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Client	Real Dirt
Ref #	Joel Payne
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Chip: All right. Here we are on the Real Dirt again. On today's dirt I have Joel Pain from Earl's in Leadville. How's it going, Joel?

Joel: Good, Chip. Good.

Chip: You're doing my favourite thing. As soon as you got here, you cracked open a jar-

Joel: Couldn't help myself. I saw it sitting there.

Chip: Yeah, that's a CSI old family purple, I think they call it. That's the Triangle Kush Urkle. Right.

Joel: It smells good.

Chip: Yeah, yeah. It's pretty good. It's pretty good. It's just some hydro weed. But it's pretty good. It's pretty good. It's no pesticides, food grade nutrients. Right. But it's nothing like this fine jar of organic weed you brought me here. Man, I always love my guest that show up with a sack of weed. You did a great job.

Joel: Just to clarify, it's not a sack, it's a glass jar.

Chip: It's a glass jar. What do we got in here?

Joel: You got some 16 week Fort Collins cough. I've never got it to go that long, but this time I just wanted to. I thought you'd like the taste sacks, I know you're a sativa guy. Some strawberry cough, because I know you are a fan.

Chip: Yeah.

Joel: And some LA Kush.

Chip: Oh, all right.

Joel: That's some more strawberry.

Chip: This is the LA Kush, right here.

Joel: Yeah.

Chip: This was the weed we saw you ... The last time I saw you you were fixing the harvest-

Joel: Yeah, I pulled that down maybe in late October or something, I think you were up there.

Chip: Awesome, dude. Well, what are we going to smoke?

Joel: Oh, man. If you want to be chatty Kathy interview time-

Chip: Chatty Kathy.

Joel: I'm thinking the Fort Collins cough spread the way to go. Five haze is always a good option. I was going to mix it with some of the strawberry, just because-

Chip: Hey, I'm going to let you blend it all.

Joel: It tastes better.

Chip: I'll let you be the bud tender here.

Joel: All right. That sounds great.

Chip: You got your [inaudible 00:01:51], you rolling.

Joel: Sure. All right.

Chip: Do it, man.

Joel: All right.

Chip: Here's the rolling tray. You know how that works.

Joel: I can probably figure it out.

Chip: I met Joel in 2009. Joel was the new cultivator for a newly formed company called "Patient's Choice" at the time. I was designing their [inaudible 00:02:22] of, I don't know, 400, 600 bud lights? 600, 400? 400 or 600.

Joel: Yeah, there was a couple rooms of 250 each or something like that. [crosstalk 00:02:32].

Chip: Watts. Right. Joel was the grower that this corporation hired to grow their weed. Right?

Joel: Yeah. That was right at the pinnacle of the industry regulation forming.

Chip: Right, yeah. 2009. You were the first grower I met here. I was coming from Hambone County.

Joel: Oh, really, I was the first one?

Chip: Pretty much. I might have met some home growers or something. But I thought everybody's going to be like you.

Joel: I hope that's in a good way about that.

Chip: It didn't work out that way.

Joel: Yeah, I haven't found any.

Chip: I don't think there's too many other growers that prescribe to the same type of techniques of do it yourself, do it simple, organic, high quality weed on a large commercial scale, as you do. There're others out there for sure, but that's rare-

Joel: When I met you I took a lot of flack for the way I was trying to do it. You saw in that warehouse, I had a tonne of 50 gallon containers filled with organic soil that all had to be hand mixed. The crew that worked for me hated me, because the work flowed. That's some back-breaking, dirty work. Patient's Choice at the time had the biggest, fanciest grow at the very beginning there.

Chip: There were one of the big ones at the beginning.

Joel: Yeah. We had a lot of VIPs coming through and looking at stuff. A lot of nutrient company people.

Chip: They didn't like you at all.

Joel: None of them liked me, because I didn't want to buy ... We didn't need to buy any of their products, A. But they also told me ... Everyone told me this won't work, this won't work, you can't do this, you can't do that. Of course, I've been doing it for a bunch of years, so I was confident in what was happening.

Chip: Yeah. Incredibly simple, scalable grow. One of our first conversations is you wanted to use these 55 gallon Tupperware or 55 gallon containers as your technique at the time and you guys couldn't figure out ... They wanted something better than a Tupperware, but-

Joel: Yeah, rubber made was how I came ... I talked them into it solely based on it was a brand new grow, there's tonne of overhead. They had all the investor typical stuff, where the guy at the tables telling you you got to follow this schedule and harvest there these many days and this and that and the other thing.

Chip: Yeah, but the Tupperware, the 55 gallon [inaudible 00:05:13] was actually ended up being the perfect answer.

Joel: It worked fine.

Chip: Not only did it work fine, it was inexpensive compared to the other containers available at the time.

Joel: Yeah, fairly durable. You could use them for quite a few rounds.

Chip: Now I think there actually might be another choice with the hard plastic container that actually works for this purpose.

Joel: I don't really use that technique anymore. I've taken those containers and used them for other things [crosstalk 00:05:44].

Chip: There was a beauty to the commercial ness of it. That even though it was a 55 gallon Tupperware containers, and I think this is what most people had problems with it, right? This is for the time a highly sophisticated grow. They had H-VAC, they were 1000 watt air cooled lights, like CO2 that you could control.

Joel: That crazy ion scrubber thing.

Chip: That crazy ion scrubber, right. I don't know if they ever got that to work.

Joel: Oh, yeah. I don't either.

Chip: They were one of the first ones. Joel's in here with all these blue rubber made Tupperware-

Joel: With dirt.

Chip: With dirt and it just looked ugly to so many people. It ended up really a simplistic grow technique. It was all organic nutrients. You mixed them in the soil, it was water only. You watered it once a week.

Joel: Yeah, with a supplemental tea every once in a while of either just really basic dry [inaudible 00:06:37] that we actually just t-bagged into the water or ... I don't even know if that time, in that space we ever made compost teas, but right around the same time I was making compost teas and adding that micro real teas and that sort of thing.

Chip: Man, that's all a glimpse into Joel but I want to step back, man. I want that light bulb moment, that 'aha' moment. When you first growing weed? Back in time, way back in time. What made you realise you had a relationship with this plant?

Joel: Well, I think it all started when I was 12. I had a neighbour move into my block who was ... I was a biker, I was a BMX, free style biker for a couple of years there. I had an older neighbour. I would have been in seventh grade, just going into seventh grade. High school kid moved up the block a few houses and he was a skateboarder. I immediately started skateboarding. I skateboard now, so it's been a life long journey of skating. I just got a Santa Cruz long board and a vintage sector non-long board.

Chip: I would've made fun of you 10 years ago. Now, good job. You should bring out the Leadville's fight. We have some really good down hill stuff.

Joel: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. They're real slow. They're perfect for down hill.

Chip: Yeah.

Joel: Right behind the farm you can hike back to the mineral belt trail, 11 mile trail that goes all the way around Leadville. It's a bike trail, it's asphalt. They keep it clean, because there's kids that lap that every day in the summer.

Chip: So you trade it in your air walks for vans.

Joel: Yeah.

Chip: You went from biker to skater.

Joel: Skater. And then that turned out ... I was such a die hard skater when I was 12 and 13 that I hung out with these high school kids every day. They turned me on to cannabis. They were all kind of new wave, punk skater high school kids, which in the mid-80s was the outcast kids. Of course, they smoked the herb. They turned me on to it and I immediately grasped it.

Chip: I think that's how it started with me, too.

Joel: One time I came home, we were smoking in this guy's bus, VW bug and the kids ... They always took care of me, these older guys. I had these cargo shorts on, they gave me all the roaches from the session. "Put them in your cargos for later." I was like, "Oh, great idea." They I went home, sat in the family room with my parents. Immediately they're like, "You reek." I went to the bathroom and flashed them down the toilet. Then they made me go to my doctor and get tested. I tested positively obviously. I blamed it on another kid. I told them I was hanging out with this guy that actually went to my-

Chip: And he was wearing your pants.

