**KENT JONES INTERVIEW**

**(Sizzle Reel\_1st File)**

**TRANSCRIPT**

**14:47:20 – W/S**

Kent: I was, I believe 14-years-old. My best friend, his uncle gave us the ran of his- the run of his place and he had a, a pool table above the garage, a room above the garage. And his son had just got back from Vietnam and so uh, uh... We were scared to death of drugs because of all the, you know, “Don't take candy from a stranger and all that cause it might have marijuana in it or drugs in it.” So uh... Steve’s cousin came up, and so he’s five years older than us, he was 19, and uh, and he had just got back. So he had his Navy uniform on and he sat down on a little dingy couch that they had set up up there and a little coffee table and he threw a tin out on the coffee table and he said, he said, “You grunts(?) wanna smoke some pot?” And we’re like, “Are you kidding? Marijuana?” And we’re like, “Whoa, that’s addictive! That’s dangerous!” And he was like, “No man, that’s all BS. That’s all BS. That’s heroine.” He said, “Just try it, you’ll see what I mean.” And so we did, and then you know, and then we, over the course of the next week or two we smoked it a few more times and now we know, now we know it’s not dangerous. And so all that did was create a couple more uh, uh fearless drug experimenters because you know you can’t tell 14-year-olds that something’s dangerous and then when they find out you’re lying to them and it’s really not, well now they’re not afraid of anything, and that includes hard drugs. So uh, you know, uh... We uh, we enjoyed smoking pot and so at that point in time we tried a few other drugs after that. I was lucky I never got strung out on anything but I knew plenty who did because in the beginning they were lied to about the dangers of marijuana.

**14:49:27**

INT: So maybe give us that answer and tell us where you lived.

**14:49:41 – W/S**

Kent: I was uh, 14-years-old, living in Days Creek(?), Oregon. It’s on the South Umpqua River, uh, it’s about 75 miles from the California border. Uh... very small town. My graduating class had 14, I was 14-years-old when uh, my best friend’s cousin come back from Vietnam. And we were over at his dad’s place playing pool on a uh pool table in a room above the garage. And um, so as we’re shooting our pool game his cousin comes up and sits down on this old beat up couch and then throws a tin out on the coffee table in front of him and looks up at us and says, “Hey, you grunts wanna smoke some pot?” And you know, we’d been, we’d been shown “Reefer Madness” in school as a documentary when we were kids and we were scared to death of drugs, you know, the whole campaign of you know, “don’t take candy from a stranger” and things like that. We were, we were scared to death of it so we were like, “Oh, you mean marijuana?” We were like, “Man, that’s addictive, we don’t want that.” And he was like, “Oh, that’s all BS. This stuff’s harmless, you know.” And so, you know, that was it. The first time we smoked it was right there in the upstairs of my friend’s uncle’s garage. And then we smoked it a few, two or three more times that week, you know. And then the down side to people telling us all of our lives that marijuana was you know a dangerous drug is, well we quickly figured out that it wasn’t. And so, you know, when you lie to little kids like that, you know, about the dangers of marijuana, well then they don’t believe you when you tell them about the dangers of really dangerous drugs. And then they’ll go ahead and experiment with those because they- You don’t have any credibility anymore, you know. Once you’ve lied about one thing, it’s all over.

**14:51:45**

INT: So how did you go from smoking it to growing it?

