



Marijuanamerica: One Man's Quest to Understand America's Dysfunctional Love Affair with Weed

Alfred Ryan Nerz

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Alfred Ryan Nerz is a Yale-educated author, journalist, and TV producer. He's also a longtime marijuana enthusiast who has made it his mission to better understand America's long-standing love-hate relationship with our favorite (sometimes) illegal drug. His cross-country investigation started out sensibly enough: taking classes at a cannabis college, hanging out with a man who gets three hundred pre-rolled joints per month from the federal government, and visiting the world's largest medical marijuana dispensary. But after connecting with a mysterious friend of a friend, his journey took an unexpected turn and he found himself embedded with one of the largest growers and dealers on the West Coast. He quickly transformed from respectable journalist into an underworld apprentice—surrounded by pit bulls, exotic drugs, beanbags full of cash, and trunks full of weed. But while struggling to navigate the eccentric characters and rampant paranoia of the black market, he maintained enough equanimity to explore a number of vital questions: Is marijuana hurting or helping us? How is it affecting our lungs, our brains, and our ambitions? Is it truly addictive, and if so, are too many of us dependent on it? Should we legalize it? Does he need to quit? As entertaining as it is illuminating, *Marijuanamerica* is one man's attempt to humanize the myriad hot-button topics surrounding the nation's worst-kept secret—our obsession with weed—while learning something about himself along the way.

Advance praise for *Marijuanamerica*

“This book is so entertaining, I want to roll it up and smoke it. Ryan Nerz takes us on a delightfully weird and educational journey that includes crazed pharmacists, a guy named Buddha Cheese, and an interstate road trip with a trunk full of pot.”

—A. J. Jacobs, author of *The Year of Living Biblically*

“*Marijuanamerica* has it all: danger, suspense, nuts-and-bolts reportage, laugh-out-loud dialogue, gritty characters, sociological dissection, and hella deep thoughts. Nerz has talent to burn; this is participatory journalism at its finest.”

—Davy Rothbart, author of *My Heart Is an Idiot*, creator of *Found Magazine*, frequent contributor to *This American Life*

“What a long, strange trip it's been for Ryan Nerz, whose wild tales and antics are the stuff stoner lore is made of. But in looking at how far Marijuana has come, he also poses the tough questions every stoner

inevitably asks. Ryan's journey is one worth taking.”

—*Shirley Halperin*, author of *Pot Culture*

Marijuanamerica: One Man's Quest to Understand America's Dysfunctional Love Affair with Weed Details

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From Reader Review **Marijuanamerica: One Man's Quest to Understand America's Dysfunctional Love Affair with Weed for online ebook**

R. Felini says

This is a non-fiction story about Nerz's relationships with marijuana and his research he did to write the book. It is an amusing story with general background for people who want to get a better feel for the current climate in America. It won't help you much with investing but that is not why he wrote it. I read it for his insights on cannabis. Anyway it is worth reading.

R Felini
Author of:

How To Profit From Marijuana Without Joining A Cartel: A Quick & Dirty Guide To Stocks in The Cannabis Industry. All You Need To Begin

Beckydhm says

Fascinating and sort of more contemplative than I expected. And fun. And fair.

David James says

Heh, dude.

Laurie says

Interesting and informative. Often funny and quite contemplative.

Jacob Sanders says

It was ok.

Mbanga Ka says

A f*ckin' great read!

Carlos says

While I didn't dislike the book I was hoping for a bit more substance. Nerz even seems to agree, writing that he didn't intend the book to be so focused on the action of one grower/distributor. While he manages to insert interesting tid-bits about history, law and even the chemistry of weed, they all feel like that, asides. The book reads like his journal about writing this book with inserts of the research he did for it. In all honesty, the best aspect of this book is that Nerz seems to be willing to talk about this drug without vilifying or deifying it. He is as honest in telling the reader when some of the scant evidence we have does not point in a positive direction as he is about dismissing the alarmist fears of the prohibitionist. I am just not sure if the book is worth reading just for that.

Lynn Parker says

I bought this book when it first came out after listening to an interview with the author on NPR. As a nurse I am very interested in the ongoing debate over medical marijuana (which in most forms comes without the chemical that triggers a high) The research is showing that this plant really DOES help people and states like Utah are fighting tooth and nail to prohibit passage of laws allowing medical marijuana to be sold and used openly (rather than illegally on the black market) This book also deals with the culture surrounding the plant; its use recreationally, criminal activity surrounding its use, its positive and negative effects on the body (yes. for some people it has very positive effects on the body) The book is well written and VERY funny. Read it for the humor alone. I really enjoyed it.

