



A Long Strange Trip:

**THE EVOLUTION OF
CANNABIS IN AMERICA**



(counter-clockwise) **Fig 1.** “Working in a Hemp Field.” *The Canna Chronicles*, 1905. **Fig 2.** “Bails of hemp at a warehouse of the Columbian Rope Company.” *The National Archives*, 6 Aug. 1918. **Fig 3.** “A farmer standing in front of his hemp crop in Seney, Michigan.” *Sudbury.com*, circa 1920s. (cover page) Protesters stage smoke-in on the National Mall. *David Fenton/Getty Images*, 4 July 1970.

AMERICA’S DARLING

The story of cannabis in the United States is older than the nation itself —

and its many plot twists and turns can serve to illuminate the complex web of political, social, and economic influences that have contributed to setting the course of American history.

TIMELINE (1619 - 1970)

- HEMP IS LAW** 1619
Virginia colony passes a law that requires farmers to grow hemp.
- HEMP AS CURRENCY** 1631~1800
For centuries, Americans can use hemp as money—or to pay taxes.
- “GROW IT EVERYWHERE”** 1794
Founding father George Washington famously promotes hemp cultivation in a letter to his field manager.
- MEDICINAL PREPARATIONS** 1839
Irish physician-researcher William O’Shaughnessy introduces the therapeutic use of cannabis to the West.
- HASHISH-HOUSES** 1883
Hash-friendly parlors flourish in cities along the East Coast.
- HEMP FOR VICTORY** 1942
WWII-era film urges farmers to grow as much hemp as possible.
- LEMAR ESTABLISHED** 1964
First organization dedicated to ending cannabis prohibition is formed.

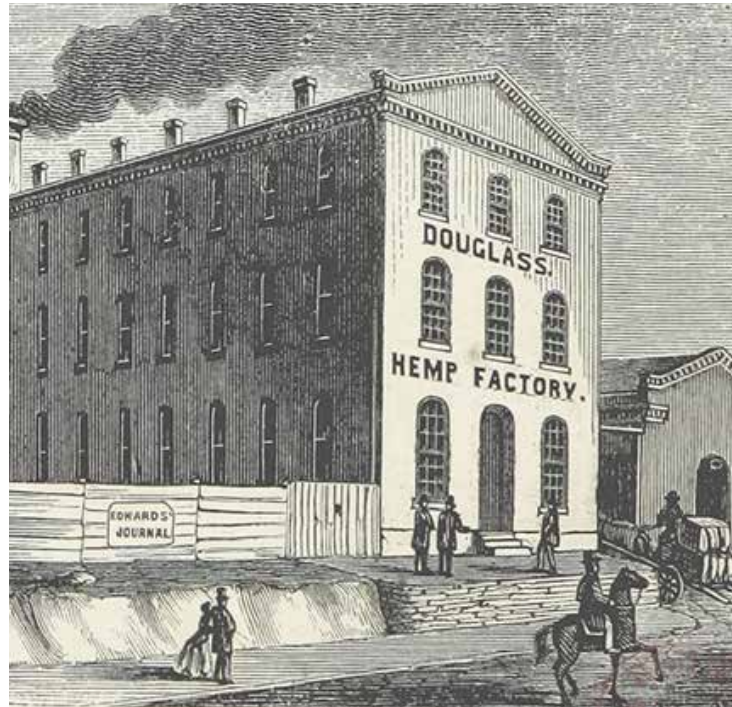
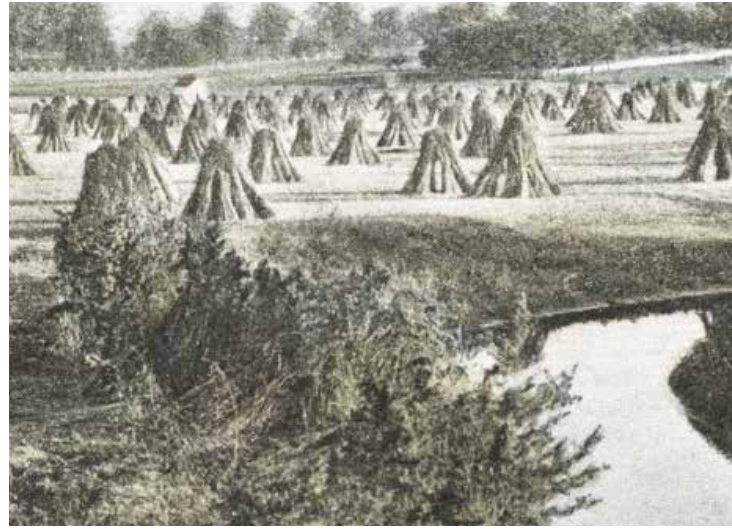


Fig 4. “Drawn depiction of villagers farming hemp.”
The Green Fund.

