## BLZZY

**CANNABIS MAGAZINE** 

Cannabis
Entrepreneurs
Heading South in
Anticipation of
Developing
New Territory

Cannabis Firms Use RICO Act in Defense Against Lawsuits

Instagram
Deactivating Accounts
Containing Anything
Cannabis

Cammabis
Administration and
Opportunity Act: Who
Wins, Who Loses?

Strain Review: Ice Cream Cake

Swicides Among Hemp Farmers Increasing

Ernest Toney, CEO
BIPOCann

Empowering Winority Cannabis Companies Through Advocacy, Recruitment and Networking

FBI Investigating
Nevada Cannabis Licensing Practices



Should Federal Loans Be Granted to Minority Cannabis Entrepreneurs?



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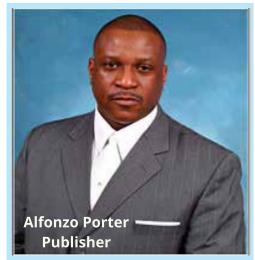
BEOC is your equity voice for Colorado's Business community. Our mission is to promote the growth of authentic communication as well as meaningful and fair interaction between corporate Colorado and the Black community. We promote sensible equity, diversity and inclusion policies and programs to maximize the responsible growth and positive business development. BEOC strives to promote and engage equity efforts in all Colorado businesses through an assessment and demonstrated equity commitment that includes: Blacks on corporate board, ownership, vendor and community relations, employment, media placement, corporate giving and consulting services. Colorado should be a leader in the social equity and corporate responsibility arena. Our legislative leaders, decision and policy makers are relying on our corporate thought leaders, equity experts and community for best practices and common sense business solutions to move Colorado forward. The BEOC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report Card is an equity tool that will be utilized to measure corporate Colorado's commitment and value-added to equity, diversity and inclusion in our state.

#### MAIN ANALYSIS F

Measure Equity, Diversity and Inclusion opportunities and relationships between corporate Colorado, Black businesses and the Black community.

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BLACK PARTICIPATION ON BOARDS OF DIRECTORS (Member(s) of Black Community on Company Board of Directors)	A
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BLACK COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND SUPPORT PARTICIPATION (Corporate Sponsorships - Giving to Black Community Organizations and Programs)	A
BLACK EQUITY MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTER (Financially Supports the Mission, Vision and Agenda of the Black Economic Opportunities Council)	A



In this month's issue of Blizzy Magazine, we spotlight Networking and advocacy organization BIPOCann whose work helps to bring more minority entrepreneurs into the cannabis industry. Also, social media platform Instragram has launched an effort to deactivate accounts that mention marijuana or cannabis. While not yet federally legal, should the SBA develop programs to aid minority cannabis businesses? Our strain review this month is Ice Cream Cake. Cannabis companies are eyeing the south as the next region to boom. This month's entertainer of the month is businessman and advocate, Iman S. Can the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act make a difference in leveling the playing field for those who have traditionally been targeted by the War on Drugs? The FBI has launched an investigation into the licensing practices of the Nevada cannabis authority responsible for approving firms to do business in the industry in the state. What's behind the increase in suicides of cannabis growers? The RICO is being flipped in order to help defend marijuana companies against frivolous lawsuits.

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SCAN NOW TO SAVE!













By Elijah Hill

Content creators and the burgeoning cannabis industry have been using Instagram to promote and grow business. However, their efforts are being hampered suppressed due to murky policies.

Instagram, the ever-growing photo-sharing platform has presented opportunities for a lot of people to showcase their talents and business acumen. The cannabis industry is no exception in its efforts to utilize the platform for similar purposes. However, Instagram is seemingly censoring, shuttering, and even deactivating accounts for sharing anything related to Cannabis.

This has caused a great deal of issues for companies with an account on media site promoting their products. Furthermore, causing a bump in the road for cannabis content creators.

Instagram is part of Facebook. This means that



For the moment, social media platforms have adopted a somewhat hostile posture towards the cannabis industry. The outlook may well change once marijuana is no longer federally prohibited.

they share the same base policies. Instagram and Facebook have made their "drug and drug-related products" policy public so everyone can read and adhere to them.

According to Instagram/Facebook's official content policy surrounding drugs and related content:

"Ads must not promote the sale or use of illegal, prescription or recreational drugs."

"Avoid using images of smoking-related accessories"

"Avoid using images that imply the use of a recreational drug"

"Avoid using images of either recreational or medical marijuana."

As it is shown the only drug

listed by name is cannabis within these policies. Cannabis and anything related to it seem to be the primary target. This is a problem for cannabis businesses and their ability to connect with billions of potential customers.

With these strict policies in action, if Instagram even detects that a firm is part of the cannabis community you will be penalized. Some accounts have lost posts due to these guidelines. Others have lost their entire accounts, requiring them to make a whole new account to join the platform again.

"First and foremost, the promotion of sale of cannabis products is not permitted on our platform.It is perfectly fine for a company to, for example, raise awareness

- 1. Ads must not promote the sale or use of illegal, prescription or recreational drugs."
- 2. Avoid using images of smoking-related accessories"
- 3. Avoid using images that imply the use of a recreational drug"
- 4. Avoid using images of either recreational or medical marijuana."

or to talk about the societal implications of legalization, things like that, that does not violate our rules."Raki Wane, the policy communications manager at Instagram said.

According to Lisa Buffo, founder and CEO of the Cannabis Marketing Association in Denver, It's unclear why accounts such as Los Angeles based Cannaclusive, an equity-focused market, and

the Oregon-headquartered Minority Cannabis Business Association have both dealt with recent deactivations.

On occasion, accounts that followed the dubious terms of service and community guidelines have been recovered. Unfortunately, not everyone is so lucky.

In the case of Cannaclusive, the organization appealed the deactivation through Instagram and even had their followers on other social platforms report a problem. The account was later reactivated.

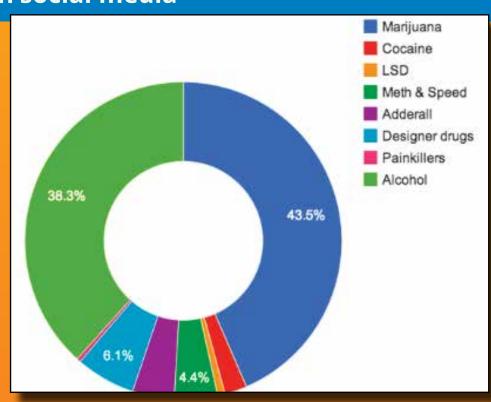
The fact that Instagram employees can reverse censorship on accounts creates a whole new problem.

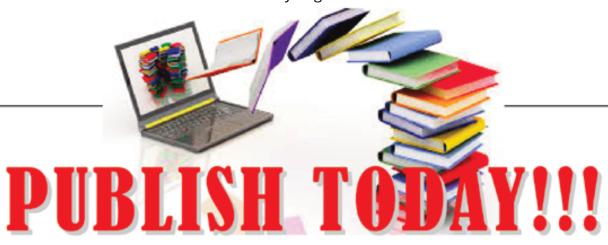
According to Founder Charles McElroy, he has heard rumors of Instagram employees taking payment from companies to reinstate a deleted account. This claim is also backed by other similar reports of influencers paying for special treatment.

Instagram said these actions would be a plain violation of company policy.

"The platform's intention is to keep children safe from drug ads and respect the global nature of the app's user base; cannabis remains prohibited in much of the world," Instagram's Wane said.

