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U.S. would be able to take him away when he never left Canada. And that's what made it such a big deal when it happened in 2005. Canadians were offended – our sovereignty had been breached.

So it's clear the reason why Marc was targeted – it's not because of the danger of the seeds, (but because of his activism).

S.C.: *Where do you guys see the next step? How will you approach your activism now?*

J.E.: I think we need to continue stressing the importance of our sovereignty as a country. Marc and I have been heavily involved in elections and in political campaigns because (Conservative Prime Minister) Stephen Harper is really doing a lot of bad things to Canada, and that impacts everybody.

Marc and I, in our activism, help people who are being hurt by the government, that's what our brand of activism is about. It's to protect people from the oppressive government force that's being used against peaceful, non-violent people. And so that extends to a lot of other things. This government is really adopting a lot of U.S. policies, especially with a lot of Christian, right-wing influences. So that's reflected in a lot of the policies that Harper has introduced.

I think when Marc was arrested that was the first time it was really obvious that our governments were working together in really sinister ways to sell out a citizen. So Marc and I have been really pushing for a change in

our government and to get people involved in more than just supporting him, but to support our country and our democracy before it's too late.

S.C.: *Vancouver's 4/20 (marijuana) rally last month was the biggest it's ever been. And yet marijuana laws were never mentioned in the federal election.*

J.E.: I think that's because Harper is so steadfast against it. He doesn't ever get face-to-face

with someone who doesn't agree with everything he thinks, so he's never going to get asked the marijuana question—it's just a dead issue in the water to him.

When you go and ask the other leaders, they're hesitant to say they want to make it legal because they know that will turn off a lot of people. What surprises me is that the other leaders often seem to be trying to get the Harper supporters instead of trying to appeal to the people who do want it legal. The majority of Canadians want it legal, but no leader is willing to say it because they feel Harper would use it against them.

So we're trying to educate (marijuana supporters) and remind them all that every single one of them is a target of Harper. They and everybody else is at risk under this

government so they've got to give a damn. This government is introducing laws to put (users and growers) in prison. That's scary. We need to get our movement more focused on preserving ourselves and our safety instead of celebrating because it's not time to celebrate yet. Things have gone backwards since Marc was extradited.

S.C.: *What changes has the Harper government made to marijuana laws?*

J.E.: Harper changed the definition of a serious drug offense to include any marijuana offenses. So that means trafficking a joint. That means possessing personal weed. They changed it from being over three kilograms to include all of it. When they define something as a serious offense it gives police the ability to wire tap without needing the approval they normally have to go through. They are allowed to refuse you bail and they are allowed to seize your property.

What that means is that right now it's possible that the police could go to every house of someone that's growing pot and charge them under a serious offense, which is usually reserved for organized crime – these are people who just have a couple of plants in their closet. So that's a lot of resources and money badly being misused and it's based on the U.S.-style. Harper also introduced mandatory minimums and that means that judges, even if they get a medical marijuana grower in front of them, have to sentence them to a certain amount of time. There are a lot of other laws that are being introduced that are targeted toward cannabis users.

Harper declared a culture war on marijuana use—one that he wants to get rid of it. That's his plan – he's dead set against the marijuana culture.

S.C.: *On the one hand the government is creating more punitive laws, but on the other the Ontario Superior Court recently ruled that current marijuana cultivation and usage laws are unconstitutional.*

J.E.: That's where the courts are on our side. That's one of the things we need to do before Harper stacks all the Supreme Court with much harsher and more conservative judges. This judge in Ontario found that Matthew Mernagh was being blocked by doctors to get marijuana. The government has to fix the program to make marijuana widely available. That means doctors can't say no. That means naturopaths could do it, or that means compassion clubs could license. It means more access.

The other option is that it will just be taken out of the law and we won't have any regulations or laws whatsoever. That's the preferable option to many of us, we'd prefer no laws or regulations whatsoever, but if medical marijuana users need access we're going to have to have some sort of system set in place. Either way I think it's a good result. The government did appeal it, however, and they will fight tooth and nail to make sure that they restrict medicinal marijuana access as much as possible. But as long as judges keep finding that they're hurting people who don't need to be hurt anymore, that's a good thing.

S.C.: *You didn't run in this federal election for the Green Party for personal reasons and instead threw your support behind sLiberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh. While Dosanjh has helped fight Marc's extradition, the Liberal Party is against decriminalizing marijuana. How do you*

balance that contradiction?

J.E.: I kind of forgive the political parties for trying to dance around legalization and so for me I'd rather see the lesser evil in power rather than the more evil evil.

I know with Harper there's not a chance that we'll have any progress at all, not a chance. With the Liberals you know they



PHOTO BY SADIE SEA

In our activism, we help people who are being hurt by the government, that's what our brand of activism is about. It's to protect people from the oppressive government force that's being used against peaceful, non-violent people. ... This government is adopting a lot of U.S. policies, especially with a lot of Christian, right-wing influences. So that's reflected in a lot of the policies that Harper has introduced.

could be persuaded with maybe arguments about money or arguments about what middle Canadians want. The NDP is certainly far more open and accessible into doing what the people want. So even though I personally consider myself a small "c" conservative libertarian and I like Jack Layton and the NDP the best, I certainly need the Conservatives to have fewer seats than last time around.

S.C.: *You've been involved in the movement for quite some time with Marc. But now that he's behind bars, how do you feel about becoming the face and voice of cannabis activism in Canada?*

J.E.: Marc was really preparing me for this all along. I've taken a lot of lessons from him but I've also learned a lot myself, especially with him being gone. He spent a short term in 2009 in Coquitlam. When he was gone I had to run this place by myself and it was hard. I had to learn how to do that, but I've gotten much better at it.

My whole life, even in elementary school or high school, I've always been a spokesperson. It's come pretty easily for me. I don't think too highly of myself, I'm always honored and humbled when somebody wants to talk to me. When somebody wants an interview I'm always grateful for that opportunity. I try to represent people well and I'm told that I do, so I keep trying to do whatever it is I'm doing right.

For more information about Jodie and Marc Emery, visit FreeMarc.ca and CannabisCulture.com.

Jody with her husband Marc Emery. Marc was arrested in 2005 by Canadian authorities on behalf of the United States for selling cannabis seeds in the United States. Jody has picked up the banner on marijuana rights after Marc began serving his five-year sentence last year.

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