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THE 420 ISSUE

WITH WIZ KHALIFA

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I'm standing in a room surrounded by literally tons of marijuana. I feel like a kid in an adult candy store. Like many, I have long had the dream of swimming in money like Scrooge McDuck—immediately I want to edit the fantasy to replace the money with Mary Jane. Hell, I'd even settle for an *American Beauty*-esque bathtub filled with bud. But my head is spinning—whether I am mentally or olfactorily overwhelmed—I step out of the dankest of rooms I've ever experienced for a respite. While getting my wits I see a quote from E.M. Forster hanging on the wall of my host's office: "We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

Record scratch


Freeze frame

Yup, that's me. You're probably wondering how I ended up in this situation.

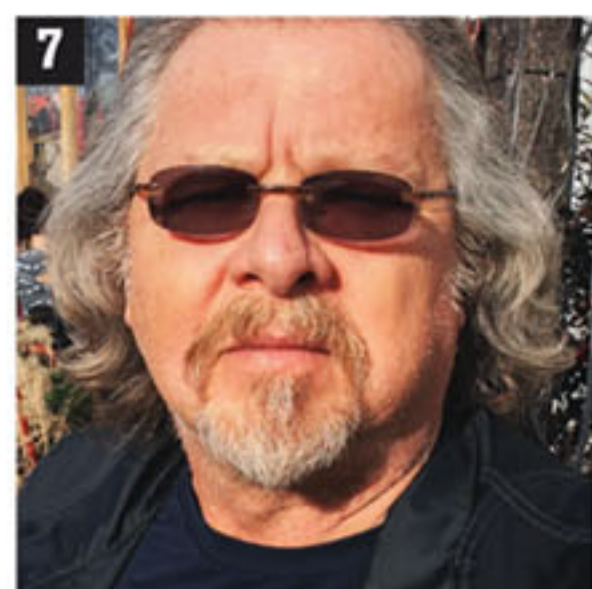
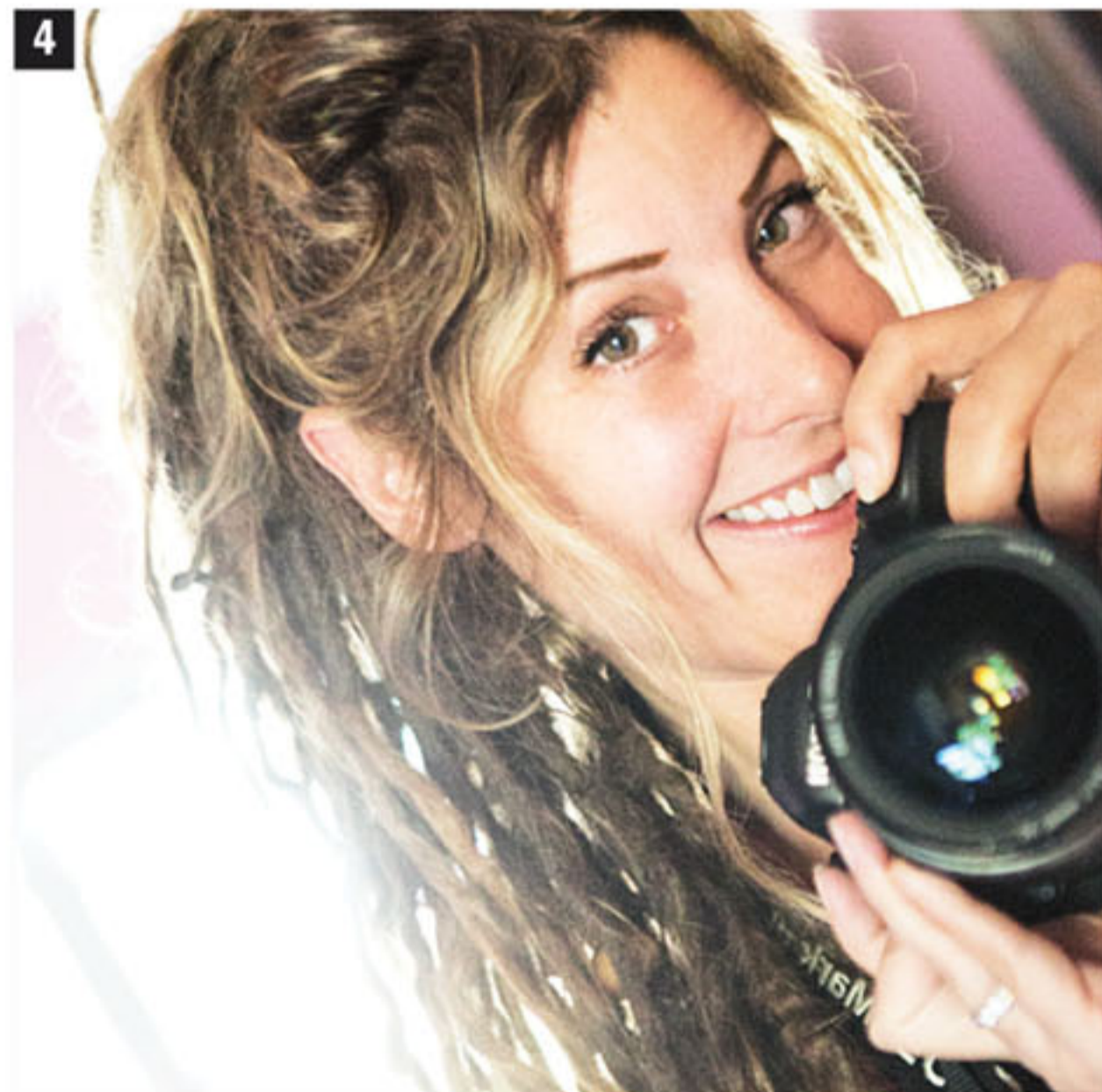
When I first stepped in as the editor of *Inked* seven years ago I never once thought we would live in a time when we could have an issue dedicated to cannabis, but here we are, more than half of the United States have legalized medical marijuana and majority recreational permittance isn't that far off (though perhaps it will likely have to wait out the Trump administration). I have probably spent a collective 10,000 hours in conversation about the merits of marijuana and we don't have the time, nor the shared bag, to work that all out in this letter—however, feel free to use this page as a surface to break up your own blunt or roll your joint (I actually looked into having this issue printed on rolling papers and the only response I received was a giggle).

Below are the people who will contribute to this sesh throughout the issue. Zizi Zarkadas (1) produced the epic cover with Wiz Khalifa—my co-editor for this issue. Rebecca Haithcoat (8) penned the piece on Wiz. George Polgar (7) spent a night in a smoke-filled room for a cannabis dinner cooked up by *Top Chef's* Jennifer Zavala. Sunnie Rizzolo (4) shot *Inked Girls* in a grow house for *Stoned Love*, and Mike Miller (6) photographed Angela Mazzanti enjoying a blunt for *Smoke Show*. Felipe Recalde (3) from RISE curated his favorite 10 California strains and Ryan Dearth (5) shot Coloradan tattooer and cannabis advocate Arlo DiCristina. Lettering legend BJ Betts (2) curated this month's art project, which uses bomber jackets as the canvases.

Betts can relate to that E.M. Forster quote, as he was in the Navy for nine years before embarking on a tattoo career. Actually, many tattooers can identify with the notion, being that this wasn't a viable industry when we were all coming up. Now the cannabis industry is emanating from the same place as tattooing, out of the shadows and into the mainstream culture.



Rocky Rakovic
Editor-In-Chief
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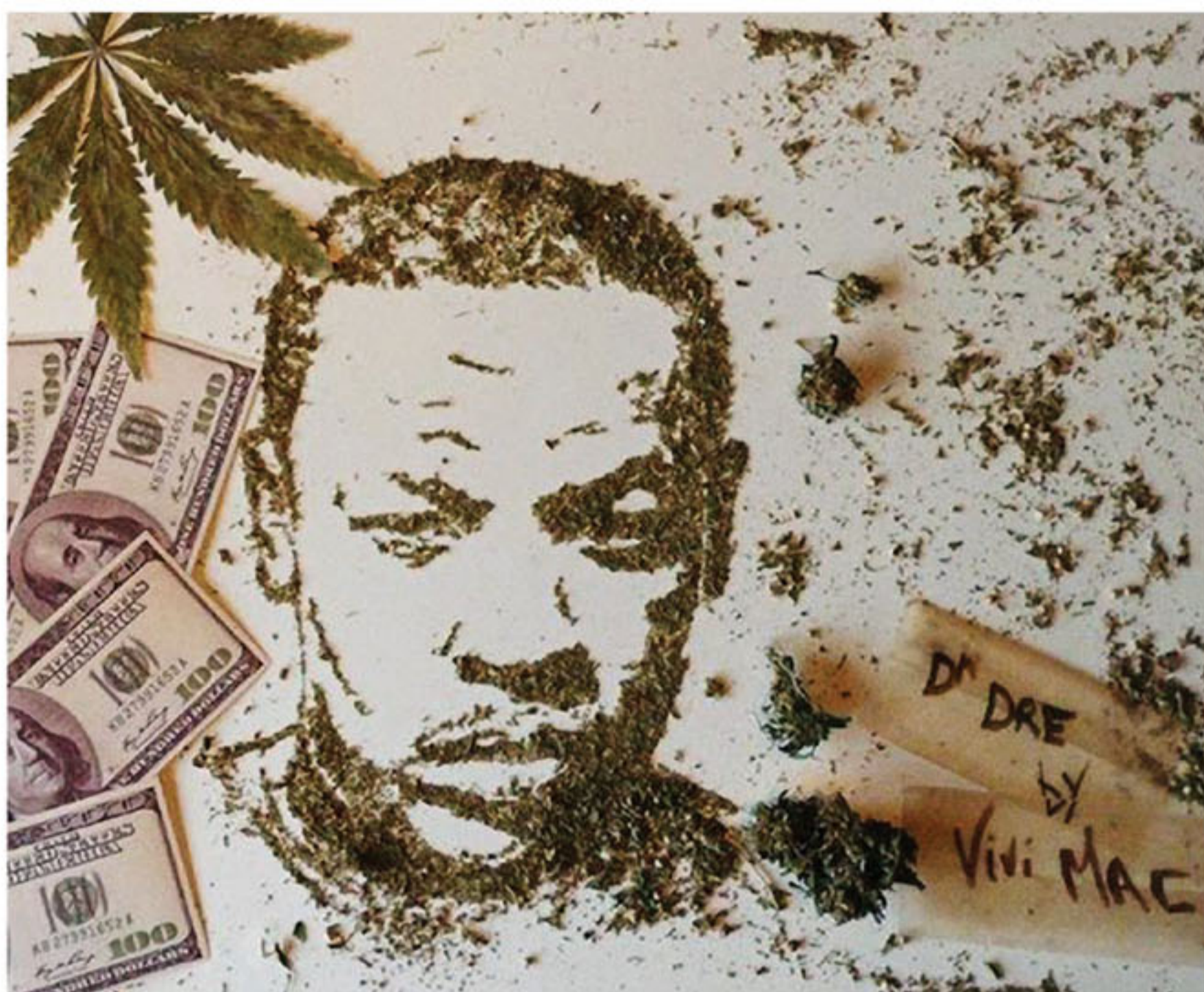
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FAZ



SEND US YOUR ART! We know that we have the most creative fan base in all of print. Show us what you got for a chance to be featured in our pages. The above is by French artist Vivi Mac, who thrives off of creating celebrity portraits from unconventional materials. From coffee grounds to honey, she has proven the impossible time after time by executing works of art with exceptionally precise detail. In many of Mac's pieces, the subject plays a role in inspiring the medium that's used to create the design—which is certainly the case in the piece she made of rapper/entrepreneur Dr. Dre. No, your eyes are not playing tricks on you, everything's exactly as it seems. We just hope that Mac didn't let her artwork go to waste, if you know what we mean....

facebook

RYAN ASHLEY MALARKEY

Erin Seaman I love her! I was so happy that when she won Ink Master, I seriously cried. Do not judge me, I am pregnant.

Gorkhali Magar One of the best tattoo artists to be on any Ink Master season.

Liese Hunter Not only is Ryan an incredible artist, she conducted herself with the most dignity as she could considering the circumstances. I would love to be tattooed by Ryan!

Drenda James She would turn me into a lesbian.

JESS YEN

Tim Bareto Another dragon masterpiece like the one you tattooed on my arm. Thank you for sharing your art with the world.

JORDYN RYDER

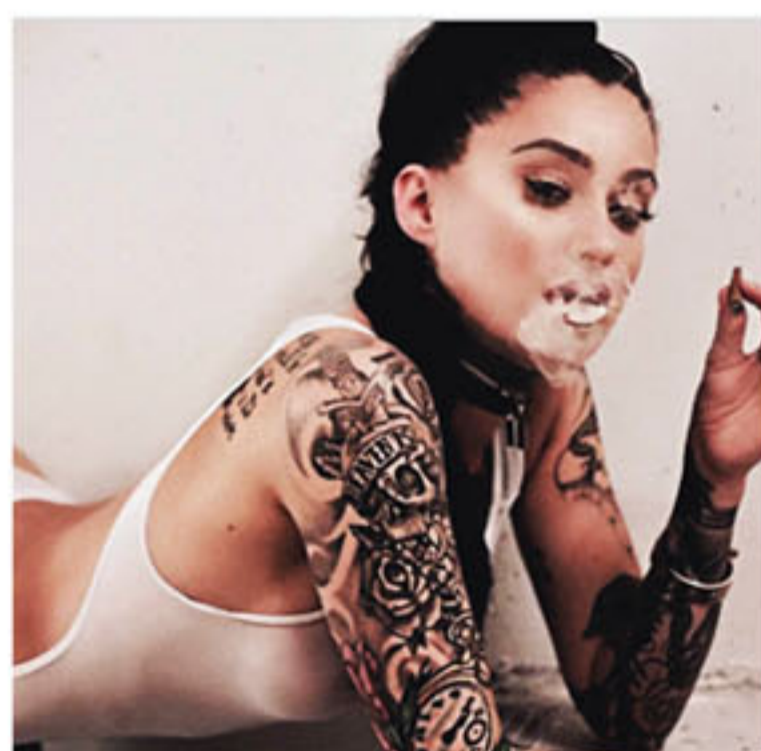
Dakota Schneider Wow, congrats Jordyn! So happy and proud of you. You're inspirational!

Ali Al-Rubaie Well deserved.

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TATTOO OF THE MONTH



BY: MIKE EXOTIKMODS @EXOTIKMODS
Want to be a Tattoo of the Month?
E-mail your ink to editor@inkedmag.com

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Model: Miss Kitty

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MY FAVORITE

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photos by Sunshine "Sunnie" Rizzolo





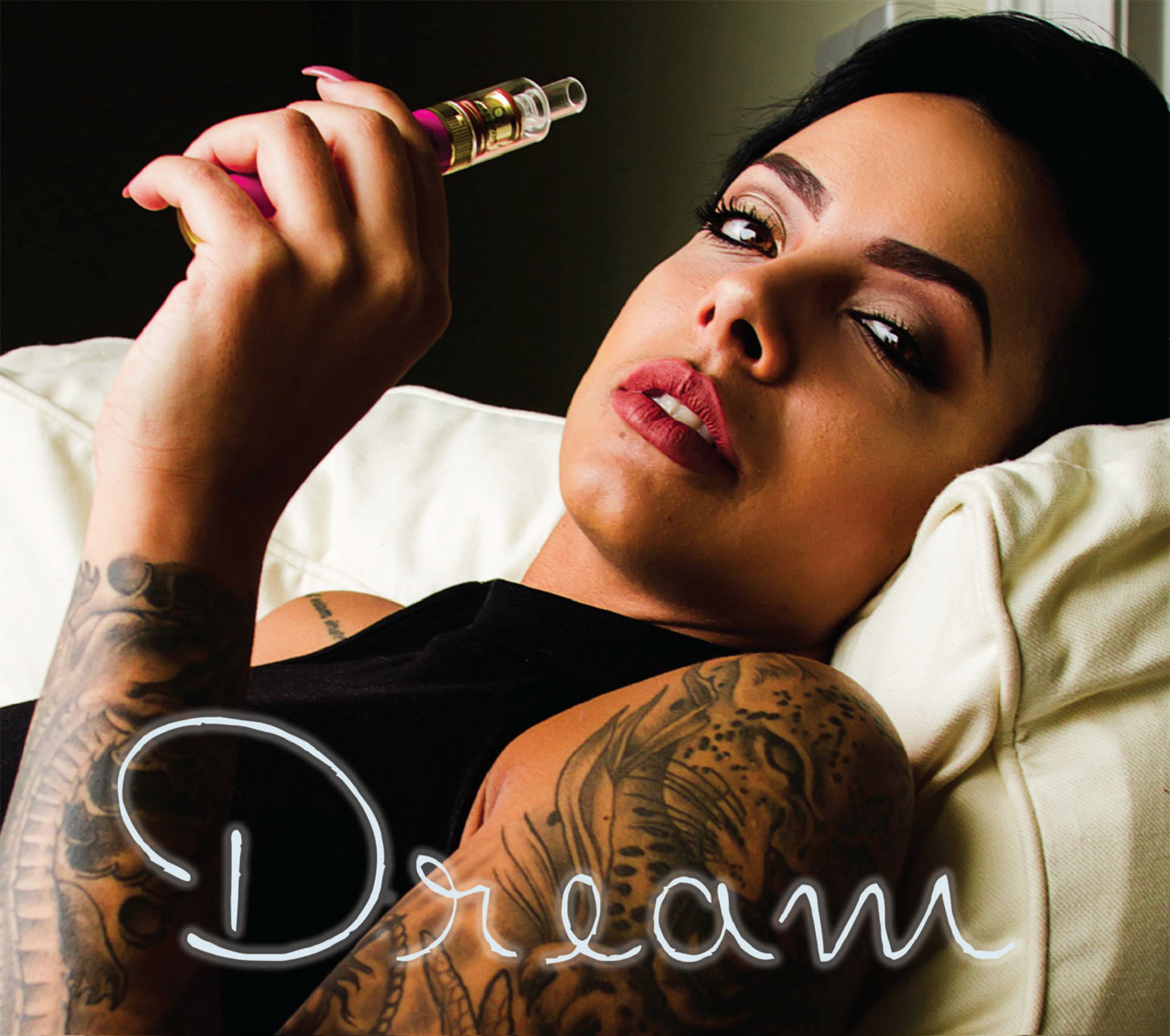
Lindsey Jennings

"I just got my own face tattooed on me, so now—so of course that's my favorite, because I'm a narcissist (my micro-portrait of Chucky by Vinny Romanelli is a close second). Kris Busching tattooed my face on my left upper arm during an eight-hour session which was the longest I've ever sat for but it was worth it. It's the ultimate self-love to me. I'm ballsy and I'm proud to love myself."

