DISCLAIMER

I have tried to recreate events, locales and conversations from lore, fantasy and research. In order to maintain their anonymity in some instances I have changed the names of individuals and places. I may have changed some identifying characteristics and details such as chemical properties, relationships and courses of rivers.

That said, this is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events, locales, and incidents are either the products of the author’s imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons (living the life or brain dead) or events (real or imagined) is purely coincidental.

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On August 23rd, 1981, just south of Eureka, behind the Redwood Curtain, twelve-year-old John Delacruzcabo sounded the alarm, “The DEA’s coming! The DEA’s coming!”

This was witnessed by Angel Sullivan and her daughters. Angel’s daughters were members of an emerging group of women that kept numerous Humboldt County nail salons in business. They were at the time referred to as ‘the pot princess’, because of their interest in dating the rich marijuana growers in Fortuna. Angel grew pot but refused to train her three daughters to grow. One of the three had a natural interest that was repressed by her mother. Angel concentrated on teaching the teenager girls how to identify which males excelled at growing.

At the time, in the 1980s, the DEA, FBI and ATF resources in Northern California sought to oppress the enlightened farming community, with around 20,000 people (more than a fifth of Humboldt County’s population) involved in growing marijuana. What North Carolina was to tobacco, Humboldt was to the wacky weed.

According to Angel Sullivan, it was early morning when, just a young boy, Delacruzcabo noticed a federal drug task force assembling at the Broadway Street McDonalds. The various agents lived by a hard rule; never ruin perfectly good crops on an empty stomach. Marked and unmarked cars in the parking lot and a lot of men and one woman of the lesbian persuasion, who Delacruzcabo identified as “armed self-righteous fascist types,” congregated, ordered coffee with bacon, egg and cheese biscuits. Too indispensable to America to sit down they stood around and told each other lies about the other busts they’d been “responsible” for.

Angel was out in the woods, grooming her plants when she heard the alarm. The Bartczaks and two other families, the Khuzwayos and Reids, quickly collected their household goods. They hid their most valuable possessions in the woods and started off toward town along the trail. It was cloudy, the rain would fall that day. The muddy ground made walking difficult. It was not just an annoyance, but a terrifying walk. Every family knew the power of the Federal government to violate the 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Amendments of the Constitution and confiscate (steal) what little property they’d manage to accumulate.

The next morning, the Humboldt Herald (local newspaper) reported the news of a massive raid, part of the new president’s
“war on drugs.”1 The United States federal system, where the states were allowed certain prerogatives, was failing and the conflict seemed at the time centered on marijuana grown in Humboldt County. The federal government, in one day, had cleared thousands of acres of prime growing land. They confiscated homes, cars, RVs, and would be burning thousands of pounds of crop and drive a fifth of the inhabitants to the welfare office. The DEA had acted decisively but had neglected to capture any of the growers. This was largely because of Johnny’s warning. It wasn’t war on drugs; it was a war on livelihoods.

Months earlier, part of the left’s paranoia, following the 1980 election, the Herald had reported that there were “two hundred federal agents” planning a raid on the Table Bluff area.2 The settlement of squatters was only about 25 miles from Eureka. Despite the reports of an “overwhelming federal force,” a number of patriots armed themselves and decided to remain. Many had seen service in Vietnam and had elaborate plans to defend their plants. When no raids materialized on the Bluff, their resolve to use violence dissolved. The patriots felt safe enough to ditch their weapons and return to “peaceful grower” mode.

That August ride was immortalized in the poem published in High Times. When The Biking Trek of Young Johnny was first published, America was on the verge of a war on fun. Ivan Longtree, the author and Cal Tech professor, first came out for legalization in 1979 with the publication of his Poems on Legalization. Though he admitted the book made little impact, it was written for his best friend, Adolph Mahler, a true legalization radical and political antagonist. Longtree, who often used poetry to remind readers of cultural and moral values, warned at the end of the poem of a coming “two terms of darkness and danger and deprivation,” implying that in light of the Reagan administration, people should be “awakened and reminded” of the “midmorning message.”

Then it happened again. On the evening of September 19th, 1981, Johnny was once again needed to be a messenger. Ricky Taylor, an African-American moonshiner, was ambushed, shot and horribly burned while tending his still in Cucumber Holler. Two men growing pot nearby heard the police radios faintly in
the distance and then the shots and Taylor’s cries. They witnessed unmarked police cars hastily leaving the area. The two witnesses raced to leave the area.

The squatters in that general area soon discovered that Larry Britt and Mark Levy were missing. Fearing that these two men had also been murdered by the government and that the feds might attack them at any moment, the fearful people hurried inside a one-room shack, which they called “Fort Apache,” after the 1948 John Wayne movie.

The families still didn’t feel safe, unarmed as they were. There were no police or sheriff’s department there to protect them and everyone felt sure the DEA would attack, and kill them by morning. They decided to send a messenger for help.

The sun was down. The sky had cleared, and stars were visible. The nearest phone was a pay phone twelve miles away in the parking lot of Herbert’s Grocery. The trip to find help would have to be made in the dark through the thick forest and a forest full of booby-traps and nervous shotgun owning growers, not to mention murderous federal death squads. The squatters wondered who would agree to go on such a dangerous trip.

Finally, someone stepped forward and said, “I’ll go.” The twelve-year-old volunteer was Johnny Delacruz cabo, who later would be known as “Johnny Marijuanaseed.”

Delacruz cabo’s journey to use Herbert’s pay phone was not like the previous (August) trip to warn growers of the coming government raid. On the first run, the boy had warned neighbors. Years later, John explained his mission.

On the first trip, the Lord was with me.
I blew the trumpet and sounded the alarm.
Because the tyrants were coming for the fruit of our labor. And wherever the feds are is a nasty fire.3

What has amazed people over the years has been the young boy’s eyes-wide-open perceptiveness. Literally, hundreds of residents, many of them growers themselves, had been at the McDonalds that morning and hadn’t noticed the federal army massing there. Also, part of the legend was that the young boy

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didn’t eat or drink water until all of “Cash Crop Hill” had been warned.

The insight Delacruz cabo showed at the McDonalds when he immediately knew he needed to alarm each and every grower scattered about the hill has set the young man apart from other patriots. At the tender age of twelve, he was already specially qualified for the job.

While growing up behind the Redwood Curtain, it was quite clear that no one else was as familiar with the terrain, but to have found each and every grower to warn them was nothing short of miraculous. While both of Delacruz cabo’s trips seem to be historically accurate, patriot storytellers (often high) preferred to tell the more romantic tale of Delacruz cabo’s treks when facing the Federal onslaught.

On the second run (September), at night and conducted amidst a tumultuous and murderous political situation, the mission was to contact the Eureka police who might come protect their lives or at least witness the attack. Later it was learned that at least two side paths, Johnny had taken, had been booby-trapped with steal bear traps and countless men have claimed they were out that night with shotguns ready to open fire on any intruder. Had young Johnny ventured down the wrong trail, that night, it might be a very different story people tell.

At Herbert’s Grocery, Delacruz cabo contacted a Sgt Jeff Watts and informed him of the trouble. Legend says that Watts immediately mustered his fellow city police officers. By three in the morning, they (of their own volition) were at the base of the hill, their red and blue lights lighting up the night. If there had been federal death squads on the mountain, they’d now be pretty brave to attack the remaining growers and shiners with so many local cops near enough to hear.

When Delacruz cabo and city cop Sgt Watts arrived at “Fort Apache” shortly before sun up, they found all the squatters including Britt and Levy. The two had come out of hiding and returned soon after Delacruz cabo left for Herbert’s Grocery. They’d gotten high and not been harmed.

Now that the city police were there to protect them, the squatters laughed at the silly things they’d done in their fright. Matt Curry’s behavior earned the biggest laugh. He’d run all the
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way from his six by four Plexiglas greenhouse to “Fort Apache” with nothing on (nude), but carrying his pants over a shoulder.

The city cops wouldn’t stop talking about John Delacruzcabo, who now had made two heroic trips, a total of 36 miles and surprisingly quickly. When asked how he accomplished such an extraordinary task, Delacruzcabo replied that his “family’s livelihood, liberty, and property” had been on his mind as he trekked the distances.

John Delacruzcabo’s marathon runs through the North California wilderness to alert people of the coming tyranny has remained the best know stories of the “war of federal aggression.” His warning cries, rousing hundreds of squatters, have never been forgotten and his words have been handed down from friend to friend over the years. The Johnny Marijuanaseed story was never documented until John Franklin’s story was published in The New York Times in March of 2018.

Although Franklin’s tale seemed to be based on the seeds of truth, those seeds have since grown into a larger than life legend. Readers in the technology age haven’t had the time to question the facts and have simply accepted Delacruzcabo as a real-life hero. Since no one thought to record Delacruzcabo’s story in 1981, today we are left to wonder which parts of the California marathons are true and which parts are legend.

According to Johann Hari, an English writer and member of the press (the first journalist to document the Reagan war on drugs), all reliable records and accounts available, Delacruzcabo did make his famous trips, but he didn’t phone the police. The Eureka police wouldn’t have had jurisdiction over anything outside the city limits and (according to Hari) were known to be incredibly lazy, so Delacruzcabo couldn’t have expected to find help by calling them. It is more likely John phoned the sheriff, and he reached the rural phone not on foot but on bicycle.

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Herb is therapeutic to a free people, government is their ruin.

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Twelve years earlier (June 6th of 1968), turmoil was in the
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air as John Cervantes Delacruzcabao entered the world. The teary and visibly shaken recording clerk could hardly complete the birth certificate information. Father: Jesse Delacruztabo. Mother: Elizabeth Heinz. Born: Humboldt County, California. Date: June 6, 1968.

The stir was because of the assassination of Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles by Sirhan Sirhan. All through Liz’s pregnancy, the nation has been on edge over Vietnam and the growing social tensions, and she would later claim that the news broadcasts caused her to deliver John “a week or two early.”

All through the summer, Elizabeth and Jesse heard the chants, “Hey LBJ, how many kids’d ya kill today?” They watched protesters march back and forth. Everyone they knew was politically active, and they didn’t know anyone who voted in the Republican primary. Crowds from conservative areas would come watch the protesters with wide-eyed amazement like it was the zoo. Kids would ask their mothers, “What’s a hippy?” Parents were afraid to answer.

Things didn’t settle after John was born. The People’s Park in Berkeley began to swarm with peaceful protests, and in early May 1969 a group of conscientious Eureka citizens drove down to Berkeley in a VW mini-bus. The group included a dozen men and women. While they fashioned themselves an army of peace, no two “love warriors” were medicated alike. Some carried jugs of watermelon wine, others LSD, others weed. Some used the intoxicants themselves to reach a higher state of consciousness, and others just gave them away to the other anti-war minded activists. Some of the travelers from Humboldt actually, with words, sought to persuade the nation out of the Vietnam war. Others simply smoked weed and congregated on history’s doorstep.

The patchwork Humboldt bunch performed well. Enthusiastically they demanded peace and the American exit from the war. Some promised violence to facilitate the exit. Others simply promised to outlast (outsit) the establishment.

Elizabeth Heinz held baby John, not yet a year old, as she stood in the crowd. When the National Guard tried to reclaim the park for the university, John’s uncle Camillo and John’s father Jesse resisted.

Whether or not it is part of legend or fact, it’s said that baby
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John was utterly unaffected by the tear gas. While not exposed for any prolonged period, it is said he didn’t cry and watched the combat with great interest.

Elizabeth Heinz had been the fifth of nine children. Her ancestors had moved to Texas with Sam Houston to fight Santa Anna. There is no way to prove this, but this has been the story handed down through the generations. What is known is that Alf Heinz moved from central Texas to Daggett’s Switch, just west of Wichita Falls, in 1886 to work for the Fort Worth & Denver Railroad. He bought an ordinary frame house, built by the high school’s construction trades classes, exactly a block north of the police station. The house still stands, but there is no historical marker to distinguish it.

Elizabeth’s Heinz great-great-grandmother, Maria Heinz, died in 1901 and left her family “four hundred and sixty-two” varieties of tall bearded iris. Several of the varieties had been hybridized by great-grandmother Lydia and grandmother Rachel was the first Texas president of the American Iris Society. A love of flowers and horticulture was part of the Heinz family tradition.

John’s father was from southern California. When Jesse Delacruzcabobo was only ten, his father died in Los Angeles. He rarely spoke of his childhood and always claimed that the most important day of his life was when he moved to northern California to marry Elizabeth Heinz in August of 1967. There are no records in Humboldt County of the marriage, and the scholars differ on the exact day. Jesse maintained they were married on August 1st and Liz insisted their anniversary was the 23rd.

Jesse, a farmer and construction worker, grew marijuana and took whatever work he could find to earn a living. He never made enough money to buy his own land, but managed to always squat on unclaimed land. He did this with Elizabeth, as well, near Eureka. In addition to growing marijuana to sell, he also grew corn, potatoes, okra and tomatoes to feed his family. The Delacruzcabobo family was poor; both sides of John’s family used their green thumbs out of necessity, but generally enjoyed growing things.

John’s sister, Mary, was born May 3rd, 1970, the same day the ROTC buildings at Kent State were burned. And the same
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day Jeff Miller, Allie Kraus, Bill Schroeder, and Sandy Scheuer were murdered.

John’s brother, Jessie Jr., was born April 22nd, 1971, the last day of Operation Dewey Canyon III, where 1,100 veterans staged a “limited incursion into the country of Congress.”

In 1972, the nation was celebrating a cease-fire accord. The document, drafted by Henry Kissinger, declared a truce to be observed while a solution was sought at peace talks. Humboldt County enthusiastically supported the idea. And with Jesse now drafted and serving in Vietnam, the Delacruzcabo family was ecstatic about the talk of peace. The Eureka City Council even recorded their own declaration of peace in the official record, but hope was apparent, especially in the media.

However, the nation’s hope did not lighten the mood of the Delacruzcabo family. Jesse was in country and in the Army and (according to the Department of Defense) he was killed in Da Nang. Task Force Gimlet, Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, Jesse’s 21st Infantry undertook the last patrol by American troops in the war to seek out communist forces. They found them shooting rockets at the city. Two soldiers were killed by booby traps. Jessie lost his life on nearly the last fighting of the war. John, his sister, and his brother, were left fatherless.

Since no written record was left behind, historians can only guess what happened to John immediately after that; not yet four, John had a younger sister and baby brother. Taking care of the family, providing the day-to-day economic needs was probably beyond the ability of Elizabeth. Her family, in Daggett Switch Texas, owned a house, but the children didn’t attend school there until 1981.

The cease-fire failed, and Jessie Delacruzcabo’s body was returned. But his friends in Eureka believe he’d been killed trading military supplies for heroin. In any event, Elizabeth did not receive the promised death benefits. This was probably due to her inability to produce a record of their wedding.

Two months after her husband’s death and burial, Elizabeth married again. Her new husband, eighteen year-old Lance Cooley of Humboldt lived with his family near Eureka. After the wedding, Lance and Elizabeth rented a twenty-foot travel trailer for seventy-five dollars a month, from one of his relatives.

Again there was no written record of the arrangements, but
it is believed that Elizabeth and the children lived in her father-in-law’s trailer. The trailer, in one of the most isolated areas in Humboldt County, was surrounded by wooded hills. Trails outside the trails meandered through the forest and down to the Salt River. The area provided a wonderful playground for the growing boy. John must have used every opportunity to learn about the lush environment and the plants that grew there. It’s probably here that John developed his interest in river ecosystems.

The illegality of cannabis is disgraceful, a barrier to full consumption of a drug which helps produce the tranquility and insight, understanding and comradeship so desperately needed in this increasingly nutty and dodgy world.

Knowing what we know today about Delacruzcabo, we might easily imagine he was born on the banks of some powerful freshwater artery of at least along a tributary large enough for catching fish. But he was born on highland looking down on the Eel River. So when raindrops and snow fell on his Jesse’s trailer, it became its journey down stream, bound inevitably for the Pacific, some twenty miles way. Maybe this is what made him into what he became. When John was ten, he’d followed the river to the sea and called his neighbors to ask his mother to please come get him. She told him that he knew she didn’t have a car, he’d been foolish to hike that far and he’d now have to walk home.

Kids never think about where the water comes from or where it goes, and Johnny probably didn’t either. But he was old enough to explore, he followed the creek as it wound through a forest on steep hillsides. He potted many woodpecker pounding on trees. He aggravated flocks of crows until they scatted, leaving a great horned owl perturbed and looking down on him from high above the creek. He frequently flushed ducks.
Marijuana grows naturally upon our planet. Why is it against the law? Doesn’t the idea of making nature against the law seem to you a bit totalitarian and ... unnatural?

John’s transplanted high school years in Texas resulted mostly in Saturday morning outings along the Little Wichita River as he matured he’d pack a lunch and hiked downstream as far as he could, slowly increasing his endurance until it matched his curiosity. He’d sold bedding plants, enough to buy a used canoe from a pawnshop. The little river grew into the Wichita, larger in volume and the banks even steeper. The rivers were amazingly wild for being only a few miles from the city of Wichita Falls.

Then one day he heard the sound of trucks ahead of him on the river. Approaching cautiously, almost afraid of what he would find, he paddled under a four-lane highway. Then, not long after that he left the intimate small river and entered the Red River.

As a boy John loved the Red because it was so easy to make believe the he lived in another era. He imagined Indians on the banks but they were unable to attack him because of the quicksand.

He didn’t venture far down the Red. He was still very young for that and it was a bit frightening. One day he spotted three older boys inflating a yellow Wal-Mart raft and carry it to the Red. They cinched up their army surplus life jackets and paddle into the river’s non-negotiable current (it had rained upstream). They were living his dream and he was envious. Delacruzcaboe exited the river walked up to the truck stop and called his grandmother to come please pick him and his canoe up. He knew navigating the Red still lay beyond his ability. But he couldn’t help but wonder if someday he could plunge all the way to the end of it.

When his grandmother arrived and he’d loaded the canoe up to go home, he climbed in the cab but he couldn’t tell her what he’s seen or what had happened. Because nothing had
really happened at all. Yes, somewhere his world had changed. He now knew something that he hadn’t known before. Other boys floated the rivers. Later in college and recruited by the fraternities, he chose to pledge the fraternity that rafted the Red River.

Years later when Delacruzcabo said he hadn’t realized at the time that this day on the Red River had been such a defining moment for him. He said he had no idea the experience marked the first steps toward a lifetime of communion with all the Texas rivers. But beside the Red, on a warm summer day, he somehow bonded with the flow of the water. He loved it. He saw others navigating it. And he wanted that as well.

It's a good thing most people smoke reefer or this would be a gory, blood-smeared world.

Near the end of John’s junior year in high school, an opportunity came to John to confront all kinds of questions. Delacruzcabo drew up a plan for a bicycle trail along the river from Wichita Falls to where it dumped into the Red River. He even presented it, as a “greenway,” to the County Commissioners who promptly complimented his work (careful not to step on a young imagination) and then politely balked at the cost of the project.

Delacruzcabo lost the attention of the politicians, but caught the attention of Dr. Stanback at Midwestern State University, who was interested to see the native-based planning approach. Dr. Stanback was very gentile explaining the political realities to the young visionary. This was the beginning of a long and strong friendship between the college professor and the future Texas legend. Dr. Stanback suggested the young man continued think along these lines and encouraged more exploration of the river; perhaps it could be developed in a responsible way.

John jumped at the suggestion. The first task was to canoe the river and inventory everything he saw. Through a whole year
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of mapping the flood plains and the wetlands, of plotting the steep slopes and wild areas, of checking in the fields for the most perfect views, the essential wildlife habitats, the nuggets of local character such as large mature trees or existing access roads (where people could put boats in and get them out), the young student fell deeply in love with that simple (ugly) river, never written about or publicized, that dumped into the Red. He went down the Wichita: summer, fall, winter and spring. He never wanted to leave.

Armed with new knowledge and a lot of enthusiasm but still clueless about the scope of political difficulties in a “backwater” county, where any talk of progress was only propaganda. John wanted to make a difference. So, after graduation from high school, rather than taking a job at the experiment station or going off to A&M or Tech, Johnny took Dr. Stanback’s offer to enroll at Midwestern.

Once in college and out there on the river overnight with his friends, one thing was sure to John and that was that the rivers were the best way to travel. Everything John saw and did — watching a coyote and pups scramble along the shore, cooking over a fire, dodging sand bars, drinking beers — all of it was just fine. The river was the coolest means of going somewhere; that was the attraction. Strangely, the Wichita and Red had become his way of seeing the world.

We all need a bit to help us let everything go at the end of the day. You might have a glass of wine, or a joint, or a big mouth-watering blob of heroin to silence your silly understanding of things but (and this is key to my message) there has to be some form of punctuation, or life just seems utterly relentless. God will pass you by if you don’t slow down part of the day. That’s the most important part of our religion here in Lawton.

Johnny’s memories of his childhood in California were not particularly happy ones. He hated when people yelled at him,
“peddle Johnny peddle” like he was the bicycle’s version of Forest Gump. True, he had rode his bike to warn the town of a DEA raid and then to report a murder, but he didn’t like it people mocked it all like he was a retard. He didn’t understand that and he didn’t understand why his mother spent so much time in town.

His mother, Elizabeth, was born in Wichita Falls, Texas. She was of Swiss-German descent and known for being a whirlwind, sometimes harping and clearly she was a quick tempered woman. His father, Jesse, was mild-mannered, genuine and trusting. Originally from Tecate, Baja California, he was clearly and proudly of Mexican descent, and apparently he was a migrant farm worker for a time.

Just years after Jesse’s birth in 1941, his family made the move permanently to California. Jesse worked as a field worker and drove a tractor and handled a variety of horses for various farm interests. It was in California that he met Elizabeth. They were married in 1978, just eight months before Johnny was born. No one knows or cares to reveal, whether Johnny was born prematurely, or if Liz was pregnant when she and Jesse were married. But no one who knew them could ever claim they were a match made in heaven.

By the time Johnny came into the world, Jesse was working as a field hand outside of Fresno. It seems there were marital problems almost from the beginning. While Jesse was easygoing and trusting of others, Liz was a dominant woman and definitely the head of the household, which could be very embarrassing for a Hispanic man. She constantly nagged him in front of his friends, which upset not only Jesse but also Johnny who began to feel insecure listening to his parent’s constant arguments. It may well have been the incompatible couple had married in haste.

She wanted Jesse to progress in his work, and make sure that they saved enough money so they could move to North California and buy some land. They never owned any land but Johnny came to resent his father’s devotion to Eureka bars. Consequently, this made him grow closer to his mother who spent time with him and taught him how to grow plants (weed). In turn, Jesse became increasingly impatient with Johnny who wanted little to do with town, which is where his father found
the Tequila and the trouble that come along with it. John wished his father could just stay at the trailer and smoke like the other fathers. The alcohol was expensive and almost always lead his father to jail. Perhaps this is where John learned to fly under the radar; the cops only knew to harass you if you went into town.

