

Thinking Outside the Bud

Episode 379 - Kimberly Hooks

<https://www.thinkingoutsidethebud.com/podcast/379-kimberly-hooks>

Kimberly Hooks, CEO , Frenchy Cannoli Brand Aroma / Flavor Expert, Educator

Kimberly Hooks is the life companion of Frenchy Cannoli whom she met 40+ years ago while traveling in Nepal & India. As a lifelong connoisseur & aficionado of finely crafted chocolate, Kimberly has embraced the science behind developing an expert palate. She worked professionally for 30+ years in the transportation logistics industry focused on organizational development, process analysis, & training design. Currently, Kimberly is the CEO of Frenchy Cannoli Brand.

<https://www.frenchydreamsofhashish.com/>

<https://frenchycannoli.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/frenchycannoli/?hl=en>

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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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[0:01]

You're listening to thinking outside the bud where we speak with entrepreneurs, investors, thought leaders, researchers, advocates and policymakers who are finding new and exciting ways for cannabis to positively impact business, society and culture. And now, here's your host, business coach, Bruce Eckfeldt.

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[1:06]

Welcome everyone. This is thinking outside the bud. I'm Bruce Eckfeldt. I'm your host, we have a very special guest today. Madam Cannoli, Kimberly hooks are going to talk to her about the work that she has been doing with Frederick nulegacy Over the last couple of years, and specifically documentary film that's coming out. In April, we're gonna talk about that we're going to talk about the work that Kimberly has done the last couple years, we're gonna talk about Prince, his legacy and all the people that worked with him, and all the great work he did, and really the significant contributions that he's made to the cannabis industry and, and to the world of hashey. So we're gonna talk about all of that we're going to hear what the documentary is about what is covered, and some of the interesting people that are in it, and stories that are being told. So I'm excited to have this conversation. We had Frenchy on the program that it was January of 2021. And it was episode 215. And I'll put a link in the show notes. People can do that. So we can, so you can listen to Frenchy then the a wonderful interview we had done. But with all that, Kimberly, welcome to the program.

[2:05]

Thank you so much for having me.

[2:06]

Yeah, it's wonderful to have you on. So before we dive into the work that you've been doing since friendship pass away, let's get a little bit of background learn about you. How did you get into cannabis? How did you meet Frenchy give us the backstory?

[2:18]

Well, you know, we were the children of the hippie generation, the end of the hippie generation. And we met at a full moon party and Pokhara in a pile in June of 1980. And he was traveling with some friends and I was on my own and attended this wonderful Full Moon Party that they had. And then we randomly kept bumping into each other in India of all places that was like bumping into somebody in California and then seeing them in Texas and then seeing them in New York. And at some point, I think after the fourth or fifth time that I randomly ran into them. They were like you need to just start traveling with us. We're gonna have a birthday for Frenchie in the south of India. We were in the north at that time. Why don't you meet up with us there in a few weeks. And you know, this was pre cellphone days, didn't have a map or anything but just on, you know, kind of the blind confidence of youth took a train to that place arrived in the evening, without really a clear destination of where they were be and started walking through this grove of bananas and ran into Frenchie who had arrived a day early to prepare for his birthday. And ended up traveling with him and a group of Frenchmen all over India for about nine months.

[3:39]

Yeah, wow. Yeah, I've been to poker, it's fun to actually know that the it's a fairly big city, but it's not a major city in in Nepal. How, why was this part of your general travels? Was this related to cannabis at that point, like give you a little context from from what you ended up doing in the cannabis world.

[3:56]

Now, it really was related to travel, I was very, I always wanted to travel when I was younger. Before Asia, I went to Latin America, I was very interested in ancient spirituality and Buddhism and some of the meditation practices that were being done by various teachers there. And cannabis was kind of, you know, part of the charm of visiting these countries, it was part of the community culture of other travelers, because this was a time when a lot of people took a gap year or years as it ended up being in my case. And, you know, that was

just something that that was was part of the culture part of the full moon party culture that then extended you know, as people returned home overland bringing back, you know, this magical product that they had discovered on their travels to Europe or or the US

[4:53]

Yeah, so help us understand the relationship. So, in terms of your relationship with cannabis, you you were working with Ken have us or what was your relationship to cannabis, sort of pre Frenchie post Frenchy give me a little sense of how you and cannabis and Frenchie kind of developed over time.

