



HEARST

A BIOGRAPHY OF
PSYCHEDELIC
AMERICA

JESSE JARNOW

Author of Big Day Coming: Yo La Tengo and the Rise of Indie Rock

HEADS

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PSYCHEDELIC AMERICA

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For

*Jill and Al
Lois and Mel
Jeanette and Al Sr.*

and

*Fisher and Millet
because I promised*

Contents

Introduction: The Long Renaissance

PART ONE

- 1** Humbead's Revised Map of the World
- 2** Dead Freaks Unite
- 3** Beyond the Whole Earth
- 4** Shakedown Street
- 5** The Burning Shore

PART TWO

- 6** This Everlasting Spoof
- 7** Day of the Dead
- 8** Wetlands Preserve
- 9** Through the Looking Glass
- 10** The Tour from Hell
- 11** Festival Season
- 12** How Jerry Got Hip (Again)

Sources

Notes

Acknowledgments

Index

Introduction

THE LONG RENAISSANCE

One fun activity to try at home is to declare a *psychedelic renaissance*. In the United States today, those words might conjure any number of university-funded research projects demonstrating the extraordinary power of substances like psilocybin and LSD to dissolve cluster headaches or treat posttraumatic stress disorder or provide spiritual well-being in the face of terminal illness.

Perhaps the phrase describes the spread of ayahuasca ceremonies into fashionable urban areas and the realms of cinematic satire. Maybe the words recall the annual slate of conferences and symposiums devoted to the mysteries of LSD, aya, mushrooms, ibogaine, DMT, 2C-B, and other substances, new and old. Or the annual conclaves at Burning Man and elsewhere that provide temporary physical community for a vast and learned psychonautical diaspora. Or new websites that condense the ancient and still mysterious substances into clean-seeming infographics, hashtags, and easily sharable quote-memes.

The phrase, too, is shorthand for the way the perception of psychedelics has gradually changed within American and global culture, transforming from *drugs* into *medicine*. The psychedelic renaissance comes supported by solid above-board scientists (no rogue Tim Learys here) and fashion magazines extolling the virtues of a good ayahuasca cleanse to achieve that *extra glow*, as *Elle* suggested in 2014. Indeed, when the phrase “psychedelic renaissance” is uttered, it acts (in part) as linguistic incense that might cloak the hairy, unchecked madness of the sixties. It carries the promise that *this* generation will be different.

Some no longer even use the word “psychedelic”—the term patched together by Humphry Osmond in 1957 from ancient Greek to mean “mind-manifesting”—preferring the nomenclature “entheogen” (spirit manifested within). Others like just plain “sacrament.”

In 2015, Thomas Roberts—the eminent professor responsible for the celebration of Bicycle Day on the anniversary of LSD inventor Albert Hofmann’s first trip—outlined a four-stage model of the psychedelic renaissance: medical/neuroscientific, spiritual/religious, intellectual/artistic, and minimalist design. And although vast strides have been made in all those phases since the turn of the twenty-first century, few outside of the medical/neuroscientific phase have been nearly as remarkable or on a broad a scale as what happened in the half century previous.

Real renaissances (or at least the actual Renaissance) are long. By the early 1970s, psychedelics had already significantly and quantifiably transformed American spirituality, art, music, technology,

countless individuals, and society as a whole. Their wide arrival was also a powerful accelerator in the century-running culture war that continues to cleave the American population. To many, the world of psychedelics remains an irresponsible fantasy. Still, the threads have danced around one another for decades, and now Roberts's four phases have started to align into unity for the first time since the drugs were made illegal in 1966.

Despite its attempt to bypass the past, the psychedelic renaissance didn't begin when the government again approved laboratory trials for psychedelics in the early twenty-first century, but the moment in the 1950s when psychedelics escaped the laboratory to begin with, ready for open mind. For more than fifty years, psychedelics have circulated through the American body controlled not by a doctor or shaman or government agent but by the independent desire of the users (and the ever-gurgling black market). They have never stopped or gone away so much as just taken a while to kick in—and sometimes out.

If one wants to learn how psychedelics might change American society, it is only necessary to study the second half of the twentieth century to see how they already have. Perhaps equally fun, declaring a psychedelic renaissance at home is to set forth on a local anthropological expedition to discover a practitioner or descendent of the United States' largest psychedelic cult.

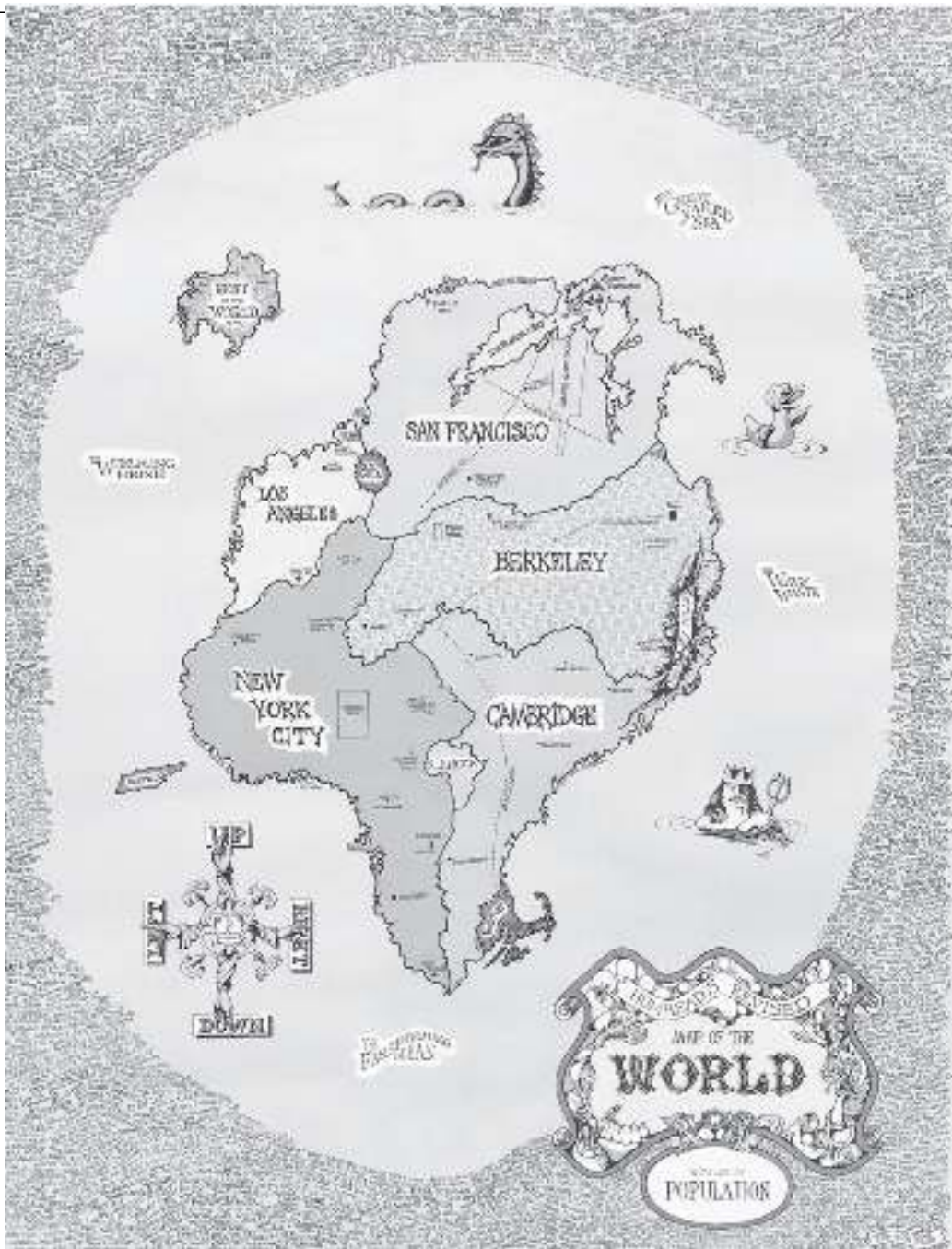
For three decades, the California band the Grateful Dead were not so much a religion as a doorway. They and their Deadhead followers provided the space that connected psychedelics to the mainstream narrative, visible evidence both of the drugs' wondrous catalytic potential and the inherent dangers. This story is a narrative carried by many people, some individual, some in groups, some for short periods, some for long, some consciously, some not, but their codes remain understood among a large segment of the population.

