



НЕУЖЕЛИ ДУХ СВОБОДЫ ДОБЬЕТСЯ
И СЮДА ???

BOOM!

USA

СЕМЕНА

EUROPE

INDIAN NEWS

TIMES of INDIA

SR

Herald

Hemp-magic wear

А КТО БУДЕТ РАБОТАТЬ, ЕСЛИ ВСЕ БУДУТ КУРИТЬ?

Chapter 2. Part One. Inside.

Sometime in the morning I manage to fall asleep for about an hour. As they keep the lights in the cell on all night, thousands of mosquitoes gather together from all over the place to taste my blood. Every inch of my skin not covered by clothes is bitten many times. The long-awaited coolness of the morning lasts only half an hour. No sooner has the Sun appeared above the trees than the bloodsuckers that had been terrorizing me all night are gone. All living beings outside the window must be searching for shade now. Having slipped off into a sweet morning slumber for a few minutes, I am roughly awakened up by the clang of the opening iron bars. A sleepy guard points at the door without saying a word. “Vovan must have done something!” I think with joy as I head towards the exit, picking off pieces of newspapers that have stuck to me during the night on the way. While I put on my sandals I notice two armed guards standing behind the bars, which doesn’t seem promising at all. Squinting my eyes, I enter a short corridor leading to the street. After the gloom of the cell, I have to cover my eyes with my hands for a moment, to give them a chance to adapt to the bright sunlight. The first thing I am able to see clearly are camera lenses aimed at me. Journalists and cameramen with three TV company logos on their cameras eagerly record every step I take. Damn!!! I guess it is unlikely that things will get sorted out quietly. I guess Vovan couldn’t help me, it’s too late.

After that, everything is a blur. In a state of complete frustration, I only vaguely understand what is happening. Silent, pretending not to understand their questions, and for some reason covering my face from the cameras. Then the TV crews are gone and the chief of the drugs police, Pashish, begins to interrogate me.

“So you wanted to fool us? You thought that if you changed your bike, clothes and cell phone, you would become a different person? Did you want to screw with us? Well, you’ve screwed yourself! You’re looking at a minimum of ten years, man. Why are you silent? You’ve got nothing to say, Russian? If you want to keep silent, that’s okay – I’ll do the talking. First off, thanks a lot for the money. It is good you didn’t have time to spend it; look, my boys are happy,” Pashish says, pointing at the corner of the room where four Neanderthals in police uniform are playing cards.

“Thanks for the money,” one of them says, turning to me as he takes his winnings and puts them into his pocket.

“Don’t put that money away, bid another five hundred,” says another thug in a uniform with a scar on his face, jerking him by the sleeve.

“Don’t spend it all in one day, you lot, bidding five hundreds,” their boss shouts and turns to me.

“So, Vasily, are you going to tell me the story or are you going to carry on with your ‘not understand’ bullshit? Should I treat you to a line of cocaine? My boys have some really good stuff. Last week we snatched it from a nigger; you’ve never had it this pure.”

“No, thanks, I don’t do drugs, but I wouldn’t mind a cigarette,” I say, looking at a pack of Marlboro sitting on the table.

“As a matter of fact, smoking in here is prohibited, but you may smoke. Have a smoke and go back to your cell. Everything we could take from you, we’ve taken, so you’re of no interest to us. Bear with our conditions for a while, in a few days you’ll be transferred to a different jail. I will go ahead and

finish typing your charge sheet and we'll see each other in court in a year or so. That's all, my job is done. Take him back to his cell," Pashish says with content, stretching in his armchair.

Left alone in my cell, I smoke the last half-cigarette in three puffs. It seems like I am in trouble, serious trouble. It doesn't get more serious than this.

Chapter 2. Part Two. Outside.

The grand opening of Hemp is mind-blowing. The city is flooded with banners advertising our hemp clothes. 'Hemp: and no addiction...', our slogan declares boldly in capital letters on all of the main intersections of the city. The phrase 'Magic wear from hemp' is to be found everywhere. All of the TV channels and radio stations tell the population that hemp is not only a drug, but also high quality, fashionable clothes. 'Hemp - magic wear' shines in big neon letters every evening on the facade of a new business center. The best creative designers worked on the image and interior of our unusual store. Inside tall glass cases, large pictures of cannabis flowers are displayed. The huge buds covered with white and golden crystals of tetrahydrocannabinol¹ make the eyes of youngsters passing by glisten merrily. I see those eyes. For many people hemp wear is associated not only with the light drug that all of the 'advanced' world is having a good time with, but also with the spirit of freedom that our country lacks. For many years our society dictated to us a slave philosophy, suppressing our individual identity for the good of the system. Whole generations of Soviet citizens spent their lives doing monotonous jobs, which were often unnecessary. Those privileged enough to go abroad would occasionally meet 'abnormal' people there. Having reached certain minimal goals in life, those 'abnormal' characters stopped and refused to keep running along with the others, after the Golden Fleece. To the 'ordinary' people's mind, those 'weirdos' were spending their time in a very questionable way. They traveled, they were creative, they tried to develop themselves spiritually.

After the USSR collapsed, our country was finally, legally invaded by the seeds of alternative information. All of my friends and acquaintances who stopped devoting their life to making more money, got infected by the virus of 'freedom'. Most of my friends primarily associated 'the spirit of freedom' with cannabis, or the beautiful Latin American word 'marijuana'. Looking at the glittering eyes of the alterative thinkers hanging out in my store, I become increasingly convinced that marijuana smokers and the non-smokers who are lenient towards this drug are by no means some sort of marginal people. They look nothing like the 'fallen' junkies that we were used to watching in the criminal chronicles of the Russian mass media. In spite of the high price of hemp clothes, one piece costing about \$100, they sell fast. I see people of different ages look at our huge pictures of the banned seven-leaf plant and enter the store with glowing faces. It makes no difference to them what to buy: they would buy anything. People touch the clothes thinking that their eyes are deceiving them. 'Can the spirit of freedom have made it here?' the expression on their faces says. But, unfortunately, delegates from the 'opposite camp' visit us as well. Sometimes drunk cops appear in the store and, unable to find anything illegal, verbally abuse the salesmen. "Got yourself some freedom over here, have you? Watch us come and get you. This is not Europe. We'll find a way to shut you all down, anyway," the cops say with an evil sneer. One can understand them. Raised in a totalitarian state, they can't see their role in a society where individuality and creativity do not have to be suppressed. Their main argument is the standard: "Who is going to work, if everybody smokes?" Watching the customers I realize that the majority of the people who are lenient towards marijuana are not 'asocial personalities', despite the stereotype. They are just different. Within the first three months

1 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) - the active chemical in cannabis and one of the oldest hallucinogenic drugs known.

of opening we sell almost all of the merchandize. Our net profit is much higher than we planned and totals ten grand. Dymkov stops being nervous and reminding me that we have to return seventy-five thousand dollars in three years. Our store becomes the entire city's pride and joy. In the nightclub run by Dymkov, regular promotional parties take place. Every day local newspapers and journals publish interviews with me, in which I explain that magic hemp can be not just a drug, but also clothes. And every night, before falling asleep, I realize that I am making history, changing the mindset of a million people.