### Aggregate mentions of substances on social media





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### U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

## Should SBA Loans Be Given to Minority Cannabis Shop Owners?



By Brenden Gilliss

In an industry largely dominated by white-owned businesses, minority cannabis owners are looking to level the playing field, but without help from federal agencies, their battle is twice as difficult to win, and the struggles are especially frustrating to maneuver.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has several initiatives and programs aimed at bolstering the development of minority owned businesses in underserved communities. These include the "Emerging Leaders Initiative" that helps minority owners create sustainable business plans, and a special loan option reserved for minority owners that provides additional aid and assistance not otherwise typically offered. However, there is an unfortunate

The fact that marijuana is still listed as a Schedule 1 Drug at the federal level, it is unlikely that federal dollars will be used to finance any business that has cannabis as its primary product. Nevertheless, with national legalization appearing possible, many African Americans will be looking to the SBA for much needed revenue.

caveat that affects aspiring cannabis entrepreneurs.

Cannabis shops are disqualified from receiving any SBA Loans because of marijuana's lingering status as an illegal substance at the federal level. In a policy notice released by the SBA in 2018, they asserted that any business that "grows, produces, processes, distributes, or sells marijuana or marijuana products, edibles, or derivatives," is barred from receiving approval on any loan. This applied even to businesses in states that had already legalized marijuana.

Even businesses indirectly associated with marijuana receive the same restrictions. Businesses that manufacture grow lights,

hydroponics, or glassware are included in the policy if they do business with companies that directly handle marijuana.

This decision impacts the ability for minorities trying to start a cannabis business to overcome the unique challenges of this environment.

According to a study released by research group Analytic Insight in June 2020, they found Denver's social equity opportunities to be "limited," with only 6% of all cannabis owners and employees in the city being African American. These numbers were determined prior to the full extent of the coronavirus outbreak.

With social equity for minority shop owners at

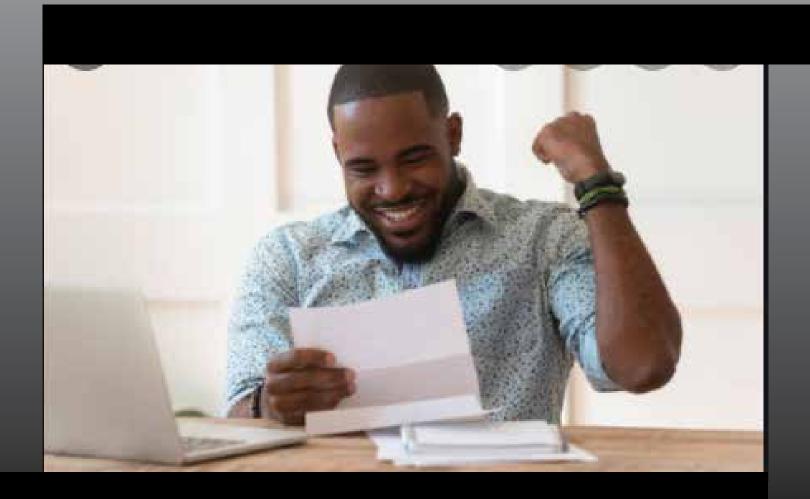
undesirable levels, having access to the wealth of assistance offered by the SBA can be critical. Efforts have been made to ensure that those who fall into this category are not overlooked going forward.

Governor Jared Polis signed SB21-111, or the "Program to Support Marijuana Entrepreneurs" into law this March. It's stated goal was to focus on social equity development by increasing the amount of available loans, grants, and technical assistance to minority shop

owners. It was funded by a \$4 million transfer from Colorado's marijuana tax cash fund, and is regulated by the Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Though it differs from the SBA, and does not have nearly the same, it is a crucial step forward for the diversification of Colorado's predominantly white cannabis industry.

Nationwide efforts, however, are slower and messier, with congressional efforts to include cannabis

stores in federal relief failing. An effort to include cannabis shops in the next round of stimulus packages fell flat in the House last summer. Meanwhile, states like California and Illinois implemented similar social equity program, but are seeing a tidal wave of minority applicants, with not nearly enough licenses to grant to everyone. Whether or not the recently passed Colorado law will meet a similar roadblock will depend on if we can learn from the pitfalls of other state's roll outs.



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#### Strain Review: Ice Cream Cake

By Heavenly Torres

Ice Cream Cake is a vanilla-y sugar dough hybrid strain that gives a euphoric and calming high.

It is a potent indica marijuana strain made by crossing Wedding Cake and Gelato #33 that can also be bred by crossing Cheese Cake and Dream Cookie.

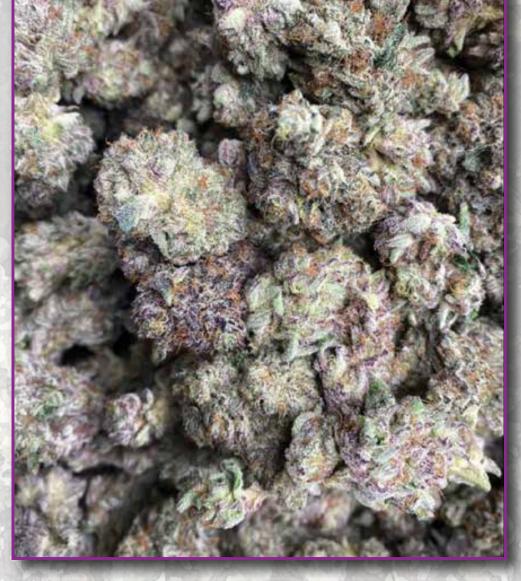
This cross bred strain gives pot users a delicious cheesy creamy flavor with a sweet nuttiness.

Leafly recorded 230 peoples report on Ice Cream Cake's flavor.

19% of Ice Cream Cake consumers taste the flavor sweet. Another 19% of people taste the flavor vanilla and 10% of users taste the flavory of earthy.

Hytiva describes the smell you'll experience during your high on Ice Cream Cake. As well as the visuals you'll see breaking your bud.

"Expect a creamy vanilla-like aroma from these buds with a slightly nutty and



sometimes cheesy undertone. The cured nuggets are a colorful assortment of light and dark greens intertwined with deep shades of purple and copper pistils."

Although Ice Cream Cake is a hybrid strain, it is very much indica dominant. The strain contains 75% indica and 25% sativa with around 20% to 25% of THC.

This relaxing hybrid strain promotes relaxation.

According to The Higher Path, this strain allows you

"Not long after smoking a hearty bowl of Ice Cream Cake, the body begins to feel transported into an entirely new state of being, free from the stresses that can accumulate in everyday life."

The main effect that comes from this indica strain is the feeling of sleepiness and sedation. Hence, why it is a great strain for those who want to relax.

Ice Cream Cake is best suitable to be consumed on slower days or during the evening and night when you want to decompress.

Ice Cream Cake is a high potency cannabis strain that has many medical advantages.

Ice Cream Cake is known to be perfect for treating those who experience depression, chronic pain, insomnia, and nausea or appetite loss. This strain also helps with stress, anxiety, cramps, and muscular spasms.

Leafly provides real numbers from real customers who have tried Ice Cream Cake. 614 people recorded their effects with this strain.

66% of people documented that Ice Cream Cake left them feeling relaxed. 46% of people reported that it left them feeling happy and 37% reported that it left them feeling euphoric.

According to Leafly, 17% of Ice Cream Cake consumers reported that this strain helped with their stress. 19% of consumers reported that this strain helped with their anxiety and 15% reported that it helped with any pain they were

experiencing.

A few consumers reported that when smoking Ice Cream Cake, dry mouth occurred frequently. 12% of people reported feeling dry mouth after consuming this strain. In addition to dry mouth occurring, people also reported that they experienced dry eyes and dizziness. 6% of people reported feeling dry eyes and 2% reported feeling anxious.

Ice Cream Cake is a very popular indica dominate hybrid strain that can be

#### **Robust Marijuana MSO Growth**

The top publicly held multistate marijuana operators continued to enjoy strong revenue increases in the second quarter. Second-tier MSOs lost money as they continued to aggressively expand their footprints.