Joel: No, no. I told them that I smoked with the kid that was in my grade, in my class, because i knew that they would ban me from hanging out with this person. I still got to hang out with the older kids. Surprisingly, my parents were both teachers. My dad's retired high school principal and my mom's retired teacher. They made me do all this stuff to go to the doctor and figure out if I was smoking. Then they did nothing about it. Not really. I don't remember ever getting in trouble and then for the rest of my existence at home, they just turned a blind eye and I was basically a daily smoker. Yeah, that led up to-

Chip: That was immediate.

Joel: I immediately took the cannabis. I would go to school, I'd smoke it at school in junior high and high school.

Chip: Oh, bad boy.

Joel: Yeah, we'd go up in the alley and smoke at a pop cans and toilet paper rolls with tin foil and that sort of thing. High school, same thing. Turned into-

Chip: Shenanigans.

Joel: Yeah, shenanigans. In terms of growing, it really took a turn when I dropped out of my second year of college and moved to Leadville to help a family member open a business there. Leadville, for the people that don't know, is a really old school Leadville-

Chip: Mining town.

Joel: Yeah, it's an old mining town, that the mines have all been closed. There's the re-open now. They had been closed since the 60s. It's a run down, no money to be made in the county itself for most people. It was populated mostly by ex-miners and dead heads, because for some reason, dead heads tended to migrate to that town, I think probably because it was so cheap and isolated in the off-season. You had a lot of cannabis users, cannabis growers and a lot of interaction with those people, because it's a small town. So I caught on quickly to the finer aspects of [inaudible 00:11:29] and high grade, indoor grown cannabis as opposed to I'd been smoking on, which I rarely saw those things.

Chip: You grew up in Boulder then.

Joel: Yeah, I grew up in Boulder County.

Chip: Colorado.

Joel: Yeah. My dad lived in Boulder County, my mom lived up in a ski resort town and I ... But I still grew up like most people back then. Cannabis, at least in Colorado and Boulder and Nederland and Leadville have always had these names for high end cannabis and [inaudible 00:11:58] that sort of thing, home grown bud. I didn't really see it at that age, not a lot.

Chip: Right, yeah. Absolutely.

Joel: Different scene.

Chip: Yeah, Mexican weed.

Joel: Mostly Mexican. I clearly remember the first time, when I was 15 that I got a bag that actually had some glands on it. We thought it was laced.

Chip: Absolutely. I saw that. The first weed I saw that looked like that was called Coma bud. It was green house grown weed. Where quarters were one bud. That's what the rumour was, is like, "Look at all that dust on it. It's laced."

Joel: Right. But it got you higher. I was 15, I didn't care. Turns out that it was probably completely safe and it was just what it was supposed to have been.

Chip: You moved to Leadville and did you have the puck then? Was it the puck?

Joel: Yeah, when I moved to Leadville, the first year or two, I did hear the name of the puck quite a lot. I honestly don't really remember-

Chip: Getting it done.

Joel: I don't remember, yeah. I feel like I probably did, but it didn't stand out enough to really recall the specific moments. But yeah, the puck was around. There was a lot of skunk

around back then. The typical AK-47, all the early-

Chip: [inaudible 00:13:21].

Joel: M39.

Chip: Oh, Canadian strains. Oh, yeah-

Joel: Commercial stuff.

Chip: Up there elevation. This was even outdoor grown weed though, right?

Joel: No, it was all indoor. In Leadville, you can't grow outdoor at all.

Chip: Right, not straight outdoor.

Joel: Not really at all.

Chip: You're in greenhouses, but that's indoor.

Joel: Yeah, I've never known of a person to grow in a greenhouse up there until in the last decade.

Chip: Oh, wow.

Joel: I'm sure people did and I've heard old timers say, "Oh, they had this clandestine crop here and there."

Chip: It's hard with the infrastructure in-

Joel: The thing about Leadville and I think why a lot of people were there aside from the fact that they were some big dead tour personalities that resided there in the off-season, there was also the right logistics for indoor growing. It was in a small, isolated mountain town with lots of rural houses with property. There was a lot of cheap properties in town and the weather so cold most of the year. We get snow in June, July. I've seen snow in every month of the year up there. Actually, snowing. It was really easy to cool-

Chip: Yeah, it's snowing right now.

Joel: Easy to cool, you don't need to put A/C on windows or anything. It was easy to ... When it's cold, it's harder for people to smell, that sort of thing.

Chip: Less moisture in the air.

Joel: Yeah, it's dry, so there's less bugs. It's dry, there's less humidity. You don't have as much of the indoor humidity problems and all that kind of stuff. It was a really, just ... I felt always it was a really perfect environment for indoor growing. It was just easy. Cheap and simple to set up.

Chip: Yeah, down in the flats in Denver it's hot. [inaudible 00:15:02] extremes. It's so hot, it's so cold, so hot and so cold.

Joel: Yeah, as a Coloradoan I was well aware many years ago that when you get to August, there's no cannabis to be found. In Colorado, back in the day it was dry. If you had any kind of cannabis it went for top dollar and no matter what it was. Because everyone in the front range and everyone at lower elevation had to shut down for the winter without being suspicious and setting up A/C. People didn't do that back then. It was only people in the real high country, maybe Nederland and-

Chip: Yeah, all the mountain towns where the weed came from back then.

Joel: Yeah, exactly. At least in the summer time you could run year around.

Chip: Totally. I never thought about that dynamic. But you're absolutely right. That was the previous technique, was just that, was people shut down in the summer. People shut down in the summer.

Joel: Yeah, so we'd always just wait. We wouldn't shut down, but we would just hold out until August. Even though we had it, we'd just wait, because everyone else was.

Chip: That's hysterical, right? I think that's what brought me to California, because I got to Colorado in August and there wasn't any weed here. I kept driving.

Joel: I remember you saying that.

Chip: Finally we hit the water and found weed.

Joel: The only other place I've ever lived in in the US or been to in the US that I would ever consider living in in lower 48 is North Cal. Similar culture to what I-

Chip: Similar culture, mountain towns and-

Joel: Yeah, small towns that are don't The logging industry, it's all either old loggers or hippies or growers.

Chip: Back to lenders, self-sufficient, do it yourself, that type of technology, I mean that type of person.

Joel: Yeah, off grid, all that kind of thing.

Chip: Yeah. You get up into those isolated areas and this community develops and this sense of you're out here by yourself and you can't call the police or the fire department or the ambulance to take care of you. You have to take care of yourself. That's a similar type of feel that develops with the people that live in those communities.

Joel: Yeah.

Chip: All right. I think it's a great time to take a break and we'll talk about our sponsors. This is Chip in Real Dirt. I'm here with Joel Pain of Earl's.

And we're back. This is the Real Dirt with Chip Baker. I've got Joel Pain here with Earl's and we are smoking a great blendo here. This is a strawberry cough NL five haze.

Joel: Yeah.

Chip: That incense-y smell and taste.

Joel: Yeah. And strawberry gives it that little ... Feel so old. I've been around forever. The NL five I'll smoke more frequently than the strawberry, but I'm never let them go probably.

Chip: Yeah. Strawberry cough used to be the Colorado strain.

Joel: Not from my perspective, but-

Chip: Those are the ones that I heard about. Paeonia and strawberry cough. That's what I heard about.

Joel: I never knew about strawberry cough being a big thing in Colorado in the past. I knew about P-bud and purple paralyzer and Paeonia bud in the early 90s.

Chip: Yeah, I didn't come to the Colorado weed until later, later on.

Joel: The P-bud was probably the first commercial, Colorado local thing that I noticed in my development at least. Because I lived on the western slope and once you live over there, then you'd see it. You didn't really see it in the front range. I didn't know it from here at all.

