

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

Audio Logo: Spoke media.

ABDULLAH: Hey, how's it going folks? It's Abdullah

BEAN: And Bean

ABDULLAH: And welcome back for yet another edition of Great Moments in Weed History. On this show, my partner Bean and I are both cannabis journalists and media makers go through one of the more fascinating points in the very, very long history of cannabis. I myself have no prior knowledge of the story we're about to hear. I'm going to be hearing it fresh just like you are and Bean has researched and written the story he's going to be telling it to us. We're going to smoke some weed and we're going to have some fun, so join us. Bean, what do you got going on for us today?

BEAN: Oh, today's story is a rocket ship ride. And it is about somebody who has had a profound impact on my own life, whose work in the world of, we'd set me on this path and changed the course of my life, but who I'd never had an opportunity to actually meet everybody in weed knows what this person accomplished. But very, very few people know this person's story. So it's with a lot of joy and anticipation and a responsibility. I think that I am here to share it with you and I cannot wait.

ABDULLAH: I can't wait to hear it. I have a couple of ideas as to who we might be talking about, but I'm going to wait till you tell me a little bit more. All right. So I've got this joint role here. It's looking pretty good, so we're pretty much ready to go,

BEAN: But maybe some of our listeners are not quite ready to roll or join it up or blunted up or got the bowl pack. So hit pause if you need to get yourself prepped. Because like I said, this is a rocket ship of a story. You don't want to be fumbling around what you're doing. You want to be settled in, ready to spark it up with us. Once you got that accomplished,

ABDULLAH: I think we might be ready

BEAN: For yet another

BOTH: Great Moment in Weed History.

AUDIO LOGO: Spoke Media.

ABDULLAH: Okey doke, I'm going to spark this thing up. Why don't you kick us off Bean.

BEAN: The hero of today's Great Moment in Weed History, let it brief, deeply troubled, but ultimately triumphant life, often underground and rarely more than one step ahead of the law at once a weed smuggler, a renegade publisher, a political revolutionary, a social misfit, a cosmic prankster, and a protol punk. He once described his life goal as quote "going all the way, whatever that may bring."

ABDULLAH: All right, so I'm pretty sure we're talking about the founder of High Times Magazine. Is that right?

BEAN: Uh, I think I gave you one too many clues. Yes. We are talking about Tom Forcade, founder of High Times Magazine. Obviously a place where I worked for over 10 years, starting in 2002 very proud to be a part of that tradition, particularly when you understand the real roots of this magazine and what it came out of and what it symbolized for the people who started it. And for so many people who, who have cared about it along the way.

ABDULLAH: I definitely know some pieces of this story that I've heard over the years. I definitely know that he had a really interesting, a really accomplished, really turbulent life. So I'm excited to hear the rest of this story. Let's go.

BEAN: I think before we get into his life story, I just should mention, you know, I broke any association with high times two years ago. Uh, I guess the easiest way I can put a bow on this is to say a magazine that was founded by this completely radical person is now being run out of a hedge fund office.

ABDULLAH: It's a shame. So it's important to remember people like Tom Forcade. It's important to remember the sentiment with which magazines like high times were actually started.

BEAN: His dream that cannabis would be accessible to everyone is closer than it's ever been. And I think that's the important legacy.

ABDULLAH: So with that said, let's get into the story.

BEAN: All right. Born on September 11th, 1945 Gary Goodson, that was his original name, grew up in conservative Phoenix, Arizona, where he came of age surrounded by the desert, perpetually seeking thrills and deeply obsessed with airplanes, weapons, and drag racing. His souped up 1940s era at dune buggy. So in 1963 he enrolls at the University of Utah. He chooses business administration as like his pretty decidedly square major. He goes steady with a conservative Mormon girl. Um, and so he just sort of seems like, oh, he's going to be sort of a working class hero with a wild streak, you know, just like his old man just off-campus while he's there, he is witnessing the birth of an underground newspaper called the Utah Free Press,

which was sort of the local Oregon of this growing underground media scene in the United States.

ABDULLAH: Interesting. So in Utah, this was happening and even more conservative place. So how did the Utah Free Press come to be?

BEAN: Yeah, this is really, really interesting and central to this story. And there's a great book called Smoking Typewriters that documents all of this underground press movement in the United States and

ABDULLAH: No relation to the typewriters strain that's really popular right now, uh, out there for anyone who's actually smoking typewriters right now.