#### Top earning MSOs (in millions)

Company	Revenue (Q2 2021)	% change from Q1	Q2 Profit/(Loss)
Curaleaf	\$312.2	+20%	(\$9.8)
Green Thumb Industries	\$221.9	+14%	\$22.1
Trulieve	\$215.1	+11%	\$40.9
Cresco Labs	\$210	+18%	\$2.7
Verano Holdings	\$198.7	+39%	\$6.8
Harvest Health	\$102.5	+15%	(\$19.5)
Columbia Care	\$102.4	+19%	(\$10.9)
Ayr Wellness	\$91.3	+56%	(\$24.9)
Ascend Wellness	\$83.4	+29%	(\$44.9)
TerrAscend	\$58.7	+10%	(\$23.1)

Source: Company regulatory filings



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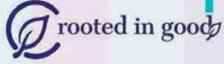
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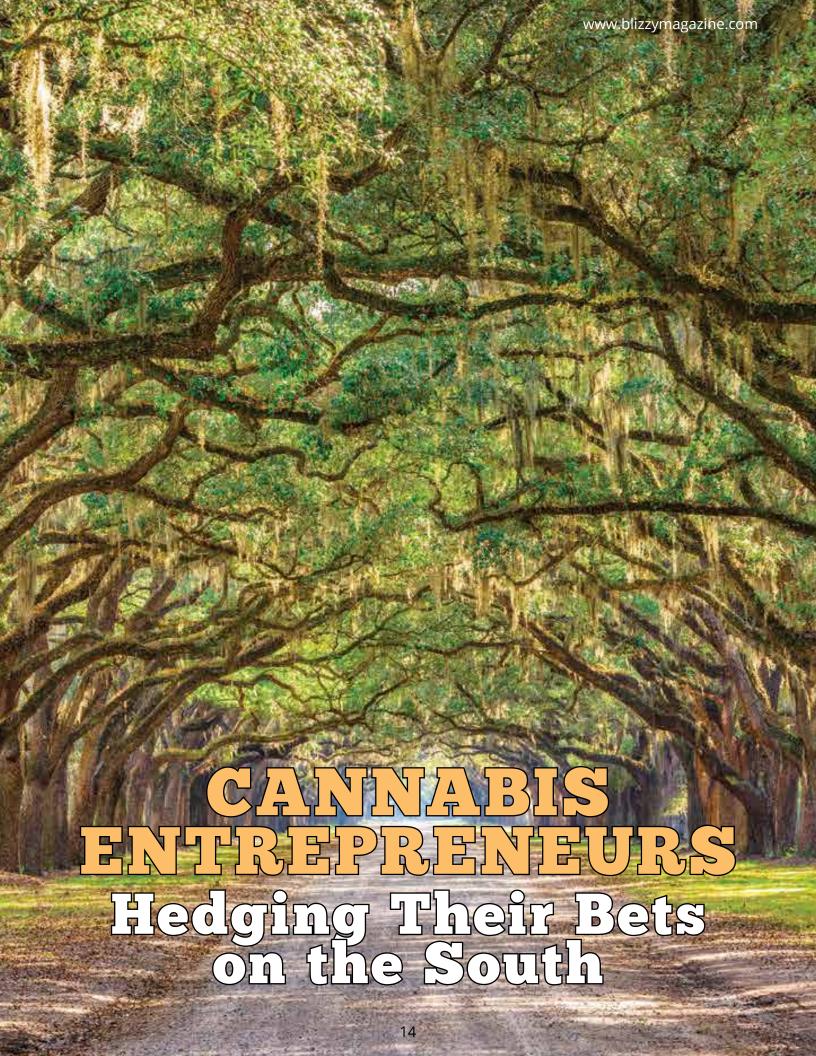
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## Cannabis Entrepreneurs Descending on the South

#### By Caleb O'Brien

As the cannabis industry continues to boom, entrepreneurs are now setting their sights on a new market... the Southern United States.

Of the potential cannabis markets still untapped in the marijuana industry, the South is the biggest of them all. With a collective 125.5 million people, only fraction of them have access to medical marijuana and none of them have any access to recreational or adult use marijuana.

As of March 2020 only three southern states have legal medical marijuana:
Arkansas, Louisiana, and Florida. Both Arkansas and Louisiana have a combined population of about 7.6 million and Florida, being the region's big prize, features about 21.4 million people along with a medical cannabis sector that is expected to hit \$1.6 billion by 2022 and \$2.5 billion by 2025.

This leaves about 96 million left without access to marijuana (both medical and recreational) and when looking at the sheer market size of the South, it is easy to underestimate how very attractive the opportunities are for entrepreneurs.

For example, Arkansas and Louisiana both have more people than Oregon and Nevada and Tennessee has about same amount of people as Massachusetts and far more people than Colorado.

The four states mentioned:
Oregon, Nevada,
Massachusetts, and
Colorado, all have legalized
both medical and
recreational marijuana and
have been reaping the
rewards ever since.

If the marijuana efforts (beginning with medical) advancing through several southern states are successful, entrepreneurs could take advantage of markets that promise tens of millions of dollars as well as offer lower costs and fewer barriers of entry.

Some of the benefits for marijuana businesses looking to launch in the region include:

- 1.Lower labor costs and real estate compared to other regions in the United States
- 2.Possible government incentives for cannabis firms in areas where there is economic hardships
- 3.Potentially less completion for licenses since fewer applicants would exist

While they're truly are benefits to both the usage of marijuana and economic growth possibilities that it brings, the social conservativism generally throughout the southern region and reluctance to change policy have kept the market at a standstill but that hasn't stopped states from at least discussing it or even putting words into law.

Most recently, Virginia became the first southern state allow recreational use of marijuana back on July 1st. While the state won't start selling marijuana until 2024, its proof that recreational legalization has started to spread throughout the United States and now is making it way down South.

So far states such as Arkansas, Georgia, www.blizzymagazine.com

Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina have all made headway in legalizing marijuana for medical purposes.

"All in all, the South is generally making great strides," said Sally Peebles, who keeps a close eye on Southern region and is a partner of Vincent Sederberg office in lacksonville, Florida.

Even before the Coronavirus pandemic, Kentucky had a bill in place to be voted by their respected Senate in 2020, potentionally making them the next the state, among others, who could approve marijuana in some form or fashion but the progress still faces steep uphill battle with lawmakers.

Kentucky's medical marijuana bill sits in the Kentucky Senate, where it took weeks to get assigned by the Senate Judiciary, and still hasn't been given a hearing yet, with many wondering if it ever will.

"If people really want to get into the South, I would wait and see whether states pass measures and licensing is determined" Peebles said. While the South has been slow to legalize marijuana, that hasn't stopped the popularity of it one bit.

According to New Frontier's data report, among states without legal recreational marijuana, six out of the top eight for illicit sales are Southern states with the three of largest markets in the country being Texas, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Alabama and South Carolina also made the list with each over \$1.1 billion in illegal marijuana sales in 2020, which ranks 7th among states that don't have to legalized recreational marijuana.

As mentioned before not a single Southern state has legal recreational marijuana and of the seven states in the United States that still don't have any form of medical marijuana, three of them are Southern states.

While Virginia is the lone outlier when it comes to legalization, there's proof that the possibility is there for expansion and if the South is able to take advantage, entrepreneurs will flock to where the opportunity is real.

Arkansas is the perfect example of the

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advancements of marijuana in the South. After opening the state's first medical marijuana dispensary in May of 2019, the sales have increased topping out at \$10 million in the first six weeks of 2020 alone.

The demand for marijuana is legitimate but in order for more entrepreneurs to really take an interest in the South, politicians must follow the public sentiment and legalize fully.