Chip: I heard about it and that Paeonia bud, we didn't know it P-bud, but that we heard about it.

Joel: Purple paralyzer.

Chip: We were looking for it.

Joel: I hear that it's around.

Chip: That's what brought me to [inaudible 00:19:12], that's what brought me to snowboarding. Searching for-

Joel: Did you find it?

Chip: No, I didn't find it, but I found [inaudible 00:19:18] and snowboarding.

Joel: Supposedly it exists. I hear people say that other people have it. But I haven't seen it

since back then. As far as I know, Paeonia used to have a huge outdoor scene.

Chip: All right. Who from Paeonia wants to come on to Real Dirt and show me and Joel some purple p-bud.

Joel: I want to see some purple p-bud.

Chip: We want to see some purple p-bud.

Joel: 25 years later.

Chip: Somebody's going to show it, dude. Somebody's going to call us. It feels good.

Joel: Just let me know. I'll be here.

Chip: What were some of strains, these early strains you were growing? We were just getting in that before the break.

Joel: The first thing I really remember heavily, we were talking about the puck. The puck was around, I didn't see it a whole lot. There was another ... I think it was P91. I'm not sure what it was. I think it was always called a hash plant, too. Like a real low yielder. It wasn't like the puck, which is [inaudible 00:20:15] and dense and afghani. This was more real fox tail-y thin, small pieces. Lot of M39, because of the commercial value. Orange bud, skunk one, AK-47.

Chip: These are all small indoor grows.

Joel: Yeah. Small-

Chip: Lots of people had one to 10 lights or something. If you had 10 lights, that was a lot.

Joel: In the mid-90s, if you had 10, you only knew a couple of people. Ever. That changed quickly in the 2000s.

Chip: That's like having 400 lights today.

Joel: Yeah, something like that. That's what it would've felt like. Having two or three lights, you felt pretty sketched out.

Chip: You didn't invite people over.

Joel: No.

Chip: Nobody was coming over after the bar.

Joel: No, none of that. Not, if you're smart. Everyone else did it though. The less you care, the more problems you created.

Chip: Totally. But that's also would expanded the consciousness and the education of it too. As those type of people pushing the limits. Yeah, I got weed. Yeah, you should grow weed too, man.

Joel: Everyone takes their own route and is dedicated in whatever way that they choose to do it. I would always just scold people when they'd get busted. In our local authority, they would make you write a letter and they'd publish it in the paper and say, "This was bad and I shouldn't have done this." I'd always be like, "Fuck that guy. Just take responsibility. Tell them to fuck off. Take the extra punishment. Don't sell your soul." Because if you really think that shit, because he couldn't really think that.

Chip: He got caught and then he had to confess. He broke the first two rules. You haven't mentioned any European strains. They've all been local, US strains. When did the European influence start to come in?

Joel: A lot of those would be European still. M39 is Canadian. But all the other stuff, rumoredly-

Chip: The skunk [inaudible 00:22:31].

Joel: Mike p-bud and Carnie could probably tell you better about where the puck comes from. Pretty much everything that I knew that people are growing came from seed from Holland. Someone went to Amsterdam for the most part, people weren't getting mailed stuff back then that I was aware of. Mostly people were going to getting it.

Chip: Yeah, Holland's been the [inaudible 00:22:54] distribution point for years and years. For sure.

Joel: Yeah, during that time you could really count on a lot of those company seeds, so there was a bit more integrity in the seed pack.

Chip: They weren't making so much.

Joel: Yeah. It was newer, so it was closer to the source and less thinned out. There was less people doing it. There's probably only 20 big names from back then, that were even doing it on a world-wide scale.

Chip: Yeah. [Younkers 00:23:28], [Navel 00:23:33], the [Sense and Seed 00:23:33] guys. [Fine dutchment 00:23:40] people.

Joel: Yeah, [Serious 00:23:40]. THZ, those are all came-

Chip: [inaudible 00:23:44].

Joel: Yeah, [inaudible 00:23:45]. Tony and ... They all came right on top of those guys.

Chip: [inaudible 00:23:54].

Joel: I feel like at least from my perspective, is yeah, they was so many year run of popularity of seed breeding and good seeds being put out. Then there was a little gap in the late 90s, early 2000s, where it didn't feel like much was happening.

Chip: Right, regulation happened in mid 90s in Amsterdam, is what went down. Everybody got rid of a bunch of mails, because people would just have thousands of plants. Regulation came through. They're like, "I'm going to have one mail now. All these clowns from C base." The whole thing changed then.

Joel: Yeah.

Chip: Right. Man, let's fast forward to medical cannabis. Legal medical cannabis. Started to get involved with care giving for people, because that's how you got involved in legal cannabis, back in 2002?

Joel: No. Little later than that. I'm sure everyone knows.

Chip: It's all hazy.

Joel: The funny story, it should've been on the bill in '99, but the lady who counts the votes or whatever stashed it under her desk and then she dies the next year. They found it under her desk or something like that. It went on the ballot automatically I think in 2000. Then for about, I don't know, the first four or five years ... I was well aware of it and all, but there was probably only a few hundred cards issued in the first five years. Then-

Chip: People were so scared of it.

Joel: Yeah, people were scared and it was just a small programme. It was like why? Seemed invasive. Around '05, '06, '07, somewhere in there, I'm not sure the year, I was probably the first five ... I don't know. I was in the first 1000 cards for sure. I got a card for myself for a little while. As things progressed, I was always keeping up with who was pushing what and what everyone ... People were saying you could get away with, in terms of plant counts and growing for people. I was interested in growing cannabis, I just wanted to grow more. I wanted to have a little licence that said I could grow as many as I could. Because why wouldn't I?

Chip: Yeah, this is all in your house. In your-

Joel: Yeah, sure. In my own personal spaces. I tried to be pretty smart about it still, because it wasn't-

Chip: What size are these gardens back then?

Joel: Oh, small, man. Six lighter.

Chip: 1000 watts.

Joel: Yeah, six lighter moved up to a 12. Then you have a couple 12s. From there.

Chip: At the time there was only a couple grow stores around, at the time.

Joel: Yeah. You had Ed in Boulder, Boulder Hydroponics and Organics.

Chip: Yeah, it's gone.

Joel: I haven't been there in years.

Chip: He's gone.

Joel: He's gone?

Chip: Yeah.

Joel: That whole store is out?

Chip: Yeah.

Joel: He always ran small rinky-dink show. Weird vibe.

Chip: Yeah. He didn't make the first cut.

Joel: Yeah, I noticed that. He did open another store out there on 36th and 25-ish or something. Anyway, I quickly evolved from Ed. He was just my local. I try to support, I'm from Boulder County. I was like Ed was the guy.

Chip: Yeah, totally.

Joel: There was no one else, really. Then, the first way to grow in Fort Collins, I would go up there just because he would special order me certain things that whatever. I would go up there anyway. Those were the only two I really dealt with, until big medical. After I started care giving, it evolved quick.

Chip: Are you making your own equipment back then or you soil or you using-

Joel: I was doing mixes of stuff and experimenting with everything. I've grown a tonne of different ways of hydro and different products of hydro. I just evolved into soil [inaudible 00:27:49] and soil mediums and stuff, just out of curiosity really. It was just out of preference. After I did it long enough and really-

Chip: Right. Damn, this tastes better.

Joel: Yeah. And there was a lot of round where I'd grow with some hydroponic, normal local nutrient or whatever. And bottled nutrient line and I wouldn't really be able to tell the difference at the end sometimes. But other times and more times I think, I would really appreciate the buds that I smoked out of the soils more than hydroponic. Or bottled nutrient line stuff.

Chip: No, I get it, man. Man, you could flush hydro weed grade [inaudible 00:28:32]. It'll taste awesome. Man, properly grown, organic, mostly water weed is incredible flavour. It's hard to beat, man.