BEAN: Wow, that's a great plug for the book. Um, so what happens is somebody develops this process called photo offset printing. Um, the technical parts are not that important, but it makes it much, much, much less expensive to put out a newspaper. All these independent newspapers start to pop up. People realize I could put a newspaper out, it's not that expensive. And now I can say whatever the fuck I want.

ABDULLAH: Wow. It's like a second revolution of the printing press. Like, you know, the made it easier, it sort of facilitated, uh, all these smaller organizations to be able to put out a paper. It's like the fucking internet.

BEAN: It's like a pre-internet and in the same way it opens the discourse to a lot of people who were kept out of it simply by the barrier of expense. And at the same time, we're talking about 1966 when the Utah free press, uh, comes up and, and, and when Tom facades in college and, and encounters this, there's also this youth uprising just starting to happen. So it's like perfect timing. So the Utah Free Press offices, which are just off campus in addition to putting out this radical underground paper, they also serve as a local safe haven for leftists of all stripes. And remember this is in Utah,

ABDULLAH: There's leftists in Utah. Where are they hanging out?

BEAN: At the Utah Free Press offices. And so, you know, spurred on by this offset printing revolution, the wildly transgressive newspapers that comprise the underground press of the time all shared a pension for disseminating ideas that fell far outside the mainstream, particularly in terms of sex, drugs, politics, religion, and you know, the inherent wisdom of attempting an overthrow of the government. So in all in 1966 in a really short span, he earns his university degree after just two and a half years of study. He is brilliant. He marries his college sweetheart, this Mormon a woman, he gets a square job and he signs up for the air national guard because he wants to learn how to fly a plane mainly and he wants to get out of the draft for Vietnam. So at the time if you could get in the air national guard and you're defending America,

ABDULLAH: You don't have to go abroad to war.

BEAN: Yeah. That's what George W. Bush did before he just ditched even the National Guard.

ABDULLAH: Yeah, that's right. I remember that. That he served in the national and then bailed on his duty

BEAN: Once he got out of it. But so, and he really wants to learn how to fly planes and that's going to come back into our story in a little bit.

ABDULLAH: Ah, okay. If we're talking about weed and planes, we'd only be talking about smuggling and smuggling constitutes some of the most awesome stories in recent weed history. I think, uh, you know, since the invention of planes, it's been used to move drugs all over the world. Uh, and I'm guessing that's gonna factor in at some point otherwise right now, uh, he's still kind of on the straight and narrow.

BEAN: Yeah. He's sort of living this double life where Gary Goodson got this square job, just got married, just graduated college and essentially joins the air national guard, like kind of a squares pad that you could take. But then Tom Forcade is walking this completely other path and it comes to a head when he's at boot camp for the air national guard. At which point he either has, or in a very Hamlet way, fakes a mental breakdown.

BEAN: Ah, that gets him out of his military commitment. He gets an honorable discharge or you know, he doesn't get a dishonorable discharge, I'll put it that way. Okay. Uh, so next in, you know, like pretty short order, he quits his job. He gets a divorce, he takes the name Tom for sod full time, you know, so like vestigial appendages, he's dropping these last connections he has to the straight world. So free from all that Tom facade took up residence in a ramshackle old Victorian in Phoenix. His growing band of acolytes crashed out on bare mattresses upstairs while the ground floor was given over to an ever expanding library of underground newspapers from all over the country.

ABDULLAH: Oh wow. Okay. So, so he's become kind of the de facto archivist for all of these subversive, uh, free press magazines. That's incredible. And at this point, there's hundreds of these right?

BEAN: At this point, there's probably dozens of them or a couple of does. It's, it's growing quickly and the thing is, no one's cataloged it and there's no internet. They're not even always aware of each other. And some of them are very big if you're in a bigger city, but some of them are quite small. So he's really the first person to kind of connect all of these dots. He founded his own, uh, underground newspaper in Phoenix called Orpheus. Uh, I love this one cover of it sported a real deal, bullet hole piercing through a peace symbol that what was, what was on the cover. The entire issue had been carefully laid out to incorporate the bullet's trajectory through

each stack of issues, which Tom gleefully shot himself one by one at point blank range with a Colt 45 automatic.

ABDULLAH: So the theme, this magazine around this bullet holes, sort of artistic choice, and he actually sat there and fired bullets through each bullet.

BEAN: This was a one off, it wasn't.

ABDULLAH: Gotcha.

BEAN: So pages layout had a space for this bullet hole and then he'd take a Colt 45 shoot through the stack issues and they're ready to go out.

ABDULLAH: Oh, that's brilliant. Yeah.

