

GROW

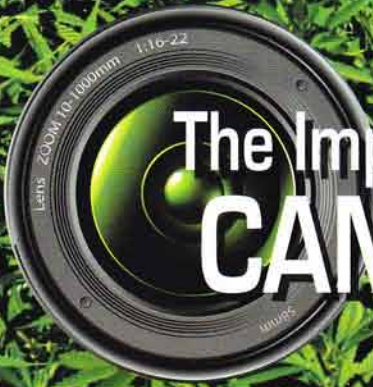
C O L O R A D O TM

**MARISOL
THERAPEUTICS**
MIKE STETLER



POTLUCK

**STRAIN
HUNTERS**



The Importance of
CAMERAS

4:20 with T.A. Sedlak

If you haven't heard of T.A. Sedlak and his new book, *Anarcho Grow*, you will soon and with good reason.

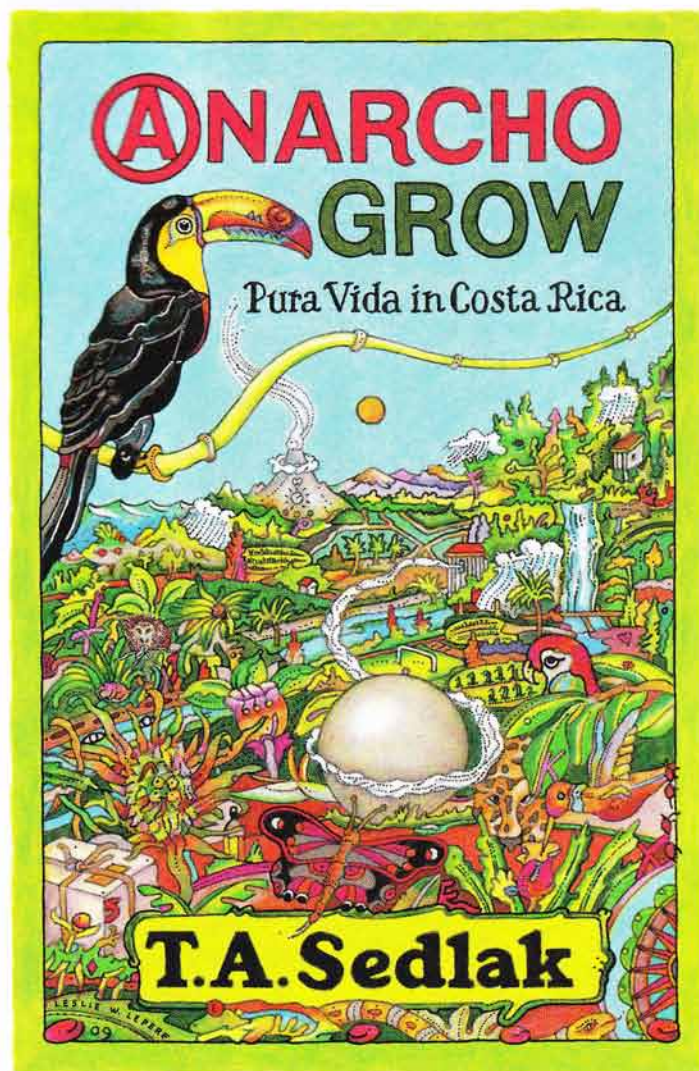
GROW Magazine first came in contact with Sedlak at Hemp Con in L.A. last February. He was manning a booth cloaked in vibrant colors of the rainforest, pitching his story to passersby.

"The main character," he'd tell us, "had done volunteer work in a village in Costa Rica during college. He later returns, thinking he can help the people more through other means and introduces them to guerrilla growing, clandestine outdoor marijuana cultivation. The community's prospering as the pot's transported to the United States by catamaran boat. However, the C.I.A. eventually catches word and heads down to check it out."