- **1860** **NEW YORK “POISON LAW”**
A new kind of law that requires cannabis to carry “POISON” label.
- **1906** **PURE FOOD AND DRUG ACT**
Law that places first federal regulations on medically-derived cannabis.
- **1937** **MARIHUANA TAX ACT**
Law asserts possession / transfer of marihuana is federally illegal unless taxed for medical or industrial use.
- **1970** **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT**
Congress classifies cannabis as Schedule I drug, alongside heroin.

A COLONIAL STAPLE Although the story of cannabis in America often focuses on the dawn of prohibition in the mid-20th century, the unabridged version dates back to the colonial era, when the fast-growing, resilient hemp plant was cultivated widely across the North American territories, holding great value as a versatile material used in rope, paper, fabric, sails, and more.

In fact, hemp was so important to life in the colonies that it was deemed a proper form of currency, and so integral to the economy that its illustrated likeness appeared on the US ten dollar bill up until the early 1900s.



(top to bottom)
Fig 5. George Washington's Hemp Farm. *George Washington's Mount Vernon.* **Fig 6.** Missouri Hemp Factory. *CBD Oils UK.* **Fig 7.** "United States \$10 dollar bill/back. Bill shows the Harvesting of Hemp." *The Canna Chronicles, 1914.*



BEYOND HEMP

While industrial hemp flourished unfettered for several centuries,

the 1850s rise of medicinally-prepared cannabis faced immediate friction, as it coincided with the first movement to address the rampant fraud occurring in American pharmacies.

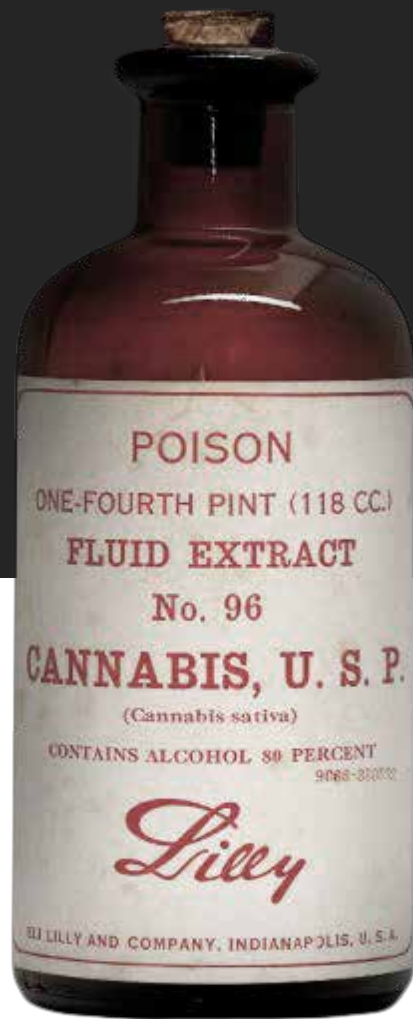


Fig 8. “Eli Lilly Cannabis Sativa Fluid Extract (No. 96).” *Herb Museum.*

POISON LAWS Varying by state, these regulations generally aimed to curtail the practice of mislabeling, tainting, or otherwise improperly selling pharmaceutical drugs. In some cases, they called for ingredients and potential side effects to be clearly listed, while in other cases, the word “poison” was required on the label. By 1905, over half the states had incorporated some kind of law explicitly referring to cannabis and its “preparations.”

HASHISH PARLORS & THE FEDS Despite new regulations, recreational cannabis had become fashionable in upper class circles by the 1880s. Women and men alike frequented hash parlors, which prospered alongside opium dens in most cities along the Atlantic seaboard.

By 1930, the conversation took a sharp turn with Henry Anslinger's Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) and its slew of anti-marijuana propaganda. Anslinger claimed that cannabis led to irrational, violent, overly sexual behavior—eventually blaming Mexican immigrants for the nation's "problem" before Congress in 1937. Interestingly, Anslinger had once rejected such "absurd" claims, but his tune changed when the end of alcohol prohibition nearly terminated his department.



