

This podcast is for adults 21 years of age and over. We talk about cannabis history and advertise cannabis products. If you're not 21 please come back when you are.

ABDULLAH: Hey, it's Abdullah.

BEAN: And Bean.

ABDULLAH: And welcome back for yet another edition of Great Moments in Weed History on this podcast. My partner Bean and I who are both cannabis journalists and media makers go through one of the more fascinating points in the very, very long history of cannabis. I have no prior knowledge of the story we're about to hear. Bean has written and researched it and you and I will be hearing it together and I'm super excited to hear today's story. I've got a joint already rolled up here. Bean, what do you got?

BEAN: Oh, today's story is about a couple who sort of unwittingly get pulled into a cannabis sensation. It changes the whole world. It changes the cannabis landscape and it is a beautiful love story and it comes with a little special treat at the end.

ABDULLAH: I can't wait to hear it, man.

BEAN: All right, well if you're at home and you're not quite ready to go and you need to hit pause, roll up a joint, pack a bowl, roll the blunt, do what you do with the dabs these days,

ABDULLAH: whatever the kids are doing with those dabs. I don't know either. I was up on it 18 months ago, but the technology has changed. I'm not up on it.

BEAN: You are the Ripped van Winkle of dabbing after 18 months. The whole, you don't even recognize your own community.

ABDULLAH: Seriously.

BEAN: People are taking their brims of their hats now and curling them.

ABDULLAH: It's, we're back to that.

BEAN: I've seen it.

ABDULLAH: So I think we've got all the pieces in place. We might be just about ready

BEAN: for another

ABDULLAH AND BEAN: GREAT MOMENT IN WEED HISTORY.

[MUSIC]

[AD BREAK]

ABDULLAH: All right, so I'm going to spark up this J right here. Uh, Bean why don't we get started, man,

BEAN: The hero of today's Great Moment in Weed History was born in 1877 in San Francisco.

ABDULLA: Hmm, 1877 in San Francisco. That's someone who came of age at the turn of the 20th century. Hmm.

BEAN: After surviving the earthquake of 1906 in San Francisco, which hit 7.9 on the Richter scale and led to the destruction of 80% of the city, she left for Paris. On the very day she arrived in the city of lights, she met Gertrude Stein.

ABDULLAH: All right, so Gertrude Stein, who is a author, right?

BEAN: Mmhhmm.

ABDULLAH: Um, who I've never read. So like most authors and uh, okay. So, Hmm. Someone who met Gertrude Stein in Paris.

BEAN: So the two women meet in Paris, they become lovers and creative partners for the next 40 years. I better to tell you her name/

ABDULLAH: Alright, what's her name?

BEAN: So her name and you can tell me if this rings a bell. Is Alice B Toklas.

ABDULLAH: No, it doesn't.

BEAN: Okay, awesome. This is great.

ABDULLAH: So I have now, I really have no prior knowledge because I've never heard this person. Uh, but it's, the name is vaguely familiar, I'm sure in going through cannabis of it. This is a prominent canvas figure from the time I may have come across her.

BEAN: Well, like I said, this was the, they inadvertently create this great moment in weed history.

ABDULLAH: Ah,

BEAN: So they're, they're famous in their own right, at least in, you know, turn of the century early 1900s literary and art circles, which we're gonna get to. Um, and then a little later down in the road, they're going to do this majorly impactful weed moment

ABDULLA: Wow.

BEAN: Kind of without realizing it. So she moves in 1906, and then there's a little bit of a slow burn to get to the our great moment, but we definitely need to understand who we're, who we're talking about here. So.

ABDULLAH: Gotcha. I'm game.

BEAN: Gertrude Stein was also an ex patriot, so her family was American and pretty wealthy, but she was raised, uh, largely in Europe. Eventually she moved back to the United States to pursue an education, but then she goes back to Europe with her brother Leo and they began collecting modern art. And they are some of the earliest serious collectors of modern art. And they're buying up paintings by like Cezanne, Renoir, Matisse, and all these Picasso's before anybody knows who they are.

ABDULLA: So they sort of had a knack for recognizing the value of this art at the time before it became insanely valuable world renowned art.

BEAN: Yeah, and, and by being a patron of these artists, they're actually helping them continue to paint. Uh, Picasso in particular for the rest of his life, was very, very grateful to Gertrude Stein for buying some of his early paintings, which allowed him to focus on his art. Uh, when everybody else was looking at these paintings and saying, Oh, modern art, it doesn't make any sense.

ABDULLAH: Like his eyeballs are both on the same side of his head because he's a genius.