"I have a beautiful and important relationship with cannabis. I'm blessed to not have any super serious ailments that I need it for, but I believe strongly in its medicinal properties and I've seen it help so many people. Cannabis gets me through the day with a smile on my face. I also had a heartbreaking experience with my mini bulldog Chewy this year in which CBD helped save her life. She developed seizures and was put on a medicine that was basically killing her, but we weaned her off the medicine and introduced CBD. She has been happy and seizure free since!"

"I've roast battled a lot! It is one of my favorite things to do. Check out the Verbal Violence podcast on iTunes episodes #41 and #43 to hear some of my jokes. I always go into a battle prepared with comebacks specific to the individual I'm roasting, and I've always got the basics covered as far as tattoos, piercings, and the fact that everyone thinks that my tattoos and piercings mean I have daddy issues...I don't, me and my dad have great sex! I've definitely made fun of people's shitty tattoos, but I'm always clearly the comic with more tattoos. One time a hookup made me freestyle rap for him and I ripped his tattoos apart, they looked like they were drawn by a second grader. It's amazing to me how many people have shitty tattoos and don't realize, they get offended by jokes and I'm like, 'Wait, you thought that tattoo was good?'"

"The first thing people notice about me? I'd like to think they notice my personality and light, but if they're shallow, then whatever their eyes are drawn to first—might be my butt if we're being honest, though."



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SHOW OF HANDS

Jackee Sandelands-Strom has an incredible touch

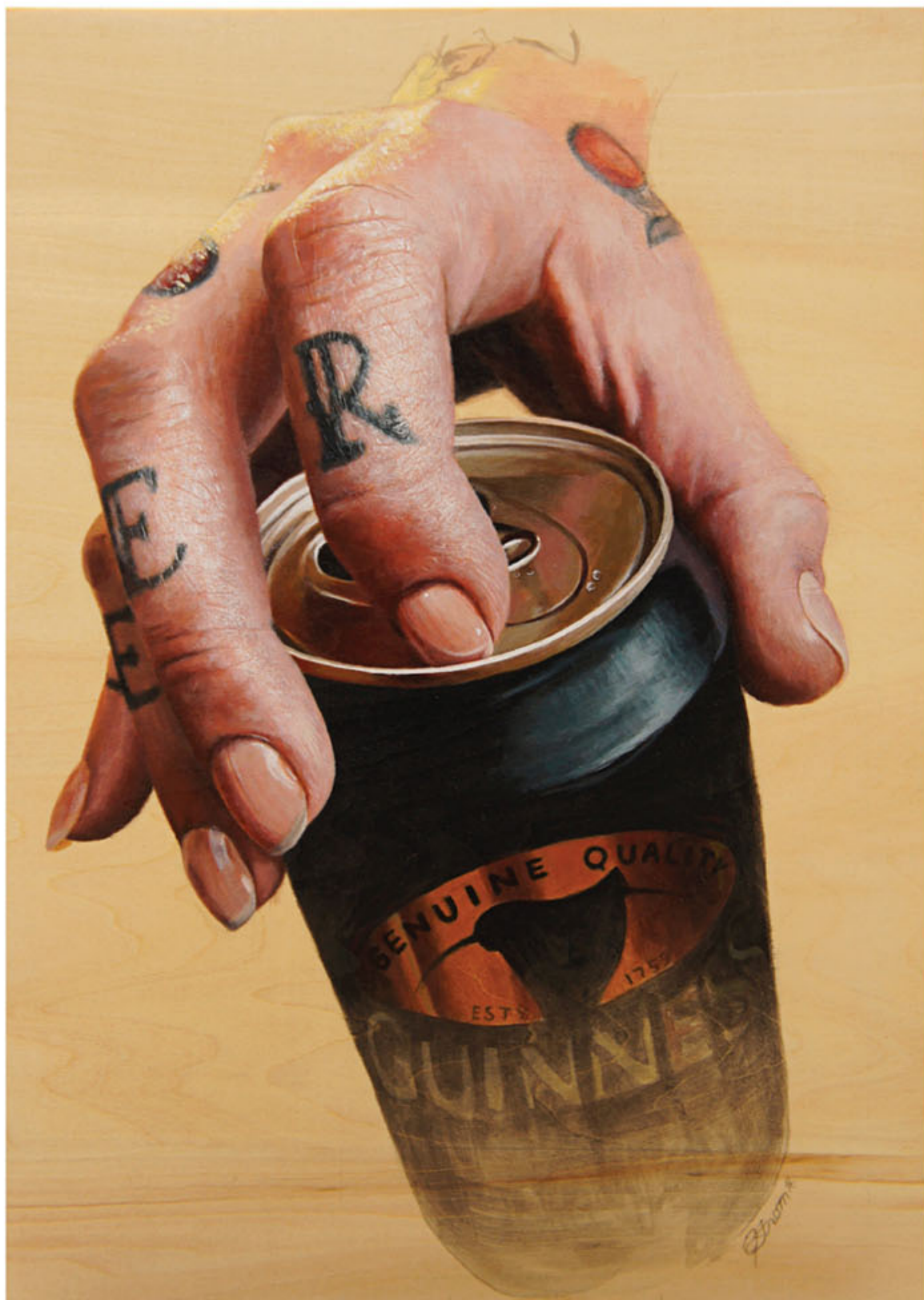
I love hands because I believe they show, more than anything else, the type of life someone leads. Whether they are tattooed, not tattooed, old, young, weathered or smooth, they show life. I have always worked with my hands and they are pretty rough at this point, but I am proud of that. I like my scars, dryness and calluses, they show the work I have done throughout my life, from leather working to hairstyling to painting.

I don't know what I hope for when people view my art. It is nice when they appreciate how much work has gone into even my smaller paintings, and I love that so many enjoy the subject matter of hands, which has kind of accidentally taken over my paintings. I started with a couple a while back just to give myself a challenge, then got some commissions for them and soon became addicted. I am very happy to have people enjoy these paintings and to be fascinated by them, for whatever reasons they may have.

I think a lot of artists have difficulty with hands because they try to make them too perfect whereas I like to accentuate the flaws. I like the dirty nails, broken nails, dry skin and more—so I paint all of that. If I paint tattooed hands I don't try to make the tattoo look new. I want to see the parts that may have healed rough, or the injuries that have happened over time to mark the tattoos. I love old tattoos with thick fuzzy line work and colors that are barely there. It adds to the realism of the painting. I'm not trying to capture what they used to be, I'm trying to capture what they have become and the life they belong to. In that, tattoos are very difficult to paint, but again because it's hard not to put paint down to make it look like how your mind perceives a nice tattoo. I work in a bazillion layers to get the tattoo to look more like it is in the skin versus being on top of the skin. It takes a really long time and lots of patience, which fortunately I have both. Not to say I don't go crazy sometimes from all the little bits of detail.

As for models, I have used my hands, my husband's hands, strangers on the street, friends and then people who have commissioned me to paint their hands. Generally when I am out and about, if I see someone with great hands then I can't help myself but to ask if they will let me take reference photos.

My hands are tattooed also. I was fortunately in the position to be able to have tattooed hands when I was younger because I worked in the right industries so it never threatened my livelihood. I am American but live in Scotland now with my husband, Tom Strom, who is a tattooist and fine artist. Our lives pretty much revolve around art from the moment we get up to the moment we go to sleep, and I love it!



ALIVE W/RISE



in-ter o-li-a



MAY 5TH





YOUR NEW BEST BUD

A CONSULT WITH "BUDTENDER" MACEY
FROM ALL ABOUT BUD IN DESERT HOT
SPRINGS CALIFORNIA

HOW DID YOU GET INTO BUDTENDING?

I was bartending and I got into cannabis after learning the medicinal benefits that I could incorporate into my lifestyle. I love my job, I love knowing that I help people with any illness and/or pain they have. My grandma fought cancer for years and it's easily the only thing that helped.

HOW DID YOUR GRANDMOTHER TURN TO CANNABIS?

She battled cancer for about 10 years and the first five she was very anti-cannabis. With no alternative medicine to turn to, her introduction to cannabis began through edibles and topicals.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL PEOPLE WHO ARE AFRAID OF CANNABIS TO GET THEM TO OPEN UP?

I would tell them to look at it as any other medication. For instance, THC is proven to be a better anti-inflammatory medication than ibuprofen or any other over the counter medicine.

FOR THOSE NOT FAMILIAR WITH DISPENSARIES, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THEM? It's a professional environment where people come to get a medical grade cannabis with friendly educated budtenders.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE STRAIN? My all time favorite strain would be San Fernando Valley (SFV) OG. I'm a heavy indica girl for sure. Indica is more of a body high and Sativa is a head high.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TATTOO? My praying hands on the side of my neck. It was done by Christian Marek in San Clemente, CA. It reminds me to always keep my faith in God.

ANYTHING ELSE WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOU? I played piano for seven years as a kid and I still play the drums.

Black Flys



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WEED
&
BOYS
WITH
TATTOOS



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UNDISPUTED

STRAINS

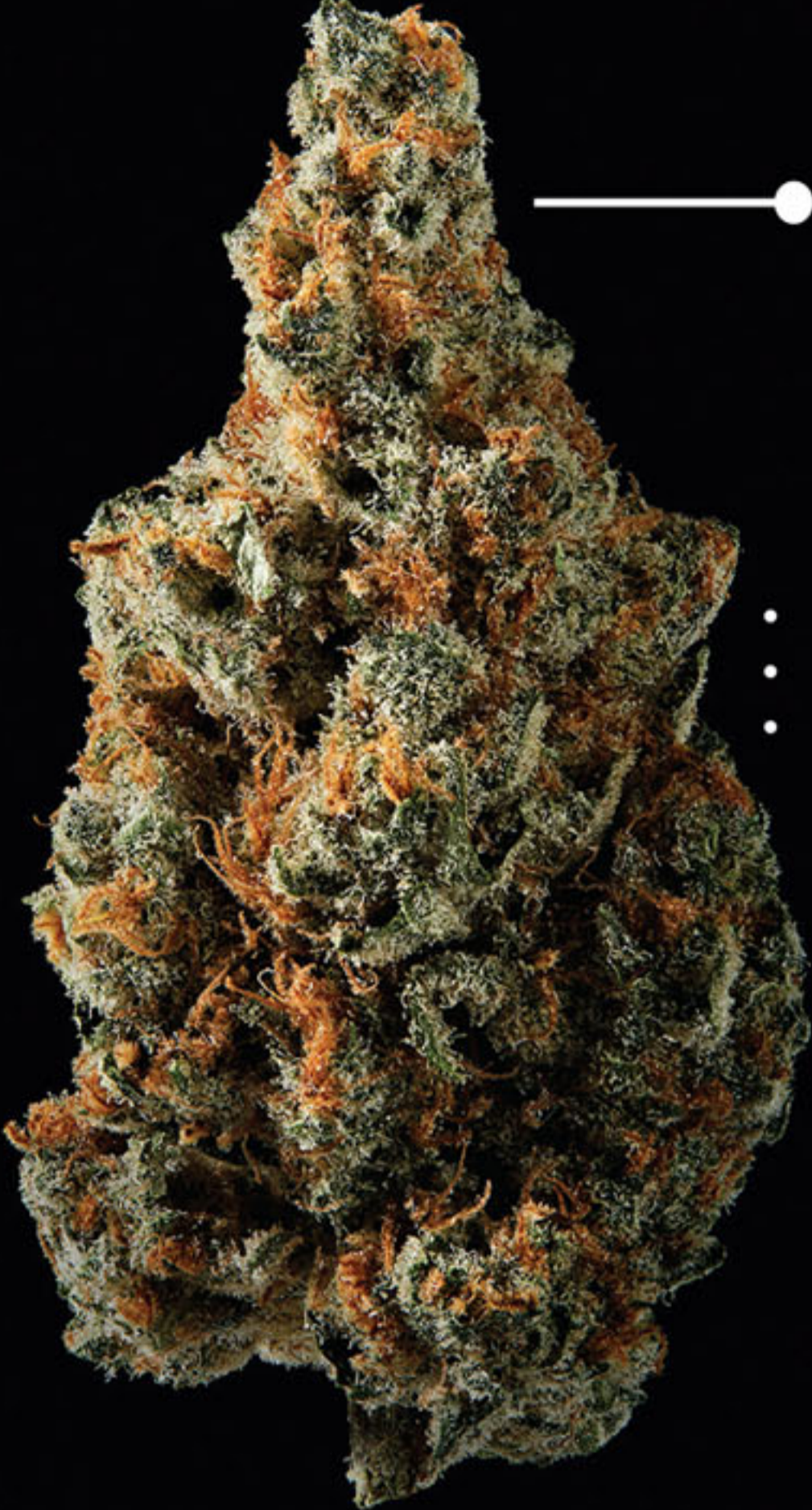
THE CO-FOUNDER OF RISE
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RECALDE CURATES THE TOP
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● BLACK CHERRY

WITH HINTS OF LAVENDER, BLACKBERRY, EARTH AND THE WOODS, THIS MEDICINAL FLOWERS SOOTHES AN UPSET STOMACH AS WELL AS REDUCES ACHES AND PAINS.

- BLACKBERRY KUSH X CHERRY PIE MOTHER
- BREEDER: GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLECTIVE [SANTA CRUZ, CA]
- SOURCE: EAZE DELIVERY [SAN FRANCISCO AND OAKLAND]



BLUE RHINO

THIS RELAXING STRAIN GIVES YOU THE SENSATION THAT YOU DRANK A CALMING TEA WITH SOME REDUCED MUSCLE TENSION, YET YOU'RE STILL ABLE TO FOCUS.

- BLUEBERRY X WHITE RHINO
- GROWN: SEBASTOPOL, CA
- SOURCE: TOP SHELF MEDICINAL [OAKLAND, CA]



OG CHEM

THIS IS THE PERFECT STRAIN FOR STARTING YOUR MORNING OFF WITHOUT ANXIETY. IT NEVER PUTS YOU OUT, MAKES YOU SUPER CREATIVE AND MOSTLY GETS YOU GOING. WE WOULD TRADE COFFEE FOR THIS ANY DAY.

- CHEMDAWG X OG KUSH
- 4.5/5 STARS ON LEAFLY.COM
- SOURCE: MERCY WELLNESS [COTATI, CA]



WHITE BUFFALO

MUCH LIKE THE LEGENDARY NATIVE AMERICAN ANIMAL, WHITE BUFFALO IS A RARE FIND, THOUGH THE 80/20 SATIVA-DOMINANT CANNABIS STRAIN ALSO BOASTS A SNOWY COAT OF CRYSTAL TRICOMES.

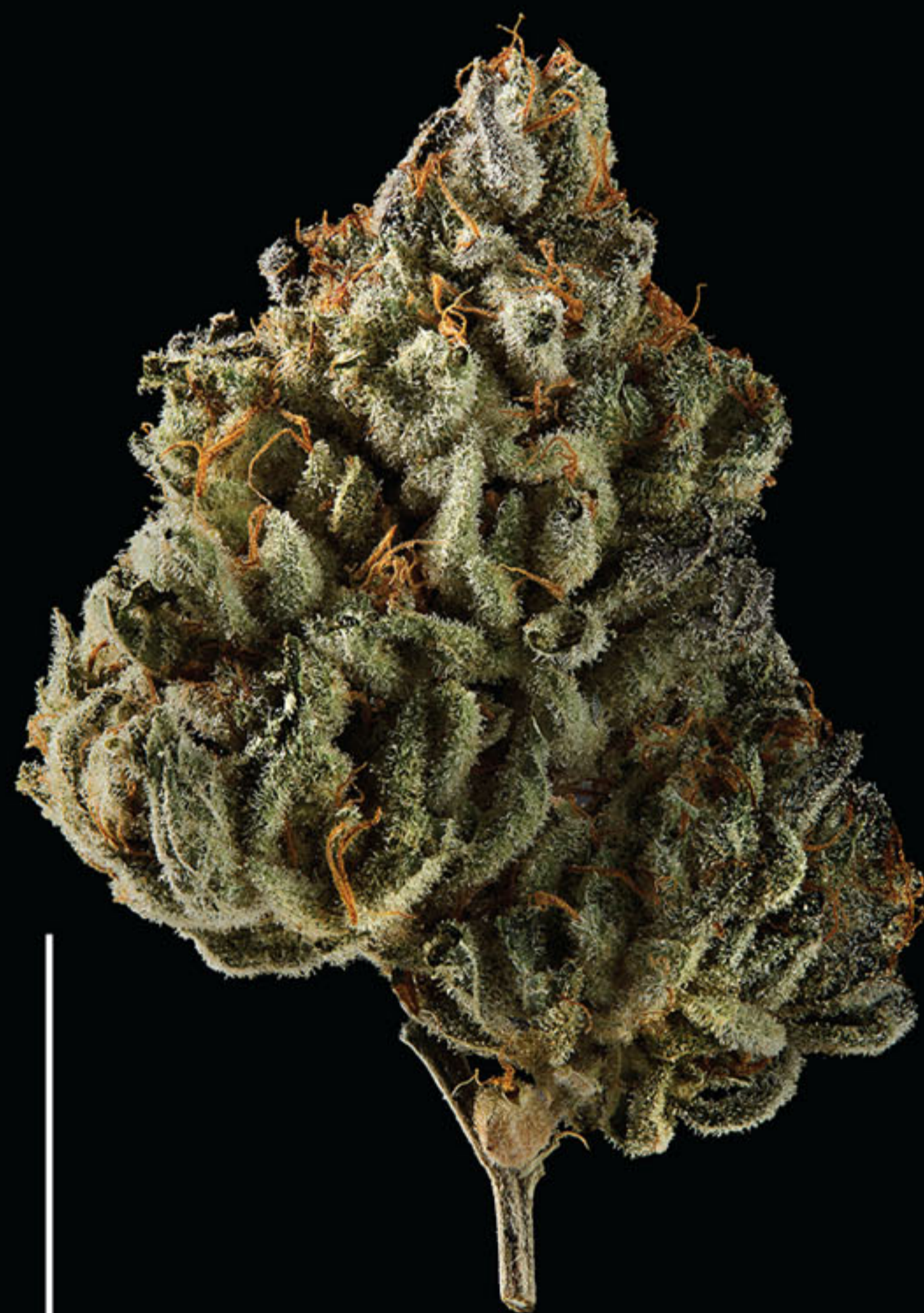
- ROMULAN X BLACKBERRY KUSH/BAY 11
- GROWN: MEDOCINO COUNTY, CA
- SOURCE: THE WEED [LOS ANGELES, CA]



MOCHI

THE COOKIES FAMILY BRED THIS STRAIN, BUT IT MADE IT'S WAY TO SOME CLUBS IN OAKLAND THROUGH ANOTHER GROWER. THE CLUB HAS BEEN ASKED TO CHANGE THE NAME, SO ITS' FOUND UNDER "MT. TAM MOCHI."