[5:09]

So pre Frenchie, I was just a casual user. Friend, she was very much interested in always smoking the highest quality product. And he quickly realized that in order to do that you had to make your own. So wherever he traveled, he sought out farmers and producers and convinced them to let him work alongside them. And so he spent eight seasons up north in the mountains. I was there one year, but that kind of very rugged mountain life without you know sourced of water and kind of formal places to stay living in lane twos and caves was not quite my thing. So I let Frenchy do that on his own. Yeah. So it was largely for me, it was really part of the you know, kind of winter vacation go a lifestyle of the parties and just the cannabis culture with the Shilo homes. And that was very much integral to the life that we had at that time. Yeah, and Frenchies, then focus later when he came to California on making hashish here and teaching others to do it as well. Yeah,

[6:18]

no, you know, we had we had Frenchie on and he kind of gave us a lot of his story, I would be curious to kind of get your perspective on, where like, what was really Frenchy is, you know, passion and contribution. And what did he want to really do for the world of cannabis? I'm curious to kind of get your take having, you know, it's really known him for so long, like, how do you summarize it for people

[6:39]

still, I would say normalization of cannabis consumers. So for those of us who smoked during that time, period, you know, this was the full on war on drugs, period, and anybody who smoked was deemed, you know, almost a menace to society. And from the perspective of your parents, you know, it was really shameful if you were doing this. And it was especially heavy in France. So for Frenchy, it's always been not only this dedication to, you know, helping people create the best quality. Cannabis concentrates in the form of traditional hashish, but also to normalize that you can just be somebody who functions at a very high level and also be a cannabis consumer, and that this shouldn't be looked down upon you shouldn't be perceived as somehow less than others in society, especially in a society where alcohol consumption is yeah, you know, deemed so normal and even in social settings encouraged isn't, you know, from our perspective, cannabis should be perceived in the same way, or at least not stigmatized to the degree that still exist. Yeah,

[7:56]

I mean, I would even argue, probably much, much less issues, social health issues relative to alcohol, you know, that you look at the data and then kind of public health statistics. Clearly, you know,

[8:07]

absolutely, I mean, you know, I think for me, yeah, I like to point out, in some cases that, you know, you can die from overconsumption of alcohol and overconsumption of cannabis will just put you to sleep for a few hours.

But I don't want to, you know, get into any kind of conflict with that industry. I just love people, you know, for Frenchy, he was really adamant that consuming cannabis and he consumed really all day long. It was very, it contributed to what he called an overall sense of well being this, and I know, this is not a one size fits all, and it's not for everybody that, you know, level of consumption that that he had, but for people whose biology, the plant is, you know, that kind of fit, I want them to be able to have access to that I want them to have that psychological comfort that it brings, or also, in some cases, that physical comfort Frenchy had kind of full body arthritis. So he had a little bit of pain continually. He's to eat small balls of hashish in the morning with his coffee so that it would be metabolized by his liver and give him that overall, it's not really pain relief. It's a lack of acknowledgement of pain. Yeah. When you consume it that way, and I wish that that kind of opportunity was available to somewhere many people, I think if it was we wouldn't have some of the issues we have with people getting addicted to some of these stronger painkillers. I think it would be a great thing for a lot of people as they're aging, because your bones just ache when you're older. Yeah, so that's part of the continued Frenchie legacy is for me to continue to pull out his education and just the all of the free content that we have to support that.

