

## **Chapter 16: San Francisco I (1971-1973)**

Careful now. We're dealing here with a myth. This city is a point upon a map of fog; Lemuria in a city unknown. Like us, it doesn't quite exist.

Ambrose Bierce<sup>1</sup>

I first came to San Francisco in 1962 – it was at the end of a train trip from New York. I spent the afternoon in at Union Square (I think it was), listening to speeches at a sort of Hyde Park speakers' corner (not done there anymore), and then I got on a plane for Seattle, the final destination on my western trip. San Francisco didn't make much of an impression on me in those few hours.

Then in 1967, my classmate Peter Miller graduated from Columbia College a year ahead of me. We had entered as freshmen the same year, but I was out of school for a year and he went straight through. He was going to go to graduate school in Berkeley, and we spent a night before he left deciding that the streets weren't paved with gold in California, and it didn't much matter where you were because you brought yourself along everywhere.

The next year I left New York for Philadelphia in order to go to Penn Law. As noted in Chapter 14, it was mostly because of a woman. Anyway, when the thing with this woman didn't work out I was nevertheless out of New York. About this time Peter wrote to me that, actually, it *did* matter where you were if it was California, and by the way the streets *were* paved with gold. I decided to go out there and have a look. So during Christmas vacation 1969-70 I flew out to San Francisco and spent my vacation with Peter and his then wife Brenda (were they married yet or just cohabiting?) on Alcatraz Avenue in Berkeley.

Berkeley was very nice, and Christmas without freezing temperatures and snow and filthy slush was a revelation. I went into San Francisco on the bus (I had no car and

---

<sup>1</sup> Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?) was a writer and newspaperman of dark and sardonic temperament who worked for most of his career in San Francisco. He is best remembered today for *The Devil's Dictionary* (1906), a collection of humorous definitions notable for their outrageous cynicism. His date of death has a question mark because he disappeared into the Mexican desert shortly after Christmas 1913 and was never heard from again.

Lemuria was supposedly a lost continent which sank in ages past beneath the waters of the Pacific (or Indian) Ocean. There was of course no such place, any more than there ever was any Atlantis or Mu, and modern understanding of plate tectonics and the development of oceans and continents have made this idea obsolete.

BART was not yet built) and looked around there too. I took a cable car up Nob Hill and down the other side, and when I got to a spot with different dazzling views in three directions ( see below) I thought “this is for me!” I fell in love with the place that very day and am in love with it still, more than 40 years later.



Timothy Leary, himself from Springfield, Massachusetts, used to say that California was an intelligence test – if you passed, you moved to California, and if you failed you had to repeat Buffalo 1-A until you passed. I decided to move to California as soon as I could. The very soonest I could move would be summer 1970, if I could get admitted to Boalt Hall (the law school of the University of California at Berkeley) and persuade the University of Pennsylvania to let me transfer. However, Penn was unwilling to let me transfer – I was paid up, draft exempt, and doing well. I suppose I could have left anyway, but they were not willing to let me finish my last year at Boalt and still give me a Penn degree.<sup>2</sup>

So I decided to finish at Penn and move to San Francisco when I graduated. I got a driver's license and a car (my first one, at age almost 26 – see Chapter 14 for a picture of it) and drove out to California for my 1970 summer job with Michael Kennedy. I tell the story of that job in Chapter 15.A. Although the office was in San Francisco, I lived in Berkeley, first with Peter in his new apartment on Bienvenue Street and later in a house he found for me to lease for the summer on Vine Street in North Berkeley. I wasn't at the office much anyway – I did my work in the Boalt Hall library on the Berkeley campus.

Christopher stayed with me for a lot of that summer while he was studying Asian languages at Stanford. We attracted some notice among our neighbors for having loud discussions in the voices of Franklin (me) and Eleanor (Christopher) Roosevelt. We heard them warn the UPS man that we were crazy. It's hard to imagine how they got that idea.

---

<sup>2</sup> I wanted the degree from Penn not for reasons of Ivy League snobbery, but because procedural obstacles (poorly remembered now) to transferring all of my credits meant it would have taken me longer to get the degree if it came from Boalt.