BEAN: Tom's personal style evolved along with his political views. [inaudible] standing five foot seven shout out with a thin limber frame. He grew his hair out

ABDULLAH: Shout out [inaudible]

BEAN: Well, which one of us is going to grow a Fu Manchu mustache and he takes two dressing alternately in either all black or all white. Mainly like Western style hats and jackets. Sometimes he even wears a Cape. So the effect of this, depending on your take on him, is that he's either this magnetic, like nearly mythical figure, perpetually oscillating between shadow and light

BEAN: or he's like a disheveled extra from a spaghetti Western [inaudible] and he wrapped to use the parlance of the time. Do you know what that slang means?

ABDULLAH: No.

BEAN: Like predating even rap music in the 60s. It's like a deep, long sustained conversation and that really kind of comes out of the weed culture of the time. People who had grown up in the 50s in the stifling environment like free speech is just kind of wiling out. Just like the idea that you can really say what's in your heart to another person, uh, is like this new concept. And they call it rapping.

ABDULLAH: It's like when you hear in an old movie or something like a hippie being like, Yeah man. And that's why like, you know, like, Oh, we can't be held down. You know what I'm saying? We got to come out of the seams, man. You know what I mean?

ABDULLAH: Like going wild and saying that shit, it's very rhythmic, sort of very impassioned. Uh, and depending on the content can be very convincing as well.

BEAN: And so like cash moves through him constantly and we'll get to the reasons for that. And it's just a second. But his personal version of hedonism besides he really likes fast cars and he really likes good drugs. Uh, but otherwise his personal hedonism is going out for tacos. His clothes are like really carefully chosen for effect, like we talked about, but then he would sleep in the same outfit for weeks to the point that he had a, uh, you know, a personal aroma that was noted by some,

ABDULLAH: Ah, a little bit of a high low then

BEAN: [inaudible].

ABDULLAH: So he's, uh, become a pretty interesting Bohemian guy. What's he getting into next?

BEAN: So like more than dope or Liberty or even revolution publishing was Tom Forcade's and during passion. And he decides he's going to master every aspect of it. He learns writing, editing, type, setting, layout, circulation, promotion. Uh, he's selling the ads for Orpheus. He learns how to do ink and paper and printing. Um, and Orpheus is like very well loved locally. People get into it. Uh, but it's not a big moneymaker. Tom, basically, he doesn't really care. He sees money as a way to print newspapers, not the other way around.

ABDULLAH: Ah, wow. So unlike every other newspaper magnate in history, uh, he's actually there for what's in the magazines, not for what the magazines can make for him, if only all magazines were like that, you know?

BEAN: Yeah. Well that's what, you know, when it comes down to all that media consolidation that we've seen, it just takes the power away from people who really care about what they're doing and puts it in the hands of the money vampires. And like the idea that High Times is run by a bunch of hedge fund people right now. I couldn't think of a clearer metaphor, but for Tom, so he's got this magazine, but he needs more money. He wants to expand. He's got a whole plan to basically start a revolution. How do you think he gets that money?

ABDULLAH: Hmm. How do you fund a drugs magazine? I'm going to guess that we get involved and I'm going to guess that pilot's license also gets involved.

BEAN: Yeah. Well, he starts them little smaller than that. And you know, remember, he's right in Phoenix, so he's very close to the border with Mexico. So he starts making these smuggling runs down to Mexico, uh, which at that time for him involved little more than just driving over the border, you know, make contacts there. People who would supply him with tons of sativa, weed very inexpensively. He'd stuffed it into his vans wheel Wells, and then he'd just drive back over the border into El Norte.

Speaker 6: Okay.

BEAN: Weed is just coming on the scene in a big way. You know, we'd, history goes back 10,000 years. We always talk about that. But for Americans in the mid to late sixties, you're starting to see weed commerce grow, but there's just still nobody really paying attention. One guy driving, even a guy with a Fu Manchu mustache.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. It wasn't showered and

BEAN: Yeah hasn't showered in a week with a van can just drive right back over the border, uh, with the wheels Wells stuffed with a good sativa. Yeah, it definitely simpler times. Um, and so from his earliest experiences, smoking weed, he's always considered it like a spiritual sacrament, political catalyst. He thinks weed is gonna help bring on this revolution. He thinks it's cultivation sale and distribution is like a righteous act of civil disobedience, but more than the weed, the money or sticking it to the man, he gets into the rush of smuggling.

ABDULLAH: Uh, he becomes an adrenaline.

