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Amsterdam's canals can become a maze for stoners.

THE 20TH CANNABIS CUP

FRICION, FOG AND CLOGS. BY STEVEN HAGER

The Cannabis Cup has a center of gravity, and I can feel it. Matt, Elise and I are sitting down to breakfast at the Barbizon Palace, across the street from Amsterdam's Central Station. If anything were to happen to any one of us, this event would certainly spin into instant chaos. In fact, it already has, since we've just discovered the annual Sinterklaas parade is shutting down the city tomorrow exactly when we're supposed to be launching a fleet of buses from the front of the Victoria Hotel. "No battle plan survives the first contact with friction," I mutter as I survey the \$45 breakfast served in a room with no windows and really bad feng shui. I knew it was going to be difficult surviving the recent collapse of the dollar versus the euro, but I didn't realize the Dutch version of Santa Claus was going to sabotage us. How would we get our attendees to the expo on the outskirts of the city if the smoker-friendly buses couldn't get through? The 20th Cup hadn't even officially started and already we'd slammed into a major clog.

The Function of Ceremonies

Everything is made of energy. Energy travels in waves, and waves have centers. In the human body, these are called chakras. I like to talk about psychic energy in terms of gravity because unlike telepathy, which some people can't relate to, gravity is something everyone understands. You can't see it, touch it or hear it, but you know it's there. When psychic energy harmonizes, it amplifies. The bigger the ceremony, the more focused the meditation, the greater the amplification and the stronger the gravity.

When you affect psychic gravity, that process is called "magic." Energies can harmonize, or they can become dissonant. The human mind is a complex energy system composed of many facets, and the integration of these elements has a center of gravity. When your psyche loses this center, confusion and identity crisis arise. Societies of people also have centers of psychic gravity. So do ceremonies. All ceremonies depend on magic, and most magic



is about harmonization. Most family ceremonies are designed to amplify affection, and the family's center of gravity is revealed by the seating arrangements at the ceremonial feast. Ceremonies are our best defense against depression, but they can also become triggers for breakdowns. That's because energy systems have antagonists. The antagonist is the negative pole. (As above, so below.) So while ceremonies create harmonization, they also reveal dissonance. A typical reaction to dissonance at a ceremony is direct confrontation. This can create flame-outs, followed by burn-outs and meltdowns. The counterculture represents peace culture, so we deal with dissonance in a kinder, gentler fashion. It's better to dance with dissonance, avoiding friction, fog and clogs whenever possible. This is known as "staying in the flow." If you are a true master of a situation, you can even drain energy off an antagonist and amplify your own gravity.



Fantuzzi rocks the expo.



Redman freestyled for 30 minutes at the expo.



Clogs are the natural enemy of energy. Friction can slow energy down, but clogs result when movement stops. Depression is a psychic clog. It's perfectly okay to have unhappy feelings, but it becomes a problem when you can't move past them to more positive spaces. The most important thing that Stephen Gaskin taught me about enlightenment is that it isn't like ringing a bell or climbing a mountain. "It's not like you get somewhere and stay there forever," explained Gaskin. "Nobody is enlightened all the time." The psychic gravity of ceremonies draws people to positive places, but they can't stay there forever.

Fog is like friction in that it slows movement, but fog is different from friction in that it's not based on dissonance, unexpected snafus or communication breakdowns. Fog is self-delusion, similar to being helplessly love-struck or paralyzed by fear. At the Cup, fog creates bliss bunnies who can't find or fix problems because they think problems don't exist anymore. In moderation, cannabis enhances harmonization, but ingesting large amounts produces fog.

I didn't start out my life seeking to become some sort of self-styled expert on psychic energy. But this is where I find myself after 20 years of throwing ceremonies around cannabis for HIGH TIMES magazine. During major ceremonies, my sensitivity to psychic energy increases, and there is no bigger ceremony than the Cannabis Cup.

A Brief History of the Cup

I had no idea what I was getting into when I created the Cannabis Cup. I thought it might help bring attention to the importance of breeding quality cannabis seeds. When the event started in 1987, there were only a handful of cannabis-seed merchants around the world. (Now there are hundreds.) The first Cup was attended by me, a photographer and a former grower, Dr. Indoors. Three seed companies entered—two Dutch, one American. The entire event was a two-day affair; there wasn't even an awards show. It was so under-funded that I refused to attend the next four Cups, instead sending a different member of the editorial staff to supervise each year. To make matters more difficult, the Dutch laws regarding seed companies kept shifting, and we were never sure who was actually going to enter. Then, at the 6th Cup, the event was finally opened to the public, and 50 people attended, including me. The first 420 Cannabis Cup councils took place, and the trademark silver award cups—so beautifully designed by Robin "The Hammer" Ludwig—appeared. The 7th Cup brought the emergence of the Cannabis Cup Hemp Expo, which inspired imitation expos all over Europe as the hemp industry exploded for a few years (before imploding). But the 8th Cup was a truly landmark event, because it was the first Cup to fully engage the issue of cannabis spiritual rights. After eight years, the Cup began establishing a center of gravity based on cannabis spirituality.

Alex Grey, the world's most celebrated psy-

chedelic artist, created the official art that year, and Stephen Gaskin, who had petitioned the Supreme Court for cannabis spiritual rights, spoke at the 420 ceremonies. These were two of the most enlightened people I knew, and I used their wisdom to help fashion appropriate ceremonies. I also hired Garrick Beck to direct the stage shows. Garrick brought over a circus troupe of Rainbow Family veterans to create an *Alice in Wonderland* theme. We had dancers, singers, drummers, stage designers, costume designers—it was all happening on a scale that I couldn't have imagined five years previously. But even though the Cup attracted hundreds of attendees, it also lost money, which quickly led to my removal as producer.

The next eight Cups were produced by Mike Esterson, who was running the (now-defunct) Cup travel agency, 420 Tours. Fortunately, Mike and I had a good working relationship, and he let me fashion the annual themes. For the 10th Cup, I created the Counterculture Hall of Fame, and Bob Marley became the first inductee. Rita Marley flew in from Jamaica to help us celebrate. At the end of the Awards Show, Rita invited the winners up onstage. She grabbed a red display box containing a dozen Sensi Seeds strains and threw samples into the crowd. A giant freestyle jam broke out that included impromptu raps from the rival coffeeshop managers. All the winners danced together. I had an epiphany that year. Rita helped me realize the importance of improvisation, and for the next five years, the Cup ended with the winners dancing onstage while the performers freestyled and the musicians jammed.