We were intrigued by the story, and delighted to bump into him two months later at Marijuana Radio's studio in Denver. There were obvious questions: How did he come up with idea for the story? Did he spend a lot of time in Costa Rica? What about their pot? We sat down for a 4:20 break and sought the answers to these questions.

How did you come up with the idea for *Anarcho Grow*?

Heavy question. It goes back a ways, probably to age thirteen, when I first started smoking pot. Weed was probably a bigger part of my life than it needed to be at times, but I don't regret it. By age eighteen I'd ordered my first seeds from Marc Emery and begun growing outdoors. Having grown up poor, I looked, and still look, at marijuana cultivation as one of the few ways one can rise from the social class he or she was born into. During college, I got someone else to care for the outdoor patches as I started to travel with my summers off. After my junior year, I spent a summer doing volunteer work in Costa Rica. The following year I returned as a drifter with a backpack full of books. By the time I returned, I had the idea for what would become *Anarcho Grow*.



It sounds like a lot of *Anarcho Grow* comes from your real life experience. How much is based on fact? How much is fiction?

Fact or fiction, it's hard to tell sometimes. (Laughs.) Well, as I said I've done a lot of outdoor cultivation, and I really wanted to get some of that experience across. There are three chapters in the book that are set in an outdoor patch. A couple characters are clearing a patch, making sure it gets optimal sun, bringing out the plants, watering and fertilizing. The book isn't instructional, but I believe anyone who's been involved with outdoor growing will look at it and say, "Yes, that's guerrilla growing." It captures the activity well, the practice and the emotions that come with it.

However, as real as that seems to me, it didn't happen. What did happen? There's a flashback to when one of the characters gets lost in the rainforest as darkness is descending. That happened to me. There's a part where the protagonist, Ben Starosta, is at a bar in small town Costa Rica, and a friend asks him if he wants to buy pot. The friend then uses the money he taxed Ben to buy crack. That happened to me. All the places are real. There's a dog in the story, Blue. He's real. But to fully answer your question, it's mostly fiction, but a writer can't help but allow some reality to slip in.

What kind of volunteer work did you do in Costa Rica?

Essentially the same as Ben Starosta, community development work. Our group built a bus stop, or most of it. We helped to forge some trails in the rainforest for tourism.

That's cool. You also mentioned that you had a backpack full of books with you there. What books did you have with you?

My favorites were *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, *Cat's Cradle* by Vonnegut, and, of course, 1984. I also read a Dickens book, *Hard Times*, *Conrad's Heart of Darkness*, and a Barbara Kingsolver novel. There had to be others. Helon Habla's *Waiting For an Angel*. That was another good one.

No T.C. Boyle? Budding Prospects?

No. (Laughs.) That's an astute comment, though. It was great for Steve Bloom to compare my book to his. To be compared to someone who won the Faulkner prize... Wow. To be honest, though, I haven't read *Budding Prospects* and didn't know it existed till Steve wrote that. It's on the list now.

Let's get a Costa Rica weed report. What's the quality level, and how wide spread is it?

The weed's a cinch to get, but it sucks. I tell people that I wrote this book to bring good pot to Costa Rica, even if it be

through fiction. (Laughs.) Since I've written *Anarcho Grow*, however, I've met one to two people that say they're growing some high grade there. People I'm going to have to try to remember because it's really schwag down there. One time, I didn't smoke for a week down there before I got it. Then I'd puff on a joint, and as soon as I felt high I'd set it down because I was afraid it'd fuck with my tolerance too much, and I'd be puffing blunts all day.

I do want to caution people about buying from people in bars, and not just abroad. Though weed's illegal in Costa Rica, there's plenty of schwag if one wants it. However, it's never safe to meet a stranger in a dark alley to score pot.

Not fun to learn that the hard way. And, is T.A. Sedlak writing another book for the potheads?

I will. I once thought that I'd go in a different direction after the first one, but now I'm starting to write articles for weed mags. The second book's in the works, and I've found I can't just remove something that's a big part of my life from the world I create. Maybe if I were a better writer, but at least I can find a home in stoner culture.

