

Marijuana, Maybe Not What You Thought

Marijuana, is it evil disguising itself as an angel or an angel disparaged by greedy drug companies as a devil? Here's where you will learn more. Find author <http://billallin.com>

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When Mexico sends its people [into the U.S.], they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.

- Donald J. Trump, American actor (b. 1946)

Donald Trump is merely the latest loud voice to rail against the coming to the United States by Mexicans fleeing their homeland hoping to find a better life. At the turn of the 20th Century, Americans with similar feelings adopted the Mexican Spanish word marijuana for what most of the rest of the world called and still calls Cannabis. Before the 20th Century everyone called it Cannabis.

The American campaigners originally tended to spell it marihuana, which is closer to the Mexican pronunciation of the word, but eventually the Mexican spelling marijuana prevailed.

Anti-immigrant advocates in the U.S. expressed their aversion to foreigners invading the land they themselves had only recently invaded and stolen from native Americans that they used the newly adopted word marijuana as an expression of the evil that they claimed the foreigners brought with them.

Is it possible that the U.S. Congress passed laws criminalizing the growth and sale of cannabis marijuana specifically to discourage Americans who had neutral feelings about Mexican migrants so that they would associate the Mexican word for the now-illegal product with migrants who entered the U.S. illegally? That may seem a strong claim but prejudiced Congress members have passed many laws in the past to advance their various bigoted causes.

How strongly did these politicians feel about turning Americans against Mexicans by making marijuana seem like a Mexican curse? The only cure for cancer that has ever been patented in the United States was filed by the U.S. government itself, in 1937. The government of the country with the highest cancer rates in the world withheld a cure for cancer rather than make the all-natural chemical-free plant marijuana acceptable to the American public. That patent holds today, though many others of that time have been allowed to expire.

Not all varieties of Cannabis are alike. *C. ruderalis* is generally agreed to be of little value for either recreation or medicine. Though uncommon, it is still illegal, yet it could be feral so it might be found growing in your back yard. Illegally, of course.

Etymologists give various origins for the name Cannabis, but the plant indisputably originates in Asia. The Chinese used it to relieve various conditions from constipation to malaria as far back as 2700 BCE. In India it was considered a sacred plant used for its psychotropic and medicinal effects. Mind-altering natural products that improve sensitivity and intellect temporarily are not considered sinful in many cultures and have been used for that purpose for thousands of years.

Cannabis is mentioned in the Jewish Talmud. Traces of its pollen or oil have been found in various tombs of ancient Egyptians, including that of the famous Rameses II. The nomadic Scythians, who were documented in 450 BCE to have used it in funeral rites by Greek historian Herodotus, likely brought it to Europe.

But which variety of cannabis? *C. sativa* and *C. indica* are the two best known. But they are often confused even in modern literature. Some claim that *C. sativa* has the most psychotropic ingredient delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in its sticky resin. Other non-scientists claim that *C. indica* has the most cannabidiol (CBD), claimed to be the primary medicinal ingredient and a sedative.

Both groups are mistaken. Both varieties are high in THC and relatively low in CBD. Much research is taking place with CBD because of its anti-inflammatory effects. Inflammation is known to be the starting place for cancer.

Researchers have found that CBD results in weight loss in their studies of overweight mice. No one has risked experimenting on humans, despite that fact that the U.S. has the highest rate of obesity in the world. Nobody knows how to tell if mice get the munchies.

Then we have what may well be the most useful subspecies of cannabis, *Cannabis sativa* L, more commonly known as hemp. Hemp grows much faster than trees and can be used to make paper (thus saving forests), clothing, building materials (someone made a whole car from it) and it can be used to replace oil. Yes, this renewable energy source could replace the non-renewable oil that is extracted from the ground and it can even be grown in less than ideal agricultural conditions.

That is, if it were legal. Which it isn't in the USA. Hemp is grown legally in Canada and many other countries. But not in large quantities that could be exported to the U.S.

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