Then came the 16th Cup, which I wisely decided to skip. It included a new, more expensive venue for the expo and the introduction of the euro—both of which resulted in massive financial losses and the end of Mike Esterson's reign. So, for the 17th Cup, I found myself back in the producer's chair.

The Importance of Improvisation

Anyone who studies breeding quickly realizes that nature loves diversity. "Hybrid vigor" explains the explosion of genetic creativity that takes place when widely divergent genes are brought together for the first time. Nature also shows a disdain for a lack of diversity: When families intermingle over generations, mental retardation and mental illness can result.

During the 1700s, New Orleans became America's ultimate melting pot. It started as a French colony and was one of the few that worked out a respectful relationship with the local natives. In 1764, the colony was sold to Spain, but in 1800, Napoleon took it back; three years later, he sold it to the United States. Two years later, six thousand refugees from Haiti arrived in a city already populated by French, Spanish, English, Irish, Scottish, Germans, Africans and Native Americans. Soon the number of Africans forcibly transported to the Americas would top 400,000. Slaves were in great demand for sugar plantations in the

Caribbean and cotton and tobacco plantations in North America. Africans clung to their culture, but after South Carolina's Stono Rebellion of 1739 (when drums were reportedly used to signal attacks on white settlers), drumming and all forms of "primitive" ceremony were outlawed in every city and state in America—except New Orleans. For decades, an area on the outskirts of the French Quarter was used by people of all colors, who gathered to trade, buy and sell, as well as to celebrate with drumming, singing and dancing. Native American costumes were embraced by the transplanted Africans. Both cultures believed in ceremonial communion with ancestors, and both had been suppressed by Europeans, so it was easy for them to harmonize.

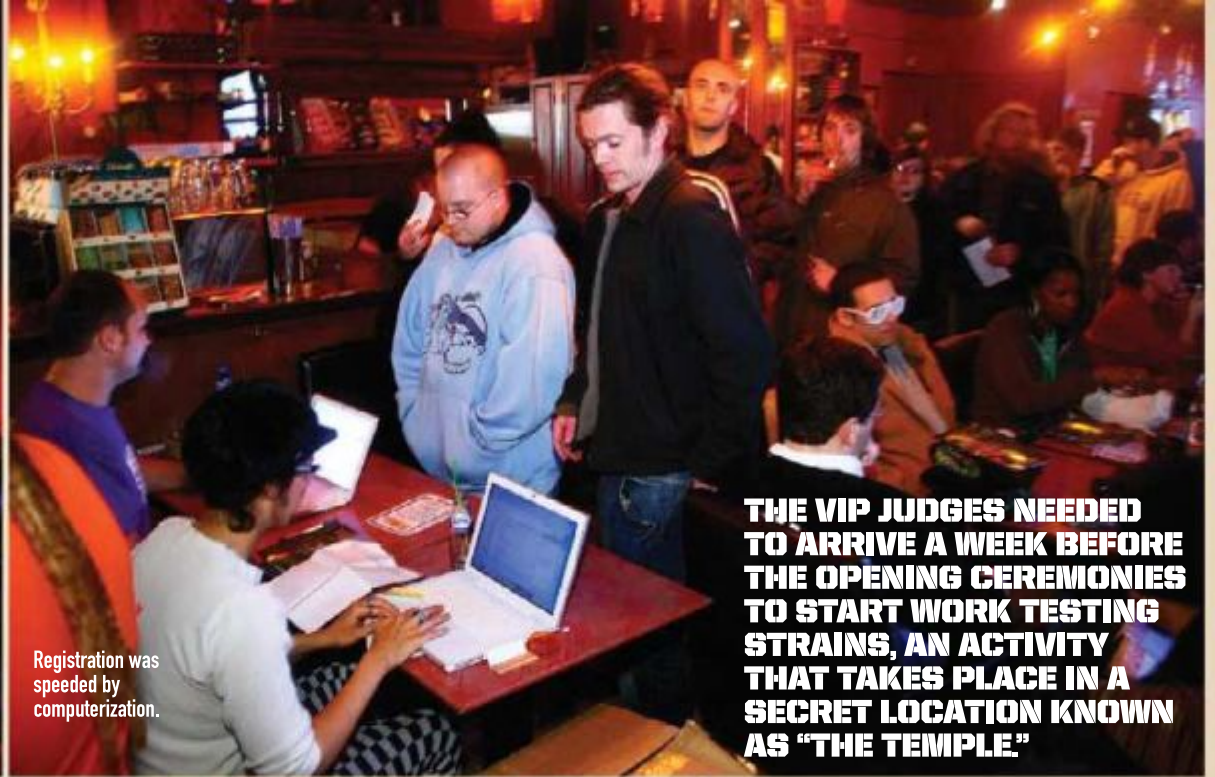
In some early reports of life at Congo Square, different African tribes occupied separate parts of the square. But at some point they converged and began to sing and dance in unison. Solo performances alternated with group choruses, developing a call-and-response form that became known as the Bamboula. In 1817, the New Orleans City Council recognized the cultural importance of the Sunday slave gatherings and established Congo Square as North America's sole sanctuary for pagan song and dance.

Visitors from out of town would soon travel to New Orleans just to watch the ceremonies. In 1819, these visitors included Benjamin Latrobe, the architect of the US Capitol, who described a number of dance rings, most of which contained a man and a woman in the center, but some of which contained two women. "They each held a coarse handkerchief, extended by the corners, in their hands," wrote Latrobe, "and set to each other in a miserably dull and slow figure, hardly moving their feet or bodies." Four years later, Timothy Flint would contradict Latrobe's placid description of the dancers, writing that "everything is license and revelry." But a middle-class African-American from Tennessee named James Thomas was probably the most accurate when he wrote that the celebrants "indulged in dancing with music made by thumping on the head of a barrel with a skin stretched over it. The performer would thump on it and carry on a chant. Another would beat the sides with two cobs or sticks. The dancers used to wear pieces of tin or some substitute on their legs to make a sort of jingle."

In 1856, a new law banning blacks from playing drums and horns suddenly appeared in New Orleans, obviously aimed at shutting down the activities at Congo Square. After more than 40 years of spontaneous weekly ritual, Congo Square went silent. The music didn't die, however; it merely moved indoors, mostly to houses of ill repute in the city's red-light district, where other laws were already being broken, and where no one complained about the "savage" elements of the new music. Soon, every brothel in New Orleans would have a house band. Another ubiquitous part of this scene was the rapidly spreading use of cannabis by the musicians.



