

FROM RICKI LAKE AND ABBY EPSTEIN THE FILMMAKERS OF THE BUSINESS OF BEING BORN

WEED THE PEOPLE



A HEALING REVOLUTION IS GROWING

MANGURAMA AND BOBB FILMS PRESENT A FILM BY ABBY EPSTEIN AND RICKI LAKE "WEED THE PEOPLE"
EDITED BY KRISTEN NUTILE AND CHRISTOPHER SEWARD MUSIC BY SIMONE GIULIANI GRAPHICS BY ADAM LEVINE
CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JAMES COSTA CO-PRODUCER CHRISTIAN EVANS PRODUCED BY GIANCARLO CANAVESIO AND SOL TRYON
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER RICKI LAKE DIRECTOR ABBY EPSTEIN

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SYNOPSIS

Cannabis has been off-limits to doctors and researchers in the US for the past 80 years, but recently scientists have discovered its anti-cancer properties. Armed with only these laboratory studies, desperate parents obtain cannabis oil from underground sources to save their children from childhood cancers. “Weed the People” follows these families through uncharted waters as they take their children’s survival into their own hands. Some of their miraculous outcomes beget the unsettling question at the heart of the film: If weed is truly saving lives, why doesn’t the government want people to access it?

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

Seven years ago, my producing partner Ricki Lake competed on the TV show, “Dancing with the Stars.” (Yes, this event does somehow lead to a weed movie.) Ricki’s most ardent twitter fan was a 7-year-old girl who was undergoing chemotherapy. Ricki fell in love with this little girl and dedicated herself to finding a cure for her genetic tumor disorder. Serendipitously, Ricki’s husband Christian had been doing research on the anti-tumor properties of CBD (a compound in the cannabis plant) to treat his grandfather’s bone cancer. What if CBD could slow the growth of this little girl’s tumors? One phone call later, Ricki and I were on a plane to Mendocino, filming the child’s consultation with a cannabis physician. Our documentary was born.

Many twists and turns (and six years) later, Ricki and I could not be prouder to present *Weed The People* to the world. The journey of making this film has been thrilling and heartbreaking. I’ve grieved and celebrated with five extraordinary families while documenting their bleakest and brightest moments. *Weed The People* has taken me from the pediatric oncology wards of California to the research labs of Israel, in search of the most advanced cannabis science.

Initially, this film seemed like a big departure from our previous doc, *The Business of Being Born*, but I’ve come to realize that the themes are quite similar: Just as parents deserve to choose how they bring their children into the world, we all have the right to access natural medicines that are potentially life-saving. These are basic human rights that institutions should not have the power to take away. *Weed The People* challenges our notions of what defines a drug versus a medicine. I hope that by sharing these stories of devoted practitioners and brave parents fighting to heal their children, we can hold the government accountable for criminalizing the one plant that could save them. –

Abby Epstein, Director

CANNABIS SCIENCE BASICS

Since the 1960's, when Israeli scientist Raphael Mechoulam isolated THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) in the cannabis plant, scientists have been studying how the various compounds in cannabis called "cannabinoids" interact with animals and humans on a cellular level. In the 1980's the "endocannabinoid system" was discovered, which significantly enhanced this biological research. The endocannabinoid system is present in all animals and humans and has a critical function of restoring balance to the body by modulating the other systems. The endocannabinoid system is comprised of a series of receptors located throughout the body. The compounds in the cannabis plant act on these receptors in the same way that opiates work on the human opioid system. For a long time, THC was the only known active cannabinoid in the plant, famous for creating a psychoactive effect. But soon researchers began discovering other therapeutic cannabinoids like CBD, (cannabidiol) a powerful anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant which is not psychoactive.

Twenty years ago, when scientists in Spain and Israel were doing metabolic studies with cannabinoids, they discovered that these compounds (THC and CBD) were killing cancer cells in the lab and reducing tumor growth in mice. Several studies were done looking at the specific way that cannabinoids "kill" cancer, through a process called "Apoptosis." Essentially, cancer cells multiply because the body loses the ability to recognize them as rogue cells. Cancer cells "hide" from the immune system and do not self-destruct. But in the test tube, cannabinoids somehow give the cancer cells back this ability to self-destruct, called "Apoptosis." It's a startling discovery, because the cannabinoid compounds send chemical messages to the body to leave the healthy cells intact and "reveal" the cancer cells as foreign so that the immune system signals to destroy them. These studies have recently moved into human clinical trials combining cannabinoids with chemotherapy drugs for enhanced results. It is believed that the cannabis helps the chemo drugs to work more effectively while also mediating the harsh side effects.

