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# QUAKE

Mute Boy

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FREE TAKE ONE



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## A hemping hand for Kentucky???

By Mark Griffin

Danny Johnson doesn't just want you to buy something at his business — he wants you to be part of the revolution. The hemp revolution.

Or in this case, Revolution Hemp, the name of his shop in Bowling Green. "I want to show people hemp products," Johnson, co-owner of Revolution Hemp (with Brian Head), said. "I also want there to be an open-mindedness about [hemp]. It can benefit Kentucky as an alternative to tobacco."

Industrial hemp has many applications. It can be used to make clothes, papers, candles, cardboard, soap, shampoo, salad oils, animal bedding, concrete, fuel, food supplements, bath gels, printing ink, solvents, burgers, caps, tortilla chips, nature bars, cookies, massage oils, pretzels, beer, etc. Adidas has introduced shoes made from hemp into the market; the Body Shop has started selling such products (e.g. lip conditioner, candles, elbow grease, and soap) to customers.

Founding fathers George Washington and Thomas Jefferson allegedly grew hemp. Jefferson is quoted as saying, "Hemp is of the first necessity to the wealth and protection of the country." The first American flag is believed to have been made from hemp. Even Kentucky's own Henry Clay was an advocate of hemp and did much to promote and protect the fiber in Kentucky.

"It's not a wonder crop, [but] it has many uses," said Joe Hickey, treasurer of Kentucky Hemp Growers Cooperative Association.

"Although hemp is not illegal to grow, possess, or sell in this country, it is heavily regulated and its cultivation is discouraged," stated John W. Roulac in his book, **Hemp Horizons**.

"...hemp is over-regulated to the extent that if you wanted to grow a crop, you would be required to fill out a permit application, have a criminal background check, your fields would have to be enclosed by a 12 ft. fence, topped with razor wire and you would be subject to unannounced searches of your property by law enforcement. Compared to corn, soybeans, or even tobacco, these regulations would be considered 'over regulation.' The United States is the only country with such stringent regulations," according to Hickey.

With tobacco under attack, talk has emerged about whether or not an alternative crop that can be grown, and some are leaning toward industrial hemp. Pushing this thought into the collective consciousness of Kentucky are Gatewood Galbraith, who ran un-

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He's proud of his new business.

successfully for governor, and TV/movie actor Woody Harrelson.

In May 1996, Harrelson planted four hemp seeds on property he bought in Boonesville. He did this in front of TV cameras and sheriff's officers. Harrelson was arrested.

"Harrelson's case, 'Commonwealth vs. Woody Harrelson', received extensive press coverage," according to Roulac in *Hemp Horizon*. "Lee District Judge Ralph McClanahan stated that the definition of marijuana, under which Harrelson was charged, 'is constitutionally defective due to its over-broad application....'"

Harrelson is quoted as replying, "There's a judge with vision." Harrelson is back in court again over this same matter.

Galbraith, who calls himself "one of America's leading hemp/marijuana advocates," ran under the Reform Party with hemp/marijuana legalization as one of his platforms.

"PROVE ME WRONG when I assert that no valid reason exist, except perhaps our own limited vision, that should prohibit Kentucky from asserting its heritage as the world's largest producer of hemp for over a hundred years, and stepping up and insisting on a lion's share of that agricultural fuel market, to the immense benefit of our farmers, our business community and our tax revenue," according to Galbraith on his web site, [www.gatewood.com](http://www.gatewood.com).

Galbraith also advocates the use of marijuana for medicinal uses. Jan. 18, 1993, he held the Marijuana Science and Truth Hearings to discuss this issue. He has also gone to court to get marijuana recognized as medicinal and as "the safest therapeutic substance known to man," as quoted in Jan. 12, 1998 *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

Johnson appreciates Galbraith's support but wishes he would only side with industrial hemp. By supporting marijuana, Johnson fears people will think the push to legalize industrial hemp is just a

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smokescreen to legalize marijuana.

In 1994, then Governor Brereton Jones formed a task force to consider the feasibility of legalizing hemp.