By most accounts, the land they squatted on was primarily on a huge marijuana cooperative. But according to Sammy Jonson “Johnny’s mother grew fantastic peppers, tomatoes and okra. She also grew weed. I know that for a fact because I was there and a client. But I also know that Johnny idolized his mother and, however young, he felt that was marijuana was a respectable cash crop.”

Years later, when John was becoming the famous Johnny Marijuanaseed, stories emerged often made up by his friends which claimed to have delved into his past. It’s pretty much agreed they made a few changes in the true story.

Young Johnny, they said, discovered a great love of the countryside and would often go off on his own. “I hated the town when I was a kid,” he told friends. “The reason I’d go off on my own was to get away from my dad who spent all his time shoplifting enough stuff to buy Tequila.”

According to Virgil Seafine, “He ran away and was usually found and returned home. Other times he just came home of his own because he was hungry. And when he came home, it was back to a trailer where his mother was bickering. It was back to a town where the locals watch his father like a hawk. What I believe is true – only this probably came about when he was a little older and got to North California. John enjoyed his time propagating plants. When we were working together on those early tomato strains, he’d talk about California and Humboldt County. He didn’t like to go to town living here in Texas either. And because his grandmother had developed some remarkable iris, he immerse himself in the study of botany.”

Seafine continued, “I recon he must have been around ten or so or in his early teens when he fist discovered the love of genetics and an eye for improvements. And his grandmother was good for him, because he learned what become so important to him and his science, the value of improvement and the freedom to enjoy it. He was on his way to becoming a legend.”
Before he was able to hybродize plants, he learned to keep silent about his deepest feelings. “He never complained to his grandmother about California or his parents,” said Esmerelda, “and he couldn’t bring himself to tell either of one of them how much disappointment he felt about being exiled from California.”

“I loved Daggett Switch. There were so many rattlesnakes, I was always moving them from my grandmother’s garden out to the dam; mice probably lived in those rocks. I had dreams; I sacked hundreds of snakes and released them out on the rocks.” In reality, it couldn’t have been more than 20 snakes over 10 years.

Joseph Moore, who cared for many of Delacruzcabo’s plants, told me, “That’s the trouble with legends when they’re established you can never trust the embellished versions.”

Johnny apparently taught his brother and sister to swim using a local irrigation ditch, and he certainly had to learn to operate a canoe somewhere. “I was canoeing as soon as I could walk,” he said, which wasn’t quite true, but it does fit snugly into the Johnny Marijuanaseed legend.

Rather than ride the school bus, Johnny rode his bicycle. By now a loner who suffered from anxiety and shyness, he found making close friends difficult. “I got into a few fights at school because my classmates laughed ay my California accent and especially my height.”

They called him “too tall,” but never a football fan, John didn’t know about the famous football player and he didn’t take the nickname well.

“And then of course there was my reluctance to play football or even basketball. On a few occasions I came home covered in blood and dirt and my grandmother praised me for my courage, fighting for the truth or right, or whatever reason she invented for me. I didn’t feel the hero; I hadn’t won and I hadn’t even participated until I was cornered.”
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The amount of taxpayer’s money and of legal man/hours being sacrificed to prosecute hundreds of thousands of Americans who are caught with a few ounces of marijuana in their jeans simply is just plain dumb - the friendliest way to put it. A harsh way to put it is that it is bull shit, walking on basic civil liberties and on the sensible expenses of public liveliness. The only positive is that it gives losers jobs in law enforcement.

In California, John likely spent ever-increasing amounts of time outside, especially since the tiny trailer grew more and more crowded each year. Lance and Elizabeth’s first son, Nat, was born in 1972. Their first daughter, Susan, was born in 1973. Then other siblings were born at year intervals, Price, Lucy, Patty, Nicholas, Mary, Angel, and Fred.

John attended pre-school and elementary in California. Schools were very different in the 1970s. Lessons were learned from readers, “Tip and Mitten” and “Jack and Janet.” The text was printed on cheap dime novel paper that could easily be torn. Student’s practiced reading out loud. Students often kept the reader so long that soon little reading was accomplished on account that the text had been memorized. John’s teacher in California banned him from taking a reader home, on account of their “Boston Terror’s” destruction of two such readers. John’s full sister remembered how he loved to read and even borrowed books from adults before leaving elementary school. This squares with other facts known from his adult life. John was a good student and a lifelong learner.

California records are sealed to this day despite repeated petitions to have them unsealed, but it is believed that rather than turn her oldest children over to Child Protective Services, Elizabeth sent them to her mother’s home in Wichita County. John was nearly thirteen-years-old when he shepherded his twelve-year-old sister and ten-year-old brother aboard a Greyhound bus headed to Texas. He’d never see his mother.
Once in Texas, the marijuana plants, he’d loved to groom and watch grow, were replaced by American Tall Bearded Iris and his grandmother taught him how to hybridize them. Together John and his grandmother hybridized three top forty iris: *Skateboarding is Not a Crime*, *Hackey Sack* and *Vampire’s Kiss*. The necessary qualities for botanical success were all there – sun, soil, water, and genetics – he would eventually go to college, but he learned everything he needed to know about plant genetics from his grandmother and her iris collection.

The neighbor, a Virgil Seafine, was an employee of Texas A&M University and worked at the agricultural experiment station a few miles south of Daggett Switch. The neighbor’s specialty was tomatoes, hothouse tomatoes and he maintained a year ground garden in his large but personal greenhouse, growing plants throughout the harsh Texoma winter. The neighbor also dabbled in improving pecan trees, and he exposed John to that species as well. The neighbor shot squirrels who stole his pecans (a big business in Wichita County at the time). John didn’t appreciate that, but the neighbor showed him where the railroad offloaded tons of fertilizer and invariably spilled buckets full.

What more could a young man with interest in growing things need? He had a grandmother and neighbor willing to teach him anything he was curious about. He had over 500 variety of iris to experiment with, his grandmother and his neighbor’s greenhouses, a water-well and a nearly unlimited supply of fertilizer a block away.

While John was growing up in Daggett Switch, the war on drugs continued. John paid absolutely no attention to politics, sports or girls. School was something of a pain in John’s side. The coaches wanted him out for football; it was an offer he adamantly refused. Of course, and one of the finest Texas traditions, the coaches made his life miserable at every opportunity.

The term “nerd” did exist at that time and was liberally applied to anyone successful at anything other than football, not just computers (there weren’t computers yet in Daggett Switch). Because of John’s repeated success in the annual science fair, he was called that and “that science guy.” Even after NASA
accepted one of his experiments for a Skylab mission the other
students didn’t know his real name. Of course, they knew it was
Hispanic and was somewhere near the front of the alphabet
because they had to hear it every time the teacher called the roll,
but they generally refused to recall the name.

Of course, the high school biology teacher, the neighbor,
and his grandmother called him John, but to the principal even,
he was just that “science kid.” This anonymity continued even
after an article on the NASA experiment appeared in the city’s
weekly newspaper. It seems that NASA knew how to grow
peanuts in space, but what they didn’t know about was if the
beneficial nematodes would continue to be helpful in a
weightless environment.

John passed junior high’s “cigarette” stage of rebellion. He
passed on a “pistol” and “beer” and “whiskey.” At a party, even
when Troy Linthicum offered him “snake juice” (a trash can
punch) allegedly spiked with Rattlesnake venom, John passed.
Linthicum even offered rattlers in ice chests at the back of their
property as proof. But John quickly deduced it was just the
Everclear (not the venom) making his classmates wobble and
stumble around. He might have stayed to watch had it not been
a gag, but John left the party early and went home early.

John passed on a motorbike another neighbor had
outgrown and was going to just give him. Actually, he did take
the dirt bike, sold it, and gave the money to his grandmother.
The only thing John wanted was for his grandmother to heat the
greenhouse throughout the winter.

But then along came Mary Ann Young, who was the most
colorful young woman at the junior high school. Perhaps not
born for prostitution, but certainly headed that way. She taught
two boys, John and a kid named Richard Haske, to roller skate,
and at the same time. She was that good, one on her right and
one on her left. Afterward, she announced that she would next
teach them to smoke weed.

The only hold up there would be the twenty dollars each,
she wanted allegedly to go buy it. John didn’t want to let on that
he knew a little about marijuana; in fact, she’d asked him where
he was born, and he lied to her, not wanting to mention
Humboldt County. He figured maybe she liked teaching boys
stuff (teaching virginal boys was her idea of self-worth no
doubt); after all, she’d held him up half one morning at the skating rink. He liked her in return and couldn’t bring himself to suggest that maybe he knew more about it than she did. It would have ruined their relationship.

Well, it all caused quite a stir at the junior high. Richard missed three days, supposedly because he couldn’t sit down. Word was that when Richard’s dad found out that he’s stolen his rare coin collection, to give to Mary Ann, he beat his son’s ass so long and so hard with a belt, Richard couldn’t sit down for three days.

Johnny managed to stay out of the mess at school. To pay for his part of the weed, he’s given Mary Ann a couple of trays of Fat Boy, Roma, Cherry tomatoes, cucumber, and cantaloupe bedding plants. He thought maybe her family was strapped for cash the way his family had been in California. He threw in a tray of watermelon plants, and she pulled her shirt up for him to see.

When biographers contacted Richard Haske, more than thirty years after the incident and asked him if the beating was because of the marijuana, he contended that his father only knew about the coins he’d taken and that his father didn’t know or care what he was buying. Richard said, “Mary Ann was a harlot at the age of twelve, I couldn’t tell him it was for weed and he just figured she was selling herself in someway or another.”

John didn’t remember it that way at all. John told friends a very consistent story. That he’d tried to teach Mary Ann plant genetics, simple Friar Mendal stuff; she liked to smoke but she quickly became bored with how it actually worked. Mary Ann wanted results, better and stronger weed and could care less how it came about. John noted that he felt a bit used but that it got him thinking early about improving the potency of his plants.

John’s friends made it clear in several interviews that he grew seedlings in his grandmother’s greenhouse’ they looked like marigold plants at that stage. He’d hand them over to Mary Ann in exchange for a few anatomy lessons of her choosing. After she’d grown the plants to fruition, she’d bring some of the weed over and they’d smoke it out in the greenhouse after his grandmother was asleep, but without any lessons anatomy. After all, it was her weed she was sharing with him and why would she put out when she was the one doing that sharing.
Is marijuana addictive? Yes, in the sense that most of the truly enjoyable things in life are worth continuously repeating.

So, Johnny actually brought an old medicine bottle with him to Texas. He didn’t know the situation at his grandmother’s house, and he worried he might have to provide for himself and his brother and sister. He scooped up some seeds before leaving California. When he arrived in Daggett Switch, there really wasn’t any need for any of that, so he hid them in his grandmother’s greenhouse and listed them as “okra” seeds.

Some years later, after his run with Mary Ann, and in the midst of his new cannabis curiosity, Johnny went to the greenhouse looking for the bottle of old seeds, thinking to himself how much Mary Ann would love him now if he grew a few *Eureka Exotica*. He’d look like a genius if he could because John already knew what he was doing but had pretended ignorance so she could play the role of teacher, which John assumed was how she liked it. He found the bottle exactly where he’d left it, covered with dust. Excited to have it, he cleaned it off, opened it and found the seeds by then had turned to dust.

As Johnny’s medicine bottle full of seeds slowly decomposed on a greenhouse shelf, his grandmother had been teaching him how to improve plants. Had Johnny had the idea to plant the seeds when he arrived, he may not have learned the valuable lessons from his grandmother.

In April of 1981, the state 4-H office in Austin announced its annual awards for its youth farming program, presenting the state’s tomatoes championship to a thirteen-year-old boy from Wichita County named John Delacruzcaibo.

In 1982, Johnny conquered Texas again, this time for his okra, giving him the unique distinction of having attained two state 4-H championships.
The first thing about breeding pot is you have to get the right THC, it has to be pleasant and good for you. It’s not good if it gets you acid stoned, knocking you down and giving you a migraine. People think marijuana is just marijuana; it’s all the same. It’s not all the same. It’s got to be kind to you.

During the summer, many teenage boys would work jobs for wages. To help his grandmother, John may have worked at a local orchard. It’s not unlikely since John lived in the pecan capital of the world. It’s been advanced that John’s first lessons of how bigger and better plants could be monetized were from his employment in an orchard. This is doubtfully his first experience seeing money exchanged for plant material. He grew up in Humboldt County and undoubtedly saw plenty of money and things, including sex, bartered for marijuana.

Still, pecan trees were extremely important to the Wichita County economy at the time. A terrible drought from 2011 to 2015 has since devastated the orchards, but in John’s formative years he probably did learn some valuable lessons from pecan production. Pecans are the easiest grown tree in the hickory genus, not technically a nut but a drupe. Pecans have many important uses. The nut provides protein easily stored; thus pecans are a crop used through the year. Women make delicious pies year round. But most important there has always been a cash market for pecans.

Both John’s sister and brother have commented on the hours and hours John helped his neighbor take pecans out of their shell on the back porch of the Seafine house. John’s sister said, “they wore out several radios sitting there deshelling pecans.”

However, given what we know now about John’s education and upbringing, the story of John’s working in a pecan orchard may have been simply a way of the Pecan Growers Association to cash in on Johnny Marijuanaseed’s fame. While possible, there
isn’t any evidence that he hybridized or improved pecan trees. At best, he was a youth who’s job was harvesting the pecans.

In 1986, something happened between Mary Ann and John. She left for California and then Hawaii. John enrolled at Midwestern State University, located only a few miles from his grandmother’s home. John never said more than, “we went our separate ways. She went about 5,000 miles west and I went fifteen miles east. It’s wasn’t any more complicated than that.”

Reports that John turned down Ohio State and Texas A&M when they recruited him seem fanciful. While an excellent student and perfectly able to study at either of the two leading agricultural schools, John hadn’t reached the notoriety and fame he’d achieve later. Sure there was the NASA experiment, but it’s doubtful the larger schools knew who he was at that time. But, things eventually would change.

It was about this time, his college years, that John Delacruzcabo became an independent and adventurous man. He decided to strike out with fraternity brothers and canoe down all the Texas rivers.

Aside from the friends willing to talk, there is no record of Delacruzcabo’s trips. It is likely, given the geography, he started on the Little Wichita River and then the Wichita River. The Trinity crossed both Fort Worth and Dallas. The Colorado brought him from far West Texas to the live music capital of the world, Austin. His friends traveled the Nueces, the Frio and even the Pecos. His favorite, despite the quicksand and diamondbacks, was the Red River and he often commented on the red sandy soils ability to yield really nice rich marijuana.

When asked if he’d owned any land along the Red River, he responded, “Why buy a cow when the milk is free.” Obviously, the man who would become Johnny Marijuanaseed saw the Texas river system as one large rent-free agricultural experiment station.

He’d canoe the rivers pitching seeds out onto the bank. Some would take and others, naturally, wouldn’t, but it was one large evolutionary laboratory. Occasionally he’d come across a crop where locals had already come and harvested his work. On those occasions, he’d simply map the location and find a different spot the next year. But he always returned to every site; seeds might have fallen, and those plants might represent an
improvement.

It was radical; it was daring, but mostly, it was crafty. No one used the riverbanks, and most people wrote them off as dirty (red) and infested with snakes and not suited for any sort of recreation, much less cultivation. For Johnny, it was like gathering up a bunch of junk and welding it together into art. No one was using it, but he had a use for it. He had a vision for it.

Rarely, but it did happen, John would interrupt rival growers, who’d dump the marijuana in the river and speed of thinking he was the law. John must have thought, what a waste of effort and moderately good weed. “I mean they took the trouble to get out there and plant, groom and then harvest their crop. Seemed a pity to have to dump it like that and run, for no real reason at all. I rarely saw the law out there. They thought I was the law.” From that first time on, John tried to look and dress the opposite of the law. He wore bright, often too bright, Hawaiian and Caribbean shirts.

While John was in college, he was exposed to the arguments against legalization. One primarily was that it made users lazy. One of his fraternity brothers had a brother, Bart, who’d skipped college and went directly to work. Bart was plenty smart and simply wanted to get to work. He took a job at PPG’s float glass plant north of Wichita Falls. Bart had bought a nice new truck and a ’73 Corvette. He was restoring a ’36 Willys Coupe and also building a rail-job in the garage of an almost paid for a house across the street from the Country Club. He couldn’t lock up the garage because the rails were sticking out from under the garage doors.

So John reportedly asked his fraternity brother how much PPG paid that Bert could afford such extravagances and the answer was that PPG had an engineering contest, open to all employees and that the prize for best innovation was $10,000 and that his brother had won it four years straight. It was a lot of money in those days. But then Bert stopped winning and then stopped entering altogether. When John asked, “Why? Would he stop when it was so lucrative?” Bert’s brother said, “He started smoking marijuana, and now he just sits around.”

John read the scientific literature and indeed decided that the drug, might, if one wasn’t disciplined, affect one’s productivity. John made extensive schedules and checklists for
all his work, his entire life. He also encouraged every user that he met to do the same so they wouldn’t fall into the trap.

In strict biological terms marijuana is far safer than many foods we commonly eat. For example, eating 10 raw potatoes can result in a toxic response. By contrast, it is physically impossible to eat enough bud to induce death. Marijuana in its ordinary form is one of the safest medically active substances known to man. By any measure of sane investigation, weed can be safely used for medical care or recreational use, either one.

Chief Nine Wolves, of Lawton Oklahoma, knew John Delacruz Cabo for many years. He said, “People think Johnny was not an intellectual. Well, he was. He read avidly and could hold a discussion on any subject. He made himself aware of politics, both nationally and globally. Don’t even mistake Johnny for being dumb, just because he was tall and smoked weed. Acting normal was only part of the persona he used to relax people who flocked to him wanting seeds of advice and might be intimidated by his big brain.

Marijuana improves our mind in a way that enables us to take a different viewpoint from “high up,” to see and appraise our own lives and the lives of others in a fortunate way. Maybe this joyous and uplifting feeling of the ability to step outside the world and to look at life’s blueprint from this step ladder is the motivation behind the “high” slang term.

This is a happy story about a good, honorable, and courageous man. Indirectly, it is about his friends (mostly users) who were worthy of such a compatriot. There are also villains in
Johnny Marijuanaseed

doesn’t know what would have happened to John Delacruzabob had remained in California or had he relocated to a different state. Texans have always been fascinated by him.

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**Hard work is only one side of the equation; science is the other.** Most of the scientists I know use their education and the science they’ve learned as an excuse not to work. Maybe they worked to get through school but they plant nothing once they’re in their job. Academia ought to get out there and get their hands green every once in a while.

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Until Alaska entered the Union, Texas was unique among the United States by virtue of its size. In mythic, terms Texas is still the largest state. It is the only state that has a separate identity in Europe and Asia. The Texas mystique, which is as good a name as any to call this phenomenon, can be defined visually, and it can be heard in accents.

The Texas stereotype, which has a long colorful history, has been disseminated in many medias, plays, novels, television and in frontier justice, the Alamo and cowboys that rode straight toward death. The “frontiernity” of Texas chichi has grown to include Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, Tom Mix, Janis Joplin, J.R. Ewing and now includes John Delacruzabob.

The stereotypical Texan is a larger than life figure of bristle, power, and raw energy. Delacruzabob was not. If anything, he was a mild-mannered and cerebral. The stereotypical Texan speaks with a heavy drawl and has a costume as recognizable as an Arab Sheik - hat, boots and a big belt buckle. Delacruzabob had no discernible accent and from the waste up dressed as if he’d grown up on Key West. From the waist down, the Waggoner Ranch.

The typical Texans’ favorite song is “Bob Wills is Still the King” and their favorite drink is Jack and Coke. Delacruzabob’s preferred beverage was lemonade and his favorite song was “Take it Easy,” by The Eagles. The typical Texan drives a
Johnny Marijuanaseed

Cadillac or a jacked up F-250. Delacruzcabó’s ride was a 1968 Opal station wagon. Delacruzcabó was, however, polite as Texans are stereotyped. He called women, “fillies” and spent a lot of time fishing.

Johnny said to Mary Ann in 1976 when she asked him what he wanted to do, he replied: “Compete with California.”

John Delacruzcabó began leaving footprints on the river banks of North Texas during the 1980s, but his travel was faint and nearly impossible to trace today. Many stories, placing the young man on the Wichita River late in the decade, suggest that he built or bought canoes and used them to float along the river. There may be some truth to this since in 1985, a John Delacruzcabó is documented to have taken a water safety course at the Wichita Falls downtown YMCA.23

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth; to you it shall be smoked for recreation.

Interestingly, one remembrance of Delacruzcabó has been totally fabricated. According to Daggett Switch Justice of the Peace, Marc Dingleberry, Delacruzcabó was a homeless drifter who arrived in 1983. He specifically remembered the year because of the terrible heat wave and drought.24 Judge Dingleberry remembered that Delacruzcabó was new to the area, but that wasn’t accurate; there are school records of John attending both high school and junior high in Daggett Switch. In fact, Dingleberry graduated a year behind Delacruzcabó. Now, for a judge to be this confused isn’t odd. This might be part of the purposeful early pattern of many Daggett Switch citizens to disown Delacruzcabó after his death. It is doubtfully an honest mistake on the part of the judge; he’s a foolish but calculating politician.

The local newspaper however went so far as to say that
“Delacruzcabon never lived” there, that there was simply no evidence to suggest this, but the paper claimed there was evidence that he’d been run out of town as a vagrant and that Judge Dingleberry still had a unpaid tickets for “sitting on a sidewalk” and “consuming food in public.” Two city ordinances designed to rid the city of the homeless, if they ever showed up.

There were never any homeless people in the small town; and self-respecting destitute person went to Wichita Falls, where a man could at least get a decent meal.

When confronted with the false newspaper report and his own misleading statements, Dingleberry said he was misquoted, and that small town newspapers can’t really be counted on for accuracy. He went on to explain that he did remember Delacruzcabon from high school and that on Friday’s instead of wearing green and white (the school colors), John would wear a tropical themed shirt predominately the color of the opposing team. The Friday they played Vernon, he’s wear a maroon Caribbean beach scene shirt. The Friday they played Burk Burnett, he’d walk the halls wearing an orange Hawaiian sunset. “I know it bugged me and some of the others that just didn’t like the kid. He didn’t play football and maybe we could a used some help those years.”