[9:57]

Yeah. I'm curious. Just you know, give people a sense You know, the couple of years before Frenchy passed away, what was my impression his focus was really on education and really kind of teaching and helping, you know, not just normalized generally, but really pass on, you know, some of the more kind of technical and you know, process things around how to make a particularly how see you didn't really understand the plant at a more intimate level. Give us your take on really what was he focused on for the for the couple of years before he passed away?

[10:26]

Absolutely. So you know, we had been involved in the industry here for some years, then, with the commercialization of adult use cannabis in California, the situation just got to the point where in at the end of 2018, beginning of 2019, he decided he didn't want to participate in the commercial environment anymore, that he wanted to just focus the rest of his time on teaching young people the basics of how to make really good quality hashish and that he wanted to leave a legacy both and do it yourself videos that the filmmaker who did the documentary with us, he also did a four part series on how to make hashish. And after prints passing. There's a group in Brazil that reached out to me that are involved in the movie industry there that told me they can do subtitles in Portuguese for the do it yourself home videos. And they wanted to do this for free just as a to honor Frenchie. And so we did that. And we made those available online. And when I made these available online, people from other countries came to me and said, Well, if you have them in Portuguese, we'd like to donate our time to do some French, and Spanish. And we now have it in German and Italian. So we currently have the do it yourself videos that were very generously done by people in the community, kind of paying it forward, if you will of from French, he's teaching in six languages.

[11:52]

That's amazing. And, and, you know, certainly, you know, my perception from the industry is, you know, his his passing was a little bit of a surprise. And, you know, I know that there was I'm sure for you, there was a lot of figuring out okay, what what do I do next, you know, not only personally but really from, you know, the the pieces he left or the work that he was doing? I'd be curious to tell him Tell me a little bit about how you kind of figured out what you wanted to do you know, he there's a lot of content, a lot of knowledge, a lot of legacy, how

did you sort of start to figure out how you were going to work with the materials work with his legacy and continue things What was your kind of motivation and thinking around this.

[12:30]

So we already had some major projects that we had been working on throughout the pandemic. Wrapping up the film was one of them. That was one of the easiest things to complete because the filmmaker during the pandemic hunkered down and really ironed out the final details. So the first thing I did was work with that same team, the overgrow shop in Brazil, to help create the professional subtitles for the film. So the film will have subtitles in five languages. And then also during the pandemic Frenchy had been working on three books, one on the history of cannabis concentrates. One a very detailed, do it yourself hash making manual and one on edibles. And so now that I've almost finished with the film, I'm starting to focus on finishing the editing of these books. So that will be the next thing that I release, and get out to the public. Additionally, Frenchy had started doing something during the pandemic because he was really missing all of the conferences that he normally attended and getting together with the cannabis community. So he created something called the hash porn beauty contest. He wanted to really amplify the work of other young hash makers so that they could get exposure and so that people could celebrate the visual beauty of hashish both in the traditional hashish form and also in the rosin form. So, the week before 420, we invite people to post their best photo of their current work. And for the ones that Frenchie deemed appropriate to his kind of understanding of quality. We repost those to our accounts so that other people become aware of these young hash makers. So I have continued to do his hash porn contest, and I'll be doing the sixth iteration poor poor 20 this year. That's amazing.

[14:26]

So let's talk about the film give us a little background on how the idea of the film started. It's kind of there's always a story about how it gets produced. Give us a little details on the history of things.

[14:36]

So we had been working with our filmmaker Jake Remington of the collabo NYC is the name of his company on doing the do it yourself hash videos. And as they were doing those, do it yourself hash videos. So I was looking at them and I said, you know, this reminds me so much of Jiro Dreams of Sushi because in this film, Jiro Dreams of Sushi They chronicle kind of the day in the life of this 80 year old Michelin star sushi maker in Tokyo. And that's pretty much what we were doing. Jake was filming Frenchy as he was working and, and filming, basically the totality of his workshop so that people would have all these details to work with. So we decided Jake should join us in Barcelona for Spannabis, the one year to kick off him kind of following Frenchie around the globe, as spreadsheet visited farmers, and basically did his day to day life. And this coincided without a lot of planning on our part to be the last year of medical use in California, and then into the first year of adult use. And so it suddenly morphed into this situation where we were recording one set of condition with the farmers that Frenchy works up with Up North during the medical youth and that a whole different set that emerged as things transitioned into adult use, and the opening of the market earlier than had been initially planned. And just all of the challenges that occurred afterwards.