"The task force must have established some kind of time record in its investigation and formulation of a report," according to Thomas D. Clark in the forward to **A History of the Hemp Industry** by James F. Hopkins, "for it met only twice and voted twelve-to-four against further consideration.... Billy [Joe] Miles, chair of the task force was quoted as saying, 'Industrial hemp [is] a worthless crop.'"

Hickey of the Kentucky Hemp Growers Cooperative Association (KHGCA) feels differently. "It's the same mentality used against soybeans," he said.

KHGCA first formed in 1942 because of the United States' **Hemp for Victory**, a campaign to encourage farmers to grow hemp for the war effort. According to Gordon Nichols of the Kentucky Marijuana Strike Taskforce, when he was interviewed about the history of hemp on audio program **Pondering Kentucky: The Magazine #35** (May 1993), Japan invaded the Philippines therefore cutting off America's supply of hemp used to make rope, sailcloth, and parachutes. USDA regulated 10 states in the growing for hemp and Kentucky was the seed state.

After World War II, KHGCA disbanded but was reactivated in 1994. "We could see a farm crisis on the horizon [in Kentucky]," Hickey said. He's talking about the declining tobacco market.

Hickey said he became involved in Kentucky's hemp movement by accident. When his father died in 1989, Hickey found bound books filled with clippings about the original KHGCA and Hemp for Victory (and learned his grandfather was a hemp farmer). "God was leading me down this path," said Hickey, who claims to wear and use hemp products whenever possible.

The main purpose of KHGCA today, according to Hickey, is to educate farmers about industrial hemp. The organization has attended county fairs, Farm Bureau meetings, and schools about the fiber. Some of the members — such as Jake Graves, first president of the revived KHGAC — raise hemp.

Hickey said every year law enforcement raid the farm and confiscate the hemp when the seeds have been produced. "No one is ever arrested and law enforcement calls to say they are coming," Hickey said.

This is the main concern for State Senator Brett Guthrie of Logan and Warren counties (and who serves on the agriculture and natural resources committee) when it comes to legalizing industrial hemp. "My greatest concern about this issue is the fact that hemp is so easily confused with marijuana. When law enforcement officials are trying to find cannabis plant from the air, it is nearly impossible for them to distinguish between hemp and marijuana. Until this problem can be addressed, I do not think we should legalize hemp in Kentucky."

When people think of hemp they think of marijuana. "Pot, weed, grass, ganja, M.J. or whatever — it's the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States," according to an Jan. 23, 2000 **Courier Journal** article about drug abuse. "Marijuana is the dried leaves and flowers of the *Cannabis sativa* plant."

The main ingredient in marijuana that causes psychoactivity results is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). "For a long time, nobody knew what THC was doing in the brain because there didn't seem to be a receptor for it," according to the **Courier Journal**. "Only in the last 10 years did scientists finally find the receptor and isolate a naturally occurring brain chemical called anandamide that binds to it."

National Institutes of Health distributed a pamphlet titled **Marijuana Facts: Parents Need to Know** and listed the effects of

smoking marijuana:

- Hinders short-term memory
- Effects one's perception and judgement (may become involved in unsafe activities such as car crashes or risky sex)
- Difficulties in learning.
- Causes cancer
- Affect the reproductive system
- Weaken the immune system
- Abnormal function of lungs and airways

"It may be that marijuana kills some brain cells," according to **Marijuana Facts**. "In laboratory research, some scientists found that high doses of THC given to young rats caused a loss of brain cells such as that seen with aging. At 11 or 12 months of age (about half their normal life span), the rats' brains looked like those of animals in old age."

However, **Social Problems** (Fifth Edition) states "...most people still believe that marijuana is physically addictive and that its use leads to the use of hard drugs. Research has shown both notions to be false.... Despite the facts, however, the public generally accepts the negative stereotypes and thus fears the drug and supports strict enforcement."

**Social Problems** states that alcohol and nicotine are far worse drugs than marijuana but they lack the connotation associated with marijuana:

"Because marijuana use was closely associated with the youth protest of the 1960s, many construed it as a symbol of an alternative life-style — as rejection of the traditional values of hard work, success through competition, initiative, and materialism and as support of socialism, unpatriotic behavior, rejection of authority, and sexual promiscuity."

