

Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters

part 1

by Anon

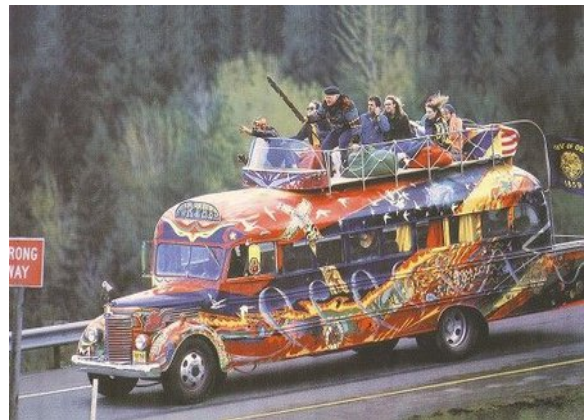
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One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest author **Ken Kesey** studied creative writing at Stanford from 1958-60. While at Stanford, Kesey volunteered for a CIA-funded study that sought to [determine](#) “the effects of psychedelic drugs, particularly LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, cocaine .. and DMT on people.” He took these drugs and wrote down what he experienced at the Veterans’ Hospital in Menlo Park, CA. Kesey enjoyed his drug experiences, and signed up for a part time job at the Veterans’ Hospital. Soon he [was](#) “stealing LSD out of the medicine chest and .. using it to turn on all his friends.”



Access to psychedelics and a bestselling debut novel made Kesey a leader of the West Coast counterculture in the early 60’s. Indeed, *Cuckoo’s Nest* allowed Kesey to afford a ranch house in the hills not far from Stanford. The house soon became a center for bohemian partygoers, and his circle of friends were dubbed the **Merry Pranksters**.

In the summer of 1964, the Pranksters went on a fake road trip from California to New York in a colorfully painted school bus called *Furthur*. This trip has been widely cited in popular culture as the birth of the counterculture. A 2011 documentary on *Furthur* proclaims, “Ken Kesey lit the fuse for the explosion that started the sixties.” The University of Virginia library [states](#), “Much of the hippie aesthetic that would dawn on the San Francisco scene in the late sixties can be traced back to the Merry Pranksters who openly used psychoactive drugs, wore outrageous attire, performed bizarre acts of street theater, and engaged in peaceful confrontation with not only the laws of conformity, but with the mores of conventionality.”



Kesey intended to turn the road trip into a movie reminiscent of Jack Kerouac’s beat novel *On the Road*. He outfitted the bus with audio and video equipment, though the footage he captured was low-quality and the film languished in development limbo for decades. And this is

where the first red flags emerge. This road trip - widely cited as the epitome of a spontaneous bohemian adventure - was in fact planned as a movie from the get go (and a novel, too). Indeed, Kesey had spent summers trying to make it in LA as an actor and author **Tom Wolfe** rode along to write the novel version of the trip, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. Prankster Ken Babbs [admits](#), “If Tom Wolfe's book never came out, the Pranksters would be nobodies.”

Kesey and crew began the *Furthur* trip in June 1964, six weeks prior to [Gulf of Tonkin](#) psy-op. Gulf of Tonkin is admitted to be a fake event organized by Naval Intelligence and used as a pretext for escalating the Vietnam War. With this timeline in mind, let's examine the characters who went on the *Furthur* trip, and see if they look like your typical hippies.

Prankster [Ken Babbs](#) was in the Naval Reserve while a student at Stanford. He then served in one of the first Marine Corps units shipped to Vietnam in 1962. Prankster [Lee Quarnstrom](#) attended ultra-spooky New Trier High School, which we've seen come up again and again in Miles's papers. Teenaged Prankster **Sandy Lehmann-Haupt's father** was a Psychological Warfare Officer during World War 2 and worked on cultural warfare projects in Berlin during the Cold War. The Pranksters picked up author **Robert Stone** in New York, who had served four years in the Navy and later traveled to Vietnam as a war correspondent. Ken Kesey's father was in the Navy and Ken as aforementioned participated in CIA MKUltra studies at Stanford. Keep in mind, 13 Pranksters went on the *Furthur* trip - 3 were brothers or cousins of Babbs/Kesey and 2 were girlfriends of the core Pranksters - so this is an unusual concentration of elite military and educational pedigrees for a supposed hippie bus.

Miles: They're also all Jewish. See [this video](#) from 1970 of a Pranksters reunion, including Tim Leary, Myron Stolaroff, Sidney [Cohen](#), Al Hubbard, Oscar Janiger, Humphrey Osmond, John Lilly, Laura [Huxley](#), Willis Harmon, and Nick Bercel. All Jewish, and many from peerage lines. Notice that Leary admits to being recruited by the CIA out of Harvard via [Aldous Huxley](#).