As multiple surveys of American LSD users discovered in the early '90s—the drug's post-1960s peak—most are white, and perhaps up to 76 percent are male. That balance is mirrored somewhat over the long arc of the substance's American history. Which isn't to say the story of the heads is exclusively male. It was psychedelic-inspired longhaired communitarian-utopians who began the natural childbirth movement in the United States, for example, and it sure wasn't the dudes who were responsible. Starting in the 1990s, especially as the psychedelic world came to encompass far more than LSD, the gender balance began to shift again.

Moment by moment, it is a story of how psychedelics—the actual substances—landed and circulated in the bohemian centers of San Francisco and New York, and of the complex secret societies that emerged, the shadow economies that came into circulation, and the new sacred practices. And it is a story of how psychedelics—both the idea itself and the ideas they provoked—disseminated into the American consciousness long beyond the sixties, and how these ideas would eventually play out in the daily life of entire regions of the country.

Together, they make an ethnographic comic book history. Some episodes and characters overlap and directly intertwine, many don't. Exploring the territory in approximated real-time, the inner maps of psychedelia are vast and alluring, but so are the outer ones.

PART ONE



HUMBEAD'S REVISED MAP OF THE WORLD

The cafe is identified by the monkeys in the window and the metal shape wrapped in tin foil dangling over the Manhattan side street. People around the East Village call the place the Dollar Sign. Peter Stampfel hears that sometimes the monkeys can be seen fucking in the cage, though he never verifies this. One day in late 1959, however, the young folk musician goes inside to determine the truthfulness of the sign advertising peyote for sale.

The hallucinogenic cactus has been around the Village for a few years, though not exactly available. “The cool thing to do when I got to New York was to take peyote and go see [the Brazilian film] *Black Orpheus*,” remembers Stampfel, then a fresh-faced twenty-one-year-old transplant from Wisconsin. He’d heard about the visionary plant from a classmate and soon read Allen Ginsberg’s epic poem *Howl*, written partially under the influence of peyote few years earlier. But Peter Stampfel had never been able to get any for himself. It is for this reason that both he and the Dollar Sign owner are pioneers, exemplars of two new kinds of humans: a modern psychedelic drug buyer and a modern psychedelic drug dealer. The advertised goods aren’t illegal, but, for the first time, they are on the loose.

Inside the cafe, Stampfel would believe the story about the monkeys. The proprietor is a large man, burly and bearded. Despite the fact that it’s November, the man is also barefoot. Stampfel remembers Barron Bruchlos as “a psychotic, crazed Ayn Rand guy.” Hence the tin foil-wrapped dollar sign. The owner splits a pay phone outside into three separate extensions, two for his adjacent cafes on East Sixth Street and one to his nearby basement apartment. The twenty-seven-year-old Bruchlos—Harvard man, actually—is a true entrepreneur and right at home in Manhattan’s East Village, a neighborhood of freethinkers. The poet Allen Ginsberg’s place, a perpetual node on several dozen underground networks, is a few blocks away.

The hallucinogenic cactus peyote had surfaced several times in the Village since the turn of the twentieth century, usually leaving its mark in the form of one or two chaotic but isolated bohemian parties. After the gang at the San Remo bar discovered they could order it cash on delivery from a pair of companies in Laredo, Texas, it circulated semiwidely throughout the neighborhood. A legendary all-night Halloween bash ensued. It was through the San Remo crowd that Allen Ginsberg had turned on before writing *Howl*. And this is how the Dollar Sign’s Barron Bruchlos gets his peyote, too, making ordering from Laredo, grinding it up, and repackaging it for sale like the enterprising fellow he is.

From Bruchlos, Peter Stampfel purchases a bundle of the molasses-colored double-O capsules—one peyote button per cap—brings them home, and splits them with his roommate. They hang out for a while and eventually Stampfel lies down. “I hadn’t really closed my eyes up to this point,” he says

Then he does.

~~“The closed-eye hallucinations were the most beautiful shit I’d ever seen in my life. I was ve~~ fixated on the combination of blue and green, and had a long period of blue and green interactions which were of an awesome, devastating, constantly changing beauty. At a point it changed to purple and orange in a combination that I’d never really considered. It made all the great art I’d seen in my life seem second rate.”

One part of Stampfel’s experience is very new; another is very, very old. Peyote and its plant relatives have been in active use in North America for millennia, most recently in northeastern Mexico and the Trans-Pecos area of Texas by groups with well-established practices. Though the westward spread of European occupiers has done much to suppress indigenous settlers, a network of Native American peyote groups thrives. Across the Rio Grande, the Mexican town of Nuevo Laredo sustains itself predominantly on its income from peyote sales, partly mail order but mostly through branches of the Native American Church. Westerners have consumed it on occasion for centuries, including Civil War prisoners who distilled it into a drink in lieu of whiskey, as well in numerous patent medicines, but none reacted the way Peter Stampfel and his friends do.

The British physiologist W. E. Dixon’s 1899 account of his own unguided mescal journey, however, meshes perfectly with what happens to Peter Stampfel in his East Village apartment sixty years later: “After sitting with closed eyes subjectively examining the color visions, on suddenly opening them for a brief space one seems to be a different self, as on waking from a dream we pass into a different world from that in which we have been.”

The place Peter Stampfel has just returned from has been there forever, though it is not often that visitors stumble in without a guide. There is no one to tell him what he just saw. There is no one to tell him what to do. For Peter Stampfel and others like him, it is an empty shore in a seemingly unsettled place.