BEAN: He was always an adrenaline junkie. Remember, he's driving that dune buggy around, he wants a fly planes. This is just like the ultimate rush. This brings it all together. And so he's operating on a really small scale. He's got a military brat sense of discipline. He's not fucking around. He's a very serious person at all times, no matter how wild. Uh, the endeavor, and this is a few years before the DEA and the launch of the modern war on drugs. So his gentleman, little smuggling operation kind of goes blissfully unnoticed.

ABDULLAH: Hmm.

BEAN: But his radical publishing draws heat.

ABDULLAH: It's just like, you know, a toss up as to which one's gonna come back and fuck you first. Yeah. I mean those are two kind of dangerous businesses to be in a and now this shit's about to hit the fan bumper. What happened?

BEAN: So like, and this is all really well detailed in that book, smoking typewriters and I, I really want to give that book its due because it's thoroughly researched account of, of this situation. Um, and so like many other underground press outlets of the era, Orpheus's headquarters was targeted by the FBI and local cops in a coordinated drug raid. So like what you are saying, which is going to fuck you first. Well it's this combination.

ABDULLAH: Oh my God. Okay. So he's being double rated raid squared, raid squared.

BEAN: And here's the thing, they're angry about his newspaper. They say who the fuck is this guy? And then they say, well laying all these hippies, we can just set them up for a drug bust.
ABDULLAH: So he's fucked at this point.

BEAN: Well he's on the man's radar and that's never good. And I think it's really important to know, you know, this is the way the war on marijuana as it was called, functioned. You know, they wanted to target communities that they didn't like. Uh, the first amendment prevents them from fighting media, so they just use the drug war. And in this case they go after Orpheus by drug rating the headquarters. And this is going on at, at underground newspapers all over the country. And it gets worse after this raid, there are two anonymous firebomb attacks against Orpheus headquarters, which is also his home. And this leads Tom Forcade to outfit the Victorians windows with mesh wire. And they reinforced the front door with a heavy bar. And so you got a guy who's already paranoid by nature and now he's squarely targeted by the authorities and or these of like a local right wing reactionaries. And that brings on sort of like the first signs of bipolar disorder that's going to plague him for the rest of his life. And I really think could be PTSD from, from going through this, this is your home, this is your dream where you make this magazine, you've brought all these people together and to have it firebombed twice. I mean, I can't imagine how that feels.

ABDULLAH: His home, the archive that he's built, his place of work is under literal attack from federal authorities. What the hell does he do?

BEAN: So ultimately, you know, he's a military brat and he realizes this is unwinnable and we need a strategic retreat. And so he abandons this communal crash pad and what he decides to do is convert a 1946 Chevrolet school bus into a mobile publishing unit and he beats it out of town. Ultimately he's headed for New York city because he's just been offered a job at a place called the Underground Press Syndicate, which is like an associated press of the underground press.

ABDULLAH: A perfect job for this guy. You know what I'm saying? What better place for him at this point?

BEAN: Yeah. And he'd been really foundational in starting it. He's not one of the literal founders, but because he had this big archive, you know, he was a big part of getting the ups off the ground and now he's been offered a job in New York. And so he's got this school bus and he's got it all set out so that he can still keep making copies of Orpheus as they're fucking driving around. And along the way. So between Phoenix and New York, he's got a few of his crew are like, fuck yeah, we'll go to New York with you. Let's do it. They get on the bus, they stop at other underground newspapers, meet people, just crash on the floor with people. They stop at a radical media conference that was held in Michigan and they make an issue on the bus to sell along the way. Um, and they're meeting all these people and it's kind of like getting a sense of what's going on with the underground press at this super critical moment.

BEAN: Um, and they start to realize to larger or lesser extents, everybody's getting hassled. Everybody's getting set up for drug busts, you know, and they start to realize this is a coordinated campaign. This is being orchestrated at a higher level. And ultimately we come to know it's the FBI helping all these local cops and, and state cops fuck with the underground press. And you know, this is why we have a Fox News in this country just spewing right-wing propaganda as a TV network and we have no real viable alternative to it, it was killed in the, and it was suffocated in the cradle by these drug busts Tom Forcade and his Merry band are in this bus. And on their way to New York, they also make a stop at a place called concert hall productions, which was running the media campaign for that summers, Woodstock, music and arts festival.

BEAN: This is 1969. These are the people kind of running the PR campaign for Woodstock, which was being overwhelmingly promoted through these underground, uh, newspapers.

ABUDULLAH: Ah,

BEAN: That's how they got so many people out to this thing.