Testing is actually hard work.



Registration was speeded by computerization.

THE VIP JUDGES NEEDED TO ARRIVE A WEEK BEFORE THE OPENING CEREMONIES TO START WORK TESTING STRAINS, AN ACTIVITY THAT TAKES PLACE IN A SECRET LOCATION KNOWN AS "THE TEMPLE."



The HT staff had to judge 80 strains in one week.



DNA and Grey Area missed the Cup by one vote.



Doc and Dom wow the expo with their Ookie Kabookie.

Was cannabis smoking at Congo Square another example of the cross-fertilization of Native, African and European cultures? Probably so. In any case, we now know that the improvisations at Congo Square gave birth to the blues, jazz and rock'n'roll. And it happened because people of all colors were allowed to congregate and improvise together. Rock'n'roll is the result of cultural hybrid vigor.

It would take me many years to figure this out. And it helped that I had a background in theater as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois, where I was introduced to the work of Viola Spolin, the grandmother of the improv movement, who learned about the intuitive self while studying at Neva Boyd's Group Work School in Chicago in the 1920s. Spolin designed exercises to open up people's intuitive energy. She taught her students how to "go with the flow." At first, these techniques were used to train actors, but eventually Spolin realized that her work had spiritual ramifications. When people successfully opened up their intuitive selves, a massive wave of creative energy followed. That's what happened in Congo Square, and that's the energy we're trying to manifest at the Cannabis Cup.



Tommy and Shelby Chong arrive in Amsterdam.

The Cup Video Project

Every year, a panel of VIP judges is assembled to prejudge the coffeeshop strains and give awards to the seed companies who enter the Cannabis Cup. Usually, this panel is composed of the Counterculture Hall of Fame inductees, the Freedom Fighter of the Year and a few recognized Dutch cannabis experts. There was an early consensus at HIGH TIMES to induct Cheech and Chong for the 20th Cup. This seemed like a brilliant idea, getting Cheech and Chong to reunite in Amsterdam and then filming

the results. I spent weeks talking to Cheech's manager, who seemed receptive. However, Cheech kept raising the bar every time I fulfilled his previous requirements. It soon became obvious that he had little interest in reuniting with Tommy Chong, in Amsterdam or anywhere else. At least not this year. Tommy, however, was a different story: He was eager to visit Amsterdam, and all he requested was a business-class ticket for himself and his wife Shelby, along with a reservation at a five-star hotel and a per diem for expenses. But Tommy has a busy schedule and wouldn't be able to arrive in Amsterdam until two days after the Opening Ceremonies. The VIP judges, on the other hand, needed to arrive a week before the Opening Ceremonies to start work testing strains, an activity that takes place in a secret location known as "the Temple."

Since it was the Cup's 20th anniversary, HIGH TIMES wanted to produce a video. After urging the company to get more involved in video and film production for the last 20 years, I was finally going to get a budget to produce a professional documentary. Over the past year, I'd visited a number of broadcast and cable networks to pitch the idea of a HIGH TIMES TV show. I produced a 15-minute reel of five ideas that included a counterculture version of *The Daily Show*, a HIGH TIMES history of comedy, and a reality show based inside the HIGH TIMES office. Since the reality show was the only concept that appealed to the networks, I began filming a pilot, starting with the first Miss HIGH TIMES pageant in Jamaica. But

Cannabis cup winners!

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"the grass is always greener on the other side"

Tasman Haze

2nd prize - Best Sativa - Hightimes Cup 2007

3rd prize - IC Mag 420 - Amsterdam 2007

Mako Haze

1st prize - Best Sativa - Hightimes Cup 2006

3rd prize - Seed Company Bio - Highlife Cup 2007

3rd prize - IC Mag 420 - Amsterdam 2007

Alegria

1st prize - Biological - Highlife Cup 2007

3rd prize - IC Mag 420 - Amsterdam 2007

South Star

3rd prize - Spannabiz Cup - Barcelona 2007

White Island - easy to grow skunk/sativa deluxe.

Milky Way - heavy yielding indica with lots of character.

2 Pounder - a delight to grow outdoors or in.

Mt Cook - pungent indica for those that like the full body kick.

Kiwiskunk - great for beginners, old type skunk with a twist.

Ray's Choice - sweet and fruity sativa/indica cross with a suprising yield.

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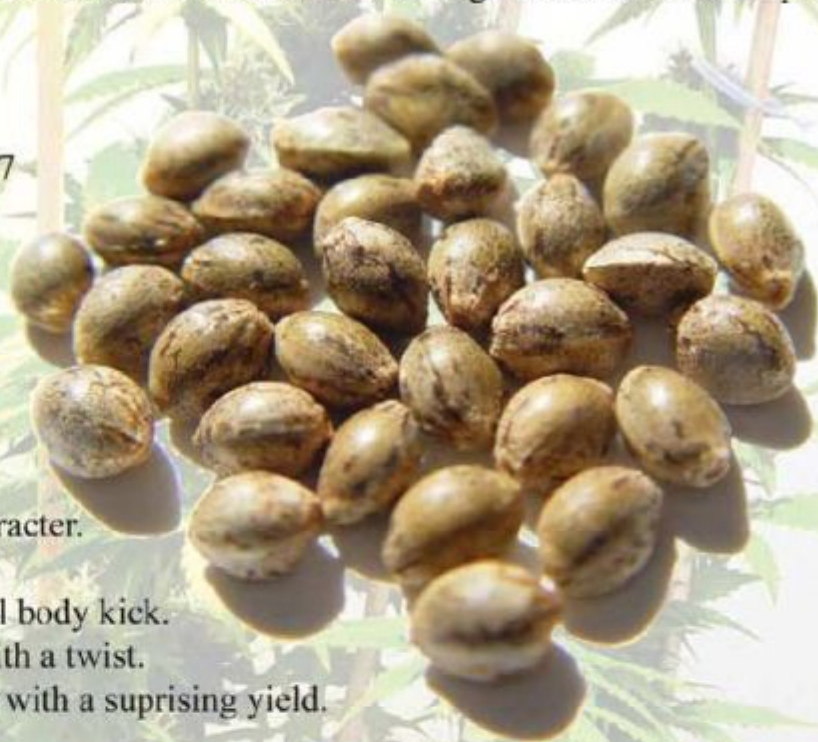
Mexican Haze - Sweet and spicy 'old-skool' haze.