The fact whether marijuana and industrial hemp are the same or not is still being debated but Hickey is adamant that they are. "Is there a difference between a rottweiler and a toy poodle? [Marijuana and hemp] are subspecies. One is high in THC and the other is low. Marijuana and hemp are opposites."

"While the leaves of hemp and marijuana look the same, one

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# HEDGES

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can easily tell from a distance that hemp is different from marijuana. Strands of fiber hemp are planted densely, at a rate of three to five hundred plants per square meter. Hemp plants are very tall, ranging in height from six to sixteen feet, with the majority of each plant comprised of thin stalks with no branches and relatively few leaves. In contrast, marijuana is planted one to two plants per square meter and is quite bushy, with lots of wide branching to promoting flowers and buds. The distinction in the public mind between industrial hemp and psychoactive marijuana is key to the revival of a both proven and promising natural resource," Roulac stated in **Hemp Horizons**.

During the 1920-30s, the public became concerned about drug use, especially about morphine and heroin. "Most Americans were unaware that smoking hemp leaves was intoxicating, however, until William Randolph Hearst launched a campaign of sensational stories that linked 'the killer weed' to jazz musicians, 'crazed minorities,' and unspeakable crimes," according to **It's a Conspiracy!** by The National Insecurity Council.

Hearst worked with Harry J. Anslinger, commissioner of the just formed Federal Bureau of Narcotics, and together they urged Congress to pass the Marijuana Tax Act.

"Because Congress wasn't sure that it was constitutional to ban hemp outright, it taxed the plant prohibitively instead. Hemp growers had to register with the government; sellers and buyers had to fill out cumbersome paperwork; and of course, it was a federal crime not to comply," according to **It's a Conspiracy!**

But Hearst, according to the book, had underlining motives for wanting hemp/marijuana banned: "Hearst owned enormous timber acreage; competition from hemp paper might have driven the Hearst paper-manufacturing division out of business and caused the value of his acreage to plummet."

Hearst wasn't alone, according to **It's a Conspiracy!**, Du Pont saw hemp as a threat to its products of rayon and nylon. "Du Pont's point-man was none other than Harry Anslinger, the commissioner of the FBN. Anslinger was appointed to the FBN by Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon, who was also chairman of the Mellon Bank, Du Pont's chief financial backer. But Anslinger's relationship to Mellon wasn't just political; he was also married to Mellon's niece.

"Anslinger apparently used his political clout to sway congressional opinion on the hemp tax. According to [Jack] Herer [author of **The Emperor Wears No Clothes**], the American Medical Association (AMA) tried to argue the medical benefits of hemp. But after AMA officials testified to Congress, 'they were quickly denounced by Anslinger and the entire congressional committee, and curtly excused.'"

**Social Problems** gave another reason for the outlawing of marijuana: "Although the arguments for enticing the [Marijuana Tax Act of 1937] based on moral grounds, some observers have suggested that it reflected the [Narcotics Bureau's] desire to increase its size and importance and that marijuana, which was an unregulated drug at the time, was a convenient tool to accomplish that goal." The Narcotics Bureau supplied information to the media about the dangers of marijuana and sponsored **Reefer Madness**, a propaganda film that warned viewers of the dangers of the "killer weed."

The Marijuana Tax Act, said Hickey of Kentucky Hemp Growers Cooperative Association, was originally designed to affect only marijuana but the over-regulation of industrial hemp has discouraged farmers from growing it.

"We're looking for less regulation," Hickey states.

Roulac added that U.S. legislators tried to separate hemp and

marijuana but the DEA has ignored the distinctions.

Hickey said the main opposition to legalizing hemp is law enforcement.

"There is no such thing as growing hemp. You are growing marijuana. It's a misnomer. You are talking about growing a controlled substance," according to Terry Parham, acting chief of public affairs for the Drug Enforcement Administration, quoted in Feb. 2, 2000 **St. Louis Dispatch**.

In a Feb. 11, 2000 article attributed to Fox News Network, Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey opposes legalizing industrial hemp on the grounds that it would damage the United States' War on Drugs.

"[McCaffrey] is not for science — not this cutesy, backdoor approach to legalization of [marijuana]," according to Bob Weiner, speaking for McCaffrey. "We are doing everything we can to drive drug use down ... we don't want to screw up the equation in the other direction."