BEAN: That's why, um, but you know, on the flip side, this becomes a very, very valuable art collection as well. Um, and so after a long courtship, Alice finally moved into Gertrude Stein's lavish apartment at the 27 Rue de Fleurs, uh, in Paris. And by this point, by the time Alice B Toklas moves in with Gertrude Stein, this house is literally overflowing with like masterpieces of all these modern artists.

ABDULLA: Wow. Insane.

BEAN: To the point where the paintings are like three high on the walls, like in the rooms

ABDULLAH: Oh wow, they're running out of wall space literally to put all this priceless art.

BEAN: They're like where are we going to put this? Ugh, another Picasso hold on a second. So like if I move that Matisse into the other room and then I'll take the smaller Picasso, I'll put it in that little place. We can tack one more up on the walls here. Uh, so here we are, we're in Paris. Uh, finally Alice and Gertrude are living together in this beautiful house full of art, Gertrude Stein is sort of an influential intellectual, but she's not very well known outside of this sort of Paris scene.

ABDULLAH: Right.

BEAN: Um, but what ends up happening is that because they have all these paintings on the wall and there's no like internet and pictures and stuff, painters are just showing up. Renoirs just like knock, knock, knock, Hello. I need to show my paintings to this guy.

ABDULLAH: Oh noo way, man. Oh, no way. So it becomes a sort of like default gallery for these guys to show their stuff.

BEAN: Yeah. And they're just like, you know, these are like artists of the, you know, early 1900s in Paris. They're a wild bunch, you know, and then they're showing up at all hours.

ABDULLAH: And so I heard you say there's no internet at this time. Huh? I guess I can see why they were going around doing this kind of shit. Wow, that's amazing. So what a special little hub this place had suddenly become uh in this specific place in time, a kind of a meeting place for like all these amazing artists.

BEAN: Yeah. It's like if you're lucky enough and you're, especially in the creative world, you know, you come across these places where like it's happening. You know what I mean? People are coming in and out. You know, there's something in the air, there's some nucleus and in this case it's this home and it's this art collection that's drawing people from different worlds and cross pollinating them. And so what eventually happens is all these painters, Picasso, I mean it sounds amazing in theory that Picasso like shows up drunk at three in the morning with like five people to throw an impromptu party.

ABDULLAH: But when it actually happens, you're like, ah, fuck, it's Picasso again.

BEAN: Pablo. Uh, so what they do, and, and Alice is, uh Alice B. Toklas is sort of the, she's running the house and Gertrude Stein is sort of more of the, uh, out front person of this scene. But Alice B Toklas is running the house and eventually she's like, okay, here's the deal. Put it out to all the drunken painters of Paris Saturday night. You don't even need an invitation. House is open. Come by, have drinks, I'll cook. Everybody's gonna be here. Uh, the, the people who come are like Hemingway, F Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, Sinclair Lewis, Ezra Pound, TS Eliott, Charlie Chaplin, Salvador Dali, are like all regulars. I'm like, dang. But she's like Saturday,

ABDULLAH: Just Saturday. So, so basically she's, uh, she's doing what, what, uh, the Baltimore cops in the wire did with a Hamsterdam.

You move your people in the edit designated area I told you about, and you'll have immunity from arrest and prosecution. You're free to make your drops, collect what need collection. Want nobody bother you, you've got my word on it.

ABDULLAH: They basically, you know, she was like, well, I can't have you fucking up my entire week, so just fucking up one day for me and we'll call it either.

BEAN: Yeah. And of course they love it. Have you ever lived in the party house?

ABDULLAH: Uh, yes. Uh, once or twice I've lived in the party house. Uh, and I mean there is this, like, there's this energy to it that's really amazing, but you know, you also really start to appreciate privacy.

BEAN: Yeah. It's not, it's best to live down the block from the party house in my, uh, personal,

ABDULLAH: Oh, that's the ideal. Yeah. That's the ideal situation.

BEAN: And so, yeah, I mean, this was a very pivotal time in world history, a very pivotal time in art history. You know the sheer idea of modern art pushed up against consciousness, you know, pushed up against the limits of the imaginations of people and a lot of what's going on in this salon will reverberate in different art movements and modes of creativity. And, uh, it's this cauldron of ideas and cross pollination. Um, it's really good.

ABDULLAH: Cool. Wow. And I mean, like, I'm assuming that there was some drug use going on here, right? I mean, okay. Obviously their drinking and stuff, but like, uh, do we have an idea of what that looked like?

BEAN: You know, I will say this because I don't want to get too far ahead of our story, but I think to get ahead of our story, I'll go back. Do you, uh, remember in the episode that started with Napoleon invading Egypt?

ABDULLAH: Yeah.

