

*The Cannabis Papers:
A citizen's guide to cannabinoids (2011)
By Publius Essay #25*

Bliss ain't ignorant

Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.

POTUS 16 Lincoln

The Bliss Copy is considered the authentic version of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address because he signed it. Let's expand the metaphor for our last section – *The Bliss Copy* – when putting your name to an action signifies the truth.

The initial Publius stood up to a king and became known as the founder of the Roman Republic. He died in 503 BC. Centuries later a future Roman emperor named a son Publius. This second Publius, the one who died in 53 AD, shadows the first Publius in our work. The founders we honor, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, would have known the stories of both Romans: the first Publius as hero, the second as soldier – and both for standing their ground while facing adversity. One might say “*bliss copies*” of each other.

The Pursuit of Happiness has a different flare than the previous two sections of our book. Life and Liberty are defined by their counter-weights, death and slavery. The pursuit of happiness lacks such a balancer. *To pursue* can mean *following, chasing, hunting, trailing, tracking, tailing and shadowing*. It can mean *practicing, engaging in, working at, going in for and taking up*. Pursuit is a verb with happiness as a goal. It is Life and Liberty in action.

As action, pursuit demands a pursuer. This is where the body comes into play and becomes practice. In doing so, certain biological systems are activated. **One system is the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.** A discussion of ameliorating human pain and suffering must engage this axis – and the HPA is modulated by cannabinoids:

The present findings demonstrate an important role for endocannabinoid signaling in the process of stress HPA habituation, and suggest that AEA and 2-AG modulate different components of the adrenocortical response to repeated stressor exposure.

Two endocannabinoids, AEA (anandamide) and 2-AG, modulate the HPA axis as it handles stress and pain. Research like the 2010 quote above highlights why cannabinoids are so hot – to people like us and the pharmaceutical companies! They touch every aspect of our health – a point we will continue to develop in this section.

We appreciate pharmaceutical solutions to health problems. Clearly, for those who can afford them, people often enjoy a greater quality of life. Many Americans and their

families have benefited personally from prescription drugs. Two major drawbacks for pharmaceuticals, to include synthetic cannabinoids, are side effects and cost.

In the 21st century we are witnessing the “*pharmaceuticalization*” of the pursuit of bliss. Three circumstances seem to account for this momentum: billions invested in research, competition within the industry, and the legal assault on divergent mendicants.

Americans expect advancements in pharmaceuticals, though the sheen of success is waning. There has been too much hype. Prescription drugs, representing billions of dollars in research, development and sales, have become everyday. Millions of people faithfully consume these chemical tools and often experience a better life. Of these pharmaceutical products, entire classes are applied to our mental and emotional functions; the CNS and areas like the HPA axis are main targets. This work is encouraged to search for ever-finer biochemical adjustments of our feelings and well-being – in essence, our happiness.

The deregulation of the pharmaceutical industry is most visible in how and what it advertises. Often the primary plea is for consumers to ask their doctors about the likelihood of a given medicine making them not only well but happier, better looking, and more confident. This pharmaceutical pursuit of happiness is prescription based in its attempt to modulate. Fair enough, though the phrase “*Life, Liberty and the Prescription for Happiness*” has never defined the rights of free people.

The prescription industry’s current situation vis-à-vis cannabis can be summed up by looking at synthetic THC vs. organic THC. Americans can be prescribed Marinol (synthetic THC), a Schedule III drug, for over \$60,000 an ounce. Marinol comes in a pill. It is made and sold by a pharmaceutical company. It is delivered by your local pharmacy. On the other side is organic THC from cannabis, a Schedule I drug – meaning the US government argues it has no medical value. In terms of effects and chemistry, the only difference to speak of is that one is manufactured and the other grown. Oh, and one doesn’t kill cancer and one does. You will have to ask yourself why this is so – why the one that doesn’t kill cancer is legal and costs \$60,000 an ounce and the one that kills cancer is a federal felony and costs a couple hundred dollars an ounce. This is only explained by a breakdown of reason.

Keep the scientists named in this book in your thoughts. Think of all the “*et als*” as well. Thousands of names signifying a scientific will to truth reminiscent of Lincoln’s *Bliss Copy*.

The larger condition made clear in this war is that we are now living in an age where our emotions are explicitly politicized. The pursuit of happiness is under attack. Experiencing the euphoria of a cannabinoid high can no longer be easily dismissed; it is not giving into temptation, an over-indulgence, a moral flaw, or even a simple kick. Not when questionable promises of joy are being sold to us. Not when organic THC is shown by that same industry’s research to positively treat a range of maladies, from pain to depression to cancer. Not when thousands of citizens are being arrested and incarcerated every year for the simple crime of using an herbal cannabinoid to feel, among other things, happy.

Bliss ain’t the problem ~ ignorance is.

Search terms

Pursuit of Happiness; hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, anandamide and 2-AG; cannabinoids and vanilloid receptors (TRPV1); synthetic THC (Marinol) vs. organic THC; Lincoln's *Bliss Copy*.

Research and selected readings

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