**14:51:56 – M/S**

K: Well, Days Creek, in the year that I first smoked it, which would have been late ’68, early ’69, Days Creek was nothing but loggers, Forest Service workers, some mill workers that traveled into, you know, Myrtle Creek and worked in the mills, but mostly loggers. You know, my dad was a logger. I was a logger when I was a young man. But uh, uh... A bunch of hippies started moving in to various communes in the South Umpqua Valley. There’s Days Creek, Milo, Tiller, and Drew; they’re all little towns of about 200 people in each place, strung out over about 25 – 30 miles of, all in the South Umpqua River. And the hippies doubled or tripled our population. I mean, now all of a sudden you’ve got, you know, a group of hippies coming in and they buy like Ash Creek- uh, a farm in Ash Valley, up by the South Umpqua Falls. And uh, and now instead of just the two people that owned it all those years before, now there’s you know, 400 hippies living on it. And uh, there was crazy farm and dude(?) farm, and there were hippies- inner-space commune, there were you know hippies popping up all over the place. And amongst that group were this group out of Laguna Beach, uh, and that group out of Laguna Beach uh, had uh, well uh- The guy who came to Oregon and bought the property, his brother had been busted with 3,000 pounds of marijuana in Los Angeles in 1969. And so he was kind of fleeing the law when he came there, or just trying to, you know, beat the heat. So he came up and bought this place, and he went down to the Days Creek store and he asked the woman at the store if she knew anybody that played guitar. And she said, “Oh yeah, the Jones kid, he plays guitar.”

**14:54:01 (cont.)**

And uh, I was buckin’ hay bales on the Rockin’ R(?) Ranch in Drew, Oregon and a Volkswagon van pulled up by the fence, and a couple of guys with long hair got out, and hollered at me and I walked over to the fence, and that’s where it all started. You know, so I uh, started out with me playing guitar with these guys and uh, I didn’t know it at first but they were international smugglers. They smuggled pot and hashish out of Columbia and Afghanistan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Thailand, you know, they... that all ended up in, by 1980, we were all indicted on a 100 ton marijuana conspiracy.

INT: Let’s try a shorter one of that. How did you get into growing? Who taught you how to grow?

**14:55:34 – C/U**

K: Well, all these hippies moved in from all over the country, five or six communes popped up all over the valley, and uh, one of those groups uh, they went- A couple of guys were down at the Days Creek store and asked uh, asked uh the woman who ran the store there if anyone played guitar, and that lived in the area. And she said, “Oh yeah the Jones kid does.” And so uh, the next thing I know, you know, these guys show up and now I’m up in the band room playing, uh, playing music with these guys pretty much every day, and it wasn’t long before I was brought into the know and uh, uh... They had just gotten back from Afghanistan where they’d done a hashish smuggle, and they were uh, they brought back seed from Pakistan and Afghanistan, and they were growing, gonna grow pot in the, you know right there on the property. In those days you could grow it right on your property, and so uh... I, you know, I think the number one reason they brought me in at first was because you know there was all the barns on my family farm that I was born and raised on, they wanted the manure, you know, in and around the stalls, in and around the corals, you know, to use as fertilizer and so that’s uh- I spent that late winter and early spring shoveling out all of the uh stalls so we’d have the manure for the holes. And so then I, I worked with them, you know, all summer long, you know the early process, digging the holes, putting the manure and the nutrients in the soil and uh, so I, you know, that’s where I got my feet wet. That would have been 1970 or ’71. I can’t remember. ’71 I think.

INT: So did that stop there or did you go on to-

**14:57:38 – M/S**

K: Oh no, that was, you know. That was, that was just the beginning. Jerry, the guy who uh, who bought the place here and was growing the pot. You know after, after a few years he went back to southern California. I was working as a logger for a couple of years until I was about 20, so that would have been 1975, and then you know, then I started growing a crop and logging at the same time, so I couldn’t put in very much because logging is very demanding you know, and in the summertime it’s six days a week and you work 10 or 12 or 14 hours a day, including your drive time. So I didn’t get much done, but I got enough done that I didn’t have to log the next year. I made enough money there. So then I attacked it like a logger; I got up at, I got up at 5:00 in the morning and went to work and uh, uh... I was, there was two of us, a buddy of mine in uh, you know, we then, we set out to grow as much pot as we possibly could, and we were guerrilla farmers, we went out in the mountains and grew. We didn’t grow, you know, on our property or in the backyard or you know, like a lot of guys they’d be 200 feet off their property line on the BLM or something, you know, crop. We didn’t do it that way, we went out in the mountains and uh... That of all of the years, I grew for 20 years, uh, it’s, at its zenith, I had fields spread out over five or six counties, I mean I was- I had fields down in Port Orford, Oregon, I was almost to Klamath Falls going east. I had fields outside of Alsea, which is north outside of Salem. I had fields all over that, all over the range between Interstate 5 and the coast. Um, you know, there’s all that been there(?), there’s Weyerhauser and Boise, Cascade and all the timber companies own most of that, and that was prime growing area in back through there, so you know.