Ryan says

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Read it in hardcover at 272 speedy pages.

It just showed up at work tucked into a cubby here at work. A weird place for a book about Marijuana to show up. No note and no explanation. I eventually found out who it was but sometimes I think it's funny to reflect on how I came across a book through my own devices or a weird referral like this.

In any event, *Marijuanamerica* tries to follow Ryan as he delves into the quagmire of legality of Marijuana in the states. He does this by following around those questionably employed/dealing/surviving in the grey area. It's a vast and different cast and crew. We have Craig, the small time dealer that enjoys too much of his products and get to see the kind of people that he deals to and how he does it. A grower in Northern California that goes by the enigmatic and kind of silly stoner name Buddha Cheese. Ryan's roommate Bilal, a heavy drug hitter weekend warrior. Sean Deangelo, a famous advocate that's been fighting the government for the entirety of his life and made famous by *Weed Wars*. A user named Joey (child), who with a list of problems and is being administered Marijuana by his parents to bring some light to his life. Sanjay, a dealer now serving some significant amount of time for dealing considerable amounts of marijuana and other drugs among the nobility of Beverly hills. And of course Ryan himself, a constant and habitual Marijuana user.

Overall it's what I expected. A view from someone who is already immersed in the life cycle and looking at some of the standards of the grey area we all live in. While surely marijuana prohibition is a failed endeavor, it's interesting to see how those in the industry, in any way, deal with its grey area.

I'd suggest it for those interested, but I wouldn't say this is an eye opening book. It's biased, but fair on most things, from the stand point of a habitual marijuana smoker. Some of the things Ryan gets himself into for the sake of 'journalism' are interesting though.

Jon says

The author's research and personal experience shine, but the book only touches on the surface when issues of addiction and the redundancy of "modern" jobs arise. The book's end makes a number of salient predictions if legalization goes into effect.

Jacob Mclaws says

My biggest takeaways from this book:

- Marijuana probably shouldn't be grouped with many other drugs since it is really quite different
 - There are some really great, though anecdotal, evidences of marijuana being beneficial to people with certain health problems (the autistic kid who actually acknowledges the dog after his mom gives him weed brownies)
 - Marijuana as a medical drug makes sense to me as long as it is not smoked (smoking does bad things to your lungs, vaporizing is better)
 - Legalizing marijuana would result in a lot less people in jail and makes sense to me economically
 - That said, I don't think recreational marijuana is good for society because of its motivation-killing, mind-dulling effects
-

Kelly Newton says

I received this book in a goodreads giveaway last year, and its been sitting on my shelf, pretty much forgotten. But, I finally picked it up this week, and really enjoyed it. And, I would definitely recommend it to others looking for one guy's experience with marijuana.

It's a popular topic right now, with the recreational legalization in Colorado and Washington, and I believe this little plant will just become a more popular topic with legalization in several more states in the near future. So, regardless of your stance, it helps to be informed.

And that's what this author does; he attempts to inform. He looks past the pro- and anti- dichotomy and really looks at the bigger picture, which includes health, community, crime, small businesses, history, law, race, and personal experiences.

I think what I liked about the book was exactly that. Issues are rarely as black and white as people want to make them. He doesn't try to persuade his readers to pick one side or another (although, the general thesis is pro-legalization for a multitude of reasons).

I also have to mention I love the writing style. It was one long crazy trip, I couldn't keep up with the time lines, the travel, the people... and that's exactly the writing style I like. He is all over the board with

information, history, and facts. There are footnotes galore. I love it. I love that style: more organized than stream of thought, but still fun.

(Mary Roach is another author that uses footnotes, which are sometimes completely unrelated but still very interesting to the topic at hand. If you come across something cool in your research, I want to know, I don't care if it's completely unrelated.)

Anyway, again... recommend. There is nothing in this book that the pro-cannibas community doesn't already know. But, even if you are active in the pro- side of things, it's still a fun read. And if you're in the anti- side of things, then read and just hear one guy's story. At least, be informed. He's not trying to change your mind. Just open it a little.
