**CAROLYN GARCIA INTERVIEW & B-ROLL**

**(Sizzle Reel)**

**TRANSCRIPT**

INT: What year, where were you, when someone came up to you and said, “Try this.”

**14:53:06**

Carolyn: You mean-

INT: Cannabis.

**14:53:08 – M/S**

C: I was, I think, 19, and living in Palo Alto, and I uh, suddenly had a boyfriend. And his name was David, and one of the first things he did was turn me on to cannabis. And I hadn’t even really heard the word marijuana before, um, just hadn’t, the whole concept of cannabis hadn’t really, never passed my, my eyes. I had not heard of it. So I tried it and nothing happened. And then he had me try it a couple more times and all of a sudden I realized what it was they were talking about so it took a little while to acclimate, maybe my third cigarette, my third cannabis cigarette triggered something in my mind that was really interesting to me. So I was a pretty much of an intellectual person before that and this was just such a mental booster for me, it was so interesting. So that, that got me going with cannabis.

INT: I’m gonna ask you again, tell me what year it was.

**14:54:30 – C/U**

C: Let’s see, okay hold on a minute, I’ve gotta remember, uh I’m going back in time here. Nineteen... it had to be... ’64, right? Did I say ’64? It would be ’65, not it would have to be ’64, so I was 18.

INT: Give me that.

**14:54:53 – C/U**

C: Okay, in 1964 I was 18-years-old and I was living in Palo Alto. Um... I had gotten fired from my job and I had acquired a boyfriend, and he turned me on to the wonders of cannabis. At that early age when I really had never heard of it before, didn’t know what it was, he insisted that I try it, and I had a wonderful experience about the third time that I tried it; it was really remarkable. Um, it was sort of like some kind of science fiction was unraveling inside my head, and I really liked it.

INT: So what is it about cannabis, of all the drugs?

**14:55:55 – C/U**

C: I think cannabis is outstanding for its reliability. You, once you are accustomed to using it, it’s something that you use on a fairly frequent basis, you know what the effect is going to be; there’s no guess work. Um, this is probably one of the most reliable, easy things to enhance your life because it’s so non-toxic. And it wears off and you’re fine; you haven’t wrecked the car. It makes you more, for me, it made me more alert and more aware of my surroundings, and it also mentally stimulated in this wonderful way that um, gave me a lot of insight, not only into my own intelligence but into the general intelligence of the universe is how I felt about it.

INT: So a big part of your life was being a part of the scene in San Francisco and its music. What role did cannabis play in that?

**14:57:18 – C/U**

C: The musicians that I met subsequently, most of them used cannabis in one form or another, they were the carriers, basically of this traditional use that somehow music and cannabis and uh, learning songs and playing together all related to this social construct that came with cannabis, which was sort of a familial, pleasant exchange of information and knowledge. Cannabis kind of greased the skids for all of that and made people get along with each other really well in a friendly, easy fashion. There was, you know, there was no fist fights. (Laughs)

INT: How did bands get their cannabis in the early days?

**14:58:20 – C/U**

C: I’m not sure how bands got their cannabis in the early days. I came along a little bit later than the early days so by the time I started to meet the bands it was getting into ’65, and uh, they had already been a brotherhood, cause this was all men of course. They had already been a brotherhood for 3 or 4 or 5 years um, in mutual support and mutual competition, really. But they, they had, they had good cannabis, and they were constantly looking for more. So by the time I emerged into this new consciousness that there was this social um conclave going on, uh, I began to meet people who were selling marijuana, I got to meet people who were sort of hiding their use, you know it was all- It was a huge realm of different varieties of how they, how they used it and managed it. Most people wouldn’t smoke before they went to work, you know, it would just confuse the issue a little, and then I began to realize there was different varieties of cannabis that different people had, and uh then I got kind of interested in it because there was such a, such a sort of mystery about its source; it all came from Mexico at the time. And it came in various colors and smells and (laughs) incredible amounts of seeds, and, and you know you become adept at cleaning the seeds out of the pot and rolling joints and so there was a little bit, there was a lot to learn and um, a little bit of a barrier to becoming adept. But it was easy after a while to engage you know in a conversation, to jump into a conversation with people who were using cannabis because they were open. And this sort of openness was really, really attractive to me.

INT: So once people started growing their own in northern California, did the bands have people that would grow for them?

**15:00:47 – M/S**

C: Well nobody grew, I mean that just didn’t happen until much later.

INT: Start again with the year.