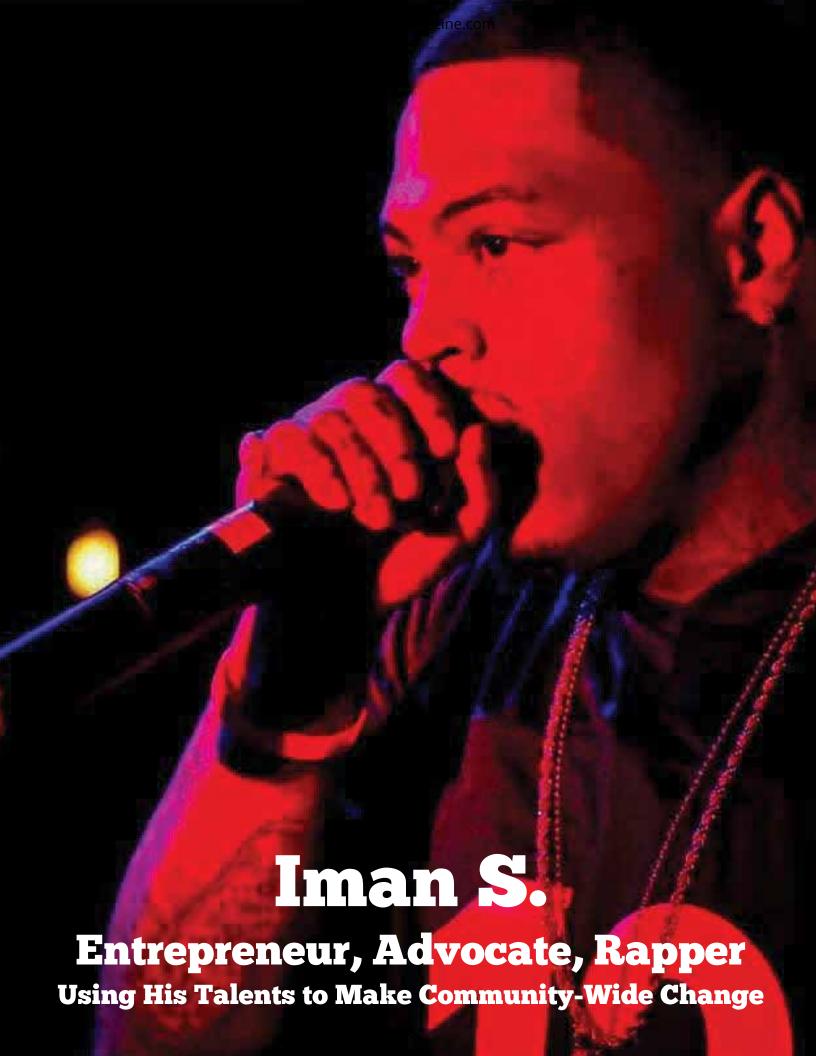
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By Caleb O'Brien

Iman S. (Iman Saks) has been around the marijuana industry his whole life. "I've had entry level positions; I've been a joint roller, I've been a transporter, and took buds from a couple of places so I'm well versed in the weed industry and ins and outs of it," said Iman.

For Iman, it started when a young girl he knew brought a joint for school.

"It was typical lunch scene. She brought out a joint, I hit it, loved the euphoria of it and have been rolling with it ever since," said Iman.

Iman, a Parkhill native, is both a rapper and the co-owner of Victory Clothing Boutique (located on East Colfax Ave). Iman helped opened the store in March of 2018 and sales

Street and Skate wear.

"Hip hop and fashion obviously go hand in hand," Iman said. "People would always ask me where I got my clothes, and it just became a point where I wanted to funnel people to me instead of sending them to other people."

The Boutique was a joint venture as Iman and high school colleague JB (Jarret Beasley) both had the same vision, with JB being more

business savvy at the time and Iman having the vision for the clothes and put together the two helped open a clothing store that "by the grace of God" has been open for the last four and half years.

"It's just another venue and another way for me to promote my music" said Iman "We've done videos there, we've had pop up shops, we've had multiple artists come through here



from Dave East to Sauce Walka. We're trying to make it a haven where when you shop in Denver, you shop with us."

Some of his singles and

albums include Bad Ms.
Take, S.E.T.H (Something Else
to Hate), Victory, The Old
Kanye, BELLY, and Game 6
The Mixtape. I do lifestyle
rap," Iman said. "Denver's

lifestyle is one of riding around and listening to your music. For me personally and speaking for myself we're not in the club every night, going crazy and we don't have side shows, we just don't have the culture that a lot of other people try to associate themselves with."

"Hip hop and fashion obviously go hand in hand," Iman said.
"People would always ask me where I got my clothes, and it just became a point where I wanted to funnel people to me instead of sending them to other people."

Iman continued, "I'm more laid back and I represent that weedy lifestyle"

While Iman represents the marijuana lifestyle, he also understands the opportunity to take part in a booming and lucrative business is slowly changing to better include the black community, a community that has been unfairly targeted

"Denver's lifestyle is one of riding around and listening to your music. For me personally and speaking for myself we're not in the club every night, going crazy and we don't have side shows, we just don't have the culture that a lot of other people try to associate themselves with."

by marijuana laws. African Americans are four more times likely to arrested than white people while consuming at similar levels.

"I wanted to be where there's more people who look like me involved in the industry with badges, with proper certifications, and the knowledge to be able to carry out just typical things that people are doing through the city every day without being looked at like we're trying to turn into a street thing," said Iman.

This is why Iman has continued to push for more

equality when it comes to the marijuana industry in hopes that it will benefit black communities more in the future.

"It's equal opportunity playing field but we're just so far behind when we kind of created the culture in itself," Iman said. "I just want to be compensated for that, not just for me but for everybody who's been in jail, who's gotten arrested, it's just bigger than just buying and selling weed.

"It's an industry for people to not only provide for their families but it's helping and healing people at the same time. I feel like if I could be the vessel in any way to get that out the right way for Colorado and the people I know who work in the industry than I want to do that," he said.

With this in mind, Victory Clothing Boutique is holding a "customer appreciation" event on Oct. 9, which will be intertwined with a radio interview to bring awareness to the store and highlight things to come such as new shirts, new merchandise for women, and promoting Iman's new project--21 Grams.

"Anytime we do an event we love to have marijuana advocates as part of it just because anything I do, I make sure it's a part of my lifestyle and not just for a look, so we want to definitely let people know that even though this is a clothing store it's still a 420 friendly environment to an extent," Iman said.

Go check out and follow lman S. at his social media accounts below:

- @imansdope
- @drycleanonly\_bysaks
- @victoryclothingboutique

**Victory Clothing** Boutique is holding a "customer appreciation" event on Oct. 9, which will be intertwined with a radio interview to bring awareness to the store and highlight things to come such as new shirts, new merchandise for women, and promoting Iman's new project--21 Grams.



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#### **ACTION THEMES FOR BCEI**

#### **ADVOCACY**

Advocating for Black businesses and community participation in the Colorado cannabis industry

#### INFORMATION

Providing information on cannabis programs and opportunities available to Black businesses, communities and citizens for participation in the Colorado cannabis industry

#### **PROGRAMS**

Providing programs engaging, supporting and evaluating the Colorado and Denver metro cannabis industry's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion efforts related to Black community participation in the Colorado cannabis industry

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JOHN BAILEY AT 720-629-0964 or johnbailey062@gmail.com

## THE CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

By LaQuane Smith

The War on Drugs has been a war on mainly people of color, specifically; African-Americans and Latinos. The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act proposes to end decades of suffering and harm experienced by communities of color; removing cannabis from the federal list of controlled substances and giving states the power to implement cannabis laws that will work for their states.

As more and more states legalize recreational and medical marijuana use, federal cannabis reforms are becoming increasingly urgent. Recreational use of cannabis is legal in 18 states and the medical use of cannabis is legal in 37 states.