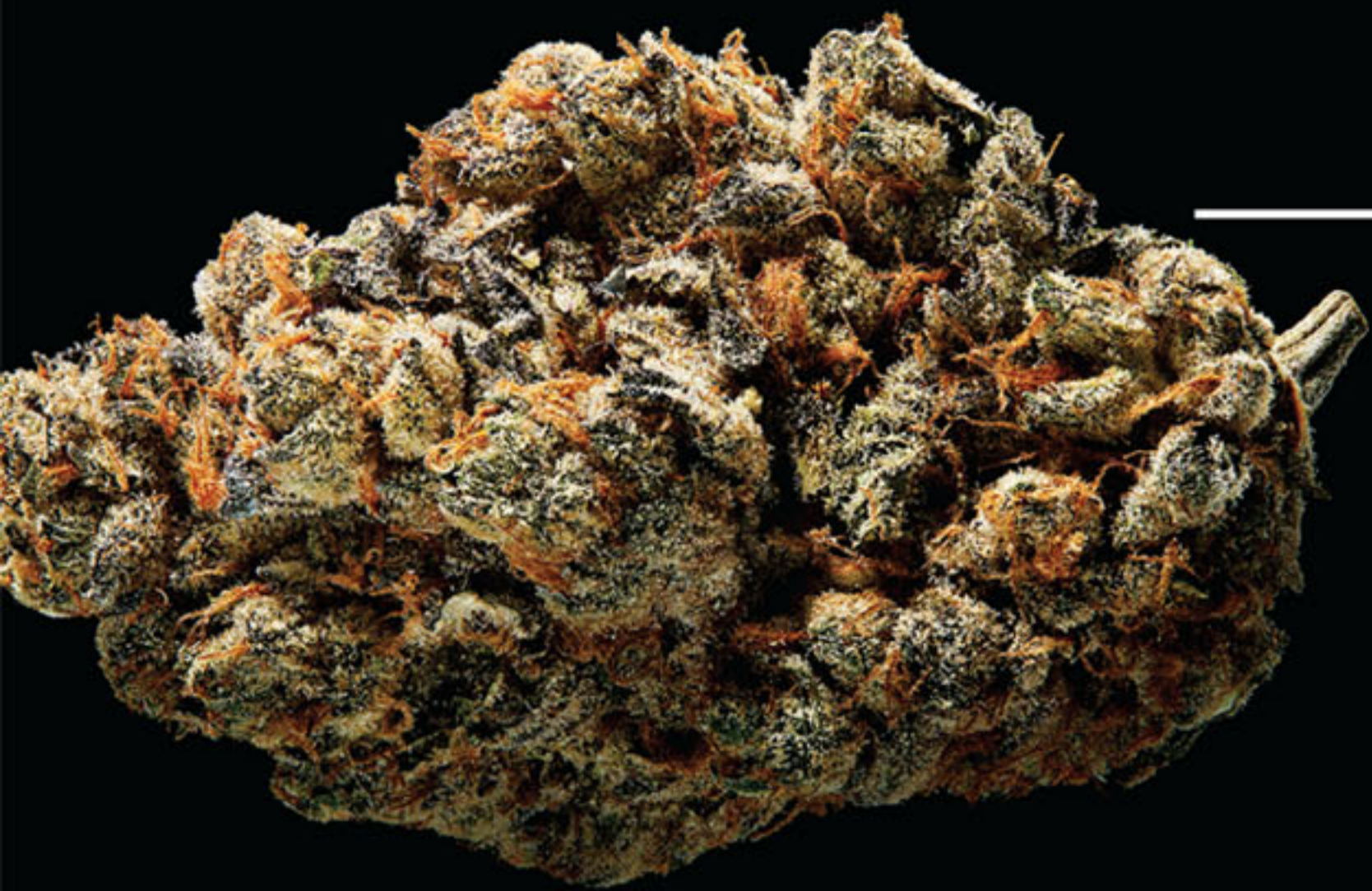
- SUNSET SHERBERT X GELATTO
- BREEDER: COOKIES FAMILY
- SOURCE: T.H.C. [OAKLAND, CA]



SUNSET SOUR DIESEL

WON FIRST AT STEVEN HAGER'S HOLY GRAIL CANNABIS CUP—AN INVITE-ONLY CUP TO TRIBUTE THE WALDOS.

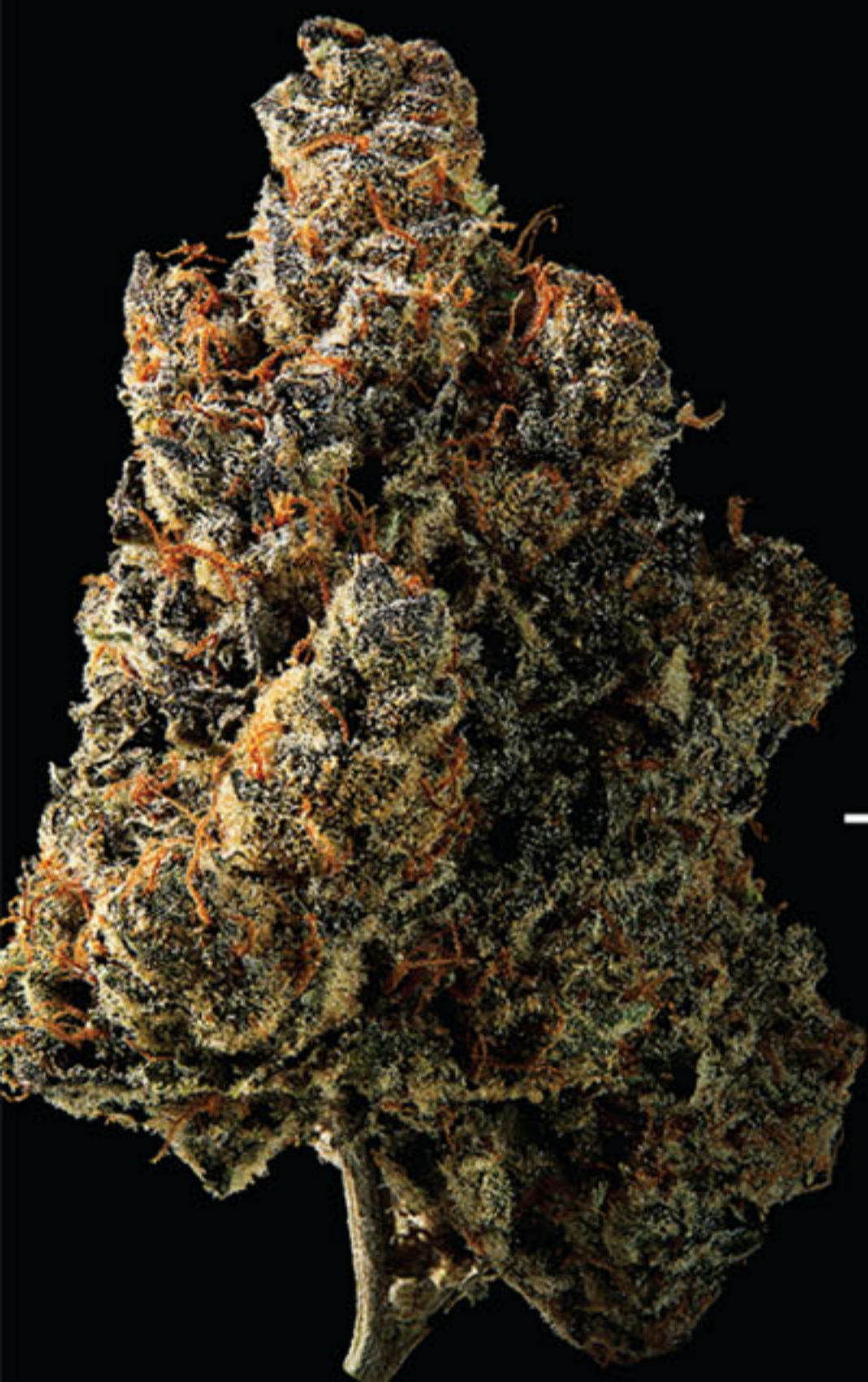
- V-TOWN SOUR DIESEL X SUNSET SHERBERT
- GROWN: VALLEJO, CA
- SOURCE: CALIFORNIA COLLECTIVE CARE [VALLEJO, CA]



DOPE ROPE

THIS STRAIN WAS NAMED AFTER A ROPE SWING IN THE BRETHART HILLS WHERE A GROUP OF FRIENDS CALLED THE WALDOS COINED THE TERM "420."

- SUNSET SHERBERT (POLLEN) X CHERRY PIE (MOTHER)
- BREEDER: MARIN CANNABIS COMPANY
- SOURCE: GREEN REMEDY (RICHMOND, CA)



THE WHITE

THIS STRAIN HAS A LIGHT PINE SMELL AND FLAVOR, BUT IT IS EXTREMELY POTENT. IT'S THE PERFECT NUG FOR YOUR TRAVEL STASH WHEN ATTENDING EVENTS THAT REQUIRE SOME STEALTH AND RELIEF.

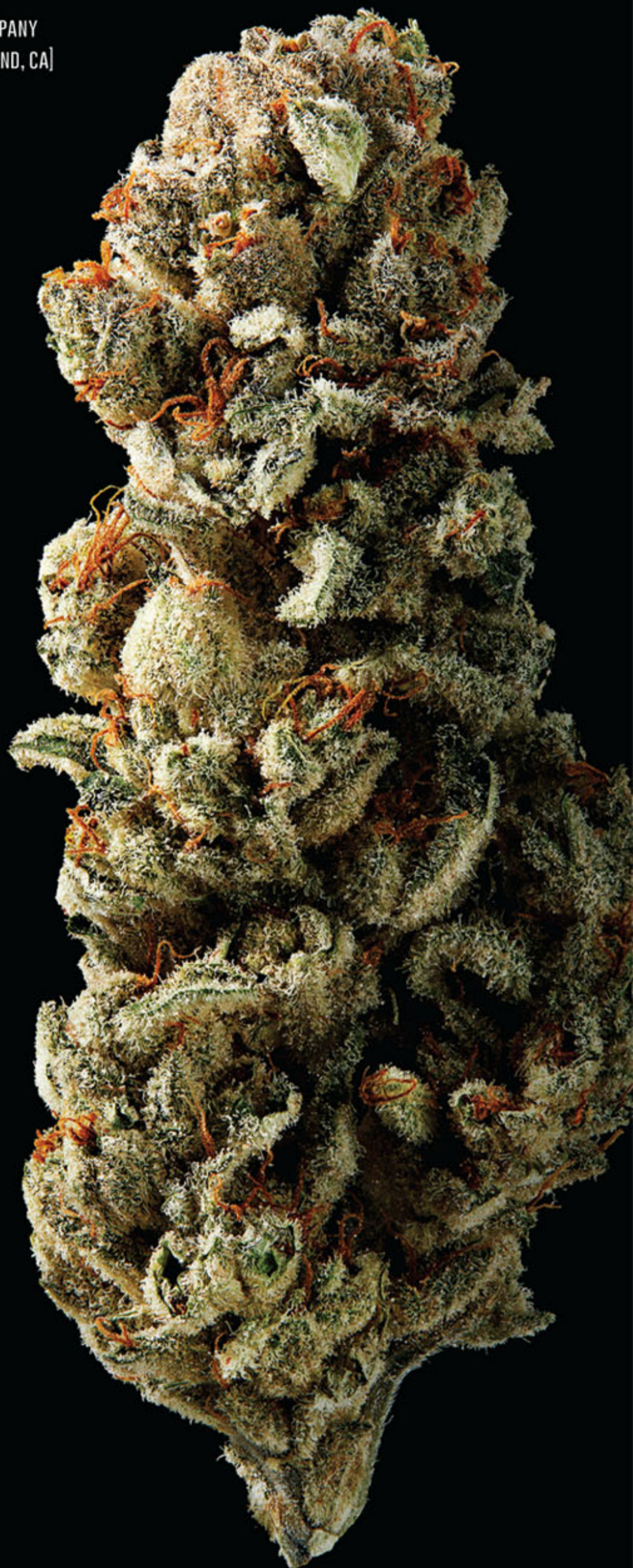
- GENETIC LINEAGE: TOTAL MYSTERY
- RUMORED TO BE FROM FLORIDA
- SOURCE: SONOMA PATIENT GROUP



GRANDDADDY PURPLE

I CALL THIS "DOC'S CUT" BECAUSE IT'S GROWN BY A REAL LIFE DOCTOR! HIS MEDICAL SCHOOL BACKGROUND MUST HAVE GIVEN HIM THAT MAGIC TOUCH WHEN IT COMES TO GROWING ENORMOUS, FROSTY BUDS.

- PURPLE URKLE X BIG BUD
- BREEDER: KEN ESTES
- FLAVORS: GRAPE, BERRY, SWEET

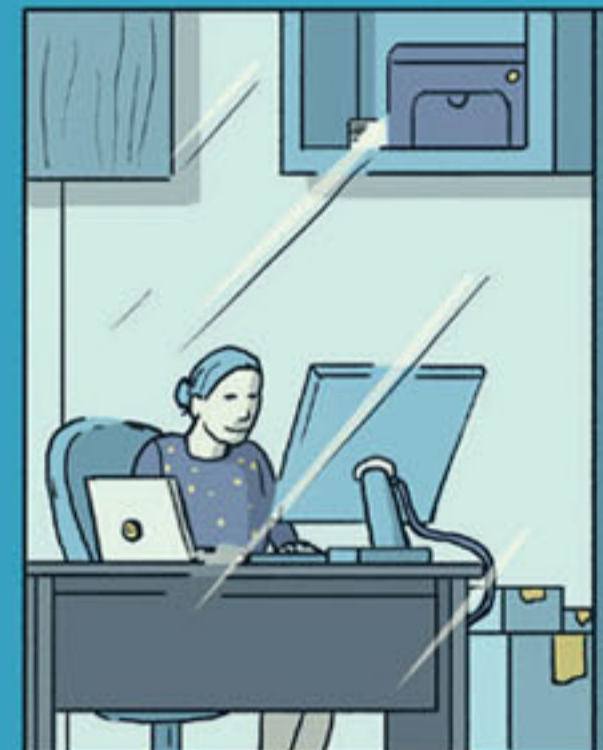
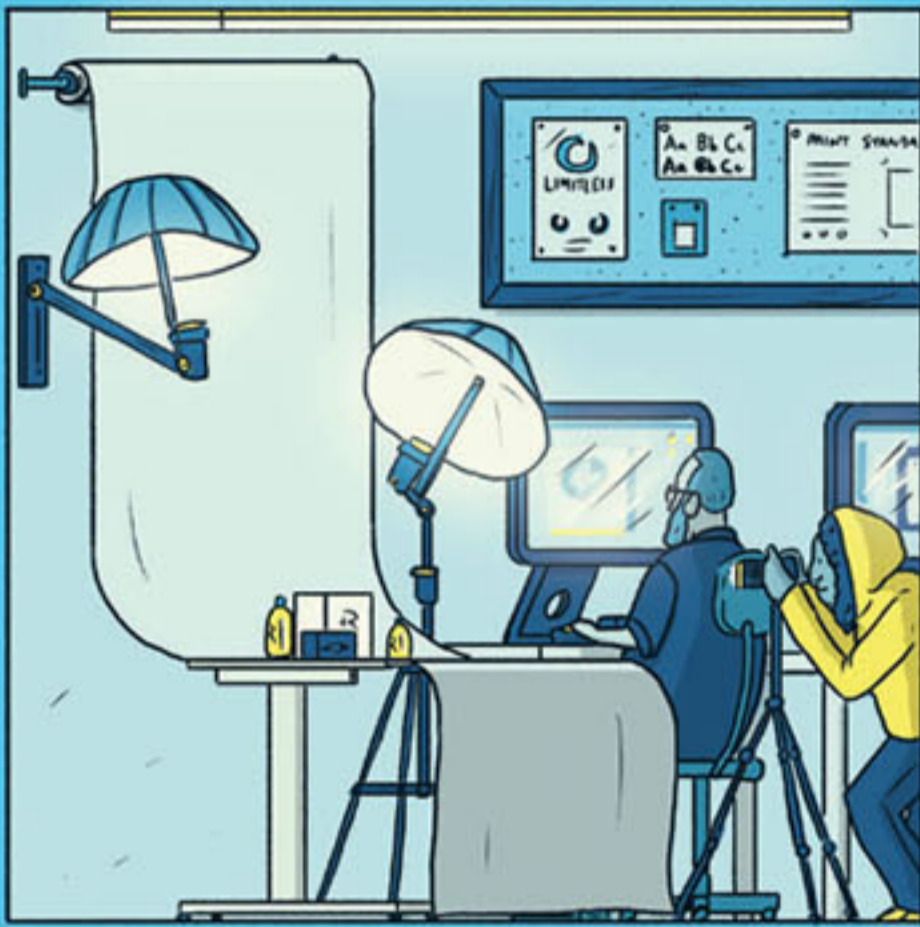


POINT BONITA

THE BREEDER NAMED THIS STRAIN IN HONOR OF JOHN HUNTER WHO FELL TO HIS DEATH IN 2002 FROM A CLIFF NEAR THE POINT BONITA LIGHTHOUSE.

- SUNSET SHERBERT (MOTHER) X CHERRY PIE (POLLEN)
- BREEDER: MARIN CANNABIS COMPANY
- SOURCE: GREEN REMEDY (RICHMOND, CA)

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Rolling Stoned

Wiz Khalifa on how many tattoos he'll end up with, his love of cannabis, *Rolling Papers 2* and the way he rolls.

By Rebecca Haithcoat Photos by Brian Ziff



It's Friday in Los Angeles, and somebody in Wiz Khalifa's house is ready to party. Giddy squeals unfurl, punctuated here and there by a high-pitched giggle. The rapper is trying to stay focused on our phone conversation, but whoever's bopping around his house has a case of "The Fridays" and clearly wants to share it with Wiz.

Just a few years ago, this scenario would've sparked a gossipy guessing game of what model or actress or singer—or all three, all at once—was shacking up with one of the most famous rappers in the world. But these days, a different sort of playmate has captured Wiz's heart—his four-year-old son Sebastian, aka "Bash," who's currently getting the weekend started with his dad.