An Amsterdam favourite and well recieved at the 2007 HighTimes Cannabis Cup

Ocean's Twelve Haze - Classic sativa in honour of that classic movie.

Cloud 9 - A superb Indica hybrid with a taste of it's own.

Picked as favourite at the 2007 Hightimes Cannabis Cup!



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CRYSTAL
GREY AREA



the idea of a reality show didn't appeal to everyone at HIGH TIMES—in fact, there was a lot of resistance to the concept. Eventually, enough people fell in line to get some sample episodes up on YouTube, and I brought in two professional comedians to help carry the show and play our house pot dealers. It wasn't strictly a "reality" show, since we were working with some scripted elements and actors. Initially, I'd wanted Redman to play the pot dealer: He's a natural comedian, he used to be a street dealer, and he already is a major movie star. But I knew that getting Redman to show up in the office to shoot scenes without a contract or big money on the table wasn't going to be easy, so I approached two unknown comedians from Brooklyn instead. In homage to Redman, we named the main dealer Doc, which is Red-

man's real nickname. The show was getting massive views on YouTube and MySpace, so I decided to build the Cup video around the characters in our show. The HIGH TIMES staff would become the VIP judges. And Doc and his sidekick Dom would come to Amsterdam and enter a strain into the contest. "It's going to be a Borat movie," I told the staff. "No one will know Doc and Dom are really actors." Meanwhile, Redman agreed to attend the Cup. The pieces of this project seemed to be falling into place. There was only one possible glitch: The HIGH TIMES staff were supposed to be the workers at the event, registering judges, selling products, counting votes and maintaining security. Could the staff actually test 80 strains of pot and hash and still be able to work 15-hour shifts every day? Only time would tell.



HIGHER TIMES



CANNABIS CUP WINNERS

G-13 HAZE
BARNEY'S



SUPER SILVER HAZE
GREENHOUSE UNITED



CHOCOLOPE
GREY AREA



CANNABIS CUP

- 1) G-13 Haze - Barney's
- 2) Chocolope - Grey Area
- 3) Super Silver Haze - Greenhouse United

INDICA CUP

- 1) Top Dog - Amnesia Seeds
- 2) Crimea Blue - Barney's Farm
- 3) Reserva Privada #18 - Reserva Privada

SATIVA CUP

- 1) Kaia Kush-Apothecary
- 2) Tasman Haze - Kiwi Seeds
- 3) The Purps - BC Bud Depot

NEDER HASH

- 1) Violator Ice-lator - Barney's
- 2) Bubble Mania - Greenhouse United
- 3) Grey Crystals - Grey Area

IMPORT HASH

- 1) Triple X - Barney's
- 2) King Hassan Supreme - Greenhouse United
- 3) Rifman's Habibi - De Dampkring

GLASS CUP

- 1) THSeeds Glass with Snob
- 2) The Zong
- 3) Green Devil Glass with Glass Chandler & Bong

PRODUCT CUP

- 1) Barney's Gift Bag - Barney's
- 2) Vapezilla Vaporizer - Wicked Roots
- 3) Vapostar Vaporizer - Vapostar

BEST BOOTH

- 1) Barney Farm
- 2) DNA Seeds
- 3) Greenhouse Seeds

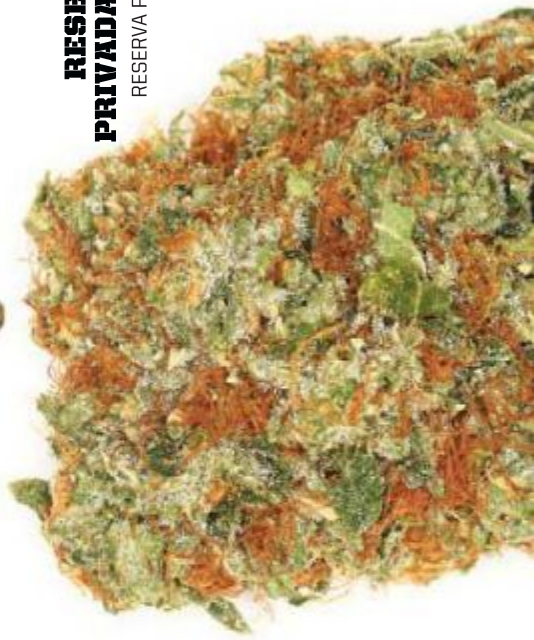
TOP DOG
AMNESIA



CRIMEA BLUE
BARNEY'S FARM



**RESERVA
PRIVADA #18**
RESERVA PRIVADA





THE PURPS
BC BUD DEPOT



TAZMAN HAZE
KIWI SEEDS



KAIJA KUSH
APOTHECARY



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PHILIP AND SHARON
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THE POWERZONE & THE MILK WEG

NOVEMBER 18-23, 2007



THE 30-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN

By Nico Escondido

I was a Cannabis Cup virgin. In fact, I'd never even been to Amsterdam until the 20th Cup! For me, the Cup was a journey that will never end. Perhaps it was brought on by the tightening of the HIGH TIMES family, or the beautiful people of Amsterdam with their transcendental thinking. The street names, like Keizersgracht, Heinekenplein and Spaloogen-dooen (okay, maybe I made that last one up), had me choking on words as I tried to ask for directions. In truth, I got lost for hours—multiple times. Upon regrouping each evening, those who were MIA for the day would fall victim to cries of “Meltdown!” (Cup lingo for those who missed assignments or failed to appear at the 9 a.m. staff meetings).

Most days, however, I would work like a dog. We all did. And some of my toughest work included the daunting tasks of a celebrity judge, charged with sampling dozens of varieties every day. There were *indicas*, *sativas* and hash—import and Neder. It was in the Temple that the likes of Tommy Chong and Redman, as well as band members from moe. and HonkyTonk HomeSlice, would join selected members of HIGH TIMES. One day, from 11 A.M. to 7 P.M., I smoked 21 *indica* strains. Then the rest of the crew came stumbling in and immediately the hash tasting began.

Redman became the catalyst in pushing us to our limits, enticing us to roll “thousand-dollar blunts”—a process in which huge globs of hash were thinly flattened and rolled around thick lines of bud. Clear rolling papers were placed around the blunt to keep fingers sticky-free, and the rest went up in smoke.

