



PHOTO BY BEN AND LIAM FUDGE

The princess of pot

Canada's Jodie Emery takes over her imprisoned husband's fight to legalize marijuana

Sean Condon is the executive director of Megaphone Magazine, Street Roots sister paper in Vancouver, B.C.

BY SEAN CONDON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For years Jodie Emery was a constant at the side of her husband Marc Emery at Vancouver press conferences and marijuana rallies as he fought his extradition to the United States for selling cannabis seeds across the border. While Marc worked to inform Canadians that their government had arrested him in 2005 on behalf of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as part of its controversial war on drugs, Jodie's presence seemed to remind people what his loss of freedom would mean on a personal level.

However, since Marc started serving his five-year sentence in the U.S. last year, Jodie has become the face and voice of the marijuana legalization movement in Canada. While taking over the mantle from Vancouver's 'Prince of Pot' may have seemed daunting, Jodie has quickly proven to be a natural leader and has picked up where her husband left off.

Along with being the editor of Cannabis Culture magazine, Jodie ran for the BC Green Party in the 2009 provincial election and continues to fight for marijuana legalization and to bring Marc back across the border to serve out his sentence.

Just a few days before the federal election, Megaphone sat down with Jodie at the Cannabis Culture head office and talked about Marc's case, what a Conservative majority will mean for marijuana users and about how she feels

about becoming Canada's 'Princess of Pot'.

Megaphone: Marc was recently denied transfer to Canada and was moved from a minimum to medium security prison. How do you feel he's being treated by the U.S. justice system?

Jodie Emery: It's really unfortunate that they refused his transfer application because he did qualify under all the criteria for transfer, and we had the support of 23 previously and currently elected representatives from all levels of government in Canada. We also had support from U.S. politicians and thousands of letters from supporters across North America. The sentencing judge also recommended that he be transferred, so the only objection would be from the DEA, who considered Marc a major threat for his political activism.

I think the DEA wants Marc to serve the five-year sentence because he was facing 30-years-to-life and his plea deal was for five years. We had hoped that most of it would be served in Canada, but it will be served in the U.S. He'll apply for transfer again in two years but it takes about a year for that to be processed and I'm not sure if they would approve it or not then. But in three years he'll be able to get out on early release if he's had good behavior the whole time. But if not, he'll be out after the five-year sentence in early 2015.

S.C.: Do you think he was denied transfer because he has been so outspoken

on his blog about the conditions inside U.S. prisons?

J.E.: I think that did have something to do with it because the rejection letter said he was refused (transfer) for serious law enforcement concerns. But, of course, he's not a threat to anybody and he's not likely to reoffend; but they just want him to be sent away. They do see him as a (political) symbol. The other part in the rejection letter said Marc could reapply in two years when he's had time to consider changing his behaviour that led to the rejection, so, that's kind of saying, 'be quiet, stop complaining'.

S.C.: Marc had been so defiant about his actions, but when he was sentenced he expressed regret for selling seeds and that the methods were "ill conceived and ultimately destructive". What exactly did he mean by that?

J.E.: Well, he has to express remorse for his activities, that's required when you agree to plead guilty; you have to admit that you're doing wrong. He knew that he was breaking the law, so that's accurate.

He's defied a lot of laws that are unjust and that punish nonviolent people his entire life. So when he sold seeds, he always thought he could face punishment. But if he was going to be charged, it would have been in Canada. Nobody expected the

See PRINCESS, page 5

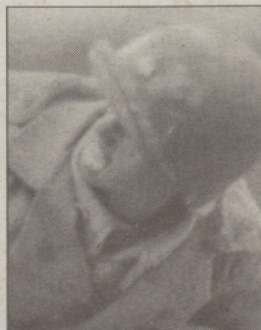
Inside



True blue

A talk with Marcy Westerling, founder of Rural Organizing Project

Page 4



One man's war

Documentary puts new focus on mental illness, homelessness and the intersection with art

Page 8



The hypocritical mind

A talk with the man who understands our two-faced tendencies

Page 10