"I just love the shit out of my kid. The most recent tattoo I got was a pumpkin on my face. My son loves Halloween and pumpkins and I asked him what tattoo he wanted me to get and that was it. Anything for my boy," the 29-year-old rapper says, bursting into his big trademark, honking bray of a laugh. "I put all of my time and energy into him. I've always been a very focused and determined person, but now I have something totally different to be focused and determined about."

If anyone can afford to shift his attention away from his career a bit, it's Wiz Khalifa. Starting with a slew of mixtapes released in the 2000s, the Pittsburgh native blazed a new path in rap and did so while, well, blazed. Dangling a never-ending joint from his fingers, he and his buddy from New Orleans, Curren\$y, pioneered a novel approach to becoming a star in the age of the unstable music industry—touring and tweeting. Meanwhile, he also helped usher in a new, melodic style that softened the edges of rap by marrying traditional rhyming with singsong hooks. Together, the twinned strategies made Khalifa a very wealthy man: Last year he secured the No. 5 spot on *Forbes's* annual "Cash Kings" list with a net worth of \$24 million.

As the face of stoner rap, Wiz certainly dismantles that lazy weed-smoker stereotype: Since 2006, he has released six studio albums, including his major label debut, 2011's *Rolling Papers*, 14 mixtapes and 2015's best-selling song and the first rap song to rack up two billion views on Youtube, "See You Again" from the film *Furious 7*. He's established and signed artists like Ty Dolla \$ign to his own label, Taylor Gang, and endured controversies that spanned from women to weed to a social media dust-up with Kanye West. He's become a pied piper not just for high, happy, tatted-up hippies who love rap. Everybody from your teenage next-door neighbor to your mom knows the words to a Wiz Khalifa song. He's become so successful that he could just chill for awhile, be a full-time, stay-at-home dad.

"People are drawn to him," agrees his longtime producer Jeremy "Big Jerm" Kulousek of ID Labs. "He's likable all the time. I feel like people connect with him. He has that charisma where people just notice him."

But Wiz balks at the mere suggestion that he's got it made. "I'm glad it looks like that to you," he says, incredulity creeping into his voice. "I don't go to sleep thinking that shit at all. I be like, man, I gotta do this, this, this, this. I can't stop. People get into a situation and they do one thing and it all goes down the drain. That's probably my greatest fear—fucking it all up."

Blowing it seems unlikely at this point, but he's spent half his life building his hazy empire—of course he fears losing it. Born into a military family, Wiz bounced around Europe and Japan before his parents, who divorced when he was a toddler, put down roots in Pittsburgh. As a child, Wiz says he was "everybody's best friend," a "lovebug." Inspired by the '90s rap legends his mom loved, he was recording at ID Labs by the time he was 15 years old.

"I wouldn't have rather done anything else with my childhood. I

just dedicated it to music 'cause I knew that was my calling," he says. "I didn't know what I'd get from it, but I just knew that out of everything I was passionate about, the music was pulling me toward something. I didn't know why I kept going to the studio every day, I didn't know why I loved this so much. I was enjoying myself the whole time."

Squirring out of an early, ill-suited major label deal in 2009, Wiz began touring like an indie band—release a project, tour behind it, repeat—and harnessing the power of a new social media platform, Twitter, to drop free mixtapes and deliver his message of women, weed and green in a helium voice over sparkly starbursts of beats. This one-two punch helped him amass a massive congregation of devotees dubbed the Taylor Gang, a nod to Wiz's high school, Taylor Allderdice, and his beloved shoes, Chuck Taylor All-Stars. But Wiz was also simply a star waiting to happen. With 2010's dizzying "Black and Yellow," he conquered mainstream radio and quickly became a household name.

Paparazzi started to hound him in earnest when he and Amber Rose began dating and subsequently married in 2013. Since their divorce a year later, however, people have mostly stopped shoving cameras in Wiz's face. After a Twitter beef with Kanye West and a lawsuit against his former manager last year, Wiz's life looks to be drama-free. His days are full of Bash's extracurricular activities—karate, dancing, gymnastics—and recording his new album, *Rolling Papers 2*.

Tabloids never suited him, anyway. "My goal and my intentions were never really based on being famous," says Wiz. "It's more what I'm put here to do. My responsibility is mainly just make people happy and uplift them."

In order to spread joy to others, of course, it first must bloom inside you. "My spirit is number one to me," he says. He recently decided to give up his beloved Bombay Sapphire after going 39 days without drinking on a tour last year ("It's really difficult not to drink on tour, so I told myself if I could do it while on tour, I could do it any time").

For the past two years, he's done yoga, and while he's not strictly vegan, he's cut out most meat and eats only vegetables and fish. "I'm not against killing animals. Everything has to die," he explains. "But the energy that goes into it is really, really fucked up and it's harmful to our bodies."

And then there's the other secret to Wiz's perma-smile: He's perma-stoned.

"Weed plays a huge role in my life," says the man who once claimed to spend \$10,000 a month on marijuana. "I just realized how it makes so many people happy."

Not that Wiz thinks weed is a one-size-fits-all prescription. "Weed isn't for some people. But if the stigma of weed was changed and people didn't look at it as such a crime and such a bad thing, it would help out America because it gives us one less fear," he says. "Oh, my kid is gonna smoke dope and become a heroin addict, blah blah blah. This person smells like weed, he's gonna rob me, he's a thug.' Even I have a little bit of fear of carrying weed with me, I might get pulled over. People's fear of weed has to go away for us to move forward."

Celebrities often look weird in person. Maybe it's because their charisma is blinding in person. It needs to be distilled a bit, viewed at a distance, through the TV or on stage or in a magazine, not encountered face to face. This is true of Wiz, at least. Tall and praying mantis-thin, he gleams, tattoos almost completely covering his body.

continued on next page

One of Wiz's first songs to wriggle up from the underground was entitled "Ink My Whole Body": "My aunt say my skin too clean to mark it up / But I'ma ink my whole body, I don't give a motherfuck."

"At first it was more like filling up space and getting things I liked tattooed on me. But the older I got, the more I realized how spiritual my tattoos are. Everything I feel on the inside is on the outside," he says. "I have one on my left hand that was a cover-up that didn't really come out exactly how I wanted it to, but I don't have any I regret."

Right now, he's working with Brian Henry from Colorado, but he switches it up every couple of years, and he knows exactly what he's looking for. Wiz might be chanting and practicing sun salutations, but he'll nix an artist quick if his technique and tools aren't first class.

"Equipment is a big thing. You gotta be able to move with tech and the times. You can't be tattooing like it's 2004. You gotta have all the new shit," he says. "And I know what's up, cause I get tattoos hella. They gotta have new guns, new ink, new wipe-down material."

You can't have a real heavy hand to where you're scarring me or scratching me up to where I'm bleeding and the tattoos look really angry when we're done," he continues. "It has to be soft. You gotta be really good with your line work. I'm real big on details. Because the way my skin is, if your line work isn't good, the lines will blow out and you'll have some thick spots and some weird spots. Someone who can do really detailed tattoos but small? That means they're talented."

Does not having fat make it hurt more?

He laughs. "I'm all bones. I got a Willie Nelson tattoo on my foot and that shit hurt so bad. Oh my god, it was the worst tattoo ever," he says, wincing even now. "I made I through it but there was a couple times I was like, I don't know if I can do this. I think the longest I could sit is six hours."

Right now, Bash seems like he's having trouble sitting still, too. In the background, he's careening about in that whirling dervish way kids have. His energy has been imperative during this recording process, Wiz says.

"My son stuck three chopsticks in his hair and was eating dinner all night. As an adult, that's unacceptable. But for a kid, he don't give a fuck. So that's what inspires me. Kids are just free," he says. "They're really innocent. As adults you kinda shy away from that innocence and freedom and he reminds me how to tap into that. Especially when you're being creative. Kids don't know rejection or how to be embarrassed. You can't be scared of rejection or embarrassment."

Well, until Bash suggests something wilder than a pumpkin tattoo, right?

He pauses for a moment.

"I'M NOT GONNA TATTOO MY PENIS," WIZ SAYS, LAUGHING. "EVERYTHING ELSE IS GETTING COVERED."







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GALAXY WARS

The oddball, once C-list Marvel comic series is now an A-list property and pop culture phenomenon, thanks to the ginormous success of the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie. Star-Lord (Chris Pratt), Rocket (Bradley Cooper), Gamora (Zoe Saldana), Drax the Destroyer (Dave Bautista), and Baby Groot (Vin Diesel) are all back, this time to unravel the mystery of

Star-Lord's father. Two legends also join the cast: Kurt Russell co-stars as Ego, the Living Planet, and Sylvester Stallone, in what seems to be a mystery role. And of course, they have a new "Awesome Mixtape." Be sure to keep your ass in your seat until after the end credits, which is now a staple of these endless Marvel flicks. —*Gil Macias*.

Got Hustle?

Have a bong, bowl or rig that needs help? From the mind that created your go-to tattoo aftercare comes a product that is as beneficial for your glass as it is for your skin. The Hustle Butter Deluxe Natural Residue Remover is designed to clean danky, gooey residues from any surface. Whether you're going through TSA or worried about what's germinating in your downstem—Hustle Butter is there to get you out of a sticky situation. —*Devon Preston*



DREAM MACHINE

Many say that music and tattooing go hand in hand, and nowhere does this hold truer than with these pedals by Walrus Audio. Based in Oklahoma City, this pedal manufacturer has partnered with tattooer Matt Gibson to create a collection inspired by traditional tattooing. The combination of dynamic sound technology and classic traditional-style artwork are set to impress at your next big gig. —*D.P.*



DON'T WORRY, THERE ARE BEACH BABES TOO

Based on the late '80s-'90s guilty pleasure famous for its slow-motion bouncing breasts (both Pam Anderson's and David Hasselhoff's), *Baywatch* stars Dwayne Johnson as Mitch Buchannon, a seasoned lifeguard who bumps heads with ripped newbie Matt Brody (Zac Efron). But after a body washes up on their turf, the two pair up in buddy cop fashion to investigate a criminal plot that threatens the Bay. Director Seth Gordon, who has helmed box office comedy hits such as *Horrible Bosses* and *Identity Thief*, was the perfect choice to bring *Baywatch* to the big screen. —*G.M.*

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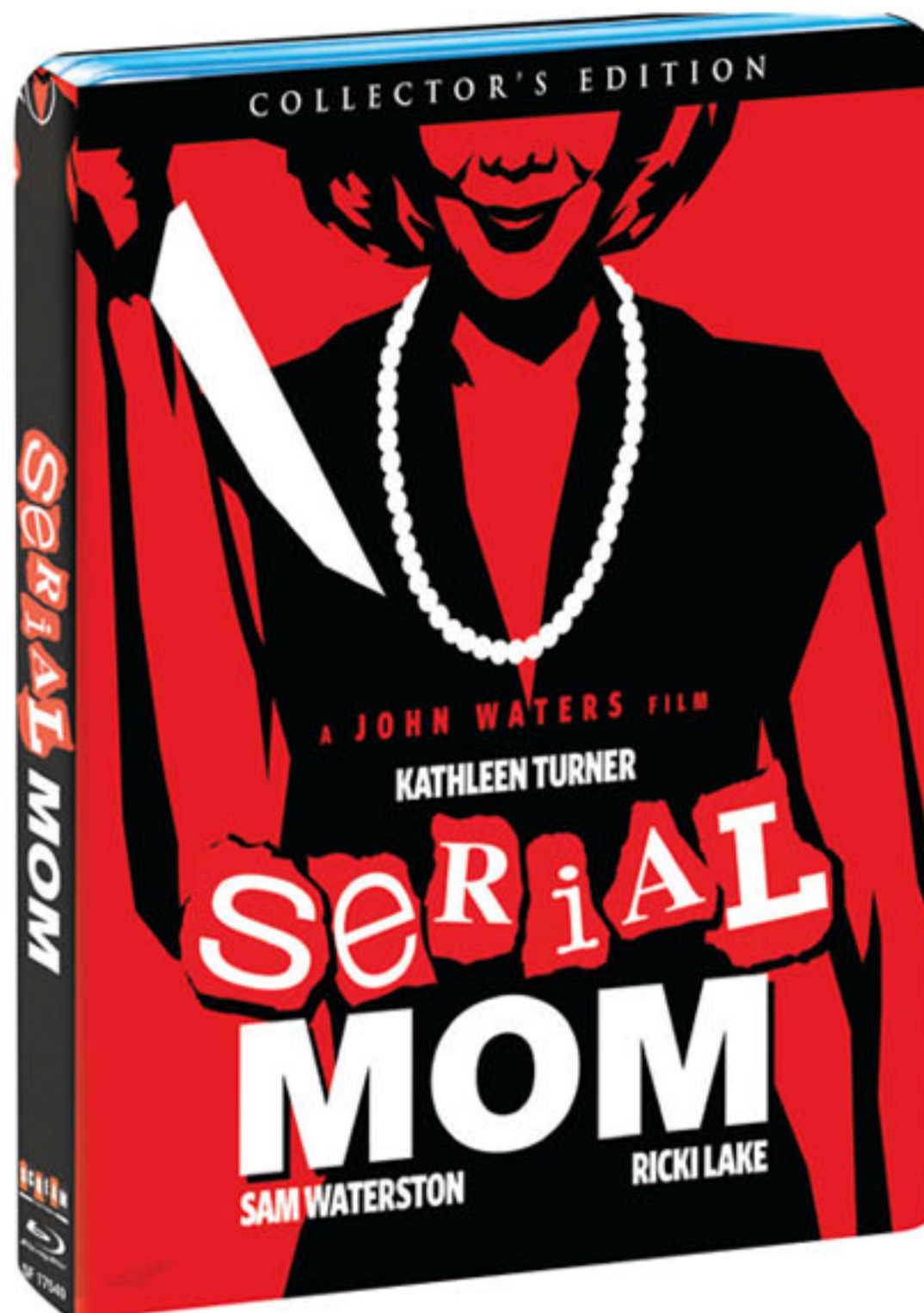


ALIEN INVASION

Prometheus was originally intended as an *Alien* prequel, but aside from the H.R. Gigerian landscapes, "Space Jockeys," and derelict spacecrafts, some were bummed that the "Big Chap" Alien never made an appearance. *Alien: Covenant*, set 10 years after *Prometheus*, is here to fix that. The unlucky crew of a colony ship lands on an uncharted planet where they find a crashed juggernaut ship. The crew stumbles across some familiar eggs that lead to face-hugging, blood, screaming and chest-bursting. And new types of Xenomorph creatures that are more inspired by Giger's original wreak havoc. Ridley Scott, the man who started it all with *Alien*, directs. —G.M.

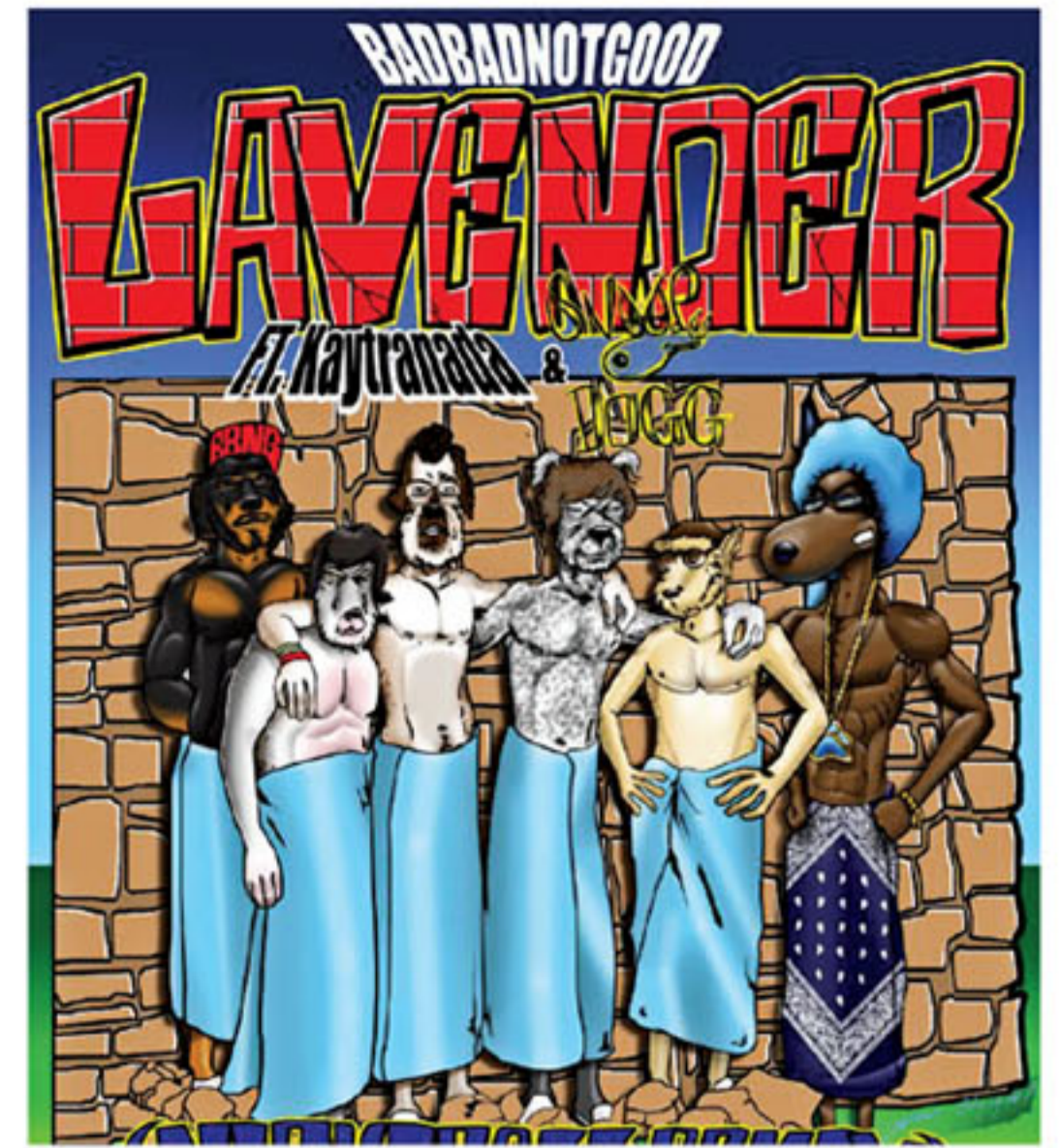
MOMMY DEAREST

John Waters' demented dark comedy cult classic comes to Blu-ray for the very first time in this all-new Collector's Edition, courtesy of Shout Factory. Bonus features include: A conversation with writer-director John Waters and stars Kathleen Turner and Mink Stole, *Serial Mom: Surreal Moments*—featuring interviews with Waters, Stole, Patty Hearst, Ricki Lake and Matthew Lillard. Order directly from ShoutFactory.com to score a limited edition 18"x24" poster. Pussy willows not included. —G.M.