Just a few years earlier, the psychiatrist Humphry Osmond created the term “psychedelic”—“mind-manifesting”—from ancient Greek. Though it wasn’t immediately clear, the word described a concept as old as society, a continent-skipping chronological path from the *kykeon* gobbling Greeks of the Eleusinian mystery cult to the ayahuasca brewers in South American jungle. In these places and elsewhere, substance-induced transcendental experiences formed the center of important societal functions for generations.

By the time Peter Stampfel eats peyote and Barron Bruchlos’s customers at the Dollar Sign are tripping their way through sleepy Greenwich Village, psychedelics are sprouting across the Cold War landscape like miniature Technicolor mushroom clouds. Experiments brew everywhere. In 1938, the Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann had stumbled on his own entry into the cosmos via lysergic acid diethylamide, LSD-25, which he ingested for the first time five years later. Unclear about its correct usage from the very start, pharmaceutical company Sandoz had marketed it to psychologists in hopes they might find one. From there, it leaks into the broader world.

The British philosopher Aldous Huxley had set off an interest in mind experimentation with his 1953 book *The Doors of Perception*, his own first trip report with mescaline. Word of LSD, mushrooms, and other psychedelics spread through the major media over the course of the 1950s. It is entirely possible that Barron Bruchlos learned how to get peyote in the pages of the underground publication known as *Life* magazine, circulation 5,700,000, which had published an improbable and mostly true account of the American banker R. Gordon Wasson’s psilocybin escapades in Mexico.

In response to Wasson’s *Life* cover story, “The Discovery of Mushrooms That Cause Strange Visions,” a reader named Jane Ross writes in about the goods she, too, had acquired via mail order.

from Laredo. “Sirs: I’ve been having hallucinatory visions accompanied by space suspension and time destruction in my New York City apartment for the past three years,” she writes. Another magazine discovers that, for a time, it’s even possible to acquire mescaline as an over-the-counter patent medicine without a prescription at a chain drugstore in Manhattan, though there is little evidence anyone makes good on this.

But LSD, with its eight-to-twelve hours of tripping time and minuscule dose size, is a special object of interest to many. Since 1951, the rogue Captain Al Hubbard has repurposed supplies for his own use, seeding projects that use the drug to treat alcoholism and guiding hand-selected initiates through their first experiences. The CIA diddles with acid and mind control in its supersecret MKUltra program, with psychedelics shooting out to VA hospitals and irresponsible agents across the country. Not long before Peter Stampfel’s first peyote excursion at the Dollar Sign, heartthrob Cary Grant appeared in *Look*, testifying to the healing power of LSD. Mind-manifestation is afoot in these United States.

Peter Stampfel’s experience differs from all who came before in one crucial way: he’d sought no special pass to acquire his psychedelics. Before the Dollar Sign and its nameless Village brethren, one had to qualify in some way—by tribal affiliation, forward-thinking therapist, social network, the knowledge of that certain PO box in Laredo, or sheer determination. The peyote had simply manifested itself in Peter Stampfel’s path, in his neighborhood.

All he’d done was navigate Manhattan’s chilly November avenues to 306 East Sixth Street, duck into the Dollar Sign, hand a few dollars to Bruchlos, and walk out, no questions asked. He can even go back. For perhaps the first time in known human history, psychedelics are readily available to the customer who might wish to acquire them. Stampfel discovers that there’s LSD around and mescaline too.

There is a word for people like Stampfel, something that distinguishes him from the general population. It had slipped into the language in a 1952 *Time* magazine story. “I’m higher than a giraffe’s toupee,” an eighteen-year old Hollywood girl told police when she was arrested for smoking pot. “Everybody’s a head now,” she clarified for a reporter the next day. “One out of every five persons you meet on the street are heads.”

“Hop heads” has been in pejorative circulation since the turn of the century. But lately the varieties multiply with a quickness. In the East Village, there are pot heads, amphetamine heads, meth heads, and relentless dabblers like Stampfel who require no prefix to describe their inclinations.

Carrying this basic initiation code, the heads connect and reconnect across a bohemian circuit of folk clubs, coffee houses, music shops, bookstores, shared apartments, and crash pads established by poets and guitar slingers before them. It sprawls from the City Lights bookstore in San Francisco to North Beach to college scenes like Dinkytown in Minneapolis and the ivy byways of Cambridge.

Peter Stampfel ping-pongs across the continent on his way to recording songs that will carry the psychedelic word to the people. He’s in Los Angeles for a little while, San Francisco, New York, San Francisco again, playing the clubs wherever he goes. He recalls a joke going around to describe the closeness of the coasts: “Three beatniks get into a car in North Beach and one of them says, ‘Let me sit on the outside, I’m getting off at MacDougal Street.’” The United States becomes a *Mad* magazine fold-in.

By early 1960, the Dollar Sign is in full swing. At eight dollars for one hundred buttons COD from Laredo, turned into caps and sold for sixty to eighty cents each, proprietor Barron Bruchlos clears a fantastic profit. “Do you want coffee or peyote?” he greets his customers.

It’s not long before the Food and Drug Administration catches up with the Dollar Sign, sending

undercover agents to buy peyote and then raiding the place. Even though Bruchlos points out that the Department of Agriculture seals of approval on his boxes, proving their legality, the agents haul away some 145 capsules and 311 pounds of peyote. No charges are filed, nor does the government make the legal basis of the seizure clear, but a story runs on the UPI wire, popping from papers around the country: “‘Lay Off Peyote,’ Beatniks Warned.”

Word reaches the anthropologist and peyote specialist Weston La Barre at Duke University. He soon visits Bruchlos’s newest coffee shop, the Dollar Sign having shut down, and interviews the peyote dealing Bruchlos in his nearby basement abode. If La Barre expects to observe the first stirrings of a colonial psychedelic culture in an East Village basement, he is disappointed—but also looking in the wrong apartment.

The objectivist coffee shop owner complains to La Barre of being ripped off by unscrupulous characters who buy his peyote capsules in bulk and resell them through classified ads in college newspapers. Before La Barre can communicate further, though, Bruchlos is found dead in his basement bedroom.

“Natural causes,” the police conclude, but Bruchlos is twenty-eight, and no one quite believes that, including Bruchlos’s father. Peter Stampfel hears that it was suicide and a suitably bizarre and grisly one at that, involving (ugh) pencils jammed up the nose. Like the rumors about the monkeys, Peter Stampfel could believe this, too.

But more and more catch on to the business end of psychedelics. There is obviously demand. A black market begins to thrive around college campuses. One chemical supply house in New York sells peyote-derived mescaline to students for thirty-five dollars a gram, more than four times the trade price. LSD-dosed sugar cubes turn up around Harvard Square for a dollar each. In New York, a pair of British expatriates named John Beresford and Michael Hollingshead order a supply of LSD directly from Albert Hofmann at the Sandoz laboratories where the substance was invented two decades previous, batch H-00047. Hollingshead mixes it with confectioner’s sugar in a mayonnaise jar, creating a thick paste that contains about 5,000 hits.