Later, in front of an Oklahoma church congregation, John confessed that he’d been an “arrogant young man” and that it had been wrong for him to draw attention to himself that way on a day dedicated to the football team. He said he’d always wanted to live by the golden rule, “which is to fly under the radar.” John said he deeply regretted the harm he caused wearing the other team’s colors although at the time he claimed it was mere coincidence that he’s picked those shirts to wear on those particular days.

After his defamatory account to the local newspaper, in an interview with me at the Daggett Switch City Café, not long after John’s death, Judge Dingleberry now had a change of heart. The judge went into great detail about how he admired Delacruzcabon for “going down into” the Little Wichita River. “With water muddy red and infested with water moccasins, only the brave or the plumb-dumb crazy would risk it, even in a new canoe, much less a home-made one.”

In the river, Delacruzcabon probably found a measure of
isolation, with cliffs rising up to twenty-five feet on either side of the river. Creeks within a short distance of each other that flowed into the Wichita provided even more isolation. Delacruzcabo soon realized this was unexplored territory. Soon his vision of a huge nursery along Texas Rivers began to materialize. He would mine the Wichita until it emptied into the Red River. He’d work the Red until it reached Louisiana. He’d work the Trinity and the Colorado until they reached the Gulf of Mexico. The Nueces and the Pecos would be his until they flowed into the Rio Grande.

Judge Dingleberry claimed to have seen what was left of one of Delacruzcabo’s Wichita River crops. Something that detracts from the account is the fact that none of the police reports had Delacruzcabo’s name on it. The Sheriff’s office reports that the crop was “rumored” to be owned by a “Johnny Marijuanaseed.” Either the police informant didn’t know John’s last name or was trying to gain favor with the investigators without totally snitching John out.

According to Dingleberry, Delacruzcabo was a cold-hearted businessman and did nothing without profit. Dingleberry contends that Delacruzcabo had millions squirreled away, but said they’d probably never find it now that he was dead. The picture of John, I’ve put together from hundreds of interviews paints a radically different picture of Delacruzcabo.

He was a “kicked-back” man and basically “only thought of improving marijuana.” He evidently did it mostly out of the goodness of his heart. While he did accept payment for his weed, it was generally a very nominal amount and usually only enough to finance his legendary canoe trips, gasoline, and food.

Delacruzcabo was “more interested in user feedback” and would question his clients endlessly about the strain he was working on hoping to learn something of it’s potency.

Judge Dingleberry’s accounts are totally political in nature. I’ve only included his comments to show the depraved efforts the city has taken to cover up their role in the story. First, they denied he even grew up and lived there, claiming he was a homeless man passing through. And then when that fooled only a few, Delacruzcabo suddenly became a violent and dangerous drug dealer, “The Texas Cartel.”

Nothing Judge Dingleberry told me was first-hand
Johnny Marijuanaseed

knowledge. Others see the judge’s statement clearly, “The judge for the last two years has simply been in the business of repeating things told to him, sometimes second or third-hand stories. Trying to look like a big wig.” Most see the judge’s stories as John sister sees them, “as a pitiful attempt to be a part of the Johnny Marijuanaseed historical legacy.”

I spoke with several resident’s of Daggett Switch in my two week stay there investigating John’s childhood and fame now in death. Bradley Weiderholtz, who owns Daggett Switch Quick Change, said, “Judge Dingleberry is just another lame ass politician trying to steal a bit of notoriety. But you better not go in his court with any property, he’ll sure as hell steal it from you right then and there all legal like. Steal it.”

I heard more than once that, “the most dangerous place in Daggett Switch is standing between Judge Dingleberry and a television camera, he’ll bowl you over to get to it.” It seems to be something of a local joke. But deep down, the voters must not mind, they keep reelecting him. The judge had never had a real opponent.

Irma Jo Washington defended the judge, one of her café patrons, “You can say what you want about the judge, but you have to admit, he does look professional. For a man that barely graduated high school, and is self-educated, and now has the responsibility of a judge, he wears a very nice suit.”

According to Judge Dingleberry, Delacruzcabo left Daggett Switch for good in 1988 when he discovered rich growing opportunities along the Colorado and profitable markets in Austin. The judge adamantly insisted that John moved his Texas Cartel south at that time. “Our little river just wasn’t big enough for him.” However, this is yet another lie. Delacruzcabo was enrolled at Midwestern through 1990.

In the late 1980s, on weekends Delacruzcabo did travel the Colorado River seeding the banks, all the way from Colorado City (in West Texas) to Austin. Delacruzcabo was known to have hybridized what become known as the “Longhorn Express” while living at Daggett Switch and attending Midwestern. An unlikely pair, Dr. Arthur Stanback (biology department) and Delacruzcabo (TKE) were quite close. Professor Stanback left extensive notes on his star pupil’s progress.
Sales receipts exist that confirm John and his fifteen-year-old brother lived in Daggett Switch during the years the judge asserts he’d left. Hardware store records show the names of John and Jessie between 1987 and 1991 purchasing increasing amounts of hydroponics equipment and nutrients – nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus and calcium. Purchases ended when in 1994, when Amazon began shipping these items.

Judge Dingleberry’s career came to an abrupt end, a year after he spoke to me, when he was photographed leaving a Wichita Falls apartment wearing a Lane Brant plus-size “City Chic” dress and Converse Chuck Taylor’s. He refused to resign and served another year and a half after that. The judge faced stiff opposition the next election when he was challenged by one of the city’s water treatment workers, who might not have defeated Dingleberry but for the outstanding and impassioned endorsement of the water treatment supervisor. The new judge doesn’t wear a suit to court, but then he doesn’t wear a dress either.

The drug war is a total scam; Nigerians couldn’t create anything better. Prescription drugs kill 300K a year, while marijuana kills no one, but they spend trillions each year ‘fighting’ it, because we users make for good little slaves to put into prisons, free labor. The bankers love it because they are the one’s laundering the drug money, and it’s ALL DOCUMENTED. Just try to write about it; they’ll plant meth on you and then you’ll be locked up as well.

It took several years for the marijuana plants to cover a riverbank; but it took much less time for John to identify and harvest the superior plants for seeds.

John traded seeds by mail with compatriot grower friends he’d made in Vermont, Jamaica, California, Laos and Hawaii.

He grew various varieties and then hybridized them in different combinations, on a massive scale, until he got the increased potency and then he made trips to the river to seed the
Johnny Marijuanaseed

riverbanks. Then, after a time, he carried back gallon buckets of his finest strains seeds. Much of the actual marijuana was abandoned or lost to deer or just lucky fellows that wondered upon it.

John always took set backs hard, but inevitably in any venture there are steps backward. Once on the San Antonio River, Delacruzcabo was forced to dump an entire gallon bucket, of premium seeds of a strain they call “Try and Remember the Alamo.” The only game warden ever to spot him, would eventually search his canoe. He didn’t like the fact that John had NEVER cut his hair and didn’t want to hear that Jesus hadn’t cut his either. John’s sister said he was depressed for weeks at the loss of that many seeds and that the game warden had tried to provoke a fight with him.35

However the next year, when John canoed the same river and reached that tragic spot, he was amazed to discover that he’d dumped the bucket in high water, after a rain, and the water had then receded. Most of the seeds had sprouted into a wonderful new crop along the bank. John called it “divine providence” and he began traveling to Lawton attending the Knowledgeable Native American Christian Church on Cashe Road, taking that particular strain with him.

John didn’t like that the Comanches called him “Jesus.” Delacruzcabo didn’t feel that he looked like Jesus, he didn’t even know for a fact what the real Jesus had looked like, but he didn’t mind the fuss they made over his product. The Comanches were always honest with him and they loved that “Alamo” blend and giggled like schoolgirls when it was mentioned.

The church in Lawton was a great place to meet new friends. Occasionally someone would bring him new genetic stock or show him an interesting mutation.

Since John’s death, his use of the Texas river system has been called “genius”36 and “enlightened”37 Of course the skill and vision Delacruzcabo showed in hybridizing all the various strains of marijuana and that work was done in a greenhouse in Daggett Switch. His use of nature as a testing ground has grown his legend to massive proportions. Delacruzcabo said many times when asked about his exploits, “There are only three things in Mother Nature’s lab: sun, spoil and water. I just pop in and out.”38
Johnny Marijuanaseed

The rivers provided plenty of unclaimed land. Wilderness spots were generally free from police and television. The lawmen were generally too lazy to get out there and patrol the rivers and certainly not smart enough to realize at least one person was out there growing, feet away from all that water. Television and even the radio annoyed John to no end, and he was happy to get down a river to be away from it. Sometimes riverbed crops would thrive and other times they would fail, both were equal lessons for the young scientist.

It was a freer and a more open society in those days; the less sophisticated police still used radios to communicate, which meant Johnny could listen into the police frequencies. Now their conversations, some illegal, are hidden from the public. Delacruz cabo, with his Opal loaded with seeds and a canoe, manage to leave Daggett Switch when the police were making a vehicle search. That occasion would draw whatever two police that were on duty. Johnny knew that every Daggett Switch officer wanted desperately in on as many of the confiscations as possible. Their career depended on it. The small town police force hadn’t turned to cell phones yet, as the larger city police forces were; so anyone that cared to listen would know their business.

Being an outlaw grower isn’t just a profession, it is a state of mind; it’s not a matter of a police scanner, a fast car and a bud bunny on your arm; it is a matter of will-power not to capitulate, a quality of imagination to create, a vigor of mind; you have to be able to smell it.

Because most of the landowners cared little about the actual riverbank, Delacruz cabo didn’t bother to obtain deed or lease the land. He simply planted seed in the rich moist soil along the rivers, generally on the north or west bank. Soon his crops were ready for grooming and eventually the harvesting. But it wasn’t the bud John was after; he’d leave most of that for others. John would return and collect the seeds of the superior plants. The
Johnny Marijuanaseed

wind, animals, the water and friends would spread the rest along the river.

Thousands of young people headed to Texas and hit up John’s brokers for seeds. The market turned friendly toward the hydro grown and a fraternity at the University of Texas in Austin sprung up that required new members to hydro five of Johnny’s plants during their pledgeship. The fraternity believed that marijuana plants gave the group and the pledges a sense of responsibility and loyalty to one another. And they owned outright the largest frat-house in West Campus. It’s the house formerly owned by Sandra Bullock and it’s quite the place to party.

I am convinced that there are authentic and legitimate levels of perception available with cannabis (and probably with other drugs too) which are, through the defects of our own genetics and our failed educational system, unavailable to us without such drugs. It’s like the Colt was the equalizer for the little guy in the West. Marijuana is the equalizer for many.

In 1990, Daggett Switch was a residential community with little industry and few real jobs, the city leaders provided a good number of the jobs to their friends and supporters at the cost of high taxes for everyone. If you’ve ever been to a city where nearly everyone you see is working for the city, but still the grass in the city park is knee high, then you know how things worked. Nothing different about this, but the real (respectable) jobs were in Wichita Falls.

The Air Force base brought a fresh supply of people to the area, many became friends and clients (buyers of seeds). Many clients were young growers nervous about others who might snitch or steal their plants. Corrupt Sheriff’s office employees were notorious for stealing weed and then demanding the grower be sent to prison, sometimes testifying high, after smoking the very weed they’d stolen. There is a huge Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, and that gave the city an air of
legitimacy, but it’s largely a façade, you only notice when passing through on the highway. Wichita could easily be the most corrupt county in Texas.

It all contributed to a chaotic underworld that lasted until marijuana was replaced as the drug of choice by methamphetamines. While Johnny’s seed clients clearly didn’t trust each other, everyone seemed enamored with Johnny and his genetic gold mine. The thing with that, however, no one ever seems to know what Johnny looked like or where he lived. All Johnny’s business was conducted through loyal friends.

All this activity and genetic innovation was conducted directly under the noses of the Daggett Switch police department. Undisputed was the fact that Delacruzcabo lived, worked, and played out of his grandmother’s house, not two blocks from the police station. This is not part of the legend and it has been documented in ten different sources. The most powerful marijuana in history was developed that near law enforcement; no wonder there has been a cover-up and why so many people would lie straight to your face. The city employees immediately understood the importance of expunging the city of any record of Johnny’s work there. It all could affect elections and if their friends in power, lost that power, they’d lose their jobs and really most had no marketable skills other than city work.

To add insult to injury, today’s much-improved marijuana was developed with electricity and water stolen from the Daggett Switch Police Department. Skeptics argue that this is impossible, but given the political atmosphere, the idea actually becomes viable. In fact, considering the nature of power, John’s exploitation seems probable. He loved quietly sticking it to the man.

In 1981, when Johnny and his siblings arrived via Greyhound bus from California, the Daggett Switch police department consisted of four full-time police officers, including the police chief, who actually patrolled. They had four vehicles and one of those was a 1951 police car, which was only driven in the yearly homecoming parade. In effect, they had three drivable police cars to patrol a city whose population was just over 6,000.

In 2018, when John Delacruzcabo life tragically came to an end
end, the city had shrunk in size to a bit over 5,400, but the police department had grown to a monstrous size. The city hadn’t grown, it had actually become smaller; anyone with a brain left (moved away), but a new generation of politician came to power, a group of men and women intoxicated with power and other people’s money. The crime rate remained the same, nearly zero; anyone with a crime in mind just drove to Wichita Falls to commit it.

When businesses closed, mostly a result of the high taxes, the city bought (which cause taxes to go up even higher) or seized their property. One thing I noticed in 2017, when I visited, was that the government-owned buildings, Burk Trucking, the old Wal-Mart and the former Lake Nautique life jacket manufacturer, were all vacant but had been remodeled (at taxpayers expense), while the privately owned businesses were falling into disrepair. They preached they needed to remodel the buildings to lure companies to return, but their policies are the cause of the business leaving in the first place. And some contractor certainly had the city counsel in his pocket.

The police department had grown from four to twenty-four officers and three detectives, despite a decrease in the population and the crime rate remaining low. No one could calculate what these officers did all day and night, but no real crime ever seemed to happen, which is what they argued when they wanted more pay; all those cops sitting around caused criminals to go elsewhere to do their crime.

The problem with this logic, and it totally escaped the voting population the thirty years John lived there, the real criminals didn’t know where Daggett Switch was even located. And to the few criminals that were aware of it, Daggett Switch to them was just too poor to rob and certainly too out of the way to mess with. Not when you had Wichita right near.

According to the minutes of the Daggett Switch City Council, the city’s police department in 2017 bought liability insurance on thirty-six vehicles. Further research showed that only six where purchased by the city, the remaining thirty were confiscated. That, in what most would agree is a one horse-town.

The most glaring evidence of this power-run-amuck was a cow of a policewoman (Scary Cherry) who in 2017 drove a
Johnny Marijuanaseed

confiscated 2016 model Cadillac Escalade. They put emergency lights on it, and it was assigned to her. Rather than this nice new $80,000 vehicle being assigned to the police chief, or the mayor or the city manager or even one of the detectives, she drove it on patrol, home and to the grocery store. She drove it all around town, and no one could figure if she was on duty or just coming or going from her twenty-eight foot single-wide.

Critics believe, despite her repulsive looks and low rank on the force (over twenty-five years and never promoted) she fed the monster, planting drugs on any vehicle she felt the city might need or want to sell at auction. I interviewed six individuals who lost, or were with friends that lost, vehicles because of drugs they claim she planted. Their stories seem true and I’ve managed to document several of them as definitely true.

She’s was forced to retire in 2018, when Texas Rangers used “bait cars” with hidden cameras, driven by rough looking confidential informants, to record her traffic stops, illegal searches and then on tape she planted dope in two of the four vehicles. Scary Teddy Cherry was never prosecuted. She’d had a good run for the city and had brought in perhaps a million dollars worth of property over her career. Her punishment was her retirement.

Interestingly, they turn on each other at the drop of a hat, depending on the political wind. The “bad seed” (as the overpaid city manager called her) is gone, but the city is back in business with fourteen confiscations in the first half of 2019.

Consider also the regulatory environment John lived and worked under. In 1984, Daggett Switch didn’t have a code enforcement officer and the city sent an average of one warning letter per month and didn’t issue a single citation from 1984 to 1987. In 2017, the last year of Delacruz cabo’s life, the city employed two full-time code enforcement officers, each driving newly confiscated pickup trucks. Together they mailed out an average of 31 citations per week and three warnings. The practice of warning people had ended years earlier as an “expensive luxury” in the words of the city manager. These citations might be for allowing grass to grow over three inches high or having your garbage containers a few feet out of place.

Thank goodness for our hero, the tyrants were focused elsewhere. While John never actually sold weed (he did give out
samples and tested plenty of product himself) he surely would have been arrested and convicted of distributing and manufacturing (the seeds). Given the prosecutors’ shameless positions, Johnny Marijuanaseed would have faced 20 years in prison. Texas hadn’t legalized marijuana in any form, not for medical or recreational use.

Prosecutor Sam Garcia, Wichita County’s first homosexual District Attorney (working with a compliant Public Defender) sent a homeless man to prison for three years for habitually digging through a chicken place’s trash. Three misdemeanors equal a felony. What would they have done to Johnny?

The judge, the “most moral man” Wichita County and a “fine member” of the Baptist Church also sent a man to prison for shoplifting a baked chicken. Of course, it was Mother’s Day; the restaurant’s manager ran out into the parking lot and tried to tackle the chicken thief. It didn’t work like it had Friday nights in high school, the thief stepped out of the way and the manager broke his arm. So, the honest looking prosecutor asked for aggravated robbery and got it. The taxpayers of Texas paid the $110,000 for the four-year incarceration. No worries, the people in Wichita County paid only a small portion of that, and the cost was spread throughout the state. But the chicken thief was off the street for four entire years. During those four years, the chicken thief stole ZERO chickens from the residents of Wichita County. However, in that time, approximately 1834 chickens disappeared from a West Texas prison scullery.

Now some of the good people of Daggett Switch, not yet turned into sheep, resisted. “Official oppression rarely goes unanswered in America,” according to Daggett Switch Follower editorial writer, Lane DeGregory.40 The paper reported that someone poisoned the four oak trees that shaded a few of the thirty-six police cars. This was the official explanation, the story out there for the voters. In secret, the city called in an arborist and he told them that they had accidentally killed the trees by using Calcium Chloride and Magnesium Chloride to de-ice the parking lot and sidewalk. Various people pointed out in Letters to the Editor that it was reasonable to de-ice the sidewalk but the “city run-amuck” felt it wise to salt the entire parking lot every time it “threatened to freeze” for a period of decades.41 The prim donnas couldn’t walk across the parking lot. There was
actually a lot of common sense floating around in the town, but it never translated into elections. No one ever lost an election. They had an army of city employees maintaining everything.

One patriot (who wished to remain anonymous) is known to have called the governor, his state senator and state representative, each week for a period of ten years, to complain that the city had bought a set of ordinances (laws) that made virtually every human activity and condition against the law. The man came across as a crackpot and never really spoke to anyone in that long period that understood or cared to try to understand. In 2008, instead of the Daggett Switch city council looking at individual needs and changes, they simply “bought” a set of 3000 laws and were doing their very best to enforce every single one of them, at a huge profit.

A company in Massachusetts wrote the ordinances and marketed them to cities who wanted to “enhance social control” and “increase revenue.” The man’s complaint to the politician’s interns that answered the phone was that they had been adopted in one single vote after five minutes of debate. The vote was three to one, with the Mayor abstaining. The “one” council member was harassed out of office as “not a team player.” He wisely resigned (before the police were turned out on him) and he moved to Wichita Falls.

One week, they reported someone turned the city council chamber into “an anthrax incubator” of course it hadn’t happened; someone had left a half-eaten sandwich out and by the next meeting it was covered with mold. It was mold, but half the residents believed it was anthrax and their government was under attack. It said they were in the newspaper. The reasonable citizens understood the wild exaggeration to be more of the voter manipulation. Control of the government was a gold mine to these people, who before their service to the city really had little of nothing going for them. The backlash (ridicule) from educated residents was so counter-productive, after the anthrax incident, the city toned down the propaganda.

But no exaggeration, someone DID pitch a box of roofing nails into the city hall parking lot.

Johnny Marijuanaseed survived because the city was too busy confiscating property and dealing with the resulting paranoia and ”civil unrest” to notice a small backyard
Johnny Marijuanaseed

greenhouse full of hybrid marijuana. Vanity, greed and official corruption served as the source of the city’s distraction.

One strange and unfortunate (but very modern) result of the Johnny Marijuanaseed legend was a new term for academia to test criminal justice students. College professors began to lecture on “official distraction.” The term has been included in textbooks and on examinations. Given that the greatest marijuana grower in the history of the sport operated directly under the nose of an overstaffed and overfunded police department, the scholars had a point. And from this discovery came a solution, “all policing.” Both terms have been included bold and listed in the glossary in the back of the overpriced criminal justice textbooks, where they take half the exam questions.

While the terms smack of totalitarianism, police academy and college students were (after Johnny) taught to “pay attention to all aspects of crime,” and not just the aspects that brought in city revenue, resulting in higher pay for police. The low IQ and already bent recruits took “all policing” to mean arrest everyone they don’t like for anything and everything they could think of. “Arrest now and find a reason later, when you have the penal code in front of you.” Many experts in the field now believe “all policing” has lead to the overcrowding of the prison system and could eventually bankrupt the government.43

There is absolutely no doubt John Delacruz-cabo would have paid a huge price had he ever been discovered. So what kept this sad but typical ending from happening? Greed or incompetence? Historians differ but it might best be explained as “small T tyranny” (small town tyranny) a phrase that’s come to represent local governments gone wild with power; they find it impossible to focus on anything else but profiting from their power. It’s like when the function of government was changed to “growing government,” forsaking the legitimate limited functions.44

My favorite varieties – Trinity 281, Brazos 387, Wichita 57 and Colorado 126 – blend well and make a sweat Texas high.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

John Delacruzcabó’s name is reported in the census as a resident of Daggett Switch in April of 1990. The report shows that the twenty-one-year-old was head of the family and that he, his brother, sister and grandmother lived in the home.

The fact that Delacruzcabó did not hold legal title to any land in Texas made it very difficult to verify the sites of his early riverbed nurseries. Law enforcement records aren’t the most reliable source of information, of course they are used to send countless numbers to prison, but they are ripe with exaggerations and inaccuracies. Local police and sheriff’s office often applied for and were granted millions of state and federal (taxpayer) dollars to eradicate marijuana crops in locations improbable or even impossible for Delacruzcabó to have planted. Perhaps these were other grower’s crops, or (and this happened) the crops never existed at all, and the requests for grants were fraudulent.

Outside of his Daggett Switch greenhouse, Delacruzcabó never was known to use an irrigation system. He traveled consistently in a pattern along the major rivers of Texas. It had become something of a joke among the local law enforcement officials in Texas; “write Austin and mention ‘Johnny Marijuanaseed’ and get a guaranteed check.” Many of the reports attributing crops to John are doubtful at best.