Although patients are experiencing anecdotal success using cannabinoids in combination with traditional cancer treatments, most oncologists are unfamiliar with how cannabis works against cancer and wary of prescribing it for anything other than palliative care.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA STATISTICS

- Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have passed laws since 1996 legalizing the use of medical marijuana for qualifying patients under state law.
- In states with medical marijuana access, it appears that overdose mortality rates are almost 25 percent lower than in states with no legal access to marijuana, and the reductions in mortality rates strengthened over time.
- Legal access to medical marijuana has been associated with a 23 percent reduction in opioid dependence or abuse-related hospitalizations and 15 percent fewer opioid treatment admissions.
- A study of chronic pain patients found that using medical marijuana was ultimately associated with a 64 percent reduction in prescription opioid use among members of the sample. Another found a 44 percent reduction in prescription opioid use after using medical marijuana for chronic pain.
- GW Pharma recently concluded a Phase II study in GBM (Glioblastoma Multiforme brain tumors treated with standard oral chemo TMZ or temozolamide). The control group received TMZ only and had a 44% 1-year survival rate. In contrast the THC:CBD plus TMZ group showed an 83% 1-year survival rate with a median survival over 662 days compared with 369 days in the control group.

FILM PARTICIPANT BIOS

Angela Smith + Chico Ryder

At 11 years old, Angela's son Chico was diagnosed with a rare soft tissue cancer called rhabdomyosarcoma. Chico's endured months of brutal radiation treatments and chemotherapy, which he barely survived. Chico also became addicted to opiates because of all pain medication given to him in the hospital. Angela began using cannabis to treat Chico's severe nausea and then found research showing that cannabis actually had anti-tumor properties as well. At first, she purchased oil from an underground source that turned out to contain rubbing alcohol. Eventually, Angela found Mara Gordon and Aunt Zelda's oil, who Angela credits for helping Chico survive both the treatments and the cancer. She was also able use cannabis to get Chico off all his opiate medication.

Tracy and Josh Ryan + daughter Sophie

Sophie Ryan was diagnosed with an optic pathway glioma brain tumor at 9 months old. Her only treatment option was chemotherapy – which would merely stabilize the tumor at best. Sophie's prognosis was that she would lose 100% of her vision and face other life-threatening issues. The Ryans learned about cannabis oil through other parents on Facebook and became interested in trying it after reading the scientific research. Sophie became Mara Gordon's (Aunt Zelda's Oil) youngest patient and after a period of trial and error, her tumor began to shrink. Tracy Ryan went on to found Cannakids, which now provides medical cannabis oil to children in California and funds scientific research in Israel.

Mara Gordon

Mara Gordon was a process engineer by training who became incapacitated by pain after a botched spinal surgery. Desperate for options, Mara began treating herself with cannabis infused edibles, based on her Aunt Zelda's carrot cake recipe. After experiencing huge health improvements and defying her own prognosis, Mara and her husband Stewart founded Aunt Zelda's Oil to provide medical cannabis to other patients.

Jaclyn and Jim von Harz + daughter Cecilia

At two years old, Jaclyn and Jim's daughter Cecilia was diagnosed with a Wilm's Tumor. Told that her cancer was 99% curable, Cecilia went through 9 months of chemotherapy only to suffer a devastating relapse as the cancer spread to her lungs and became Stage 4. The von Harz's decided to try cannabis oil as a last resort after opting out of more chemotherapy, which Cecilia did not seem likely to survive. Months later, all of Cecilia's metastasis had disappeared. As a fireman, Jim was able to receive support from the Fire Family Foundation to help pay for Cecilia's oils which cost them \$1500-\$3000 month.

Sheila and Chris Kephart + son AJ

AJ Kephart was diagnosed at 13 years old with stage 4 osteosarcoma (bone cancer.) After multiple surgeries and chemotherapy AJ continued to relapse. Out of treatment options, AJ's oncologist told the Kepharts that they should look to "alternative medicine" because he only had weeks to live. Under the care of cannabis physician Dr. Bonni Goldstein, AJ started taking cannabis oil and experienced a complete and "unexplainable" remission.