Hickey has heard all these arguments. "Law enforcement says hemp is marijuana and that we would just take hemp and turn it into pot. That's propaganda." He compared turning hemp into marijuana to boiling the ocean to get salt.

Hickey has also heard that marijuana could be easily hidden in a field of hemp. He states that would be counter-productive for the marijuana grower. Hemp has a much shorter growing period than marijuana. By the time hemp was ready to be harvest, the still developing marijuana would be collected as well. "You would be cutting [the marijuana] before it produces buds," he said.

Hickey also said that growing hemp and marijuana together would not be good for marijuana, cross-pollination would reduce the THC count in marijuana.

There is also the argument that by allowing hemp to be grown, marijuana use, in turn, would also be encouraged. "Absolutely not!" said Hickey. He stated England, France, and Canada allow hemp to be raised and none of them are promoting marijuana.

"You can make moonshine from corn but you don't condemn corn," Johnson said. "Better to smoke soybeans for a high [than industrial hemp]."

"It is puzzling that the DEA still expresses concern over a perceived problem that their colleagues in twenty-nine other countries have reported no trouble handling," Roulac wrote. "Initially, European law enforcement officials also had strong misgivings about crop theft and camouflaging of marijuana. Hemp permit requirements in the EU include background checks on growers; mapping of hemp plots; locating plots in places where they will be 'invisible,' with limited road access and screening crops (for example, corn); inspections of fields."

Roulac continues:

"Since hemp is an agricultural crop, it is now appropriate to shift the main regulatory responsibility for hemp from Drug Enforcement to the Department of Agriculture. This is especially important in light of the fact that the DEA's predecessor agency, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, was responsible for effectively hamstringing the hemp industry."

Hickey claims what is behind law enforcement's reluctance to deregulate hemp is money. According to him, law enforcement gets \$3 to \$8 for each marijuana/hemp plant destroyed, decriminalizing hemp would be a financial loss.

While hemp growing is discouraged today it was encouraged during World War II. **Pondering Kentucky** said the federal government was begging Kentucky to grow it. Ask older farmers in Logan County and they will tell you how about they grew "marijuana" for **Hemp for Victory**. Some claim where the Russellville High School stands today was once a hemp field.

Kentucky has a long history with hemp. "It was one of the first

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crops in Kentucky," Gordon Nicholas said on **Pondering Kentucky**.

"An additional commodity, hemp has virtually no role in the present economy of Kentucky, but its production and manufacture were a considerable influence on the history of the state," the late John F. Hopkins wrote in **A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky**.

Historical markers in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky recount the state's hemp history. Fayette County was considered the leading county in hemp production but Maysville claimed in 1845 to have "the most extensive hemp market in the Union," as Hopkins recounted.

During Kentucky's early history, hemp was raised as intended clothing for frontier families but as Kentucky developed into a state the fiber was used primarily as baling for cotton. Efforts were made to encourage the U.S. Navy to buy domestic hemp instead of the cheaper hemp made in Russia but it failed.

Hemp has entered Kentucky folklore. Frontier men hid in hemp fields from hostile Native Americans and Native Americans themselves hid in a hemp field when they waited for the right time to attack the home of Samuel Davis. Famous Kentucky Renegade Simon Girty concealed himself in a hemp field as he sneaked up to Bryan's Station.

Unfortunately, hemp has ties to the bondage of Blacks in the Bluegrass state. "Without hemp, slavery might not have flourished in Kentucky..." Hopkins wrote. He stated slavery was heaviest in the region where hemp farming was most productive.

Hopkins said hemp was even called a "..." because it was believed African-Americans understood better how to raise it; plus hemp raising was considered dirty work for Whites.

"Hemp in particular was produced to a large extent by slave labor, in spite of the fact that during the seasons of the year in which it did not require attention other tasks had to be found for the workmen," according to Hopkins.

Hemp was considered the ideal crop for farming. Henry Clay is quoted, "Hemp exhausts the soil slowly, if at all. An old and successful cultivator told me that he had taken thirteen or fourteen successive crops from the same field, and that the last was the best."

"Hemp has never been a highly profitable crop for farmers," according to Roulac. "Instead, it is a reliable rotation crop that provides weed control and improves soil conditions for the next crop." He also states hemp has fewer enemies such as weeds, diseases and insects as compared to other fiber crops.