The end of the failed federal prohibition of cannabis or the War on Drugs; The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act id to ensure that Black and Brown Americans will no longer have to fear:

- ·arrest for legal marijuana use
- ·being barred from public housing

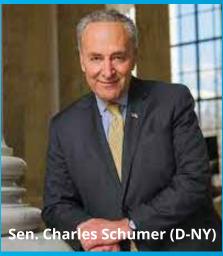
- ·being barred from federal financial aid for higher education and
- possessing and using legal cannabis in states where it is legally consumed.

State-compliant businesses will be treated like other businesses and allowed access to financial services. For example, bank accounts and loans. The medical community will benefit as well. Medical research will no longer face unreasonable obstacles to research.

The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act will also include restorative measures to elevate communities of color that were unfairly targeted based on discrimination laws, policies, and intended practices. The bill automatically expunges federal non-violent marijuana crimes and offenses to petition a court for resentencing. Another benefit for communities of color is that the legislation creation of an "Opportunity Trust Fund."

The Opportunity Trust Fund will be funded by the federal cannabis tax revenue with the purpose







of reinvesting in the communities most impacted by the failed War on Drugs. The fund is also designed to help level the

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include restorative
measures to elevate
communities of color
that were unfairly
targeted.

playing field for entrepreneurs of color who continue to face barriers and systemic obstacles that make it difficult to access the industry. The legislation is also designed to end discrimination in federal benefits for; 1) medical marijuana patients, and 2) adult recreational use.

As the current law now stands, cannabis also known as marijuana is classified as a Schedule I controlled substance for the purposes of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA).This has put many industries, businesses, and communities of color at a disadvantage. As a Schedule I Controlled Substance, research for potential medical benefits and harmful affects are limited.Many cannabis businesses are denied access to financial resources, banks are prohibited to establish new customers, and communities of color continue to suffer the affects of discrimination and lack of opportunities.

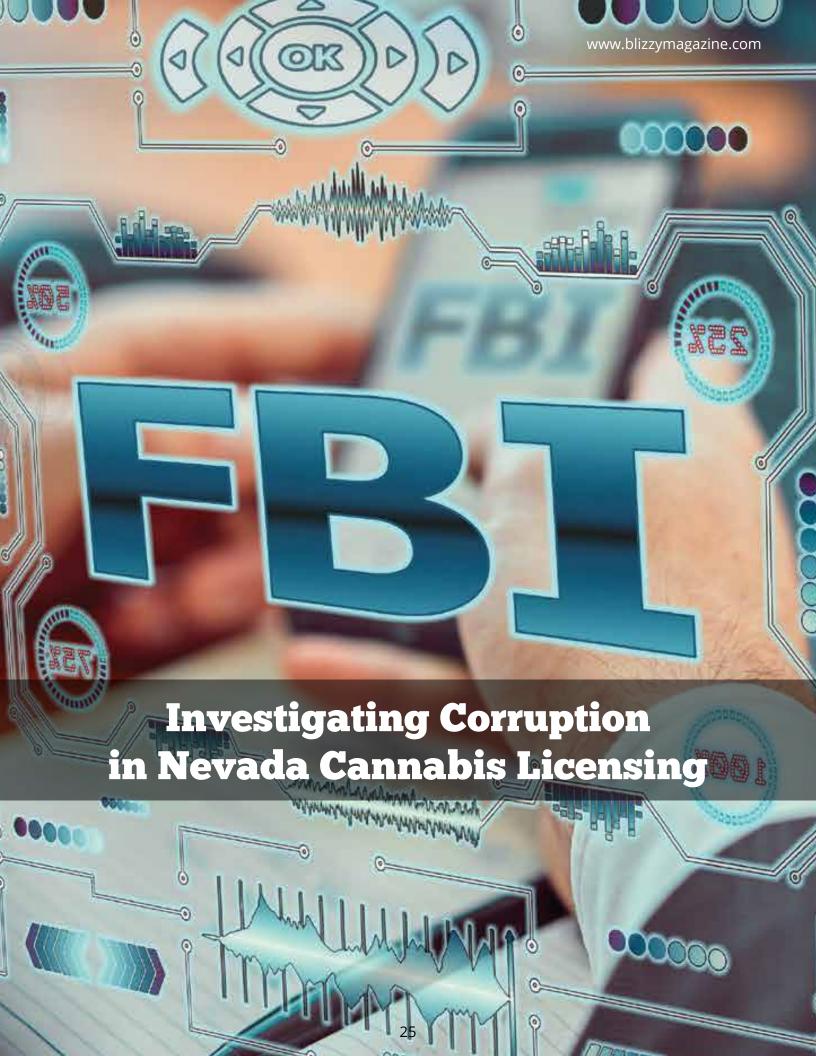
#### Winners, Losers, and To Be Determined

The Cannabis
Administration and
Opportunity Act is going to
benefit banks financially by
allowing them to have
access to lucrative clients
they never had before –

cannabis business owners. Cannabis business owners will now have access to financial services and resources that will allow them to reinvest in their cannabis businesses. This will make it possible for them to expand and grow which means more profits in the long run.

Medical research facilities, organizations, and universities will possibly be able to get access to research funding to further their cannabis research.Communities of Color will have an opportunity to use the federal tax revenue from the opportunity trust fund to build their communities. This could mean better schools, roads, job opportunities and training. If the legislation is implemented as it is currently written; there will be a lot of winners that will benefit from the Act.

The big question as it relates to communities of color is – Will this legislation truly be implemented to ensure that resources are set aside for Black and Latino communities that has been devastated by the War on Drugs?lt remains to be seen if this will be the case.





## Investigates Nevada Licensing

By Caleb O'Brien

Nevada has come under fire recently by the FBI who are investigating the legitimacy of the state's cannabis licensing process.

Over the past year, FBI agents have been interviewing Nevada industry insiders to determine whether or not illegal influences played a role in awarding lucrative cannabis licenses to businesses, such as swaying politicians or bureaucrats with jobs, gifts, money, or campaign contributions in order to obtain licenses.

The state has issued more than 750 licenses (335 of which are dual licenses for both medical and recreational) for dispensaries, production, cultivation, and testing but ever since Nevada legalized recreational marijuana in 2016, the state's licensing process has been embroiled in lawsuits and controversary.

This has led applicants who have failed to get licenses leveling charges against those who have obtained them while also drawing questions about whether marijuana companies who featured high profile Nevada politicians and businessman as partners had an advantage in getting licenses or zoning permits for businesses.

"My gut told me and our Spidey sense is telling us there is a lot of 'pay to play' " said Chad Christensen a former lawmaker who co-owns Pisos Dispensary in Las Vegas who went on to say that he spent about 45 mins with agents at the FBI's office discussing licensing concerns back in mid-December.

"It's all about public trust and confidence" said Tyler Klimas, executive director of the Nevada Compliance Board"As regulators of the state's cannabis industry, it's imperative that we work with our federal partners to ensure that trust and confidence extends outside of our borders and prevents any actions that could damage the state's reputation or harm the industry."

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recreational
marijuana in 2016,
the state's licensing
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embroiled in
lawsuits and
controversy.

While the FBI has been investigating this situation since Feb 18th, 2020 (which was kept under wraps), trust been a major factor for all those involved in the Nevada cannabis industry.

Back in 2000, Nevada voted to legalize medical marijuana but it took more than a decade before regulations were put into place in 2015, allowing the first retail sales of medical marijuana to actually happen. Nevada followed that up a year later, 2016, by approving recreational marijuana sales, with the first licenses for adult-use facilities being exclusively distributed to businesses that already sold medical marijuana.