**15:00:55 – M/S**

C: In 1965 when I got to know a lot of people in the music business in the Bay Area, as far as I knew nobody grew, that wasn’t happening. There was really inexpensive $25/ounce uh weed readily available that came up from Mexico and it was good! Um, I think, but it was also packed with seeds which eventually got my attention. But, but I don’t think anybody really seriously was doing any growing that we knew about until the early ‘70’s, because nobody had any land. Everybody was living in like you know, in their car or in somebody’s boathouse. You know, there was no money, there was no money to establish a garden somewhere, as far as we knew. So all of this pot came up from Mexico, and uh, and then it began to have names attached to it. “Oh this one’s from Guero- Guerrero, this one’s from ?.” And then when I, when I first started really spending serious time with the Grateful Dead, they had, they had some amazing, wonderful weed like Maui Wowee(?) and you know, Acapulco Gold which was amazing! And uh, it was, it had gotten a lot stonier than it had been back in the ‘60’s. Got a lot stronger. And I think that must be the point at which anglo farmers got into the trade and were actually doing some breeding and selecting and careful uh, real careful growing. The quality went way up.

INT: How and when did you get into growing?

**15:02:43 – C/U**

C: So in 1971 uh... we bought a piece of property with a house and a garden, and the garden was large and beautiful, and it was out in Stinson Beach in California so it’s sort of foggy out there and didn’t really seem like it was gonna be such a great place to grow tomatoes, in fact the tomatoes really weren’t interested. And I come from a gardening family. So my father was a uh agricultural extension agent, and so I saw a lot of gardens and a lot of farms when I was a kid. And I knew a lot. We always had a huge garden, ate all our own vegetables. So I was like the perfect person to take this on. So in 1972 um I planted the first 4 seeds that were given to me by a returning Vietnam vet, and it was, oh my gosh, you know, this was, this was some pretty high rent weed, and I had to give it all away, it was too strong to smoke. It was just, cause it came all the way into flower and it was really cute, you know, it was just a nice plant, and it smelled delicious and it looked- and then it began to flower and it made these beautiful little flowers and it was, we’d never seen any marijuana flowers before. And um, it’s- As I recall we didn’t have a male plant, so they were all females curiously enough. So this was our first experiment with seedless pot, and it was very, very strong, and, and I had to give most of it away. But then the next year, that’s when I had- By then, by the next growing season which is really May ‘til about the first week of October, I had collected, I’d made quite a collection of seeds from different sources, so I had 20 different kinds of seeds labeled in my collection by that time and I planted a few of each of those and then selected the best one of each group to grow out. So that’s how I began the project.

INT: Do you feel like you accidentally learned about sinsella, or had you heard about it?

**15:05:08 – M/S**

C: I’d heard about it from somebody. It had- I’d heard about sinsemilla from some of the dealers that this was, this was the hot, fabulous weed, didn’t have to have seeds in it and the flowers were bigger and more lush. But uh, we didn’t see any of that until I actually grew some. And uh, cause we weren’t, we didn’t buy the expensive stuff in those days, but there it was. You know, here was another way to go, but it meant identifying the male plants before they shed any pollen and we had no idea, even when we started we had no idea what a little marijuana flower looked like or what a male flower might look like. So it was, it was a lot of observation and a lot of note-taking at first until I figured it out.

INT: How did you come to write books? Where were you?

**15:06:19 – M/S (closer than above)**

C: After a couple of year, a couple of seasons of growing in our yard in Stinson Beach, I had built a small greenhouse to try to extend the season, and had run into some problems with it, you know. I had experiences with mold and with over-feeding that was a problem, and you know certain things started to occur and I realized I was getting quite a lot of information, but I was also getting a lot of phone calls. And in the spring of 1974, my phone started to ring constantly, and friends that I had given my product to um, began to call with ridiculous questions. And the funny thing about weed is you know how you have the tendency to forget what somebody just said? So (laughs), I suddenly realized I was getting the same phone call the next day from the same person; they would ask the same questions. And this went on for about a month before I realized I had to write some of this stuff down, like how to dig a hole, you know. How to make compost, you know. How to actually find a seed that looked, that looked promising, you know, get the nice, shiny, fat ones, and actually put them in there, you know, so on and so forth. So it took, you know, it took- The first draft of my book was about 20 pages, and I- it was a desperation move to keep people- keep my phone from ringing over and over and over again. So it paid off, I think, in the long run, cause then it became a book.

INT: You’re doing a great job. Why is it important to save these stories?