Symbolism and the Collective Unconscious

Every year at the Cannabis Cup, glass jars are coded and filled with cannabis strains. And every year, the codes were inevitably the same (A, B, C, etc.). But at the 18th Cup honoring John Trudell, Alex Whiteplume and the American Indian Movement, a major breakthrough occurred: The coffee-shop strains were given animal totems, and the seed-company strains were given sacred Lakota names. It put a structure on the ceremonies that transformed the event. For the 20th Cup, I decided the codes should be based on a countercultural Tarot deck customized to our crew.

The 14th century was a time of immense turmoil in Europe, beginning with France capturing the papacy and then conspiring to murder the Knights Templar, the world's richest bankers. During the Hundred Years' War between France and England that ensued, the papacy returned to Rome and the French elected their own pope, launching the great

papal schism. The Black Death appeared in 1340 and soon killed 30 million Europeans. And a mysterious secret society called “The Society of Smokers” appeared in Italy and France. So little is known about them that one suspects their history (like the rest of the history of cannabis) has been systematically purged from the historical record. Fortunately, a medieval manuscript known as the Chantilly Codex survived and contains some of the group's musical compositions. The Society of Smokers created secular music that conflicted with the Catholic Church's desire for a musical monopoly. Since tobacco had not yet been introduced to Europe, it seems obvious that they smoked cannabis or hash. I believe the Society of Smokers were the medieval version of cultural hybrid vigor, a cross-pollination of East and West, and that their ceremonies ran afoul of the Catholic Church, which was just launching its long history of torture and inquisition designed to remove all traces of alterna-



Tommy made two appearances at the expo.



Derry of Barney's swept every Cup.



Tarot cards all hand painted by Sweetbryar Ludwig.

tive spirituality from the empire.

Tarot appeared in Europe at the same time. The oldest surviving deck dates from 1410, made by the artist Bembo for use by the Vicsconzi-Sforza dynasty of Milan. The characters and scenes in the cards were taken from tableaus that had appeared in ceremonial parades for decades. The cards were used for a game similar to bridge.

Three hundred years later, Count de Gebelin was the first to theorize that Tarot contained hidden meanings which could be used for divination. By this time, many secret societies existed in Europe, and most were influenced by the Kabbalah—the study of hidden meanings and symbols in the Old Testament or Torah. It was quickly discovered that the Tarot's 22 trump cards corresponded to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and other elements of the Kabbalah's Tree of Life were also mirrored in the cards. Today, it seems obvious that astrological and ceremonial drug references were encoded into the Bible. In the 1800s, these revelations led to a resurgence in magic, Tarot and ceremonial drug use.

Another hundred years would pass before Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung would provide an entirely new interpretation of Tarot. Jung was one of the first scientists to recognize that the mind is composed of many separate elements, and during dreams, these elements work out their dissonances and establish their psychic center of gravity. Jung felt that Tarot could be used in therapy to unlock the hidden meanings of the dream life. Jung also believed in the collective unconscious, which is just another way of describing the impact of psychic gravity. By creating this new deck, I was hoping to harmonize the event and put some magic into the 20th Cup.

Peak Moments of the Cup

There were three big changes in the Cup this year, and they all created peak moments. First, the expo was moved to a giant location called the PowerZone, and the Opening Ceremonies and the Awards Show were held there. It was the first time in 13 years that the Awards Show hadn't been held at the Melkweg. And it was the first time in 16 years that anyone could experience the Awards Show without feeling squeezed by the lack of space.

Second, Craig Coffey, the HIGH TIMES director of technology, developed a plan to upgrade the registration process and vote count. His concept required a wireless hub for linking four rented laptops. In the event of a connection problem, we were prepared to use our older but slower protocols. Craig was especially concerned about speeding up the registration while putting in safeguards to prevent multiple use of the same pass code. During the pre-registration at Amnesia, Cannabis Inspector—a well-known fixture at the Cup for many years—was caught trying to register using a code that had just been used at a different computer station by his redheaded sidekick. They were both instantly apprehended by the alert Temple Dragon Crew. The Inspector got back in line, paid the 200 euros for a pass and was allowed to attend. But two days later, he was asked to surrender a Temple Dragon T-shirt he'd been presented after the 19th Cup Awards Show, which he did. He was also informed that a TDC court date had been set for the following afternoon at the expo.

Which brings us to....

Third, the first Temple Dragon Court ruled on two cases. The Inspector came first. After the charges against him were read, he protested: "I was just testing the system. Now you know your system works. That's my job—I'm the

Inspector." The more he talked, the more angry the Inspector grew. By the end of his defense, his fists were waving and his face was completely flushed. "I love HIGH TIMES!" he yelled. "I love the Cannabis Cup!" The Inspector got the crowd on his side with his passionate and heartfelt defense, and a humbled TDC decided that no further action was required. Then out came Doc and Dom—but before I can tell that story, we need to flash back to the day before, when Doc and Dom first appeared at the expo during the Bobby Black show.

Bobby introduced Doc and Dom as the owners of Big Apple Seeds, a new seed company based in New York City. Doc sat down and began to talk about Oookie Kabuki, the strain he'd supposedly grown in New York and entered into the Sativa Cup. (In fact, Oookie Kabuki was really Super Silver Haze, purchased from a local cannabis broker who considered it one of the best crops he'd seen all year.) Doc challenged the DNA boys to bring some Choclope to the stage for the first-ever Cannabis Cup bud throwdown. Robert Connell Clarke, who was sitting in the VIP room, was brought out to blind-taste the two strains and decide which was the best. After carefully testing the two strains, Clarke pronounced Oookie Kabuki the winner. It was a devastating blow to the DNA boys. Doc and Dom threw samples to the crowd and then walked back to the VIP room to celebrate. Dave Watson pushed Doc into a corner and held a 10-minute private conversation explaining why Dave Watson was the biggest cannabis baba in the world. Everyone was treating Doc like he was the new King of Cannabis or something.