(left to right) Fig 9. "A poster for Elmer Clifton's 1937 drama *Assassin of Youth*." *Movie Poster Image Art/Getty Images*.
Fig 10. American propaganda film, *Reefer Madness*. "A poster from the later release of the 1936 film." *Wikipedia*.
Fig 11. "Advertisement for the film *Marihuana*." *National Library of Medicine*. 1936.

ERA OF PROHIBITION

“ Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.

By getting the public to associate the Hippies with marijuana and Blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. ”

— JOHN EHRLICHMAN

Former Aide under Richard Nixon

Quoted in *Harper's Magazine*, 1994

TURN ON, TUNE IN, DROP OUT As federal cannabis law intensified through the 1950s—beginning the practice of mandatory minimums and severe penalties for first-time offenses—an undertow of resistance was also taking shape. By the late 1960s, the counter-culture movement had swept the nation.



(top left, counter-clockwise) **Fig 12.** “The Grateful Dead held a press conference in SF over their arrest for possession of marijuana.” *CNN*, Oct 1967. **Fig 13.** “GIs lighting up a homemade hookah, made from a wine bottle and a .45 caliber shell.” *Bettmann Archive/Getty Images*. **Fig 14.** “Allen Ginsberg at the Women’s House of Detention in Manhattan.” *Benedict Fernandez/NY Photo Review*, Dec 1963. **Fig 15.** Protesters stage smoke-in on the National Mall. *David Fenton/Getty Images*, 4 July 1970. **Fig 16.** “Narcotics agents with over 400 lbs. of marijuana.” *Ed Ford/World Telegram & Sun*, 1963. **Fig 17.** Advocates for legalization take their message on the road. *Stanford University Research*, circa 1970s.



Fig 18. “Two Hunter College students covering their faces with books, at police headquarters after they were picked up on narcotics.” *Herman Hiller/World Telegram & Sun*, 12 Mar 1968.

PUBLIC ENEMY NO.1 Aside from the Watergate scandal that eventually forced his resignation, former President Richard Nixon is arguably most famous for a 1971 press conference in which he declared drug abuse the country’s “public enemy number one,” and unveiled a costly plan—later coined the “War on Drugs”—to fight and defeat this so-called enemy.

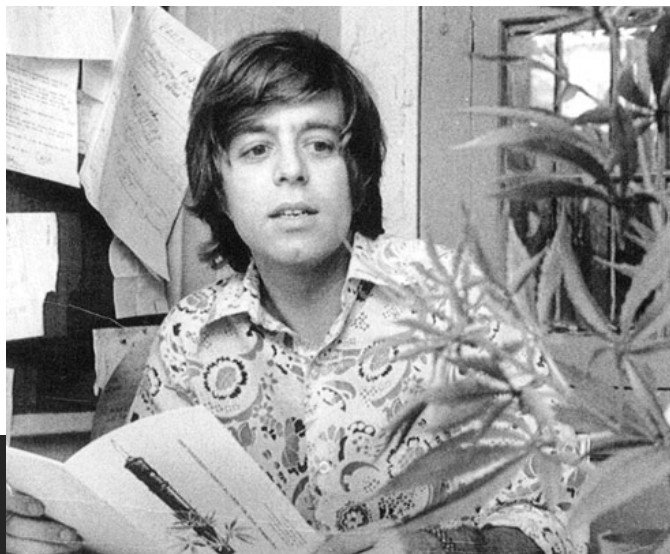
This declaration came shortly after the passing of the 1970 Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act in which Congress re-classified cannabis as a Schedule I drug, legally defining it as a substance with a high potential for abuse and no accepted medical use.

THE HUMAN COST OF WAR Decades following the rescheduling of cannabis as a Schedule I drug, the federal government continued to maintain more or less the same disciplinary tone set by Nixon in the early 1970s—ultimately contributing to the significant increase in drug-related incarcerations across the nation—all the while, feeding a growing mistrust of law enforcement in the most vulnerable communities.

As years turned into decades, it's unclear whether these severe laws had little, if any effect on the rates of drug use in the U.S. On the contrary, a growing body of data confirms that these punitive measures may have further fueled the illegal drug trade, disproportionately targeting and penalizing communities of color.



(left to right) **Fig 19.** “A man is arrested in Miami at a raid where marijuana was seized.” *Al Diaz/AP Photo, 1979.*
Fig 20. “Throughout the ‘80s, Florida police scrambled to confiscate ever larger loads of weed across the state.”
State Archives of Florida, circa 1980s.