I commuted to Kennedy's office on Pine Street, near Steiner, in my little orange Austin. See Map III, which shows places relevant to my life in San Francisco. Telegraph Avenue in 1971 was still a vibrant hippie scene and not the burned-out husk it (and Haight Street in San Francisco) later became. I sat in the old Café Méditerranée on Telegraph Avenue (right) and enjoyed the ambient bralessness. I also went down to



Stanford a lot, especially when I started going out with one of Christopher's classmates. I worked pretty intensely, but found time to enjoy Berkeley and San Francisco, and did not falter in my determination to move west as soon as I finished at Penn.

Sure enough, I graduated from Penn on May 24, 1971 (that's the date on my diploma, anyway), and within a few days I was on the road. I arrived in Berkeley two or three weeks later, crashed with Peter temporarily, and immediately began looking for an apartment in San Francisco. I went to an apartment service and checked their listings. I didn't know San Francisco well at all, so I chose sort of blindly. I may have looked at a



few places, but I was in a hurry to get this settled, so when I found a two-room apartment (living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom) at 566 Fell Street (left), between Laguna and Buchanan, at a rent of I think \$135 a month, I took it and moved in sometime in June 1971. In the picture, my front window is the one hidden behind the tree, which was not there (or at least not that high) in 1971.

I signed up for a Bar Review Course – the law was epitomized in 14 very large orange volumes – and started studying full-time for the bar examination to be held in August. Kennedy & Rhine agreed to let me do this and not start work until the exam was over – they expected I would pass on the first try, as indeed I did. I soon found that the classes were unnecessary if I had the books, and the thing to do was memorize the books. I spent all summer doing this.

In a famous and unprecedented citizen action a few years earlier, the people of San Francisco had stopped the construction of the freeway which was supposed to slice all the way through the city and connect the Bay Bridge and the Peninsula with the Golden Gate Bridge. They didn't stop all of it – Potrero Hill was largely destroyed as a neighborhood because of the freeway – but they did stop its completion. As a result Interstate 80, the mighty all-weather superhighway which crosses the whole continent from New York to

San Francisco, across the fruited plain and over the purple mountain majesties, ended at a traffic light on Fell Street.<sup>3</sup> My apartment was half a block from this traffic light, on an uphill grade. So an endless stream of trucks stopped half a block from my apartment, and then started again in their lowest gear, gradually changing gears as they slowly ground their way up the hill right past my window. The noise was unbearable. I had known the freeway exit was there, and seen the uphill rise, but I had never been up close to a freeway exit before did not make the connection until I moved in, and then it was too late.

Fortunately at about this time I met Les Wisner. Les lived in a back apartment, which did not overlook Fell Street and so was sheltered from the awful noise. I ended up spending a lot of time in his apartment instead of my own. Les shared his apartment with his girlfriend Makiko Nakachi, whom he married later that year. Makiko was from Okinawa, where Les had met her while serving in the army. Les and Makiko became very close friends of mine and remain so today. I have designated Les Wisner as my attorney in fact for health care decisions if I am incapacitated, and when their son Toby was small they designated me to act for Toby if they became incapacitated.

We spent hours together in their apartment, smoking marijuana and watching movies on television late at night. Our favorite was Channel 36 in San Jose, where a used car dealer named Jay Brown sponsored movies. Brown appeared in commercials in odd costumes, performed absurd antics, and told us about the Price Slasher, who was a-hackin' and a-hewin' at the prices down at Spartan Dodge on Stevens Creek Boulevard in San Jose.<sup>4</sup> All this seemed very amusing to us, stoned as we were to the gills every night. Makiko joined us for some of it, but eventually went to bed or did her homework (she was a student at Lone Mountain College, since closed and its facilities absorbed by the University of San Francisco).

I learned two very useful life lessons from Les Wisner that summer of 1971. The first was to smoke as much marijuana as I could. I followed this advice faithfully for many years. I had not been a serious marijuana smoker in college or law school (see Chapter 17.E), but I became one then, and it did me a world of good. The second lesson I learned from Les was not to work any more than I had to. This was a revolutionary concept for me – in previous years I had confused how much I worked with the importance of what I was doing and therefore (unconsciously) with my own worth and value. I did this in political campaigns, at my draft counseling centers, at the National Conference for New Politics, and in my summer job at Kennedy & Rhine the previous year, and I was set to continue doing it as a trial lawyer once I passed the bar. Les, who painted houses when

