#### **Introduction**

*Pothead, Stoner, Doper, Hippy, Cannabinoider –*

Four out of the five words listed above define a particular reality based on culture and language. The fifth word, the one you can’t pronounce, is something new.

Almost all of us were born into “marijuana” prohibition, which began in 1937. That prohibition is coming to an end because of a new word you are going to be hearing with increasing frequency. The word is “cannabinoid.” What a cannabinoid is and does is the focus of this book – but you should know that we started with the intention of writing a “cannabis” book. As some of you are aware, there are plenty of great marijuana and cannabis books. Liberty is a common theme to these books as well as the healing powers of the plant. What hasn’t been noted or described in context is the fundamental role cannabinoids play in life. Yes, life. Like the four out of five words mentioned above, and the cultural baggage they carry, clarity is needed to address some old misconceptions, demonizations, and prejudices built around the policy of marijuana prohibition – which is simply a cannabinoid prohibition – which makes it a life prohibition.

There is another important change. We have a President who won an election based on the idea of change – even change we can believe in. The President of the United States is referred to by the acronym “POTUS” ([www.potus.com](http://www.potus.com)). Based on the changing scientific evidence, we believe this POTUS is going to end cannabis prohibition – that’s right, the end is near, and here is one of the main reasons why: – Cannabis arrests went from just under 400,000 to nearly 750,000 by the last year of POTUS 42, Bill Clinton. That totals nearly five million fellow citizens arrested for cannabis violations under POTUS 42.

During POTUS 43, George W. Bush’s administration, annual cannabis arrests remained at the 750,000 level through 2006. In 2007 and 2008 arrests topped 800,000. That totals over six million citizens arrested for cannabis under POTUS 43.

Now to Barack Obama and POTUS 44 – Will the legacy of his administration be more arrests given that cannabinoids are proving to be one of nature’s best-kept secrets? – Or will POTUS 44 end the madness of arresting millions of fellow citizens for possessing cannabinoid plant material? – The writings contained in this book are in support of ending this madness. But more than that, while researching and writing this book, we learned how natural and vital cannabinoids are to human life. This project started as a book about cannabis but morphed into a book about cannabinoids – the scientific and Internet search term for the chemicals in the cannabis plant and our bodies.

The first thing we learned together – our first truth – was that every human being uses cannabinoids. We don’t mean everyone smokes pot. No. What we mean is that ***cannabinoids and the endocannabinoid system (ECS) modulate other systems within the human body***. This is true for all mammals. Cannabinoids are shown to protect and heal other systems – such as the muscular, nervous, immune, reproductive and digestive. Essentially, modulation means that cannabinoids help other systems in the body adjust to changing conditions.

In the first part of the book we discuss basic scientific findings and the dynamic nature of cannabinoids. You will read how cannabinoids complete the human experience and begin to see what we are up against – the cognitive dissonance of describing ‘marijuana’ as something good. But slang terms like marijuana, pot, Mary Jane, reefer, etc., are cultural identifiers and not scientific. As cultural terms, we are not against the words marijuana and pot – we’ve only learned that there is greater clarity in the words cannabis and cannabinoids. That is because they are the words of science and not slang. We know you will have questions – like we did – and this book will provide the answers or point you in the direction the scientific evidence leads. And we are sure you will be surprised – *be you pothead or prohibitionist* – as you’ll discover irrefutable truths that have been known for some time but hidden by the language games of our culture.

But think of it – after more than 70 years, wouldn’t now be a good time for change and the truth about cannabis and cannabinoids? The truth of how cannabinoids help chemotherapy patients recover. The truth of how cannabinoids modulate the runner’s high and physical activity. The truth of how cannabinoids protect the beginning of human life – the fertilized egg in the mother’s womb. Or even the truth of taxing and regulating a cannabis economy instead of arresting millions of fellow citizens every presidential administration – which exposes another truth – the forgotten devastation of families affected by a cannabis arrest.

