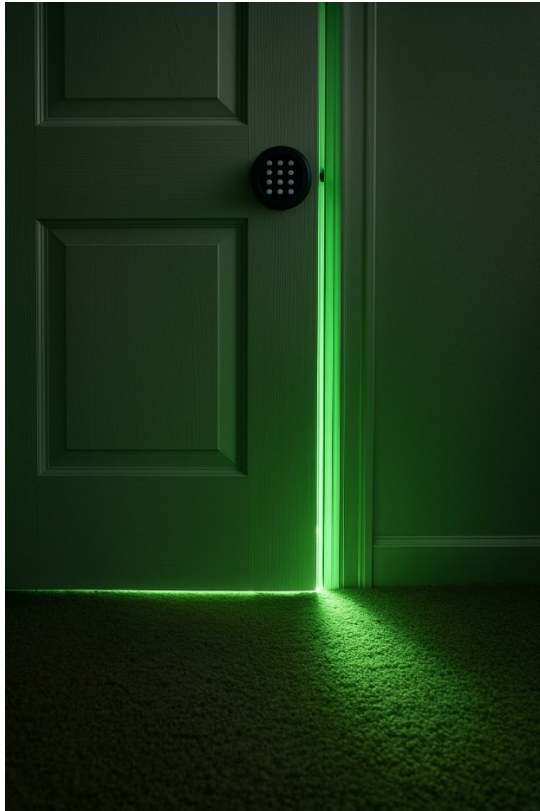


Home Grown | Rob Scott

# Home Grown



**Rob Scott**

## Forward

My name is Macallister Monahan. Call me Cal. I don't have any friends really, not anyone in this town at least. The year is 2025 and it is a strange time at hand, or a foot, you choose your cliché. Across Houston, this year alone, every single industry has downsized their workforce. It is the same with nearly every large city across America. No place is safe from re-organization and mass layoffs. Some say it is AI creating corporate efficiency and cutting deficient, marginal employees. Others advise it is the telltale sign that a recession is about to take hold of the economy.

Right now, 7.5 million Americans are unemployed, including yours truly. During the Covid disaster, only 10.8 million Americans were unemployed, the largest unemployed group ever. And the one thing that was highly correlated with unemployment was cannabis consumption. That means as unemployment went up, so did the quantity of weed sales. And ever since 2020, the price of weed has never been discounted. It is still \$80

for a quarter-ounce of it, no matter where you live or buy it.

I love weed. I love that it allows me to feel heightened sensory perception, I feel happy, my overall well-being feels euphoric. The moment I inhale it, my stress is melted away; I have heightened sensitivity to colors, sounds, touch, smell, and taste, making experiences like listening to music and eating food more enjoyable. I instantly feel creativity and weed allows me to do deep philosophical thinking. When I smoke weed, I feel it, it makes me feel energetic, fully alive and I get shit done. Some people like it for the relaxation, not me, it is Lemon Citron always for me, I thrive on it. It is a highly demanded and popular strain making it valuable and hard to find and hard to afford on a small budget.

I never set out to be a farmer. I have spent most of my life running numbers, chasing deadlines, and watching the clock like it owed me something. But the older I got, the more hollow it all felt; the kind of emptiness that no promotion or paycheck could patch over.

When I was laid off, my world slowed down, but I didn't want it to. I panicked. I kept looking for the next thing to

fix, the next task to justify myself. My idea was just to grow my own weed. But if I succeed in my connoisseur standards it could be enjoyed by everyone else too. In the end, the weed wasn't the point. It was the proof; that something could still grow from what life had just burned down.

All states in the US publish their cannabis sales where it is deemed permissible to consume it. Twenty-four states have ratified the consumption of recreational cannabis to be legal to consume within their state and those that consume recreational cannabis do so at the rate of 600,000 pounds of dried cannabis flowers or Kolas every single month. It takes 10 million plants every month to produce that amount of cannabis. That is just enough to distribute to every legal adult within those legal states two grams ( four joints ) of recreational cannabis every month.