Joel: It's the same with food. I'm an opportunist when it comes to eating. I just like to eat stuff. I prefer organic. If you give me an organic, conventional store, Safeway, three blocks up from your house. Banana, non-organic and then I get an organic banana and they're truly what it says they are, I can always taste that organic banana. It always is going to taste infinitely better than that other one. I can barely eat the other ones anymore, because they taste so different, they're so tasteless.

Chip: Yeah, totally. Tasteless.

Joel: Bland and starch.

Chip: Right. But if it's all you know, then you love bananas. It's all you know.

Joel: Yeah. Like I said, I wouldn't judge anyone because they wanted to eat this banana over that banana. It's just my personal preference. It's all subjective. It's what I like.

Chip: No, man. I used to be on the soap box, on organic and vegetarianism and veganism. I'm a 20+ year vegetarian. I try to only eat organic food. I preached it hard at one point. Man, I realised a little bit of the air in my ways, I grew up a little bit. It's not for everybody. I also see the beauty of synthetic nutrients and the environmental impact that goes along with mining some organic nutrients. [inaudible 00:30:18], back it's considered organic.

Joel: Yeah, [inaudible 00:30:22] some countries.

Chip: I don't think that's any better than say like taking a waste product from the natural gas industry and use that as a fertiliser. It's waste product, I think we should use that.

Joel: I've thought about that a lot. It'd be really fun to have your own bat caves, wouldn't it?

Chip: Bat caves.

Joel: Bat caves. They have their own diets. You give them Jamaican diet, Indo diet, Mexi diet, Peruvian diet, whatever. All the diets.

Chip: You could just have these bat caves around the world.

Joel: You could make your own diet. You have the Colorado diet.

Chip: Yeah, bat caves around the world.

Joel: Yeah, in the yard.

Chip: Yeah, no doubt. But there's a place of it all. I realise that now. I got gross stores that have made potting soil and all this stuff. In Colorado, in Denver most of our market is a synthetic market.

Joel: Yeah, sure.

Chip: It's a large part of the synthetic market. We have the organic stuff there. That's not the way people do it.

Joel: Yeah. In terms of big cannabis these days, it's all about pushing numbers. You're looking for yield and you want it to look as bling as possible and as junky as possible, to weight as much weight as possible. I get that. I can't think of another dispensaries grow that I've been to that doesn't use bottled synthetic nutrients. I know there's a few that use organic bottled nutrients lines.

Chip: We shouldn't even be friends. We should be enemies, me and you.

Joel: Yeah, right.

Chip: Because you don't buy anything from the gross store.

Joel: Not much, not often. I do. I do have a small-

Chip: You buy soil and amendments.

Joel: I buy amendments and I don't buy a whole ... I buy soil straight from the man that brings it to everyone else. Because at this point you just bring the semi and it's the same load. Yeah, the soil hit us that hard, because we recycle it all. Black out houses-

Chip: [inaudible 00:32:40] blackout.

Joel: Yeah, dep houses. Deprivation houses, where we have beds and we've turned that soil six, seven times. Now, we just pulled it all out, because we're expanding and we're putting out in more full season pots, that don't rely necessarily on electricity or lights. You get a bigger plant. We can take that soil that after seven runs is maybe a little bit feeling ... Some of the plants are showing symptoms of some sort of toxicity or deficiency in terms of ... In small ways. We'll just replace that soil into bigger pots. We'll take that soil and add a little bit of the new. We are always buying a little bit of soil, mostly amendments.

Chip: Sure, but it's really low input. That's beauty of organic-

Joel: It's very cost effective.

Chip: Is how cost effective it is. On the commercial scale, on a large scale for our food, agricultural consumption, it just makes so much sense. It really is low cost.

Joel: In the end, that being said, if I were to feel like I would get a superior product by doing

more, using more, I would. It is cost effective, it's not-

Chip: And get some good home grown, some 05030-

Joel: [inaudible 00:34:04]. There's so many products and so many things that I've tried it over and over and over so many times now that it's easy to take test batches when it's mixed the exact same. You're pretty confident of it. I took [inaudible 00:34:16] back. Real gold, you brought it in. I put it right up against what I was running for some of yours, and it ran exactly the same. It was a little bit lighter and it had to be watered a little bit more. Other than that, it performed exactly the same, which is exactly what you said. You were right.

Chip: Trust me, man.

Joel: However many years later, Chip, you were right.

Chip: Trust me, man. Trust me. I believe in organic for sure, man. It's hard to make organic products though in our marketplace. They don't make it easy to label things organically. It's also hard to get organic product, raw materials, organic raw materials. It can be done and I've got organic products planned in the future. I just know it's a small part of the market.

Joel: Luckily for us, I guess. I don't know. I feel like a lot of people seek it out.

Chip: Absolutely.

Joel: I know there's other entities-

Chip: I met someone in Louisville the other day. I already told you this story, but I'll tell everybody else. At the guitar shop up there. Wildwood Music, [inaudible 00:35:25] for Wildwood Music, the coolest guitar store probably in the world. It's in Louisville.

Joel: Yeah, Wildwood.

Chip: I was in there checking out the guitar and the guy said, "You work in Earl's?" Because I had an Earl's hoodie on. I was like, "No, no. Just my buddy." He's like, "Do they have another shop in town?"

Joel: I wanted you to come over and be a featured bud tender of the month now.

Chip: Yeah, totally. I'll totally do that. Featured bud tender of the month. Absolutely.

Joel: That's be sick. Mid summer, boom days. Yeah, that's cool.

Chip: But you have people from all over the state come up there for sure. It's a nice drive up the Leadville.

Joel: It is.

Chip: Joel's got hands down certified chip grade weed.

Joel: Thank you, Chip. That means something, man. That means something.

Chip: It is. I went toward Joel's facility, that we'll talk more about here later. When I go into places, the number one thing people say is, "I get this much a light, I'm pulling this much a plant." As I'm talking to you about it, you don't really think about it that way.

Joel: You have to think about it that way to an extent. But that's not the main intent.

Chip: That's not the main intent. That's when I knew ... I already knew you were a grower looking for quality. That's really the tale tail. People can say whatever. As soon as they're talking about yield per square foot is their most important thing, then that's what that means. Dude, great, honest, yield per square foot. I get it.

Joel: You can grow some pretty damn good weed on a schedule programme, I guess.

Chip: On a standard operating procedures.

Joel: Yeah. The last grow I tore down here not long ago, big chain. Just a guy that I used to work with. He runs this grow. This guy's a grow for everyone else. We'll remain everyone unnamed. Beautiful gardens, man. Beautiful. Every plant looked healthy, so symmetrical and just pretty. Very organised and efficient. Even him, he was like, "You see this death star? How long do you take it?" I'm like that's usually 75 probably usually for us. He was like, "60, every time. 60." It's like it still looks good, it does the same. It's like, "Yeah, I get that. It probably does. You can still make some great concentrates from it. You'll still have an even pretty nice flower for someone who doesn't"

Chip: Right. I hear the same thing about sour diesel. Everywhere I go. 64 days. 64 days.

Joel: I've never run a sour ... I know that the res line or whatever has 60 some day sour diesel yielders finishers in their bud. All my sour diesel east coast clones, that I've ever run were-

Chip: 70.

Joel: Mid 70s. Mid to late some time, depending-

Chip: The top colon and everyone wants to really mature. We should roll up another one. Don't fire up a roach.

Joel: It wasn't quite the roach.

Chip: It was so good though. That's how you can tell the weed's great. Let's see, what else? I'll roll this next one up. What else we got here? Let's see. What do we have. NL five, strawberry cough.

Joel: NL five, strawberry cough, LA Kush.

Chip: LA Kush.