Any student of history can tell you we are not the first Americans to confront untruths. To voice our truth through language, to create a new set and setting, we turned to a collection of essays known as *The Federalist Papers*. During 1787 and 1788, James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton wrote 85 essays in support of the US Constitution. They used the penname “Publius” in honor of a famed Roman republican – someone they saw as a defender of liberty. We are “Publius” in 2009-11 for the same purpose – to make our sum greater than our individual parts.

**Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness**

Science is the language of Publius. It is science that can lift the fog of war caused by 70 years of Reefer Madness. As the founders detailed the workings of the US Constitution, piece-by-piece and Article-by-Article, we have given the same care and effort to describing the cannabis plant and the role of cannabinoids in our culture. We also found that cannabinoids shared one other strong characteristic from the founding period; the similarity is found in the famous phrase summing up the basic rights of free people – *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness*.

It is no secret that many people think that there is a life-giving quality to cannabis use. That is where we began – the anecdotal and lived cannabinoid experience. Since the 1970s, cannabis use has been defined by practice – some combination of the medical/patient model and the recreational/liberty model. ***What we are describing is something new – the idea that cannabinoids are fundamental to life.*** The cannabis war will no longer be about use and ideology – about who is sick enough or free enough or responsible enough. What is new today is the science of cannabinoids – and you’ll find it more than compelling – some even mind-blowing.

Liberty provides its own compelling arguments. The war on cannabis users has compromised our liberty. It has been this way so long that many of us don’t even recognize the unintended consequences placed on our collective liberty by cannabis prohibition – the collateral damage caused by the war. But as this changes, as cannabis prohibition comes to a close, we can look forward to a better culture – one with fewer invasions of privacy, fewer arrests, fewer imprisonments – and more choices for relaxation, more affordable wellness and healthcare, more tax revenues, and, dare we say it – happier citizens. The days of Reefer Madness, when it was believed that marijuana smoking created homicidal maniacs, are behind us. The days of dominant Cheech and Chong images and spaced-out tokesters are behind us. Clearer perceptions about cannabis are emerging. Someone like Montel Williams is the new face of the cannabis patient – a former Marine and successful talk show host who fights Multiple Sclerosis and maintains his health and happiness through the use of cannabinoids. Or even beyond any medical perception, someone like Rick Steves – a successful writer and host of travel shows on television and radio. Or even beyond celebrity – perhaps someone like you?

That brings us to happiness. – Each individual citizen has their own definition of what makes them happy. Notice that the goal is not the “right to be happy” but the *pursuit* of happiness. This pursuit is intrinsically related to freedom of choice – the right to pursue one’s happiness without infringing upon another’s right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. One doesn’t have to be a lawyer to understand this is a legal problem – but it is also more than a legal problem. What we have, and what most of us have been born into, is a system that makes the pursuit of happiness a legal problem – one to be policed. This is a relatively new phenomenon. *Americans have not always thought the pursuit of happiness was something best handled by the courts.* At one time we believed in the ***“right to be let alone.”*** In 1928, nine years before cannabis prohibition began, US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote of our constitutional right to be let alone in the case of *Olmstead v. U.S*.:

The makers of our Constitution undertook to secure conditions favorable to **the pursuit of happiness.** They recognized the significance of man’s spiritual nature, of his feelings and his intellect. They knew that only a part of the pain, pleasure and satisfaction of life are to be found in material things. They sought to protect Americans in their beliefs, their thoughts, their emotions and their sensations. They conferred, as against the Government, ***the right to be let alone*** – the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men.

The war on cannabis has been an assault on the right to be let alone. This means it is also an attack on the conditions favorable to the pursuit of happiness. Cannabis prohibition has contributed to a net loss of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is about to change. The end of cannabis prohibition is upon us because of its own logic – it should have worked by now.

One more thing: like life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I, Publius, have many forms – many selves, if you will. In reading *The Cannabis Papers*, you will find that I speak in many voices. That is because there are many voices to be heard. So take this book as the founders might have – and you’ll see that the fog of war is not coming from the cannabis plant.

*Publius*

*Publius 2009-11* is Bryan Brickner, Julie Falco, Stephen Young, William Abens, Danielle Schumacher, Derek Rea (1954-2008), David Nott, Dan Linn, Dan S. Wang, Brian Allemana, Dianna Lynn Meyer, and many others.