After fifteen hours spent tripping on a Greenwich Village roof and a subsequent correspondence with Aldous Huxley, Hollingshead makes his way to Massachusetts. There, at Huxley’s recommendation, he looks up the thirty-nine-year-old professor Timothy Leary, whose Harvard Psychedelic Project solidifies Cambridge’s spot on the coalescing map of psychedelic America.

The previous summer in Mexico, Leary had been introduced to mushrooms and, not long after his return, initiated the project. He’d had Allen Ginsberg over for a visit, who soon burst down the stairs naked, proclaiming himself God and raving of a network of interconnected minds.

The poet plots to turn on the cream of the underground, from bebop pianists to abstract expressionists. Leary and his partners will make more credible scientific progress. Hollingshead’s arrival with LSD will throw chaos into the project, but not yet.

On Good Friday 1962, the Harvard Psychedelic Project produces what becomes known as the Miracle at Marsh Chapel, a double-blind experiment to test the reliability of mushrooms as a source of spiritual ecstasy in those predisposed to religious experiences. Encouraged at first by psychedelic elder Aldous Huxley, there is a brief period of careful elitism. The well-respected, well-heeled Huxley, too, especially encourages Michael Murphy and Richard Price’s Esalen Institute on the Pacific cliffs of Big Sur.

In the wild, the heads continue their own investigations. By the turn of the decade, there is evidence of small LSD cults flowering in the Pacific Northwest, using the drug similarly to peyote. “The participants do not belong to the American Indian race, and this gives rise to understandab

concern and protests,” reads one police report. Disconnected pockets of psychedelic users emerge and a terminology arises. “A ‘good head’ must always say he is ready to take the drug again, although not necessarily immediately,” concludes a chapter on black market LSD users published in 1964. Reading another chapter in the same study, “Hallucinogen users are recognized as propounding special values in their drug use—values which set them apart from the common herd and which, we infer, are hardly shared by the police.”

But the practices and beliefs of the American drug religion are still working themselves out. There are brief vogues for morning glory seeds (true, if one takes the right kind) and smoked banana peels (bogus) and the ever-witchy *Atropa belladonna*, better known as deadly nightshade. Recalls Peter Stampfel, “This one friend of mine took some belladonna once and he was walking down the street and he started having a conversation with a parking meter and, after a couple of sentences, the parking meter looked at him and said, ‘You know too much.’”

“The only person I ever met who enjoyed belladonna was Steve Weber,” Stampfel says of his drug-taking match the pair’s brand-new folk duo the Holy Modal Rounders, formed in 1963. Whenever they meet, the two play music for three days straight. In Weber’s memory, they are on Benzedrine inhalers. In Stampfel’s, it’s crystal methedrine. They are the first band of a new breed, overtly inspired by both Harry Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music* and drugs. Peter Stampfel becomes the first person to use the word “psychedelic” in a recorded song. Released on the Holy Modal Rounders’ self-titled debut on Folkways in early 1964, their take on “Hesitation Blues” adds the word to the new musical lexicon.

“It was important to me,” Stampfel says of getting the term onto an LP. “I believed, like a bunch of other people, that if Kennedy and Khrushchev took some LSD together, we’d have world peace forever.”

Not long after the Holy Modal Rounders’ album comes out, Stampfel and Weber are drafted into a new band that is rehearsing at the soon-to-open Peace Eye Bookstore near Tompkins Square Park. The Fugs will champion drugs and many other provocative ideas. One of the Fugs’ founders, Ed Sanders is the editor of *Fuck You / a magazine of the arts*, churned out from a Speed-O-Print mimeograph. Sanders’s Secret Location on Avenue A.

“A CALL TO ACTION” reads the first page of issue #10, published in the spring of 1964, written out in Sanders’s hieroglyphic-inspired calligraphy. “STOMP OUT THE MARIJUANA LAWS FOREVER.”

“INTO THE OPEN!” part of the text reads. “ALL THOSE WHO SUCK UP THE BENEVOLENT NARCOTA MARIJUANA, TEEENSHUN! FORWARD, WITH MIND DIALS POINTED: ASSAULT! We have the facts! Cannabis is a non-addictive gentle peace drug! The Marijuana legislations were pushed through in the 1930’s by the agents and goonsquads of the jansenisto-manichaeen fuckhater Conspiracy. Certainly, after 30 years of the blight, it is time to rise up for a bleep blop bleep assault on the social screen.”

The Fugs sing about LSD on their first album, too, in a song called “Couldn’t Get High,” but their forte is vast palette of transcendent obscenity and radicalism rendered as slop folk and poetry. Their songs are for heads by heads.

Along with Sanders, the band’s other singer is Tuli Kupferberg, an old-school bohemian hero of Ginsberg’s *Howl*, who (in Ginsberg’s breathless descriptor) “jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge though it actually happened and walked away unknown and forgotten into the ghostly daze of Chinatown.”

Around the Village, the otherworldly Kupferberg is best known for his self-published book *100 Ways to Live Without Working*. Allen Ginsberg will dub him “the world’s oldest living hippie.” There

have *always* been heads. But now, at the Peace Eye Bookstore, in communal apartments, in the pages of Paul Krassner's zine the *Realist*, the newly launched *East Village Other*, and elsewhere, they start to shape an identity of their own, something that distinguishes them from being simply serial drug abusers. Though some of them are that, too.

NOBODY CONFESSES TO inviting Ken Kesey to speak in front of 15,000 antiwar marchers on the UC Berkeley campus in mid-October 1965. Today's words, some of the most prescient Kesey will ever utter, are not about psychedelics, except that they are, pointing the way to a new frontier. The writer has been speaking publicly about his drug use since not long after the wild success of his 1962 debut novel, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, whose first pages were written under the influence of peyote. In 1964, while Freedom Summer voter registration drives unfolded in the South, Kesey and his Merry Pranksters had expressed their own sense of liberty, setting out cross-country in a Harvester school bus dubbed Furthur (sometimes spelled Further) and repurposed with microphones, speakers, turrets, and the half-mythical amphetamine gazelle Neal Cassady (star of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*), and a good supply of LSD.

For the Berkeley march, they arm the Bus like a military convoy and show up blasting toy guns and parading with their new friends from the Hells Angels. It's taken a few years longer for psychedelic head culture to truly take root in the American West, but—thanks to Kesey and the Pranksters—it does so deeply. They arrive at the rally tripping and one of Kesey's old friends—the one who introduced him to psychedelics—is severely disappointed and almost never speaks to the writer again.

Dressed in a World War I military helmet and Day-Glo orange coat, Kesey gets to the podium just before the march is to set forth. In between discomfiting harmonica blasts, the writer lays out a crystalline summation of what exactly the heads have been doing by making all this bluegrass and avant-garde tape music, by smoking grass, by tripping, by searching for the cool places on *all* the maps.

"They've been having wars for ten thousand years and you're not gonna stop it this way," Kesey tells the assembled crowd. He winds up to it. "There's only one thing's gonna do any good at all," he says. "And that's everybody just look at it, look at the war, and turn your backs and say . . . fuck it."