And there's more. As I mentioned, Tom Wolfe rode on *Furthur* for three weeks to collect material for his famous book about the trip. Wolfe majored in American Studies at Yale, a department started by [Norman Pearson](#). Pearson was a top-ranking spook who served as the “link between the OSS and the British Ultra cryptoanalysis project” during World War 2. Afterwards he helped organize the CIA and later used Yale's American studies [program](#) as “an instrument for promoting American interests.” Wiki admits the American Studies program was a recruiting ground for intelligence. Given that Wolfe took classes with Pearson and [wrote](#) his eulogy, it is likely Wolfe was a spook (Miles has written about this [before](#)). We're not done yet. [Stewart Brand](#) didn't make the bus trip, but was in the Pranksters and is mentioned in Wolfe's book. Brand attended the elite boarding school Phillips Exeter and graduated from Stanford. He spent two years as a paratrooper in the Army and then “worked as a photojournalist out of the Pentagon.” See Miles' write up on Stewart [here](#), where he outs Brand as an intelligence asset.

Some will mention there was a draft and pressure to serve in the military during this era, but that does not explain the amount of red flags we've found. As previously mentioned, the *Furthur* trip took place in June 1964, before the war had officially started and before the draft was in full effect. [None of the Pranksters were drafted](#), and the core of the group had college

degrees and thus were draft-exempt for most the 60s anyways.

The Merry Pranksters appear to be the domestic side of the Gulf of Tonkin psy-op, used to divert anti-war protestors to drugs and navel gazing instead of pursuing meaningful political change. Prankster **George Walker** [said](#) he “witnessed an obvious cultural shift among young Americans” after the bus trip and soon “there were thousands of hippie buses all over the place.” Better to have the masses piling into druggie buses than actually organizing, right?

Incredibly, a **Stanley** was the main LSD supplier to the Merry Pranksters and later to the Grateful Dead, Beatles, and other counterculture icons. [Augustus Owsley Stanley III](#) was “the first known private individual to manufacture mass quantities of LSD.” Known as Owsley, he “became the primary LSD supplier to Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters” in September 1965, two months before the Pranksters began their famous Acid Tests. The Acid Tests were parties organized by Kesey that included light shows, fluorescent paint, music, and LSD. The Grateful Dead got their start while performing as the house band at these Acid Tests.

Stanley had been connected since birth. He was “the son of a political family from Kentucky” and his grandfather had been a Congressman, Senator, *and* Governor of Kentucky. Owsley dropped out of high school, but was admitted to UVA’s engineering program. He then dropped out of UVA and, despite a “dearth of formal education,” was hired to work on cruise missiles at a major defense contractor. After this job, Stanley enlisted in the Air Force, where he spent stints at **Andrews Air Force Base** and the **Jet Propulsion Lab**. So even more military connections around the Pranksters. [And more phonies without degrees at JPL.](#)

The Grateful Dead

John Perry Barlow, one of the Grateful Dead’s lyricists, published [an article](#) in *Forbes* entitled, “Why Spy?” In the article, Barlow admits to working for the CIA for many years. He describes his first time passing “through the gates of CIA headquarters in Langley” where he led a team of techies that convinced the CIA they needed a website. I’ll say that again. A Grateful Dead lyricist helped start the CIA’s website. Kind of trippy, right? Barlow’s bio is of course a bundle of red flags. Wiki tells us he was born in 1947 and raised on a 22,000 acre ranch in Wyoming. Barlow’s “academic record was erratic throughout secondary education,” but he still “had his pick of top Eastern universities.” He enrolled at Wesleyan University and during his senior year somehow found time to work in Andy Warhol’s art studio in Greenwich Village. He developed a heroin addiction during this time, but was nonetheless admitted to Harvard Law School. Barlow turned down Harvard’s admissions offer, and [spent](#) “the next two years traveling around the world, including a nine-month sojourn in India, a riotous winter in a summer cottage on Long Island .. and a screenwriting foray in Los Angeles.” In other words, he was wealthy and connected.

During his college years, Barlow was a “frequent visitor” to disgraced Harvard professor and LSD-evangelist **Timothy Leary**’s house. Leary spent two years at West Point, but

transferred out after getting into trouble. He was drafted into the Army during World War 2 and enrolled in the psychology section of the Army Specialized Training Program, which produced officers with technical skills. **So he was an agent.** After the war, Leary earned a Ph.D. and was inspired by an article in *Life* magazine to travel to Mexico in search of psilocybin mushrooms. [R. Gordon Wasson](#) wrote the *Life* article on psychedelic mushrooms in 1957, and is credited with introducing “psychoactive mushrooms to a wide audience for the first time.” Wasson was a Vice President at JP Morgan, and it’s admitted that his mushroom research was funded by the CIA. So, yet another example of the CIA discovering and then popularizing psychedelic drugs.