Now, not every legal aged adult consumes a joint each and every week. But those that do, are mathematically consuming their preverbal two joints every evening. Look, all I am asking is, "what happens when all that can, do partake in a couple joints per evening?" How much

weed is that? Math geeks swear it is more weed than we can grow on American soil. In America we only have 687 million available acres in farmland and only 140 million of those acres are presently cultivated for produce and the others are for grazing acres for livestock. But here is the kicker, you can't grow recreational cannabis outside, it subjects it to pollen and that ruins the crop. So, two million acres are required to grow enough cannabis in America. And that space must be from indoors. 87 billion square feet. At a 10-ft by 10-ft spare bedroom, 100 square feet of space requires 870 million spare bedrooms. There are only 146 million housing units across the United States. Do you understand the problem? To make enough space for two million acres of space indoors, every house and every apartment combined must convert six spare bedrooms over to weed production. That is not physically possible.

In the United States, there are more renters of homes than owners occupying them. This trend is likely to continue as expense shows no signs of curbing and renters find it even harder to accumulate the savings to buy their own piece of the American Dream. Adjusted for property taxes and insurance, the rental price is 0.75% of the value of the underlying asset, monthly.

In finance class, students are taught the present value of money. Over the long term, factoring in the cost to carry a loan and paying interest, taxes and maintenance; owning versus renting is basically a wash if the person renting has the discipline to save and they stay in the asset less than ten years. A \$300,000 loan over 30 years at 8% costs \$800,000 in loan payment and \$200,000 in insurance and taxes, not including maintenance expense the resale value of said house is not actually \$1 million plus maintained items, but maybe \$700,000 if the home has been treated well and worn little. The physical home is the savings account in this case.

When you rent, you pay a market price for the rent that may or may not be based on actual economic conditions. A \$300,000 house rents for \$2,400 per month, no taxes, no insurance, no repairs, no improvements, just rent. If you need to move, no problem. You don't need to negotiate a sale, just finish the lease and move.

Deposit on a home rental is one month's rent, \$2,400, if the home is trashed, the owner gets to keep the deposit. Renting out a home is very risky given the ease at which

growing weed at home has become. Anybody can secure the equipment; it is cheap and available everywhere. Absolutely anyone can make a mistake in the room preparation and accidentally destroy it with black mold, water and chemical damage.

Most people spend what they make. Americans place a high value upon entertainment and vices with a budget of about 15% of their weekly allotment of income. The average Joe American makes \$63,960 and his take home pay is \$1,000 every week. A couple of beers in the evening and a couple joints at night cost \$650 per month. \$8,000 per year for twenty-six ounces of weed at \$80 per quarter-ounce bag. When you are divorced, unemployed and trying to live off \$485 per week, life is sobering. My rent costs \$1,500 a month, while food and utilities take the rest. No more weed and beer funding exists for me. But hard times foster innovation and make stronger, smarter men.

As recreational cannabis became legal to consume, states only permitted the indoor growing of weed so that it was not visible to others outside of the residence. Indoor grow operations are best for feminized plants anyways so

that pollen is not introduced to them. Pollinated cannabis plants spend the entirety of their energy making both male and female seeds in large quantities and not in producing THC. Indoor grow operations are the best kind for ensuring feminized plants remain feminine and concentrate on making the THC resins and large, beautiful, buds or flowers.

Instead of just one harvest a year, when the daylight is at exactly twelve hours of light and twelve hours of darkness; by contrast, indoor grow operations can yield at least three crops a year, sometimes more because the indoor lights can be timed at will.