BEAN: That ended up bringing hashish to France and there was that hashishians club.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course. Yeah. All those like, you know, famous French literary icons like hanging out together, bottle air, and uh, who else was in there?

BEAN: They're a Dumars. Yeah, Balzac.

ABDULLAH: My favorite, Balzac.

BEAN: He smiles every time I say Balzac, ladies and gentlemen.

ABDULLAH: But yeah, of course. So here we have another iteration of like a similar thing. I mean, I think in those types of situations it's only a matter of time before canvas makes an appearance.

BEAN: Yeah, absolutely. And these, this sort of group of Korean literaturatai and artists, whether they're French born or ex Patriots, they're looking back to that era of do Moss and bottle there as very inspirational to them. The same way we might like look at music of the sixties and seventies and be like, Oh cool. Wouldn't it have been amazing to be alive then? And so this is just this long continuum that really does go back to Napoleon in this hashish culture that develops in France. So meanwhile, um, Gertrude Stein was a celebrated novelist, poet, playwright and public intellectual in her own right. And she also served as a mentor and a patron to a lot of these down and out artists who came to Paris in the 1920s. Um, she even gave them their most lasting moniker, uh, the lost generation.

ABDULLAH: Oh, okay. So is that the collective name for all these artists is the lost generation?

BEAN: Yeah. It's like the brat pack, right? Right. Rat pack. That's sort of what gets hung on them. And it's sort of this idea of these people who came out of world war one a really traumatized and drank a lot and got into existential philosophies and really questioned, you know, what kind of way the world would have a world war.

ABDULLAH: So these guys are kind of like the, the advanced thinkers of the time and like, you know, like Paris is kind of like the hop in place for all this kind of like edgy, creative thought.

BEAN: Yeah. Paris in the 20s is legendary and this is like the center of that. So you're really in a, in a heady brew here. Um, and so while Gertrude Stein's doing all of this, Alice B Toklas collaborates with her on all the creative projects, organizes the salons and she cooks these, uh, elaborate meals on Saturday night for the, for the salons. And according to James Beard, who is actually the guy.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, the guy. I uh, know who James Beard is because I was actually nominated for a James Beard award one time. Uh, interesting story. Not a great moment in weed history, well maybe kind of a great moment of weed history.

BEAN: More for Bong Appetit.

ABDULLAH: That's right.

BEAN: Yeah. So James Beard, the guy, not James Beard, the award a said Alice B Toklas is one of the really great cooks of all time. She went all over Paris to find the right ingredients for her meals. This is all going to come back soon. Note the meals, the cooking, the secret of her talent was taking great pains and having a remarkable palette.

ABDULLAH: Interesting. So at these parties it was Alice Toklas who was kind of the chef or whatever. She was the one preparing all the food while Gertrude Stein was talking about like, you know, paint tones and whatever.

BEAN: Yeah. Modes of duality. Basically like any party, there's like four nerds talking about nerd stuff in the corner and everyone else is hanging out by this great friend food for failure that's put out right.

ABDULLAH: And Alice Toklas is the one behind it. Okay. And so she's going out, she's hitting the streets, she's hitting the street stalls, she's shaken melons. She's putting her ear to the grapefruit. You know, he's really checking his stuff, boundaries, selecting ingredients. He's bringing them back and dicing them up, slicing them up, throwing them in a pan shaking it around anymore and serving it up to all these uh, dorky, uh, kind of cool, tight pants, French artists, guys.

BEAN: I didn't realize you were an expert in French cuisine.

ABDULLAH: Uh, you know, I know a little bit about it and I don't mind, uh, you know, flaunting it now and then. So there's a little piece for ya.

BEAN: All right. If you follow that recipe, I'm sure something will come out.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, something will come out.

BEAN: I believe it was. You smack it up, you flip it, rub it down.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, smack it on a bing bong.

BEAN: So, uh, in 1933, Gertrude Stein writes a book, this is weird. She writes a book called the autobiography of Alice B Toklas. That is about how great Gertrude Stein is.

ABDULLAH: What? Okay. So it's her own autobiography, but it's about someone else.

BEAN: No, Gertrude Stein writes, this book calls it the autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. So its written in Alice B Toklas his voice, but it says by Gertrude Stein, I'm a cover. And what I always speak to hopeless in the book is like I'm paraphrasing, but you know, I've only met three geniuses in my life.

ABDULLAH: Was this like some kind of like artsy joke or was she seriously just self aggrandizing?

BEAN: She was seriously self aggrandized.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God. That is completely insane. What kind of fucking person does that?

BEAN: Uh, I, the only person that I know who does that is Gertrude Stein and her, her writing is very strange and avant garde. I mean they're, they're on garden people. Um, Alice B Toklas just rocked a full mustache.