Joel: LA Kush. That's a great round of LA Kush. I inherited that when we took over the business and he is a finicky nasty little thing to keep alive and to just make perform. This last run-

Chip: This is huge chunky nugget.

Joel: She was so chunky huge, just so delicious.

Chip: What's the biggest problem with it?

Joel: With LA Kush?

Chip: Yeah. It wants to die as soon as you start to give it a cut, make it a cutting.

Joel: Yeah, pretty much. Looks like it wants to die all the time, except for rare occa ... It was a fall. With growing in Leadville and where we grow and the way we grow, we are able to utilise the sun 10,250 feet or whatever. One of the houses sit at that, the other one is probably 10,225 or something.

Chip: We should have started out this way. Joel Pain, he is the founder of the highest commercial grow in the world.

Joel: The highest greenhouse supplemental light dep grow. This is funny, because I got out of the business for a little while. I got so discouraged with what happened down when I met you and with the industry itself, just as a whole. I was just really bummed out on what I was seeing. I boogied out for a little bit and went to Leadville.

Chip: Found yourself in the cave in the hills of Leadville, listening to the words Jerry Garcia.

Joel: Not so much of that stuff going then. Where was I going with that? Anyway.

Chip: All right, man. I think it's time for another break anyway. I'll break, while I roll this joint and this is Real Dirt with Chip Baker. I'm here with Joel Pain from Earl's in Leadville. That's right, we're back. That joint is rolled. It's pretty good size one, huh?

Joel: Yeah. You got a bigger grinder than me. I maxed my grinder on that one. Then I put it in there and I was like, "oh, that's a half joint."

Chip: Yeah, but [inaudible 00:41:29] last week, man. I should get a smaller grinder.

Joel: Just roll more joints.

Chip: Totally.

Joel: I smoke-

Chip: It's not like this shit grows on trees, man.

Joel: It doesn't even fucking grow on trees half the time. Little bushes.

Chip: The little bitty bushes.

Joel: The little bushes.

Chip: Little bushes. All right, so we were talking about-

Joel: I had a brain fart but I was talking about being the highest greenhouse light dep in the world. Because when I came back in, we ... When we took over the business as Earl's, from the guy who had the medical store before that, Cloud city compassionate care Dan. Shout out, Dan. Dan [Patro 00:42:23]. He's a good dude. Super good guy. Still around. Just burned out on the industry, man, because it was tough. It was super tough. When I was working in Denver, I went up there. Let's finish the story anyways. When I took the business-

Chip: Concentrate.

Joel: I was like, "Are we the highest grow in the world? Because we're real high. We're super high." We use the sun. But on top of that, I just wanted to be the highest grow. I actually called high country healing. They were at Alma still then. I asked them how high their grow was. Because they're the only town that's actually higher than Leadville. It's not incorporated or I don't know how that is now.

Chip: What's that?

Joel: I called up Alma and their grow was higher. Long story short. I was kind of bummed. At the same time, it doesn't really matter. Who gives a shit about that. We grow with the sun, which is more important I feel like.

Chip: Because they were indoor.

Joel: Yeah, they're all indoor.

Chip: They're all indoor.

Joel: [inaudible 00:43:18] light and all that stuff. I've had some experience in North Cal with some partners in different projects and that sort of thing. Medical growing, where we grew trees. Five pound, 10 pound trees. I had never really known other than in the western [inaudible 00:43:39] I think people are growing some pretty good crops. Otherwise, around here I'd never ... There was no one growing trees, no greenhouses, that sort of thing. Can't get away with that in the front range. People-

Chip: A lot of flavour on this is great. Sounds great.

Joel: What did you roll up again? The LA?

Chip: I got that LA.

Joel: Two hours. Perfect. I needed to just simmer.

Chip: You're growing in these 1970s greenhouses that you've converted into-

Joel: They're kind of mixed match, piece together. The original grow for the entity that we bought out, clouds city compassionate ... I guess I should stop and say that Earl's isn't just me. I have two partners, Matt and Earl [Boovy 00:44:35]. They're father, son duo.

Chip: That's the name sake.

Joel: That's the name sake. The Earl's. Because Earl's 84 years old. He's a Leadville legend. He's done many things in his life that are just inspiring. His son is a hard working, cannabis-smoking, loving, dirt biking, heavy metaling-

Chip: American.

Joel: American. Leadvillite.

Chip: Some of my favourite things.

Joel: He wasn't born, but he was raised in Leadville. We live out on their farm, where Earl used to raise tomatoes in the 80s. He raised hydroponic, rock, wool based tomatoes in a couple of different greenhouses. He did that, lasted for a few years. Then Earl being the guy that he is, went on to do other things after a few pump failures and this and that. He was doing other business dealings and it was just not worth his time. He just abandoned it. This greenhouses just sat around for a lot of years. One of the local florists use one ... One of local, yeah florists I guess, used one of them for a while and what not. As care giving was more of a thing, I was seeking a place to put four, five gallon pots and put a plant in it. Because I can grow six plants, I can flower three at any time I want.

Chip: Four or five hundred gallon pots.

Joel: Yeah, right. Filled with soil. One plant, put them in the spring time, harvest them in the fall time.

Chip: Five plants, is what you're saying, in 100 gallon pots.

Joel: Yeah. You could have your six, I can flower my threes. However you want to do that.

Chip: I just wanted to make sure we weren't talking about four, five hundred gallon pots. No, your 100 gallon pots-

Joel: No, four or five hundred gallon pots. Four to five hundred. 400 to 500 gallon pots.

Chip: Oh, okay. 400 to 500 gallon pots. Reasonable amount.

Joel: Minimum 200. That would be a small pot. Fading off here. This does taste delicious, this LA Kush.

Chip: Taste awesome, dude.

Joel: I haven't smoked this in a minute.

Chip: LA. You're growing four, five hundred plants.

Joel: No. I was growing six plants in four to five ... In huge pots. Anyways, we ended up using these greenhouses prior to taking over the business in a care giver sense.

Chip: Right, small plants.

Joel: With small numbers, so we had experience at the high altitude, because Leadville gets really cold as in early winters. But we're at 10,000 feet, we're the closest to the sun, man.

Chip: I've seen this place. Yeah, all year long, homemade greenhouses pretty much.

Joel: One was the old tomato farm, the full season house attached to that is a new house, because the house that existed before that looked basically just like it, got taken out by a spring snow load a couple of years before that. Just completely bend all the metal truss ... Just flattened it. Then the upper house we attached to the original grow, which we bought from the previous owner. He had 14 mites. We came in and just gutted it all and put in our own lights, really simple and attached an old greenhouse frame. It's actually a Quonset hut frame that I had sitting in my yard across town and Earl built it all out. Tractor'd it up.

Chip: Yeah, totally. This is all made out of spare parts, right?

Joel: Yeah. The light dep is a hand crank on the hub, he's welded it all together and has on runners and polies. It functions just fine.

Chip: The return on investment on this thing happened like immediately.

Joel: Yeah. Took like a month.

Chip: Right. It's incredibly functional. I see people spend dollars and I see people spend buckets of dollars on grows.

Joel: Yeah. Me, too, man. We met in the bucket side.

Chip: Yeah, we did. We met in the bucket side. Dumb, burning money at it. Fortunately, some of it was going my way.

Joel: Yeah, exactly. Good for you, man.

Chip: And your way, too.

Joel: Yeah, for sure. Good times.

Chip: Good times. That's how we all get here from working hard and making it happen, man. Those guys made it happen too man. They did what they did.

Joel: Who's that?

Chip: Patient's Choice.

Joel: Oh, yeah. Sure.

Chip: They progressed. Sold out different owners.

Joel: Different owners.

Chip: It still exists.

Joel: I don't know much about it. I just live up in my own little nest of the world and don't even pay attention to much.

Chip: Supplemental light.

Joel: Yeah, supplemental light. We have-

Chip: Double skin.