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"My gut and my spidey sense was telling me that something was wrong and that there was a lot of 'pay to play'"

In 2018, the state had 64 new licenses up for grabs with The Nevada Department of Taxation receiving more than 164 applications from 127 groups and individuals but only awarded them to just 17 applicants. This process sparked a massive lawsuit, which some lawyers eventually dubbed as "World War Weed", that is currently being appealed to the state Supreme Court.

Among the 17 applicants included some high profile politicians, many with no experience in marijuana or retail, who joined to obtain licenses and open marijuana businesses which has raised the questions about whether they influenced dispensary licensing decisions due to their involvement with certain groups. It also led Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak to appoint a task force to "root out corruption or

criminal influences" within the state's marijuana industry.

"I think the feds are really taking a hard look at it," said Scott Sibley, a publisher of the Nevada Legal News and a part owner of a Las Vegas dispensary and cultivation facility. "I think this is their opportunity to make a big splash on this so it rocks everybody and people know not to pay for these licenses. It needs to be on the up and up."

Sibley also mentioned that there has been word out in the industry about a potential investigation for some time but says its unclear whether investigators with find any wrongdoing.

Back in March, a report by Chicago tribune claimed that Green Thumb Industries, which has approximately a dozen licenses in Nevada, was under a similar federal investigation for a possible "pay to play" in the state of Illinois. Green Thumb would later dispute the accuracy of the story calling it "baseless "and with no indication that the company is a focus of the Nevada FBI

probe.

In hopes of eliminating any future controversy, lawmakers transferred authority over marijuana to the new and improved Nevada Cannabis Compliance Board in 2019, which was modeled after state's Gaming Control Board. The board will oversee future distribution of new retail, growing, manufacturing licenses and more if the legislature makes them available.

"Looking back to 2018 it's been pretty public how messy it was," said Sibley "They can look back and think of a million things to do differently. It's not surprising we are still dealing with that litigation."

Despite trying to eliminate suspicion, the FBI has discovered that the new board may have also engaged in corrupt activities, specifically a engaging in pay to play act in April 2021.

While we all await the conclusion of this investigation one this is for certain, the sooner this investigation is concluded the sooner the public's trust in the licensing system can be restored.

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# SUCIDE

### Amongst Cannabis Farmers

By Heavenly Torres
Suicide amongst hemp
farmers has been prevalent
since the 1980s.

When Colorado legalized marijuana, a global economic event began called the "Green Rush."
The Green Rush began in 2012 and has been ongoing since.

Maximum Yield explains the term behind "Green Rush."

"The term "green rush" is used to describe the massive growth that the fledgling marijuana industry is seeing in the United States. It encompasses the founding and growth of businesses like marijuana dispensaries and delivery services, as well as growing operations, edibles, marijuana clothing companies, accessory manufacturers, and more. However, it also refers to less tangible items, like marijuana stocks and



bonds."

The marijuana industry has been skyrocketing since the Green Rush began back in 2012.

Due to this skyrocket in numbers, it has caused a lot of hardship for hemp farmers. The Green Rush added stress and uncertainty for them.

According to a 2020 study by the Centers for Disease Control, suicide rates in agriculture are higher than for any other occupation. The numbers state that 84.5 per 100,000 people are reported suicides.

There are several factors that have led to the rise in suicides among cannabis farmers.

The first and leading cause for the rise in suicides comes from net farm income worries among hemp farmers.

Another common factor in the rise is due to pesticide induced issues among farms and bad weather. As well as inexperienced farmers unfamiliar with the hemp farming process.

The Philadelphia Inquirer stated that more than 16,000 licensed growers will profit from their hemp crops but due to weather, pesticide, inexperience, and crop failure that between 40% and half of the crops planted won't be harvested.

"Nationwide, bad weather,

mold, disease, pests and inexperience have crushed some crops. Now lack of capital, harvesting equipment and drying space — challenges affecting rookie and veteran farmers alike as growing expands — means that some healthy plants may not make it out of the ground."

Marijuana farmers not being able to harvest their hemp crops causes the net farm income worries.

Due to this, many farmers struggle with high barriers for legacy companies, high tax rates that make it harder to turn an honest profit, a robust illicit market luring away customers and thousands of marijuana farmers, businesses, and dispensaries continue

having major troubles obtaining licenses and permission to begin operations.

According to MJBizDaily, "In 2019, for instance, there was a rash of hemp farmer suicides after a disappointing harvest season."

A third factor that has led to the rise in suicide rates comes from the social isolation hemp farmers experience while growing and harvesting their crops. In 2014, a government program called "2014 Farm Bill" was approved to help mentally ill and suicidal farmers. This government program stated that millions of dollars would be put towards the program to aid hemp farmers, but politicians decided not to go forth with the funding of the program.

A fourth common factor that led to the rise is suicides among hemp farmers is the presented stigma around mental health issues in the United States.

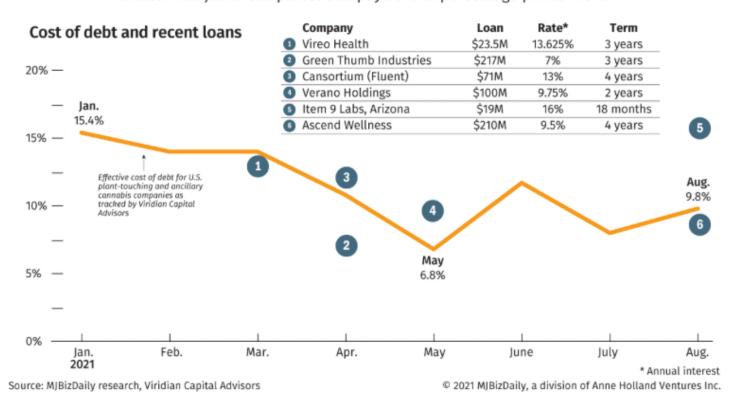
Sam De La Paz, managing partner of GreenWave Consulting in Sonoma County stated there are steps that can be taken to help fight the rise in self-inflicted deaths.

Those steps including simplifying regulatory compliance for small businesses, cutting their tax burdens, implementing social equity programs, and potentially capping the currently unlimited cultivation licenses around the state.



#### **Cost of Debt Declining For Large MSOs**

While large multistate operators are getting lower interest rates on loans, smaller marijuana companies still pay several percentage points more.







### **Conferences & Training**

Hall of Flowers

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September 22, 2021 - September 23, 2021

Midwest Cannabis Business Conference

DETROIT. MI

September 22, 2021 - September 23, 2021

Midwest Cannabis Business Conference

DETROIT, MI

September 22, 2021 - September 23, 2021

Indo Expo

CHICAGO, IL

September 25, 2021 - September 26, 2021

HortiCann Light + Tech Conference VIRTUAL

September 28, 2021 - September 29, 2021

**BD Expo West** 

LOS ANGELES, CA

September 30, 2021 - October 1, 2021

**NECANN Atlantic City 2021** 

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ

October 2, 2021 - October 3, 2021

New Jersey Cannabis Convention

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ

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National Credit Union Cannabiz Conference

LAS VEGAS, NV

October 13, 2021 - October 14, 2021

Benzinga Capital Conference

NEW YORK, NY

October 14, 2021 - October 15, 2021

Maine Cannabis Convention

PORTLAND, ME

October 16, 2021 - October 17, 2021

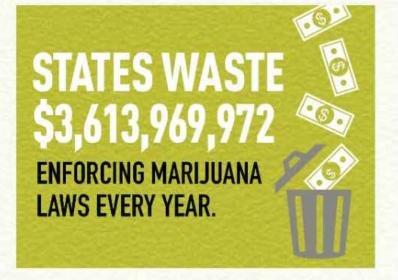




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JOB OR PUBLIC BENEFITS.

AND

FOR OUR COMMUNITIES,
MARIJUANA ARRESTS MEAN
WASTING MONEY THAT
COULD BE BETTER SPENT.