ABDULLAH: Oh no shit. Yeah, that's dope. Respect to lady out there rocking a mustache, especially back in the 30s when you probably got like a lot of more shit for it. So, you know,

BEAN: And it's also, you know, book is kind of one of the first books to deal with homosexuality in what we would, I would like to call a modern way or in a way that is accepting and celebratory of homosexuality. Um, and that makes the book kind of a worldwide sensation. They go on a world tour and support of the book. It brings this subject, uh, you know, that everybody was aware of, but no one had a way to talk about it. It really was a big step along that way. Um, and it turns both of them into worldwide celebrities.

ABDULLAH: That's really cool that the world beyond just the small artistic circles has an appetite for this kind of perspective that they're bringing into a mainstream audience. That's great. That's refreshing.

BEAN: Yeah, absolutely. And so, um, we're gonna take a little weed break in a minute.

ABDULLAH: Oh yeah. We could use one.

BEAN: I could use one. Um, and the, and, and S and the next half of this is the, is the weedy part and the, and the world changing occurrence. But so before we got there in, in 1946, uh, Gertrude Stein passed away and French law basically prevented Alice from directly inheriting the estate, which is including all of these paintings.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God.

BEAN: Yes. And their whole life now, they've been a couple for 40 years at this point. They've run this home together and it's complicated, but in essence, Gertrude Stein has to give the paintings to her family because she can't give them directly to Alice. And then mother fuckers, uh, not too many years later, Alice is like basically on a trip out of town and the family comes into the house and takes all the paintings and moves them into a bank vault.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God.

BEAN: And uh, won't give her anything and all of a sudden she's, she's, she's pretty down and out in Paris as they say.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God.

BEAN: Now I ask you what life force on the planet is going to come to Alice B Toklas his rescue.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God, I'm so stoked that cannabis is the thing that is going to save this lady. That's awesome.

BEAN: All right, well we'll get to that right after we get to this.

[Smoke Weedia]

ABDULLAH: Okay. So when we left off, uh, shit had kinda gone South for Alice Toklas.

BEAN: Yeah, I mean, that's tough financially, emotionally, you know, and it reminds us of how shitty the world could be to homosexuals at that time and how many people are still living under those conditions that you could be. Uh, and they weren't just a couple. Um, they weren't able to be formerly married, but they weren't just a couple. They were inseparable. They were one of those couples that spends all their time together, works on creative projects together, travels together, compliments each other's skillsets and, and, and have this sense of mission about them. So to, to lose your partner like that and then be stripped of everything that you had to your name.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. All because of the, the greed, uh, you know, of Gertrude Stein's family. I mean, I guess the, it's really crazy to think about that they can completely deny the right that someone like Alice Toklas has to all that art after building an entire life with Gertrude Stein. You know what I mean? It's really an injustice.

BEAN: Yeah. Are you ready for, we'd come to the rescue.

ABDULLAH: Oh, yeah. I absolutely am. It's about time.

BEAN: So, uh, we find Alice, she's facing financial ruin. So she decides to write the Alice B Toklas cookbook, which would compile her star studded remembrances of the Paris salon alongside some of her favorite recipes.

ABDULLAH: Oh, wow. All right. So this shows a lot of gusto. I gotta say, uh, for this person. You know what I mean? After losing so much, essentially not only a livelihood, but an entire lifestyle

in a home and, uh, you know, in the community, this is somebody who like, Nope, I won't go down like that. I'm gonna do what I can to make this shit happen. And she's drawing on something that she's practiced in something that, you know, clearly is a talent of hers. And I mean, that's the best way, uh, to beat the blues, as they say. You know what I mean? When the draconian conventions of society gets you down, do what you love and try to sell it, you know what I mean? Why the fuck not so, how does the book do?

BEAN: So Alice decides to come out with this cookbook and she's hoping to produce a culinary reference that would appeal to those seeking a taste of Parisian cafe society while providing herself with a little nest egg to live on. And I think every writer can relate.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. She's like, this is the Salvador Dali club sandwich. It's got bacon and grilled chicken and it's got a little, you know? Yeah. It's like all these like crazy.

BEAN: The bread is a brick. Yeah. The chicken is a fish that's still alive in silence. Inside mouth is a tiny dictionary. Open to the word club.

ABDULLAH: All topped with a fried clock.

BEAN: Ooh. When you get up nice and crispy.

ABDULLAH: Oh yeah. Just right.

BEAN: I like a nice alarm. I'm fright.

ABDULLAH: Alarm clock. Fried alarm.