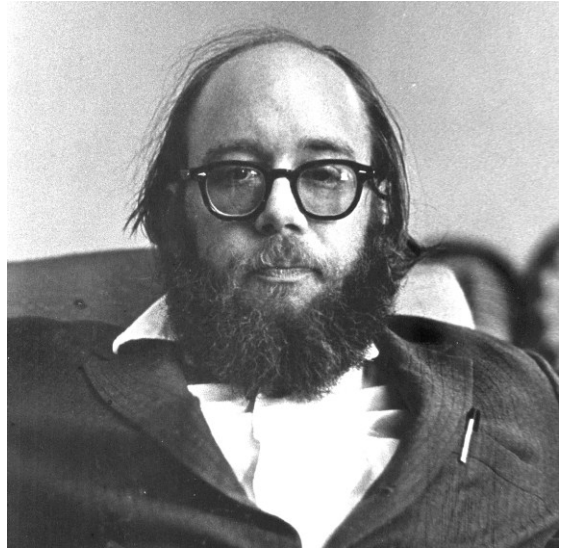
---

<sup>3</sup> The Fell Street freeway exit was demolished after the 1989 earthquake.

<sup>4</sup> Years later we learned that Jay Brown had a huge following among the potheads of the Bay area. You can still find discussions about him on the Internet.

he had to and didn't work when he didn't have to, showed me this was folly. I abandoned that approach immediately (with the help of LSD) and have stuck to it ever since. In my last full year as a lawyer (2007) I got work down to about 13 hours a week 40 weeks a year, and finally managed to get rid of it altogether.

When we weren't watching movies on television, we were going over Les' portfolio of photographs. He was a photographer and quite serious about it – he later got a fine arts degree from the Rhode Island School of Design. He composed his pictures carefully and printed them himself in a small darkroom he created in his apartment. We spent a lot of time analyzing each picture and selecting which ones, and which prints of each one, would go into the shows he occasionally had. I learned a great deal about photography and how to look at photographs from that experience. Here's one he took of me around this time, looking startlingly like a young Allen Ginsberg.



Les' friends, mostly from his army days, became in a way my friends too. I remember Ed Cole, and Jim Parr the mad mountain man, who would come down from his Sierra fastness occasionally with dope for us to smoke, and Norm Gravem, at whose house in Feather Falls, Butte County, I first took LSD. This encounter with LSD, which Les facilitated (he had taken lots of it in the army), was the pivotal experience of my life, and I discuss it at greater length in chapters on Drugs (17.F) and Religion (18.C).

In the building, in the apartment next to Les', was a man named Roderick Ivanhoe whom we got to know pretty well. At home he would either wear a kirtle of his own devising or go around naked. Ivanhoe could do anything practical. Did you need a gold mine retimbered? Ivanhoe know how to do this kind of thing. Even Les, who was a very practical guy himself and thought nothing of taking down walls or replacing a ceiling, was awed by Ivanhoe's technical skill. But the strange thing was, instead of enjoying this huge reservoir of high-level expertise, he wanted to be a lawyer, something he had no talent for at all. He had started at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, and asked my help in reviewing a student paper – it was clear to me that this was not his field. Why he wanted to be a master of the abstract when he was already a master of the concrete remains a mystery.

Adolph Snow, the landlord, gave us a lot of trouble. He kept the heat so low Les had to break into the furnace room and raise the heat. He kept his aged deaf mother in a chilly apartment downstairs – to get her attention we had to wave a yardstick back and forth

under the door because she couldn't hear the bell. She said she was cold in there, but Snow said she wasn't complaining but "only stating a fact."<sup>5</sup> I kept asking Snow to fix my toilet, into which I had accidentally dropped a toothbrush (but I didn't tell him that). He told me the problem was that I (or my friends) "don't know how to shit." I wish I had had the presence of mind to ask him to teach me. When I left I had a dispute with Snow about my security deposit and ended up having to sue him in small claims court, where I won.

I smoked a lot of dope, but not so much I didn't study for the bar like a man possessed. When the time finally came to take it I was ready, having memorized all the subject headings in the 14 big orange books. This enabled me to reproduce their detailed tables of contents from memory inside my examination books, and thus have a legitimate crib sheet for recognizing issues. Recognizing the issues was the main point, rather than actually getting the right answer. The examination, which was all essays – no short answers and no Multistate or Professional Responsibility tests as there are today – lasted 2½ full days, ten sessions in all. I wrote and I wrote and I wrote on an electric typewriter, blocking the sound of the other typewriters by wearing headset-style ear protection from the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Coral Sea*. On two of the questions I wrote comprehensive outlines and never got to write the essay itself, but it was still OK.