Police reports from 2001 located one of Delacruzcabó’s abandoned riverbed crops, possibly his first, on the Little Wichita near where it passes under Highway 287 and another on the Wichita River, near Camp Creek. These are likely these are the locations John tended from 1987 until 1991, traveling to and from them via canoe. He writes in his journal that he cared for the “two Wichita factories” until he’d collected enough “improved seeds” to populate important locations on the Trinity River.

Tarrant County law enforcement suggests that Johnny Marijuanaseed brought a “THC super-charged” variety to the Trinity in 1993. This is alleged in a search warrant issued in 1994 that allowed police to record conversations of 14 known Fort Worth weed dealers. Nothing ever came from the surveillance or investigation. It’s not certain John had contact with or even knew the targeted dealers. It’s very possible the dealers didn’t
even know who developed the weed they were selling.

There has never been a 'war on drugs'! In our history we can only see an ongoing conflict amongst various sellers of drug – wars between producers. In ancient Mexico the use of alcohol was punishable by death, while the ritualistic use of mescaline was highly worshipped. In 17th century Russia, tobacco smokers were threatened with mutilation or decapitation, alcohol was legal. In Prussia, coffee drinking was prohibited to the lower classes, the use of tobacco and alcohol was legal.

As with the Wichita, the marijuana Delacruz cabo grew on the Trinity had little to differentiate it; it looked and smelled the same, but it was considerably stronger. Between April and September each year, John worked like hell to make his quota of seeds. He had to make them on schedule because they were all sold in advance as packages to the various growers. Promises had been made. In the winter, he had time off to recover and work in his greenhouse. Come April it was back to the canoe and the river life.

By this time John was beginning to formulate his philosophy of what it meant to be a Texas grower, based upon the lessons he’d learned in school, his view of life from the river, carefree individualism, self-sufficiency, choice and the need to circumvent the official corruption and oppression. Violence wasn’t necessarily required to be free if a man was wise to the ways of government.

And he’d become almost addicted to his work. If he wasn’t working, he wasn’t happy. Yet he looked around Daggett Switch, and virtually no one else was working, they were pretending to work, and he was concerned.
We took in enough cannabis smoke to allow a Penatekas Comanche manipulating a blanket over it to transmit the complete works of Shakespeare.

Media sources, just as dubious as law enforcement, suggest Delacruzcabon had most of his crops on the Trinity, west of Fort Worth along the West and Clear Fork of the river. However, because of the lucrative money available to eradicate marijuana crops nearly every jurisdiction claimed wild growing marijuana growing along its rivers and they attributed it all to a mysterious unknown criminal called, “Johnny Marijuanaseed.” Within a year of his death, at least sixteen cities claimed to be a birthplace or one-time residence of “Texas’ new sub-culture hero.” One company in Stonewall County marketed “floating innertube tours” of John’s favorite “plant incubator,” the Brazos River.  

John likely spent his college years (1987-1991) on the Wichita and Trinity Rivers. There is no evidence he ventured into the other rivers until after 1991. After graduating from Midwestern, he worked his way south and west, with the last rivers to be sewn the Pecos and finally the Rio Grande. The friendly people of Texas for the most part Texicans, people of Hispanic backgrounds who no longer really consider themselves as Mexicans and unquestionably not loyal to the government in Austin, they provided much of the physical and moral support for such a massive (lifetime) work. Delacruzcabon may have received food and drinking water and information he needed to avoid the law from Texicans living along the rivers. Delacruzcabon moved freely among the Hispanic population. He was respected and accepted as the “el diablo de la genetica,” and, “The long hair that don’t care.”

Of course, one reason John was able to avoid arrest was the car he drove. He was known to drive only one car his entire life. It was his first and last vehicle, a lime green 1968 Opal station wagon. It was a car the authorities didn’t want anything to do with, and it never occurred to any lawman to confiscate it. To
the Daggett Switch police, Delacruzcabo was just a nerdy kid with a piece-of-shit car, and that he was a no-count with a flower garden. And then years later, he was an old-man flower gardener driving a car as old as he was.

Delacruzcabo was living proof that a person could fly under the radar. It was possible so long as the city never thought the person had accumulated too much. Of course many, if they didn’t see the confiscation swindle, weren’t able to fly under the radar. Of course, once they saw the scam they beat it out of the city for safer territory.

One human geographer at Texas State University showed me evidence that cities with higher confiscations, grew at a much slower rate. Daggett Switch actually contracted in size. Professor of human geography Danny Kahneman told me, given the prevailing growth patterns, the population of Daggett Switch should have doubled in the Delacruzcabo years (1984-2017) instead of shrinking. All the local businesses (now empty buildings) that closed might have not struggled with more patrons; they might have thrived had it not been for the city policies of enriching themselves.

The city drove down the property values, but that didn’t matter to the police or the code enforcement people or the politicians. They’d been losers in high school and now they were big people, with an important job (mowing the park and chasing dogs), with resources, pay-checks and the power to make other people’s lives hell. Any doubt or anything questioned was met with a clear, concise answer, “We’re bringing law and order to this town.” Well, who could argue with that? If you did, you’d move to the top of their “list of resistance.”

Every “winner” (observant and superior) from the high school years left for Fort Worth, Dallas, Wichita Falls or some other larger city. The lucky and brightest few found themselves in Austin. No one ever complained about the brain drain; it cleared the way for new talent (them), but it was clearly a phenomenon that shaped Daggett Switch.
When the grower takes scissors and Ziplocs down to the river, the controllers – Ameri-fascists, the socialists, the new aristocrats (the old bureaucrats), uptight educators, for-profit prisons, politicians constantly up for reelection – are suddenly hushed; the silence of the Texas rivers. That absence of noise is the 100,000 uncontrolled and unintimidated Texans getting high. It’s unique and ought to be fearsome come November. Why do we have elections in November when the weed is fresh and everyone’s high?

In the mid-1990s, as John Delacruzcabon became a frequent and welcome visitor to Colorado City, people began to record tales of the herbalist. Dr. Cricket Dee, a medical doctor, wrote to his son attending Southwest Texas State University (at the time): “Mr. Delacruzcabon often visits your uncle and my uncle. He always manages to bring them some interesting new seeds and samples. He’s about six foot five, narrow as an arrow, looks like Jesus and is as calm as Roscoe.” Roscoe was the family’s Redbone hound.

At this point, he was most likely clean-shaven, although later in life John grew a beard. Another story suggests that Delacruzcabon had sunken cheeks, a small mouth, and an upturned nose. Many remember his long hair and his dark, really black eyes.

In the 1990s many Texans wore jeans and a cowboy hat and boots, sunglasses to combat the harsh sunlight. Delacruzcabon wore Hawaiian shirts purchased from the Goodwill Store in Wichita Falls. In the winter, John wore his grandfather’s businessman’s felt Stetson. He always carried a Blackberry on his belt. In the summer, John wore a Ranger or Astro’s baseball cap. There is no photographic evidence suggesting that he wore a straw hat modeled as if he were a bull rider, as some have alleged. Ray Wiley Hubbard, the legendary Texas singer, and song writer, said, “He looked like the drug dealer from Screw You,
just out of jail and trying to get home, but I don’t think he ever spent a night in jail. John just looked like he had. You know, he never knew he was in that song. Sad huh?”

On his feet, John rarely wore anything but low-end Nocona cowboy boots, nothing fancy as to draw attention to himself. He continued to wear them even after 1999, when the Nocona plant was shut down, and production moved to El Paso. Sometimes for long river journeys, he’d slip out of the boots and wear canvass high-tops, especially if he thought he might be swimming. To the church in Lawton, he wore moccasins. His appearance might have been strange to some but to the friends he made traveling the rivers he was simply “chill.”

Some of the capitalist right have written, trying to explain his rejection of profit and selling only the seeds, that he’s been bitten by a snake as a young man and had never really been himself. There is no evidence that he was ever bitten or suffered any accident or trauma as a child. He may have been a bit eccentric, and that caused people to make up reasons for it.

Texans typically tried to avoid the brutal summer heat, especially in the middle of the day, by enjoying the air conditioning. Most people, even lifelong Texans, couldn’t tolerate the summer, where many times the temperature would be in access of 105º. Delacruzcabó would routinely work throughout the summer days.

Once, one of John’s friends launched a serious search (everyone he knew minus the police) along the San Marcos fearing John had had a heat stroke. When they found him, they’d explained their concern, “It’s 109º and hotter here than Death Valley.” Johnny contemplated and said, “Well, it was 105º yesterday, so I guess I just didn’t notice the extra four degrees. Out here in the summer, what’s a few degrees more or less?”

To me calling it “Texas Tumbleweed” was just a little redneck, but High Times used to list the prices each month, and they’d say, “Texas TW.” This was recognition enough for me in the old days.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

John Delacruzcabo said he was twenty-three when he first floated down the Colorado. He arrived in Colorado City with a station wagon of seeds and a canoe strapped to the roof. He met a man, Tim Larabee, who was living with his wife and three kids in the press box out at the Little League baseball diamond. He befriended John and showed him the best place to enter the river.

The panhandler is far more moral than a city manager. The panhandler doesn’t enlist anyone, cops or judges, to force you to give him money. He’s coming up to you and saying, “Will you help me out?” It’s entirely voluntary. The city, when they want money, they’re not asking for a voluntary transaction. They pass a city ordinance (or 3000 of them) and say, “You must give us this money or we’ll seize your property, money or we’ll throw you in jail.” That’s immoral.

For the next five years, Delacruzcabo traveled back and forth between his Wichita, Trinity and Colorado River experiments. In the spring of 1998, a Mitchell County man spotted a strange watercraft floating down the Colorado. Delacruzcabo and Larabee had lashed two canoes together to carry a 55-gallon barrel full of marijuana seeds. Historians believed the men were headed to Austin on the largest seeding journey ever taken in history.

After his humble beginning in the business, Larabee moved west of Austin with his wife then four children. He now owned a modest home on land worth more than the home on it, along the river. It is a quite an expensive area and Larabee paid cash for it.

At every inviting spot along the way to Austin, Delacruzcabo would use a copper dipper to pull out enough seeds to make a nice crop. Larabee’s task was to build a fence to keep the cattle and deer out. Then he would move to the next likely spot, leaving his seeds to sprout and grow into plants all
Johnny Marijuanaseed

along the way to Austin. At the end of that long seeding the trip, the two men parked their canoes at Larabee’s home and drove his family for pizza.

Though his planting routine may have appeared random, Delacruzcabob knew precisely what he was doing. The proximity to water and the fertile soil were vital to John’s calculations. The spot needed to occasionally flood with the rising river, but the water would need to quickly recede. Delacruzcabob became an expert picking optimal real estate along the rivers. Tired of building fences, Delacruzcabob learned to pick spots when cattle and deer would not want to go. He rarely made a poor choice of locations.

Delacruzcabob was not the only grower on the Colorado; he would discover he wasn’t even the first. However, Delacruzcabob’s crops were significantly larger and more potent than the other grower’s efforts. Almost every community along the Colorado can point to a spot along the river and claimed that Johnny Marijuanaseed once planted there. While many of these claims are unfounded, a researcher and attorney for the Texican and Mexas Railroad, Royce P. Nunn (grandson of legendary Texas song writer Gary P. Nunn) was able to document thirty sites between Colorado City and Austin were the marijuana still grew the wild, the offspring of John’s original plantings.52

Delacruzcabob kept an excellent record of how he developed various varieties but were he planted his crops has really been lost in time. Delacruzcabob seemed to sew the seeds wherever he thought they’d grow well but also wherever he wanted almost as a way of saying “thank you” to whatever local people showed him hospitality along the way. They, naturally, would groom and care for the plants.

In 1998, Delacruzcabob charged a “twenty” for a handful of his premium seed (whatever cutting edge variety he’d just developed). If a buyer didn’t have cash, Delacruzcabob would accept food or even the promise of payments in the future. He took a skinny ass horse once and a pure-bred puppy once in exchange for seeds. He also reportedly gave seeds to first time needy growers. His agents weren’t so generous with the seeds.

Given the police and courts (both) were beginning to ignore the Fourth Amendment protecting citizens from illegally searching and seizing nearly anything on four wheels, river travel
Johnny Marijuanaseed

was ideal for Delacruzcabos venture. Greedy and thus aggressive cops didn’t generally travel the rivers. Rivers cut through Texas at their lowest points, forming spots with moist sedimentary soil, rich in nutrients. It’s not surprising that rivers were Delacruzcabos choice of travel. There was literally no chance of a traffic stop along the Colorado or any river in Texas. A single game warden, in all of John’s years, had noticed him. And the water made it easy to bring Larabees weed to market in Austin. If there were law out on the river, the product would easily be dumped into the river, but that was never necessary.

Johnny befriended either fortunate and/or very cautious men. We can only find one $500 fine that a man who harvested for Johnny received. Given the scale of the growing, that level of skill or luck is unheard of in history. In an era of Soviet-style law enforcement, John somehow escaped. There was little chance the police would ever find an informant in Johnny’s circle to get him caught up.

Screw the government. The growers for Johnny worried primarily about prison sentences and deer eating their buds, or thieves stealing them.

To keep the deer away, Delacruzcabos put radios in trees with small Chinese made solar panels. John also found mothballs, human hair (gathered from barber shops) and urine to be highly effective as a deer repellent.

Imagine you just got accepted into UT Austin and you can reject them. That's Colorado 126. Imagine you got the dopest piece of peach you ever had and she's all into that. And she's tatted up and friendly. That's Trinity River Strain 281.

Marijuana theft became a wide-spread problem as everyone knew what it sold for and Texans, if anything, are opportunistic. The thieves, known as rippers, caused growers to set booby traps around their river crops to teach them a lesson; Johnny insisted on non-lethal methods. Fishhooks hanging from trees
at face level, trip wires rigged with shotguns, the shells filled with rock salt, live canebrake rattlers in East Texas tied to plants, and pit bulls with their vocal cords removed so they wouldn’t bark.

John actually disapproved of such methods. His argument was simply to plant more marijuana, so much the thieves wouldn’t have the resources to haul it all off. But he wouldn’t interfere with his disciples, except to insist they didn’t kill anyone on accident, or on purpose.

Reagan’s War on Drugs will go down in history as the most racist government policy since slavery.

In 1997, Jax Maximus (not his real name) discovered that a ripper had visited one of his Trinity River patches. He came out to tend it and found a whole section picked clean. So, Jax staked out the patch overnight with his ten-year-old son and an AR-15 rifle with a night scope.

Meanwhile, a state trooper pulled over a car for speeding, and the driver happened to be the man stealing from Jax, and John. The driver negotiated his way out of the situation by offering in exchange to give the location of the best patch of marijuana he had ever seen.

So, the state trooper drove out to Jax’s location on the river and pulled right up to the plants. The headlights illuminated the crop, sure enough, the most healthy crop he’d ever seen as well. Narrowly, violence was avoided, Jax and son disappeared into the night and the location was abandoned.

That is not a drug. It’s a plant.

The Texas rivers provided safe haven for John Delacruz cabo because people kept their mouths shut. If someone got too nosey the saying, was “mind your own funeral,” just as it had been a hundred years before. Now, that
Johnny Marijuanaseed

sounds harsh but “most” of the time it was said in a friendly tone, as a polite reminder.

Also, after enough occasions of armed lawmen raiding family homes and businesses, the children of decent people realized that silence was the only weapon they had to protect their families from the law intent on filling the Texas prison system and providing work for the lowest of lawmen. This understandably grew into an unofficial code of silence that is passed down even today along the rivers. I speculate that even hundreds of years from now, Johnny’s Marijuana legacy will still mean silence along the rivers.

Alcohol and marijuana, if used together and in moderation, plus loud, usually 80’s music, make stress and boredom infinitely more bearable.

Bell Cord Callahan had shot a man in a West Texas night club in a dispute over his wife and did eight years flat. Other than Bell Cord, John’s Texas growers were innocents who’d never seen the inside of a prison. They might have been in jail a day or two, but despite Texas’ diligence and innovations feeding the prison industry, they’d pretty much remained out of trouble.

Mostly these men were older than John and had already dabbled in growing, but their experience had been something of a shot in the dark. These men benefited greatly from John’s experience and of course his college degree. John knew the science, and they all had the sense to say out of trouble.

How many men engaged in the cultivation of marijuana along the river system in Texas would be impossible to calculate, but they numbered in the dozens, and they included Buzz Yarnell (Shorty) and a number of his Iraqi war vetrens. Hugh Calloway (Guardrail), Grady Welch (Waco), Homer Ganss (Tenderloin), Alvin Laudermilk (Mosey) who was killed in The Broken Spoke in 2001. In early 2011, Frank Gervin (Heavy) simply disappeared from Uvalde County. He got in his truck in the driveway, waved to his wife and was never seen again.

Johnny never served in Iraq, but Yarnell told him about a
few experiences there. Yarnell focus was on all the strict rules of engagement and how easily they could get you killed by the terrorists. Each war is different and this was something that weighed heavily. It seemed that on the back of each convoy was a big sign in English and Arabic, “Stay back, you will be fired upon.” Well, according to Yarnell despite the warning they were prohibited from firing on drivers that ran right up on them, and on more than one occasion Iraqis would run right up on the rear vehicle and detonate an explosive. Johnny was fascinated and helped every veteran he ran across.

Nothing could have prepared anyone for that sort of wartime experience, but fight in a war that seemed to have too many rules certainly prepared men like Yarnell to succeed in a world back home, where obeying the law kept a person poor and dependant on left-wing politicians, and law-breaking turned growers into upper-middle-class homeowners.

All the Iraqi war veterans returning home helped the lawless element of Texas plug into a nationwide network of fellow veterans who understood how the world truly worked when the propaganda was stripped away. With this underground “band of brothers” in place from the start, Texas entered a gold rush, selling mountains of well-grown, genetically superior, weed to buyers in nearly every Texas city. Some naturally filtered to the East and West coasts, but Johnny’s seeds were the chief export to the other states.

It’s simple math, something the politicians can’t do. Or don’t care to try. Even if one takes all the “reefer madness” propaganda of the law and order establishment at face value, marijuana prohibition has done far more harm to far more people than the actual smoking ever could.

The first time Bell Cord Callahan showed Johnny a sample from a crop Delacruz cabo hadn’t started for him there was a problem. Delacruz cabo calmly asked Callahan to spend some time thinking about his product, pointing out the poor quality of
the smoke.

“Feel this right here?” Johnny asked. “I doubt people want to pay for this wood.”

“If you’re trying to move a lot of pot,” Johnny taught him, “you don’t want it sitting, and sitting, in someone’s garage for a month waiting for someone to decide if they want to buy it because it isn’t good enough. There can’t be any doubt and you don’t want it sitting around for the cops to walk in on. It’s risk. It can get stolen, or burned up, or molded. It has to impress them the first time they look at it, smoke it. Anything can happen if they don’t buy it right then and there.”

Delacruzcabo was adamant about one thing. Pot was a commodity like anything else that was great to have, but you didn’t want it sitting in one spot; it needed to be moving if it was going to ever help anyone.

After a long season of guarding and worrying about a crop and after endless hours of work harvesting and transporting it no one hardly ever thought it was their job to find high quality seeds for the next season. Except Johnny.

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*High Times* has a thing they call “landrace” seeds; those are seeds specific to the area they are in. Let’s say Columbia. They are known to be there for a longtime, so they seem to be a local breed of plant. You got places like Afghanistan, Mexico, Hawaii and Burma, Thailand and even South Africa is getting a reputation. One of the greatest days of my life was seeing Texas getting its own listing. I knew the ‘Texas TW’ was several different and separate strains, after all I developed them, but the recognition for Texas in general was nice.

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Growing the product called for a lot of sitting around; it forced men who wouldn’t ordinarily spend much time together to tolerate each other. During this part of the business, when you cut the dried buds form the stalks, the men would sit around
a garage or barn and clip the buds from the branches with rose clippers. On one side of them would be a giant pile of dried out marijuana and on the other side neat pile so groomed buds spread out on plastic. In these circles of men, they often roled joints made from balls of the resin that clung to their fingertips, or they would set fire to a good size bud and passed it around, inhaling the white smoke directly into their noses, no paper or pipe, something like second-hand smoke.

Yarnell didn’t use clippers but a full-sized Bowie knife, its edge slightly deformed from years of sharpening. Everyone decided that if something happened, they wanted Yarnell on their side, not against them.

As they sat in a circle cutting buds off stalks, there was always someone who’d ask questions and Johnny answered them in a very academic manner. He basically taught them what he’d learned from his grandmother and Dr. Stanback. As he talking about botany, the older men paid attention, carefully eying the young intellectual. Delacruzcabo’s lessons motivated the men not to slack on the job of growing high-quality weed. The workers would take regular breaks from clipping buds by walking to a beer cooler or urinating but John rarely stopped. He worked waiting for the men to return so he could finish answering their questions.

Finishing a grooming job on a load of pot could take days or a week and required that everyone stay from beginning to end. They needed to stay until the job was done for security reasons. They had wives and girl friends at home but most told their significant others it was a National Guard bivouac. That they were going and would stay there and when their commitment was done they’d be home. Johnny was the only member of any group that was allowed to leave in the middle of it.

The biggest killer on the planet is stress, and the best medicine is and always has been a good weed high.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

On the Trinity in 1997, Homer Ganss and Grady Welch were out grooming. They were caught by the sheriff himself. He attested them and hauled them off to the county jail. Miraculously, they made bond late that afternoon.

As soon as they were released, they went straight back to the river with tobacco knives and a camper, lanterns and a roll of twin. They worked all night, stripping the crop clean.

The next morning the sheriff showed up with a dump truck and two bush hogs. The equipment waited up top of the riverbank as the sheriff walking down to the patch. He walked back to his employees, shaking his head. “It’s all gone,” the sheriff said, “You could sow wheat down there.

When Waco and Tenderloin appeared in court, the judge gave them a $100 fine for fishing without a license. It’s the only thing that would stick. The next day, Waco went out and paid cash for his first European car, a 1997 BMW.

Delacruzcabbo was always treated respectfully as an educated man. Even friends that didn’t (couldn’t) readily grasp the beauty of plant genetics respected Delacruzcabbo’s enthusiasm for ever increasing the THC levels. Often described as a kind, quiet and likable man, John was the adopted son of hundreds of families.

If invited to have supper with a family, Delacruzcabbo never ate until he was sure there was enough for everyone. After college, he never drank alcoholic beverages, and he was never known to have watched television, except for an occasional baseball game and then only at night when work was difficult.

After supper, they would gather the boys and girls around John, and he’d sing Willie and Merl songs. While he occasionally had trouble remembering the words, he was a very accomplished musician.