(top left, counter-clockwise) **Fig 21.** “The Flowering of the Hippies.” *AP/The Atlantic*. 1967. **Fig 22.** “Marijuana Lobbyist—R. Keith Stroup, a 27-year-old lawyer, sits at his desk where he runs the legalize marijuana lobby.” *AP Wirephoto*, 11 Oct. 1971. **Fig 23.** “Hippies smoking weed at the 1969 Woodstock.” *Truth Theory*, 1969.

THE TRAILBLAZERS In an effort to establish a professional tone in cannabis advocacy, DC-based attorney Keith Stroup formed the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), which would go on to secure a major victory in 1973, when Oregon became the first state to decriminalize cannabis. In a short five years, ten states and two cities had followed suit with decriminalization measures of their own.

By the early 1980s, the clothing-optional activism of smoke-outs and sit-ins which had come to define the counterculture era had all but disappeared—taking with it the plumes of smoke, flower crowns, bellbottoms, and any hope of a fast-track path for federal legalization. State level, however, hard-working activists across the nation were writing the next chapter of cannabis reform: legalization for medical use.

ERA OF (RE) LEGALIZATION

“ I knew a lot of cancer patients who secretly used marijuana,

shares Chris Conrad, a longtime cannabis activist. Yet, the plant's medicinal properties would remain a secret until the HIV/AIDS community spoke out. Conrad continues,

They knew the government was out to get them anyway [...], so they told everyone. ”

— **CHRIS CONRAD**

Cannabis and Hemp Lobbyist

Quoted in *Vice*, 2016

AN UNEXPECTED HERO Celebrated activist Dennis Peron first recalled encountering cannabis while serving a mandatory term of duty in Vietnam, where he also happened to acquire two pounds of product—soon to kickstart a long-running career as one of San Francisco’s most prominent pot dealers.

Though born in the Bronx, Peron discovered a home amongst the colorful hippies in the Haight, who above all else, didn’t mind that he was gay. By the late 1980s, however, the vibrant city was reeling from the damage inflicted by the AIDS crisis. In 1990, Peron was dealt a personal blow in the devastating loss of his partner. Remarkably, he found a way forward by immersing himself in community activism.



(left to right) **Fig 24.** “Dennis Peron (right) at a signature drive and voter registration table at the Haight Street Fair, San Francisco.” *Dannynicoletta.com*, 16 Mar. 1980. **Fig 25.** “Dennis Peron, right, with another marijuana activist, Jack Herer, in San Francisco during a legalization campaign.” *Andy Kuno/Associated Press*, 1996.



(left to right) **Fig 26.** “A late-in-life photo of Mary Jane Rathburn.” *Jim Wilson/The New York Times/Redux.*

Fig 27. “Peron’s friends and loved ones—many of whom joined him in the Proposition 215 campaign—celebrated his 71st birthday.” *Gracie Malley/CannabisNow, 2016.*

ENDING PROHIBITION Wasting no time, Peron threw himself into the fight to legalize medical cannabis—helping to write two landmark pieces of legislation for the reform movement, Prop P and Prop 216—which legalized cannabis for medical use citywide in 1991 and statewide in 1996, respectively.

Shortly after the Prop P victory, Peron opened the first medical dispensary in the U.S., in partnership with activist Mary Jane Rathburn (nicknamed Brownie Mary for her special “healing” brownies). Believing their establishment had a purpose beyond distributing medicine, the founders would eventually transform SFBC into a center where those affected by AIDS, cancer, and other serious illnesses could seek support.

TIMELINE (1973 - 2018)

OR decriminalizes cannabis.	1973	—
AK, ME, CO, CA, OH decriminalize.	1975	—
MN decriminalizes.	1976	—
MS, NY, NC decriminalizes.	1977	—
NE decriminalizes.	1978	—
SF legalizes medical marijuana.	1991	—
SF Buyers Club opens—first legal cannabis medical dispensary in U.S.	1992	—
CA legalizes medical marijuana.	1996	—
AK, OR, WA legalize medical.	1998	—
ME legalizes medical.	1999	—
HI legalizes medical.	2000	—
WA, CO legalize recreational cannabis.	2012	—
OR, AK, DC legalize recreational.	2014	—
CA, NE, ME, MA legalize recreational.	2016	—
MI, VT, North Mariana Islands legalize recreational.	2018	—

— **1970** **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT** Congress classifies cannabis as a Schedule I drug, alongside heroin.

— **1979** **MISSISSIPPI CODE** Any cannabis possession is a misdemeanor, with first offense punishable by jail-time.

— **1992** **AK** recriminalizes cannabis.

— **2006** **CO, NE** narrowly vote down recreational cannabis (46%).

