

Exercise 1

Underline the facts in the following passage. How many can you find?

The smell feels illicit even though it's not: a pleasant blend of pine, cedar, and skunk. It hangs in the air of a refurbished brick warehouse in downtown Spokane, permeating each drafty room. One of the only residents on this early January evening is ODO Oil, a company that processes cannabis oil, but there are big dreams of a sprawling cannabis business district with recreational shops and kitchens baking pot-infused treats. Upstairs, 60 rundown hotel rooms may eventually be converted to pot-friendly condos. For now, the main floor is mostly empty, save for a few televisions in the storefront windows broadcasting a CNN rerun about cannabis onto the snowy, empty streets outside.

I'm visiting ODO with Alan Schreiber, a scientist who plans to do business here. The company's lab director, Steve Lee, is telling us about the history of the building, but Schreiber promptly interrupts. "I want to see my product. I just want to talk about what's going on," he says.

"Absolutely," Lee says. He guides us downstairs to the main processing room. It's loud and hot and filled with \$1-million-worth of extraction machines, which wrest the oil from dried, ground cannabis plants. The extraction concentrates the compounds that give pot its oomph — dozens of chemicals called cannabinoids, which include tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the main psychoactive ingredient. A guy in Tyvek coveralls and protective gloves pulls a lever to spritz a first-run of raw oil into a clear plastic cup. If we're being charitable, the oil looks like melting caramel gelato; if not, it'd easily be mistaken for the contents of a baby's diaper.

We make our way to a secondary processing room, quieter and cooler, where the oil is filtered and spun until it has the deep viscous clarity of buckwheat honey. Lee holds up a Mason jar of the stuff, estimated at \$18,000 wholesale. He explains that in order to land on store shelves as inhalable cartridges, or as an ingredient in cookies, candy or other edible goods, the oil must go through state-mandated safety and quality tests from a third-party lab to assure that it's free of contaminants such as bacteria, mold and remaining solvents. The labs also determine the potency.

Schreiber, a former academic entomologist and pesticide toxicologist who is now essentially a hired gun in agricultural pest control, then turns to me. "I'm going to make a statement, and he's going to agree with it or not agree with it, or maybe counter it," he says, nodding at Lee. "He doesn't have to test that for pesticide residues."

Lee agrees. "Currently in Washington State there is no mandate that we have to test for pesticides," he says.

Excerpt from "The Scientist Pot Farmer," by Brooke Borel, Undark magazine, 4/7/2016