Other times he’d tell stories. His favorite was about the time he fell asleep, floating in his canoe. When he woke up, he discovered that he’d passed his destination and his ride, Wallisville, out into the Gulf of Mexico. The moral of the lesson was to “pay attention to what you’re doing at work.” That seemed to indicate John understood his seeding the riverbanks as work to take seriously.

Delacruzcabbo always had books or toys to give as gifts to the younger children.
Highly successful growers are futurists and can creatively look beyond the present and imagine possible futures. A futurist is driven to steer the organization in new directions. Whether introducing new products, tapping new markets, or initiating innovative production processes, a mega grower is constantly thinking of new ways to speed forward. Futurists are two things... one, alert and two, tradition breakers. A word of caution about the future, any idea won’t make it into the future until it is communicated well. Make sure you don’t assume everyone has the same vision of the future as yourself. Communicate the future.

Not everyone he met grew marijuana, the government had coward many otherwise open-minded and free market Texans. Many of his friends grew vegetable gardens. Delacruz cabo brought them improved seeds (okra, tomatoes, and cantaloupe), many varieties that he could have sold to the big seed companies.

Delacruz cabo preferred to sleep outside on a palate of blankets. Only on the rare summer nights that threatened rain would he agree to stay in a house with air-conditioning. John hated to get rained on; that’s why he said he “stayed in Texas and didn’t go off somewhere.”

There was an admiral or another high-ranking naval officer who make a lot of money selling a book extolling the virtues of making your bed. I’ve got one up on him. Roll up your bed and throw it in a canoe, station wagon and get in down the road, or river. That’s more virtuous than making any stationary bed. I’ve ever heard of.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

No one knows the exact moment when John became “Johnny Marijuanaseed.” Many central Texas families have handed down stories that one of their family members gave him the nickname. One family may have given him the name, and it stuck; but obviously impossible, hundreds of families have claimed it.

Legends about Johnny Marijuanaseed include one about his talking to coyotes until they came and took hotdogs from his hands.

He whistled peculiarly, so coyotes drew near him thinking they heard their mates. He gobbled until the wild turkey flocked around him. Quail as well. Young foals followed him, and finally, he would have to speak harshly at them lest they abandon their mothers.

Another time, he is said to have packed up and put out his fire in the middle of a cold night when he realized he’d accidentally camped next to a coyote’s den that contained a bitch and her litter and he didn’t want to disturb her.

These tales appear to be pure legend, but many legends have their roots in the truth. John refused to destroy yellowjacket nests saying, “God forbid that I should destroy one of his creature’s homes.”

By 2000, Delacruzcabo was selling seeds in the Matagorda Bay area. John bought two empty lots on the coast. While he probably intended to build a beach (perhaps retirement) home, things never developed. The lots went back to the county for taxes when Delacruzcabo passed away in 2018.

The thing about breeding a better plant is you have to be stubborn and flexible, more or less at the same time. If you’re nor flexible, you’re standing still. If your not stubborn, you may be backsliding. It’s weird, man.

While the details of Delacruzcabo’s genetic manipulations are well documented, there are only scraps of information about the horticulturist’s personal life. There is, however, a well-documented fact from 1999 that does shed some light on his
Johnny Marijuanaseed

personal convictions. Delacruzcabo, a patriot and Libertarian candidate for governor, was asked to address the Fourth of July crowd at Zilker Park in Austin. It was said that the herbalist spoke with great passion on the subject of freedom. He maintained that despite both political parties rigging the system to slowly deprive the people of their liberty, he still believed the people would rise up and “vote the bastards out of office” and that “violence would not be needed” to restore limited government.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying we don’t need government. I’m not an anarchist. The worst places in the world are the places what have no security, no rules an no government. We need the rule of law, but the second worst place in the world is where they’ve made everything against the law. Do we really need so much rule of law?

John Delacruzcabo was forty-two years old before there was any mention of him in print. However, the story was not about his life as a plant geneticist or mega marijuana pioneer, but about his work as a missionary who shared his religious beliefs with others as he traveled the rivers of Texas.

“There is a man in the Texas hill country who is an extraordinary evangelist. A cowboy in tropical shirts and moccasins, who can sleep anywhere, inside a home or outside on the lawn. He lives on the very least and is not concerned about material wealth. He’s a white or Hispanic man preaching the wisdom of the Knowledgeable Native American Church.”

According to the religious magazine, Delacruzcabo received his training at Fort Sill Oklahoma in a Church originally organized by Indian Chief Quanah Parker. He procures books explaining the native religion that “combines ancient Comanche beliefs with Christianity.” It was reported that he lent books, when he could find readers. He sometimes preached long sermons on the best way to worship God. John is quoted in the article, “All religion relates to living life, and the life of religion is to do what’s cool.”
Johnny Marijuanaseed

The article concludes, “This man, only known as ‘Johnny’ has been employed as a plant geneticist and owns a greenhouse and nursery.”  

The founder’s vision of limited government is one of the greatest philosophical achievements in the history of man, that’s why its slow erosion over my lifetime is so criminal. Limited government protects people while leaving them free to pursue their own interests. That freedom is what makes so much good and creative things possible.

These excerpts were printed in a magazine and web-blog in 2010. The article suggested that Delacruzcabo was well-known by the members of the new Knowledgeable Native American Church (KNAC) and that the church’s growth in Texas was astronomical and about to surpass its size in Oklahoma. Several letters were written between 2005 and 2010 by a prominent KNAC (pronounced næk) preacher, William Longturtle; they suggest that the church was no long dominated by native people and that the new Texas churches were now occupied by equal numbers of whites and Hispanics.

The Knowledgeable Native American Church and I share two goals; one is spiritual and everyone understands that, but the other is a bit more complicated. Cannabis and marijuana affects everyone differently. For instance, in passing a joint amongst a group of congregates, some people may be completely unaffected while others experience intense intoxication of one variety or another. Why is that? I want to encourage everyone to try to understand how your genes may influence your body's interaction with marijuana.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

Longturtle, an ordained minister and hydroponics dealer in Lawton, corresponded with Delacruzcabo for more than ten years. The businessman/preacher also supplied at least part of the religious literature the herbalist shared with Texas families along the rivers.

This fact was verified in a letter Longturtle wrote to the pastor of the new Texas KNAC churches in San Marcos:

_I’ve sent some books to you with Johnny, who you well know travels about administering our sacred communion. He’s something of a nomad and I don’t know when exactly he will arrive, but I can guarantee you he is greatly in love with the nativist church and suffers greatly spreading the good word and the newest most potent seeds. Please advise me when the books arrive._

Though it is not known for sure when the nick-name Johnny Marijuanaseed replaced Delacruzcabo’s given name, it was first recorded in a letter written by Tex Hinojosa in response to William Longturtle. “They call him ‘Johnny Marijuanaseed’ here in San Marcos. He’s a very successful evangelist with the young people at the college.”

Delacruzcabo was probably one of the earliest Knowledgeable Native American Church converts and believe in Texas. The church was primarily in Oklahoma. Even by 2010, when the organization held meetings at the Anadarko Powwow, there were fewer than forty Texans who made the trip. Delacruzcabo was one of the first to carry the message into Texas.

In 2009, a Pentecostal minister named Tex Hinojosa moved, from Ciudad Acuña, to San Marcos. He built a cabin a few miles west of the city and soon became a confirmed believer and member of the nativist church. The young minister organized a group of nativist followers in the college town. Delacruzcabo was a member of that group who meet in the old abandoned Sears story. John helped the group keep in touch
Johnny Marijuanaseed

with the main organization in Lawton. When the young minister first moved to the area around San Marcos, Hinijosa documented that there were no other believers in the nativist faith living there, except for Delacruzcabo. It is doubtful however that Delacruzcabo was actually living there, it was probably at a time when John was seeding the San Marcos River and possibly the Guadalupe.

Delacruzcabo is mentioned in hundreds of emails written by KNAC members. One dated, May 15, 2010, tells of John’s offer to pay the rent for the old Sears in the Springtown Shopping Center. The proposal is also mentioned in an email William Longturtle wrote to a church member in San Antonio on June 16th, 2010. “The money that he offers is genuine and if your group in San Antonio could contact Mr. Delacruzcabo you might have a worship home yourself. He’s been willing, in the past to supply enough of the new improved product, enough to sell and cover the rent on the San Marcos church space.”

Historians can only guess if Delacruzcabo actually delivered weed to the fledgling congregations or he simply gave them directions to the river crops and the congregation members harvested the plants. Whatever the case, the rents were paid on at least ten strip mall churches along the I-35 corridor, from Laredo in the south to Gainesville in the north. There was a strip mall church in Odessa and one in Nacogdoches as well.

In 2018, there were 18 such churches in Texas with 4,821 members. Of these, 3,219 were designated as “regularly attending.” These numbers rival the church’s membership in Oklahoma, where the church began. While the preaching was mostly done by others, Delacruzcabo is considered the founder of the religion in Texas. There is little doubt about Delacruzcabo’s dedication to his missionary work in Texas. The stories have been repeated time and time again. In a different location each Sunday morning, Delacruzcabo would enter whatever strip mall church, preach and practice communion. After the service, the entire congregation would go to eat at the nearest pizza buffet. John would, of course, then move on with his work traveling about the state in his green Opal.

Most of Delacruzcabo’s acquaintances in Texas had no idea that he was in contact with college professors and professionals,
Johnny Marijuanaseed

lawyers, and doctors. Many of Delacruzcab’s friend’s were entrepreneurs with small businesses. In fact, the poor paid little attention to the intellectual ideas that Delacruzcab preached – limited government and chemical communion with God.

Texas has been a wonderful place for producing marijuana and more so than any other state as far as permutations go. Well, the rivers are an innovating place. It’s nature and manipulating it is really very intellectually simulating.

According to Jane Issackson, whose family lived on a pig farm ten miles south of Henrietta in 2007, “It was something hardly anybody except Johnny could understand. He’d get so excited and talking too fast, he lost most people. But, he was well-liked; he didn’t have much so he was sort of like us. Everybody wanted to stick it to the man, but he never really did that as far as I know.”

In a way, Delacruzcab’s odd appearance, old car, and clothes and handmade canoe encouraged Texans to at least listen to his ideas. Most were tired of the same old politicians, hair perfect, clothes perfect and driving a car most people could never even dream of affording. Those people weren’t Texas and the Texans John knew turned them off like a TV set. He gave the first impression that he wasn’t educated. No one could ever accuse him of being “arrogant” or “holier than thou.” Most Texans couldn’t understand the intellectual underpinnings of libertarianism and nativist doctrines, but Delacruzcab understood them well and did his best to teach the ideas.

Though few knew what he was talking about, Delacruzcab was followed by thousands, almost blindly. Delacruzcab read and theorized and preached and he struggled with the glazing over of the eyes of the congregation if he advanced anything new or complicated economic or religious argument. His followers wanted a simple experience, and this was always a puzzle to him because he preferred answers, all the answers regardless of how much work it took to get there.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

While John did struggle with this phenomenon, he did occasionally pun about it, “Different smokes for different folks,” and frankly admitted that the “chemical communion” practiced by the nativist church affected individuals in different ways, because “not everyone is the same, physically, mentally, chemically. Ideas, books, and marijuana all effect people differently.”

A well-read, college educated, Wichita Falls Baptist minister invited John to lunch with him to discuss religion; he was surprised to find that “the strange traveling evangelist has one of the best informed and most brilliant mind” he’d ever known.

A widespread story about Delacruzcabos is referred to by scholars as the, “impoverished Christian.” Though the setting and the particular television evangelist name seems to change with each telling, the event seem based on the original internet posting, which is considered accurate.

Johnny Marijuanaseed was a member of a crowd that gathered around a televangelist’s Lincoln Navigator as the minister was asked for his explanation of why church money was spent on Las Vegas suites, the evangelist began to preach. At least two broadcast quality cameras were present, and many thought it was staged to appear spontaneous. The televangelist preached that “a rich man entering heaven would be like a camel passing through the eye of a needle.” The minister asked the crowd “Where is the impoverished Christian, today?”

At that point, the story says, Delacruzcabos pointed out his lime green thirty-year-old Opal station wagon, which happened to be parked directly next to the new Navigator. Delacruzcabos said, “Here’s your impoverished Christian!”

The wealthy evangelist, who’d wanted to use the tape on his program, suddenly seems at a loss for words, as he looked at the line green vehicle, and let the group of listeners go. The tapes have disappeared and, of course, the episode was never broadcast.

When approached the minister, mentioned in the original internet posting that describes the events I’ve just described, acknowledged that the incident did take place, but that the cameras hadn’t been his. No such tape ever existed, he claimed.
I love the structure (rest stop) built just south of town. It was built by the State of Texas. Building it took the government two years and cost $580,000. It’s a brick outhouse – no running water – just a prime example of how your tax money literally goes down the toilet.

John Delacruz cabó became intimate with the rivers he explored. So intimate with the Canadian, in fact, that one spring he spent almost an hour IN it. This happened during a ferocious March storm that assaulted the panhandle one morning. It made the Texas landscape reverberate with thunder. Torrential rain fell on John, and the wind whipped the river into whitecaps. He sought shelter on shore, but the river bank was so steep and so muddy that he could hardly keep his footing. The wind and rain were so cold that he finally jumped back into the river as it was warmer and the better of the two alternatives left to him. He was a sodden river rat when he finally got out.

Arguably John’s favorite river was the Guadalupe, which raises out of springs and flows southeast 250 miles to the Gulf. It has cut a narrow valley through hills covered with live oak and cedar. Shallow, clear and sprinkled liberally with rapids, it clearly was the most recreational river in Texas, and so John seeded only a few select stretches, the few miles that weren’t regularly full of inner tubes.

Ten’s of thousands of tubers and rafters jammed the lower stretches summers, but above Canyon Dam the river was unspoiled. Joseph Moore, an avid naturalist, frequently canoed the Guadalupe with John.

The Guadalupe is at the heart of the Texas hill country, where live oaks line the highways, deer and roadrunners streak across traffic and wild turkeys burst in front of cars. Pastures as so vast that cattle, goats, and sheep always seem lost.

Late one afternoon, the two men loaded John’s aluminum canoe with supplies and put in near the town of Waring, about
40 miles north of San Antonio, without the intention of seeding the river. It was simply a recreational trip.

The Guadalupe unfolded before them an avenue of rushing water 30 feet wide, fringed with centuries-old bald cypress trees. They had paddled only a few yards when they hit rapids.

In the stern Moore maneuvered the canoe; he paddled, and he especially prayed. These, though small, were Delacruzcabó’s first rapids since California and he thought back to his childhood canoeing with his mother. “Read the V’s” he remembered. A “V” pointed upstream indicated a rock or other obstruction (maybe a tree), because moving water parts at an obstacle. A “V” pointing downstream is usually the best course through a rapid, because it indicated a clear chute. Reassured by his memory, Delacruzcabó said he settled back and enjoyed the ride.

The Guadalupe provided entertainment. Again and again, they shot easily through the rapids. Punctuating the fast water spells were quick pools of green where minnows skittered. Cattle trails wound down hillsides to the water, and occasionally an ancient cypress with a circle of soil still clinging to its roots lay upended on shore. Moore explained to our hero, these dead giants were remnants left by a flood that ravaged the river in 1978.

Then too relaxed, they misjudged the current at the next rapid. Between a jumble of boulders and a fallen sycamore, the water seized them an hurled them against the tree and tipping the canoe. As the canoe began to fill with water, they jumped out. Delacruzcabó grabbed the canoe and towed it to shore while Moore sprinted down the bank after the gear. Running, wadding and swimming, he caught everything but the Ziplocs. They emptied the containers and repacked the canoe and went more cautiously.

Blue herons flashed overhead, a small water snake wiggled by. Herefords watered in midstream calmly stepped aside at the last minute to let them pass, mooing at them as they drifted past. More Cypresses, snatched by the 63’ waters of the 1978 flood, lay in piles on the shore. Close to sundown, when hey left the river, Delacruzcabó asked Moore how far they’d come. “About 39 miles,” he said. “Went quickly, didn’t it?” It had. The Guadalupe is a fast friend.

Landowners along the upper river were not shy.
Determined to save this stretch from the commercialism that ruined the lower section, they protested fiercely. In the 1990’s when the Texas Parks Department proposed acquiring acreage along 225 miles of the river, Delacrucabo’s friends quickly formed a protective organization – the Guadalupe River Association – and fought so loudly that the state legislature finally scuttled the idea. When the federal government listed the Guadalupe as a possible site to be protected, the association managed to get it dropped from consideration.

The best growers strongly believe they can take a strain of marijuana and corner the market based on their effort alone. I’m not really a grower; I develop the seeds a grower needs, but I’m always looking for people that consider themselves a jack-of-all trade who can single handedly take my genetic material and operate a business. A mega grower had the ability to multitask and handle the basics on his own. I like people who can set goals and take action to achieve them. I don’t want marijuana grower calling me on the phone constantly, not that I give out my number. I didn’t even own a phone for a very long time. Don’t call me; you’re your own grower. You have all the seeds you need, combined with good sense; you have all the tools you need. I can’t baby sit anyone. Be independent but don’t pass on a piece of good advice.

Johnny Marijuanaseed had a friend in nearly every Texas town and ten friends in every river town, and for over 30 years we didn’t know his real name or where he lived.
He most productive growers are obsessed with scientific knowledge. They have a strong desire to acquire in-depth knowledge about horticulture. I call it “knowledge talent” and I look for people curious about how plants grow. Nature is not simple, and to call it an accident is like throwing a box of watch parts in the air and hoping they all come down in a way, there’s a watch that works. It’s complicated and you just can’t throw a bunch of seeds out there and hope they grow. The more science you know the most easily you can stay ahead of the growers in other states. A mega grower gathers an large amount of information and stores everything new and they ask themselves, “What does this mean for my crop?” You have to ask that question always and sometimes twice. Intellectual curiosity is one thing but don’t generate too many ideas… so many ideas spreads you thin. Keep it pithy.

Odysseus, Delacruzcabo’s puppy was a mastiff, purebred, and was given to him as payment for a gallon of “Brazos and Blitzed” seeds. He was a handsome, if not lumbering puppy, and the needle-sharp teeth grasped the hem of John’s new shirt, not new but new to him (from Goodwill). Odysseus and John enacted a brawl of sorts, about releasing the shirt, which ended with John rolling him over and placing his hands at the proud puppy’s throat, like his mother would have mocked a bite to his neck or the same as any member of a pack of dogs might. Finally, the pup accepted his dominance, but the shirt had been torn.

That night the puppy and John slept on a mat together, beside the river. Delacruzcabo worried about the puppy’s expected girth and labored mobility. The dog’s thick short bones compared to his long thin bones and the nature of John’s work, constantly moving about, there was some doubt about their
compatibility.

John didn’t want to leave him warehoused in his grandmother’s back yard. But he’d been told by an old man, “You don’t understand how it is out here, you’ve been in a greenhouse your entire life. Every grower needs a dog. The puppy will grow up, you’ll see in a year. He’ll be your protector and stand firm between you and any danger. Odysseus’ breed was bred for thousands of years to give his life for his master. And it’s far more noble to die for a weed scientist than a Roman general if you ask me.”

John’s grandmother eventually repaired the torn shirt. Almost the age of 91 at the time, she made it as good as new, something like Joseph’s coat. “I hope that shirt doesn’t get you into trouble. It sure is pretty, but with all those colors, someone is bound to stop you.”

With the passing months, the young dog did assume the role of protector, just as the old man had predicted. Odysseus remained at John’s heels as he worked the Brazos. Even though Odysseus was only a growing juvenile, he did fiercely confront the other canines, snarling and barking. Same for the three bobcats they encountered that first six months together. Odysseus wasn’t shy about warning others that John was his specially selected human.

John and the puppy were inseparable. John’s grandmother was comforted by the relationship. She wrote John’s mother in California that John couldn’t sleep unless Odysseus was curled up right next to him. The miracle of grower and his dog was unlike anything the grandmother had ever witnessed. At the house there, she’d only kept cats as mousers and to combat snakes.

One day on the Pedernales, not far from Naumann’s Camp, a herd of deer with newborn, spotted fawns, grazed near a crop of marijuana. John walked with tools in one hand and Odysseus’s tail in the other. When John noticed the fawns, he let go of the tail and pointed, “Look, Odysseus. Baby deer. There are a ton of them. Pretty little things.”

The dog paused. His eyes tracing John’s gesture down the river bank. Two dozen buff colored does, and half again as many fawns, grazing on the marijuana. The dog struck out on his own, turning to look as if expecting John to follow. John hesitated.
He told the dog to, “Come back.”
Tail still at alert, Odysseus trotted toward the deer. After all, his master pointed to the creatures, a signal to him that meant to him, intimidate them. *Didn’t John mean for me to run them off?*

Dozens of black-tipped ears pricked toward the dog. A score of sable-ringed muzzles lifted to sniff the air.

Suddenly, one doe panicked and wheeled toward the dog. Her body became a bullet, protecting her fawns. The first threat to Odysseus came from a large mother of twins. She lowered her head and pawed the ground, warning the young dog but he was a breed that didn’t take warnings. Oblivious and unafraid the dog trotted on toward the danger. The Doe squealed and charged. Odysseus had crossed the line and John had hesitated in awe of it all.

Odysseus, still a puppy, tucked his tail, and confused, by the doe’s charge, he rolled up in a submissive ball. *She hadn’t been near that big before she charged.* And then an entire army of angry mother’s surrounded him.

The large doe lashed out at Odysseus and he yelped. He tried to rise, and maybe fight once the battle began, but two other does kicked him back down. They struck him with powerful front hooves, then grew bolder and again and again they brought their full weight down on him. A fourth doe got in on the pounding. The young dog was unable to escape. He was butted and kicked from all sides.

John, freely admitted that he’d frozen. But eventually, he ran to the melee of attacking deer and scattered them. With their young fawns, the deer disappeared.

Bloody and near death, Odysseus lay panting in the grass. John Ran to his dog and he says he cried. When John told this story, friends said he abandoned what little macho he had and showed no ego. He admitted he wept, and that the entire incident was his fault.

Odysseus’s fur was covered in blood. He lay trembling in the grass. John said he didn’t want to leave even to fetch the canoe, afraid his dog’d give up and would be dead by the time he got back.

John said he gave the young dog a pep talk, something from a baseball movie he saw once and then returned to bring up the canoe. The dog was large and he was only able to load the dog
into it by tipping it over on its side and dragging the dog onto a blanket and then up into the canoe. John was known to have said his life’s most painful memory was turning that canoe upright as the move was excruciating to Odysseus.

He prayed, paddling down the river to the next town, “Lord, save my little friend. Please save Odysseus.”