Adrian and Angela Peterson + son AJ

The Peterson Family live in Chicago, but after son AJ (6) was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor, they came to Los Angeles seeking cannabis oil. With no other medical options for AJ, the Petersons wanted to try everything they could to extend his life. They set up a residency in LA to be able to consult with Dr. Bonni Goldstein and get cannabis oil for AJ from Mara Gordon of Aunt Zelda's Oil. The cannabis oil allowed AJ to get off his steroid medication and improved his quality of life, but it became challenging for the Petersons to keep up their supply of oil from Chicago. (Shipping over state lines is a Federal offense.). Sadly, AJ passed away nine months after his diagnosis.

Dr. Bonni Goldstein

Dr. Goldstein was a pediatric ER doctor who became interested in medical cannabis after seeing how well it worked for a friend with cancer. Dr. Goldstein founded CannaCenters in Los Angeles, becoming one of the top cannabis physicians in the country.

KEY CREW BIOS

Director - Abby Epstein

Abby Epstein has been producing and directing documentaries for over ten years with her partner, Ricki Lake. Their first collaboration was the celebrated feature documentary *The Business of Being Born*, which premiered at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival. *The Business of Being Born* enjoyed a successful theatrical release and had its broadcast premiere on Showtime. The award-winning doc inspired their book *Your Best Birth*, (Hachette) and the follow-up docuseries "More Business of Being Born" featuring Cindy Crawford, Alanis Morissette, Gisele Bundchen and Christy Turlington. Abby made her directing debut at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival with the documentary, *Until the Violence Stops*, featuring Jane Fonda, Salma Hayek and Rosie Perez. The film premiered on Lifetime Television where it received a Primetime Emmy Award and a Gracie Allen Award.

Under their joint venture BOBB Films, Abby and Ricki produced the documentaries *Breastmilk* and *The Mama Sherpas*. BOBB Films is currently in production on one additional feature doc: *Sweetening The Pill*. In addition to her work as an independent filmmaker, Abby has produced pilots, promos and online videos for many companies including Universal Films, Original Productions, Freemantle Media, Fusion and Discovery Health.

Prior to working in film, Abby directed Broadway theater, including *RENT*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* and many international productions in Spain, Mexico and Canada. Some highlights of her stage directing career are the comedy *Platonically Incorrect* featuring Sean Hayes, which became a pilot for NBC television, and the LA premiere of Mike Leigh's *Ecstasy* featuring Nick Offerman.

Executive Producer - Ricki Lake

From acting and producing, to dancing her way into the hearts of television audiences, Emmy Award-winning television host Ricki Lake is a pop culture icon who has built a career on her graciously candid sensibility and her authentic, relatable nature. The world first met Lake in 1988 as Tracy Turnblad in John Waters' film *Hairspray*. Her additional film and television credits are extensive. At age 24, Lake became one of the youngest daily talk show hosts in history with the debut of "The Ricki Lake Show". She has also co-written two books, released a 4 part-DVD series, and served as an Executive Producer of several documentaries. Lake's legacy and perhaps her greatest love is her role as an independent filmmaker. Her award-winning, critically acclaimed documentary *The Business of Being Born* debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2007 and is often hailed as the "must see" film among mothers-to-be. She is currently working on a film about hormonal birth control.

In recent years, Ricki Lake has channeled her nurturing spirit and drive for social change into passion projects, serving as a leading voice for crucial issues such as women's rights and informed choice within reproductive health. Ricki is also a strong advocate for mental health awareness and suicide prevention, having just lost her beloved husband, Christian Evans on Feb. 11, 2017.

Producer - Giancarlo Canavesio

Giancarlo Canavesio, (ad)venture capitalist, documentary producer, Mangusta Productions principle and Mangu.TV founder, is recognized as one of today's most prolific producers of controversial, paradigm challenging, and mind-expanding films, with themes covering psychedelic and plant medicines, consensual non-monogamy, new frontiers on mysticism and science, and indigenous wisdom. His documentaries making the list for "best social change" docs are — *2012 Time for Change*, *Neurons to Nirvana: Understanding Psychedelic Medicines*, and *The Lottery of Birth*. Released and upcoming feature documentaries include Raz Degan's *The Last Shaman*, Tao Ruspoli's *Monogamish*, Randall Wright's *Summer*

In The Forest, and Bruce Parry's *Tawai*. New paradigm docs on DMT, divine feminine vs. toxic masculinity, cosmic orgasms, the metaphysics of Blockchain, new conscious capitalism, and next age docuseries are in various stage of development for release in 2019/20. Most recently Mangusta Productions partnered with global specialized distributor Abramorama to create "Mangurama," a distribution imprint and fund to expand consciousness through films.