ABDULLAH: So they were actually running ads, uh, in all of these alternative press papers.

BEAN: Yeah. So Tom knows them from that. And he decides to stop in as a representative of the ups and now ad. So a guy named ed Dwyer, who's a literal friend of mine, definitely a friend of the podcast later, he's going to serve as high times first ever editor. He remembers that Tom sorta showed up unannounced in this bus full of people parked in the parking lot. He comes in, he's dressed in this, you know, Western outfit, all in black on that occasion with the, with, with the Western hat and everything. And he just kind of charms everybody.

BEAN: He meets a, he gets a whole bunch of new advertising for the ups papers, for woods, you know, for Woodstock ads. And then he sweeps the places, receptionist off her feet so much that she quits her job on the spot, gets on the bus that day and goes to New York City with them and she becomes Bonnie to Tom for Forcade's. Clyde.

ABDULLAH: Wow, no kidding. So this guy rolls in, his all happens very quickly. He seduces there, his secretary, she quits her job and rolls out with 'em and he makes a massive impression and then he just dips out.

BEAN: Yeah. He's next stop New York city, you know, this is the end of the tour. And, and Cindy is like a great match for him. She's pretty wild and outrageous too. And, and this is very important. She can like smoke him under the table.

ABDULLAH: Oh, awesome.

BEAN: Which wins his immediate respect of

ABDULLAH: Bad-ass gal.

BEAN: Yeah. And she also sort of helps, like she's much more worldly than him, so she helps him kind of adapt to life in a big metropolis and sort of all the scenes that they're getting into. They land in the lower East side of New York, which then is like this wild place and he's got all this weed from his smuggling, so he's just kind of on the scene, got great weed. He starts meeting all kinds of people. Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin and the hippies are kind of ascendant and, and he falls right into this New York counter-culture.

ABDULLAH: Wow. It's all happening as they say.

BEAN: Yeah. And uh, you know, we're going to have to take a little break in a second to smoke some weed and get paid for it, which is lovely. Um, and when we come back, I'll tell you about how Tom Forcade set up one of the most legendary weed distribution networks in the history of New York City.

AUDIO LOGO: Smoke Weedia.

ABDULLAH: All right, we're back. I'm rolling up our second Jay here. Stoked to hear the next chapter in the story of Tom Forcade, Bean let's go.

BEAN: You know, this is definitely a multiple Jay story if you're smoking along at home. Okay. So we, I promised you, I would tell you about this legendary weed distribution ring that he sets up. Yeah. It's dubbed Bobby's because there's this fake name Robert Smith listed on the door buzzer that you ring to get into the apartment. Um, but the entire enterprise is actually this huge massive loft on lower Broadway that Tom Forcade has specially outfitted to accommodate all these kind of pretty big dealers that he's supplying from his smuggling rounds.

ABDULLAH: Gotcha. And this is in New York city.

BEAN: This is in New York city on lower Broadway. And this is wholesale. You're not popping into Bobby's to pick up an eighth.

ABDULLAH: So at this point he's still involved with the underground press, but he's also selling weed out of this place. Bobby's,

BEAN: Yeah. Except now he's like long graduated from, you know, driving wheel wells full of weed across the border. And he is actually overseeing a small cell of people who are flying in plane loads of connoisseur, quality weed from Mexico, the Caribbean, Latin America. This is the era of like Santa Marta Gold, Colombian Red, uh, and he's really focused on finding the connections in these places, bringing in the best weed he loves. You know, sometimes he's

flying the planes himself, sometimes he's just running the operation, but it's getting bigger and, and yeah, it's that golden era of weed smuggling.

ABDULLAH: It sounds like he had some of the best in the world.

BEAN: Yeah, man. We're talking about a real outlaw era where it's people who believe they're breaking a law that's wrong. But this becomes kind of a pretty big operation over time. And as Tom Forcade himself explained, there are only two kinds of weed dealer. Those who need forklifts and those who don't guess which kind he was.

ABDULLAH: The fork lift guy and I'm guessing

BEAN: He was the forklift kind. Holy shit. But he is like you said, he's still got his day job at the underground press and ticket office where he's his business acumen to grow the organization into like now it is hundreds of different papers. He gets a contract to have all those papers put on microfiche, which brings a lot of money into the ups, really helps out all these small papers. Um, but at the same time he's keeping a real focus on the way the government keeps fucking with the underground press. And here's something he wrote in, in an underground paper with obscenity busts. They get your money with drug busts, they get your people with intimidation, they get your printer. So they're like going after the actual printing presses and telling them not to publish these papers.