The next day, I realized that it would be bad

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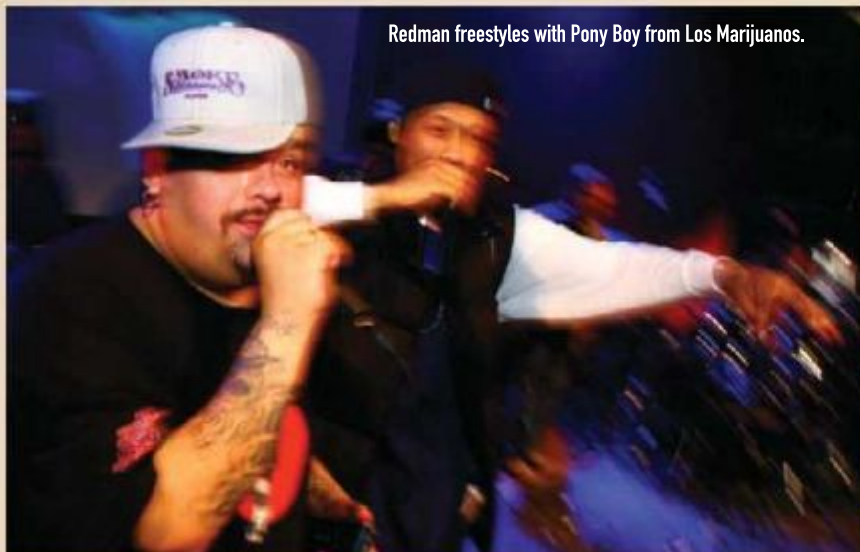


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Redman freestyles with Pony Boy from Los Marijuanos.



Blaze 1 and Pyrx blew the lid off the Melkweg.



The HIGH TIMES staff and Miss HIGH TIMES.



HonkyTonk HomeSlice at the expo.

karma to let our hoodwink ride out through the Cup unchallenged without making a reality adjustment, so Doc and Dom were called to the Temple Dragon Court to face charges that they'd lobbied the HIGH TIMES staff to pick their strain for the Sativa Cup. Since the seed-company judging is done blind, it's a serious infraction for a company to give weed to the VIP judges with the real name attached. Big Apple Seeds was found guilty, and Ookie Kabuki was disqualified from the 20th Cup. "This means it didn't win the bud throwdown, either," I told DNA, "so Choclope wins by default." The DNA boys looked very, very relieved.

We had a lot of great music at the Cup this year, including performances by moe., HonkyTonk HomeSlice, Los Marijuanos, the Homegrown Band and Muck Sticky. But the unexpected musical sensation of the event turned out to be an unknown band from Northern California called Pyrx. When reports came back that Pyrx had blown the lid off the Old Hall at the Melkweg, I lured the band to the expo, where they played an entire set for the 420 show on Awards Night. Later that evening, the leader of the band, Blaze 1, got on

the drums and led an all-star jam that included members of HonkyTonk HomeSlice and the Homegrown Band. We've done a lot of improvs over the years, but nothing has come close to the jams that unfolded this year.

Redman's improv the day before really stands out as my favorite peak moment of the 20th Cup. He was a somewhat elusive figure, showing up frequently at the Temple to sample entries, but making only one appearance at the expo. When Redman finally arrived, I immediately tried to talk him into going onstage and freestyling with the Homegrown Band. "I can't freestyle for 30 minutes," Redman protested. Eventually, however, I was able to coax him onstage, where he *did* freestyle for 30 minutes. Later that same night, Redman appeared at the Melkweg, and I couldn't help but notice that a couple of the raps that had spontaneously emerged at the jam session reappeared as part of his show. For the first time, it felt like we were really channeling the energy of Congo Square. But maybe you don't believe me—in which case, you'll just have to check out the upcoming 20th Cannabis Cup DVD and see for yourself. ✨



CONFESSIONS OF A CELEBRITY JUDGE By Chris Simunek

When I was first informed that I was being sent to the Cannabis Cup as a celebrity judge, my first thought was: "On what planet am I considered a celebrity? I might like to buy some real estate there." Sure enough, upon arrival in Amsterdam, I was given entree into the top-secret Temple, where bold-face names such as Redman and Stephen Gaskin mixed with B-listers like myself, Danny Danko, Rick Cusick, Nico Escondido and a host of others. Imagine the set of *The Surreal Life* with rampant marijuana smoking and you have some idea of the scene.

For the most part, I concentrated on the *sativa* varieties. My first round included (as I later learned) Choclope from DNA Genetics, Super Silver Haze from Greenhouse, Mexicana from Nirvana,

Tasman Haze from Kiwi Seeds and Kaia Kush from Apothecary.

There was no alcohol at the Temple, which I found stifling. Some say your judgment is impaired on alcohol; I argue that it's just different. Marijuana makes you a slave to your environment, urging you to respect the trees and the bugs and the idiot in the corner, while alcohol enhances the human instinct to dominate your environment, to make it work for you. Hence its tendency to make people belligerent and/or completely full of shit. The two in tandem help you reach a middle ground. I caught Danny Danko taking a breather from someone who'd cornered him with a long, rambling tale about the time his parents first found pot in his lunchbox, and he remarked: "We're here to judge marijuana, right? Well, this guy is compromising the integrity of my high."

In the end, I went with the Choclope, though I had high regard for the Super Silver Haze and the Kaia Kush. Much thanks goes to HIGH TIMES for allowing me to walk out of that house every day to the beautiful, canal-lined streets of Amsterdam and think: *Life will never go any easier on me than this.*

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AN INTERVIEW WITH TONY SERRA

In 1985, HIGH TIMES turned readers on to Tony Serra with the aptly titled interview “California’s Counterculture Counselor” (September 1985). Back then, HT referred to the attorney as “just the sort of guy you’d like to have around when the Feds break down your front door.” Twenty-two years later, Tony Serra is still that sort of guy. Talk about street cred: Serra has represented the Black Panthers’ Huey Newton, the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Hells Angels, Earth First! and marijuana revolutionaries Dennis Peron and Brownie Mary. He’s currently working on several medical-marijuana cases.

After nearly 40 years spent fighting for American civil liberties in court, jail and the street, Serra was locked up for tax evasion last year. He described his 10-month stay in a federal camp as “benign,” but penned what is now a Nobel-worthy emancipation proclamation for the incarcerated in the widely circulated “Letter from Lompoc.”

HIGH TIMES caught up with Serra at a hotel in New York City, where he and his sons Ivory and Shelter consumed a steady stream of marijuana smoke throughout our time together. Serra not only discussed legal strategy and recounted instances of attempted set-ups; he also explained why pot pisses off the federal government so much. Interview by John Veit, photos by Ivory Serra

You were just in jail. You must have heard a lot of tales about people getting set up.