**15:08:35 – C/U**

C: I think it’s important to save the stories about how cannabis culture landed on the west coast and became this grower’s world because it was a long process. Each individual grower started about the same way I did without really knowing anything, but just that the interest was there. And so the energy then accumulates around the interest and suddenly you have to make a plan. And so suddenly a whole bunch of people were planning and finding safe places to grow and having adventures along the way. Every grower you ever will talk to will have adventures to relate because stuff happens. You know, you can’t help but have things happen. There was everything from ground squirrels to deer to human predators to you know horrible accidents of fate and the cops come or whatever. All of these are great tales that can be told and should be told cause they’re a lot of fun. (Chuckles) We all survived it, you know, it’s such a safe, nice drug. I don’t think anybody ever got hurt or, you know, wound up in the nut house or any of that. It’s just, it’s just a friendly plant and a friendly compound. (Pause) That wasn’t a very good ending. I could do that one again.

INT: So you were talking about the stories.

**15:10:22 – M/S**

C: And the stories are important because everybody started out from the first place where I was not knowing anything. As a young person, you know, you, it’s a leap of faith. And so with the leap of faith of putting the seed in the ground or however, however they got started, and you, you have to live with your results. And then once you’ve got good results, then of course you can share that and everybody encounters adventures along the way of all the different things that can happen from um you know, slugs and deer and cows and neighbors, the fire department, and you know the police, it’s just- And you know, thieves, who knows? All of these things, every single one of those scenarios has wonderful stories attached to it from every person that ever started out back then not really knowing what they were doing. And those stories are a lot of fun. They’re really fun.

INT: How do you feel about where we are now? Maybe start with “I never thought that...” (Carolyn asks if he wants her to discuss legalization. Interviewer says yes, a little bit.)

**15:11:51 – C/U**

C: Well now we have legalization in some states, so I’m able to grow 4 plants in my yard as are everybody else in town. We’re out in the country or wherever, and this takes a lot of the anxiety out of it, and um, you don't have to, you know, hide it quite so assiduously or you know- And it also makes it free to the individual, which to me that’s like the most important thing. This is a plant that should be grown in your yard like oregano or mint or rosemary or lavender. It has a fragrance, some marijuana does not have a good fragrance, but it has a lovely fragrance, it’s a very pleasant plant to grow. And we’re in a place now where we can grow it, and I’ve wished for this for 50 years. And cause it was about, a little over 50 years ago- is that right? Really? 50 years ago that I got turned on to marijuana, really liked it, and immediately stated, “This stuff should be legal!” (Laughs) And here we are 50 years later and it is, and I’m really enjoying that change. It hasn’t really changed my smoking habit, which as I’ve gotten older I smoke less, and um, but less is more, and it’s really pleasant and I’ve got some great stuff, you know. I’m really pleased with the way things have turned out even though it took an awfully long time to get here.

INT: That’s great.

**CAROLYN GARCIA – B-ROLL AND AUDIO**

**15:28:06 – OVER-THE-SHOULDER SHOT AS CAROLYN LOOKS AT OLD PHOTOGRAPHS**

C: Yeah, I grew- I mean I surprised myself. Frankly. (Chuckles) You know I surprised myself by how big and beautiful they got, and it was just, they were 7, 8 feet tall and made these huge flower stalks. But we didn’t know when to harvest, it was like the huge question, like, “Now what do you do?” Um... They weren’t, they weren’t seedy, so I didn’t really have a way to be able to judge maturity, so we just kind of guessed. So with some guesswork, um, came up with a, came up with a version where the little flowers start to turn golden that when most of them have turned somewhat golden, that’s a good time to pick it. Besides it was starting to fog up and get rainy, so that made, made it really obvious that we had to harvest. And meanwhile, I mean gosh look at that stuff! It’s beautiful! I did really great. (Laughs) Like there’s the corner of our house. You can see how close it was to our house. It was right there, right out in the garden and it kind of, I never expected them to get so big. Let me put it that way. I had just learned how to make compost and so I made a whole lot of it and fed them plenty. And these two pictures were taken to show the variation in leaf shape um that I was getting out there in the garden. They were quite varied. This was a Nepalese variety that had these very strange leaves that were all clumped together, and then this was a Mexican variety which had extra little bitty leaves down by the stem. I just thought they were so pretty. So I had to take those pictures. But gosh, thank you Kodak. These are in great shape.