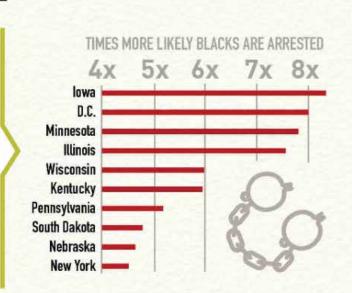
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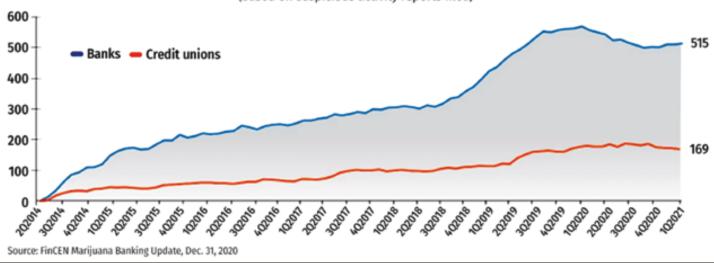
7.5 TO 8.5 TIMES

MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO BE ARRESTED FOR HAVING WEED.





#### Number of Depository Institutions Actively Banking Cannabis-Related Businesses in the US (based on suspicious activity reports filed)



One of the greatest challenges facing the cannabis industry has been access to banking. As the industry matures, however, banks are realizing the enormous potential of this new opportunity. With nearly 700 financial institutions now providing services to the industry around the country, it is only a matter of time before major players enter the fray.



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### Cannabis Companies Use RICO Act

#### in Defending Against Mounting Lawsuits

By Caleb O'Brien

Licensed cannabis businesses are turning the tables on unlicensed marijuana retailers and law enforcement officials by deploying a legal weapon that has been used against them for years.

In the past two months, cannabis industry executives have filed at least two lawsuits in California under the RICO Act (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act), a federal statute that has since been used against marijuana business in lawsuits but was originally intended as a legal weapon against the mafia.

While these two cases could take years to play out, there's reason to believe that more cases like these



businesses is now being turned on its head and has

become a tool for the industry in their defense.

might be on the horizon, although due to the challenges inherit in RICO lawsuits are likely few and far between.

"Given the nature and rapid growth of the modern cannabis industry, I would expect we'll see more civil RICO claims involving its participants and investors moving forward," said RICO expert Ben Fox, who is also a partner at the Bondurant Mixson & Elmore law firm in Atlanta.

"Cannabis companies, having been on the receiving end, have come to recognize that it is a potential powerful tool in the toolbox. Whether they will have success or not in (using RICO) remains to be seen" said civil RICO expert Gerald Arth (Philadelphia-based).

The first of the two cases was filed in San Diego County Superior Court back on July 6th by licensed retailer March and Ash with case being scheduled for hearing on Jan 8th, 2022.

The suit is aimed at a group of local businesses and individuals who are accused of propping up ads for, and profiting, from illegal marijuana dispensaries with the suit claiming within the last four years, the racketeering enterprise being challenged in this lawsuit has worked ... for the collective purpose of profiting off the unlicensed sale of cannabis."

Some of defendants include ATM owners who operating cash dispensing machines in illegal stores, landlords who were paid rent by illegal retailers, and the alt weekly newspaper San Diego Reader which carried numerous ads for unlicensed marijuana shops.

The second was filed in Mendocino County Superior Court on Aug 9thby four licensed marijuana farmers with the case being scheduled for hearing on Feb 4th, 2022.

The suit targets two law enforcement, a former sheriff's deputy (Mendocino County) and a former official of the state of Fish and Wildlife, and implicates both the county sheriff's office and local district attorney with the suit alleging that the ring of corrupt authorities stole from marijuana farmers and covered up their theft.

Certain corrupt law
enforcement officers are
above the law because the
Sheriff's Office and the
District Attorney's Office
have given officers the
green light to steal
marijuana, guns and cash
under color of law," the suit
alleges. "At least some of
the local judges have been
willfully blind to unlawful
conduct by local law
enforcement that is
common knowledge among

many in the community."

So what are the next steps for these two cases and possible future cases just like it?

Well it's possible that either or both cases could be moved from state to federal court which could make cases harder to win according to Fox.

"It's more defendant-friendly to be in federal court," said Fox explaining that because federal legal standards are higher for RICO cases, defendants usually have the leg up in this instance which could lead the way for "unclean hands" strategy by defendants, essentially arguing that everyone in the marijuana industry is breaking the law therefore nullifying the RICO claims.

Take for example a 2019 civil RICO suit filed between two California marijuana farmers against one another which was dismissed after a year because the judge ruled there was no standing due to marijuana being illegal federally.

Another reason is that there's always the possibility of plaintiffs winning big, which is also one of the reasons RICO cases are tough to win.

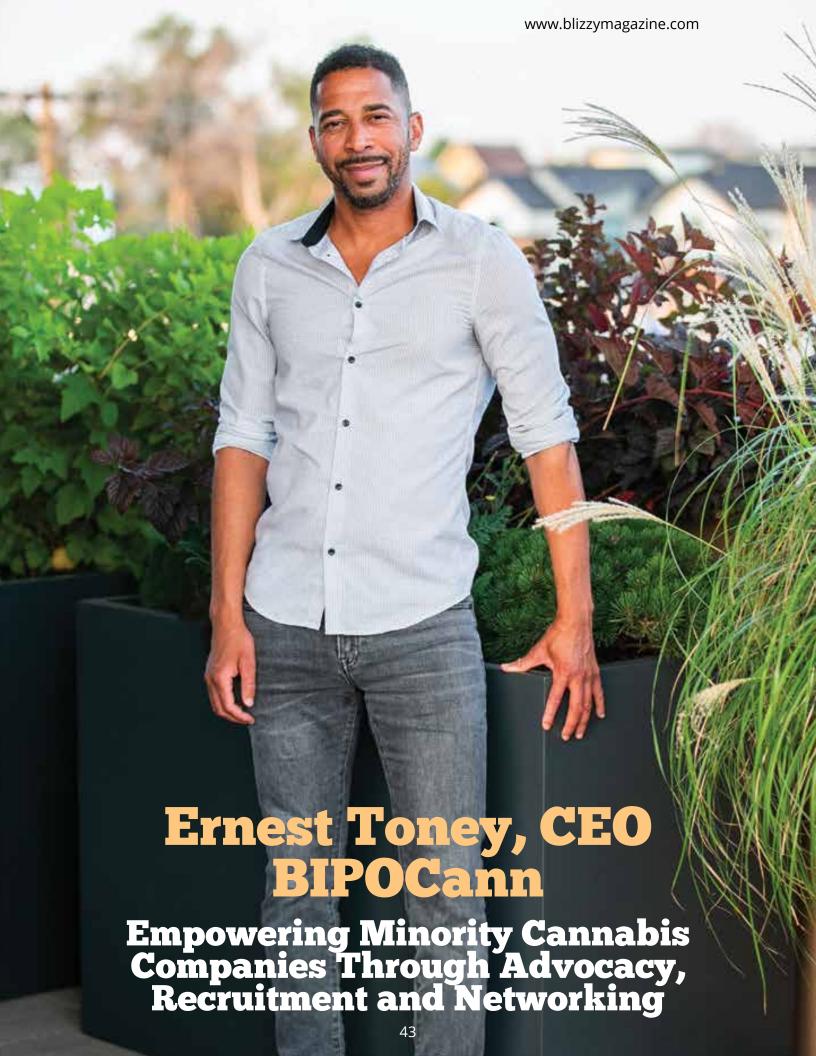
"If you're found liable, there's not only the reputational harms, but there are mandatory treble damages," Arth said. "They're not discretionary. They're mandatory. And because of that, courts very carefully scrutinize these cases."