IT'S PRONOUNCED FRA-GEE-LAY

Remember the leg lamp from the 1983 holiday classic *A Christmas Story*? It's time that you meet her seductive and sophisticated cousin: the Monroe Lamp by Bessa Art & Design. Modeled after the screen siren who revolutionized mid-20th century cinema, iconic actress Marilyn Monroe, this home accessory radiates Hollywood glamour. Standing at an impressive 70.8 inches tall, these legs are sure to capture every onlooker's attention, just like the real life Monroe's did in the Academy Award-winning film, *Some Like It Hot*. Complete with hand-worked brass, a fashionable teal lampshade, and a gold tassel fringe, this pin-up inspired piece is perfect for spicing up any bachelor or bachelorette pad. —D.P.



THE PLAYLIST BY JONAH BAYER

"LAVENDER (NIGHTFALL REMIX)"

BadBadNotGood
(ft. Kaytranada & Snoop Dogg)

Snoop fired at Trump in the video which got hype, but the song itself is a banger.

"INCURABLY INNOCENT"

At The Drive-In

One of post-hardcore's most celebrated acts returns in magnificent fashion.

"MELK EN HONING"

Author & Punisher

Industrial electronic doom produced by Pantera's Phil Anselmo? Sign us up.

"PARKING LOT"

Blink-182

Blink-182 take their instantly identifiable song into a new era with this anthem.

"THIRD OF MAY/ ŌDAIGAHARA"

Fleet Foxes

This timeless nine-minute track reminds us how much we've missed these guys.

"AMMOSEXUAL"

Fuck You Pay Me

If you thought punk rock wasn't dangerous anymore, you haven't heard Cleveland's finest.

"SENTENCE DAY"

Obituary

Death metal legends Obituary sound as brutal as ever on this headbanging ripper.

"BRONSEGUD"

Kvelertak

They put their own demented spin on heavy music and we can't get enough.

"HELP"

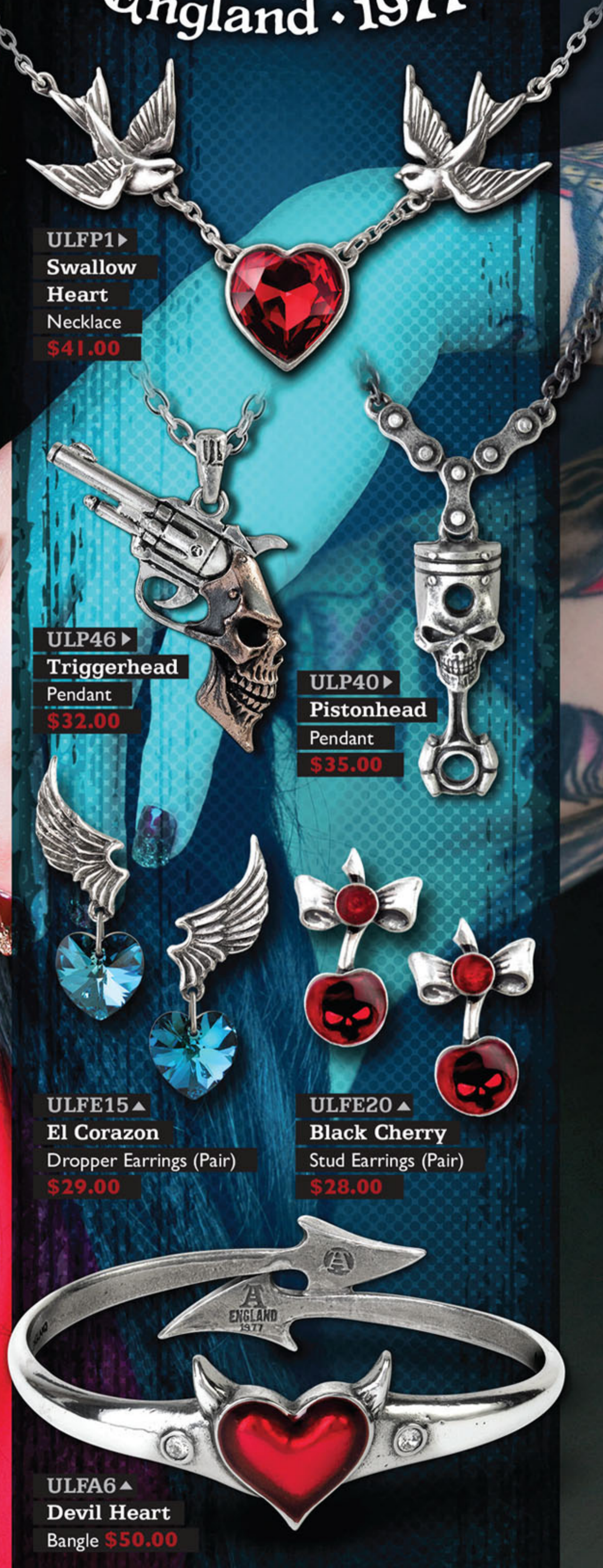
Papa Roach

Papa Roach is back and this radio-ready rocker proves that they still know how to write a hook.

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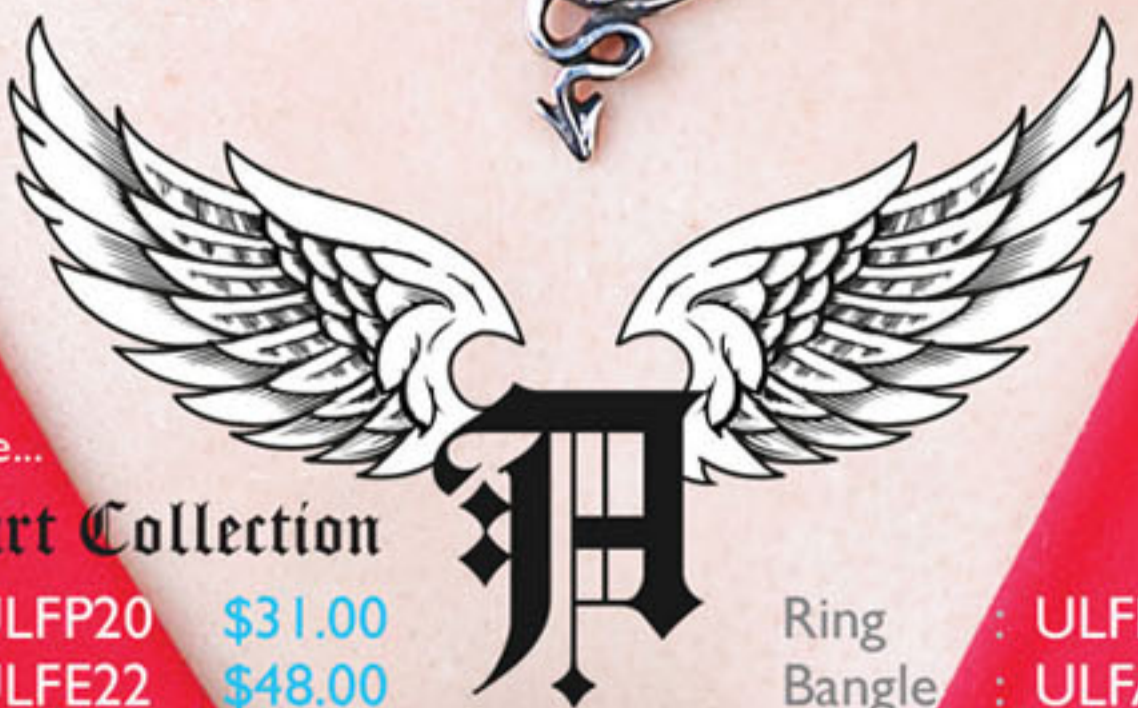
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Jack is Back

Johnny Depp reprises his role as Captain Jack Sparrow in his fifth *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie. This time, he faces off against the Spanish ghost pirate Capitán Armando Salazar (Javier Bardem), yet another revenge-hungry old nemesis of his who has escaped from the Devil's Triangle. And what's a Pirates movie without some mythical and all-powerful artifact to seek? This time Jack's only hope is the Trident of Poseidon. Geoffrey Rush also returns as fan-favorite Captain Barbossa. Yo ho! —G.M.



WILDE ABOUT SEX

Jessica Wilde (@jessicawildemfc) is here to answer your burning sex questions—though if it burns, consult an actual doctor right now. She's not a doctor, but she once role-played as a nurse so she's beyond qualified. Send your questions to press@inkedmag.com.

I feel like my boyfriend isn't into me. I always tell him how I feel and he says he loves me, but I just don't think he does. Should I just end it? -itsmeheidii

I could be married to my husband for 10 years and still ask him if he likes me every day. "Do you think I'm cool? So you like me? Are you sure?" It's normal to want reassurance from your loved one, but you might get annoying if you don't believe the answer you're getting.

How do I talk to girls on the internet better? -f4ck-nick

You can be whoever you want on the internet, man! Usually pickups happen in DMs these days, so I'd suggest sending the internet girl of your dreams a message to spark up a conversation. However, if she isn't responding, it might not be your technique.

I don't share many interests with my girlfriend. I love her, but I'm finding it hard to do things we both like. What should I do? -Carl

The beauty of dating someone that isn't yourself is that it usually forces you to have new experiences. How boring would it be if you dated a replica of yourself? That's relationship masturbation.

My girlfriend got me the same aftershave that her dad wears. Does she have daddy issues or something? -Tom

Nothing wrong with a daddy's girl! Some women think it's sexy to call their men daddy, while others just like the comforting smell of their fathers. I wouldn't read too far into it, there's nothing wrong with either one.

There's a gay guy at work, I'm straight, but I still feel kind of annoyed that he's not attracted to me. I've found myself flirting and trying to grab his attention. Am I taking it too far? -Murray

Absolutely. I don't flirt with every Tom, Dick and Sally because they're not hitting on me. Unless you're prepared to broaden your horizons, leave this guy alone, dude.

ELVIRA

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DARK LADY

Legendary horror hostess Elvira starred in her very own cult comedy-horror flick back in 1988 and it has only ever been available on VHS or DVD, until now. Thanks to Cinespectral Films, *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark* finally makes its way to Blu-ray and it's presented in glorious full 1080p HD from an all-new 4K scan. Act fast, because while this Blu-ray is available in three different cover variants, it is limited to three thousand copies. The disc comes in sexy media book-style packaging and it's loaded with tons of exclusive content including various featurettes, commentaries, never-before-seen behind-the-scenes clips, and much more. —G.M.

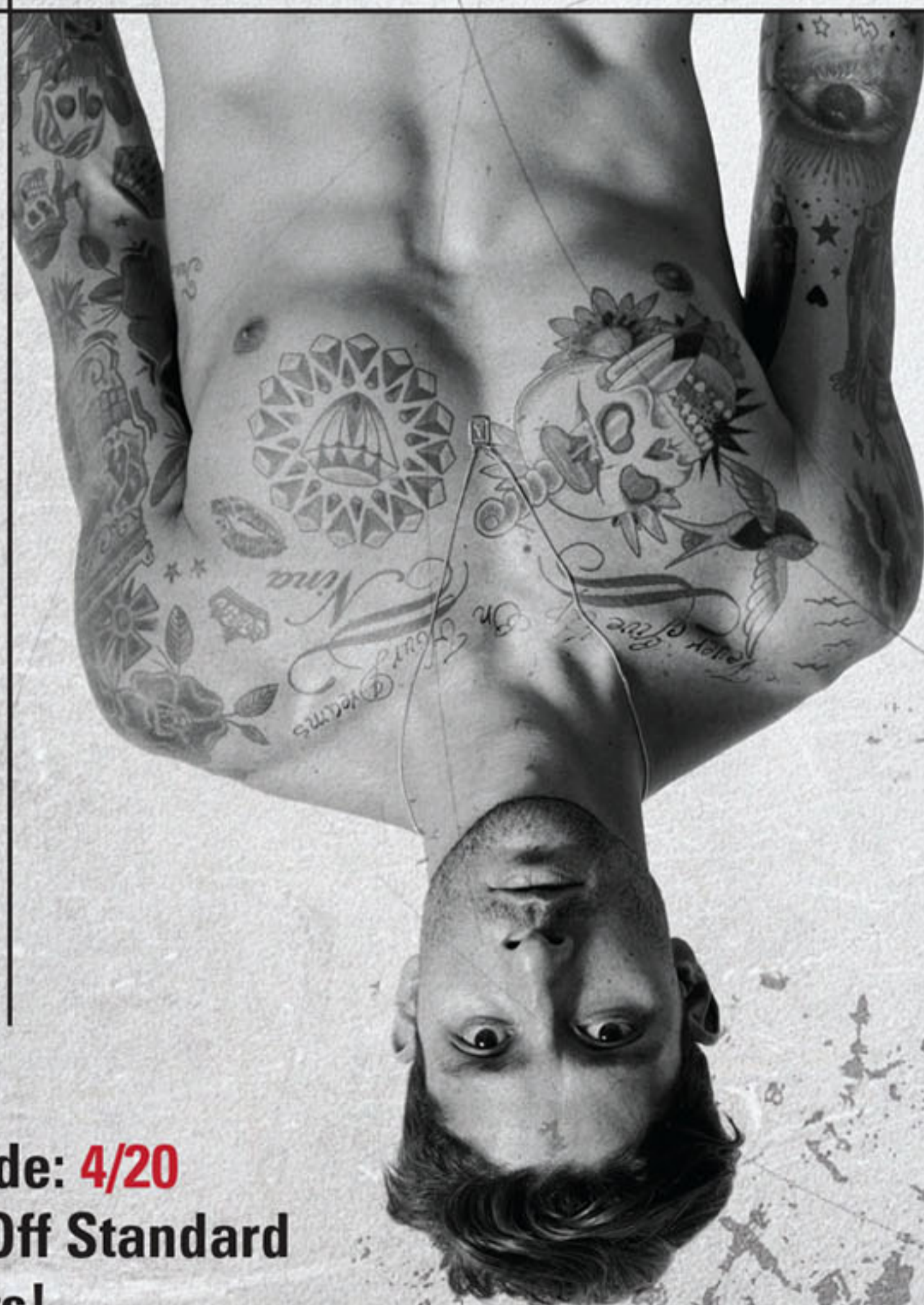
Between the Lines

Planning a vacation or just looking for a way to pass time? *The Tattoo Flash Coloring Book* may be your next obsession. Illustrated by Brighton artist Megamunden, this book includes over 60 pages of detailed traditional flash that will make anyone feel like a tattoo icon. Move over Sailor Jerry, anyone can be an artist with this book. —D.P.





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Stoned Love

Boomie Bones and Sonia Tiger in their natural habitat

photos by Sunshine 'Sunnie' Rizzolo

Boomie Bones and Sonia Tiger have trouble picking their favorite tattoos—like selecting your death row meal or perfect cannabis strain it is a tough ask. Sonia prefers her most recent markings (such as the two-faced girl who is being split in half by a knife that sits on her chin) because, "my style has evolved and I've finally found an artist who produces work that best represents me." For Boomie, she begrudgingly narrowed down her 50 pieces of bodyart to her knuckles which read "wabi sabi." If you are unfamiliar with the incredible notion here is a beautiful description by Robyn Griggs Lawrence from *The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty*. "Wabi-sabi is the Japanese art of finding beauty in imperfection and profundity in nature, of accepting the natural cycle of growth, decay, and death. It's simple, slow, and uncluttered—and it reveres authenticity above all. Wabi-sabi is flea markets, not warehouse stores; aged wood, not Pergo; rice paper, not glass. It celebrates cracks and crevices and all the other marks that time, weather, and loving use leave behind. It reminds us that we are all but transient beings on this planet—that our bodies as well as the material world around us are in the process of returning to the dust from which we came. Through wabi-sabi, we learn to embrace liver spots, rust, and frayed edges, and the march of time they represent."











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AN INDUSTRY BLOSSOMS.

The legalization of cannabis has created a budding economy in Sonoma Valley, CA. Meet the family men and mothers, heroes and honest people, healers and innovators who are harnessing the full potential of this cash crop.

By Rocky Rakovic Photos by Lunchbox



Those seeking their piece of the pot—\$50 billion in 10 years—are sophisticated agrarians and innovative business minds. Remember when all you could score is a dime bag of schwag weed off your drug dealer? Now you can walk into a storefront and procure prepackaged pure cannabis nectar from AYA by Sonoma Cannabis Company.



The face of the marijuana industry has always been that of your friendly but shady local drug dealer. You know him.

We all know him. He's the kid down the dorm room hall with his parents' money, a Bob Marley poster and the schwag weed, or the guy in your neighborhood who smells of stale American Spirits and will drop off at your place but won't leave until you pack a bowl and watch four *Adventure Times* ("Yo, we should order a pizza!") or the dude who keeps coming around the tattoo shop and will totally smoke you up if you fix his sleeve. Those characters aren't the right ambassadors of marijuana. Now that states have legalized cannabis, leading lights in the industry have emerged, and they aren't crusty (though some are a little crispy)—they are responsible fathers and mothers, hardworking laborers and sharp businessmen, brilliant scientists and honest farmers.