For more on T.A. Sedlak and Anarcho Grow visit tasedlak.com

*Several varieties of Colorado indoor were consumed during this interview: Purple Romulan, Sour Diesel, Sage, and Belladonna, as well as several drops of Strawberry Cough tincture

The Importance OF CAMERAS

BY: T.A. SEDLAK (AUTHOR OF ANARCHO GROW)

The two growers had made it to their patch early. The sun was low, and they hoped to finish their work before the heat came. Adam Maruska knelt, feeling the ground still moist with dew. He shoved bamboo rods into the ground and tied the branches of a marijuana bush to them, spreading the plant out like an octopus. He wiped sweat from his forehead and looked up. His eyes bulged. Fifteen feet away he saw a dark green box staring back.

“Jack,” he said.

“What?” His friend turned.

“There’s a camera.”

The paranoid couple ripped down the camera, scoured the rest of their patches, then made the difficult decision to gather their hidden tools and abandon the plants. They’d spent four



A local agent setting up a camera to catch guerrilla growers



Adam found a camera spying on him

months on the grow operation, stopping twice a week to water, fertilize, and spray with Neem oil. They invested numerous hours bringing the plants out in cups, then planting. They even did tasks not needed in the lush Midwest, like carrying out bags of potting soil, a full pallet, and dumping it into the holes for plants. Adam had just finished his last semester of college, had big plans, and was banking on one last outdoor grow. However, all his work was for naught. Such is the life of a guerrilla grower. There was a lesson learned, though. Never partake in guerrilla growing without the use of cameras.

Federal, state, and local governments spend millions of dollars each summer in an attempt to bust outdoor growers. They do flyovers, which leads guerrilla growers to become experts in camouflage. But once a patch is discovered, they use cameras to find out when the growers come and go in order to bust them.



The agents caught on their own camera

“We should have been more astute,” says Adam. “We always wore rubber boots and hiked up the creek to our patches, not leaving much of a trail. In the few places we did walk through weeds, the trails had widened out. There seemed to be new trails. I remember staring at them, thinking how unnatural it looked, at the same time, trying to convince myself it was deer.”

Pictures on the memory card inside the camera reveal the officers had placed it in the patch on August 10th. The next images are of Adam and Jack working in the patch on the 12th. Adam then found the camera on the 16th.. If it weren't for rough weather that helped knock down vegetation the officers had used to hide the camera, Adam and Jake may not have ever found it and would have continued denying that cops had made the wide, beaten paths they'd found. Perhaps they'd be behind concrete walls right now. However, if the two growers had used cameras when they started the operation, they would have known about the officers when they visited the patch on the 12th.



No one wants to see an agent in their patch, but better on film than in person

Any marijuana grower will tell you the most important part of the process is being safe. For indoor growing, that includes eliminating odor, not consuming too much power, and keeping home traffic to a minimum. For outdoor growing, it's choosing a safe place, camouflaging it, and keeping the area under surveillance. Digital surveillance is a modern breakthrough in guerrilla growing. Trail cameras for tracking game have only been on the market for the last ten years. They can cost anywhere from \$60 to \$300 (US), but it's, obviously, a small price to avoid incarceration. The photos included in this article are from a camera that retails for \$300 (US). However, we're not all purchasing our cameras with government money and might have to rely on a cheaper model. Clarity of the image isn't as important as the image itself. Generally, a patch has to be abandoned no matter who's wandered into it. So, making out the person's features might not be important.



A good trail camera can be purchased for as little as \$60 (US)

For deciding on which camera(s) to use, research should be done. A simple glance on Amazon.com revealed more than ten different trail cams for under \$100 (US), and each had multiple reviews from buyers. Customer reviews showed that one of the cheapest models had the best response time between sensing motion and snapping the picture.

There are also different features with each camera you'll want to learn about. For instance, some growers would rather opt for a more expensive camera with infrared technology than one with a night time flash.