Leary’s experience with psychedelic mushrooms inspired him to run studies on psychedelics as a professor at Harvard, though he was eventually fired as word got out that he was giving students drugs. In the early 60s, he moved his operations to the **Hitchcock Estate**. This was a historic mansion owned by heirs to the [Mellon fortune](#). The Mellon descendants allowed Leary to set up an LSD commune on the property, which the Merry Pranksters visited as part of the *Furthur* trip.

Leary was eventually sentenced to ten years in prison in 1970 for drug offenses. We’re told the prison assigned psychological tests that Leary himself invented, so he was able to answer the questions in a way that got him assigned to a lower-security prison. Right. After only serving nine months, he escaped by climbing over a wall and hopping into a truck. Leary fled to Algeria and then to Switzerland, where he [stayed](#) “with a high-living arms dealer, Michel Hauchard, who claimed he had an ‘obligation as a gentleman to protect philosophers.’” Leary was eventually caught and returned to prison in 1973, where “he was placed in a cell right next to **Charles Manson**” of all people. The two were able to converse, even though Leary was supposedly in solitary confinement. If you have not already, read Miles’ [paper](#) on the Tate murders to grasp how big of a red flag Manson is.

Leary shortened his prison sentence by agreeing to serve as an informant for the FBI upon release. Leary has [admitted](#) in interviews to working as an intelligence asset as early as 1962. He said, “eighty percent of my movements, eighty percent of the decisions I made were suggested to me by CIA people.” **Which of course means his sentence was faked and he was never in jail.**

The Grateful Dead’s main lyricist **Robert Hunter** also participated in the CIA/Stanford drug study. The CIA was testing LSD as part of it’s nefarious MKUltra project, so Kesey distributing acid to his hippie friends has been portrayed as a kind of Robin Hood act. In the [words](#) of one author, the CIA planned to use LSD “to control people’s minds” but instead the drug “wound up fueling a generational rebellion that was aimed at destroying everything that the CIA believed.” John Lennon also noted the irony of the hippie’s favorite drug coming from a CIA lab.

Hunter's birth name is supposed to be Robert Burns, linking him to the Scottish poet, but I found no evidence of that. His listed name is Robert C. Christie Hunter, and those middle names look fake. Why give one in full but list the other as an initial? It reeks of spookery. His parents are not given in the common bios, and he is alleged to have been from a broken family in San Luis Obispo, with his drunken father leaving him and the family destitute at age 7. He grew

up in foster homes. The usual fake sob story. I suspect he is really Robert Hunter III, son of Robert E. Hunter, Jr. That Robert [Hunter was a lifetime member of Bohemian Grove](#), along with Bob Weir and others. The whole set were Freemasons. Hunter, Jr. came out of the Marine Corps, and then became a banker. He was a limited partner of [Brown Brothers Harriman](#), the oldest private bank in the US. This of course links us to Prescott Bush, whose father had been president of A. Harriman & Co. Eight of the original partners of Brown Brothers were Skull and Bones. The bank was the US headquarters of Fritz Thyssen, who bankrolled the fake Nazis. This also links Hunter to the Rockefellers. In the 1950s Hunter was a cattle breeder and winery owner in Sonoma Valley. Are you starting to get the picture about who he really was and where he came from?

More evidence of that comes from the fact that the Grateful Dead's Robert Hunter grew up in Palo Alto. Well, Robert Hunter, Jr, the banker, also came from there. Before he bought his Sonoma Ranch he was living in San Francisco, among other places. He lived there from 1949 to the late 50s, exactly when our Robert Hunter was there. He remained very active in San Francisco later. We are told that lyricist Robert Hunter moved to Connecticut with his family in his last year of high school, and he attended University of Connecticut. That would have been about 1958. Well, Brown Brothers Harriman was also there. Prescott Bush, one of the heads, lived in Greenwich, CT.

Hunter's first band with Jerry Garcia debuted at [Quaker](#) Peninsula School in 1961, so that is a clue as well.

A people search on Robert Hunter of Palo Alto returns no one named Robert C. Christie Hunter, age 79, or anything close. The closest we get is a Reverend Robert S. Hunter, 87, who has also gone by J. M. Hunter. He is related to Robert Hunter as well as to a Saunders. We also get no results for a Robert Burns of that age and place. So according to the big computers, this guy is a ghost.

It's interesting how much of the counterculture hinges on this notion that Kesey *stole* the LSD and was not simply *given* it. Because if Kesey was *given* LSD and encouraged to distribute it, then it would be less cool, right? That would in fact make Kesey a government agent, and would call into question the counterculture's belief the LSD could expand your consciousness. Even if you believe the official story, you must admit it's a thin line. Either Kesey was stealing drugs from the government because they have some type of inherent good, or he was working for the government and using the drugs as the government actually intended (to dumb people down). The notion that the CIA and Stanford people running the experiments just didn't notice Kesey taking out large amounts of acid also seems dubious, but we'll come back to that in Part 2.