

# WEED WORLD™

ISSUE 127

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NEW STRAINS

**STILL IN THE GAME** WEED WORLD  
TALKS TO SUBCOOL

THE TIPPING POINT  
**GREEN RUSH**  
ON THE HORIZON

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# 2016



# THE TIPPING POINT

BY FRENCHY CANNOLI

Chair image: Pexel



**The election is behind us in California, the controversial Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA) passed, and we are now looking at a possibly over-policed, overregulated and overtaxed future with little potential of economic survival for most our small cannabis farmers or little hope that our inner cities will be able to share in the promised wealth the "Green Rush" will bring to California.**

While AUMA is far from being perfect, it must be considered as an important step forward nonetheless. The world was watching and it wasn't only California, but also Maine, Massachusetts and Nevada that approved recreational Cannabis initiatives on Tuesday, November 8th, while voters in Florida, North Dakota and Arkansas passed medical cannabis initiatives in the biggest electoral victory for Cannabis reform since Colorado in 2012.

The consumption of Cannabis and Cannabis derivatives is now legal for medical and recreational purposes in 29 states, and as President Barack Obama explained on TV<sup>1</sup> "You'll now have a fifth of the country that's operating under one set of laws and four-fifths in another. The Justice Department, DEA, FBI, for them to try to straddle and figure out how they're supposed to enforce laws in some places and not in others, they're going to guard against transporting these drugs across state lines—you've got the entire Pacific Corridor where this is legal. That is not going to be tenable."

As much as it will be difficult for the different branches of the US government to enforce laws in some states and not in others, it will be even more challenging to explain to the rest of the world why the United Nations drug treaties can accommodate state regulations of medical and adult-use of cannabis in the US while still insisting other countries continue to fight the misguided U.S. War on Drugs.<sup>2</sup> Actually Jamaica, Spain, Czech Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Portugal, Peru, Switzerland, Mexico, Canada have all taken a step toward legalization, and the flow will be hard to stop.

"The World Health Organization's (WHO) Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD), the body charged by the 1961 and 1971 Conventions with the scientific and medical review of scheduling proposals, has actually never engaged in a formal review of cannabis' place within the Convention. As the Committee itself noted in 2014, "Cannabis and cannabis resin has not been scientifically reviewed by the Expert Committee since the review by the Health Committee of the League of Nations in 1935." However, in 2013 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) stated in the Journal of Global Drug Policy and Practice, The Economic Impacts of Marijuana Legalization by David G. Evans, the Executive Director of the Drug Free Projects Coalition, that we

"...strive to be a compassionate society, but there must be a balance between alleviating or managing illness and creating a system that does more harm than good. Until there is FDA quality scientific proof that the use of crude marijuana as "medicine" is safe and effective, it appears that the use of marijuana as "medicine" is a risky venture for the public health and safety. Not all the data is in about the economics of marijuana legalization, but on balance it would be a negative public policy for which our society will pay a great spiritual, medical, public safety and economic cost that we can ill afford. The scholarly opinions and historical evidence are clear that if drugs are legalized, then the rates of drug use and addiction will climb. This will lead to misery, more deaths, social disorder and massive spending."<sup>3</sup>

The very same year multiple Emmy Award winner Dr. Sanjay Gupta, the CNN Chief Medical Correspondent, gave the following message to the world:

"I apologize because I didn't look hard enough, until now. I didn't look far enough. I didn't review papers from smaller labs in other countries doing some remarkable research, and I was too dismissive of the loud chorus of legitimate patients whose symptoms improved on cannabis. Instead, I lumped them with the high-visibility malingerers, just looking to get high.

I mistakenly believed the Drug Enforcement Agency listed marijuana as a schedule 1 substance because of sound scientific proof. Surely, they must have quality reasoning as to why marijuana is in the category of the most dangerous drugs that have "no accepted medicinal use and a high potential for abuse."

They didn't have the science to support that claim, and I now know that when it comes to marijuana neither of those things are true. It doesn't have a high potential for abuse, and there are very legitimate medical applications. In fact, sometimes marijuana is the only thing that works."<sup>4</sup>

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## We need to acknowledge that the Cannabis plant is a trinity and start making a distinction between Cannabis the medicine, Cannabis the mild intoxicant and Cannabis the agricultural product.

Given such extreme opposite views on the medical potential of Cannabis, the question is who should we trust, Mr. David G. Evans, Esq. an attorney at Law and Executive Director for the Drug Free Schools Coalition or Dr. Sanjay Gupta who was offered the position of Surgeon General of the United States?

I should also mention some of the Medical Marijuana Breakthroughs of 2013 as background references:

- FDA approved the first clinical trials of Cannabis for pediatric epilepsy
- Scientists proved that various Cannabis compounds can kill leukemia cells
- First clinical trials of marijuana for brain cancer started in the UK in 2013
- First clinical evidences of the beneficial aspect of cannabis compounds on Crohn's and Parkinson's diseases were published in 2013<sup>5</sup>

There have been many medical Cannabis related breakthroughs since 2013, too many to list, proving the many medicinal Cannabis benefits beyond any remaining doubt, however it is also a psychoactive plant that affects mood and behavior, very much like coffee, tea, tobacco or wine.

The problem is that the recreational aspect of the plant is also the source of its medicinal properties and cannot be separated or eliminated. Cannabinoids and Cannabis terpenes can be extracted to create a new pharmacopeia acceptable to Western medicine standards but they also are the psychoactive constituents of a mild intoxicant that can be consumed legally in the US today by adults like wine and tobacco.

We need to acknowledge that the Cannabis plant is a trinity and start making a distinction between Cannabis the medicine, Cannabis the mild intoxicant and Cannabis the agricultural product.

The US Food and Drug Administration should most certainly rigorously control the medical aspect of Cannabis like any other drug, however Cannabis, the mild intoxicant and Cannabis, the agricultural product is outside the realm of medicine and should be regulated as such.

We must face the fact that Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal substance with 183 million consumers worldwide, the most widely cultivated drug crop and the most trafficked

drug worldwide per the 2016 World Drug Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime<sup>6</sup>. The fear of diversity, ignorance and greed were the reasons behind prohibition and a costly eighty-year War on Drugs; we have since polluted our planet to the point of no return with petroleum derivatives and locked up millions of people around the world unnecessarily in a misguided war on drugs. Thankfully, we are today finally closing this chapter of our history.

There is no going back, Cannabis will become the most used legal substance on the planet in the very near future, and the US Cannabis industry will soon compete with countries that have been producing Cannabis and Cannabis derivatives in vast quantity for centuries. A choice must be made, will California and the US Cannabis industry produce quantity in the future, and face a very fierce competition or will the industry focus on establishing quality standards and become to the future Cannabis world trade what France and Bordeaux have been to the wine industry since the mid-nineteen century?

The most beautiful aspect of choosing quality over quantity would be the mandatory alliance of small farmers and big investors; the love, devotion and knowledge of our small farmers is the source of quality, and cannot be bought, but their value and potential can be protected and nurtured to create a legacy to the benefit of all.

### References

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*Frenchy Cannoli is a consultant, educator and writer in the Cannabis industry with special focus on hash making using traditional methods. Frenchy can be reached through his website at: [www.frenchycannoli.com](http://www.frenchycannoli.com) or seen on Instagram @frenchycannoli*

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