**15:30 11 (cont.)**

And here’s a young friend and uh, and then I took a lot of pictures which didn’t turn out, especially pictures of mold when it started to show up, that was the big- That was the big limiter, was mold, and we had to learn how to work with it. And the way that mold was dealt with was people began to build greenhouses, and this was the first, this was the very first greenhouse that friends of mine built out in Sonoma County, where it was much warmer and drier than Stinson Beach. And this greenhouse was a pretty big success but if you notice the construction details, they’re a little sketchy, and I think they were very lucky that a windstorm didn’t come up and just carry the whole thing off. But they successfully grew a really big crop their very first time out. And my friend Fred here who is now gone, he’s deceased, and we loved Fred, he did all this and um, in the second year they had this greenhouse they did get busted, but the story is a cute one about Fred’s bust is the cops came and cut down all the plants which were just flowering and just ready to be harvested, took them all off to some warehouse, dried it all, and put it in the evidence lockers in the Sonoma County courthouse. But by the time the thing came to trial, all that was left in the evidence locker was some stems and the judge threw the case out. (Laughs) It had all been uh... yeah. It had all been moved to, to somewhere else. We don’t really know what happened to it all. We can only speculate. But that’s typical of the stories for early growing.

**15:32:02 (cont.)**

This is one of the illustrations for my book, and it was part of the promo, promo materials for it, for the “Primo Plant.” And the book itself, this is the second edition, so the first edition has a different cover that Alton Kelly(?) drew, but I thought that the artist that we hired for this did a lovely job converting the photographs and the images into, into pen and ink drawings that really reproduced well in the book. And it was meant to be a backyard gardeners book, so I put little you know, I put little grids in here so you know, the locations and planting date, the pH of the soil, and fertilizer, pests and diseases, and variety. So people would have an idea that they could actually record all this stuff and keep track. And then a few cooking recipes, how to make marijuana butter, I thought that was important. And um, you know, and a big discourse on mold, because that was the great limiter, living out by the coast. And this, this, this is a Farmer’s Bulletin from 1915 about growing drug plants, and they don’t really mention cannabis by name in here but they, but it’s all the plants that are grown, everything from larksber(?) to licorice, um, echinacea, digitalis(?), dandelion, um, chamomile, and they all have this certain aspect of they have to be harvested at the right time when they- And there even is cannabis in here, I forgot. See, there it is, it says so. And oh gosh, I haven’t read this in a long time. It says, “Ordinary stable or barnyard manure plowed in deeply is better for use as a fertilizer than commercial preparations. May be safely applied at the rate of 20 tons per acre.” So there you go. (Laughs) 1915, folks, they were growing a lot of cannabis, uh, they were growing hemp for victory, at the time, and it was an important crop in this country, a very important crop. And it needs to be again. And then wait, one more.

**15:34:23 (cont.)**

This is a, just a rough sketches that I did for the artist who did the pictures in the book. So what I was describing was month-old plants in different structures and what the ideal structures, this being the ideal structure, a perfect structure, and this one having been pruned too late to do a good job, and so on. This was my voyage of discovery, was how to grow a really, really nice pot plant. And that’s why I titled the book “Primo Plant,” because, because you can grow ragweed, you can grow a crummy plant but you might as well grow for a beautiful, perfect plant in sunlight and have it come out in an ideal form, and have it be really the most elegant and smokeable, delicious plant you can grow. And by doing just basic care and a great deal of observation, you can do that quite easily. So... I still encourage people to grow their own pot, because it’s always better if you grow it yourself. It’s, it’s attuned to you; you’re tuned in together; you’ve come through the months together.

INT: (He says he totally agrees and shares his experience.)

**15:36:05**

C: So our old friend ?, who started growing pot a couple of years after I did, this was his big personal discovery, was there was an attunement process between the grower and smoker and, and the actual uh, finished marijuana itself. There seemed to be some sort of a communication going on about what would be right for your particular brain. And by growing many different varieties I kind of poo-pooed that for a while but I began to realize that we select, just like wine or beer, we have taste. And there’s just a gamut of taste demonstrated in the world of marijuana, my goodness, there’s so many different kinds. And they really are different. They have different chemical structures and you know, varieties of the different inebriating chemistry. And they have different aromatics, and the aromatic part is really important. That’s what gives it its unique flavor and smell, and so I have favorites there. Everybody has favorites with the, with the aroma and the smell and the flavor of the smoke, and it really differs greatly from person to person. But by growing your own you become really intimate with the process, the processes of the plant and so. And as it matures, it changes so completely, it’s really interesting and I recommend home growing unequivocally. So... go for it. Go for it. Go forth and grow!