

# From an Interview With Dennis Peron July 1977

After Dennis was shot in the thigh by a San Francisco narc, he underwent surgery and was laid up for a week at St. Vincent's hospital, which was up the hill from the Castro, near Buena Vista Park. A beautiful building, long ago converted to condos... I sat at his bedside and took down his story on a portable tape recorder.

Just now (March 13, 2018) I scanned in some pages from the interview transcript. This is primary source material for some future historian who recognizes Dennis as the Rosa Parks of the medical marijuana movement. I can almost hear his lilting voice.

The Thai people are beautiful, not just physiologically but in their hearts. They have a saying: mai pen lai. It means 'never mind.' If you got hassled about something, just forget it. Mai Pen lai. Mai pen lai. Don't worry about it... I got that feeling from those people and I tried to make it spread. I was trying to get as many GIs as possible away from that bar-prostitute scene that was really just set up for them.

So, leaving Thailand I went back to SF went to the Haight-Ashbury and was totally bummed out.

ON THE PHONE... The first bust was on a Wednesday, then again yesterday.

I'll tell you how I was shot. The police came up. We had a man at the door at the course. The narc was going out and while she was going out they stabbed the doorman and choked him. Now, these guys came up and I didn't know who they were. None of them had uniforms --no uniforms. or anything like that. Long hair, fatigue jackets, really grubby looking people. Guns, dungarees, black, third world... anybody else in my position would think it was a rip-off and that's exactly what I did think it was. So when the guy was coming up the stairs I grabbed the bottle ~~and~~ to throw it at him. I actually wasn't throwing it at him I was <sup>trying to</sup> ~~throwing~~ it in front of him to persuade him to instead of up the stairs. go down the stairs. And as I grabbed the bottle, he shot me. Shot me in the

leg and broke my bone. So, they got me for assaulting an officer which was ridiculous. I never even got to throw the bottle. It looked like a rip-off to me, no one identified themselves, they didn't show any warrant, No uppers, no downers, no coke, no nothing, see I'm very organic. I don't go for hard drugs, I don't go for what they do to people or what they do to society, so I always kept my shows really straight, really straight, Like hash, hash oil, pot, thinks like that. So what it comes down to is that the law is situated that if you have 28 grams or under it's like a traffic ticket. But if you have 29 grams it's five years. I had a little more than 29 grams of course and I'm facing five to fifteen years or something like that. For the same thing that my customers who maybe bought an ounce or two will get a fifty dollar fine, maybe, maybe they'd get a ticket. It's the magical ounce. The ounce that you can get a fifty dollar fine for had to come from the pound, which is the five year thing, which has to come from the brick, which is the fifteen year thing, I'm talking about grass of course, I have no need for anything else but grass, I mean I'm a stoned pot-head, and I've been a pot head for years. And I'll tell you, I really don't like to go public, I didn't want to go public with it because you know in this profession it's kind of best to

remain anonymous. But like now, it's come to 1977, and there's just so much that pot-heads can take. There's just so much that we can be pushed around and, they can try to stop us, they can try to stop the pot-head dealers, but what happens to the users, what are they going to do? They're either forced out onto the street, to buy on the street, where they can be victimized by anybody on the street, or they can just stop smoking and there's no way they're going to stop smoking. That's why they can keep victimizing people like me. That are sealing it, I'm out and out selling it and telling the newspapers and everybody that I'm selling it and I have been selling it for eight years and I might go to jail for it like I want to be the last one to go to jail for it, the last one convicted for making funs from cuba to miami (KTAN phone call)

We all know it has to come from a pound right? We all know that you might buy an ounce but it has to come from a pound. Well most of our stuff comes from Columbia. It's mostly imported. it comes from columbia, or from Hawaii, some of it comes from Mexico but that's really the low-grade stuff, I'll tell you about my store, what ~~is~~ it is, it was kind of set up like a market, real and there was like bowls right in front of the scales, and there was like five or six different bowls, all representing a different quality of columbian, or mexican or whatever the sign said. And there was signs, in the bowls

bowls, how much it was for an ounce, for a quarter pound, for a pound, and there were joints in the bowls. If you wanted to smoke one you just smoked it, It was a ~~be~~ very loose, very unhurried atmosphere, it was more like going into Macy's and looking at a shirt that you might want to buy, and you could try the shirt on if you wanted it, and if you didn't want it you just left. And that is the kind of operation I've been running for really like eight years. Look, I'll tell you I have been ripped off ~~with~~ eight times, so that was always my worry. I knew --I've been busted nine times-- and you know when you do it from 1970 to 1977 --in the old days they came in into your house without warrants, you know the whole thing, in the old days they wouldn't bother ~~with~~ warrants, they'd bust you right on the street or they'd frisk you down, and in '74 they got a little more sophisticated, they started getting warrants and things like that. But I have been busted four times without a warrant and of course they just dropped the charges and things like that, So I've actually gotten only two convictions in my whole life out of all the busts I've gotten