— **2010** **CA** narrowly votes down recreational cannabis (47%).

CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 215

On November 6, 1996, Prop 215 (also known as the *Medical Marijuana Initiative* or the *Compassionate Use Act*) legalized cannabis for medical use in California.

NO (44.42%)

YES (55.58%)



Who qualified? Patients in California diagnosed with one of the following medical conditions:

- AIDS (Positive Status)
- Anorexia
- Arthritis
- Cachexia (Wasting Syndrome)
- Cancer
- Chronic Pain
- Glaucoma
- Migraine
- Persistent Muscle Spasms (Spasms associated with Multiple Sclerosis)
- Seizures (Epileptic Seizures)
- Severe Nausea
- Or any other chronic or persistent medical symptom that either substantially limits a person's ability to conduct one or more of major life activities as defined in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or if not alleviated, may cause serious harm to the person's safety, physical, or mental health.

RIDING THE WAVE After California became the first state to legalize cannabis for medical use, a handful of other states followed suit. Of course, legalization in each state came with a unique set of rules around who qualifies as a patient, how to access medication, how much patients can possess, how to renew a medical card—and the list goes on.

MORE THAN A PIPE DREAM Early adopters of medical marijuana undoubtedly set the stage for the recreational revolution on the horizon, serving to usher in a new era of de-stigmatization and facilitate a growing acceptance of the plant's many uses.

By the early 2000s, the reform movement had secured a number of statewide victories legalizing medical marijuana, soon setting their sights on recreational/adult-use cannabis legislation—defined by the goal of legalizing cannabis sales and possession. Some fought on behalf of the health benefits of cannabis, while others targeted the draconian laws that disproportionately (and negatively) affected already-marginalized groups.

OBAMA RE-ELECTED, AND IT'S RECREATIONAL.

The 2012 election was a historic year in politics. Not only did the first African-American president win re-election comfortably—Maryland and Maine became the first states to legalize same-sex marriage. Also in this landmark election year, Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize recreational cannabis.



Amendment 64 55% ✓

- January 2014: Legal sales began
- 2017: \$1.56 Billion in revenue
- 2018: 520 dispensaries



Initiative 502 56% ✓

- July 2014: Legal sales began
- 2017: \$1 Billion in revenue
- 2018: 103 retail stores

A BUDDING TREND

**In a departure from
the sterile look & feel
of pharmaceuticals,**

which has often been mimicked in medical cannabis branding, the recreational shift coincided with a movement towards lifestyle branding—with a focus on wellbeing.



(counter-clockwise) **Fig 28.** Inside Seattle’s Cannabis City, an icon in the legal cannabis movement. *Bri McDaniel/dope magazine*, 2018. **Fig 29.** Wana, 2016’s No. 1 ranked edibles brand in CO, announces popular Mango Gummies (Sativa) available year-round. *The Weed Blog*, 2018. **Fig 30.** Willie Nelson’s Pot Brand Coming to Canada. *Bloomberg*, 2018.

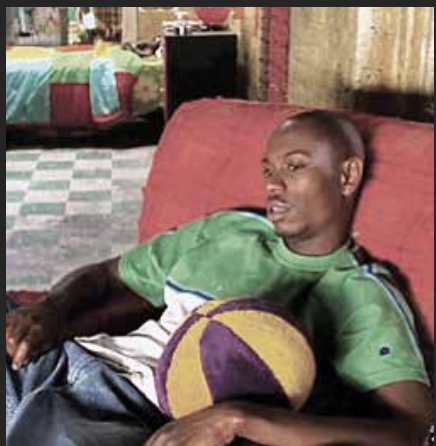
THE RECREATIONAL PIONEERS Many early brands and retailers capitalized on the growing trend of consumer-driven wellness—presenting cannabis as a part of one’s holistic profile of health.

EN VOGUE These emerging brands typically skewed upscale/luxury and were oftentimes backed by celebrity endorsement. Predictably, many marketing moves in a new industry like this one have been short-lived—perhaps already yesterday’s news.

In order to ensure a lasting place in the market regardless of the latest consumer trends, many successful cannabis companies have created and adhered to a strong set of values, often incorporating social or environmental justice into their missions.