ABDULLAH: under threat, essentially

BEAN: Under financial threat for sure. They say we're going to make life really, really difficult for you. And you know, a printing press, prints, all kinds of stuff. So for them to go to the wall against the FBI over one little paper. Um, this often puts these underground press right out of business. They have nowhere to print.

ABDULLAH: And the fact that these authorities are so hell bent on shutting these places down these little places shows that they had hit a nerve, that they were actually saying something that the federal government was concerned about, that the Nixon administration was concerned about, which means that people should probably know about it.

BEAN: Yeah. And he goes on with bombings. They get your office and if you can still manage to somehow get out a newspaper, their distribution monopolies keep it from ever getting to the people and he fumes against it in the press. But this is kind of my favorite pushback in Tom Forcade history. Uh, on May 13th, 1970, Tom traveled to Washington DC and a stretch limousine painted with the red, blue and gold of the Vietcong flag in order to testify before president Richard Nixon's commission on obscenity and pornography.

ABDULLAH: Wow. That is a hardcore move. This is during the Vietnam war.

BEAN: Yeah. 1970.

ABDULLAH: Yeah. I mean, that's pretty intense. That's the equivalent of a, you know, painting your car with an ISIS flag and showing up to like a congressional hearing with, it's very, very hardcore demonstration.

BEAN: Yeah. And then we're just getting started here. But so what's going on is they're using literal obscenity busts against the underground press saying these newspapers are obscene and that's why we're taking action against them. But in the same place, pornography and I have nothing against a ethical, pornography is being sold openly in the same place. So Tom Forcade is saying, how can you bust my ups paper for obscenity when you allow pornography to be sold at the exact same newstand?

ABDULLAH: Yeah, yeah. It's pretty insane thing. And I think the answers that the free press is far more threatening to their sensibilities than the pornography. Even if on paper, the tools that they wheeled a to call out, the free press also would include pornography in their whole thing about morality. You know what I'm saying? Like the content they're making is not really threatening. It's entertainment. It's the kind of entertainment that engages people to the point that they don't pay attention to the shit that's really going on. The free press is literally, they're explicitly telling you in black and white, this is what the fuck's going on. That threatens the government and they're taking action.

BEAN: Yeah, absolutely. So, but, uh, as a representative of the underground press syndicate, a Tom Forcade was actually invited to speak in front of this congressional committee. Now they're trying to kind of set him up as the fall. They, they think they're going to bring him in, make him look bad and bolster their own position. You know, this is like a setup. You're being called in to the principal's office essentially. But Tom Forcade plays it a little different. And the Los Angeles times would later site Tom facades prepared remarks before this commission as quote, the highlight of one of the most bizarre hearings ever held on congressional premises.

ABDULLAH: That's fucking awesome. Of course, they invite mr Fu Manchu at a White Cape, uh, with a Victorian house full of, uh, the world radical magazines, uh, to actually testify. At this kind of hearing. You're going to get a fucking show.

BEAN: You're going to get an ear full. And I'm gonna, I'm gonna read you just an excerpt. I actually, I need a couple of puffs on this before I can really imbue, uh, the spirit of these remarks that I'm about to give you just a short excerpt. This Keystone committee is engaged in a blatant McCarthy witch hunt and is the Vanguard of the brain police. The mind monitors the thought thugs, the honky heaven whore is grasping to make thought criminals out of millions of innocent citizens. You are 1984. With all that implies, what pretentious arrogance to attempt to impose your standards on the public while you Jack off in the censorship room.

ABDULLAH: Ah, standing ovation, the room goes wild. That is awesome.

BEAN: Martica fuck off and fuck censorship. You uptight. Smokey the bears of the totalitarian forest, rushing around with shotguns for shovels trying to quench the fires of freedom. You make me puke, green monkey shit. I'm like, yeah, and of course he is. He's using these supposedly obscene words to just show them, I am honored, afraid, and your rules mean nothing to me, and I'm going to express myself in the way that my people relate to. And I love that. And he says, you know, you're trying to quench the fires of freedom in opposition to this. Our program is liberation. Total freedom to which we are totally committed. A dictatorial structure cannot withstand the absolute power of an underground media that can turn out a half a million people at Woodstock or a million people to sit on Nixon's back porch until the war ends.

ABDULLAH: Yeah.

BEAN: And we will know more passively accept the suppression of our voice, then we will have our bodies. There can be no free country without a free press. And if there be no free country, then there will be no country.