I’ve been in this a long time. Most drug cases have informants. We have more nomenclature for informants than any other country. We have material informants, participatory informants, anonymous informants; we have reliable informants. We have confidential sources, CRTI’s, CS’s—a whole body of law that pertains to informants that no country has ever had. We are infiltrated by informants. Every case has informants. The federal system is monopolized by informants.

Of course they want to get lawyers, if they can. Lawyers have to be more paranoid and more protective. A lot of times, I will interview people by walking around the block with them. I don’t want to be recorded, so you get out in traffic and walk. We put the radio on, so we talk under the radio, which obliterates the signal. I don’t do that often—only when I think I’m being set up.

Have you seen instances of this system of informants in the current medical-marijuana crackdown?

I just finished trying a marijuana case in federal court. I represented a lawyer. He’s 53 years old; he’s got an impeccable record. His wife is a doctor; she has an impeccable record. She got breast cancer. They both had kind of an epiphany: They wanted to help people. They opened up a clinic, where, according to California law, they were legally dispensing marijuana. They were convicted [in federal court], and about eight people testified against them who were given governmental immunity. Now they

are going to go to prison for five years for each of them. So it’s not delusional that this country is like 1984.

Many times, you will have an informant introduce you to an undercover officer for a controlled delivery. It’s body-wired, many times videoed. If it’s not videoed, they strip-search the informant, give him marked funds. If he’s not going to have a body wire, they will send him in after they strip-search him, and then as soon as he gets out, they’ll strip-search him again. And then he brings them contraband. They will serve a search warrant soon thereafter, if not immediately, and they are obviously after the marked money. But most of the time, there will be a wire. They want seizures; federal court especially wants seizures.

Explain how you use contempt as a legal strategy.

I’ve been in a lot of jails because I was, you know, robustly adversarial as a young lawyer. So I did time in San Mateo, San Bruno, San Francisco, Marin County, Lompoc as a young lawyer, now as an older lawyer. At one time, I prided myself that I had been in custody probably more than any other lawyer on the left.

You go for contempt. Contempt has a strategy. You’re not releasing your ego or vanity or adversarial spirit randomly—you are trying for an objective. I had a Black Student Union alleged bomber at San Francisco State around ’67, ’68. There was violence; there was action. He had allegedly brought explosives to San Francisco State to blow up something. I had to break the sequence of events. We walk right straight up, and I start some contrived argument and walk

right out of court. They’re screaming, “That’s contemptuous!”

So you go off to jail. The case is postponed—I think we got a long continuance—and they offered me a year at county for my client rather than state penitentiary. Go to county, you can do sheriff’s parole, very easy time, work furloughs, etc., etc. ... So the thing is contempt.

These days, things seem more mechanized in terms of not letting people obfuscate the process with theatrics.

I agree with you: No one is doing that. We are sheep. The legal profession, for the most part, is cowardly. They are not speaking out. The legal profession sees all the transgressions of law enforcement—they see all of the inequities of the informant system, the mandatory-sentencing system—but they do very little.

They should boycott, they should write, they should protest. They should demonstrate. They’re quiet. They sit on their hands. They make a lot of bread. They are not like in the ’60s. Very few lawyers are activist. They’re not organized. The National Lawyers Guild, which was kind of left-leaning, is more like a supper club than any kind of voice of dissent. Dissent has been repressed. The lawyers are cowards. That’s why, when the revolution comes, the lawyers will be shot first. So don’t look to law for activism; lawyers are cowards or they wouldn’t be lawyers. And they are compromisers—their client goes to prison, and they go out and have a steak dinner.

There’s an election coming up. Do you foresee any positive change on the horizon?

There is no meaningful distinction between the parties. As a consequence, I’ve never believed in the electoral system. I’ve never voted. I don’t believe in the two-party system.

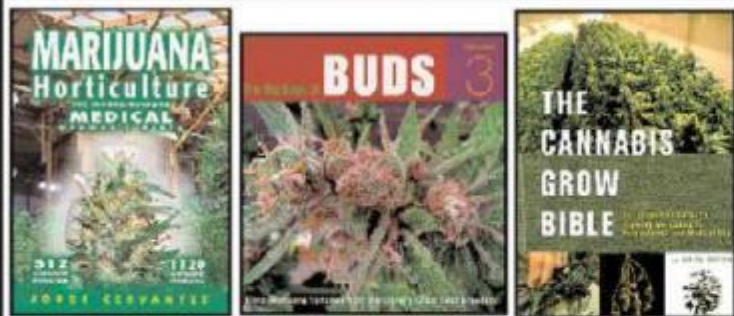
From Clinton forward, we’ve lost more freedom and basic civil liberties than any other time in history. In that sense, we’ve lost most of our Fourth Amendment rights. And that’s forgetting all the terrorist-type legislation—just normal Fourth Amendment precedence has been eroded so much that there is only an echo of what it was in the ’60s. There were valid search warrants required for so many things that are not required nowadays. And there was more due process; there was no mandatory sentencing.

You would think you have a right to bail, but



Attorney Tony Serra catches up with HIGH TIMES twenty-two years after first appearing in the magazine.

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THE HIGH TIMES INTERVIEW
 Serra says: "From my perspective, it is a national disgrace what the DEA is doing to the state's legal medical-marijuana dispensaries and the personnel who work there."

in the federal system, especially in the drug cases, there's a consequence of preventive detention where they don't have a right to bail. The presumption is against bail. You are always taught "innocent until proven guilty" and that you have a right to bail, but, in many cases, that's not true any longer.

After 9/11, the jury pools are in fear and trembling. So it is very difficult to take on law enforcement in front of a jury. They've got the prosecutors on their side. Most of the judges are ex-prosecutors. They have infiltrated everything. The ATF and the FBI actually aid the DEA in their drug investigations.

What's happening with your medical-marijuana cases?

Two hundred and fifty of our dispensaries were served with notices that [the Feds] were going to take their property by forfeiture unless it ceases. I am representing people out of Bakersfield facing continuing-criminal-enterprise charges—a 20-year-minimum mandatory. They are going into states where it's legal and prosecuting persons who are acting legally under state law. In the early stages in California, when they wanted to stop medical dispensaries, they would go by injunctive relief—and that's civil, so no one goes to jail. Now they are going by criminal.