## Chapter 1: The Empty Room

I am overweight, balding, mid-50s, divorced, recently laid off, looking at the unused bedroom in my rental apartment. Bills are piling up, my savings are dwindling, but I have an idea. The 12 x 14 spare bedroom is never used. What if it were to become a grow room? The yield on certain kinds of cannabis strains can reach five ounces per square foot. 168 square feet can produce 840 ounces, times three harvests per year, or 2,520 ounces, or \$800,000 per year if I sold them for \$80 per quarter-ounce bag, times 10,000 bags per year, about 30 bags a day. Moving half a pound of weed a day is more than just a little trafficking. But if I am going to break the law, then I will go big or go home, I guess.

Of the twenty-four states in America that permit growing recreational cannabis in a home for personal consumption, there are limitation on the number of plants one is allowed to cultivate. Most allow for two to twelve plants per residence. These would be considered “closet” grow scenarios where you only need about 24 inches of depth and 60 inches of width or a wardrobe closet, about 10 square feet, to grow up to 12 plants.

While that is a reasonable amount of space, the output is only 180 ounces a year or roughly a year's salary for the average Joe American. The only problem is that it is not legal to sell what you grow for personal use. But most states allow for the gifting of some of what you grow to another person. And this is where I got my big idea.

What if I grew and traded for services used. What if I used electricity and traded it for weed? Electricity costs \$300 per month when you operate a grow room. That is an ounce of weed per month. Place the electricity bill in the name of my neighbor and supply him with a quarter ounce bag every Monday and Friday. When I need food, the neighbor down the way will make home cooked meals for me for a couple joints per meal; three square meals every day for quarter ounce bag every Monday and Friday. What if I worked out a trade with my regulars to see if they know of people with skills and supplies that will trade for my weed. At some point I will need to pay rent and achieve some spending money. This gets tricky in a barter situation, but nothing prevents me from working at a job while doing this endeavor. I only really need to cover rent and spend some cash. \$2,000 per month, about \$12 per hour, I can work remotely for that kind of money. Working remotely will provide me with

the basics of health care and allow me to live a legitimate life within reason.

The idea may have had some merit in the states of Michigan, New Mexico, New York or Ohio in 2025 where twelve recreational cannabis plants are legal in a residence, but not in Texas. If I am going to break the law, do I go large or small?

In Texas, the cultivation of cannabis is illegal and prosecuted under the state's marijuana possession or manufacturing laws. Penalties are based on the total weight of the plants at the time of arrest and can range from a misdemeanor to a first-degree felony, carrying a possible sentence of up to 99 years in prison.

Because Texas does not have a specific cultivation statute, the penalties are tied directly to the total weight of the plants and associated materials, such as soil. Law enforcement typically weighs the plants when wet, which significantly increases the total weight and can lead to more serious charges.

The penalties are determined by the weight of the plants, including the soil: Possession of 4 ounces to 5 pounds is a state jail felony with 180 days in jail and \$10,000 fine. Possession of 5 pounds to 50 pounds is a third-degree felony with 2-10 years in prison and \$10,000 fine. Possession of 50 pounds to 2,000 pounds is a second-degree felony with 2-20 years in prison and \$10,000 fine. Possession of more than 2,000 pounds is a first-degree felony with 5-99 years in prison and \$50,000 fine. Evidence of intent to distribute can lead to separate "delivery of marijuana" charges with 10-99 years in prison and \$100,000 fine.

One cannabis plant in a five-gallon bucket with soil and water weighs 60 pounds. One plant achieves second degree felony level. It is the same charge for up to 33 plants. But 34 plants tips the scale to first-degree felony. A felony is a felony in my mind. One plant, if caught in Texas, is a felony charge. What difference does it make if I am busted and get a felony or a double-secret-probation felony?

The more I thought about the do it or don't do it conundrum, the more I wondered what the hell I was

going to do if I didn't try it. I am broke, no savings to speak of, no retirement, I am renting a piece of shit apartment, I own nothing, if I was busted and "lost it all" what the fuck did I lose? My freedom?