Joel: Two of the houses that we have currently are full blackout. It's all hand crank. You got to yank it around a little bit. Functions just fine. A lot of times of the year we can get away without even pulling tarp to flower or to vet, either way. Depending on time of year. All done by one person, basically. Heather. Shout out Heather. She is one girl show.

Chip: Yeah, totally. I'll have the real girl around here one day.

Joel: Yeah, for sure. She would be so stocked on that. She does it all man. She's really a power house. We're really small crew overall, we're extremely ... Me and my partner, Earl's son, work every day, doing everything. We have three trimmers. They trim all of it currently. More or less-

Chip: You're constantly harvesting?

Joel: Constantly trimming, because we harvest everything. We wet trim it, we dry it, we seal it up and we tub it up. Then, we [inaudible 00:50:41]. They just crank through it. They do it all of it. They turn the soil for us, which is back-breaking.

Chip: Then you farm hands.

Joel: They're farm hands. Then they crank it out. We hopefully compensate them okay for that.

Chip: Here's to the farm hands.

Joel: Yeah, big time, dude. We couldn't do it without that. That is the biggest challenge of this entire operation is-

Chip: Is the labour.

Joel: Is the labour.

Chip: We've talked about this earlier.

Joel: Exactly.

Chip: Employees is the hardest thing.

Joel: The hardest thing.

Chip: The hardest thing. In Colorado, Denver has three percent unemployment I think right now. I don't know, don't quote me on that.

Joel: Okay, I have no idea.

Chip: The holy hell, that is such a small-

Joel: That's a low number.

Chip: Low number. The cannabis industry is definitely a significant part of that, because employees 20,000+ in the state.

Joel: Non-cannabis people will tell you all day that they're not sure it has anything to do with weed at all. I don't think it does. I may name a whole bunch of other things, but the timing I think is just pretty ironic. I think it's obvious that the economy-

Chip: It's obvious the economy is taking off because of weed.

Joel: I've been here off and on my whole life [crosstalk 00:51:54]. It's at a peak, it's because of cannabis.

Chip: Absolutely.

Joel: How happy am I. It evolved all around me, right in my own little nook of the world.

Chip: Oh, yeah. You made it like this man.

Joel: I used to chase it around, go to Europe and Amsterdam as much as I could and whatever, whatever. So that I could be a part of it. Now it just kind of came.

Chip: Now it's here. Grass is always greener.

Joel: I guess. Although, any time I get free time for the last 15 years, all I do is live here. But that's the beauty I guess. That's what you do when you-

Chip: I'm a gypsy, dude. I've been all over, I've lived all over. This isn't going to be my last home for sure. Home's where my feet are.

Joel: Yeah, I hear you man.

Chip: I love Denver, though. This is a great place to be, man. Colorado is a great place to be right now.

Joel: I love Denver a lot more now than I did as a young person. As a young person I really appreciated the Boulder scene. Denver was-

Chip: Yeah, Boulder's great too.

Joel: Denver was kind of bland. There wasn't much going on. There was a couple of venues. It's all basically what exists now, just names other things. But it was small ... It wasn't too happening in Denver. If you go back and look at pictures of Denver 20 years ago and then look at pictures skyline now, it's a whole different thing. That says it all right there.

Chip: Yeah, absolutely.

Joel: I enjoy being in Denver. Back when I met, i used to go back and forth all week. I'd come right out of Denver, I had my little place. We used to hang out there once or twice maybe. Every time I was coming down, I was excited to be coming down to that part with all the access, just amenities of the city life. Then, at the end of week I'd be just as happy to go back to the tranquillity of trees and people leaving me alone, don't care what I look like or wear.

Chip: Mountain towns.

Joel: It's great. If you don't look the way I just described, if you don't look-

Chip: You stand out a little bit.

Joel: A lot. You look like a tourist or a Denverite or whatever. That's what you are. It's a different way of life. It really is-

Chip: I see that wherever I go. You go to the East Coast and either one of us would totally look out of place.

Joel: Oh, yeah. For sure. I hate going to the East Coast for the most part.

Chip: Here we go anywhere. Any bank, any restaurant, I'm half way shaven. Joel's got mud and dirt all over his clothes.

Joel: Yeah, totally. Totally do. For sure.

Chip: Farmer. No, I'm just jiving.

Joel: Yeah, it's true though.

Chip: Let's talk about dirt, because that's-

Joel: The Real Dirt.

Chip: One of my favourite things to talk about is dirt. You make your own dirt.

Joel: Yeah, I guess.

Chip: Let's talk some dirt techniques man. Here's a great question people always ask me. Let me get your perspective on it. How do you stabilise the pH of the dirt and fertilising your water when it's organic?

Joel: Well, we don't do much.

Chip: You don't do any of that.

Joel: We don't really do shit.

Chip: Do you balance out the pH or you're soiling in any way?

Joel: I would imagine some of the products ... In total, what I would add to my soil mix is, at this point, eight items, nine items. It might be even less than that usually.

Chip: Line or chips.

Joel: No, no line or chips or anything as the sole means would be to balance out a pH. I only trust the pH at all. I add what I add based on repetition and practise of amending in terms of different ratios of different things. And just bringing it down to a level or to a number of products. Products I mean dry goods, like bone, blood, kelp, poop. Some trace [inaudible 00:56:07] rolls and some this and some that. But not Earth warm castings, nothing ... I used to add a lot more. I used to-

Chip: Keep the balance of acidic and alkaline fertilisers probably. You haven't even thought about it, because you're just such a pro, you're like, "I think it needs-"

Joel: Not that I'm a pro, I think I'm so-

Chip: You're totally a pro.

Joel: So retarded that I just did it over and over enough that I witted out to a nice ratio of things, just complemented each other in a way that I didn't have to ditch the soil. I could recycle it. I could just turn it, do the exact same thing back in it, put the plants right back into it, whatever size, clones, whatever. Full size plants and then flower it again. Then take them out and over and over.

Chip: Did this technique come from economy or availability of soil?

Joel: It came out of necessity to stay ... Honestly, the primary reason would probably be, because discretion. Because when you're in a small town and everything's totally ... People-

Chip: [crosstalk 00:57:28].

Joel: People that didn't exist at time where they were conscious of what was happening in the weed world, because of their age or whatever. If you didn't live in a time when weed wasn't legal in a place where it's legal, you don't understand what it feels like for when it's not legal. Unless you're stupid, you're taking every precaution. I would not have to bring soil in and out. Take it somewhere, do something with it and ... Wasn't really economy, because [crosstalk 00:58:03] and that money.

Chip: So you built your soil. Yeah, just being in a mountain town and isolated area. Sometimes just getting proper ingredients is expensive, right?

Joel: Yeah. Living isolated, those things all come into place. It's more of a headache. Why wouldn't you want to do that? In the end you wouldn't want to do it because the product-

Chip: That's how I started, dude. I started making my own soil and watching the soil got down the road, damn for power flower big ups. He's not around anymore. Dan's around, but his company is not. He helped me out and I'd go buy ingredient from him, because we were in the middle of nowhere. In fact, we're living off the grid and it's like what else to do? I got to shovel all the fucking dirt.

Joel: Right. We talked about that business. I hit you up about that back in the day, because it's such a big thing out there. There're so many at this point of ... Someone will make use of a nice soil mix, it's actually a pretty decent soil mix and they'll truck it over to you and fill up your pots or your troughs or your beds or whatever.

Chip: Totally.

Joel: And they'll front it to you until next season, because you'll pay them. I thought that that idea in Colorado would be a great thing. I still think on the western slope, if they ever stop depressing everyone over there with the laws.

Chip: Yeah, the western slope hadn't opened yet. I think one of our sponsors is a local soil company. They're on a sponsor list, I forget who they are. Oh, yeah. Growers. Growers' soil. You'll hear more about that at the break. You do call it building ... You've built your soil-

Joel: I don't call it any of that, man. I call it anything. Like I said-

Chip: I'm growing man. You call it dirt or soil?