BEAN: I'm like waiter, my clock's a little runny Dolly. Little Dolly joke. Getting into it, Kim into the mix. All right. So, uh, so yeah. So what happens with the cookbook. As the deadline for the book draws near Alice has like a lot of pages to fill. Uh, so she gets a little worried and she decides, Oh, I know what I'll do. I'll ask my friends. I got all these famous, uh, great art friends, so she kind of puts the word out. I need recipes, writer and avant garde artists. Brian Giesen, most definitely friend of the podcast. Maybe that gives you a hint of where this is going.

ABDULLAH: This guy sells bleed.

BEAN: He's traveled, he's one of their homeys. He's traveled extensively in Morocco.

ABDULLA: Check.

BEAN: Yup. Check. He hung out at various times with William Burroughs and Paul Bowles and sort of all these far out beat generation type guy.

ABDULLAH: Check.

BEAN: Check. And so he decides to kick it up a notch, uh, by slipping her a recipe for hashish. Fudge.

ABDULLAH: Ding, ding. Right.

BEAN: I think the oven just went off.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, I'll get it. Amazing. Okay. So this guy's cool as fuck.

BEAN: He, he gives her this recipe. She's, you know, frantically trying to fill this book and it's, it's got spices and nuts and fruit and cannabis. And so here, hers, Alice B Toklas many years later, reading the recipe in her own words.

TOKLAS: This is the food paradise. Baudelaire's artificial paradise.

ABDULLAH: She's referencing a Baudelaire from the, uh, from the doob crew. Uh, what was,

BEAN: I forget the name of those guys. Well, in French it's has, she shouldn't flip the hat. She should CC. I think that translates to dupe crew. Pretty sure. I don't know my French that well.

TOKLAS: It might provide an entertaining refreshment for ladies bridge club.

BEAN: How quaint, I love that.

TOKLAS: In Morocco it is thought to be good for warding of the common cold and damp winter weather and is indeed more effective if taken with large quantities of hop mint tea. Euphoria and brilliance. Laughter extended reveries an extension of one's personality and several simultaneous planes are to be complacently expected,

ABDULLAH: Ah, complacently expected. I love it man. That's a great description for this food. We'll get you stoned. It's way better than that government warning that you see on edibles. It's like, it's like a really poetic version of this product contains marijuana and can cause, you know, like hallucinations or whatever. It's like this is a, this is a much nicer way to say it.

BEAN: Yeah. Just complacently expect hallucinations and you'll be fine. Um, so Alice B Toklas will later claim that she had no idea that this fudge would get you high, uh, when she included it in the cookbook. But this seems highly unlikely based on how explicit and absurd the recipe is. Also, Alice had personally visited Tangiers with Gertrude Stein as far back as the 1930s. And lots of the artists in their little circle are definitely known to have gotten down on some Moroccan hash.

ABDULLAH: Oh, no kidding. As everyone should in this lifetime.

BEAN: This Moroccan hashish culture is like as old as any wine culture and as particularly in and around the Riff mountains, there's these Berber villages for more than a thousand years, they've been cultivating cannabis. And then they have this dry sift method of separating the trichoms from the plant matter. This is the same product you find in the Amsterdam coffee shops. This is where this guy Brian, you know, first experiences hash culture, and he has majoun, which is this thousand year old recipe for, like I say, it's kind of like the air. It's kind of like the ancestor of the gooball.

ABDULLAH: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah. And I mean, so gooballs for anyone who doesn't know, you used to be able to get them in the Phish lot, I'm sure you still can. So I'm actually a guy who, I've never been to a Phish show, but I've been to like 15 to 20 Phish lots because in college we used to go, uh, to the Phish lot and just hang out in the lot and you know, you grocery shop, you get really good acid mushrooms and you know, we'd, you get really fantastic weed. I mean, you know, like...

BEAN: These advertisements are not endorsed by the band Phish or its parent company, a Phish co. But yeah, totally a great place to score some weed.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. Yeah. And I'm sure the band would endorse that too at this point. I

BEAN: A thousands years earlier, there is what's called the majoun.

ABDULLAH: Ah yeah the gooball.

BEAN: Yeah. Yeah. It's this recipe for kind of like a cannabis treat. And there's actually this a really cool episode of Parts Unknown with Anthony Bourdain where he travels all the way to Morocco and he finds people who still make money June, uh, the traditional way.

BOURDAIN: Of course networks standards of practices prohibit me from even tasting this delicious and reportedly mind altering treat, I'm guessing anyway. So until I see Christian and Wolfe doing bong rips in the room. I will of course abide by these rules because that's the kind of guy I am.

ABDULLAH: And, and is Majoun always made with hash or is there Majoun and hash Majoun.

BEAN: No Majoun is hash.

ABDULLAH: Is always made it a high?