"Aurora?" I called to the cat, "Do you enjoy your freedom?" She meowed back to me, as if I was going to feed her again and ran to her bowl. "Is that all the matters in life to you? Just three squares a day?"

It got me thinking, dangerous I know, but what is so bad about prison? Besides the risk of being raped, only being allowed to go outside an hour a day, I guess I need to consider the one positive thing about it, the shelter and the three squares a day. So, I googled it.

"It says here, Aurora, prison food is often high in carbohydrates and low in essential nutrients, contributing to poor physical and mental health outcomes. Meals frequently include items like instant noodles, canned vegetables, and pre-packaged foods. Breakfast is basic cereal, hot cereal, milk, pastries, or oatmeal. Lunch is usually hamburgers, hot dogs, burritos,

tacos, fish patties, or sandwiches. Dinner is sometimes Lasagna, Salisbury steak, or other meat patties with sides like Instant mashed potatoes, canned vegetables, and bread or cornbread. Drinks are usually water and sweetened, flavored drinks are often provided with lunch and dinner”.

The cat was taking a fresh steamy dump, and I caught a whiff of it. “Bathroom facilities you ask, Aurora? Why let’s see what Googlebot has to say about that. Says here there is no privacy with their stainless-steel commodes. Oh, and it get’s better. The mattress is usually thin, sometimes only a few inches thick, and made of a vinyl-covered foam or other durable, fire-retardant material to withstand heavy use and prevent hiding contraband. Inmates are typically provided with a minimal set of bedding, which can include a thin sheet and one or two scratchy blankets. No pillows. Heating and cooling are inconsistent, with Texas inmates having to endure extreme temperatures without adequate air conditioning.”

As I watched the cat curl up on the couch, I continued searching for clothing and entertainment provisions in

prison. Scrub pants and shirts, T-shirts, socks, and underwear are provided along with simple shower shoes. Most prisons offer communal televisions in day rooms, with programming often determined by the administration or a majority vote. Popular viewing events, like the Super Bowl, can build a sense of community, while disputes over channel selection are a source of tension. Libraries are available in many prisons, offering access to books, magazines, and newspapers. Some facilities participate in inter-library lending programs, and inmates can sometimes receive books and magazines through the mail. Playing cards with others is popular in prison.

“Well, Aurora, it is no worse than being broke and having to make friends. Everyone is equal in wealth in prison, so all that is left is good looks and personality. Good news for me is I have neither. Who’s going to want to fuck with me?”

I suppose most intelligent people would consider relocating to where growing was allowed in America like to Michigan, New York, New Mexico or Ohio.

“Do you want to move to New York, Aurora? It only costs \$1,500 per month to rent in Herkimer County, New York between Syracuse and Albany and it is the least expensive part of the whole state. It only receives 120 inches of snow a year! Or what about Michigan? It only costs \$1,800 per month to rent a two-bedroom near Flint, Michigan, the least expensive area of Michigan to live in and not be killed with 86 inches of snow per year. In New Mexico, Clovis is the least cost place to live in a two-bedroom apartment at \$1,400 per month with summers being hot; the winters are short, very cold, snowy, and windy; and it is mostly clear year-round. And then there is Ohio, the least expensive place to stay in Ohio is between Toledo and Canton in the northern part of the state. \$1,350 per month for 58 inches of snow filled-cold winters and three other distinct seasons.”

The more I thought about moving to one of these preferred quasi-legal places to grow twelve cannabis plants indoors the more I found myself unable to make the math work. First month, last month and deposit is five grand, let alone getting there, with what?



“Aurora, I don’t have \$5,000, I don’t even have gas money to get us to Ohio. Say we were able to get there, then what, how do we live there? I will have to find work there and what the fuck do people do with 120 inches of snow? Oh, fuck that! I say we chance it here, grow some, save the money and then move when we can to one of those places as fast as possible!”

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I hope you did enjoy reading the first few pages of “Home Grown” by Rob Scott. Please note all books can be located for sampling and purchase at:

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