Joel: I call it soil.

Chip: I'm a dirt guy.

Joel: You're the dirt guy.

Chip: I have to do that jut to piss people off. They're like, "It's soil!"

Joel: No, I don't give a shit.

Chip: Yeah, it's just a terminology. I'm all about pressing buttons sometimes too.

Joel: In the soil dirt, my soil dirt. My dirty soil.

Chip: Yeah, it's my dirty soil.

Joel: My dirty soil fluctuates in the dirtiness levels.

Chip: Okay. Here's another one that I get for organic stuff. Because people coming in the shop every day [inaudible 01:00:39] Colorado and ask those questions. What about pest, man? How you deal with pest? What's your pest management system?

Joel: My pest management system is don't bring in plants from anyone else. If you do, you can, if you do ... For the business side of things, for Earl's in Leadville, there's no-

Chip: You don't have to do that.

Joel: We can't bring anything in from the outside. I don't get clones from other dispensaries at all.

Chip: Last week's show we had the same conversation. My last week show I had the same conversation with Great [Gammet 01:01:14] over genetics and bringing genetics in. It's a problem.

Joel: Yeah, it's stupid. It started in the beginning, that's how everything came in. People just brought it in. You have to follow the rules now. Whatever we had or had seeds of or have made seeds of we can have. We just go with that. In terms of pest management in general, just don't bring plants in from other people without quarantining it. If you have to use products that you don't want to put on other plants and stuff to do that, that's

what most people are probably going to have to do, because as far as I know around, most people have issues.

Chip: Start from seed, keep your own plants in.

Joel: We don't spray with anything. The only we've used as pest management in the last couple of years is product called Green Cleaner. We only ever spray that on vegetative plants or solely on the top of the soil spread, on stem cell spread. But never in flowering. Nothing ever touches plant matter in flowering and no buds ever get sprayed with any kind of product, water or-

Chip: Fertiliser.

Joel: Or fertilise. No, we don't spray fertiliser ever. But a pesticides or fungicide or anything like that, we don't spray ever on flowers at all. We don't spray water either. It gets condensation from the greenhouse sometimes, because the temperature fluctuation is pretty intense. In the winter it can be negative 30. If the sun's out, it's 95 in the greenhouse, so at night you'll get-

Chip: Are you able to get strict environmental controls up there?

Joel: In terms of?

Chip: I have other guests on the show and definitely other customers who have to have it at 74 degrees. Nothing.

Joel: We have a simple thermostat set up. I didn't set it up. It works. It's not how I done it in the past and how I did it in the past it's more digital.

Chip: It's a kiss operation for sure.

Joel: Yeah and it works.

Chip: it works great.

Joel: You have to be around and neat pick it here and there. It's seasonally. You have to change some of the variables seasonally.

Chip: My point that I always try to get across is you don't have to spend a million dollars ... Even in today's operation.

Joel: I didn't even want to get back into the marijuana Colorado game at all, because I was so disgruntled with what I'd ... Most entities, from my perspective in the industry, are using most of the products that are totally illegal. I see recalls all the time. Not to say that ... I think that the testing is ridi ... The way it's being handled and the knowledge behind and the science behind all of it, it's still all in its infancy that it's irrelevant in some ways.

Chip: Stab into the dark. You haven't had any problems scaling this organic technique. It's

inexpensive. It's low labour cost.

Joel: Yeah, it's all really cost effective for sure. There's no really more cost effective way probably. Honestly, that really doesn't ... I've been planning on putting in a hydro ... I've never grown hydro under the sun at 10,200, whatever feet. With supplemental light, too.

Chip: You'll crank it.

Joel: Yeah. Crank it. Use whatever nudes you recommend, Chip.

Chip: Hey, we'll put a list on realdirt.com. Hydro nutrients I'm going to recommend.

Joel: It's solely off a preference. I don't claim to have a whole lot of ... I took a little bit of botany and that sort of thing. I quickly found out that in terms of growing cannabis at a young age, that was my attempt. I dropped out of school, came into this cannabis culture. Started growing a bunch of weed.

Chip: Dropped out of school, started growing weed.

Joel: Yeah, in my early attempts I wanted to try to be really legitimate about it and go back to school. So I put myself back to school and tried to take some botany and science stuff and have some way to back some of it. I quickly found out that none of that really made any difference. It's all experience with just growing the actual plant.

Chip: Wow, man.

Joel: Yeah, I'm just rambling.

Chip: That taste great dude. That does it. If you had a pain point or challenge along the way or something that's been the most difficult thing to deal with or overcome in this new legal industry for cannabis grower like yourself.

Joel: I think it's employees. Finding people, staff, people that can put everything into it, because we're so small. We have four employees at a store. We have three trimmers, we have one grower, I have a partner. We do everything involved, which is so expansive in the industry. It's time consuming and all that, whatever.

Chip: It's hard to expand.

Joel: Yeah, it's hard to find ... It gets better all the time, because of people at this point. So many years later are really good. They're really good. They crank it out. They can really get shit done and that's why we can just keep up, we don't wholesale in, we don't wholesale out. We do it all just for that one store. The whole idea is just to promote Leadville. That's the biggest challenge is to keep up with all of that and try to find the right people that are going to help sustain that. Because it's just one thing. It's like a food to table sort of a thing. That's the challenge. Everyone else is something else. Everyone else is what we've talked about doing it all these other ways that we've talked

about. They're cranking out schedules. They're trying to perform these numbers.

Chip: That's a factory.

Joel: Yeah. I've been attempting. I don't think it's-

Chip: You're growing weed.

Joel: I don't know how successful it's been, but the attempt is to grow the same ... I don't have a personal garden anymore. I pull out of the jars. I buy weed at the store too. For real cheap.

Chip: I'm my own best customer.

Joel: Those are my gardens. I'm trying to just do that basement ... Not basement, but greenhouse basement vibe to ... We get the same quality, being greenhouse up there with supplemental light. When it's full sun for six months out of the year, we can just turn the lights out, because we don't need that shit. The rest of the year we just throw them on. Any time that this clouds kick in or there's storms and stuff. We don't even open up. They're covered just like an indoor room.

Chip: What's the best month of the year for harvest?

Joel: October, November. September through November we get the same performance up there.

Chip: Same quality. That's when the highest quality is.

Joel: Yeah, for the most part. Everything performs to its full.

Chip: The max.

Joel: Yeah. That's what I love about the sun. In my experience, it makes the plants perform.

Chip: And the natural beauty of the plant too. There's just evolution that the plant knows about the moon and the sun and the change in the Earth. Even indoors often the best crops are still that same time, September to October, November. The plant feels it. It feels the tug of the moon.

Joel: Yeah, we've talked about that before. That's the main challenge, besides finding good help to expand that idea. To try to expand it in a way that it's still the same thing. If we were to put a store in another location that is more heavily populated, can we keep up with that same personal touch? It's hard to maintain that whole idea.

Chip: Time and place, man. [crosstalk 01:10:15].

Joel: That's the whole thing, because that's the whole intent and we're trying to make money as a business and whatever.

Chip: Yeah, it's business. You got to.

Joel: I'm trying to make it with feeling really solid about it. Doing it in a way where I'm like well, I don't know if this way's better than anywhere else, but I feel the best. I'm a consumer. I've been smoking weed for my whole life, since I was a pre-teen. I loved weed every day. I love my weed. There's not that many days in my life I haven't consumed cannabis. To be able to provide someone with the same quality that I would ... The best quality that I could possibly give to somebody.

Chip: Speaking about giving somebody, pass that good joint over here.