Fig 31. “Chocolate Tokens by The Goodship Company.” *The Goodship Company/dope magazine, 2018.*



(counter-clockwise) Fig 32. Cheech and Chong and Giant Joint. “Stoner Movies—Just Say Yes.” *Chestbeating By Word*. Fig 33. Marijuana in Pineapple Express. Columbia Pictures/The Wall Street Journal, 2008. Fig 34. “Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle.” New Line/Everett Collection, 2004. Fig 35. Dazed and Confused. “Slater & Kyle.” Universal Pictures, 1993. Fig 36. “Dave Chappelle stars in ‘Half Baked’ a wickedly funny 1998 take on stoner culture.” Universal Pictures, 1998.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS It must be noted, not all brands on the market have adopted a health-conscious brand look and feel.

In many cases, the prevailing “stoner bro” stereotype has encouraged brands to target a young male demographic using 420-friendly messaging and visuals already at play in the marijuana subculture (i.e. 420 references, weed slang, munchies talk, etc.). Oftentimes, it’s worked.

A SHIFTING CONSUMER LANDSCAPE

Recently, data has revealed a complex picture of cannabis consumption across the expanding frontier, with a majority of new customers skewing female between the ages of 25 and 44, and half looking to explore “medical applications” of the plant.



(counterclockwise) **Fig 37.** Rihanna smokes with entourage. *Instagram/badgirlriri.*
Fig 38. Taking a dab at the Cannabis Cup. *Michael/Paredes, 2016.* **Fig 39.** “Partygoers dance and smoke pot on the first two days at the annual 4/20 marijuana festival in Denver.” *Associated Press, 2014.* **Fig 40.** Advocate, consultant, and marijuana pioneer Dr. Dina waters plants. *Critical Blast, 2013.*

THE GENDER DILEMMA While cannabis usage amongst females has increased rather dramatically since the first recreational dispensaries opened their doors in 2014, the picture of female representation—particularly in leadership across the industry—has worsened.

A number of factors have contributed to this problem, including the influx of male execs from other industries, the specific set of challenges women face during fundraising, and social prejudice.

WOMEN BUYING CANNABIS



ON THE RISE: In California, the number of women buying cannabis doubled from 2017 to 2018 (BDS Analytics, 2018).



BUYING POWER: In 2018, women drove 70-80% of the purchasing (Eaze, 2018).

VS.

WOMEN WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY



ON THE DECLINE: Women with C-suite roles in the industry fell from 36% to 27% from 2015 to 2017. (Marijuana Business Daily, 2017).



LEADERSHIP: In 2018, just 17.6% of “Executive” or “Director” roles were filled by women. (Vangst, 2018).

A REGULATORY LABYRINTH

“ We call them the 3 C’s:
Confusing, Convoluted,
and Contradicting...”

The rules and regulations change so frequently from state to state; don’t get me wrong—some of the changes have been for the good, but even more have become extremely limiting.

— JARED MIRSKY

CEO/Founder of *Wick & Mortar*

Quoted in *Potent*, 2017



Fig 41. The groundbreaking “Forget Stoner” campaign, which was followed by the launch of their cannabis magazine. “MedMen hopes its campaign will help move beyond dated labels that don’t reflect the reality of today.” *MedMen, 2018.*

REBELS WITH A CAUSE While specific rules vary, the regulations implemented across all states generally restrict the messaging, placement, and imagery utilized in cannabis ads. In order to navigate this legal obstacle course, brands are increasingly turning to the experts who in turn, are devising inventive and courageous campaigns to push the conversation further.

Some of the most successful cannabis companies have partnered with these experienced creative teams, harnessing advertising as a means to educate the public, change perception, and resolve the negative stigma surrounding cannabis.

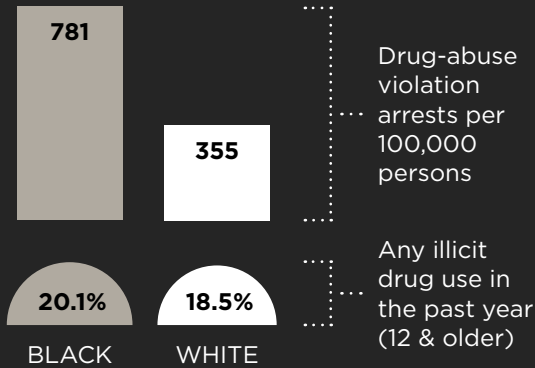
A CALCULATED RISK In 2019, Acreage Holdings stirred up a media frenzy after submitting an ad for the Superbowl with an urgent message for viewers: *“Please call your U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator to advocate for change now.”*

The emotionally-charged video featured patients living with a wide range of debilitating conditions who have found a treatment that works: medical cannabis. While CBS ultimately rejected the ad, [the video](#) gained traction online—reaching nearly half a million views on Youtube.

