

Token Woman

Celebrating famous female cannabis connoisseurs throughout herstory to the present day. All contents copyrighted. "Bright Leaf" artwork by Jean Hanamoto <http://www.camomoto.com>

Saturday, November 5, 2016

Cannabis Policy “Disjointed” and Ruthless

I could almost title all my posts these days, “What a Weird Week It Was.”

Yesterday, I got to see a rehearsal for the new Netflix series *Disjointed* starring Kathy Bates, produced by Chuck Lorre (*The Big Bang Theory*, *Mom*, *Mike & Molly*) and co-written by show runner and former *Daily Show* head writer David Javerbaum. The venerable, versatile Bates, in another great look for her—long hair, oversized glasses and a mumu—plays Ruth, a former hippie radical working as the proprietress of a cannabis collective.



In the witty, charming and quite funny pilot, Ruth and her son, an MBA, do battle over the future of the business, with her wanting to keep it focused on healing and her son focused on profits. It's a somewhat accurate depiction of what's taking place in the cannabis industry today. I like that, unlike the heroine of *Weeds*, Ruth is a pot smoker herself, in it for more than the money.

I invited Yami Bolanos along to the taping, because she has run the PureLife Alternative Wellness Center in Los Angeles for 10 years, and is a founder of GLACA, the Greater Los Angeles Collective Alliance. Last year, she helped pass a bill in the California legislature to end the practice of denying organ transplants to medical marijuana patients (yes, you read that right).

Yami liked the show, but objected to the depiction of budtenders smoking marijuana on the job. “If a budtender did that at our collective, they wouldn't have a job the next day,” she said. Indeed, the episode was directed by James Burrows of *Cheers* fame, but I notice none of the bartenders on that show were drunk. People like to assume that if someone smokes pot, they do it all day every day, but that isn't true for most.



Another woman I invited to the taping, Chelsea Sutula of the Sespe Creek Collective in Ventura county, couldn't make it. Turns out, she had been raided the day before by 30 some members of the Ventura County Sheriffs department and

Oxnard PD. All of the medicine at the collective was confiscated, as was all the money in Sutula's business and personal bank accounts. Her pets were put into confinement and she was jailed for 18 hours, most of it without food, drinking water, or a place to sit down in a cold jail cell littered with soiled maxipads.

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About Me



Token Woman

Token Woman is the work of Ellen Komp (aka Nola Evangelista), a longtime hemp/marijuana activist and author who happens to be a woman. She is the author of

Repeated requests to call her lawyer went unanswered.

Because cities in Ventura County won't license cannabis collectives, Sutula registered for a more general business license, and is now being charged with fraud. Until the raid, she had been paying state tax to the tune of \$16K monthly, local sales taxes, plus unemployment and worker's compensation insurance for her 20 employees, all of whom are now out of a job and will be applying for unemployment benefits. And the collective's patients, many of whom relied on the high-CBD medicines that Sespe Creek specialized in, will now be without a supply.

Some think Sutula may have been targeted for her support of Proposition 64, the measure to legalize the recreational use of marijuana that will appear on the November 8 ballot in California. Local law enforcement officials oppose the measure, although one of them told her he expected some communities in the region would see the wisdom of licensing cannabis businesses in the wake of the vote. That the raid happened five days before the election may represent a last-ditch "smash and grab" by the cops before licensing finally happens in California.

Our cannabis policy is "disjointed" indeed when we can chuckle over the antics of a dispensary operator like Bates's Ruth on television, while a real-life Ruth sits (or rather, stands) in jail for doing the very same thing. Netflix isn't the only network to join in on the trend: according to the *Hollywood Reporter*, Amazon recently tapped Margaret Cho to star in *Highland*, HBO picked up six episodes of *High Maintenance* and NBC is teaming with Adam and Naomi Scott to develop *Buds*.

My Godmother was named Ruth, so I happen to know that "Ruth" means "compassion," which is why "ruthless" means what we all know it does: "having or showing no pity or compassion for others." We need a lot more Ruth these days, and a lot less ruthlessness of the kind displayed this week in Ventura County.

Contribute to the Save Sespe Creek fund.

Posted by Tokin Woman at 6:19 PM



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