Camera placement is also an issue. The best scenario is to put the camera in a place where it will spot intruders but is also camouflaged. If you place the cameras outside of your patches, and they're not hidden, it's likely people will just think they're for tracking game anyway. And, if those people see your cameras while trespassing, they'll be more inclined to leave the property.

Trail cameras are not only good for surveillance of a patch that has been planted but also for surveying places you might want to grow in the future. Any guerrilla grower can think of a place he's thought about planting in but is unsure if people go there. Toss up a trail cam for the year and find out.

While law enforcement seems to be working harder than ever to bust guerrilla growers, new technology has to be taken advantage of to keep patches safe. Adam and Jack lucked out in their patch. You might not. If you want to avoid being locked up, cameras are recommended.

For more by T.A. Sedlak, visit www.tasedlak.com

TRAIL CAMERAS FROM CHEAP TO STEEP

BY: T.A. SEDLAK (AUTHOR OF ANARCHO GROW)



Wildview EZ-Cam: Amazon.com Price: \$60.35 (US)

The Dope: 1.3 megapixels, 30 foot flash, 8mb internal memory with additional SD card slot, Takes 10 second videos

Review: The photo quality isn't great, but it does the job. Trigger time (time between motion sensed and picture snapped) is exceptional. It's easy to use. However, this camera poses a problem for those not wanting a flash with night time photos. Those afraid of the flash will have to opt for a more expensive model. Best for growers needing to purchase several cameras.



Moultrie Game Spy D-40: Amazon.com Price \$84.99 (US)

The Dope: 4 megapixels, 45 foot flash range, 16mb internal memory with additional SD care slot, Infrared motion sensor up to 30 feet, 2 inch LCD menu display screen, Takes 10 second videos

Review: An extra \$25 will get you lots more features, but is it worth it? Don't be fooled by the 4 megapixels. The picture quality is hardly better than the EZ-Cam. The trigger time doesn't test out as well. And, those hoping to get nighttime photos without a flash won't find it here. While the flash can be turned off, the pictures without it are unrecognizable. This camera's infrared feature is for determining that the motion is from a mammal to eliminate blank photos. The LCD screen is nice, though. You can check the photos on it in the woods. Overall, the Game Spy is probably better than the EZ-Cam, but \$25 better? Depends if you crave its added features.



Bushnell Trail Sentry 5.0: Amazon.com Price: \$149 (US)

The Dope: 5 megapixels, Night Vision, Range not given

Review: The picture quality is fantastic with a setting to choose between 3 and 5 megapixel images. Trigger time is superb. However, the whole story behind this camera is the night vision. This camera takes photographs at night without a flash. Actually, it uses an infrared flash that our eyes don't pick up. The pictures in this setting are black and white but good. However, LED lights glow when motion has been sensed. Therefore, you might want to put some black tape over the lights. For those looking for the cheapest camera with night vision, this is it. You should like everything else about it too. It's easy to use and has all the features without the superfluous features.



Cuddeback Capture: Amazon.com Price: \$194.21 (US)

The Dope: 3 megapixels, 50 foot flash range, SD media

Review: The picture quality is great, better than EZ-Cam and Game Spy. The trigger time is even a little better than the EZ-Cam and Trail Sentry. However, at \$194, one would think it would have the infrared system to take decent pictures without a flash. While this seems an excellent camera, \$194 is just way too much for most to spend. It's nice that it leaves a date and time at the bottom of pictures, and that it's camouflaged, but more is to be expected from a \$200 camera, namely night vision.

Final Thoughts:

A camera from any one of these companies could result in a lemon, and communication with the companies won't be fun, as none stand firmly behind their products. Luckily, companies like Amazon.com make returns easy.

Also, none of the cameras come with a great strap system for mounting or USB cords for viewing. Plan on purchasing them. None operate in temperature below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. It won't necessarily damage them, but it's not recommended. Any of the cameras may need the software updated through internet downloads, and sometimes SD cards have to be formatted on your computer. Good luck and grow safe!