ABDULLAH: Wow. So very, very strong words. He's essentially telling them that we are the people and we'll sacrifice ourselves. I mean, that should scare the shit out of the fat white suits sitting on that panel or whatever. Right. This is very clear and present danger to their state of mind. And, uh, to the system that they've very carefully put in place.

BEAN: So the commission on obscenity sat dumbfounded, throughout Tom Forcade's, lengthy diatribe and I only gave you a little, a little representative sample. And then when he finished one of the commissioners asks him, would you mind explaining to me how we have engaged in a McCarthy-esque witch hunt? Which Tom Forcade's replies. Uh, I actually believe I have material in my box to explain that. Uh, he opens this box that he brought with him. He pulls out a whipped cream pie, runs up to the head of the commission who just asked him the questions and, and pies him in the face and

ABDULLAH: Holy shit, he actually pied the fucking guy. That is legendary. That's incredible.

BEAN: That there is an amazing picture of the pie in the picture has, has already hit his face and is kind of rebounding off his face. And you can see a bit of his expression. You could see that he's covered in pie. The pie plate is still in sort of midair. Tom's arm is still fully extended. You see the cowboy hat, it was on the cover of the New York Daily News.

ABDULLAH: Wow.

BEAN: And in a lot of newspapers.

ABDULLAH: Okay, so now he goes to jail. Like what happens?

BEAN: No man, it's the 70s.

ABDULLAH: Everybody's cool with this guy. That gradual pieing was no big deal.

BEAN: No big deal. It was expression. You know, they don't wanna you know, I don't know why, but you know, there's no consequences to that particular thing and nothing happened as a result of that. ,

ABDULLAH: He wasn't, they weren't like, Oh, uh, you're not allowed uh, you know, in the building anymore.

BEAN: No, and I can't recommend that. Pieing in the face is, you know, we see this milkshake King thing now. Oh yeah. We're going to talk a little more about pie in the face tactic in a little bit. So [inaudible] for them.

ABDULLAH: Oh nice. I'm glad this is a theme.

BEAN: In the meantime, Tom Forcade didn't just push back against the government. He is also like pushing back against the straight media, which is coming in and trying to co-opt all of this youth culture and take it over and take out the politics and still make all the money. Um, as an example, he worked really closely with the people who promoted Woodstock and he saw how they put all of their life force into it and almost went broke trying to make this concert. Uh, and then Warner Brothers sweeps in at the end and they make \$50 million off a concert film. Uh, that only costs them 500 grand to make while the people who really created Woodstock and created this culture, uh, almost, you know, were bankrupted by it and, and walked away with nothing

ABDULLAH: That's fucked.

BEAN: So he denounces that as like a classic rip off, but he goes a step further and he helps found this organization called the rock liberation front. The point of which is to like target people in the music industry who are profiteering but not giving anything back to the scene and the culture. Most notably the RLF with Tom Forcade once occupied the offices of Phil Spector. Because he had put on this concert for Bangladesh with George Harrison, but afterwards, all the money was sitting in escrow and he had made a lot of money and none of it had gotten to know people in Bangladesh. So the RLF shows up. Tom Forcade's got a, a basket that says free food for music execs and it's full of rotten produce, which he just starts throwing all over Phil Spector's office. So a huge fight breaks out in various accounts. Phil Spector pulls a gun out, but ultimately because they have the underground media to back them up, all of these stories are starting to come out. Look, this was a rip off this guy, Phil Spector is ripping people off the pressure that makes him ultimately cough up the money.

ABDULLAH: Oh, amazing. Wow. So it actually worked.

BEAN: It actually worked, but that was just like a warmup for his next big confrontation. So Tom Forcade's next big confrontation is a much bigger target than Phil Spector. He goes down to Miami for the Republican national convention in 1972 so this is Nixon running for reelection.

NIXON: I have again proudly accept your nomination for President of the United States.

BEAN: And he arrives there and there's a lot of protests going on at the convention, you know? Yeah,

CLIP: We are The Vietnam veterans against certain terms that we can longer tolerate murdering for prophets and racist genocide in Southeast Asia.

BEAN: So he sets up shop and the top branches of a eucalyptus tree in Flamingo Park in Miami, which has been redubbed the people's park. And he calls this tree the people's pot tree. And what he does is he's up in the branches with a big bag of weed broken down in the little bags of weed. [inaudible] people on the ground find his operative, give them the money, the operative walks off, and then he drops a bag of weed down to the person.

