

Happy 4/20

Mike Riggs | April 20, 2012



Today is April 20, AKA 4/20, AKA Stoner Christmas. Across the United States, Americans of all colors and creeds are going to consume marijuana. I'd like to wish a Happy 4/20 to all you heads out there, and a special 4/20 to D.C.'s once and former heads. **There are a lot of you in this town:**

"This is a town where I could probably kill 200 major careers if I wanted to be a complete prick," says Allen St. Pierre, executive director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), which is headquartered on K Street. "Politicians, members of Congress and the Senate, many of their principals—legislative directors, chiefs of staff, communications directors—people in the private sector, Cato Institute, American Enterprise Institute, Brookings, police, any number of notable journalists from television, print, radio, many brand names most Americans would recognize pretty quickly—I've smoked with all of them. There is more smoke in DC closets than there is sex."

St. Pierre's claim holds true for many D.C. smokers. I once shared a joint with a House staffer whose boss had recently proposed a piece of drug war legislation and an aide to a GOP presidential candidate; worked with a guy who bought his weed from the son of a congressman; and shared a bowl with a Democratic speechwriter.

All of them were successful, intelligent, hard-working people, and I enjoyed their company immensely. I also felt a little sorry for them, because they're cowards. They all thought pot should be legal, but none of them has ever used his/her bonafides to make an impact.

But I don't feel *that* bad for them, because there are worse things than living a lie, such as living incarcerated, losing your kids, losing your pets, having your belongings seized by the state, growing up without a dad or a mom, having to get piss-tested weekly to stay "free," and getting to see people you love only through plexiglas, watching them shrink in their shackles. Those things are much worse, in every measurable way, than being a hypocrite.



The good news is that Americans who have suffered the consequences of the drug war don't need D.C.'s closet heads—or back-to-back pot-smoking presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama—to lead the charge.

Here, let's look back to April 4/20 Eve, 1995, when DEA Director Thomas A. Constantine **attacked** ABC News for its special, "America's War on Drugs: Searching for Solutions":

American life in many communities no longer resembles the quiet peace of our childhoods. Drugs have degraded the quality of life so many of us have worked so hard to improve. Yet despite my ability to understand, and despite years of work to eradicate crime, violence and drugs, I am baffled by the cyclical calls for the legalization of drugs according to proponents, the answer to our problems. The latest

entry in the legalization debate was the irresponsible and inaccurate special America's War on Drugs: Searching for Solutions" aired on ABC recently, which pretended to be an objective look at alternatives to our current drug policies.

What ABC did not take into account was that the overwhelming majority of Americans are unequivocally opposed to legalizing drugs. They understand that many crimes are committed by people using drugs not to support their habit, but because drugs exacerbate the user's criminal nature.

Today, a majority of Americans favor legalizing marijuana, legalization ballot initiatives in Washington and Colorado are polling favorably, and more than a dozen states and Washington, D.C. have legalized medical marijuana. While too many Americans still start their day to the sounds of flack-jacketed thugs breaking down their doors, the tide is turning, and God willing, it'll eventually crush Pharaoh and his army.

Happy 4/20!