Joel: Partnerships are good, too, always. The thing that I have with the guys that I'm partners with, is that they're real hand shake kind of dudes. They know that I'm the cannabis dude. I'm the dude guy that's loved cannabis forever. I've always had a passion for just cannabis. I haven't been out and about trying to be involved with the cannabis world so much. Just in my own travels and my own adult life, I've always been chasing cannabis things and keeping up with the cannabis world, in terms of the genetics and the companies and the people doing things. At least in the public eye. A little bit. It all works pretty well. They have a lot of the qualities that they possess, it enabled us to expand and keep things maintained and help in a lot of ways that aren't gardening. I'm able to just have full control over how it gets gardened. It works great. The way it gets sold at the store, everything. It all is the way that we feel, as an entity, as I feel it should be.

Chip: Yeah, you're the driving force.

Joel: We don't break packages. We don't put any gas on and seal it up or air.

Chip: Pull the nugget out and put it in a sack.

Joel: We just put it in a jar. We just try to take the heaviest, chunkiest nuggets that we can from whatever crop we get. Which varies a little bit seasonally, strain wise. It all jumps around. The intent is so always try to keep nice chunky buds in the jars. You can open it up and you can look at it and you can smell it a little bit. Then, you can even pick buds or whatever. If you want to cherry pick, we'll get you some stuff. Just try to give people the best option of what we have. It just gets better and better obviously.

Chip: Yeah, that's great, man. You're going to have people from all over the world come to you after this episode.

Joel: Yeah, talked away in the tiny little town in the middle of Colorado, at the highest town. It's tight up there.

Chip: Tourism is for real. [inaudible 01:13:32] tourism is real though. You were talking about it. Me and you have been involved in searching weed all over the world before that was even thought about as something you can do. Now you can do it in the US and we were going to Europe, the Americas and other places.

Joel: Yeah. Europe was always disappointing in a sense. The cannabis flowers that I got. Although sometimes exotic strains. Sometimes pretty nice flowers. Overall, it was better at home. It was probably the same for you, right? Coming from Hambone, you're like our shit's better than your shit. Right?

Chip: Yeah. I get it, dude. Somehow we would always end up smoking weed from California, when we were in Europe. What about now, man? What's going on now? Is it just a job?

Joel: Yeah. What is it, Chip.

Chip: You make it sound so ... This joint's great. This is great joint.

Joel: Goes on and on.

Chip: The joint goes on and on. You make it sound so simple, but it's not. You're very zen like about it.

Joel: I don't know about that. I spend so much time doing it. I spend so many years travelling half the year and then come work and just make money and binge and purge, in terms of lifestyle. I'm stuck now. I'm just stuck in this idea, which I'm not claiming that I've accomplished shit. Our flowers now, Chip, are as good as flowers I've ever grown on a really consistent basis on a big enough scale to have 25 jars on the shelf most ... 20-25 jars of full term, 100+ days sativas and whatever. We let it finish, whenever it finishes. Because we can. Because we don't wholesale in, we don't wholesale out. We don't have any desire to do it.

Anything we have that isn't cherry picked, we just send off to someone else to do something with. Make deals and sell it and then feel better about it, because we know we didn't spray a fucking thing on that. No matter however it fucking came out testing, we never sprayed a fucking thing, because you come to our grows for a lot of years and they don't have any of those products, we don't use. We don't sneak them in. We all live there too, in the farm. Can't really sneak them in. [inaudible 01:16:17]. You'd be stupid to do it. I don't know why you do it. You don't have to. We've had problems, we throw shit away. That's the problem with the old days, in the beginning of this industry is everybody wanted these numbers and shit. Anything in the beginning-

Chip: Varieties? Numbers?

Joel: Numbers in terms of what you're going to yearly be able to produce for them.

Chip: Oh, projections.

Joel: Projections. So unrealistic and you'd have to argue with these people about how realistic it is. Yeah, I don't want anything to do with any of that shit.

Chip: Speaking about fantasy, what's the future hold? Look into this crystal ball of yours. Life, Chip. I don't fucking know.

Joel: We're at a point now with the team that's working together to make Earl's function that maintains itself. If we could expand that a little bit and put another store in a more populated area. I grew up down the front range, so I'd love to have a store that was down here that I could just ...

Chip: Yeah, me too man.

Joel: I don't know if I could keep up with it, because the numbers we do at the store up there, in terms of people coming around and how much we have. Which isn't a lot. It's not-

Chip: You could have a couple more greenhouses up there.

Joel: We are currently.

Chip: You can get some employee [inaudible 01:18:00].

Joel: We had some neighbours that were like, "We had these greenhouses down the road and [inaudible 01:18:05]. I've been driving by past them for a lot of years and then when I saw them on sale. They were selling them and we went down to talk to them, and they're like, "Oh, yeah." They hooked us up better than that. Really nothing. We're not even using them, we're just setting them up, because it's fun and we can grow veggies and stuff in there too and eat it. Fill skate broad ramps.

Chip: Oh, yes. Totally. Got to do something inside.

Joel: Gardens, we'll put in gardens too. I don't know. It'd be nice to be able to at least just have a little store. Just a tiny little store, put some flowers. I don't know any other dispensaries that grow how we grow.

Chip: No, I hear they're out there and I'm tracking them down.

Joel: Yeah. I know that there's a lot of organic people and doing this and that. I don't know. You never know. We're always growing. We get more and more business all the time. Most of it's word of mouth and a lot of people are driving up from down here to come up and get an ounce or whatever. Once they do a little while, we try to hook them up a little bit kind of thing. We don't push it really. I'm never really promoting or ... A little bit. We take some pretty pictures once in a while and do some sales. Try to stoke the locals mostly, because that's who comes around.

Chip: Totally. Awesome small town shop, that's for sure.

Joel: Well, you got the tallest peak out the window, when you're looking for buds. You can mountain Albert.

Chip: Right. That's a beautiful spot.

Joel: Yeah, it's great spot. That's why we did that. Great parking and all that. We just lucked out. The store that we took over was a tiny little spot with couple spots out front and

everyone would just leave because they had to wait for 30 minutes to get in the tiny door in the back. We're like oh man. Luckily, Phil-

Chip: You guys got a premium spot, that's for sure.

Joel: That worked out.

Chip: Some of the best weed in Colorado for sure.

Joel: Simple little build out. We didn't do a whole lot. We just took the restaurant guts from the high country café. Is that right? The high country.

Chip: The high country.

Joel: THC.

Chip: Awesome.

Joel: My partners were like, "We should just keep the name." THC. I was like, "That's not the worst idea ever."

Chip: No doubt. It's great. Man, the hearts really come into this man. The weed we got here is awesome weed and I know it's indicative of the weed you got in your shop. This is hand grown, old school weed people would call it. This is what you would buy from a guy who grew four, five lights in his backroom and sold it to you in his living room.

Joel: Yeah, that came from a shelf. That came from the same jars. That's the attempt-

Chip: You keep the spirit alive, that's for sure.

Joel: It's taking a few years to get it to the point where I actually ... I wouldn't even promote it all for the first couple of years. I've only been pushing Earl's as a business really for the last year, because for the last year-

Chip: I like how humble you are.

Joel: Kind of, because it wasn't so good. When we run short because we started small and built up, and we did it slowly with our own six hands or whatever.

Chip: Six hands and three hearts.

Joel: Yeah. Filled with [inaudible 01:21:42].

Chip: That's the greatest thing ever man. Well, man, it's been awesome having you on. Joel, this is great. I know we've been trying to work it out for a while. Thanks for driving down to this lake springs snowstorm.

Joel: Yeah, I did. I beat it down, so I'm just going to drive back through it going up. It's cool. I

appreciate you having me down man.

Chip: It's good time. We'll roll one more up before you leave for the day. Hey, this has been another great Real Dirt with Chip Baker and Joel Pain. Thanks, bud.

Joel: Yeah, man.

How did we do?



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