[16:12]

Yeah. What were the cast of characters give us a sense of of who was involved in this and what their roles were.

[16:18]

Frenchy works with a variety worked with a variety of farmers up north, but some of his favorite farmers are located in an area of Humboldt called the Lost Coast. So a few few of the farms there are profiled also Frenchies apprentice Laura Bell, who goes by the moniker cherry blossom bell on Instagram, and who's now director of operations for heritage. Mendocino man running a huge hash making facility there is also featured quite a bit. Her brother, who's the master Brito Leo stone is also featured. And then just other people who were working in the various farms. And yeah, a host of other farmers that Frenchy visited and worked with over the years.

[17:02]

Yeah, what was the most challenging part do you feel of of getting this? You know, getting the film produced getting in shot and produced?

[17:09]

I think Jake told me that he had over 80 hours of material Oh, she's and all of it was fantastic, because he's just an amazing filmmaker. And of course, filming the macro photos at the chai comps and the beautiful fields of cannabis. They had a drone so they were doing the aerial photos, Frenchies that passionate and compelling speaker and always has amazing sound bites. So it I think it was such artistry to be able to watch those 80 hours and find snippets of dialogue among all these people that create a kindness seamless conversation between them for an hour and a house. Yeah, man, I'm so proud of the work that he did. And also just how it portrays the current situation in California for the small farmers.

[17:59]

Yeah, yeah, give us so without being too much of a spoiler. Give us a sense of really, what does the film cover? What is the message like what what are what are you trying to sort of put out into the world by producing this?

[18:12]

So Frenchie youth is noted for saying that the way we treat the planet, the way that we work with it will define the future. And so he really wanted the film to focus on three things, wanted to tell a little bit of his life story, how he got involved with hash making, wanted to really illustrate some of that hash making. So some of the scenes are at some of the workshops that he did. And he also wanted people to understand that the quality that he worked with is given to him by the farmers that he works with that that quality is not something that he makes. It's something that is grown by those people with dedication and love. And it's also a part of the terroir of the local growing conditions that those people are nurturing on their regenerative farms. So Frenchy really wanted people to understand that, you know, for him, the best cannabis was always going to be sun grown in the outdoors, and was going to be in some very special growing condition, whether that be at you know, 6000 feet in the Himalayas, hand Rubby charts in wild fields, or in northern Humboldt, in this last Coast area with a very special microclimate working with these multi generational farmers.

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Any highlights that you can kind of tease us on in terms of, you know, what people will see in the film,

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they'll see a lot of hash, there'll be a lot of hash bars, some amazing macros, beautiful cannabis farms. Yeah, just wonderful, authentic people. And also part of this also was born from this idea when you look at cannabis

content on most mainstream, you know, kind of platforms like your Netflix or discovery or HBO or whatever. For us. There's kind of two categories. They're stoner stupid, and they're stoner murderous. And most, if not all of the people that I know within the industry fit into neither one of those categories. They're normal people who happen to be making a living with this plant that they have a lot of passion and dedication to. So you know, that's really also very strongly illustrated in the film, because as I mentioned before, Frenchy felt very strongly about breaking the stigma and pointed out to people that you could be a highly functioning human being a very creative, imaginative human being, and a cannabis smoker.

[20:39]

Yeah. So let's talk a little bit about sort of the distribution showing like, what how do we get this out there. I mean, I know the world is full of all sorts of kind of platforms and things these days for distribution, but what what has been your decisions around how you want to distribute show, get this, get this film out into the world.