Producer - Sol Tryon

Raised by an artist mother and social working father, Sol has always been driven towards making the world a better place through his work. After attending film school in Maine, he moved to NYC where he worked on over 20 independent feature films as a production assistant, assistant director and production manager before producing his first film, *Bomb The System*, in 2003. "Bomb", earned him an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best First Feature and was released theatrically around the world. Sol has since produced numerous other award-winning films, including: *Weapons*, *Explicit Ills*, *Starlet*, *2012: Time For Change*, *Here Comes The Night*, *Monogamish* and more. Early in his career, Sol began working with world-renowned artist Shirin Neshat on several video installations and films. Through this work he led productions on shoots all over the world creating art that would be seen in every way possible from museum shows to worldwide theatrical distribution. His directorial debut, *The Living Wake*, earned several awards at film festivals like, Cinevegas, AFI Fest, Woodstock & Austin, prior to being released theatrically across the US and in select countries around the world.

Having relocated to southern California in 2011, Sol, enjoys life with his young family while working to create content that inspires positive thought and action. Sol currently has several projects in various stages of production, including: *The New Armenian*, *Land of Dreams* & *Legend of the Seven*.

Editor - Kristen Nutile

Kristen Nutile is documentary editor and filmmaker based in New York City. She recently edited HEROI(E), which was nominated for an Academy Award. She also edited WARRIOR WOMEN, THE BULLISH FARMER, DEEP RUN, and UNFINISHED SPACES. Other editing credits include EVERY DAY IS A HOLIDAY, STARBOARD LIGHT, INVITATION TO DANCE, and FROM PRISON TO HOME. Kristen's work has shown all over the world including the Sundance Film Festival and the Tribeca Film Festival, and she is a recipient of the Albert Maysles Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking. Kristen collaborated with legendary filmmaker, Albert Maysles and Tanja Meding on SALLY GROSS - THE PLEASURE OF STILLNESS, a documentary about dancer and choreographer, Sally Gross. It screened at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC and the Film Forum in New York City. She holds Masters degrees in both Documentary Film and Video from Stanford University and Biology from San Francisco State University.

CANNABIS EXPERTS BIOS

Dr. Donald Abrams, MD

Donald Abrams, MD, is Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of California San Francisco and a general oncologist at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. He provides Integrative Oncology consultations at the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine. Dr. Abrams was the President of the Society for Integrative Oncology in 2010 and has been a member of various Education sub-committees of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. He was Chief of the Hematology-Oncology Division at Zuckerberg San Francisco General from 2003-2017. He co-edited the Oxford University Press textbook in Integrative Oncology with Andrew Weil, MD. He was also named a Top Cancer Doctor in Newsweek's 2015 Special Health Issue on Curing Cancer, in the category of Medical Oncology

Dr. Bonni Goldstein, MD

Dr. Goldstein served as Chief Resident at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. She was a Clinical Instructor in Pediatrics at USC School of Medicine in Los Angeles, Emergency Transport Attending Physician at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and Emergency Medicine Attending Physician in the Pediatric Emergency Department at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. In 2008, Dr. Goldstein developed an interest in the science of medical cannabis after witnessing its beneficial effects in an ill friend. Since then she has been evaluating both adult and pediatric patients for use of medical cannabis. She is currently the Medical Director of Canna-Centers, a California-based medical practice devoted to educating patients about the use of cannabis for serious and chronic medical conditions.

Dr. Sunil Aggarwal, MD, PhD

He completed the Medical Scientist Training Program at the University of Washington School of Medicine where he received a Ph.D. in medical geography and a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) with a Pathway Certification in Global Health. He completed his Internship in Internal Medicine at Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, Residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the New York University Medical Center, and Clinical Fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health-Clinical Center Pain and Palliative Care Service. He is currently an On-Call Palliative Medicine Physician Consultant at MultiCare Health System and an Associate Medical Director of MultiCare Hospice. He serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the National Cancer Institute's PDQ Cancer CAM information summary on cannabis and cannabinoids. More about his work can be found on his website www.cannabinologist.org

Dr. Mark Ware, MD

Director of Clinical Research, Alan Edwards Pain Management Unit, McGill University Health Centre. Associate Professor, Depts. of Family Medicine and Anesthesia. Dr. Ware practices pain medicine at the Montreal General Hospital and the CLSC Ouest de L'Isle. Dr. Ware has received research funding from the CIHR and salary support up the level of chercheur-boursier clinicien senior from the FRSQ. He teaches clinical pain management, including pharmacology, complementary approaches to chronic pain and the neurobiology of pain. His research focuses on the safety, efficacy and effectiveness of cannabis and cannabinoids in pain and symptom management. His educational work is focused on improving pain education at all level of the medical curriculum (undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing medical education). He is also Executive Director of the non-profit Canadian Consortium for the Investigation of Cannabinoids (CCIC).