"Ordinary weeds and grass could not compete with rapidly developing hemp and were killed by shading and starvation," Hopkins stated. "In fact, a crop of hemp was considered to be an excellent means of eradicating weeds from a field which they had overran." Insects avoid hemp because of a resin sweated from the plant.

Hemp brought money to Kentucky but it was never a motherload of cash. Kentucky's hemp market was hurt by competition from overseas hemp, which sold for cheaper and was said to be of better quality.

The decline of the hemp market in Kentucky occurred after the Civil War. With slaves freed, cheap labor didn't exist anymore. Cotton producers were unhappy with hemp baling from Kentucky and experimented with alternatives. Plus, tobacco was becoming more of an important cash crop.

However, the same can't be said for marijuana. The Appalshop produced documentary **Bluegrass Blackmarket** (1994) that tells how Marijuana is the cash crop in the impoverished Appalachian, where because of its isolation makes it a suitable growing area. A law enforcement agent interviewed responded that robbing banks

may help to improve one's livelihood but that still doesn't justify committing the illegal act. Another person interviewed said the only true way to stop marijuana raising is to take away the economic incentives.

The question today is whether or not industrial hemp can become a viable replacement crop for tobacco. A Oct. 10, 1999 **Minneapolis Star Tribune** article by Bob von Sternberg reported on how well Canada is doing with its effort to raise hemp (Gov. Jesse Ventura is pushing hemp in Minnesota):

"...an examination of the Canadian hemp industry's brief record reveals the fact that the experience hasn't lived up to the hype that preceded legalization. Despite opponents' warnings that growing hemp would spark an explosion in growing still-illegal marijuana, Canadian officials say that simply hasn't happened. And even though hemp's advocates predicted the new crop could become the economic salvation for farmers, that also hasn't happened. Not yet, anyway."

The article states the market for hemp is small. "People go into thinking it's the best thing since sliced bread, but if you've got no one to sell to, it's not worth anything," Bob L'Ecuyer, general manager of Canadian hemp operator Kemex Ltd. was quoted in the article.

The argument that there's no market for hemp means little to Hickey. He said one of the purposes of Kentucky Hemp Growers Cooperative Association is to help develop the hemp market.

Kentucky Hemp Outfitters is a statewide business that tries to sell products made from the weed (Hemp Outfitters was asked for a comment for this story but never responded back). For a period, hemp beer was made in Kentucky.

Southern Kentucky Hemp Expo was held this year at Western Kentucky University as a way to promote hemp cultivation. One attendant was former Gov. Louie Nunn, a hemp advocate. "I used to be skeptical about hemp 'til I read about this [Expo] and realized that this was the way of the future," Nunn was quoted in an April 26, 2000 **Daily News** article by Mitchell Plumlee. "Desperate times call for desperate measures. Times have turned away from tobacco. We're losing farmers just like soldiers in WWII. Farmers are the lifeblood of this state."

That is one reason why Johnson opened Revolution Hemp — so hemp products can be made available for the public (just as a side note, other businesses in Bowling Green, such as Box of Rocks, do sell hemp products). "My dream is to bring the hemp industry to Kentucky... I think it will happen."

Johnson said he has heard no negative comments about his new business but he does think undercover cops have visited the store to see what exactly he is selling. Johnson doesn't mind though. "I welcome all police and judges," he said. He sees it as an opportunity to educate them on the uses of hemp. He encourages anyone wanting to understand hemp better to see him. He has books, magazines, and material about hemp. Both him and Hickey urged people to talk to their legislators about this issue.

Revolution Hemp is located at 332 East 13th Street in Bowling Green (behind Baker's Street Cafe or whatever it's called now).

*Kentucky Hemp Growers Cooperative Association's website is [www.hempgrowers.com](http://www.hempgrowers.com).*

*Agri-businessman Billy Joe Miles was asked for comments but did not respond back*

*Since starting this article, the Kentucky legislator voted to return industrial hemp to the fields of Kentucky but to be only raised by universities, not farmers.*

*Special thanks to Shelly Free for proofreading this article. She kept me on my toes.*

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