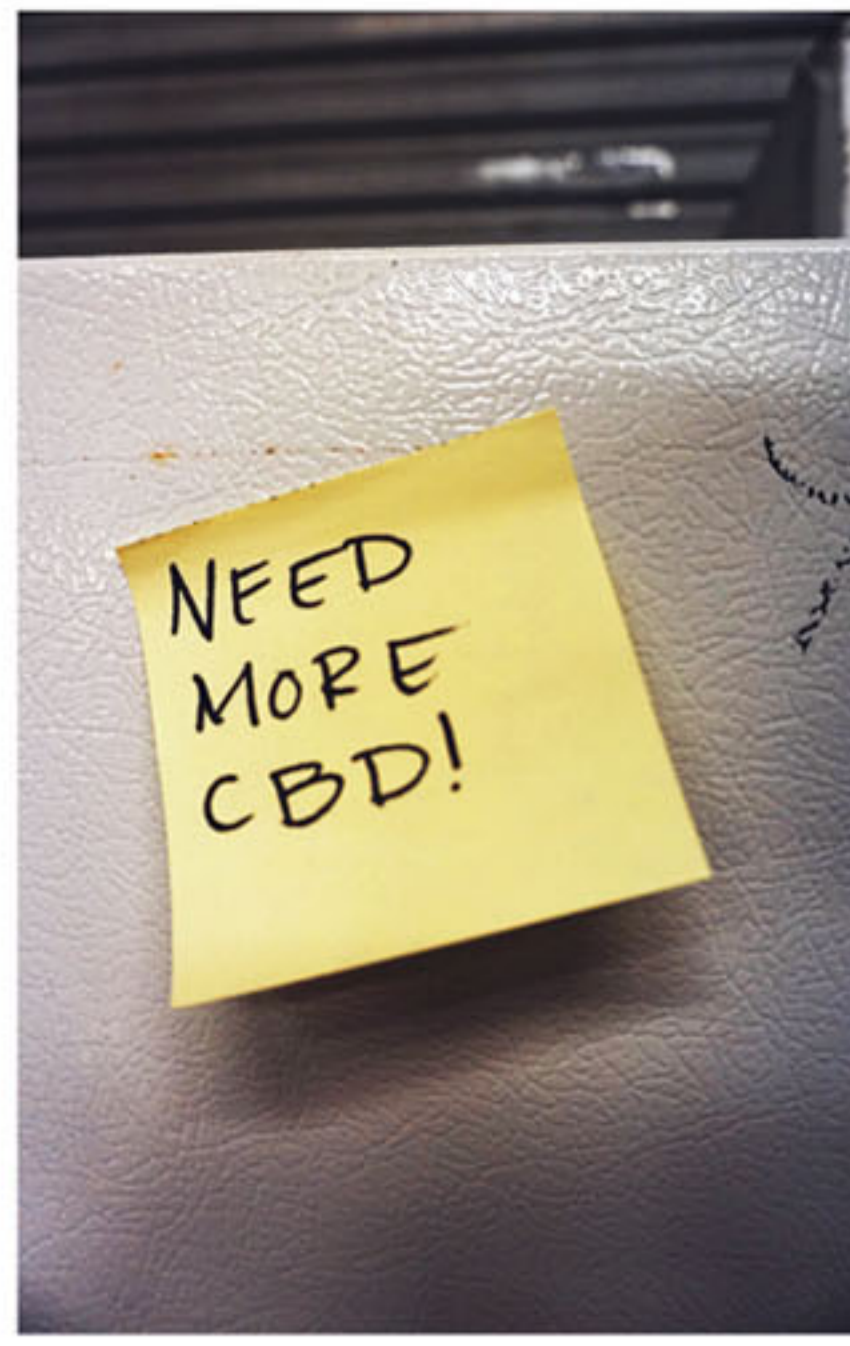
The cannabis industry is going through a similar period as tattooing did a short while

ago—let's not forget that tattooing was illegal in New York City until 1997. Historically most conservative politicians who have no insight into the fringe cultures of the inked and the enjoyers of marijuana have refused to learn about either and instead collected votes by fearmongering about both to their older constituents. But now cannabis is helping grandpas with their cancer and you can walk into any Chuck E. Cheese in America to find almost every mother there has a tattoo or three. While tattooing seems safe under this new presidential administration, cannabis is under fire.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions sees marijuana on the same spectrum as heroin. "I reject the idea that America will be a better place if marijuana is sold in every corner store," he said. "And I am astonished to hear people suggest that we can solve our heroin crisis by legalizing marijuana—so people can trade one life-wrecking dependency for another that's only slightly less awful."

White House press secretary Sean Spicer has communicated that Donald Trump isn't cool with recreational use either. "The president understands the pain and suffering that many people go through who are facing especially terminal diseases, and the comfort that some of these drugs, including medical marijuana, can bring to them," Spicer said. Then he declared that that state's permissance of recreational marijuana "is something the Department of Justice, I think, will be further looking into."

Yes, certain states have opened the door for the cannabis industry, but federal law still carries a minimum prison sentence of five years for growing over 100 marijuana plants. The plight of the pot farmer is possibly tougher than any in the agriculture industry. Not only does federal law limit their crop to a ridiculously low yield, those who want to go legit—those willing to put their plants through testing and pay taxes—are getting hammered by the cost of regulation while their underground competitors



The California Green Rush is on and attracting diverse characters. The founder of Aunt Zelda's and director of New Frontier, Mara Gordon, keeps comprehensive data on alleviating patient suffering through medical use. RISE is the Uber of weed and was co-founded by a self-described tech geek. Care By Design is run by genius businessman Dennis Hunter who runs a tight operation including lab equipment that a research university would covet. Imagine if these scenes were in your work environment? That "NEED MORE CBD!" sticky note wasn't stuck on a dorm room mini-fridge, that was a note written from the manager of a cannabis candy factory to his workers.



can set the market without those losses.

The violent swath of the marijuana industry isn't the user but chiefly the cartels that move in the shadows. Allowing an industry to blossom in the light effectively puts an end of those devious operations, and regulating the quality of product gives the government assurance that the populace is ingesting the safest form of cannabis. By choosing not to tax an industry that Bloomberg says will be worth \$50 billion within a decade, the administration is making a curious step backward. Perhaps, as we have seen in other areas of farming, politicians are starving the family farmer to make way for big tobacco or an agricultural corporation like a Monsanto who spends millions on lobbying every year.

While inevitably a gigantic corporation will move into the marijuana market and manufacture homogenous dry mid weed, there are noble small farmers and businessmen who are crafting thoughtfully complex cannabis plants and products. The difference won't be apples and oranges; it will be those orange-GMO tomatoes versus juicy, plump, organic Brandywine tomatoes.

Perhaps the better analogy for mass-produced pot and the products currently coming out of wine country would be a screw cap of Carlo Rossi Chablis to a Chateau St. Jean Cinq Cépages Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon. We went to Sonoma Valley, California—the fertile valley of marijuana and of cannabis entrepreneurship—to meet the

proper chaperones of the emerging industry. No area in the world is better suited to lead society into medical and recreational uses of cannabis: the soil has grown the finest wines for generations and, since the tech boom, brilliant minds have flocked to Silicon Valley, which lies less than three hours south.

We met with RISE, a distributor that can have cannabis to your door quicker than Domino's can deliver a pizza, Mara Gordon, who may have gathered the most comprehensive data on cannabis's specific medical benefits, and Benjamin Bialkin, a masterful grower who is has the possibility to set up large grows anywhere, even around strip malls, thanks to his air filtration invention called the Triple Back Aardvark Nose that eliminates odor. We shared a drink with a former military

man who uses cannabis to fight his PTSD, sat in a plume of smoke with retired tourists who chose Sonoma Valley to taste its wine and weed, and stood in the kitchen with a man who would have died from a brain tumor had it not been for the plant. He detailed how the doctors gave him no chance to live past 2013, but he took cannabinoids and shrunk the spots on his brain. The man then left us to pick up his daughter from school. If it wasn't for cannabis, she wouldn't have a father.

The modern faces of marijuana are family men and mothers, heroes and honest people, innovators and healers. During our cannabis-filled week in Sonoma Valley we didn't hear one Bob Marley song, OK, maybe "Waiting in Vain" came on at the local dive bar—but that's a great tune.



Does that plant photo make your eyes red? Then you are probably part of America's 60% who believe that cannabis should be legalized. The marijuana industry is the fastest-growing in the nation, yet about 700,000 people are arrested annually on marijuana-related charges.



Marijuana can either go farm-to-table or be infused in products such as gummies and granola bars. Valhalla makes cannabinoid gummies with the flavors of Tangerine, Sour Watermelon and Tropical Twist. Mercy Wellness of Cotati runs a sleek medical cannabis collective; their storefront feels more like a boutique hotel than a dispensary. Mercy has also implemented a nitrogen canning process that preserves flowers 20-times longer than traditional methods. Your local drug dealer is going to have to find a different grind, he can't compete with the new weed workforce.



Inked

PRESENTS

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HERBIVORE'S DELIGHT

Top Chef contestant Jennifer "Fear" Zavala enjoys cooking "in the weeds."

By George Polgar Photos by Evan Kaucher

Anyone who has ever toiled amid the flames, flaring tempers, and pots-and-pans-clanging cacophony of a restaurant kitchen for more than a few months, knows that the Food Network-hyped glamour of the chef life is mostly bullshit. And the only way to survive and thrive in that scalding, sizzling, aromatic world is to flash killer culinary chops and a bullet proof attitude.

So when Jennifer "Fear" Zavala joined the Sixth Season of *Top Chef (Las Vegas)*, you might say she was just a little better seasoned than the competition. "In the restaurant

business chefs peak at 25 years old because of the perception of restaurant owners that chefs beyond that age are too set in their ways, just too hard to re-train," Zavala says as she putters around the kitchen of a secret location that was only disclosed a few hours before her latest Cannabis Cuisine Dinner.

Without putting a number on it, the mother of two boys—10 months and 10 years old—says she's way past the age of taking too much direction in her cooking, though she has a rep as a team player. That should have raised red flags for



her as she embarked on her month-long sequestration on the set of *Top Chef*.

Though the TV-viewing foodies who lap up the redolent mix of recipes, drama and competition down to the last sinfully delicious slurp probably don't recognize it as such, *Top Chef* is a show about bosses taming talented but undisciplined chefs and squeezing them creatively, emotionally and to the limits of physical endurance.

"I think they thought I was coming from thug street because of the 'Face Tat Leader' thing," says the diminutive Latina, referring to the star tattoos on her face that trail down and wrap around her neck into an elaborate piece artwork beneath her apron and clothes. "But what the hell... I'm from Connecticut."

She went on to explain that her awkward chemistry with the panel and her natural recoil from the controlling formula of the show pretty much doomed her to being the first to get sent home.

"Yeah, it was pretty horrible for me. Oh, Padma Lakshmi," Zavala says with a shudder as her musician, and tonight's chef's assistant, husband Chris chimes in, "Oh yeah, you were ready to go after her with a fork." She continues, "I'm kidding, really, because she was really OK. But we just didn't click."

After *Top Chef* Jennifer did her thing around Philly, opening a few cool new restaurants as a hired gun. These were good gigs for the self-trained free spirit. Jennifer had learned about demanding cooking conditions after years of bouncing from kitchen to kitchen, including celebrity catering gigs like tour chef for Ozzfest.

"I did a lot of craft services catering for many years for a lot of celebrities, politicians and musicians and in those environments, if you are a woman and sober—not militantly sober just under control—there's a lot of pressure and the potential for getting side-tracked," Zavala says, attributing that experience to her focus, self-control and self-confidence.

Over the years, her restless spirit and the inevitable friction with restaurant owners led her to some revelations about the journeyman life of a food fighter. She started a staffing service where she and her A-Team of longtime associates would swoop in to the rescue when popular restaurants faltered due to kitchen reshuffling and spot scheduling snafus.

"It was a tough business because every call was a panic emergency," Zavala says with a mock sigh at the drama.

But eventually the demands of the endless restaurant boom in Philadelphia and declining number of experienced, mostly Mexican kitchen workers sidelined her staffing operation. "These days, with the immigration crackdown under Trump, that business isn't even possible. The good workers who are staying have found their spots for full-time work, and the rest have gone home."

Tonight Zavala is using her wide-ranging culinary skills—she grew up in a Mexican-Polish household—to tantalize the taste buds of a dozen ladies, who look like stand-ins for Lena Dunham and her gaggle from *Girls*. Thanks to the support from a sponsor, Atlantic Floral Design, the pop-up formal dining room is finished in a high-tone "Midsummer Night's Dream" theme suitable for the Philadelphia Flower Show.

But this is no ordinary chef's private tasting. This is one of Jennifer's celebrated underground and somewhat notorious Cannabis Cuisine Dinners. Though Philadelphia is the world's largest municipality to decriminalize weed, serving food infused with marijuana for payment, could cross the line to distribution which is a serious charge.

So these dinners, which Zavala does a few times a month, run on a sort of financial potluck system where all the guests "contribute" for the food costs and the chef's dedication to her art.

Is this just an abundance of caution? The cops aren't going to come busting in if a couple of folks are making pot brownies for personal consumption. But these dinners are cannabis dining experiences that may not involve much quantity of the substance in the food but enough to make it legally dicey.

As the guests wait to be seated at the long, formally set table, they pass joints as they chat about fashion, relationships and politics.

The menu for the evening is interesting and tasty, though not stoner fare. "I use the cannabis with a light touch. Mostly it's seasoning reduced in coconut oil and buffalo-milk butter, which I then use to prepare the rest of the ingredients. Not every cannabis ingredient is even psychoactive," Zavala says. "I use ground hemp seeds to make the flour, which is the breading on tonight's main course."

The meal is very traditional in terms of professional presentation and the blending of flavors and textures.

Starters include platters of charcuterie, homemade mozzarella, and tangy but sweet pimento cheese spread

The "dosed" item for the starters is a plate of baguette slices with a topping of infused buffalo milk butter on top. One for every guest. Talk about amuse-bouche.

Second course is a sweet potato beet with homemade ricotta and kale. The "dose" for this course is an orange-honey salad dressing with garlic confit cooked in hash oil.

Third course is cheese tortellini, squid ink spaghetti, Spanish chorizo and fried cod breaded in hemp seed flour. The psychoactive element in this course is the apricot demi-glaze.

A dessert mousse dubbed a Neapolitan Fool has no marijuana dosage in it, but as a signature touch the customary decorative mint leaf adornment is replaced with a tiny marijuana bud.

Zavala's public persona these days has almost nothing to do with her brush with fame on *Top Chef*. She has joined a merry band of pranksters who have been at the forefront of the decriminalization of weed in Philadelphia and the passage of medical marijuana legislation for Pennsylvania.

Zavala and the crew did a lot of performance art for pot freedom. They would show up at official functions and even confront national political personalities about their positions on pot.

"I guess I got a little infamous from that stuff because when I decided to launch my illegal tamales truck, which I promoted through social media as the 'Illegal Tamales Truck' the Philly cops showed up one night and told me they got a report that I was selling tamales laced with marijuana," explains Zavala.

"I told them, 'No way.' These tamales have absolutely no pot in them. But I admitted to having no license for the truck. That they couldn't have cared less about. They even bought a few tamales and talked up my food back at the cop shop."

Flashing a smile with a mischievous sparkle in her dark eyes, Zavala shakes her head. "I'm such an outlaw...right? But even the cops love me."

With that, she turned with an armload of artfully plated delicacies and went to feed the hungry and the stoned.



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This isn't your father's paraphernalia

photos by Harrison O'Brien



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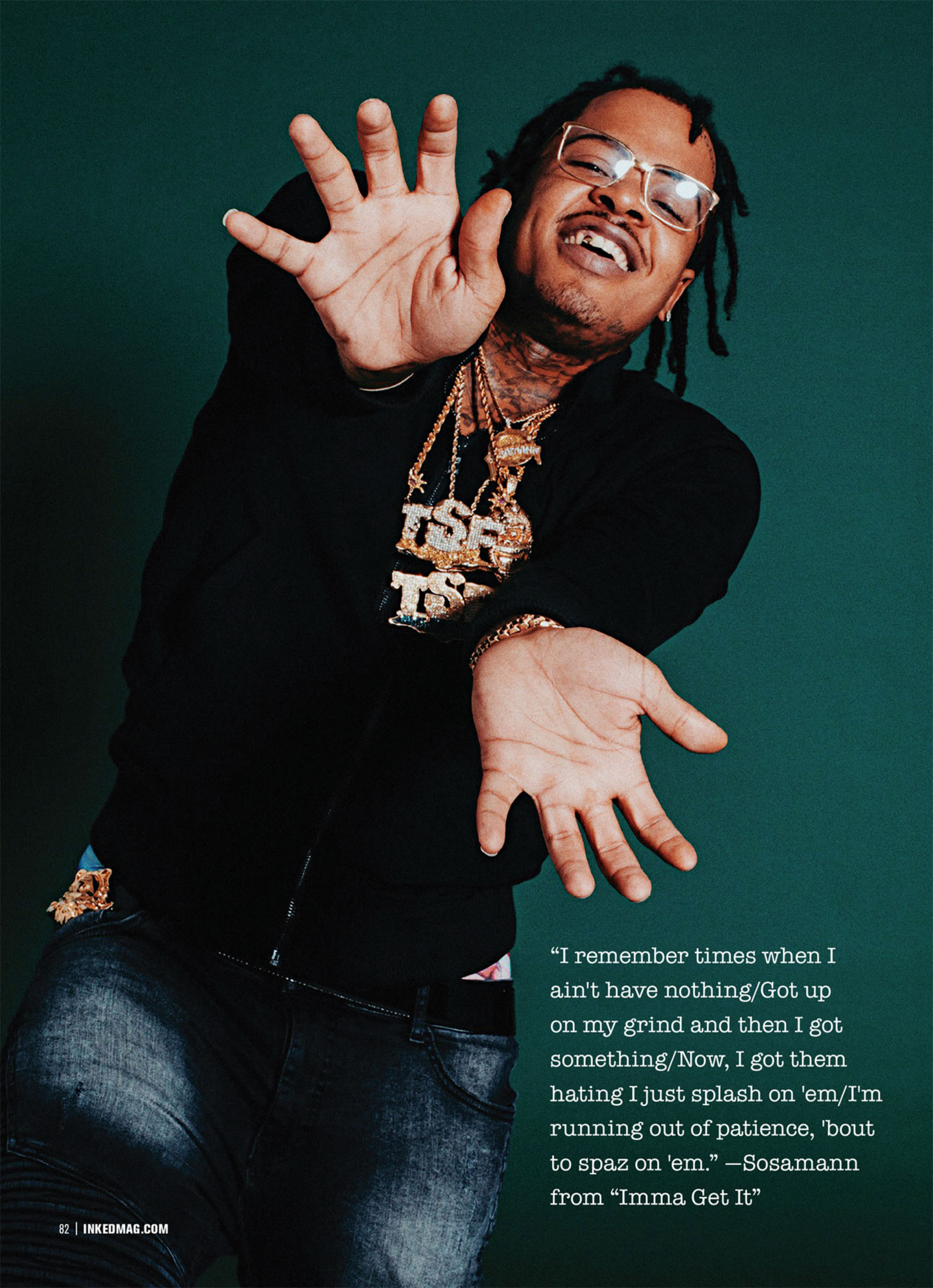
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WIZ KHALIFA

Wiz Khalifa's music crew rolls tight

“I have a piece on the back of my arm that is a woman blowing smoke into the air and in the smoke is the face of a man called ‘Vices.’ I believe everyone in life has things that remedy them and help them move through life, though they may not be exactly healthy things. The piece I have represents a multitude of those things: love, sex, smoke, drugs, men and companionship.” —Raven Felix





“I remember times when I ain't have nothing/Got up on my grind and then I got something/Now, I got them hating I just splash on 'em/I'm running out of patience, 'bout to spaz on 'em.” —Sosamann from “Imma Get It”

“To see the reaction on people's faces from the music we make. That is the best part of doing this.” —Ricky P



“Taylor Gang is a funny crew of people with comical personalities, we share similar dress styles and it's just all around love. Oh yeah, and we're high as shit!” —Tuki Carter



“Art is expression no matter
the form...a frog standing
on a beer can is art—ha, ha.
Everything is art.”
—Chevy Woods



“My favorite tattoo is the one of Heath Ledger as the Joker on my left arm by my boy SupremeCourt. Heath took the acting as serious to the point that it cost him his life. I'm sure that wasn't intentional but he put his all into his character and I do the same in the booth.”