While the difficulties of RICO cases will always be there, it hasn't appeased the appetite in the cannabis industry looking for more cases. In fact according to one marijuana business executive, a RICO lawsuit might be the only solution to the alleged corruption in California.

Despite the growing desire to pursue more cases like these, California marijuana industry lawyer Matt Kumin says he doesn't expect a "slew" RICO cases anytime soon.

"Most cannabis folks, even legitimate ones, the whole motivation and desire to sue isn't there," Kumin said. "You have to be really hard pressed to sue. It takes a lot of money, it takes a lot of energy, it takes a lot of time to put together."





# Fighting for Advocacy: How BIPOCann is Empowering Minority Business Owners

By Caleb O'Brien

Every year, more and more states across America vote to join in on the marijuana market. Each passage creates the opportunity for additional millions of dollars to be made in a brand-new economy. But the same worrisome story seems to emerge every in every place: people of color almost always get left in the dust, while their white counterparts continue to rake in the lion's share of cannabis profits.

It's for precisely this reason why Ernest Toney decided to create BIPOCann, a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance the presence and prowess of people of color in owning cannabis-related businesses. Toney, a person of color himself, had witnessed the critical lack of representation from



minority owners firsthand while he worked as a marketer and business developer at marijuana conferences for groups like MJBiz Daily, which spurred him to action.

"The corporate profit centers of the multibillion-dollar [marijuana] industry is

underrepresented in those demographics, yet the same groups, communities of color, tend to be the populations that are most targeted, arrested, convicted, and incarcerated or cannabis possession and use. So there's this problem where you see this booming legal cannabis industry that



does not have a lot of minority representation,"

Keenly aware of the struggles faced by BIPOC individuals looking to start in the marijuana industry, Toney found himself in a position where he felt empowered to provide help and assistance to aspiring minority shop owners that they are often unable to access.

"I decided to make a change, and I started this business. I saw that there was some problems, there were some gaps, and I was trying to find a way that I could build some bridges and try to help folks who want to participate in the industry have a go-to resource or place where they can get educated and connected."

He took his own money out of his savings account to start up BIPOCann, and worked arduously to establish connections with cannabis companies, not truly knowing what to expect of the venture. After seven months, though, his business became profitable, and BIPOCann's outreach started increasing across the nation.

In order to accomplish his mission, BIPOCann centered its goals around three main areas of development: advocacy,



recruitment, and networking.

In the realm of advocacy, Toney works closely with several groups in Colorado to find ways to support and influence legal efforts to change how Colorado approaches enabling social equity. Recently, with the new Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act being debated in Congress, Toney drafted a letter to send during the bill's public commenting period. He was concerned about the ramifications that interstate marijuana commerce would have on small businesses being smothered out of



## BIPCCARN

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their local market by larger companies. When minority businessmen and women are able to open a cannabis shop, they are the ones most adversely affected by such a change in their ecosystem if they are not properly accounted for. Additionally, Toney engages in conversations with Colorado community

groups and state
departments overseeing
elements of bill
creation.Toney believes
having the necessary
insight into the legislation
process is a crucial facet of
forwarding positive change
in underserved
communities. By knowing
when and where people are
allowed to speak up on bills,

those previously unheard voices gain a powerful influence in the creation of laws that will ultimately affect their livelihood with or without their input.

His recruitment strategy works to ensure that people of color looking to enter the workforce can connect with his membership directory of companies at BIPOCann to find places actively working to promote diversity and inclusion within their staff.

One of the lesser understood avenues to entering the marijuana industry is by starting an indirect marijuana business that can cater to particular needs of companies who actually handle marijuana. Toney calls these businesses the "non plant touching" group, and he emphasizes the importance of promoting this style of business to those hoping to start new cannabis businesses. "In a new market when cannabis becomes legal, you often hear people say 'Okay, I

wanna get in business, and let me figure out how I can get a license.' Now, we've lived in Colorado where this market has thrived for a long time, and you know that there's a lot of different ways to participate in the industry aside from strictly owning a business license. That is common knowledge here, but it might not be common knowledge elsewhere,"

He stresses that such indirect marijuana businesses can see the same levels of success as those who actually handle marijuana. With fewer barriers for entry, yet similar potential to grow and scale as a business,

Toney uses BIPOCann to inform people of the variety of options available to someone ready to enter the market.

One place where such knowledge will be highly valuable is Toney's home state of Virginia. Just this past summer, on July 1, Virginia became the eighteenth state to fully legalize adult use recreational marijuana. Virginia's legalization of weed is particularly notable because it is the first state in the Southern market to do so. Some industry professionals, including Toney, believe that it is a sign of good things to come



for cannabis in the South, but Toney wants to make sure that Virginia is not destined to repeat the mistakes other states have made when it comes to disadvantaging social equity individuals.

"They're starting the policy session in January, there's going to be a lot of opportunity to educate a lot of folks about the ways they can be involved in the industry, and hopefully to have like a change that can have some trickle-down effects throughout the South, which has a high minority population."

Having been raised in the historically significant town of Farmville, in central Virginia, Toney says that the region and its policies are "near and dear" to him. Farmville had been the sight of several momentous occurrences before and during the Civil Rights Movement, including a student-led walkout from a segregated school over poor infrastructure and teaching conditions, whose success would lead to their case being picked up by the NAACP and ultimately being incorporated into the landmark Supreme Court case Brown v Board of Education (1954).

After the ruling of Brown v Board, Farmville's school board refused to comply with new integration policy, opting instead to cut off funding to the black school entirely—a decision that resonated deeply with Toney.

"That had a ripple effect for several generations, because now you basically take students at all different age levels, from kindergarten to high school, and you say, no education, you take away your upward mobility to advance and get jobs and economic growth. And you have these lost generations of students who didn't have anything to do or anywhere to go."

During the time Toney grew up in the 1980's and 1990's, he bore witness to the negative impact that the infamous War on Drugs had on his small community.

When he was a child, a correctional facility was erected in Farmville to hold community members caught possessing any variety of drugs, including marijuana. The correctional facility had quickly become one of the city's largest employers, and created a strange, sorrowful reality for Toney when his dad became one of the people who worked at the facility.

"I grew up with people who worked in correctional facilities administration, and they felt like family, but

## Breakdown of Marijuana Business Owners and Founders by Race:

- 81% White
- 6.7% Other
- 5.7% Latino
- 4.3 Black
- 2.4% Asian

When he was a child, a correctional facility was erected in Farmville to hold community members caught possessing any variety of drugs, including marijuana. The correctional facility had quickly become one of the city's largest employers, and created a strange, sorrowful reality.



they were also family members who I would see in orange jumpsuits working in front of the facility when I would go, when I would catch the bus to go to my dad's office. It was the place that was putting food on my table, but it was also the place where a lot of folks in my neighborhood...neighbors, aunts and uncles, cousins,

were getting arrested and incarcerated,"

He saw a hypocritical dichotomy in how often his people would be locked up, while seeing parents in the whiter parts of town use the same drugs his friends were locked up for without any repercussion. This sparked a passion within Toney to examine the particular ways that drug and crime policies could impact various

communities throughout Virginia and the United States.

After graduating from college at James Madison University in 2007, Toney spent some time working for the Arizona Diamondbacks as a sales consultant before moving to Colorado in 2011.

Now, as Toney looks ahead to the future of BIPOCann. he is excited for the several new ventures planned, including a sponsorship program for formerly incarcerated blacks looking to open cannabis businesses, and moderating a conversation about minority participation in new cannabis markets at MJBizCon this October. He is looking forward to strengthening and expanding the company's presence within Colorado, while also building out a new chain of support for social equity applicants in Virginia by working with minority coalition groups.

Businesses or minority cannabis entrepreneurs interested in getting involved with BIPOCann initiatives can join the BIPOCann membership network by going to bipocann.com and clicking "Join Bipocann" under the Membership tab.





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