This is one of Ken Kesey's most magical moments, revealing what's there fleetingly when people turn around. It is a promised land of sorts, blurry, unformed, and perhaps only possible to see between strobe flashes, but it is the very same coastline that Peter Stampfel opened his eyes on, that all the uninstructed freaks are washing up on every day.

The split emerges in real time between those who might turn their backs and those (especially among the Berkeley tribe) who are ready to *march*. And they do, off into the Berkeley sunset while the war rages on. The Pranksters troop back to the hills outside of Palo Alto, to Kesey's pad in La Honda.

The Pranksters and many others in California and elsewhere have already turned heel in a big way, are already scanning enthusiastically for new horizons, and are already finding them. The back-turning might (and will) be dismissed as libertarianism or escapism or white privilege masquerading as radical politics or justification for getting really high or even a CIA plot to depoliticize American youth through psychedelics, but it is starting to take indisputable material shape as young people of all ages begin to pool their resources and discover some of Tuli Kupferberg's 1,001 ways to live without working. It helps that by mid-1965 a large supply of very high-quality LSD is making its way through California and around the country.

The social shapes and archetypes that emerge in California in late 1965 and early 1966 will echo and repeat around the country, often by literal name. Ken Kesey and the communally dwelling Merry Pranksters find a tangible form for their freak-outs in a weekly multimedia party called the Acid Tests, counting the LSD-dosed human bloodstream and resultant gestalt as one of its media. Though it is the Merry Pranksters who oversee the Tests, which begin in late November 1965, the boundaries are permeable and the Tests become a platform for a freshly psychedelized arts underground up and down the coast, uniting decades of evolving California spiritual and lifestyle experimentation into a veritable blueprint.

The well-spoken nonleader of the band at the noncenter of the Acid Tests is guitarist Jerry Garcia, an exemplar of head culture to parallel Peter Stampfel out on the East Coast. He'd spent Freedom Summer crisscrossing the country in search of bluegrass, but, throwing himself into his new band—the Grateful Dead—he puts down his banjo, picks up the electric guitar, and votes for the last time. He splits with his wife, who takes their young daughter and joins a parallel psychedelic collective, the Anonymous Artists of America. The charismatic autodidact Garcia and rest of the Dead and everyone else in sight belong to the new country. The Merry Pranksters' Acid Tests continue weekly through the end of 1965 with the quintet now core to the events' existence.

In December, Ken Kesey leads a parade through North Beach with a weather balloon that reads "NOW!" decreeing a Trips Festival for the end of January, a call to the heads. It's an open beacon for all the dancers and the poets and trapeze artists and homemade synthesizer makers and light shows and rock bands and multimedia shows projected on teepees. The event will unify everyone's trips, not least the Merry Pranksters', and connect them with the vast mindspace collecting in the Bay Area. People are encouraged to bring their own gadgets. Outlets and electricity of all kinds will be provided.

Charged with organizing the three-night Trips Festival at Longshoreman's Hall on Fisherman's Wharf is a junior Prankster named Stewart Brand, who calls on Ramon Sender, director of the San Francisco Tape Music Center, an avant-garde musician-run collective in the up-and-coming Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh had spent time hanging out there, and it was Lesh's classmate Steve Reich—with whom Lesh shared possession of a tape recorder—who first turned Ramon Sender onto peyote. It is a small circle that will soon have influence in all kinds of unexpected ways.

Electronic composer Ramon Sender and the Merry Prankster Stewart Brand are specimens of two deeply related other types of heads, here entwined as organizers of the Trips Festival, and running a close connection for years to come. After the Trips Festival, Brand will go back to the future, operating near the center of California's technology boom. Sender will go back to the earth, starting his own religion and becoming a pioneer in a new wave of California-style DIY spirituality. At Longshoreman's Hall, where all burns white hot, there is no difference. Sender jams with the new band Big Brother and Holding Company on a Buchla box, a synthesizer built at the Tape Music Center. By Saturday night, the Trips hit full throb and the Grateful Dead play their first major San Francisco show.

Prankster-organizer Stewart Brand would say the weekend was "the beginning of the Grateful Dead and the end of everybody else," and a wave of Bay Area avant-garde does seem to crash to a close at its end. The night afterward, Ken Kesey disappears, en route to a fake suicide and an escape to Mexico in order to dodge a pot bust.

But it's not true, and especially not about Stewart Brand himself. A few weeks after the Trips Festival, he is tripping (mildly!) on the rooftop of his North Beach apartment and thinks he can see the curve of the planetary surface as the city spreads out before him.

“Why haven’t we seen a picture of the whole earth?” he wonders, first in his journal and then vealoudly. He prints the question on pins and sells them in Berkeley. The space program has existed for almost a decade, after all. He is sure it will change things, though he isn’t sure what. He likes the phrase, *the Whole Earth*. Stewart Brand is the archetypal head futurist in a top hat with a kaleidoscope monocle, ready for his next step.

The Trips Festival does signal some endings, though. The Tape Center’s Ramon Sender is ready to split and does, looking for even more alternatives and transforming himself into a head wanderer. First, he makes for the desert with surplus acid from the Trips Festival and lives in a cave near Needles, Arizona, for a while, trips, and sees God. Or, more accurately, realizes that he’s been seeing God all along, because It is visible in the sky every day.

“My great epiphany in the desert is that the sun is a conscious being and I could have a very personal relationship with this being,” he says. “It was so obvious that the sun is God, the creator of everything we have, and why we then had to intellectualize it and put it on another level and create all these other deities, it just went wrong as far as I could tell.” It’s a nice few weeks out there.

And then a pass through Socorro, New Mexico, where the ever-seeking Sender visits the peyote-taking Church of the Awakening, run by “an elderly couple, straight-looking as could be.” And then finally, up to Colorado, for a destination he’d heard about at the Trips Festival. Near Trinidad, a group of geodesic domes springs from the high desert, their colorful walls made from salvaged car hoods, their ideological roots drawn from Canadian utopianist R. Buckminster Fuller. Ramon Sender has arrived in Drop City.

Drop City is more about dropping out than dropping acid, though the acid will come. Artful experimenters, the Droppers will soon construct their Theater for Electronic Psychedelics, a multimedia dome for a New Earth, hurtling toward a new future. Like psychedelics, going back to the land (or just getting away from dominant culture) isn’t a new idea, but the fresh cocktail of the two in the wake of postwar American prosperity is powerful.

The Northeast had the transcendentalists and Walt Whitman in the nineteenth century. A few decades after them, the so-called Nature Boys wandered Southern California near Indio, desert-living barefoot beardo descendants of the German *Wandersvogel* and *Lebensreform* movements. But, in the present day, *dropping out* is afforded mostly to those who have enough economically to put aside. As an attempt to mask or transcend or protest class, it is a complicated maneuver but a real one. Coupled with more than a decade of the civil rights movement, the new media-ready psychedelic dropouts magnify the idea that society’s lines might not be as fixed as they are made out to be, that there is a plurality of belief systems and types of people.

Ramon Sender’s visit to Drop City is short and not terribly eventful. No more than an hour, probably. He asks a few questions, gets back in his car, and heads back toward California. But he gets what he needs. Ramon Sender knows he can’t live in San Francisco anymore.