Figures 42-44. Captures from a groundbreaking video ad in favor of cannabis reform featuring real patients using cannabis as a treatment. “Acreage Cannabis Ad Rejected For Superbowl by CBS.” *Acreage Cannabis/Youtube*, 24 Jan. 2019.

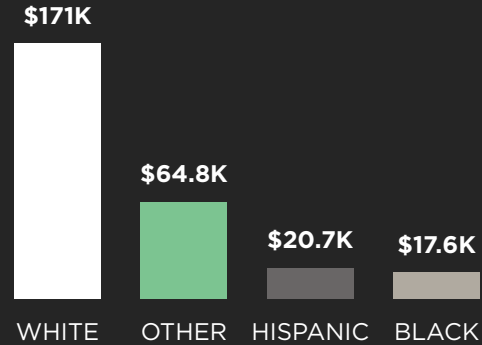


DRUG USE & ARREST RATES BY RACE



Source: 2017 FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, U.S. Census Bureau. *Marijuana Business Daily*, 2019.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD NET WORTH BY RACE & ETHNICITY



Source: The Federal Reserve Board, 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances. *Marijuana Business Daily*, 2019.

IT'S COMPLICATED As the new industry took shape, early data confirmed growing concerns over a racial disparity: while people of color bore the burden of drug-related penalties during prohibition, their white, majority male counterparts had reaped the rewards of a newly-legalized market. The most obvious barrier to entry for minorities and women has been the exorbitant startup costs, upwards of \$150K at the minimum, just to enter the space.

REGULATION CAN WORK In some cases, the lack of diversity in industry leadership can be traced back to discriminatory regulations, such as the rule prohibiting individuals with prior drug charges from joining the legal market. To their credit, some states have tried to correct these early missteps through social equity provisions.

In New York, such provisions did not impress Black lawmakers, who successfully blocked a legalization proposal in March 2019, citing its failure to properly guarantee an equitable financial share for individuals/communities most acutely affected by drug prohibition. Likewise, in New Jersey, a coalition of Black pastors and advocates vowed to back a legalization measure only if it ensured community reinvestment.



(left to right) **Fig 45.** “Despite Liberalizing Marijuana Laws, the War on Drugs Still Targets People of Color. New York City police officers stop a man for suspected K2 possession.” *Drew Angerer/Getty Images*, 14 July 2016. **Fig 46.** “At a recent conference in Brooklyn on marijuana legalization, Jacob Plowden, left, spoke about the lack of diversity and inclusion in the cannabis industry. *Demetrius Freeman/The New York Times*, Mar. 2019.

A WORLDWIDE SHIFT

“ The global war on drugs has failed, with devastating consequences.

Fifty years after the initiation of the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs [...], fundamental reforms in national and global drug control policies are urgently needed.

”

— THE GLOBAL COMMISSION
ON DRUG POLICY

June 2011



(left to right) **Fig 47.** “A legal weed supporter during the Global Marijuana March in Toronto in 2017. Canada became the first G7 nation to start legally selling recreational cannabis.” *arindambanerjee/Shutterstock*, Mar. 2017. **Fig 48.** “A group of workers harvest hemp at a farm near Beijing.” *Alamy*, 2019.

FEDERAL LEGALIZATION While the reform movement has made significant progress statewide, marijuana is still illegal federally. Moreover, concerted efforts to take cannabis off the Schedule I (high abuse, no medical use) drug list have consistently failed.

