

## ESSAYS FROM THE EASTSIDE: Moneyjuana

**By Corrie Clark**

A whole culture just died with the legalization of Cannabis.

The rebels and the slackers, the Cheech and Chongs, and all the country music songs about 'Wacky Tobacky' will slowly become folklore.

It was the same with alcohol.

Prohibition brought protests and arguments in publications and politics, but once legal those same articles brought changes to thoughts on alcoholism and created those sad country music songs about bad nights and lost dogs.

The world got into the alcohol business after prohibition like the world is getting into cannabis.

Cannabis is a drug. By now if you have read anything at all you know it is addictive. The statistics are that 9% of users will become addicted. It's a higher statistic for the very young, at 24%. One of the main reasons always used for accepting legalization is that legalizing cannabis will control the illegal drug trade and keep the product 'clean'.

That's relieving news to our brave new world that is seeing unprecedented deaths due to lethal mixing of other substances such as fentanyl.

Legalizing cannabis will keep the gangs at bay and help destroy the 'sinister underworld' of illegal trade.

But let's be honest. The local Town Council really had no choice but to opt into our government's legalization of cannabis, because the money is already coming in and the industry is already out of the government's control.

Let's think back to alcohol. we are lying to ourselves if we say we haven't known an alcoholic in our lives, but there are many billion-dollar liquor and beer companies.

The Government of Canada is not going to control the cannabis industry any more than it controls the spirit, beer and wine industry. They will regulate and make money, but it won't be the government that changes the illegal drug industry. It will be the corporations. Big Tobacco has already bought in.

Altria, the company that makes Marlboro invested 2.4 billion in Toronto Cannabis producer Cronos Group Ltd. Neal Brothers Inc., known for their chips and salsa and other specialty foods, made a deal with Newstrike Brands, to produce co-branded edible cannabis products when those become legal in October of this year.

Aurora Cannabis announced it would start making medical marijuana for Mexico. Mexico? let that sink in? what we perceive as the North American drug cartel fantasyland. The drugs are going back, but they are going back legal.

'High Times', a 43-year-old publication that has always bragged about being the world's number-one resource for cannabis culture and a source for 'the war on drugs' is actively seeking stock investors as they enter the production trade.

We will be convinced to forget the cost on human lives, addiction treatment, policing and health care? because those things have just become the price of doing business? like tobacco, gambling, and alcohol.

Until addiction doesn't make money and products that provide artificial pleasure are not part of the human experience, we will once again trade our conscious for consumerism.