[20:58]

So initially, I did some screening, I rented out some cinemas in a variety of cities and did some some screenings in person to be with the community and do Q and A's after the film. We also submitted that film to a couple of film festivals, which we did not get chosen. And I'd still a little young, in my background, I'm still feeling a little bit the cannabis stigma may play a part in that, I'm sure. And so we've decided to release it ourselves and other online streaming platform on April 29, I'm going to do a series of kind of Premiere parties, virtual premiere parties, and invite people worldwide to hold in home hosting events where they purchase one ticket to watch it with their friends. And then I'm going to do a q&a after using our YouTube Instagram and Facebook Live Stream means to connect with everybody answer their questions and hear their comments on the film. So I'm really looking forward to over the course of April 29, spend some time initially with people in Europe and then jump to the east coast of the US and then the West Coast of the US to participate in these virtual streaming parties. I'm going to be doing a raffle I should mention that proceeds from the film The ticket sales, a percentage of the ticket sales are going to the origins Council. This is a nonprofit that works with over 900 legacy cannabis, farmers and businesses in California. They are doing a study on cannabis terroir, with the loss Coast farmers guild, which is some of the farmers featured in the film. Frenchy was very passionate about helping the farmers get kind of named recognition. And this type of study is the first step towards that to protecting their heritage. So I'm thrilled to be able to use proceeds from the ticket sales to support this. And then we're also going to be doing some raffle and auctions on the day to further generate some money to support the studies that they're going to be doing.

[23:08]

Yeah. And where does the film go from there of YouTube? So April 29 series,

[23:13]

anybody can purchase the streaming whatever they'd like. I mean, I'm hoping that we generated enough buzz on the 29th, that that will draw attention to some of the larger streaming platforms and that maybe one of them will pick it up. And that will make it available to people outside the industry that are cannabis curious, because I think this is a great way to learn about the plant, learn about the community, learn about the farmers and experience it from our perspective.

[23:44]

Yeah. So So you mentioned that you've got a couple of other projects, then I guess, when do you feel like you're kind of the work on the film ramps down and you can wrap up some of these other ones? What does that timeframe look like for you?

[23:55]

I think that's maybe you know, after April 29, I'll see how you know what happens, you know, based on the buzz that we create, but to a degree once I've released it to the internet, you know, then it'll take on a life of its own, and I'll start to focus the majority of my my time on getting the books finished, because especially the do it yourself book, you know, I think that'll be so lovely for people to have that type of reference. I've actually Frenchy has had numerous occasion where people from producing countries have contacted him to get some fine tuning guidance on how shoemaking so this is such a lovely thing where maybe the tradition skipped a generation and some of the knowledge was lost to be able to give back interesting and to just be able to set out the basics for anybody to use. Frenchy was really clear that you know, we didn't have a lot of access to the science of the plant when we were young because you know, you didn't have the internet and it wasn't going to be an easy thing to go to a library and say Hey, can I can you give me all your books on cannabis? So this is our way of making this available all over the world. And again, with the support of the translation group, I really hope to have this translated into some of the main languages. So that this is knowledge that is not lost and will be built on because Frenchie was really clear. And I'm really clear that the next generation like his apprentice are going to be doing things in a way using tools that are better, and just continuing to improve the process and make this standard this high quality, the standard of product the norm and not the exception for what cannabis consumers should expect. Yeah.

[25:43]

Do you hope that people that watch the film that get curious and you know, want to know more than pick up the book and actually start working with the plot themselves? Oh, absolutely.

[25:52]

And Bella and I are continuing to do the workshops, and Frenchy also had a group on Facebook called the lost art of the Hashi Shin group where I continue to answer his questions. I organized all of Frenchies workshops. I counted the other day, I think we did over the course of about five years 120 workshops. So I've seen Frenchy do the workshop I participated in, I think every workshop except maybe two or three times where bell went with Frenchie somewhere. So I am I call myself the little Frenchie, parrot, and librarian, I can answer the basic questions and what I can't answer, I can get belt to give me the details. Yeah. So we continue to support Do It Yourself hash making. And I really think for a lot of people who are already growing their own plant. This is the next step and kind of controlling your destiny in terms of having access to quality product at a reasonable price.

