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A security expert's journey through the ethical weeds

*SDS Publishing is proud to announce the release of "The Marijuana Project,"
the debut novel by Brian Laslow*

NEW YORK -- Sam Burnett, a savvy security expert, is hiding in the catwalk of a medical marijuana production facility he has been hired to protect, caught in a surveillance plan he never thought he'd face. In fact, Sam doesn't even approve of marijuana and wonders why he's still working there.

He is not alone with this conflict. The FDA still lists marijuana in schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, the DEA's most restrictive level. They cite marijuana's high potential for abuse, that it's not accepted medical use for treatment, and lacks proper safety measures under medical supervision.

This position is at odds with many groups advocating for its legalization, both for medical purposes and recreational use.

Since 2900 B.C., when the Chinese referred to cannabis as a medicine possessing both yin and yang, the pros and cons of medical marijuana have stymied private citizens as well as state and federal agencies. With 23 states legalizing at least limited use of medical marijuana, the controversy continues over its status as a gateway drug, posing ethical dilemmas for doctors, government officials and security professionals who must protect it from a variety of internal and external threats.

This is how Brian Laslow entered the picture in 2001 as the owner of a security consulting firm specializing in risk assessment, system design, project management services for electronic security and operational security management. Inspired by his findings inside the medical marijuana industry, Brian wrote *The Marijuana Project*, a fictionalized account of his tempestuous experience working with a brand new production facility in the northeast.

The story follows Sam Burnett, a conservative and highly principled family man who constantly travels the country as a highly sought after security expert. While looking to spend more time at home with his children, he is approached by a consortium looking to open a medical marijuana production facility nearby. Sam accepts their offer, and over the next two years, while designing, implementing and operating their entire security program, he finds himself facing one moral conflict after another.

Does Sam favor using medical marijuana to relieve a variety of physical symptoms, easing anxiety and providing pleasure? Or does he see it as an invitation to more serious drug use, mental instability and irresponsible, even dangerous behavior?

You could call it a security expert's journey through the ethical weeds.

At first, Sam realizes that whether he approves of it or not, medical marijuana needs to be protected from ending up in the wrong hands and that taking the job means he can be home much more than before. But even what Sam learns about medical marijuana--that it can help people suffering from a variety of ailments, is at odds with his religious upbringing and his own conservative views about drug use, legal or otherwise.

When his son's best friend is killed in a car accident caused by a driver under the influence of medical marijuana, Sam reaches his breaking point. He ends up taking matters into his own hands, which leads to a potentially dangerous confrontation with his employers and a group of unknown provocateurs.

In the end, he must decide if he can personally continue to participate in the protection and perpetuation of this industry.

Sam Burnett's dilemma is indicative of the decision that millions of people in America are currently struggling to make. His story will resonate for all those struggling to make sense of this changing landscape in our society.

About the Author

Brian Laslow (a pen name for obvious reasons) has over 25 years of experience in the security field. He started his career as the owner of a security installation company serving residential and commercial clients. Since 2001, he has been an independent security consultant providing risk assessment, system design, project management, and ongoing security management services for a wide range of commercial, industrial, and government clients. He has extensive experience with building security programs from the ground up.

Brian wrote a successful book on security consulting and speaks frequently on topics relating to physical security, risk assessment, system design, and publishing for consultants. He holds multiple certifications from the security and consulting fields.

The Marijuana Project is his debut novel.

THE MARIJUANA PROJECT

A Novel

By Brian Laslow

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