At Pace Bend Park, he managed to drag the canoe out of the water and out into the road. A man stopped and offered John his .22 pistol. John reached for it but, the site of a lady who’d also stopped, made him hesitate again. And good thing cause she stepped right up, “A moment, Sam. Let me check the damage on this big fellow,” she said.

“He’s broken to pieces.”

“He was protecting you? From deer, you say?”

“Deer with fawns.”

“He just trotted off on his own, like… I made the mistake of pointing at them.”

“Still a puppy? They don’t know any better at this age. Hard to believe a dog this size is still a puppy. It kinda throws you off, don’t it?”

She took it all in and stood there and thought.

“No, put the gun up Sam. We’re taking him to Doc Tolleson. Sam, we’re gonna use your truck. Put the tailgate down and maybe we together we can lift him up.”

Three other citizens had stopped and the five of them lifted Odysseus into the bed of the truck. Sam had it in gear and ready to roll. The dog blinked a lot on the way to the vet, something of code to John the dog telling him, “I’m still in here.”

Multiple lacerations. Broken ribs. Lung punctured. Broken left foreleg. Broken pelvis. Four-hour surgery, a plate with four screws fixed his leg; a plate with six screws fixed his pelvis. Stitches? One hundred and three. Tubes and IVs, everything was done. They didn’t have a crate large enough to put him in so they just laid him out on two or three blankets in one of their indoor kennel runs. The vet didn’t want to let John sleep the night in his practice, but John brought his blanket and pitched it on the floor beside his buddy. The lady, who is still today unknown, but who’d pretty much taken over the situation. John has withdrawn and wasn’t talking. She was the one that persuaded the vet it would be okay for John to sleep over.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

The next morning, before the vet or any of the staff arrived, Odysseus licked the back of John’s neck. Odysseus still wasn’t standing but this slight affection brought John out of his shock-like stupor.

Three days later, it was a bit odd negotiating payment. The veterinarian had smoked weed in school but didn’t need any seeds or even any bud; but the mystery woman, John’s most ardent ally, whispered that she probably knew some people who could help. An hour later, John had $1200 cash, and Esmerelda had arrived in the Opal.

John told this story everywhere he went and recommended Dr. Tolleson to everyone no matter how far from Austin they lived. Dr. Tolleson told me, “John was a one man, million-dollar, marketing team,”68 and that people regularly would drive across half the state to bring their animals to him. John’s recommendation brought people from San Angelo, San Antonio and even as far as Abilene.

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I happen to think consenting adults should be able to do just about anything they want. I think prostitution should be permitted. If quarterbacks and boxers make a living with their bodies, why can’t a woman make money with hers? Homosexuality is odd, but it’s been going on forever. The war on drugs is a scam to incarcerate people for having too much fun. It’s not for one group of people to have fun when another group is too scared to try.

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Little is known about Emerelda, but that she was frequently called “la cancionera de los pobres” (the singer to the poor), but not because she sang about poverty. Rather her music, coming out of the Hispanic soul and expressing a shared cultural vision, offered those who were poor the solace that comes from being together and being one group. She sang about her love for her mother, about dancing and having fun, about being betrayed by “bad men” she loved, about children who sang about death. Hearing these songs, people wept, because she expressed their
life. Struggling men and women traveled good distances to come hear her sing. It’s not known if any recordings were ever made; it appears, if there were, they have been lost.

At least the fate of most of the poor doesn’t depend on the government or private charity. The world’s best poverty fighter is employment and capitalism creates more jobs than any other system. And yet capitalism (our only hope for the future) even the left-wing billionaires who used the market system to become wealthy would deny it to others. I’m not sure Zuckerberg and Bezos aren’t idiots or maybe just so self centered they can’t see the entire picture.

One year Delacruzcabo was stopped on Hwy 289, in the Texas hill country. It is the only know traffic stop researchers found in the life of the legendary hero. It was four in the afternoon, blazing hot and the road was almost empty and he was in no rush, he was traveling his average speed, 45 MPH. That type of overt violation was typical for him, driving too slow, in a state where almost everything was against the law, was sure to get a driver pulled over.

John never smoked in the middle of the day or before driving. John happened looked out the open window to his left, and a highway patrolman was pacing him, no lights or siren, just keeping up with him in the opposing lane. Everyone’s seen that menacing look on the face of a perturbed officer of the law, like they really don’t want to work, but you are forcing them to do it. The cop indicated with his hand that John should pull over, so John did. John sat in the car waiting with the mastiff panting harder now the vehicle had stopped. More than once he’d seen cops, his station wagon containing gallons of seeds, and he’d drive on calmly unconcerned. But this time he’d been stopped. The seeds were in the canoe strapped to the roof.

“Not in any hurry today?”
“Yeah, I guess not. I try not to get in too much a rush.”
“T’ve actually never seen an Opal in life.”
“It’s a 1968, and yes it’s as old as I am.”
“They’ll never believe it at the command post.”
“Don’t tell them it was lime green.”
“I won’t. Where you going?”
“Home.”
“Where’s that?”
“Daggett Switch, up near Wichita Falls.”
“I know where it is. Not too many long-hair types up there.”
“Well, there’s at least one.”
“Where you been?”
“The Blanco.” And he gestured up at the canoe.
“Your dog’s getting hot.”
“He does a lot better when we’re moving. The air moving over his face.”
“Big dog. You can pet him if you want. He’s not a felon…yet.”
“No, I better not. I like dogs though.”
“He’d like a little pat. There’s not a mean bone in his body, not even for cops. I think he actually likes you guys.”

John was praying his dog wouldn’t ripe the officer’s arm off if he did reach inside the Opal. He wasn’t sure how the dog would react, but he was hoping the heat would take the bite out of him.

“Well, thanks but you better get moving again. Be careful.”

So, John started the car again and pulled slowly away. Driving home carefully, he turned the thing over and over in his head. He said he didn’t feel the slightest bit cocky or smart, just thankful he had a, tongue hanging out, big dog.

Warren Buffet commented in a Bloomberg television interview, “Mr. Delacruz cabo never moved without calculation. He was like a robot, and you have to be that in business. He never would have invested in the seed cannon unless it provided a good opportunity. He would look at a site and immediately compute the odds a crop could be grown there and what the yield would be. Robotic.”

No one realized it, but the empty drive at Delacruz cabo’s Daggett Switch home meant one terrifying meaning for the
state’s police. Johnny Marijuana seed had left his greenhouse to see the state’s rivers with the newest and most potent genetic material.

You want to make it in this business? You’ll need strong interpersonal skills. I look for people that understand a business is a collective effort. We have to work together and everyone wants to work with people they can get along with. Employees and customers, competition even, the law and even the media. I can’t sink so low, but Yarnell is friends with a dozen deputies and even two reporters and I’m always amazed at the lies he’s able to feed them. When you live in a country where nearly every human activity is illegal, misinformation is just as important as the truth.

Delacruz cabo told Danny Newton, the triple amputee and Persian Gulf War vet that he left in charge of a section of the East fork of the Trinity, “Feel my hand; it’s calloused by the work, but if you think about it, nature does the real work. My strategy is to plant a million carefully crafted seeds each year and then select one or two of the superior plants. Sometimes it’s just the good luck of a magic combination of genes. A lucky bird, bee or gust of wind. I’m fairly tolerant of deer even, one might carry the magic genes that will get half America stoned on his whiskers as he grazes in our crop. It might be a huge improvement. Whatever happens out here, I depend on you to notice it. Weed out the male plants, like I taught you, but when you harvest leave the biggest bud there… if it makes seeds I want them to take back to my greenhouse.”

Marijuana plants are like two pair of identical bluejeans; they are the same size, but some girls can pack more into them than others.
Several of John Delacruzcano’s family lived in the Navasota area, a few miles southwest of North Zulch. Delacruzcano probably visited them often since the place was on the Navasota River. John’s brother, Jesse Jr., was married and had five fine children. John, on at least four occasions, pitch to his nephews in the place of Jesse at “coaches pitch” baseball games in the summer of 2011 and 2012. 

His sister, Mary, had also married a man named Seth Sweeps. The Sweeps and their four daughters lived near Three Rivers on the Frio. Delacruzcano gave Sweeps the locations so he could care for the Frio crops.

This and his life with his aging grandmother appear to be the only home life that John knew for a long period of years. Though stories portray him as a lonely man, other clues point to a man who enjoyed the solitude. He clearly was a thinker, theorist, and a planner.

He was said to be very fond of his nieces and attended many of their volleyball matches. He attended many of their choir concerts. Other clues that he wasn’t so lonely were the many gifts to his sister’s daughters, his frequent visits and the entertaining stories the girls could tell about his adventures.

In 2011, forty-three-year-old Delacruzcano abandoned supervision many of his north Texas crops to others. Once again, he moved his focus West. He seeded the Nueces and Pecos rivers. The Pecos River would be his most difficult challenge. It took several years and hundreds of hybridizations for John to engineer a variety of marijuana that would grow in the poor soil and alkaline water. He accomplished this with the introduction of what he called, “No Law West of the Pecos #238,” which was eventually given the street name of “Judge Roy.”

Though most people thought of John Delacruzcano as a man living in poverty, eating Raman noodles, driving an old Opal and wearing thrift store clothing, in truth, he was quite a good businessmen and one who knew how to market his product.

By the mid-2010s, many Texas growers where facing stiff competition from growers in states were marijuana was legal,
Johnny Marijuanaseed

California and Colorado. The horticulturist had already proven the potency of his varieties and had always shared his genetic material, especially in the pot growing states; they’d paid nominal fees to him for the seeds. The Colorado, Vermont, Alaska, and California growers especially were capitalizing on John’s work and moving marijuana about the country and bringing his product back into Texas. The Texas growers had too lower expectations (the price) to stay in business with “foreigners” as many of them called out-of-staters.

There is evidence that Delacruz cabo was making rounds down the Rio Grande in 2014. One undocumented traveler remembered the seeds his parents bought out of a canoe that year. THE seeds come from Delacruz cabo’s crop near Presidio.

The immigrant remembered the date clearly because a year later, his family with the profits, secured an immigration lawyer and citizenship.

After the Pecos River adventure, Delacruz cabo had extended his crops to the Rio Grand. Several dates have been given for his first trip down the river to Brownsville. It was a long and grueling trip and required a great deal of logistical support. Stories handed down have him arriving in El Paso with a mysterious (beautiful) young Mexican girl named Esmeralda.

Although there is not solid proof positive or photography to prove they were romantically attached, the master’s thesis of Matt Garcia sociology graduate student at Texas Tech supports the idea perhaps finally John Delacruz cabo had found “love, or at least female companionship.”

Garcia claims to have found a witness who knew Delacruz cabo who told him this story, “John and Esmerelda came there (El Paso) long before 2014. Certainly it was, that in 2008 they were seen one fall day, sitting in a canoe filled with gallon buckets, paddling down the river. John kept the seeds wet so they’d be quick to sprout. Esmeralda was incredibly lovely, but couldn’t have been then seventeen or eighteen.”

Canoes and boats made of aluminum or fiberglass could be expensive but, according to Garcia, John by 2008 had traded his original homemade canoe in for a new aluminum ride; Garcia said it was the nicest on the market at the time. John always used a canoe to transport his seeds. He was never known to use any motorized craft, as has been reported.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

John probably entered the Rio Grande at El Paso or not far from there. He is said to have planted his first crop along the southern border, “not for scientific or economic benefit” but as a “welcome to our southern neighbors, our amigos.” John floated the river broadcasting the seeds, with Esmerelda driving along the highways in support, with food, water, and supplies.

After this exhaustive trip, John and Esmerelda returned to Texhoma. John was known to winter in Daggett Switch, spending many hours in the greenhouse. He slept many nights in the greenhouse claiming it was warmer than the house. Esmerelda however, as a rule, slept in the house.

Highly useful growers are those that are ambassadors for the brand, we are a brand, did you know that? You represent out business to the outside word. Growing is just soil and sun and water; growing is also faces and voices and opportunities to sell some bud. With either there is a mission and a purpose and an endorsement people are looking for, marijuana sells itself, but you have to sell the seeds. You have to be an exceptional storyteller and you have to communicate the essence of what we’re doing here. What’s that? We’re growing higher and higher potency marijuana. Tell them it means increased profit now but its also something for the generations that follow. Never sell bull shit. Please. It’s my name and reputation.

The seasons regulated John’s routine. Each spring he would follow the rivers, stopping to groom his young plants and to plant new, improved varieties. Then as the harvest time approached in the fall, John would collect as many seeds as he needed for his winter greenhouse experiments. In the winter he would return to Daggett Switch. Year after year, records show his regular river trek and the time he devoted to his grand experiment in the greenhouse.
For John’s largest crops, John pitched a worn canvass tent nearby or arranged to stay with friends of other nativist church members. For example, in 2006, Delacruz cabo discovered a nice spot on the Nueces about six miles west of Uvalde. He planted seeds and the next fall he boarded with a rancher in the neighborhood for six days. In 2007, Delacruz cabo spent three days with the same family.

After that, it seemed that much shorter periods were needed to maintain the crops. Delacruz cabo boarded with other families for up to a week and then moved on to the next crop. Most likely this pattern was repeated on the next crop. This pattern was repeated again and again his entire life.

Contrary to popular believe, highly effective criminals, and I say this with a little tongue in cheek, are not risk takers, they are risk mitigators. If a grower has a dominate risk talent, they stay out of trouble by flying under the radar. A mega grower isn’t loud or braggadocios. They replace emotion with rational (calculated) thought. This is really mathematics, calculating the odds of success and decide if the profits are worth assuming the risk. Its noticing pattern of risk, what happened to another grower in another state. Growing marijuana in Texas is inherently risky, they have about 200,000 of us locked up. None are us. But there isn’t any avoiding all risk, just cut down on the risk you take.

John Delacruz cabo was responsible for breeding the most potent stains of marijuana. And he was responsible for extensive plantings along the Texas rivers. However, he could not always claim that his river crops produced the best marijuana, Delacruz cabo grew plants from seed. Even if the seeds came from high potency plants, the new plant might produce an inferior, less potent bud. But no marijuana at this time could measure up to plants grown from what he called his premium
Johnny Marijuanaseed

seeds, seeds developed in his lab greenhouse in a Daggett Switch backyard. These seeds were mailed around the world and were the foundation of the huge increase in average THC levels the last thirty years.

The river plantings were (one) experiments of his efficiency. They were tests of his winter hothouse work. And (two) they were gifts to local friends of his.

Whatever the quality of the buds that grow from the river plants, young and old friends found a use for them. If one plant was deemed not good enough to smoke, all they had to do was look a bit longer for a better candidate. They were lush and plentiful and easy to find, and John would lead this friends directly to the crops.

Actually, more than a few of Delacruzcabo’s river planting produced world class buds, “I mean that’s the idea right,” he’s known to have said. Always a crop would contain some killer plants, genetically superior, plush and healthy and potent enough to knock you on your ass. Once a season passed, the plants would breed naturally with wind, or bees and sometimes John would be surprised by moth nature would produce. He took extensive notes on mutations and various varieties that originated in nature.

I think the citizens of Daggett Switch, police and politicians, had they not oppressed me, I would have never left the city limits, with garden plenty to occupy me. I’d have lived a simple but unaccomplished plant geneticists. Now looks what they’ve allowed me to sew, in my new huge garden.

Legend suggests that John Delacruzcabo traveled across the entire western United States and met other well-known historical figures, such as Larry McMurtry in Phoenix and Snoop Dog in Los Angeles. There have been photos of Delacruzcabo with each of the men, but analysis has proven them high-quality fakes, created with Photoshop. There is no known photo of John Delacruzcabo with either writer or rapper; an internet
jokester used photos of Jim Caviezel who played Jesus in *The Passion*. John did look like the Jesus, portrayed in millions of paintings. Millions of people have been fooled by photos of Caviezel with McMurtry and Snoop.

Plants the herbalist planted were said to be growing in Colorado, Utah and Northwest Nevada. Also, he supposedly sang (Joan Baez and Janet Joplin) folk songs with Springteen in Fresno at the fairgrounds.

A previously respected, California historian suggested that Delacruzcabo may have traveled as far as Hollywood. The information came from a *Hollywood Reporter* employee who came forward in 2018 and said he has seen John and Esmerelda in the fall of 2012, “having lunch with Harvey Weinstein about a possible bio-pic.”

However, this is all fanciful supposition, credit claiming, and simply manipulation of the media for self-promotion. There is no proof that Delacruzcabo ever traveled outside the state of Texas or southwest Oklahoma.

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**I don’t raise Hell, I raise Weed.**

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In many communities in the Western states there are Johnny Marijuanaseed festivals and traditions, partially because of legalization. No officially sanctioned festivals are known in Texas. However, there is something of a nude swim party starting each year at noon on the anniversary of Johnny’s death at Hippie Hollow on Lake Travis in Austin.

Many Texas cities have used the legend to become tourist traps and have used the name as a marketing gimmick to trick motorists to stop in their city. Several city managers have voiced their opposition to official days of remembrance, parades or any other recognition and cite their city’s reliance on federal and state drug enforcement grants to remain operating (to continue paying high salaries).

In Eureka, the largest Johnny Marijuanaseed Festival, the community displays a distinctive Red Dirt music and dancing. With its arts and crafts and the traditional work fair and
lifestyles, it’s a great time for everyone. Festive booths array the park and various groups sell ethnic Tex-Mex and marijuana eatables. Screw the dispensaries and the state regulators; it’s a festival. One stage spotlights Western Swing bands brought from Texas for the weekend. The other stage is dominated by Tejano meets Honky-Tonk music. Mariachi bands. Scottish bagpipes parade thought the fair, but no one knows actually why. There are also Filipina tinikling dancers, wearing cowboy hats.

The festival is rooted in the idea of community with everyone representing their native culture, and everyone enjoys their own culture but on this weekend they are clearly fascinated by the culture and myth of Texas.

In life and now in death, Delacruzcabo embodied the complexities and contradictions in the new culture, both in Texas and in California. Although he was a sensitive and solitary man, he came to represent the new liberation high-potency marijuana brought to the rebellion against government control.

Ha-highly successful growers have little self-doubt. Rather, they are more likely to possess strong self-belief. If they have high confidence, they believe that they have what it takes to be a successful grower. They will certainly have the ability to help start an organization, persist in the face of uncertainty and even weather complete catastrophes. There will be challenges in growing and selling your product. I look for people who can recognize opportunities and initiate action. Uncertainty is a deal killer. A grower’s high confidence helps convince others (customers, prospective employees and potential partners) of your ability to get things done. Confidence helps marijuana growers in stressful conditions. It’s better to avoid situations where you feel less in control. When others see roadblocks and potential arrest, a confident grower will use the river to circumvent. A word of caution. Over confidence will get you arrested and in Texas that means convicted.
In 2008, the Obama administration opened the floodgates to immigration moving north. The routes the immigrants took brought many of them into contact with John and his friends. Word quickly spread that millions could be made growing and selling the new high potency weed. In fact, immigrants were told they had to have the new strains because there was so much competition and that people were becoming spoiled and didn’t want the reggie anymore and it all made perfect sense to them. Two years into the Obama presidency, John was getting forty dollars for a handful of his newest premium seeds.

Delacruzcabo planted crops all along the Rio Grande. He was ready and waiting when the floods of immigrants came. In fact, by 2012, one of his largest crops on the border bested fifteen thousand plants – the plants were decedents of plants he planted in late November 2008. John had two things going for him, both long-term vision and great timing.

At the age of 45, Delacruzcabo was still traveling the rivers. On March 10, 2013, he paid cash for a Hobie Mirage Pro Angler Tandem canoe. He bought a trailer to pull behind the Opal. By 2016, when Donald Trump began his immigration crackdown, John moved his focus back to Texhoma and the Wichita River.

Not many people knew much about the herbalist’s business. Delacruzcabo himself seemed to have been the only one who knew all the locations. Perhaps he deliberately allowed people to believe he was just a poor man who wondered Texas, planting marijuana. Contrary to popular belief, Delacruzcabo sometimes carried large amount of KNAC money as he traveled from church to church.

One story handed down by family members tells of a time when John feared that thieves would rob him. He weighted a duffle bag full of cash and threw it into the Big Mineral Creek. He had to wait three years for a drought to lower the water level enough to retrieve it.

It does appear that MasterCard knew Delacruzcabo had money and extended him credit. Records show he used that credit to buy twenty-eight new hydroponics units from a Koran manufacturer on November 22, 2014. The EonFlora Company actually shipped the equipment to a “Johnny Mseed” at his
grandmother’s Daggett Switch address.

During the last five years of his life, Delacruz Cabo used parcels of land that totaled more than sixty miles of linear river and forty-three acres. While this didn’t make him a wealthy man, more people in those circles recognized his name than the governor’s.

During the last years, Delacruz Cabo devoted most of his time to the reutilization of North Central Texas Rivers, the rivers he’d seeded as a young man. They were near his Daggett Switch home. Records showed that he seeded five new parcels along the Little Wichita, the Wichita and Clear Fork of the Trinity and along the Red River. A tract along the Trinity was one of Delacruz Cabo’s masterpieces with ten thousand “Poinsettia” (marijuana variety with a red bud) growing.

The only other plot worth mentioning was in Wilbarger County, about 12 miles north of Vernon. With the help of The Cossacks (motorcycle club), Delacruz Cabo cut the timbers and built a log cabin and strung electric fencing. The Cossacks had a man, and sometimes a wife and children, in the log cabin at all times. It is believed that Delacruz Cabo had an agreement with the group to improve on the “Cossack Sword” variety even though it was already considered the strongest variety on the market at that time. Later, the Cossacks pulled up the old “sword” plants to make room for a new and improved variety, which, unfortunately (because of Delacruz Cabo’s untimely death), never materialized. It is pure fantasy the idea that the Cossack’s cashed in on a million dollar life insurance policy when John was killed. What insurance company would pay off on such a claim? It is someone’s fantasy.

If twenty-two-year-old Delacruz Cabo had a stock of genetically superior seeds to take to California in December of 1990, experts doubt it, as there is no record of it. He did travel to California, and he did return a full-fledged genetic engineer with a gift for judging plants and a notebook full of observations. But the seeds he brought back followed the old template. Nothing he brought back was earth-shattering, but inspiration came fast, and it came hard. And it came from nowhere; it wasn’t that always that way.

Not in the horticulture world. Very many eighties marijuana
breeders spent years scuffling around the vortex of their original genetic material.

