



Flowers Shining Everywhere Inc.

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NATURAL FOOD ADVOCATES ARRESTED FOR CHOCOLATE

Ron Obadia, cofounder of Living Libations, a natural food and beauty care company, faces charges of exporting a controlled substance after being arrested at the US Border when basic tests administered by customs officials indicated that some of the essential oils and organic chocolate in their hand luggage tested positive for narcotics.

Haliburton, ON. October 7th, 2008. The co-founder of *Living Libations*, a Canadian company selling beauty products and natural chocolate, was arrested on Thursday September 11th by State police at the Lewiston, NY Bridge. Mr. Obadia was traveling with his partner Nadine Artemis and their baby son to Natural Health festival in Sedona, Arizona. Border guards pulled the family over for inspection and administered NIK tests on toiletries and food in their hand luggage after the canine unit became aroused by the scents. The NIK tests, known to produce false positives, concluded that the organic, unrefined chocolate and pure essential oils of frankincense and tea tree that they were carrying, contained drug residues. U.S. customs agents turned the matter over to the state Police who arrested Mr. Obadia and charged him with exporting a controlled substance.

The ordeal comes on the heels of a similar experience the family faced on August 3rd when Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis were both arrested by RCMP at the Pearson International Airport in Toronto while traveling with their son to visit the United States. U.S. customs officials searched and x-rayed their hand luggage which included natural cosmetics, essential oils and two pounds of their *Living Libations* chocolate. After the scents in their products triggered the dogs from the canine unit, RCMP officers demanded that Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis hand over their breastfeeding baby who had never before been separated from his parents. The couple was separated, handcuffed, interrogated at length, and told that the other had confessed to smuggling drugs. Both Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis were fingerprinted and arrested, despite learning later that no confessions had taken place, and that tests for drugs on their personal items came back negative.

Released on bail, the family returned to their home in Haliburton where they faced a surprise visit by Children's Aid Society. The agency had been told by the arresting officer that Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis were suspected of being major drug dealers after two bricks of hash were discovered in their diaper bag. After three harrowing weeks with charges pending against them, all charges were completely dismissed. Marcy Segal, the criminal lawyer they retained had petitioned the Crown Attorney to expedite a sample of their chocolate for testing. After tests administered by Health Canada's Welfare Justice Department proved their food and beauty products to be drug free, Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis were **completely exonerated** by the RCMP.



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Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis, passionate advocates of natural health and beauty, founded *Living Libations* in 1999, specializing in natural food and beauty care products. Made from organic raw ingredients such as unrefined, unprocessed cocoa, maca root, hemp seeds and goji berries, their chocolate bars remain a signature product in their line, which is sold at

Erewhon Natural Foods in Beverly Hills, California. Ms. Artemis speaks at health and wellness conferences throughout North America, and has been importing essential oils and creating natural cosmetics and health products for over 18 years. Visit www.livinglibations.com to view their full line of essential oils, natural cosmetics and chocolate bars which are the favorites of Alanis Morissette, Daryl Hannah and Woody Harrelson.

The arrests of Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis raise troubling questions about the right to produce, sell and travel with natural foods, supplements and cosmetics. Following their arrest in Canada, Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis retained a top customs and immigration lawyer to notify the officials and smooth the way for their subsequent trip across the border. The lawyer traveled ahead, assuring that their exoneration files were duly noted in US border computers, and to notifying Customs Superintendents that Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis were going to venture across the border, with forensic certification in hand, and prepared for any questions, or FDA searches. Despite such top-level coordination, US Border Patrol re-arrested and re-interrogated the Ron Obadia based on notoriously flawed drug test kits.

Their experience also points out the dangers faced by average citizens when the results of NIK tests are used to make arrests and file charges. *The Narcotics Identification System*, a kit readily available on the internet, is routinely used by law enforcement to test for the presence of drugs. Despite these presumptive tests being inconclusive in court, creating results that are open to interpretation, and often falsely positive, the tests are used to arrest and charge innocent people. While official testing by Health Canada on the chocolate carried by Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis led to all charges being in Canada, Ron Obadia must now fight charges in the US due to the results of the NIK. The entire ordeal has left the couple with legal bills totaling \$22,000.

Nadine Artemis states, "Our recent adventures were quite the ordeal; yet, we appreciate that our arrests illuminate a schism in the system. The current screening methods create false-positives by substances used by many: chocolate, tea tree and frankincense. These screening methods call for an update so that we may all walk in the strength and radiance of our lives."

Other natural brands have had to deal with similar false positives tests on their products. In 2007 a false-positive for GHB was generated on Dr. Bronner's peppermint soap. Based on the faulty field test, Newport Beach police threw Don Bolles in jail for three and half days over Easter weekend. The charges were later dropped.

To support Mr. Obadia and Ms. Artemis in their fight for natural food rights and challenge in the use of NIK test results, a donation can be made to legal defense fund at <http://livinglibations.chipin.com/superfood-freedom>.

NIK test results and Health and Welfare Canada pdf at: <http://www.naturalnews.com/024304.html>

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