BEAN: Always, if it don't have hash it ain't majoun.

ABDULLAH: Gotcha. Okay, cool. So you and I, Bean, actually have a Majoun experience of our own. So we did an episode of Bong Appetit, the web series for munchies, and we met up with this woman named Devorah in Northern California and we made Masun

[Clip]

ABDULLAH: There it is, a little infused ball of Majoun rolled in mixed nuts and infused with about a hundred milligrams of cannabis Ghee and I can't wait to eat one of these.

ABDULLAH: I got so fucking high, maybe the most high that I've ever been on camera and that is saying a lot because I've been very, very high on camera many, many, many times. And this is one of the highest and they were filming and totally included it in the final episode. That was such a fucking good time Bean Oh my Go.

BEAN: That was great. And we made our own hash in that episode.

ABDULLAH: That's right. We made our own hash with Billy, our friend, uh, up North. Yeah, really cool lady. We made ice hash and then we brought it down to Devo rah and she made majoun. We made majoun with her and we got high as fuck and smoked hookahs as well.

BEAN: Indeed. And so, you know, her recipe had like 30 different ingredients. The real thing in researching this is majoun isn't really like a single recipe. It's kind of a basic set of techniques and ingredients and then you put it together how you want. So almost like how every Italian grandmother has a tomato gravy that is a little different to that.

ABDULLAH: I make a mine a little spicy.

BEAN: I, my nanny made hers a little spicy too.

ABDULLAH: Yeah.

Bean: Uh, then every Moroccan family would have like their own unique way to prepare majoun. So when Brian is adapting the recipes sort of for this cookbook and Western palettes and pantries, really he has to kind of simplify it because a lot of these ingredients wouldn't be available to people in the U S and parts of Europe where the book is going to be sold. Um, and he also renames it hashish fudge even though it really basically is a majoun, um, probably just so people have some conception of it. But what ends up happening is people put it in like the brownie category in their minds. And, ah, that's how the meme of the pot brownie becomes a pot brownie.

ABDULLAH: No freaking way. Okay. That is really interesting. So what you're saying is the evolution was that there was majoun and then post-Alice Toklas cookbook, this guy Brian, who is this worldly world traveler guy who ate the OG majoun,

Bean: Og Majoun

ABDULLAH: OG Majoun. France.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. Au Francais. And then so he rebrands it as cannabis fudge

Bean: Hashish fude

ABDULLAH: Hashish fudge. And that becomes sort of translated through the culture into the weed brownie, which is the ubiquitous edible. I mean the weed brownie is literally like, it was the only edible for a very long time.

BEAN: The word - I'm in this weed game long enough. I can't pinpoint the first time I heard the word edibles.

ABDULLAH: Yeah.

Bean: In that context of food with weed in it.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. It was not that long ago though.

BEAN: 33:37 No, it was not that long ago. And before that you said pot brownies, no matter what it was

ABDULLAH: Yes.

Bean: That was the only way to make somebody understand it was food with weed in it.

ABDULLAH: Yup. Yup, yup. That's right. Pot brownies. Exactly.

BEAN: And that's how this happens and, and it's kind of a story of, depending on how you look at it, it could be a story about cultural exchange. It could be a story about cultural appropriation. I certainly think that, you know, Brian lived in Morocco for many, many years. He was immersed in that culture. He cared about it. So I don't think he changed the name for bad purposes. I think he just thought it was funny or, or thought it would make more sense to people or whatever

ABDULLAH: Yeah sure. It's a clearer branding, you know what I mean? Majoun is like not, you know, it's, it's the, the word is not, it's not self-explanatory what that is. But if you say, hashish fudge, I get what that is.

[Clip]

Alice B. Toklas: Take one teaspoon black pepper corn, one home that made for average sticks of cinnamon one teapot, coriander. These should all be pulled realized in a mortar, abbut a handful of each of stone dates, dried figs, shelled almonds and peanuts. Chop these and mix them together.

ABDULLAH: So this is interesting that a couple of the things she's mentioned are in the Ayurveda and are described in various places as mixtures with cannabis. So black pepper for example, which contains beta caryophyllene which is the terpene that's also found in cannabis. It's known to kind of mellow out a high. So there is an old, you know, kind of a old wives' tale or old kind of urban legend. You'd say that if you're really, really stoned, you should chew black pepper corns cause it'll calm down your high a little bit because of that terpene. It actually does sort of even out the high a little bit and take the edge off of it. Um, coriander, I feel like there's a, that's also an ayurvedic herbs, but I mean I'm sure there's some sort of correlation there as well.