—JR Donato





ARLO DiCRISTINA

If you take a quick stroll through Arlo DiCristina's Instagram, you'll immediately bear witness to the type of hyperrealistic, super-surreal tattoos that you'd expect to come from the grizzled old fingers of a tattoo veteran. If you continue scrolling, however, you'll no doubt happen upon repeated photos of a smiling, clean-cut dreamboat. That's Arlo.

DiCristina is a young man whose hands and eye are beyond their years. A master of photorealism, turned slightly askew, he has the ability to add a bizarre twist to the familiar. His surrealist renderings cross the boundary between dark and light, much like the grayscale tones that grace his portfolio. Outside his studio, Arlo is an adventurer, a wanderer, and a reminder of the power of positivity in an ever-changing world. As laid back as he is driven, as serene as he is focused, Arlo exemplifies what it is to be an innovator, a risk taker, and an icon. —Nick Fierro

You started tattooing at a young age.

Can you remember your first? I was in high school, and I had my buddy order a tattoo machine for me because I wasn't 18 yet. I didn't even look at the directions or anything. Right away I found a very trusting friend and wound up doing a compass rose on his shoulder. It turned out absolutely horrible. At that point I knew I needed to get some training, like an apprenticeship, or at least watch some YouTube videos or learn how to actually set up my machine. I'm more of "hands on" kind of guy, so I went the apprenticeship route.

Did you see a future in tattoos back then?

I mean, it was never one of the booths at career day in school. At the time I thought, "Hey, my buddies are all going to be blue-collar workers, I'll probably be a blue-collar worker too."

When did you develop an interest in drawing?

What got me into art in general was probably Pokémon cards or skate decks. I would sit there with a skate magazine and I would draw all of that stuff, which was kinda weird. I was definitely drawn to that kind of stuff, it's hard to pinpoint what exactly, but weirder things tend to get more of a reaction, and art is supposed to be about antagonizing or provoking a reaction.

Did you seek out a formal apprenticeship?

The first shop that I tried to get an apprenticeship at was right across the street from where I was living. I was right out of high school and was going to be joining the ironworkers union. It was the best shop in that town, and I went in and actually got an apprenticeship. By the end of the first day, I was like "no way."

What was the problem? I had just gone through high school and braved through all of that hazing bullshit when I was a freshman. So there I was, entering the tattoo industry, and it's back to that ridiculous shit.

What sort of vibe did the shop have?

It was a bunch of adults trying to belittle me, and I realize that I was just a kid back then, but I had developed a little awareness of adulthood and how they should act. So I wound up not taking the apprenticeship.

Were you self-taught from that point?

Well, my next apprenticeship was sort of the same story. This guy would try to preach at me. He was a nice guy, but that's the thing, they're all nice guys. They're all just a product of what they've been exposed to. If that was the norm for them coming up, that's what they're going to continue to do. It made the process a lot tougher, because instead of trying to build you up, they were constantly breaking you down. From that point I went off on my own and started to do things my way.

The macho attitude didn't motivate you?

The weird thing is, a good portion of my life was based around trying to be a tough guy. When you're a kid, you think that type of image is cool. I think I just went through it and got over it before it was too late. Being involved in sports like wrestling and boxing, you encounter a lot of cocky tough guys. Cockiness and negativity both come from insecurities. Usually the people at the top of their game aren't projecting that level of arrogance. You see that more in the type of guys that are somewhere in the middle. They're still trying to prove themselves. You have to realize that there's always someone out there better than you, and be humbled by it.

As an MMA fighter, did you ever worry about your hands?

Actually, the only times I broke my hand was when I was being a stupid little hoodlum. That's one of the factors that ultimately lead to me pursue tattooing. For a while, though, I saw a future in both. When I was young, a few guys from my town made it into

Grand Junction, CO

@arlotattoos

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the UFC, which is as high as you can get in the field. They were right around my weight, so I'd always compare myself to them.

Do you ever wonder what your career as a fighter could've been?

I think that the biggest insecurities I have are based around wondering about that. I put a ton of effort into fighting. I was never a state champion in wrestling in high school, but I'd beaten three-time state champs. I feel like I have one of those Uncle Rico stories from *Napoleon Dynamite*. I chose to get into a fist fight because I thought the image of being a tough guy mattered and broke my hand midseason. Realistically, I think I could have made it to the UFC, and I might have had like three or four fights before I got cut.

Is there anything from those days that you keep with you?

I hate to admit it, but I think I've really kept my competitiveness. I'm really competitive by nature. It's not necessarily bad. There's positive competition, and there's negative competition. I think it's what's gotten me as far as I've come.

You've lived in Colorado since before marijuana was legalized. What's changed?

My community is the biggest town on the western slope; the town is occupied mainly by a bunch of retirees and oil industry people. It's pretty conservative, and they don't have dispensaries there. It drives me nuts because the amount of income that we are missing out on is massive. But the people in my town, mostly older folks, are the only ones who have time to sit in on city council meetings, and they're comfortable with the way things are.

What about the changes to Colorado as a whole?

As a whole, you see a lot more people coming from out of state, so it got a little touristy. For the people who smoke, and who've smoked for most of their lives, there's no change. As far as I'm concerned, I usually don't go to dispensaries. I still use the same guy that I've had since I moved here.

Do you feel that legalization is a positive thing?

Seeing marijuana became legalized, I think it's a great step, but I think it's something that should have been done forever ago. I'm definitely a drug advocate.



Have you been offered a sponsorship from a local distributor? Not really, but I've posted some pictures using different products. I haven't figured out the best way to integrate it into my work, but I'd definitely be open to some sort of sponsorship.

You're a fairly active guy, especially for someone who's a weed advocate. We've developed the image in society of the stoner as this loser, this lazy person living in his mom's house, which is fine, but it's not the case with me. Some of the most successful people I know smoke pretty regularly. We're biased to substances, and that's crazy. Pharmacists dish out meds constantly and it's accepted, but the ones that the government hasn't embraced yet are frowned upon.

You stopped tattooing for a while to travel. What prompted that? It was two or three years ago, I don't know if I was getting sick of tattooing, or felt uninspired, but it was starting to become monotonous. It was starting to feel more like a job than a passion. I wasn't really sure if I wanted to live here in Grand Junction, or in Colorado at all. I took six months off and traveled all over Europe and Southeast Asia.

How did you adjust to life as a backpacker? I was in Berlin, and I had no idea about hostels and I couldn't afford hotel rooms every night. I like to wing it, so I bought a hammock and a sleeping bag and tried to find a spot to sleep. It started to get dark out, and I couldn't find anywhere to put up my hammock. I wound up in the middle of the woods when I came across two people. I'm sure that I freaked them out a little bit, but they really freaked me out.

Sounds like you were off to a rough start. Yeah, I was in the woods outside some suburb of Berlin. I found a spot to sleep; there were just some dudes in the woods. Now, I know I'm not a total pussy, so these guys would've had to be carrying a gun, which most homeless people don't have, or they would need to have a knife to do me any harm. Even if that were the case I'd probably still have a good chance of winning. Either way, I was still terrified.

Glad to hear that you made it out alive. I ended up finding some random spot and straight bumming it for a week in Berlin, sleeping in a hammock by the railroad tracks.

Did you eventually acclimate to being a nomad? After a while, I started to feel like a ghost. I had no identity. All the people around me were there for a reason; they're on their lunch break, or with their family. It

was a weird feeling. I ended up going to Prague, and it wasn't until I went on some pub crawl there that I started to become familiar with hostels. I'm like, "wait, people from all over, basically just backpacking like I'm doing, can get a room for like 20 bucks a night?" It was mind blowing.

Did you tattoo while you traveled? In the beginning I was tattooing. I tattooed for the first few months in London, and then in Finland. After that, I sent home all of my tattoo equipment and was just traveling.

You've since opened your own studio. What can you tell us about it? In February I opened my private studio in Grand Junction, which I haven't named yet. Right now it's just my apprentice and me. It's an old Victorian home. I live in the top two levels, and tattoo out of the bottom. I tried to keep it classy, with an upscale Victorian type of feel, you know, pillars and stuff. There's also a back carriage house for my clients when they come to stay.

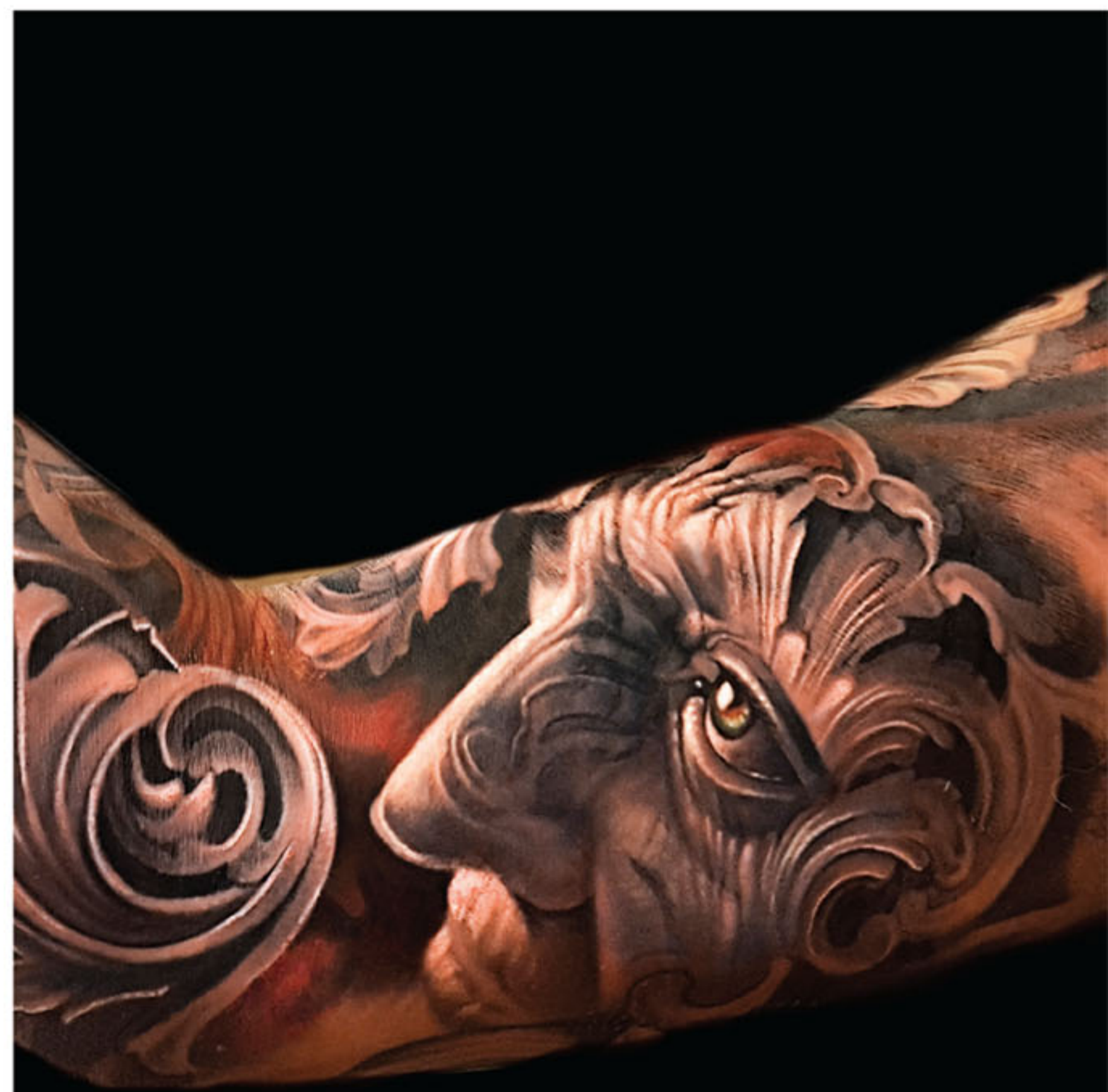
What sort of mark do you see your work leaving on the industry? What I'm trying to do, when I go to conventions, I want to try to dress up more, wear nice suits. I want to present more of a classy image and bring that to the industry. Veer away from the tough guy stigma that, in my opinion, is holding the industry back. I feel like our art isn't held at the same level as other mediums. I don't think what we do is anything less than what a painter does, and I think it would be great for the industry to be recognized in that respect.

Do you feel that tattooing is misrepresented? People have a lot of preexisting notions about what tattooing is. I want to present it with more class, so it's perceived with more worth than in the past.

What's your approach to applying a solid design to a client? You're sitting there with a client, developing a piece. They will put in the time finding an artist whose work speaks to them. They find that artist and then have to hand over a hundred percent of their trust and faith to that person. The artist then sits there, working for hours at a time. At the end, after all that, the client still has no guarantee of how that piece is going to turn out. It's an incredibly intimate experience and it's really bonding. That client then takes that piece of artwork with them, and it will represent them and their artist for the rest of their lives.

What have you taken away from your experience that you'd like to pass on? If you mess up, it's permanent. You don't get a new canvas.





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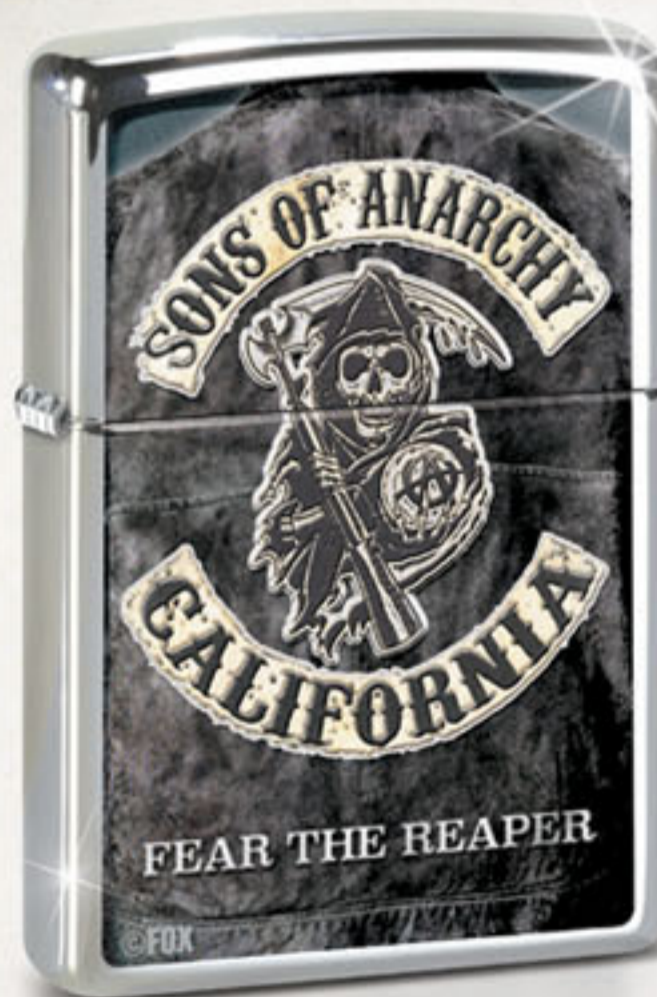
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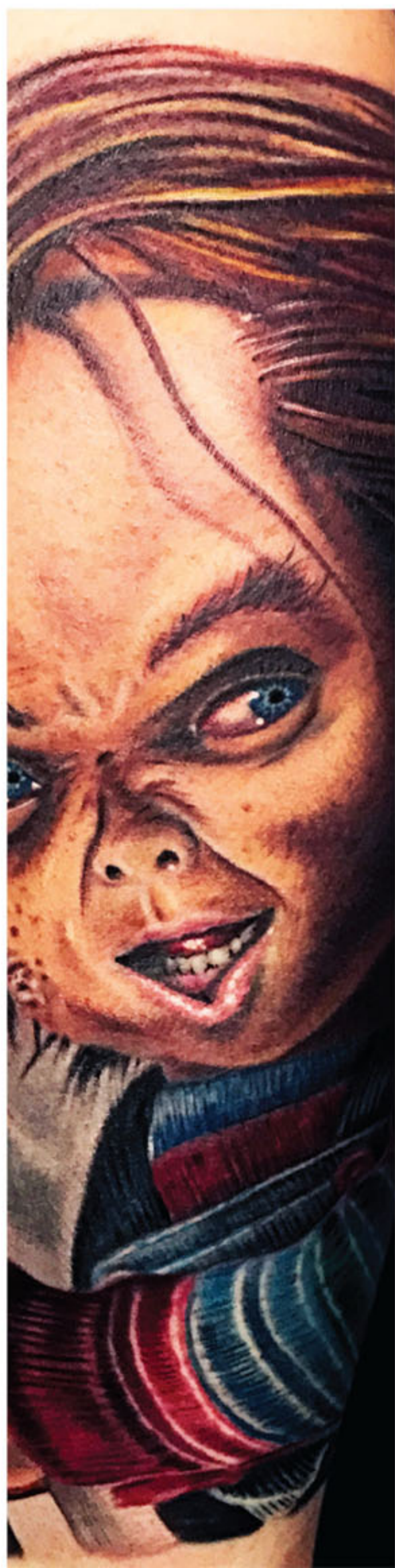
TELL US WHY YOU STARTED SMOKING THE GOOD STUFF. I guess it's an interesting story on how I started to smoke. I smoked heavily about 20 years ago, when I was a youngster, but I quit when I had my kid. When my son was born I quit everything except drinking and I never thought in a million years I would end up with a drinking problem. But in 2015, it caught up to me. Today, I'm six days away from six months, no alcohol. Smoking marijuana helps me in all sorts of avenues in my life. My son is about to be 18 years old and we have an open line of communication. I recently found out he smokes a little bit and it doesn't bother me because when I was his age I was doing a lot worse. At the end of the day if my kid is just smoking a little bit of pot but has his shit together then I'm OK with it. My wife started smoking as well and I feel that it really did bring the family together, which is amazing!

SOME OF YOUR WORK THAT REALLY STANDS OUT IS YOUR PORTRAITURE. HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DOING THIS?

The right reference is always important, for sure. A lot of it for me is in the eyes—if there's a connection there then I can bring out that emotion in the tattoo. I try and catch the essence of the animal or person rather than just trying to replicate it exactly on skin. There are a lot of tattoo artists out there that do realism and just pull the same tiger or lion off of Google, so I make special attempts to photograph animals at zoos. Or flowers, etc. No matter what, though, I always play with images in Photoshop and change it up at least a little bit. Then when I tattoo it, I don't resort to the reference as much, I kind of do my own thing and that's something that helps set you apart from other artists doing the same piece. Like I've always said, if a bunch of realism artists did the same tiger tattoo and nailed it, "What's the point?" You will just be lost in the bunch.

