

**Participatory Observation:**  
**American Hemp Market**

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Culture and Diversity in the Modern World

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**Abstract:**

The American Hemp Market is emerging and lots of companies are looking to exploit at any cost. What sounded like good ideas for tax incentives for the business, the actual implementation of these practices are not actually in place because of the lack of machinery needed for the start up of a company. Although it is shrugged off by business owner, Ross King, that it can be achieved again at a later date in possibly another state shows the amount of drive to be the pioneer to this new frontier.

**Participatory Observation:**

6 September 2019 - Left Denver at 6 am on I - 76 and made a stop at Mighty Mart 14424 US-34, Fort

Morgan, CO 80701. Arrived at Kind Roots Botanicals 380 Dexter St, Wray, CO 80758. It was a crew of a Director/Producer along with myself a Director/Producer doing a location scout in order to know what we were going to get the whole crew into as well as plan the shots for the harvest. It was planned that combines would be used to harvest the hemp. A process to obtaining an in-camera interview is to also conduct pre-camera interviews in order to help assess the situation to look for the best backdrop for the frame.

We got a run down for the layout of the facility as well as a tour of Kind Roots Botanicals by the CEO, Ross King. During the tour we were asked a lot of questions to Mr. King and learned the opportunity held in the hemp industry as it is emerging in the American market. Ross described many opportunities of tax incentive for bringing new work for American business in rural areas. These “legacy tax” breaks, as Mr. King described, only applied to start ups that are looking to bring more commerce to rural areas by bringing workers who will also bring their families which will contribute to the community. Adding new revenue into the rural market is the reason for the tax incentive for new business/industry moving into rural areas. Ross King was very excited to work towards obtaining that incentive for his business as it is a great selling point for the startup. Another great selling point to the extracted product is that the hemp never touches the ground and will utilize new technology to achieve this in order to ensure clean extraction for a purer product.

The use labor as a selling point was a great thought and was exciting to hear when conducting the pre-camera interview. The new frontier of the hemp market was sought after by Mr. King as he is moving from the real-estate

market on to the hemp market. The labor force idea was a good selling point opportunity for companies like Charlotte's Web, who are looking to invest in facilities across the eastern board of Colorado. These dreams of acquisition and mergers will make any American psycho excited due to the level of return in this emerging hemp market. There were lots of plans and mission statements that changed upon meeting up our second time.

18 October 2019 - We left Denver at 6am. The long drive requires us to take a break to stretch out our legs. Upon stopping at McDonalds located at 1203 Main St, Fort Morgan, CO 80701 the crew and I noticed the stench of Western Sugar Cooperative. It smelled like cigarettes lit with burnt hair and after drinking a coffee from there, I tasted the same smell in the water. If cancer had a flavor, that would be it. Upon arriving to Bowman Ranch for the harvest, we noticed the work force used for the harvest was a migrant workforce that was hired from "Farm Labor Force LLC"

The use of combines for harvest was not utilized because the manufacturer became overloaded with the demand for the product since the signing of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018. The lack of machinery was quite disappointing because of the months of planning shots to emulate *Hemp for Victory* (Raymond Evans, 1943). The hand harvest was sold to the crew as eco friendly and green, but upon witnessing the amount of machinery used to haul the hemp with a plastic lined trailer bed, I became numb to the disappointment. The plastic was utilized in order to prevent any contact of the product with the ground upon harvest. This idea of quality and purity was apparent when the massive plastic sheets were used to hold the warehouse of hemp. Although the priority lied with the product, there was no personal safety equipment issued to workers who all wore mismatched clothing in an un-uniformed manner. Everyone was utilizing bandanas in order to protect their lungs from the large amount of pollen that comes off of the plant.

Upon completing the participatory observation of the act of harvesting, our interview with Ross King occurred in the extraction facility. The interview was revealing as to what was needed in order to make the harvest happen without the machinery. By hiring cheap local migrant labor — though legal means — the bottom dollar became the prime focus of the the harvest because too much money was invested this year. It is understandable to see what happens when things do not come together as planned and see an adjustment to the process,

but seeing American hemp harvested by cheap Mexican migrant labor was not what was expected. Learning the level of sacrifice in order to harvest without equipment, I was able to understand the need for immediate labor as the snow had affected the crops ability to grow.

The amount of loss due to the logistical failure that happened after the machinery was not complete in time for the harvest was negated though the cheap human labor that was sought. The thought of incentives went out of the window when harvest season dictated the moves of those invested. Due to the high volume of plants that were grown specifically for extraction being affected by the snow, choices were made to abandon incentives in order for some sort of return. It is disappointing to learn the harsh realities associated with the American hemp industry as it is not as whole-heartedly American as I naively stepped into. The methods of exploitation for new frontiers still applied in emerging markets like the hemp market.