He makes arrangements for his San Francisco Tape Music Center compatriots to move to Mills College in Oakland. He also remembers something Lou Gottlieb, a journalist and ex-member of the folk trio the Limelighters, had told him: that Gottlieb owned undeveloped land in Sonoma.

Sender goes up for a visit with Gottlieb, Prankster-organizer Stewart Brand, their respective partners, and a pocket full of Buckwheat’s Hashish Cookies, infamous in the Bay Area. It is apple blossom season, all is pink and white and fragrant, and Sender decides to stay. By the end of the year, with Gottlieb’s blessing, there are a half-dozen people living on the Morning Star Ranch, the first major commune in California.

THE OLD GUARD grumbles. Aldous Huxley and Colonel Al Hubbard and the other early psychedelic luminaries had hoped to turn on the cream of society. Their former protégé Timothy Leary has run amok, fired from Harvard, but there are still plenty doing good work at the intersection of mystical experience and healing psychotherapy. Psychedelic medicine holds infinite potential, they believe. In Menlo Park, not far from Stanford, and even closer to where the Grateful Dead were coming together at the same historical moment, a former employee of the Ampex tape company named Myron Stolaroff had opened the International Foundation for Advanced Study. It charges \$500 for a guided sequence of experiences that will bring one into the psychedelic light. This is where Stewart Brand had first tripped before falling in with Ken Kesey. But the flame tenders hadn't planned for LSD-25 to simply be *available*. Aldous Huxley had been severely disappointed in Timothy Leary's media-happy exuberance, and—passing away in November 1963—hadn't lived to see the full chaos set in motion by the Harvard boys. The old guard is outnumbered. The flame is no longer theirs. It's only just starting.

THE ARCHITECT OF the hip economy, the person soon most responsible for psychedelicizing the United States, makes his first moves on bulletin boards around Berkeley, where he posts a few index cards advertising the sale of "250 Heavenly Blue seeds for \$1." Like the peyote-selling Barron Bruchlos and the Dollar Sign a few years before, the short, hyperactive man has ordered a still-legal substance and packaged it for resale. But Augustus Owsley Stanley III is a different kind of entrepreneur than was Barron Bruchlos. Owsley Stanley is a head. He begins to trade. He tries speed. And he finds LSD.

"The first acid I took was made by a guy who was actually a civil engineer that got interested in it," Owsley would remember to Bruce Eisner. "[He] read one of the syntheses, and performed it in his kitchen in one step." As it happens, it is some of the first acid made outside the confines of a proper laboratory and isn't very strong. But the experience piques Stanley's interest and soon thereafter he comes across a 500 microgram #4 cap, likely from either Sandoz or a state-run lab in Czechoslovakia. He splits it with his cousin and *really* discovers LSD.

"And after that I tried to get some more," Owsley would continue. "I couldn't get any, so I thought, 'Well, shit, if I can't get any, obviously there's only one other way out. Go to the library.' All the organic synthetic chemistry that I know is the stuff I picked up in a few weeks in the U.C. [Berkeley] library."

It helps that Owsley Stanley is a savant with an obsession for quality. He's studied Russian alchemy and ballet. He's repaired radios in the Air Force. The disowned grandson of a Kentucky senator, he'd gone off the grid permanently around the turn of the decade. Living in Los Angeles, he'd written some bad checks and, as he recalled, "realized that I couldn't deal with the regular commercial world of finance that allowed you to write checks, and to have credit cards and all the rest. I decided after that I didn't want to deal with it, and I've never had a checking account after that, even Or any sort of credit card." Owsley is looking for a different value system. Like others, he leaves his family behind.

Stanley and his chemist girlfriend, Melissa Cargill, make and sell methedrine. Using the proceeds (and using lab equipment that gets confiscated and returned once en route) they work their way up to LSD. When Stanley arrives there, it is with an all-encompassing zeal. Over the next two years, he and Cargill and their associates will manufacture at least 1.25 million hits. Others will make more than they will, but no chemist will be as influential on the unfolding story of LSD in the United States as Owsley Stanley. He gives around half away. Even so, when the first batches hit the street in the spring

of 1965, the money rolls in.

~~“All the equipment that I had to use to make it is costly, so I had to get some money back~~ Owsley would say. “But I never felt it was my money. None of the money that came from acid I felt was my money. I was like a custodian of it, and didn’t know what to do with it. It was a real problem for me. I never bought a decent car even during this time. I certainly didn’t buy any houses or anything. I just didn’t believe it was mine. What I was doing was something for the community that I could. I gave a lot of the material away, gave out handfuls of the stuff in the park all the time.”

His first big investment is the Grateful Dead. After the Trips Festival, the Kesey-less Prankster decamp for a season in Los Angeles, and Owsley Stanley declares himself the Dead’s patron and soundman and installs the quintet in a pink house in Watts, next door to a brothel. When they need to be discreet over public sound systems, the band take to calling their patron Bear, after a teenage nickname, sometimes with a definitive “the.”

Should an anthropologist creep up the stairs into the Los Angeles house that February, she might come across the first stirrings of what will grow into the biggest psychedelic practice on the continent. Unlike peyote and its derivatives or the psilocybin mushrooms that sometimes circulate, LSD belongs to no particular tradition anywhere in world. It is there for the creating. Invented in Switzerland, it is manufactured in the United States, right in the attic of the pink house in Watts, indigenous to a region where American ingenuity might make it so. Though most head residences won’t have their own acid chemist, the behavior lays out how life will be from now on for many people. There have always been heads, yes, but now they are heads together.

“A dozen or so sapient humans literally *puddled* together,” sapient human bassist Phil Lesh will write of a typical scene, “draped over and around one another in completely non-sensuous and inclusive bond, seemingly as natural as breathing.” Band members will speak with great earnestness about seeing through each other’s eyes and hearing through one another’s ears. Topping the band’s reading list during their period of psychedelic discovery is Theodore Sturgeon’s *More Than Human*, a science fiction novel about the emergence of a groupmind among individuals, a *blesh*. Sci-fi and its possibilities are as real as bluegrass and LSD. The LSD isn’t illegal yet, but the pot they’re smoking is, an added outsider mentality to keep them bonded together.

They’re not the only ones, of course. In Texas, around the time the Dead were getting together and the Warlocks in ’65, a group of heads from around Austin met on a peyote-gathering mission in Laredo and formed a new band (complete with an electric jug player/philosopher/dealer/lyricist) called the 13th Floor Elevators. Influenced by the Holy Modal Rounders (among other moderate weirdos) the Elevators’ own particular blesh leads them to the musical concept they call “the thing voice,” when seemingly discordant parts create a new effect that none directly intended. The intention is to musically “play the acid” and carry the word, the flagship band of a small but influential Austin psychedelic scene.