INT: Why was that prime area?

**15:00:03 – M/S**

K: Well it was prime area because uh, number one, like in most of Oregon it’s very easy to find water, and I don’t know about other places but in Oregon, if you find boomer holes at the source, a boomer hole is a- A boomer is a mountain beaver, it a little fuzzy thing that looks like a chipmunk, and uh you never see them because they’re nocturnal, but uh, if there’s boomer holes, I don’t care if that stream’s a half a pencil in size, it’ll run all year. And uh, and if there’s not boomer holes, it’s gonna dry up. So I always knew where the water was gonna be good, but all that private timber ground, once those guys go in and certify a unit, and certify a unit is when they go in and uh, they do what’s called a pre-commercial thin, you know, they’ve- Years before they’ve re-planted the unit with Doug Fir trees. When they go in and they do a pre-commercial thin, and they cut out about half the trees and cut them down, and that opens it up to where you’ve got perfect camoflauge and you’ve got plenty of sun because it’s been thinned. Also you could pick up the dead trees and build kind of a natural looking fence that people wouldn’t even notice that can steer away people on foot, though there’s very, seldom people on foot out there. But it will steer away the elk and the deer and stuff like that, too. Um, the uh... The other thing is, once they’ve done that pre-commercial thin, they have no reason to come back there for decades because, you know, when they come back the next time they’re gonna come back to log, so that means all that timber’s gotta grow up to be the size that it needs to be for them to log it, you know which now isn’t that long anymore you know cause they’ll take it pretty small now. So uh, so basically you know, it just, we knew it was a safe- We knew those were safe areas. You know, we knew, we knew the water was good and we knew that uh, that there wasn’t anybody, there wasn’t gonna be anybody in there.

**15:02:12**

INT: Where did you get your first seeds?

**15:02:27 – M/S (slightly closer than previous shot)**

K: Well, yeah, my uh, my pal Jerry, he uh, he had smuggled some hash out of Afghanistan, and uh, first he brought back a Pakistani variety, and I think, I it grew at really high elevation, you know, and I think if I remember right it was even like- When I say high elevation, I mean like 7, 8, 9,000 feet in elevation. And the plants grew great but they didn’t bud well you know, because you know, our climate, they, it wasn’t right for it. Then he brought back seed the next year from, from the Mazara(?) Valley in Afghanistan, and then that seed, that seed was you know, it took to the Oregon climate like blackberries. It was, you know, it really budded well and it came out reasonably early. You know, it would come out, start coming out last week of September and we’d be completely done with everything out by halfway through October. So... You know hunters are an issue in October, so...

INT: So give me that answer again with a context of time.

**15:03:43 – M/S**

K: So in 19 uh... in 1970, I think it was or ’71, Jerry had been in Afghanistan doing a hashish smuggle, and he brought back a Pakistani seed that was growing at high elevations, 8 or 9,000 feet. And then uh, he grew that, and it grew well, the plants looked fabulous but it didn’t bud well, and uh. So then he got seed out of Afghanistan, out of the Mazara(?) Valley, and then that seed- The Mazara Valley is low, like 2200 feet in elevation. And that stuff, you know, it took to the Oregon climate like blackberries did, you know, it really, it really grew well. And it came out early, you know, it was uh... I’d start harvesting, you know, late September and be done by mid-October.

INT: So tell me how long you grew and at your peak-

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