[Clip]

Alice B Toklas: A bunch of cannabis sativa can be pulverized, this along with the spices should be dusted over the mixed fruit and nuts and kneaded together. About a cup of sugar dissolved into a big Pat of butter rolled into a cake and cut into pieces or made into balls about the size of the Walnut. It should be eaten with care two pieces are quite sufficient

ABDULLAH: Oh wow. And does it say a specific measurement for how much weed goes into it?

BEAN: Yes, it does very precisely. It says a bunch,

ABDULLAH: Abunch, a bunch of Cannabis sativa and so is she talking about actually grinding up like dried cannabis flowers or using hash specifically or it's unspecified?

BEAN: Well, the recipe gets into this. Here's, here's the last part.

[Clip]

Alice B Toklas: Obtaining the cannabis may present certain difficulties, but the variety known as cannabis Sativa grows as a common weed, often unrecognized everywhere in Europe, Asia and parts of Africa besides being cultivated as a crop in the manufacture of rope. In the Americas while often discouraged its cousin called Cannabis Indica has been observed even in city window boxes. It should be picked and dried as soon as it has gone to seed and while the plant is still green.

ABDULLAH: Sounds great. Tastes great, makes you feel very great.

BEAN: Yeah. Well, but here's what happens a upon so, so, and remember this is like, she's rushing to put this book together, this crazy Brian Guy gives her the recipe for hashish fudge. She gets it to the publisher. Here's all the recipes. Uh, and, and then upon publication in 1954 in Europe, the inclusion of this hashish fudge recipes sparks a media scandal. And that led to it being a best seller.

ABDULLAH: Give the people what they want as they say. You know what I'm saying? I mean, that is, is seriously, like, it's, it's so awesome to hear that even back then, cannabis was sparking curiosity in this way. And so I'm guessing that a lot more people started, uh, making weed food at home after this, right? I mean,

BEAN: Oh yeah. So, well, the, you know, first thing we should note is this, you know, completely gets Alice B Toklas back on her feet.

ABDULLAH: Oh yeah, that's right. So she had fallen on hard times. So this was exactly what she was looking for

BEAN: But it was a total accident. You know what I mean? It was nothing then she planned or engineered, you know, it was, it was a confluence of events and being in the right place at the right time and knowing the right cool dude who had a killer majoun recipe. Um, and you know, it doesn't get you back on your feet to having like 50 Picasso's yeah. But it, it gives her an ability to live the rest of her life in comfort and, and dignity and all and all that. Um, but when the cookbook is published in America, the publisher takes out the hashish fudge recipe.

ABDULLAH: Oh. I mean that's kinda like, you know, might as well take all the fucking recipes out of it. You know what I mean? Like you're going to take out that one. I mean, that's kind of a dumb thing because did that publisher not realize that that's what was selling that fucking book at those numbers. I mean, do they not like to sell books? What the hell were they thinking?

BEAN: It's 1954. That's a square - that's like peak square probably for United States

ABDULLAH: It's exactly like one generation after the first prohibition in the United States, you know, all the kids were indoctrinated by that fucking propaganda of reefer madness are now adults operating in the world. It's a dark time in America in terms of cannabis perceptions, racism is at a crazy high cannabis is totally a part of that sort of discrimination. Oh, that is so fucking dumb. So how does the book do in America?

BEAN: Uh, well, the uh, first edition, uh, I don't think does very well, but what happens is in the early 1960s, a new American edition of the cookbook is published and it includes the restored hashish fudge entry. And so by now all these beatniks and then later hippies just start passing around the book. And that's really when this pot brownie meme gets started. But so now another turn: after the American version comes out with the recipe, it becomes like this hippie thing. And

then in 1968 Peter Sellers stars in a film called, I love you, Alice B Toklas where he goes from square to hippie immediately after eating a Toklas brownie.

[Clip]

Peter Sellers: They're very good, they're uh, they're groovy.

BEAN: So it's a really, really funny, weird film. But they're creating these memes. He accidentally, you know, he eats one and his whole thing changes. Then his parents eat them by mistake and they have a wild adventure and then goes full into hippie lifestyle. Uh huh. And then ultimately he has all these realizations about himself and I mean it's pretty good Peter Sellers, I am a huge fan of, of his comedy as well. Um, and it's even got a totally killer, weird theme song.

[I Love You Alice B Toklas Theme Song]

BEAN: And you know what I found out doing some research is Tommy Chong saw this movie. I love you Alice B Toklas in 1968 in Detroit before Cheech and Chong and then, and there he determined I'm going to become a weed comedian filmmaker hippie.

ABDULLAH: No way. Holy shit. There's layers to this thing. Wow. That's fucking crazy. So this movie is what inspired Tommy Chong to essentially give way to a barrage of Cheech and Chong movies. Dude that's really fucking nuts.