The 13th Floor Elevators play their first show in December 1965 and nearly every one thereafter while tripping, sometimes scheduling multiple gigs per day to maximize the doses and only playing every four days in order to reset themselves before tripping again. When they make it to *American Bandstand*, Dick Clark will ask who the head of the band is. “We’re all heads,” electric juggler Tommy Hall replies without missing a beat. Other band-bleshes make their own discoveries, but none will carry the LSD mission as hard as the Elevators, tripping more methodically than even the Dead. Few will burn out as dramatically, either, persecuted in their home state, essentially hiding out between shows, with all three primary band members incarcerated within a decade.

The Grateful Dead succeed in part because they are enmeshed so deeply in California, already

liberal safe haven, and in part because they are reared in the safety net of the emerging psychedelic religion. It provides them with a function and a source of income.

Throughout the early spring of 1966, the Dead rehearse downstairs at the pink house in Los Angeles in a jungle of cables. They are not merely practicing but discovering a practice, the ritual combination of music and psychedelics. They don't trip at every show, but, when they do, it is with great intentionality, letting it feed back into their music. Believing there to be a symbiotic relationship between the acid and the music, Owsley Stanley donates his massive Altec Voice of the Theatre stereo speakers to the cause, lugging them to Los Angeles from Berkeley. The band might not sound like much yet, still existing on a repertoire of jug band adaptations, garage rock, and primitive originals, but they're learning. They practice all week and, if not other nights, *always* take acid on Saturdays.

Momentarily in Watts, the music of the Grateful Dead and the manufacture and sale of LSD exist in perfect alchemical and practical harmony. It is during these weeks, with the regular irregularity of the Acid Tests, dancing audiences, and a collective goal of ecstasy, that the Grateful Dead become the Grateful Dead. With the self-sufficiency of having their own acid supply, they transform into the archetypal gang of psychedelic adventurer-comrades on the open seas of American reality, soundtracking nightlong dance rituals as their music rushes to catch up with their minds.

"Back in the old days when we were taking acid and stuff, I learned some of my most important musical lessons," Jerry Garcia will observe decades later. "There were times I was so high and out there and felt so vulnerable that playing the guitar seemed like the only pathway to salvation. Even taking it to that level of craziness and making it seem that important, which is obviously not the case. I learned there's no reason not to go all the way when you're playing. It's an emotional thing, and I've learned how to incorporate that somehow."

During one practice in the pink house, tripping, Owsley Stanley sees the band's notes pouring from the Voice of the Theatre's massive curved speaker cones in what he describes as "interacting waves of color." The experience sets him further down the road of sound exploration with the same zest as his LSD making, thus initiating the Grateful Dead's long and (eventually) extraordinarily influential connection to sound reproduction technology. Though not after a lot of pains in many Grateful asses.

In a further departure from consensus reality, the acid chemist lives on a protein-heavy menu of red meat and milk, a self-derived forerunner of the Paleo diet. Because Stanley is paying for the groceries, the band abides by it, too. Stanley takes over the attic, decking it with tapestries and storing the LSD.

"There's nothing wrong with Bear that a few billion less brain cells wouldn't cure," Jerry Garcia will remark of the patron/chemist/soundman. The guitarist, especially, becomes a talking buddy with Owsley. "If Garcia doesn't have a guitar in his hand, he'll rap," Bob Weir tells an interviewer. And when not talking or playing guitar, Garcia is a voracious reader and an autodidact to match the Bear.

Starting in the pink house and in the next few years, Stanley and Garcia rap out a smoke bubble fantasia that builds into what Garcia calls "hip economics," a way for the underground to operate. "You can have a small amount of money and move it around very fast," Garcia summarizes it for *Rolling Stone*. But the key to this other economy is its twin income streams: drugs and rock 'n' roll. In the same way that heads aren't merely serial drug abusers, the hip economy isn't strictly a black market but a financial arrangement guided by higher aspirations. Building a money component into psychedelics on a grand scale is another particularly American achievement, which unfolds in micro and macro across the emerging real-world map.

A glorious example of hip economics in action is found in the Dead's new temporary home in Los Angeles, in motion before the Dead even got there. One of Owsley's very first local representatives-

beginning with the '65 batches—goes by the professional name Al Dente and makes up business cards advertising the Goon King Bros. Dimensional Creemo. Born Hugh Romney, the man later known as Wavy Gravy had worked as an absurdist-surrealist nightclub comedian and for a time “financed [his] free-floating lifestyle though the sale of single ounces of marijuana packaged in decorator bags and containing tiny toys.” Weed slinging is a nearly stable income stream for heads, as well, and will remain so. His first brief connection to Owsley, via a mutual folk musician friend, is almost coincidental, but it’s a small network.

By November 1965, Romney had been inspired to stage the Lysergic a-Go-Go at the AIAA Auditorium, a multimedia psychedelic comedic blowout that kicks off a week before the Pranksters’ first proper Acid Test just up the coast. Romney’s a-go-go collaborator is a psychedelized military vet named Del Close, on his way to inventing long-form improvised comedy and influencing generations of stage actors who do for drama what the Dead will do for rock ‘n’ roll. When the Acid Tests come to LA, like Pigpen, Close will receive special dispensation to go undosed. He takes speed instead. A posse of friends begins to accumulate around the charismatic Romney, coming to a head with his landlord when the Dead and the Pranksters show up on their first night in town. Romney and his crew find new digs that earn them a new name, and another of the early psychedelic clans is born: the Hog Farm.

It becomes a standard arrangement to use drug money to fund creative endeavors, either one’s own or friends’. Austin’s 13th Floor Elevators discover it, too, with electric jug player Tommy Hall making frequent trips back and forth to the West Coast to pick up LSD for local distribution. But just as psychedelics spread, so does psychedelia, a new art movement that is sometimes hard to distinguish from the drug religion itself. Around the country, musicians and filmmakers and writers and comedians and conceptualists and *everybody* work to adapt their mediums to the psychedelic vocabulary. Just as often, it seems, heads seem to adapt their psychedelic vocabularies to new chosen mediums, often failing but sometimes unlocking deep creative channels.

Everywhere the language of psychedelia is quickly borrowed to sell whatever it is that needs to be sold. Many years later, searching newspapers from New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Boston, one researcher would discover that LSD was in the news every single day in the spring of 1966.

Bursting from radios and magazine covers, sucking in centuries of visual art and musical and literary movements, psychedelia becomes a viral idea that spreads more quickly than LSD itself could, and the Grateful Dead have every reason to be identified with it. Although countless musicians draw from the newly minted conceptual treasury, it is the Dead’s immediate world that propagates the infrastructure on a broader scale.

When the band’s benefactor runs low on cash, Owsley brings junior soundbeam handler and trainee chemist Tim Scully into the pink house’s attic to get his first hands-on experience with LSD. Using a newly acquired pill press, the two convert the remainder of Owsley’s crystal into some 4,000 tablets of what the chemist brands Blue Cheer. Their work coats the attic in a fine psychedelic dust. Though Owsley’s products have been out on the street for almost a year, it is this batch that has the greatest impact.