[26:50]

Yeah. So if, if someone gave you a million dollars to fund, you know, all the work and continue this legacy, like what would you really focus on? How do you what would you accelerate? What would you do next? I mean, where do you really go with all this?

[27:03]

So there was another project that Frenchy was very passionate about and very interested in and that is aging hasheesh. And we started how she aging study with a lab in Canada called Hi north, we were only able to do

one iteration. And that's another area where ultimately I'm looking to do fundraising. Because there's a misconception Well, maybe not a misconception. But in North America, when people talk about how she they're often talking about a live unpressed resin that stored in the refrigerator, that's tech not technically what we would call traditional hashish traditional how she she's pressed resident product, and during that pressing your decarbing it which makes it shelf stable, meaning that you don't need to put it in the refrigerator, you can keep it in a nice proof container in a cool place like a wine cellar, an agent and because terpenes have a natural corrosive functionality, the product will mature and change over time almost like a fine wine depending on the cultivar. So Frenchie was really curious to do studies to determine at what point wouldn't it no longer be good to age. So what's like the ultimate shelf life and also to document that a lot of you know, a lot of this concern and why people are keeping it in the refrigerator is that the THC is going to convert into CBN. And this occurs in our limited studies much slower than people are anticipating. And so you know, we would just like to continue those studies and document at different temperatures, what's actually happening and get a sense of how long we can store this Frenchie once smoked in the Powell of royal Nepalese temple ball that had been aged for 12 years. Wow. So as we understand it right now, that's kind of not a limit, but an acceptable point. Yeah, so we would just really love to see some long term aging studies occur.

[29:07]

Yeah, it just, it just goes to show how little we know, you know, technically about this plant knowledge, more understanding and research that we can do to really see what it can do its benefits and how we can use it in all of its different shapes and forms. So really, it's amazing work that you're doing. I think

[29:23]

designer cannabis is really that super cool wave of the future. We need more people who as they are becoming producers really looking into the science of the cannabinoids understanding what they do both psychoactive Lee and therapeutically and then doing the same with the terpenes because when you look at traditional hashish concoctions in India or other places like Morocco, they're using other spices that have also their terpene profile to enhance what's happening with the cannabis. So for example, in the traditional bomb you You know, a lot of pepper is used because that's got the better care offering. And that acts as a natural calming agent to the THC and cannabis, which causes anxiety for some people. So I think as we move forward and we start to reach out to a wider consumer base, there are a lot of us who don't need those excessively high THC cultivars that in fact that that's not comfortable for many people. And that we would do well to look at some of the studies of what was being grown back in the 80s, when the THC percentages were so much lower. But yet, we had these products that were very rich in the terpenes coming from the Himalayas and whatnot. And just having people get more thoughtfully combined these things and design products appropriate to a variety of different emotional needs different settings, different times of days. I think this is really going to be an interesting thing as we move forward.

[31:01]

It's amazing, then really the businessman a pleasure. If people want to find out more about the work that you're doing about the film, what's the best way to get all this information?

[31:09]

So we have a website, and it's FrenchyCannoli.com and Frenchy is spelled with a Y so it's FRENCHYCANNOLI. For all of our Do It Yourself content for the podcast and Smith spreadsheets writing

Frenchie wrote extensively as well. And then there's also a dedicated website for the film and that simply Frenchy dreams of hashish.

[31:36]

Excellent. I'll make sure that the links on all those are in the show notes as well as we'll link our previous episode with Frenchie on there as well so people can listen to that. Kimberly, thank you so much for taking the time today. This has been an absolute pleasure for me as well.

[31:47]

Thank you so much for having me.

[31:50]

That's it for this episode of thinking outside the bud. Be sure to subscribe using your favorite podcast app so you don't miss our future episodes. See you next time.

[31:59]

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