ABDULLAH: Oh man. How magical. Well, what a delightful way to buy weed that you literally just give somebody money and it falls out of a tree.

BEAN: It's like an autumn leaf, you know, falling down and you just catch it in your hands. A nice little sack of weed.

ABDULLAH: Beautiful.

BEAN: So the, the Miami cops kind of realized that this is going on, but they've got thousands of really angry protesters all over the city and they just kind of say, all right, we're going to leave this park alone. If we can keep all the freaks in one place, kind of keep them surrounded. If they want to, uh, sell weed out of a tree, we got bigger problems.

ABDULLAH: Right.

BEAN: But that is not all that Tom Forcade has planned for this occasion. Little did the cops know that stage two of his plan called for driving a flatbed truck as close to Dick Nixon's acceptance speech as possible and then he's going to rapidly like convert it into a stage and he's got this band that he manages and they wrote a rock opera just for this occasion called "Eat the Rich". And he's like, we're going to just drive right up to where Nixon's giving his speech, pull out our instruments and blast them with eat. The rich are crazy concept noise album.

ABDULLAH: That is fucking awesome man is a wealth of really good freaking out squares ideas, man. That's seriously, you know, that's brilliant. He keeps topping himself. I can't wait to hear what he comes up with next.

BEAN: So they're in this flatbed truck and their cover story is they're posing like their official production crew of the inauguration. They're part of a Nixon's team to put this on, but on their way through security, the police searched the vehicle and they confiscate a candle, a canister of gasoline and quote other materials suitable for making a fire bomb according to charges that were later levied against Tom and Cindy.

ABDULLAH: All right, so an empty bottle and a tee shirt.

BEAN: Basically. So the truck does get waved through on some level this works. But as soon as they start to set up their band equipment, they get tear gassed and they have to retreat and they never get to play, "Eat the Rich".

ABDULLAH: Ah, that's a bummer.

BEAN: Months later though, federal indictments get laid down on Tom and Cindy for quote, the possession of fire bombs and they are faced with charges that could put them in jail for 20 years each or longer.

ABDULLAH: Holy shit. Yeah, those are essentially terrorism charges. That's fucked man. So once again, they've found something to pin on them just because they don't like what they're saying.

BEAN: Yeah. And I mean, this is like up until now, I mean, it's been these like increasingly intense skirmishes between him and the power structure. And now, you know, there's, there's very real thought that looming over him and Cindy are, you know, 20 years in prison. Ultimately they both won an acquittal after a two day trial. Uh, but the whole thing is just this incredible mind.

ABDULLAH: Fuck yeah. Shit. So I mean, he's right to be as paranoid as he's been. Like literally, uh, the government's constantly on his ass looking to take him down. That's fucked. How does he get out of this one?

BEAN: Well, they'd go to trial, which is scary. Um, I interviewed a guy, we did an episode about him, Robert Platt shorn, who did 30 years for the first time smuggling offense. And he said to me, if you ever look at a piece of paper, and it says, uh, the U S government versus your name, you're fucked. And that's what they're facing. They're facing these federal indictments, but they go to court and uh, the judge looks at the evidence and says this is bullshit and they're both acquitted. Um, but it really, really fucks with them. Uh, you know, we're going to have to leave this story here for episode one of our two part special, but I'll give you the last word, uh, from

Tom Forcade, and it's going to give you a nice preview of where this is headed. Um, at the time, right after this trial for having a firebomb at the Republican national convention, Tom for said, I had just been acquitted of an explosives charge and I went into a long period of self examination to determine what I wanted to do next. The movement was over and I needed something to keep from killing myself out of boredom and so aided by many tanks of nitrous oxide, I came up with High Times.

ABDULLAH:: Ah, okay. So after a really wild backstory, I mean, this guy has been up to so much, we're finally getting to the part where he actually starts the iconic, we'd magazine High Times only shit. I can't wait to hear the rest of the story. Come back for part two of Tom Forcade's journey through life. It's an incredible one and there's some really, really crazy shit coming up. We'll see you next time on great moments in [inaudible] history,

BEAN: And we even have a little special surprise in part two.

ABDULLAH: Great Moments in Weed History is a Spoke Media production. It's hosted by me Abdullah Saed and David Bienenstock, AKA Bean, we're produced by Cody Hoffmocker and Brigham Mosley with help from Lee George and Reyes Mendoza. Special thanks to the gold Digger studio.

BEAN: This episode was mixed by Jonathan Villalobos. 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 if you're enjoying our show, please tell your friends about it at your next smoke sesh.