They distribute the pills locally through the scene around Canter’s all-night delicatessen in West Hollywood, where dealers hang out on “Capsule Corner” and in seedy apartments, playing Monopoly with real cash and shooting the breeze. Owsley’s work is getting around. In early March, *Life* runs a story about an LSD epidemic in Los Angeles. A few weeks later, a *Life* photographer turns up at Capsule Corner, looking for the source of the still-legal blue-purple tabs. Panic ensues at the Dead’s pink house in Watts, though Owsley’s name appears nowhere in the subsequent *Life* cover story, “The

Exploding Threat of the Mind Drug That Got Out of Control.”

For reasons as clear to everyone as the white light of acid, the Dead and the Bear must part ways with Los Angeles and, soon enough, each other. Owsley buys the Dead some more conventional sound gear and the band makes for Olompali, a palatial spread in Marin County where they can continue their practice.

Owsley Stanley, meanwhile, establishes the modern LSD business. After the *Life* story, acid is the topic of three meetings by the Senate's Special Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, and it will achieve illegality with flying colors by early fall. Timothy Leary has long claimed psychedelics to be a matter of “internal freedom,” which they are, but no amount of elegant phrase making is going to make acid legal. It is clear the hip economy needs a more serious plan of operations.

“When the band asked me to stop living and traveling with them, I felt rejected,” Tim Scully would recall. “For a while it had felt like an extended family.” But Stanley and Scully have other work to do for now.

Calculating that it will take 72 million hits to save the world, Scully drives the Grateful Dead's now former equipment truck to Denver to scout locations for a new lab to be built in as discreet a location as possible, preferably deep in some unnoticed suburb. He and Stanley and their associates derive standard acid-making lab procedures. One discovery is that, no matter what protection they use, all attending technicians will inevitably get very, very, very high. Gloves and masks get in the way anyway, so they abandon them, work until they're tripping too hard, and take breaks when they must.

They try their hand at manufacturing DMT, which goes fine. And they try their hand at 2,5-dimethoxy-4-methylamphetamine, a.k.a. DOM, a.k.a. STP, which absolutely does not. Owsley puts a decimal point in the wrong place and sends people on three-day trips by mistake.

More successfully, Owsley Stanley gets to building a more robust pipeline. First, he establishes primary trustworthy dealers in a dozen major markets through which all product will flow. From each he extracts a promise to resell for no more than \$2 a hit. Whenever needed, a local distributor can simply hop on a plane and fly to San Francisco for some more.

“I felt that giving so much away for free kept the markup in the sale loop to a low level,” Stanley reasons. “The quality stayed high and the markup stayed low, and people got it anyway. Putting it out through a sales trip allowed a wide distribution that wouldn't have happened if there had been no money in it.” Keeping the price low is paramount. In San Francisco, the Hells Angels handle distribution and are able to keep order down the chain, where everybody ends up making money anyway.

The same week acid is made illegal, the *San Francisco Chronicle* calls Stanley the “LSD Millionaire,” and the Dead reply with a song for their patron, “Alice D. Millionaire.” Decamping the city, the band occupy 710 Ashbury Street, a three-floor Victorian a block and a half uphill from their new neighborhood's central corner: Haight and Ashbury. They move their money around as far as they can, supporting a small scene, keeping a steady flow of pot in and out of the house, and taking shows whenever and wherever they can, from a debutante ball down the Peninsula to the opening of the new North Face Ski Shop in North Beach.

The hip economy booms. Owsley's money is everywhere in the Haight in late 1966 as the neighborhood becomes the model for extreme self-generating urban renewal: gentrification. He helps fund the *Oracle*, a floridly designed newspaper run by one of his former dealers, Allen Cohen, that the staff sometimes scents with jasmine before distribution. Looked at one way, it's a complex tax dodger laundering illegal profits away from government hands. Looked at another way, it's the way economies are supposed to work, with goods and services and money in fast circulation.

“Hip capitalism” becomes a buzzphrase around the Haight and in more mainstream quarters, but it’s already a very different idea than hip economics, tipping the balance toward straight-world money and breaking the vacuum seal of an alternate reality. Until a head can invent something so wonderful that it transcends money, though, American currency will act on the hip economy like gravity, keeping the new alternate universe tethered to the traditional United States and reality at large. But, in the Haight, another group will attempt to tip the balance back.

Owsley donates to a group of radical street actors that take the name the Diggers, plenty conflicted about taking Owsley’s supplies. More than anybody else, the Diggers provide the missing philosophical tool between Kesey’s back turning and Owsley’s hip economics and it is called *free*. Using comm/co, a printing press that makes its services available to the community (also funded by Owsley), the Diggers put the word out through broadsheets and missives to the press.

There is Free Food every afternoon in the Panhandle. And there is a thirteen-foot Free Frame of Reference (which lives at the Free Garage) through which one must step to get a bowl of (free) Digger stew. There is a Free Store.

“As part of the city’s campaign to stem the causes of violence the San Francisco Diggers announce a 30 day period beginning now during which all responsible citizens are asked to turn in their money,” they announce calmly. “No questions will be asked.”

The Dead contribute to the creation of the powerful new ethos, with a move that’s one-half People’s Band righteousness and one-half brilliant marketing: they play for free in the park. Many parks. In many cities, they will supplement their club debuts with free public gigs. They are no strangers to benefits, either—their very first gig as the Grateful Dead was in support of the radical Mime Troupe theater—but now they do their part more than ever. Shows for various causes dot the band’s itinerary that fall, and causes are in no short supply in the Haight. Religions, diets, fashion and spiritual teachers circulate, the economy of ideas moving no less quickly than the economy of drug cash, representatives from each inevitably ending up on the Dead’s front stoop, rapping with Garcia.

After the Acid Test Graduation on Halloween 1966, which the Dead bail on anyway, the Pranksters’ influence fades, and the Dead are no longer *quite* as public about their acid use. They issue a single on a local label, available at the Psychedelic Shop, the prototype head shop. The band sells their first merchandise, too: a T-shirt emblazoned with a picture of Pigpen, available for sale at the Fillmore. Also available in this extracondensed fall of ’66: the first piece of fan-made merchandise. A house at the corner Sanyan and Alma, by the Panhandle, sells pins bearing the phrase “Good On Grateful Dead,” an awfully funny phrase to describe a band around for barely a year, but it’s been a long year. If nobody is around, one can let herself in, leave some money, and take one.

WITH THEIR ASTOUNDING and wondrous medicines made illegal, the psychedelic old guard shapes their own enduring underground. The ever-welcoming Bay Area remains a center of this world, as well. One psychedelic therapist continues to quietly practice from an office in the East Bay, and he isn’t alone. Under strict secrecy, Leo Zeff will train a generation of therapists in his methods, tending to a nationwide network of regular trip sessions, guided by himself or trusted associates. “If you don’t know what to do and your mind wanders, listen to the music,” Leo Zeff tells his trippers, advice that the Grateful Dead’s Robert Hunter will accidentally-but-not-accidentally echo in a song lyric.

Near Leo Zeff, in the Berkeley Hills, the fiercely independent ex-Dow chemist Alexander “Sasha” Shulgin forges compounds in his own backyard lab and bioassays them in his own unique body and

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