Raphael Mechoulam, PhD

Raphael Mechoulam (Hebrew: רפאל משולם) (born 1930) is an Israeli organic chemist and professor of Medicinal Chemistry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. Mechoulam is best known for his work (together with Y. Gaoni) in the isolation, structure elucidation and total synthesis of Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol, the main active principle of cannabis and for the isolation and the identification of the endogenous cannabinoids anandamide from the brain and 2-arachidonoyl glycerol (2-AG) from peripheral organs together with his students, postdocs and collaborators.

David (Dedi) Meiri, PhD

Dr. Meiri's scientific background is highly diverse; He holds a M.Sc. in Biochemistry and a Ph.D. in plant biotechnology from Tel Aviv University. Dr. Meiri conducted his post-doctoral fellowship at the Ontario Cancer Institute where he focused on the role of the GEF-H1 protein in tumor invasion and metastasis. Upon completion of his post-doctoral fellowship, Dr. Meiri took a position at the Technion Israel Institute of Technology, where he heads the "Laboratory of Cancer Biology and Cannabinoid Research". Presently, his lab is investigating the therapeutic potential of phytocannabinoids, the unique active compounds of Cannabis. On-top on few other studies conducting in the lab, the main focus is to determine the antitumor effects of cannabinoids, including the anti-metastatic and pro-apoptotic effects phytocannabinoids exert, on a spectrum of tumor cells.

Cristina Sanchez, PhD

Cristina Sánchez (Madrid, Spain, 1971) graduated in Biology at Madrid Complutense University in 1994. Once graduated, she joined Dr. Manuel Guzmán's laboratory, where she studied the effect of cannabinoids on lipid and carbohydrate intermediate metabolism first and on cancer cell proliferation later. She obtained her PhD with Honors in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Complutense University in 2000. During her postdoc at Dr. Piomelli's laboratory (University of California Irvine, 2000-2003) she studied the involvement of another group of bioactive lipids (lysophosphatidic acid and related compounds) on pain initiation. In 2004, Cristina returned to Spain and she started coordinating a new line of research within Dr. Guzmán's laboratory. The goal of her research is to understand and exploit cannabinoids as potential antitumoral agents in breast cancer. More recently, she has also focused her attention on new cannabinoid receptors and their possible involvement in cannabinoid antitumoral action in breast cancer and other type of tumors.

Amanda Reiman, PhD

Amanda Reiman is the California policy manager for the Drug Policy Alliance. Based in San Francisco, Reiman leads DPA's marijuana reform work in California. Reiman has conducted numerous studies on medical marijuana dispensaries, patients and the use of marijuana as a treatment for addiction. Reiman served as the first chairwoman of the Medical Cannabis Commission for the City of Berkeley and has consulted with various cities and states on the development of medical marijuana policy. Reiman is currently a lecturer in the School of Social Welfare at the University of California-Berkeley, where she teaches Drug and Alcohol Policy, Substance Abuse Treatment, and Sexuality and Social Work.

Ethan Nadelmann

Ethan Nadelmann is the founder of the Drug Policy Alliance, a New York City-based non-profit organization working to end the War on Drugs. Described by Rolling Stone as, "The driving force for the legalization of marijuana in America,"[1] Ethan Nadelmann is known as a high-profile critic and commentator on U.S. and international drug control policies.

Final End Credits:

WEED THE PEOPLE

In Loving Memory of
ADRIAN "AJ" PETERSON
CHRISTIAN EVANS

Directed by
ABBY EPSTEIN

Executive Producer
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Producer
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CINDY JONES
JOSH RYAN

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CHICO RYDER
ALEXANDER ("AJ") KEPHART
SHEILA KEPHART
CHRIS KEPHART
ANGELA PETERSON
ADRIAN PETERSON
ADRIAN ("AJ") PETERSON
BONNI GOLDSTEIN, MD
ETHAN NADELMANN
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Performed by BERNA

Produced by BERNARDO BAGLIONI

Music by BERNARDO BAGLIONI Lyrics by CAROLYN F. BARON

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