BEAN: He moved from where he was living to Venice beach, California, where this film was set to live as a hippie. Lived there for a while. That's where he sort of created the character of, you know, "Man," his, his classic character, who you probably just think of as Tommy Chong. Yeah, he did. He did all his field research there, brought it back up to Canada. And that's where Cheech and Chong met and developed the act. And so then from there and then this just solidifies the pot brownie, like we said, it's the Kleenex of edibles.

ABDULLAH: Oh yeah.

Bean: And it becomes this meme and it shows up in all these different TV episodes. So some of my favorites are, there was a time when Laverne and Shirley found themselves at a wild party in Hollywood. So everyone was smoking weed in the quote jolly room at this Hollywood party. And Laverne really wants to join them but Shirley warns her off.

[Clip]

Laverne: Don't you remember in high school that movie we saw Reefer Zombies?

Shirley: They looked like they were having a pretty good time. Ooo, what have we here?
Laverne, your favorite, brownies.

BEAN: And so Laverne and Shirley ended up getting high eating brownies they didn't realize had weed in them.

ABDULLAH: That's really great. You know, shout out the Laverne and Shirley writer who is definitely a stoner who, uh, obviously put that like-minded joke in there.

BEAN: Yeah. A friend of the podcast and get in touch. Yeah. Seriously. Here's what I, I think I, I'm pretty sure you're into this show. There was a Frasier Christmas special, uh, aptly titled high holidays where Niles decides to get high as an act of rebellion.

[Clip]

Niles: Take a look, ah, yes, thick and gooey ganja in its purest form

Roz: It's a pot brownie. You idiot.

Niles: I'm especially looking forward to something called the munchies stage. It's where one enjoys bizarre food combinations. I'm thinking of pairings this Chilean sea bass with an aggressive Zinfandel.

BEAN: and then of course the most important weed brownies of all time. We're the ones made with both THC and TLC by brownie Mary, who baked her magically delicious weed treats for AIDS patients and helped usher in the era of medical cannabis.

ABDULLAH: Yes, absolutely. Brownie Mary, a really, really important icon in the fight for cannabis legalization in the United States. If you haven't yet, definitely go and check out our brownie Mary episode and it'll connect to this one in a really great way.

BEAN: Yeah. The, those connections you're talking about between episodes, even here, we saw a connection to the hashish club to what was going on in this salon in Paris in the 1920s onto a Peter Sellers movie. The, all those connections are what weave together into a culture.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, exactly.

BEAN: And you know what though, I'm out of prepared remarks, but I promised you something. What's that? What did I promise you at the beginning of this episode?

ABDULLAH: Oh yeah. I think you did. Well, what's the treat?

Bean: What else could it be, but

ABDULLAH: Majoun balls! Holy shit.

BEAN: Yeah. Those are made from the Alice B Toklas recipe available in the Alice B Toklas cookbook.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God, this is incredible. It is. It tray of looks like more than a dozen majoun balls, dozen and a half looks like. Oh my God. And uh, are these infused with hash?

BEAN: I put a little delicious. Uh, I was not able to source Moroccan hash. Um, but I got the closest thing I could find a really nice water hash has some of those same elements. I followed the recipe from the Alice B Toklas cookbook, you know, got the figs, got the dates, the nuts, the spices. I did try one and uh, had a very, very lovely tasty mellow experience with it. And you know, let me know what you think. Have one

ABDULLAH: That is incredible. Thank you so much being what? A treat. I have not had majoun since we filmed with Devorah and I am stoked to eat one of these. Oh my God.

BEAN: And this is, you know, you're taking a bite of weed history. That is Brian's recipe given to Alice B Toklas and shared with the world. And now I'm happy to share it with you.

ABDULLAH: Ah, that's so nice. Here. Would you eat one with me?

Bean: Abso-fucking-lutely.

ABDULLAH: Excellent. Well here's to you Bean.

Bean: Here's to you and to Alice B. Toklas.

ABDULLAH: And to you at home as well. I love you Alice B. Toklas.

ABDULLAH: Great Moments in Weed History is a spoke media production. It's hosted by me Abdullah Saeed and David Bienenstock, AKA Bean. We're produced by Cody Hofmockel and Brigham Mosely with help from Lee George and Reyes Mendoza. Special thanks to gold diggers studio.

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Bean: Our executive producers are Alia Tavakolian and Keith Reynolds. Check out our show notes where you'll find more information about things we discussed today and links to our sponsors. And very special thanks to all of our supporters on Patreon. Find out how you can help support the show and get cool benefits by visiting patreon.com/gmiwhpodcast. And if you're enjoying our show, please tell your friends about it at your next smoke sesh.