People like these pay federal taxes, state taxes, have 23 employees. They are doing a service to the medical community. In our office, we've had two 10-year-minimum mandatories. The one that just got convicted was five years. There is a whole contingent of growers in California that are growing for various dispensaries that are doing fives and tens and sixes. And these people are nonviolent, no criminal record, thought they were making a humanistic contribution. They were making a little money, but probably

not, you know, excessive. The marijuana growers who grow for medical reasons are very altruistic, and they have, without mercy, been taken out by the Feds. From my perspective, it is a national disgrace what the DEA is doing to the state's legal medical-marijuana dispensaries and the personnel who work there.

What accounts for the Feds' ardent persecution of pot smokers?

There is a view that says people who smoke pot are of a different ilk. They are more enlightened, aesthetic, idealistic; therefore, they are not as what the government would call them—sacrificial patriotic. They are not buying the political ideologies of the day. If you took a statistic on how many people oppose the war in Iraq, or oppose war, or oppose American imperialism, or oppose the oil economy that runs the planet, you would find that a great percentage are pot smokers and young people. And the government fears that. So it's seditious, mind-altering, mind-enlightening, and ultimately treason, because you are not going to be a Marine. You see all the ads for Marines? How many pot smokers who see these ads on television are going to go out and become a Marine? Go over and kill for the good of the oil industry? Not very many.

What do you think about the advances in the genetics of marijuana cultivation?

It's like 200 years ago in France, when the wine industry was born and they created various strains, and there were all kinds of experts with their clones and specialties to help develop their wine. That's what's happening in Northern California with marijuana now. We produce some of the best in the world.

You obviously still get high. How do you balance being a smoker and being a lawyer?



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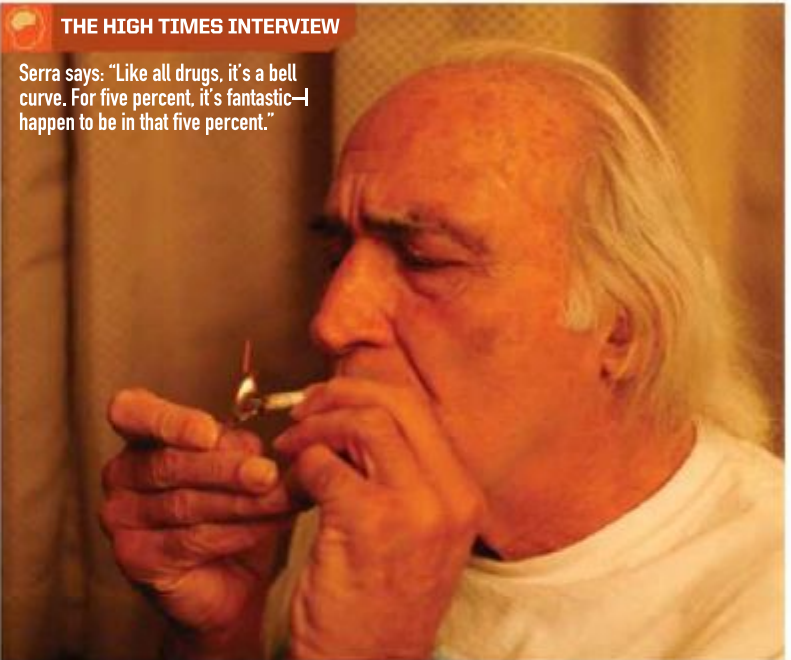
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THE HIGH TIMES INTERVIEW

Serra says: "Like all drugs, it's a bell curve. For five percent, it's fantastic—I happen to be in that five percent."

Let me tell you an interesting thing. I've been smoking for about 45 years, almost daily. I won't smoke when I go do a case in, say, Nevada or Boston, or where I think they are still rigid or conservative. I won't expose myself because I have a gig. I am a lawyer; I don't want to bring bad karma on my client. But when I am in the Bay Area, I smoke daily.

I don't smoke obsessively. I must do law with an unfettered linear perspective. Marijuana gives you more of an illusionary, transcendental perspective—that's why it's so beautiful. It's spiritual, it's enlarging—you see nexus connections between various things.

But that's not beneficial in front of a jury?

No, you would be too grandiose in front of a jury. You would be too poetic. You would be too persistent in your adversarial spirit. I smoke mostly in the evening. Understand, I am a trial lawyer—I do back-to-back jury trials. A trial lawyer has to have a steel trap for a memory. Propaganda always says that marijuana impairs memory. Well, it hasn't impaired my memory—at least to the degree where I don't remember things that are required for cross-examination. For cross-examination, it has to be more or less photographic.

I can do photographic-memory cross-examination for about 36 hours. I can read it and then—you know how you see it in your mind? 'It's on the fourth page, it's in the third paragraph, and it's the third word. It's 'green'! It's not 'blue'! Isn't that right?!' I can still do that. I am the experiment. I am not passive, lazy or self-indulgent; I don't sit around eating candy all day. I work 14 hours a day, six or seven days a week, on back-to-back trials.

Marijuana has only helped me; it has never hurt me. 'What kind of argument am I going to give? What kind of metaphor am I going to give? Where am I going to be dramatic? Where am I going to be recessive? How am I going to approach a certain witness?' Lots of strategy.

Let's pretend I'm reading, preparing for a case, and I'm smoking a joint. I'm writing furiously. I'll write down 20 points. The next morning I'll look at it, and I can only use five of the 20. The others are too literary, too poetic, they're metaphoric, they're allegorical. So you can't use it all. It overloads your imagination.

Yet, to an extent, you view marijuana as an aid?

Maybe it's self-indulgence; on another level, it's meditative—it's a pursuit of serenity, tranquility; it's elimination of stress. It's elimination of paranoia, sometimes—and many times, overt physical pain.

But understand this: Like all drugs, it's a bell curve. For five percent, it's fantastic—I happen to be in that five percent. Five percent on the other side, it's poison. Ten percent over here, it's really great; 20 percent on the other side, take it or leave it. So it's where you find yourself on the bell curve that relates to whether or not it's going to provide a benefit to you. It's relative. Marijuana isn't for everyone, just like whiskey isn't for everyone. Cocaine isn't for everyone. Methamphetamine isn't for everyone. Heroin isn't for everyone. But for the few who find it beneficial, it's a good thing.

But there are more that find marijuana beneficial than find the other drugs beneficial. Because it is an enhancement—a mental enhancement. ✨

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