Authorities knew something was up in Texas fields but couldn’t put their finger on it. Reagan’s DEA Director Francis M. Mullen told reporters, “someone in Texas is growing plants that could grow on Mars or Venus and kill a horse.” While that statement is documented, what’s not found in history is the story circulated in Texas in the 1990s that a hunter found a deer actually comatose from eating Delacruz cabo’s Trinity River Strain 281. The hunter killed the buck and harvested the meat, then claimed to have caught a buzz eating the steaks and sausage. It’s all part of the legend of Johnny Marijuana.

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It had taken me seven years to get a variety so that it was wham-bam-thank you ma’am.

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One less obvious comparison to Delacruz cabo’s first high-powered marijuana strain is to another artist, a musician. Bruce Springsteen’s start runs almost parallel and illustrates the early dues Delacruz cabo paid. Springsteen himself had been a virtually unknown recording artist for ten years (just as long as John had been an obscure iris and tomato breeder), when in 1974 he wrote “Born to Run,” a song that was a quantum leap to everything that came after. So it was with Delacruz cabo’s “Golden Tarpon” from the Bosque River. It was a huge leap to the new modern varieties he would develop.

No one would ever deny that John Delacruz cabo did what plant geneticist are expected to do; he improved plants. No corporation. No gene splicing. No salary. No BMW in the driveway.

Looking back at these ten years, Delacruz cabo openly admitted, “For a while, I lost track of what I was doing with the Tarpin. I lost the spirit of the thing somewhere. I became very confused. I didn’t understand what was going on. I was getting caged in all the time – on other work and stuff.”

Meanwhile, his friends urged him to produce the Golden
Snake seeds and settle on this as his trademark strain. There were three Golden varieties those early years (spider, snake and raven). Delacruz cabo could no longer even feel their strengths and weaknesses, and had to ask friends their opinion.

However, Willie Nelson, well traveled and super versed in the effects of the various varieties on the market, didn’t take long to recommend the cross between snake and raven. Nelson gave advice, “Any time you spend ten years on one project, there’s something wrong. A variety should take about a year or two and no more but this case the end result was worth the years wait.”

Nelson later said, ”Johnny had asked me to try those strains of weed. I thought maybe he knew what he liked, so of course me not knowing plant breeder etiquette in those days, I pointed out the snake had a bigger blast but the spider lasted longer, and I was right. It changed the whole world. It was a big moment, because I think people started to realize that I was more than just a customer, that I had some insights. Of course, John’s friends never wanted to speak to me after that, because I’d delayed the Tarpon strain another year. They were like leaches and all about money any particular strain would bring them. They wanted the best right then, and they don’t like waiting to move up in the business.”

People say, ‘where there’s a will there’s a way’. Down in Texas we have our own saying, ‘where there’s a Willie there’s a way’.

Esmerelda said, “He was trying to make something great. ‘Golden Tarpon’ was the kick-off strain. That was the direction that took Johnny into history. It was gigantic, and this was the direction we’ve gone. Mostly. So Johnny had to live up to ‘Golden Tarpon’. But not instantly, you have to put that kind of time and energy into it if you expect to produce anything great. Not just good. Creative and scientific advances come in flashes, but it has to be woven together. Then there’s that nervousness, not being totally sure he’d gotten it right.”
Johnny Marijuanaseed

Johnny told friends at the time Golden Tarpon became popular. “Remember when the Tarpon were here? I worked ambitiously. From the beginning, I would… with the idea of taking the whole thing in and being definitive in some way. I think everyone around me was ambitious for potency as well. I was shooting for the moon. And I guess, they say, I fell somewhat short, but not far inside of that. I felt I’d at least taken a small step forward but people kept telling me I’d taken a huge step toward the ultimate high. So I ran with it.”

When I was at Midwestern I was never a socialist. I was quick to avoid that crowd (but they’d follow you around hoping you’d give them some bud), while they were fun certainly they lived in this dream world and facts, studies, science meant very little to them. I’d noticed what had happened to the Democratic Party, once the socialists took over and warned that would happen here in Texas if they kept thinking/voting that way. The average kid in the English department would have everybody having ice cream and cake with every meal as their human right. The biology kids were far more real and I thought on my own and realized man’s responsibility not to take the wrong path. I knew utopia wouldn’t be the way the left said it would. At a tender age, I’d seen people who just refused to carry their own weight, but would protest at the drop of a hat, or match. And the ones who protested the most and loudest were the ones least able to support themselves. Socialism, democratic or not, just doesn’t work. They didn’t like that, but they protested little, they needed the weed. A few probably listened to me.

John’s middle name seems to have been “innovation.” No better evidence of this can be found than his purchase of a T-
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shirt cannon. The device used compressed air to fire a projectile up to 150 feet. With little trouble John designed what he called “marijuana bombs” (seed packages) that would explode and scatter the seeds on the riverbank. It was most like a shotgun and the method even slightly scarified the seeds and speeded their germination.

The gadget worked and saved John hundreds of hours of his labor. He used his new tool to great effectiveness on trips where he had barrels of seeds, as opposed to buckets. The “barrel rivers” were the Brazos, the Nueces and Rio Grand rivers. Buckets sufficed everywhere else.

Whether 60 of 16, there is in every grower the love of wonder, the sweet amazement of the new tender buds, the never-ending challenge of the weather and the water level, the unfailing childlike appetite of ‘what next’ in the joy of growing.

Texas Governor at the time, Rick Perry, called a press conference with little notice to announce, “Look closely down around your river; you may find one of these illegal crops. Often they are in some precarious, snake-infested, fairly private spot like in a bend or planted on a sand bar. We’re sure if this phenomenon is totally wild or not.”

The governor looked every inch the politician, painted and powdered for the cameras; but having been told about the vast amount of marijuana growing along his state’s rivers, he suddenly looked affected, formerly vain, he now looked insecure and unreal, quite frightening, grotesque.

John encouraged his adopted friends, who tended the plants to save money. “Bud booms (like cattle, cotton and oil booms) are short-lived, speculative and ruinous to those who rely on them and don’t save.”

According to forensic accountants, Johnny Delacruzcabon wrote the IRS a $100 check each April. Sometimes it wasn’t
mailed until June, but adamant that he not become a leach, he paid for the services that he felt he benefited from the federal government.

John rarely drove faster than 50 MPH and avoided the federal government’s interstate highways like the plague. But he did use the national weather service data, where rain fell at a particular time; if the data said a certain amount fell, he could accurately calculate within inches the rise and fall of the various rivers. He also calculated this information was worth about $100 to himself. He admitted that it might be worth more to the men who tended and harvested the plants and he asked them to contribute a fair amount, but he warned, “if you send more money than NOAA needs to Washington you’ll likely never see it again.

Tim Larabee, who tended the Colorado River, circumvented the IRS entirely and sent a $10,000 check directly to the Nation Weather Service. They took the check for “a donation” and some bright marketing oriented bureaucrat thought they might receive more if they publicized it. The weather service public relations office contacted The Washington Post with the news and the government PR people followed up on the newspaper’s write up. Larabee was shocked (frightened) all the media attention might expose his river operations. It turned out well; it seems that Larabee also used the weather reports for baseball. He coached his son’s two baseball teams (parents grooming their kids to become major league players). Serious stuff.

He was able to tell the reporters it was worth that much to know when a game might be rained out. They could avoid travel expenses perhaps. Also, that he wanted optimal (cool) times in the summer to practice. In the Texas summer, he needed to know the temperatures, that he loved the sport and the kids were his responsibility. They’d not “catch a heat stroke” on his watch. Of the twenty or so media stories, he was aware of, all of them turned touchy-feely and gave everyone warm fuzzy feelings of how much he loved coaching baseball and his sons. People were shocked parents were that dedicated to baseball for their kids.

John Delacruzcabot once told the story of how he decided to seed the Brazos. It was to be a long journey and clearly a big step toward developing “Brazos Brownout”; after the Daggett
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Switch postal carrier tried a “year one” sample and brought the mail the next day, he said, “The idea is to get a slight buzz, not turn your lights out.” However, a rodeo friend in Stephenville encouraged John to develop it further; he’d feed it to horses and found they were far easier to work with and he figured people might benefit from it as well.

“Look here,” said John’s rodeo friend. “You see that sorry ass bull in that lot, the black one. If anyone rides him this year, I’ll take off and come seed that bitch with ya.”

That made the choice more clear. John agreed, “cause you always want to agree with the rodeo man.”

The bull hadn’t been ridden and then several months later John’s cowboy client drew the beast and rode him at Santa Rosa. John happened to be there when it happened. The cowboy jumped off and rowed himself over to where John was on the front row, “When we leaving buddy?”

This was how the Brazos was seeded. Behind Delacruz cabo friend’s benevolent trickery there was a strategy that we all understand. We are familiar with such choices, and sometimes we’ve been intimidated by the options available. This is probably truer in circles were everyday activity is illegal. Sometimes Delacruz cabo faced difficult choices and consequences impossible too big or too slight (to most) to calculate. John never flipped coins. His bull rider friend, however, made choices based on if he stuck the eight seconds or not. John enjoyed the man’s company; the cowboy was totally opposite of him, but John found that it was liberating.

The legalization of marijuana is not a dangerous experiment – the prohibition is the experiment!

Johnny Marijuanaseed taught his cannabis genetics to a Mr. X, a local kid from Wichita Falls Hirschi. Eventually, he would grow into an adult with a well-stamped passport whose identity to this day remains unknown, because the police never discovered him. Mr. X escaped Wichita County and developed a worldwide network of buyers for his mentor’s high-potency
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generic material. Despite Johnny untimely death, most feel that Mr. X is still traveling the globe hawking the seeds. Others swear Mr. X has a million dollars but lives in an isolated trailer in Humboldt County.

I’ll tell you what happened in Daggett Switch. We started out with whatever was available to smoke, Mexican, Columbian, and mostly it was Mexican. It wasn’t any good, but that’s what we had to start with. We started crossing it as soon as we could. See the differences in the different plants. Then you have to be religious, make every effort to let that be what you tried to breed. Don’t just bunch stuff in there; you just diffuse and decrease the potency and we did everything to try to get it to excellence.

To be worth all that work going into it, it needed to do well in Texas because it wasn’t going to be grown in Mexico or New Mexico; it was going to be grown on a Texas riverbank. Mold next to a river can be a big problem; the denser your bugs get, the bigger and better and denser your buds get, so when there is a lot of pot there, they can harbor mold. I hate talking about what we’ve accomplished but if we’ve accomplished anything it’s the mold resistant crops we’ve designed. But you’re looking for mold resistant dense crops. And I encourage you to keep moving in that direction.

From high-school age on, Delacruzecabo subscribed to High Times magazine and traded for old issues, which he carefully indexed. The magazine showed how to pluck male plants from the females in order to produce the seedless crop of high potency sinsemilla. Delecruzecabo paid attention, and the information proved 99% accurate. He gathered the knowledge and ruminated on it for years, until he was ready to share it with
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the friends as he traveled around. The men and women he adopted, mostly down on their luck, had no idea there was a magazine and thought he was a genius.

While Johnny stayed in Daggett Switch refining the most powerful varieties, Mr. X went took American Airlines around the planet selling his discoveries: California, Vermont, Poland, Russia, Thailand, Vietnam. Philippines, Australia. These growers were amazed and willing to pay almost any price for a “species” they called “Cannabis Texica.” There were no new species of course but the seeds produced a product so new and different the foreigners thought in those terms. You can say what you want about Mr. X (opportunist, thief, whatever) but he did know how to market Johnny’s work and was instrumental in spreading the legend around the world. He mailed nothing, he delivered the seeds in person to the world’s elite growers.

Johnny was crossing the thick-leaved indica with the sativa which gave smokers the cerebral high he was looking for. Johnny didn’t like the stoned (narcotic) high the indica provided. It was too much like hashish, but he did like the thick heavy buds. The sativa was a good smoke but it was too tall and stringy, or in other words it produced less real marijuana.

Responding to the challenge, Johnny cross-breed the two cousins to produce hybrids that maintained the potency and substructure of indica with the heady classical plants that matured earlier in the growing season. One thing rarely attributed to Delacruzcabio, but totally originating in Texas was the early maturity buds. Each year, John developed crops that matured earlier and earlier. It was the very definition of progress.

When Johnny first started growing, he quickly realized that the tropical strains he imported from Thailand, Burma and Africa, matured too late in the year for North Texas (and might freeze before producing the really nice buds) and the early budding old hemp plants weren’t worth using at all if you wanted to get high. The only answer was to produce hybrids until the problem was solved.

Many speculate that the true breakthrough was when Johnny used genetic material from Tibet up in the Himalayas. A master’s thesis student from the University of Colorado found a
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strong genetic link to hashish plants grown near Shigatse, Tibet. She speculated this was introduced into Texas and then proved it with DNA testing.

The genetics are clear. Obama Kush, Thin Mint, Panama Red, Easy Girl, Purple Haze and Northern Lights Out - all had their origins in Texas.

The power of myth is strong and so when confronted with the story of Johnny Marijuanaseed, many government and church officials deny the man ever lived. They make such statements ignoring all the evidence to the contrary. Texas used to be full of Holocaust and 911 deniers, add to that number a few million law enforcement types that now deny Johnny did what he did to revolutionize marijuana. The cover-up, to knowledgeable people, is something of a comedy.

Koa Kahanamoku, a Hawaiian and professional surfer said, “Johnny was a Daniel Boon. He has friends in every freaking place on earth, in piss holes and capital buildings equally. And whomever he emailed, they actually responded; they accepted his libertarian ideas and accepted him as a scientist and a person. Obviously, everyone did or he couldn’t have done what he did so quickly. He revolutionized a plant AND a planet. It developed into a huge worldwide movement in only a matter of a decade. No one is bull shitting you. Seeds can be tricky, either they’re good or bad and Johnny never sold me a bad seed.”

So, when growers wanted the newest most potentially potent seeds, they contacted Johnny, but that wasn’t any simple task. No one knew his true name and certainly no one knew where to look for him, except Texas, which isn’t any small place. However, John had friends in every county.

Johnny used to take his shirt off and walk through the thickest patches to feel the buds beat against his chest and arms with the mass and density of corncobs.

None of the growers working for Delacruz cabo knew were the seeds came from. It’s not that John was a secretive man; the subject simply never came up in conversation, and the law hadn’t yet begun using warrantless trackers on vehicles. Some would
speculate where he grew them; none would be correct and no one would ever connect the seeds to Daggett Switch until after the man’s death.

Soon many dealers realized that Texas sinsemilla wasn’t some ugly step kid. California product dominated the market, but Johnny’s Texas grass was just as good, just as cerebral and potent. A big plus, the Texas weed was cheaper by half.

The only drawback that the Texas river farmers faced as they started selling their river grown marijuana to the East and West Coast smokers was that they tended to look down on Texas marijuana, calling it “cowboy cannabis.”

To combat the prejudice, which was mostly based on the look of the product, Johnny had growers change the look of the product. They made it look like Jamaican ganja by spraying Dublin Dr. Pepper over the buds. It made it look darker and sticky and sweet.

Another of Johnny’s ideas was to spread the marijuana out on a black sheet of plastic, sprayed it with water and allspice, then covered it with a sheet of Plexiglas and let it sit in the sun all day. The sun would bleach the buds and give them a golden color. Most people thought it came from Colombia.

Slowly over time as Texas pot won respect; the growers stopped disguising their product. Texas weed’s high potency began to sell itself.

In October 1996, two teenagers from Henrietta Midway and their great uncle were crazy enough to be out on the Little Wichita fishing (there are very few fish in that river), when they stumbled upon a patch of the bright green plants growing eight feet tall. The plants reminded the old man of the hemp plants his family had grown for rope when he was a kid. He pulled up some plants and took them to the barbershop to show the fellows. The two boys removed the buds and smoked them with their buddies in the gym the next day.

Well, in those circles there is always someone who will talk. These are the sorts of people Johnny avoided like the plague. When a state trooped caught wind of the pot field he called the drug task force. On October 23rd, the taskforce borrowed a boat and found five acres of marijuana, before dark, a crew arrived
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with bush hog mowers, floated them down the river on barges. With the help of high-powered light brought down the river by the highway department, they mowed most of the night.

Johnny was away supervising goings-on down outside Victoria. The Vietnam Vet that Johnny had left to tend the north Texas crop cried as he watched the cops from the dark. They mowed down the largest marijuana crop ever discovered in Texas at the time. Narcotic agents estimated the value to be $42 million.

Texas criminologists continue to be vexed by what they call the “pathology” of the Texas rivers. Why was the marijuana so random, so potent and so difficult to eradicate?

Delacruzcab0 is said to have spent over $20,000 (in three decades) seeding his crops along Texas rivers. Estimates have been that 60 linear miles of weed were produced on an average year. Harvested and sold, in today’s dollars; we’re talking about 120 to 130 million each year. Now that’s not accounting for deer and poachers harvesting the crops. It is impossible to know just how much he could have profited had he been interested in that aspect of the business. Other’s clearly profited from Delacruzcab0’s generosity and genius. Many of John’s friends went from destitute to wealthy men inside just a single growing season.

A favorite topic of Delacruzcab0 as he traveled Texas visiting people was the government propaganda concerning marijuana, and the other propaganda as well. Of all the tricks the government had at their disposal, what irked John the most was their attempt to turn the environmentalist against him.

In 2018, the federal government announced they would use $2.5 million to target illegal growers in Texas. The U.S. Attorney, McGregor Baker told reporters, “Right now, our priorities are to focus on what’s been historically our federal law enforcement priorities, interstate trafficking, organized crime and the chemical poison of our population.”

The Associated Press reported that most of the Texas pot was destined for the Midwestern and Eastern States where it was more profitable. The AP quoted the Texas Attorney General who referred to the illegal growers as Texas new oil rush,
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“bringing both riches and environmental devastation.” However, Delacruzcabo knew his marijuana product was consumed in the Texas urban markets and he’d asked and none of his compatriots send that much weed outside the state. Delacruzcabo pointed out there wasn’t any environmental damage. The argument sounded idiotic to him. He was an environmentalist. Nearly everyone he spoke to was sympathetic to ecology. He felt the politicians were simply trying to divide and persuade the population they needed to put half the state in prison to protect the environment. Conservatives were suddenly all for the ecology, so long as it filled the prisons. John was livid at the time.

The government had hired a socialist scientist to study the issue. Naturally, he found “dangerous pesticides” in 12% of the illegal Texas grown, claiming the highly toxic pesticide Carbofuram was prevalent. Delacruzcabo was quick to point out the reports said the hack scientist “found traces of the pesticide in the pot, though he didn’t attempt to quantify how much was in each sample or its effect on people.” So the man wasn’t saying the pot was sprayed, but couldn’t tell us the concentration. John maintained it was only trace amounts, because they never divulged the amount. It smelled like more fake news. “The pesticide posed a threat to water, wildlife and ultimately people,” but the journalist (government parrot) offered no science and no link to the pesticide being found in the drinking water.

The AP article erroneously reported that the Carbofuram was being smuggled into Texas from Mexico by drug cartels and laborers hired to plant illegal crops. Mexican laborers were said to have to carry fertilizer, irrigation hoses, and camping supplies to remote sites. This is what allegedly accounted for the pesticides popularity. Carbofuram is packed in a highly concentrated bottle, and it is intended to be heavily diluted. But the article pointed out that a tea-spoon could kill a deer. Delacruzcabo asked everyone he encountered, “How would a deer ever get a tea-spoon of the pesticide?” John’s followers had never heard of the chemical until it was in the newspaper. John had taught them to use diatomaceous earth.

An anonymous source working in the Justice Department said, “The reality of the situation is there is so much marijuana in Texas that we could use all our resources going after it and we’d
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never get there.” To that Delacruz chuckled.

It was said that Delacruz cabo became physically ill when he read, “Theoretically, all of Texas’ water supply flows down Texas rivers and researchers found that water sample might be contaminate.” Might! To Delacruz cabo that “might” mean the government has not found anything harmful in the water but they had found a reporter willing to phrase it in such a way to frighten the population, the voters.

After John’s death, Esmarelda commented on how frustrated John had become after those dark and misleading media reports. He’d wanted to respond to the newspapers and pen articles exposing the propaganda, but of course, he couldn’t, not without possibly exposing his identity. It was one thing to plant marijuana seeds here and there, but to question the legitimacy of the 200,000 people locked up in the Texas prisons… well that would be messing with their wallet. Esmarelda warned him they were ruthless and would hunt down anyone who opposed them. He listened.

Esmarelda pointed out his depression came mostly from the fact that no reputable scientist stepped up to debunk the government’s line. The scientists he knew from MSU, the one’s who’d educated him, were old and not in any position to stand up. Dr. Stanback had passed, by this time. The young replacements were all cowards and cared more about their positions than the truth. Delacruz cabo apparently spent hours lamenting the situation.

Delacruz cabo spent hours on riverbanks, staring idly down at the red or brown (never clear) water. No cars, taxis, or pickups. No beer or soda delivery trucks. No bread trucks. No police or ambulances wailing. No shoplifters tacked in parking lots and no billboards. No pollution of any kind. Him knowing the truth might have been the only thing that saved him.

Years later, it came to light that the research was done in California and the phrase “California” in the official reports had been replaced with “Texas” by law enforcement before it was handed to reporters. It had been in all the newspapers, but no one even bothered to call the scientists (in California) to confirm anything. The media was totally controlled by the government, wittingly or not. The government paid researcher, Maurad
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Gabriel, had never even set foot in Texas. It was all a perfect example of how lazy journalists, instead of looking into the issue, simply cut and pasted the government email into the newspaper.

When delivering the carefully selected adoptee (many times amputees) to their particular part of the river, usually a bed covered in plants, Johnny would famously warn them, “It’s not going to be one big party; it’s not going to be all beer and pizza.” There was a short lecture that it wasn’t for their personal use but it was being given to them for the benefit of their family. No one worked for Johnny unless they had family. Johnny told them he was too busy and traveling to keep an eye on them. But he asked them to think of it as a job, an economic opportunity. And finally, John explained that it was science. The bud could be sold, but it was primarily there for testing and cultivation purposes and that they were expected to test the promising plants and if they were sufficiently potent, that he wanted the seeds. Most of the fellows didn’t mind making a few notes on their experiences.

Growers moving up show profitability. They are fascinated by money and want money can by for them and their family. While I never was all that interested in money, I have friends that are. I person would be daft to ignore this part of the equation. I develop better and better marijuana plants each season, until we have something to satisfy all this demand I won’t stop, but money really never appealed to me, but I actually look for men with kids that want to go to college. It’s going to be expensive so you better start looking at plants like Franklins. They’re both green; it ought to be easy. But remember profit is not greed. Greed can make you blind; don’t poke yourself in the eye. Who would do that?

By the late 2010’s, the herbal community had grown in size.
In addition to long-established markets (Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston) there were now markets for vast amounts of marijuana in medium markets (Wichita Falls, Abilene, San Angelo, etc.) This was the highest point of John’s friend’s domination of the markets.