BEFORE SOMEONE GETS A TATTOO WHAT ADVICE DO YOU GIVE HIM OR HER? Don't do it! You'll never get a job!

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WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO WORK MOSTLY IN BLACK-AND-GREY? I feel like working in black-and-grey lets me focus more on the application of the tattoo. It's not as messy or time-consuming as color. I like to take my time. With color I'd never get anything finished.

SOMEHOW YOU MADE HARRY POTTER LOOK BADASS. WHAT TO YOU MAKES A "FAME ONE" TATTOO? I really appreciate that! I think I'm still trying to figure that out, to be honest, I'm currently a little over five years into my tattoo career so I'm still constantly learning and changing things up on a daily basis.

WE LOVE HOW THERE IS A RIBBON OR SMOKE ELEMENT OF NEGATIVE SPACE IN MANY OF YOUR DESIGNS. WHERE DID THAT IDEA COME FROM? It's just something I've adopted from the OG's. I love how, when used properly, it can make an image flow with the body. I also love the way it can break up large sections of black and combine other pieces.

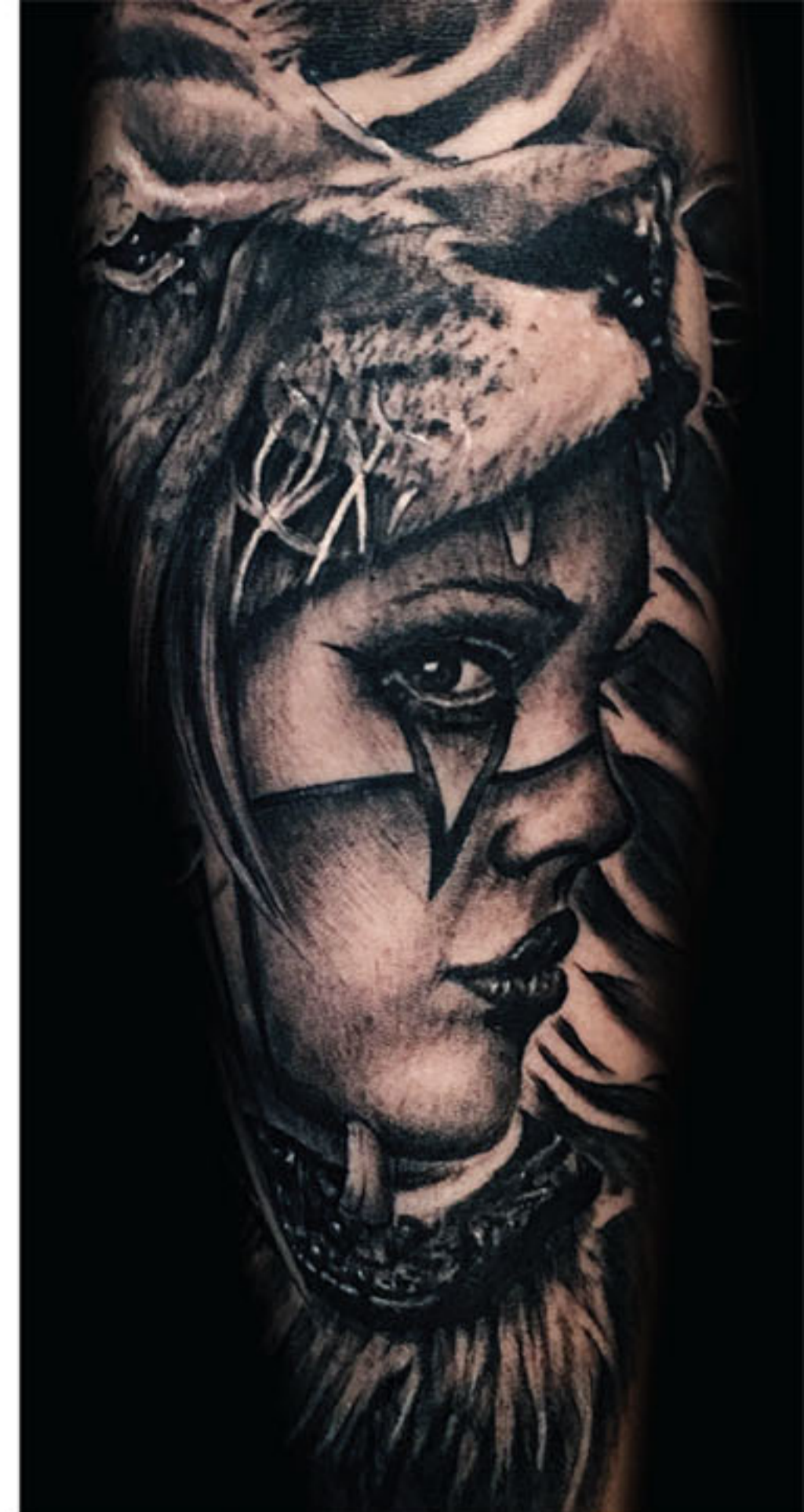
WHAT HAS GRAFFITI TAUGHT YOU ABOUT TATTOOING AND VICE VERSA? Honestly, everything. Tattooing for me wouldn't exist without graff. In more ways than just design, but the art of the hustle. The idea of making a living out of something you love. Not working a 9-to-5 for shitty pay for someone else. Graff taught me how to make a living off of art, years before tattooing was even an idea for me. Ha ha, I know you guys probably expected an answer like, "Because of graff I'm good with colors," and in that respect I guess my script might have a little graff element. But outside of that I feel it's completely different, especially since I tattoo black-and-grey.

WHAT'S MORE TABOO RIGHT NOW: TATTOOING OR GRAFFITI WRITING? Well, I can't recall the last time I got locked up or had investigations held against me for tattooing or having tattoos. So I'm going to lean more towards graff— ha, ha. My career is still young though so anything is possible!

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Do you smoke before every session? I smoke before every session that I do. If my client doesn't smoke, I go on the rooftop, so that I don't bother them. Usually, though, about 95 percent of the time, most of my clients smoke weed, so they usually bring it. That's why I got the private studio, usually for those types of people. They can smoke and do whatever they want to do there, and I jump right in. It's free weed!

Has marijuana ever caused an issue during work? There's never been an issue. Even when I tattoo law enforcement, everybody should know by now that I smoke, so they don't ever stress me. They look the other way. It's never been a problem. We even throw a 4/20 event every year—it's one of our largest shows of the year—and we have no problems. It's illegal in Georgia, but I think it's so stupid for it to be illegal, so I think that a lot of people just turn their eyes from it.

MIYA BAILEY

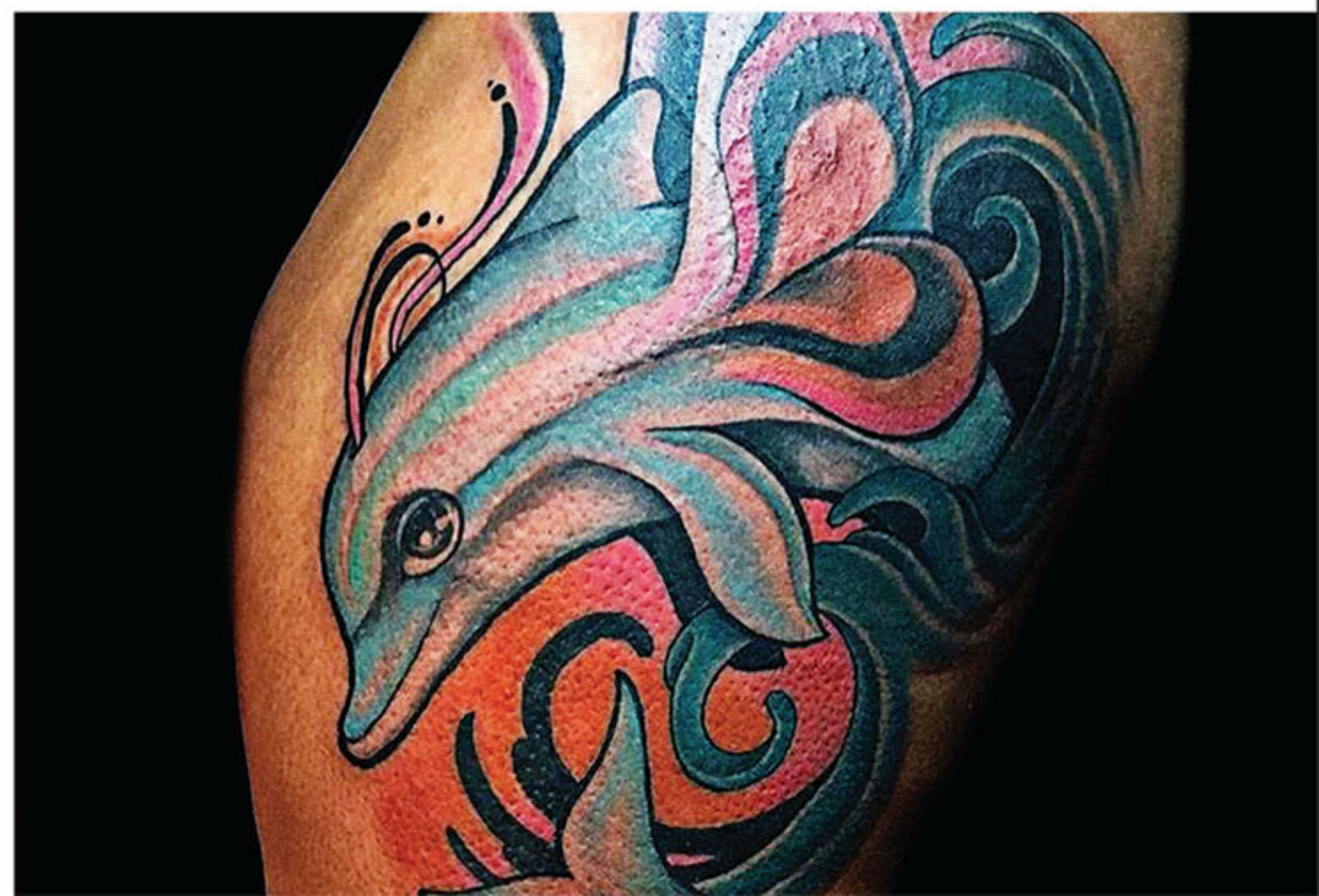
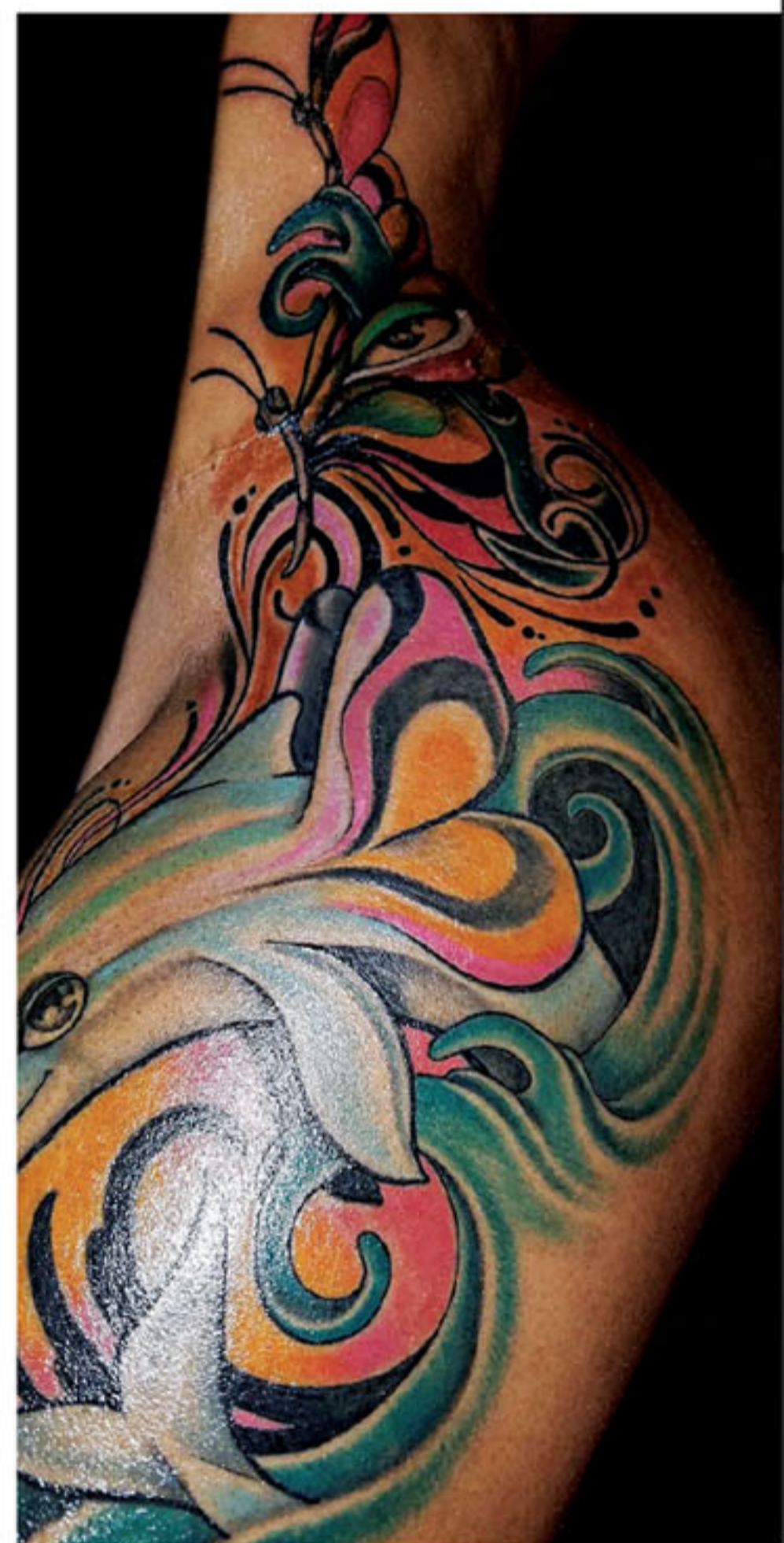
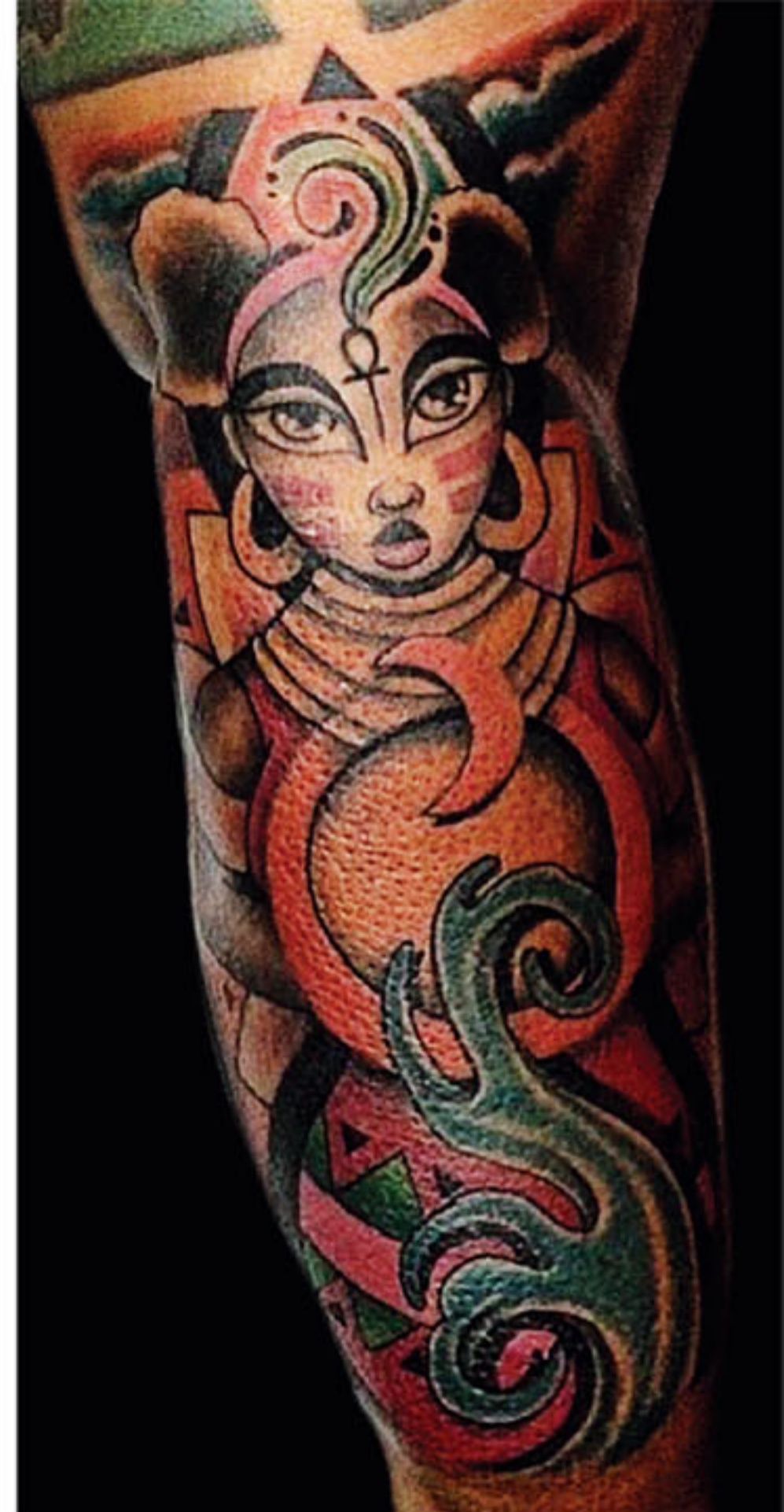
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What's the 4/20 event like?

Everybody in Atlanta comes together, contributes weed—we try to get at least a pound or two together—and we smoke it all in my private art studio. We start at 4:20 p.m. on the dot, and we don't stop maybe until like 11 o'clock at night. We get people from all over the city, and sometimes a lot of people come from out of state, too. They bring their weed, we all smoke, compare, trade it. Oh, and it's an art show, too! [Laughs] The smoking happens upstairs, and the artwork, which is all inspired by marijuana, happens downstairs.

When you're the one going under the needle, are you using weed as a sedative? Marijuana does kind of make you more sensitive. If you're high and you get tattooed, you can feel things a little bit more but, at the same time, it's more relaxing. It's like a perfect balance to me, in my opinion.

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