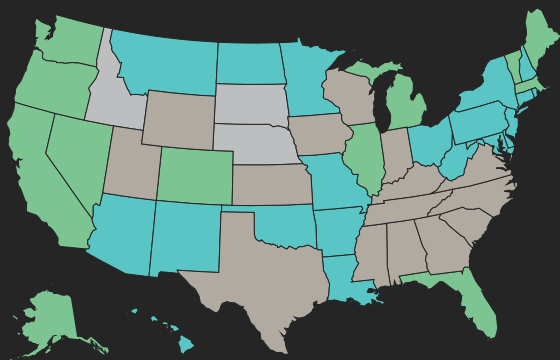
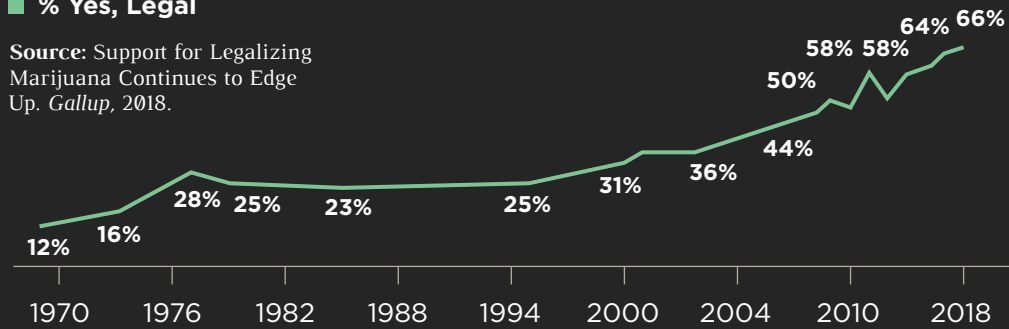
Meanwhile, countries like Israel, the Netherlands, Canada, Uruguay, and Australia have legalized medical cannabis for export, taking advantage of the lucrative opportunity to rake in revenue in an uncrowded market. Canada has become a top exporter of medical cannabis, while China accounted for nearly one third of all hemp sales in 2017. By 2020, the trade powerhouse is forecasted to reach \$228 million in sales of hemp-derived CBD.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE As of 2019 (the year this resource was published), 33 states and the District of Columbia have legalized cannabis in some form, and public support has been growing steadily nationwide.

DO YOU THINK THE USE OF MARIJUANA SHOULD BE MADE LEGAL, OR NOT?

■ % Yes, Legal

Source: Support for Legalizing Marijuana Continues to Edge Up. *Gallup*, 2018.



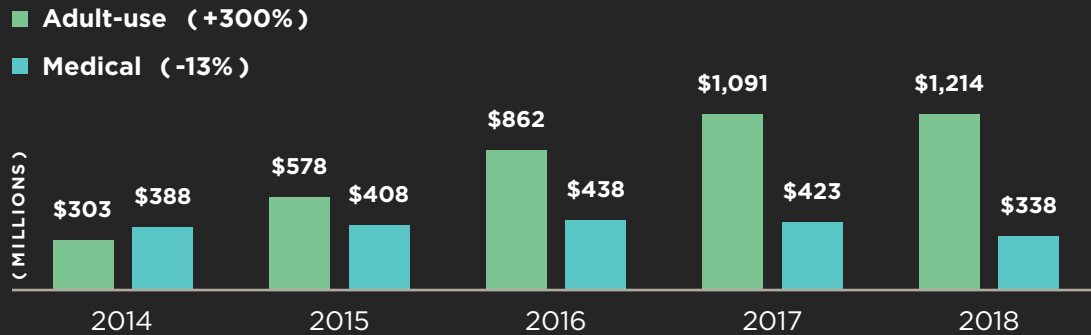
U.S. LEGALIZATION

- Adult-use
- Medical only
- CBD only

Source: National Survey on Drug Use & Health, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration. *New Frontier Data*, 2019.

LEGAL CANNABIS SALES IN COLORADO TOP \$6 BILLION IN FIRST FOUR YEARS

Source: *New Frontier Data*, Sept. 2019.



MONEY TREES Just five years after state-regulated pot shops first opened to the 21+ public, the cannabis industry has established itself as a multi-billion dollar, money-making machine. Beyond revenue, legal marijuana has created 250,000 jobs (and counting), fostered the development of university research programs, and offered a safe solution to a long list of medical issues.

At long last, the industry's staggering success may well have inspired federal lawmakers to include hemp in the 2018 Farm Bill—effectively removing low-THC (<.03%) cannabis from the Schedule I drug list, and instead, declaring it an ordinary agricultural commodity to be purchased, cultivated, processed, and sold.

JUST KEEP TRUCKIN’ ON Although the fight for reform was far from over, the 2018 Farm Bill signaled an important victory for cannabis advocates. For rural farmers, the change may well have come just in the nick of time, as unpredictable, extreme weather had become the new normal, and dwindling harvests had brought some farmers to the brink of financial ruin. Despite the risk involved in cultivating a “new” crop, farms have eagerly welcomed the opportunity. After all, the plant no stranger to American soils.

While the story of the cannabis is anything but predictable, seeds of its future have been planted by generations of citizen groups practicing unrelenting grassroots activism—challenging the government—and winning. At least for now, it appears that cannabis has returned home. Indeed, what a long strange trip it’s been.



Fig 49. “Farm workers set hemp in northern Fayette County in Lexington, KY.” *Mark Mahan*, 1 July 2019. **Fig 50.** “The Hollywood sign is seen vandalized.” *Damian Dovarganes/AP*, 1 Jan. 2017.



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helping us elevate
the conversation.**

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