Delacruzcabó noticed many changes as he continued to make regular visits to his family across Texas. By this time KNAC had churches springing up all over the state. Most of these new churches were given river crops to harvest, for the building’s rent and, of course, Johnny provided the best seeds for production of the communion “Sunday” (hydro) weed, as it was called.

The church doctrine was not debatable; weed for communion was to be premium (the most potent variety available) and hydro grown. Each February each congregation was instructed to go to their “building rent” crop and clear a spot, room enough for the new plants. Several churches, actually most of them, had grown prosperous and no longer paid rent, but had purchase old Lutheran, Methodist, and Episcopal Church buildings. To a casual observer, it looked like the Knowledgeable Native American Church had been there since the beginning of Texas. The KNAC congregation in Alamo Heights owned (outright) a stone church built 1853. But the majority of the KNAC church buildings were not so old, some from the 1920s. Three congregations decided new construction was the route and built contemporary structures. The KNAC group in City South built a $38 million temple.

In October 2017, forty-nine-year-old Delacruzcabó made his last known visit to his sister’s family on the Frio. A neighbor recalled this trip and the special gift the herbalist received:

“While on his last visit, his niece, Miss Rebecca (daughter of Mary and Seth) made him a camel hair sports coat with two embroidered letters, ‘J.M.’ and they were so nearly perfectly arranged it looked almost professionally done. The fit of the coat was perfect. This seemed to please Johnny and Esmerelda both to no end.”

There was a specially ordered tag and a label on the inside of the jacket, “Especially Tailored for Johnny Marijuanaseed, my Uncle.” The young lady had sewn the coat entirely by herself.
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and was something of a fashion prodigy.

Delacruzcabo made his last trip to the home of his brother near Navasota, shortly before his death. Lucy Jane Paris had married Jesse and always entertained Johnny with loud music and copious amounts of good food. The neighborhood there all came over to honor Johnny with a barbecue. Yes, they had 483 people in the sizable backyard, between the river and the house.

A October 5, 2018, Comal County Sheriff’s Department crime report gives nearly all the facts relevant and all we really know about the death of Delacruzcabo. The report read:

“The deceased was well known through the county by his eccentricity and his access to potent strains of marijuana seeds. His strange garb made him a memorable character to many. He is reported to have been a nurseryman, while there is some debate where he actually lived. Reliable sources say he lived on the Trinity River west of Fort Worth. He was a regular visitor to this area upwards of 20 years. He was a native born Californian and moved to Texas as a child.

He is supposed to have considerable property, yet he drove a classic old Opal station wagon (1968 model). The vehicle is registered to a John Delacruzcabo in Matagorda County Texas. The sheriff’s investigator there reports that the address is one of two empty lots on the Gulf coast.

He was known to be a member of the Knowledgeable Native American Church but had no single congregation where he regularly attended. He was carrying with him at the time of his death, 18 religious books in a canoe beached approximately twelve feet from where the body was discovered. Also in the Canoe there was a canteen with fresh water, a tent and a
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paddle. The jacket he was reported to have been wearing was not found.
His death was a homicide. The deceased had been shot twice in the chest with what appears to be a nine-millimeter. Two nine-millimeter shell casings were found in a grove of marijuana plants. The deceased carried no identification. The victim apparently rowed upon the illegal crop and stopped his canoe to investigate when he was killed.

While the newspaper eventually sorted many of the details of Delacruzcabo’s death, most of the facts haven’t been known until Dutchworth’s 2020 biography.
According to Dutchworth’s book, Delacruzcabo was working seeding a crop in on the San Marcos when he received a text message that deer had broken into one of his Comal river plantings. When he reached the Comal, he met his untimely end. He was shy of fifty-one years old, but many described him as a seventy-year-old-man. The years of sun and living out of doors seems to have taken its toll on his appearance. He died almost instantly of his wounds.77

Esmerelda came to claim the body and was eventually given it after some nasty haggling. The two were apparently never married and their names never appeared together on any document including hotel registries, because they never used hotels. Esmerelda was put off until it looked like Comal County might have to pay for the burial. Rather than suffer that expense the county gave up. As part of the negotiations with the county, she was allowed to bring the body home to Daggett Switch in the back of the lime green Opal.
The body was taken to the Phillips and Luckey (funny name for a funeral home) for preparation. Peter Kipp, the man who prepared Delacruzcabo’s body for burial provided a green coffin. He spoke to Skip Dutchworth with Esmerelda’s permission; about his burial attire.
His shirt was a 100% cotton tropical design manufactured
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in Thailand. His boxers were of similar colorful design and also cotton, but manufactured in Mexico. He was put to rest wearing a pair of Wrangler jeans holes nearly worn in both knees. He wore a shark’s tooth necklace that Esmerelda had purchased for him in Matagorda. Esmerelda requested he wear moccasins, but that his pair of snakeskin boots be included in the coffin. He was buried with sunglasses and his cell phone.78

The pallbearers were some of the most prominent men in all of Texas and southwest Oklahoma, a doctor, a veterinarian, a teacher, a professor of philosophy, A Comanche chief and a homeless (war hero) veteran that Esmerelda had to bail out of the (for profit) Wichita County jail. Marijuana seeds and even some bags were thrown into the grave as the mourners passed by. It was a beautiful and fitting end for the legend.

Pastor Nine Wolves Stanley, KNAC pastor from Broken Arrow, eulogized John, “He achieved success and lived well, laughed often and loved much; he has enjoyed the trust of a pure woman, earned the respect of academic men, and saw the love of little children. Many contributed to his niche and but he accomplished the task, he left the world a greener place, whether an improved plant, a perfect buzz, or a rescued soul; he was a man who always looked for and offered the best; whose life inspired others, whose memory is pretty much a sacrament.”

Tim Larabee added, “I wish I could say that I discovered Johnny Marijuana and the Texas rivers farms. I wish my Wranger was stopped by the Texas State women’s softball team on a dark stormy night, or that I tracked a years worth of bribes Wal-Mart paid to their politicians. I can’t, luckily Johnny discovered us.”

And so John Delacruzcabio was buried in Lowland Cemetery outside Daggett Switch, not 100 yards from US Hwy. 287, the road that had carried so many of his seeds to Colorado and California and had been called the drug highway of America. John’s final resting place is about three miles from the location of his famous greenhouse.
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Soon after the funeral, the largest ever in the history of Daggett Switch, Esmerelda traveled to Wichita Falls to see an attorney, Thomas Kramer, who has written John’s last will and testament. After a week the attorney asked a Wichita County court to give him authority for him to settle his client’s affairs.

The inventory of items Kramer listed as part of the estate included a home on two lots in Daggett Switch, an extensive iris garden on a third lot, a lime green Opal station wagon and a bank account with a balance of $631.

Kramer then worked several weeks collecting claims against Delacruzcabos’s estate. All that materialize was a twenty-eight dollar MasterCard bill and a $1380 bill from Comal County for storage fees. When Kramer contacted the county officials he learned that they wanted $130 per day they’d kept the body refrigerated. Given that the county was responsible for the delay, the debt was negotiated down to $600. A bill from an unscrupulous mechanic in Daggett Switch claimed $1600 for rebuilding the Opals engine in 2008. Esmerelda insisted that the mechanic had been paid with weed. The mechanic’s bill was never satisfied. The funeral home had negotiated with, The City of Daggett Switch, a payment of $285 dollars for a police escort from the funeral home to the cemetery (only 1.8 miles), but two days after seeing the size of the funeral the city now wanted an additional $2200 for additional expenses. There were no additional expenses and that was ignored as well.

The attorney handling the will had originally drawn it up for free so he now took as payment a mason jar full of seeds and eighteen of the hydroponic buckets and an air pump to aerate them.

It was the dead of winter before enough media attention made the city of Daggett Switch think they might seize Esmereldas property. The whole story had embarrassed them and a raid was in order, and it needed to be in the middle of the night. It was conducted without a valid warrant; it was signed of course by Judge Dingleberry but contained so many spelling errors and legal flaws it would never stand up to scrutiny. They broke the greenhouse door, shattering the glass and found ten hydroponically grown tomato plants.

“"The city dumbasses were dumbfounded. They’d so expected to seize and auction the property. They acted like
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they’d spent too much on Christmas and now didn’t know how to pay the charge card. I’m not just saying that, I imagine that’s partly why they were so disappointed,” said neighbor Angelo Kruger. Esmerelda, by herself, had to bring a 4 x 8 ply board out to cover the greenhouse door as it was freezing that night.

It has been speculated that Delacruzcabo had stopped using the greenhouse in his back yard and had moved his experiments into the abandoned City Florist building, directly abutted to the police station. In 2020, a remodeling crew discovered water and electric lines had been patched into the police station utilities. Investigators found no hydroponic equipment.

Fortunately, Esmerelda had FedEx’d the vast collection of mason jars to John’s friends in Alaska, Thailand, Vermont, California, and Colorado. She included copies of his notebooks. The original notebooks were entrusted to Thomas Kramer who keeps them in his office safe. He will at the end of his career donate them to the botany library at Midwestern State University.

In 2020, the Texas Horticultural Society selected a spot to memorialize Delacruzcabo. They erected a natural granite bolder on the site of John’s largest Wichita river crop. The inscription reads, “Johnny Marijuanaseed. He lived for others.”

Today people love to hear stories of the kind and mild-mannered traveler. Johnny Marijuanaseed planted seeds from one end of the state to the other. He is often mentioned as part of Texas’ return to freedom along with other patriots, Willie Nelson, and Johnny Manzel. But unlike these two celebrities, Johnny Marijuanaseed had no celebrity, except what he freely gave away.

The seeds of his legend were planted long before his death in 2019. Storytellers, especially in North Central Texas, wanted to nurture these tales. Authorities were able to discourage journalists and there was no local media coverage until the article appeared in The New York Times.

The Times piece by Bruni Franklin effectively spread the story across the nation. Bits of The Times story can be found in almost all articles written about the legendary marijuana pioneer. The media has clearly just cut and pasted The Times story into their own smaller blogs, embellishing rather a lot of the facts.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

(adding interest).

In the introduction of *The Times* article Franklin writes, “Among the heroes of history that acted voluntarily and thought critically there is a man, whose full name is seldom spoken or even known. Many feel that this name should now be perpetuated. School children, as well as tyrants, should know the name of John Delacruzcabō.”

Franklin, who was a flaming Manhattan homosexual (lipstick and eye shadow), began to gather material because he mistakenly thought Delacruzcabō was gay and he was looking to write a LGBTTQQIAAP (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual) propaganda piece.

When Franklin learned about Esmerelda, depressed, he almost put the piece down, but his editors insisted he finish. *The Times* article won the Pulitzer; in fact, every Pulitzer went to a gay journalist that “rainbow” year, so Franklin eventually did win his propaganda battle. The article, chiefly second-hand memories of old Texas potheads, however, changed many aspects of history. To his credit, much of Franklin’s information came from Skip Dutchworth, who’d long ago escaped being a regional novel writer but moved back to Texas to research this story and write the definitive biography.

Dutchworth had retired about the time Delacruzcabō died. Most likely, he knew John and might have frequently, traveled the same paths, perhaps not by river; but clearly the two men traveled in Texas’ enlightened and progressive circle. In Texas, enlightened and progressive circles are small.

The most lasting portrait of John Delacruzcabō developed from his last years of on Earth. The saintly white-haired missionary for the Knowledgeable Native American Church, so oddly dressed, this image became so popular that he was portrayed that way in a film about his proselytizing to the Texas State University in the feature film, *College Daze*.

Hundreds of so-called “reminiscences” and stories have been created by Hollywood writers. There are at least five Austin film writers who have sold scripts to film producers, at the time of printing; one has been produced. It’s become something of a cottage industry in Austin. There are eight biographies on
Johnny Marijuanaseed

Amazon, including this one. There are four feature-length films and twelve documentaries for television. Almost all of the interest in John has been the result of Franklin’s *Times* article.

One Wichita County historian was fired from his museum job when he wrote:

> **Among the heroes of Wichita County**
> was an oddity called Johnny Marijuanaseed. Many years ago he brought from Northern California a gallon of seeds in a lime green Opal station wagon with a canoe tied to the top. He floated down the Wichita River and planted the seeds of his fame.

> Totally undeterred and unsuspected by authorities he went from panting to planting, camping wherever the dark overtook him, selling high potency seeds, he never carried a gun or any weapon, aside from his dog. While he owned property in Daggett Switch, he was rarely known to sleep in a bed or eat from a table. He wintered in Wichita County and made outstanding discoveries developing the high THC varieties that have changed marijuana use forever. He died in Comal County in 2019.

Delacruzcabo’s legend grew because he left no written record except for his greenhouse notes, which have been locked away to protect the Daggett Switch property from confiscation. Perhaps when they are released they will put some of the stories into a scientific context.

Perhaps the notebooks will help us learn which stories are based on facts and which are pure fiction. I expect there are some of both in this story. But perhaps that isn’t entirely necessary. As one writer has observed in *The Austin Chronicle*, “the fact is Johnny Marijuanaseed has helped us all achieve a higher state of consciousness, the facts beyond this don’t really matter any longer.”

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Johnny Marijuanaseed

And it has been these legends that have police and sheriffs, as well as DEA and FBI agents motoring up and down Texas rivers trying to eradicate the marijuana that is still sprouting along the fertile river banks. Police have been responsible for their fair share of the embellishment to John’s story. Greed is also a force pushing the legend forward.

In 2019, a sheriff and a deputy were caught on tape seeding Big Pine Creek in Red River County. The deputy, in exchange for a lenient sentence, testified that they planned to blame the crop on Johnny Marijuanaseed and apply to the governor for state aid (millions) to eradicate the crop, clean up the creek. There is no way to calculate how many other Johnny Marijuanaseed sites have and will be in the future be fabricated for a big government check.

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No man is really happy or safe from the government without a profession, and it make little difference what that avocation is —welder, pipe fitter, or roustabout, accountant, physician, rancher (Angus, Herefords, or Brangus); botanist (cotton, corn or sorghum) or he rises iris, tomatoes or marijuana. Anything will do so long as the man straddles a job and rides it hard.

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According to authorities, Johnny Delacruz cabo planted every marijuana crop in the Southwest, from Texas to California. New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada have all awarded eradication multimillion-dollar grants to clean their rivers. Communities in Oregon and Washington State have gotten into the business and are lobbying their states for clean up aid.

John Delacruz cabo deserves credit for the rivers he actually seeded, but his true accomplishment was as a hybridizer of what is called today, “super-weed.” He developed what was your grandparent’s weak into today’s efficient, smooth but powerful weed. By 2019, when Delacruz cabo died, his last strain “Gulf Coast Hurricane” or just “Hurricane” was measured as 22 times as strong as common marijuana from the 1970s, when
Johnny Marijuanaseed

Delacruzcabo and his siblings came to Texas.

For a few small towns Johnny had no effect at all on their finances; for others, however, with a congressman or state legislator, Johnny was a godsend. Johnny Marijuanaseed would spend $42 (in fuel, food, and expenses) seeding a river but the locals might receive $1.2 million trying to eradicate the plants. And they could destroy the plants but the seeds would restore the riverbank in a matter of a few years.

Texas could become the 50th state (the last state) in the U.S. to remove the threat of being jailed as a punishment for possessing small amounts of marijuana under a bill approved by the state House of Representatives as this book was going to press. The legislation, which would punish people caught with an ounce or less of cannabis with a fine instead of arrest and incarceration, passed by a vote of 98 to 43. All that remains is passage by the state Senate.

This gentle Texan, without the support of the media, or Harvard trained rhetoriticians, or busses of professional protesters, or checks from Manhattan, or large sums of shame money, or Baptist backing, quietly and with dignity changed the political landscape.

Spineless Texas historians lament the public’s obsession with Johnny Marijuanaseed. They prefer to highlight the state’s cash cows: Mark Cuban, Michael Dell, Ross Perot, Jerry Jones, the Georges Bush and George Strait. Clearly, Johnny is part of the Texas historical records, but his admirers will have to fight like hell to be included in any history books. Its all about power and money and Johnny wasn’t in Texas for that.

The Jerry Dome, Austin’s Pun-off at the O. Henry Museum, a populated Llano Estacado, fireworks on PK, the King Ranch, 95.9 The Ranch, marijuana for miles along their rivers – what imaginations the Texan’s have.

The potency of the weed is one measure of the man, but another might be the abundant untrue stories people tell about the man. American and even English television and film quickly discovered the story had market appeal, producers would buy,
Johnny Marijuanaseed

and people would watch programs about Johnny Marijuanaseed. They wrote glorified stories set on picturesque Texas rivers at even when they’d never actually seen one.

Internet entrepreneurs quickly cashed in on the craze producing virtual cruises down the various rivers, much like Google’s virtual streets. These virtual tours of Texas rivers for a time even rivaled Google Street View. Interest has died off in this aspect of the story, but still the Texas Tourist Bureau complains that the virtual tours keep people from actually visiting and touring in a boat.

Today, universities are beginning to produce academics who specialize in the legend of Johnny Marijuanaseed, biologists, geneticists, literary folklorists and sociologists have written dissertations on John Delacruzcabo and/or his work.

The spirit of John Delacruzcabo has been preserved in picture books, plays, novels and biographies (both authorized and unauthorized). He has been depicted in books-on-audio media, films and animated cartoon. There is even a musical score for a Broadway stage production and an anthology (authorized by Esmarelda) of his favorite tunes.

Actress and philosopher Kirsten Dunst said in an interview, “If everyone had paid attention in school like Johnny, there’d be no cancer and no war.”

The best selling novel The Texas Bowl by Del Simpson was reviewed recently in the Austin American Statesman, “The book sprawls and passes its happy perfect ending, where the lovers, at last are free to marry, at last, accepted by the public and not threatened with rehab, at last, secure their drug use will not destroy their careers, reach the final consummation by sharing a bowl of Johnny Marijuana’s finest, naked and high on the couch.”

The story of his life is still popular today with every anniversary of his birth and death, articles are published about his two marathon runs in Humboldt County as a child, about rivers he once visited and even about what his children would have looked like, had he sired any. He didn’t.

Today, people still get buzzed on Johnny’s marijuana and sit around remembering the days when Johnny floated down the rivers. It’s nostalgic.
Johnny Marijuanaseed

Though John Delacruzcabo is gone, and many of the crops he planted have been eradicated, now even stronger crops have been planted in other out of the way places. It’s not been forgotten and groups of reenacters (dressed as Johnny did) float down the rivers of Texas casting seeds along the bank.

A monument has been placed near the site of his birth in California. The McDonalds in Eureka has a plaque that tells visitors of the early morning bike ride to warn the people of a DEA raid.

In Navasota and Three Rivers, there are monuments. The Johnny Marijuanaseed Memorial Park is located just outside the city limits of Daggett Switch and can be seen from his grave site. That gravesite is visited by hundreds of visitors each year. The local politicians are happy with the revenue from the traffic stops they make, they don’t pay a dime for the park’s upkeep. Skeptics have pointed out, even though outside city limits) the political powers in Daggett Switch would never have allowed the grave or park to exist if they didn’t bring in revenue (drug confiscations).

In 2020, the Mexican Postal Service remembered Johnny Marijuanaseed with a commemorative Stamp.

Many towns in California and Colorado hold official Johnny Marijuanaseed festivals in November after the crops are harvested.

His story captures a moment in time, a moment of quiet rebellion, but also a moment of perverse indulgence.

With wit and wisdom, patience and sheer energy, John Delacruzcabo changed the landscape of Texas rivers and society right along with it.

According to an article in Monsters, Ghosts and other Attractions magazine, Johnny Marijuanaseed’s ghost returns every year to the place of his murder on the Comel River.

The report said:

A small boy on his way down the river in a small homemade raft was surprised to see a gray-bearded tall Anglo or Hispanic man, in a Hawaiian shirt, poised as if thinking at the side of the river. The
Johnny Marijuanaseed

*strange ghost was smoking a doobie and reading a book. Shortly afterward a game warden saw a similar site. And then a woman looking for her lost Chihuahua saw the same ghost.*

Not everyone can see the ghost of the genetics legend, but the anniversary of Johnny’s death is the best day of the year for the operators of the New Braunfels Dairy Queen and the Motel Six.

Texas, which produced John Wesley Hardin (and in Hico hid William Bonney from capture for nearly 70 years), also produced Ann Richards, the nation’s first lesbian governor, and more than a few heterosexual Presidents. The state that gave us Pantex and Exxon, the first heart transplant and the world’s largest honkytonk, will now forever be remembered for producing Johnny Marijuanaseed and the powers that be can do little to stop that. The story is out. I’m sure wherever Johnny is, this popularity gives him at least a little satisfaction.

The legend of Johnny Marijuanaseed is the story of a state that nurtured the ambition of an adventurous young man willing to take incredible risks and do the hard work. It’s the story of an economy that made such agronomy necessary. It’s the story of students of Milton Friedman exercising their free will in the marketplace, maximizing their liberty with the least possible harm to others. And it’s the story of Darwin’s evolutionary laboratory which happened, for a short time, on the banks of Texas rivers.

Skip Dutchworth summed it up most accurately when he spoke at the 2020 Miami Book Fair, “Johnny did what he loved and people were fascinated by that. People typically feel their lives have been an evasion; Johnny’s was not. Many of us are naturally haunted by the lives unlived, the experiences missed, the crisis avoided. This natural sense of more-or-less chronic deprivation is intensified by the media, which provides relentless samples of relevance and importance to beguile and frustrate the majority of us, whose hours are unfulfilled by cotton, cattle or oil.”
Johnny MarijuanaSeed
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8 Banaszynski.

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14 Interview with Amy Hanson (retired educator), Café Nooner, January 22nd, 2018.

15 Interview with Mary Garcia (sister), Daggett Switch Café, February 12th, 2018.


18 Interview with Mary Garcia.
19 Weingarten.

20 Banaszynski.

21 Banaszynski.

22 Bragg.


25 Interview with Marc Dingleberry (judge), Daggett Switch Café, February 14th, 2018.

26 Franklin.

27 Interview with Jason Boland (client), Daybreak Café and Grill, February 26th, 2018.

28 Interview with Larry Joe Taylor (client), Ruby’s Texas Bistro and Steakhouse, February 27th, 2018.

29 Interview with Marc Dingleberry.

30 Interview with Mary Garcia.

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32 Interview with Irma Jo Washington (waitress), Daggett Switch Café, February 13th, 2018.

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61 William Longturtle.

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63 Franklin.

64 Interview with Rev. Robert Jeffress, minister, (St. Paul Café, Dallas TX), April 29th, 2018.

65 Bragg.

66 Franklin.

67 Bragg.

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