I passed on the first try – I don't know my score because unless you failed they didn't tell you. But I didn't care about my score – in fact, I didn't care about passing the bar. By the time the results were announced, in November, I had already taken my acid and decided to quit the law, and Joe Rhine had to prod me even to check the results. I tell about the ragged end of my first legal career in Chapter 15.B.

When I worked for Kennedy & Rhine I got to know Jim and Artie Mitchell. They were the proprietors of the O'Farrell Theatre on O'Farrell and Polk Streets, and the premier film pornographers of a time just becoming liberated from censorship. Defending them from police harassment was the bread-and-butter account which kept Kennedy & Rhine afloat as a political law firm. I tell about my work for them in more detail (and show their picture) in Chapter 15. Artie (or was it Jim?) sized me up one day and offered me a role in one of his films. Originally it was to be a character part, no sex involved, but when he asked me if I wanted a "balling or non-balling role," well, who could resist that in the early 70s? So I said balling, please, and I was cast in one of their films.

I will not name the film because if I do readers of this memoir will rush out and rent a copy, and I'd prefer that not to happen. That is possible all these years later because it turned out to be one of the most famous porn films of all time. I did not expect that – I thought of this as a lark in a film which would soon be forgotten as the Mitchells' films

---

<sup>5</sup> Snow's mother told everyone to "be well and happy," which was really good advice.

usually were. As it happened I ended up in one of the landmark films of the *genre*, and people have embarrassed me for years afterward by saying they recognized me, or asking if I was in that film, or inviting me at dinner parties to tell the story of my acting career. It is something I am not exactly *ashamed* of, but am still trying to live down. I considered using my real name in the credits, but decided to bill myself as Hadley V. Baxendale.<sup>6</sup>

Making this movie was quite an adventure. I worked two days, making \$100 a day in return for a release of all future rights. The first day was setups – we filmed this in the Off Broadway, a North Beach night club on Broadway and Montgomery, all plush and flock wallpaper, which looked appropriately enough like a high-end bordello. I was told to go to Selix and rent a tuxedo – instead I rented full evening dress, including white tie, tails, a high silk hat and an opera cape. I cut quite a figure in my Lone Ranger mask.

The second day's shooting took place at the Mitchell Brothers' studio, a large industrial building located somewhere remote like 19th and Minnesota on the eastern side of Potrero Hill. We got there early and hung around in the green room, snorting the cocaine the management thoughtfully provided. The star came on and took off her clothes and some still shots were taken of her. Then the orgy scene began. A fluffer who called herself the Head Girl stood by ready to fluff us if we needed any encouragement to get started. The audience (that was most of the players) indulged in increasingly intense sex play. The star was caressed by four women and fitted into a kind of trapeze. The main man, large and black, came onto the stage wearing white tights with no crotch. He asked Jim Mitchell "so you want me to fuck her now, right?" Jim said yes, that was the idea, this would be a good time for that. He asked one of the four caressers to fluff him, which she was glad to do. Then he set to work, and those of us in the audience did the same. Cameramen moved among us, paying close attention when anyone said he or she was ready to come (male come-shots were especially prized). This went on for about an hour (it was hard to keep track of time) until suddenly it was over.

It was one of the most intense days I have ever lived through. It took me a few days to get over it, and I didn't want to talk about it at the time. I'm still not all that thrilled to talk about it, but this is my autobiography, after all, and I'm supposed to let it all hang out. Well, this episode is definitely in the hang-out category. I'm not at all sorry I did it, although doing *one* of these films was enough and I did not consider making a career of it even though that might have been more fun than the career I ended up with. I would have preferred it to have been a more obscure film and not to have been recognized so often later on, but such is fame.

---

<sup>6</sup> Lawyers will recognize this pseudonym as a play on *Hadley v. Baxendale*, 9 Exch. 341, 156 Eng.Rep. 145 (1854), a famous English contracts case all law students read in school. It holds that remote consequential damages following a breach of contract are not recoverable.

Anyway, to return to the story of my life other than porn, I quit my job at Kennedy & Rhine, for reasons discussed in Chapter 15. Since I no longer needed (or thought I needed) speed to work, I was off speed, but also out of work. I couldn't draw unemployment benefits because I had *quit* my job rather than been laid off. So I needed to find another job that I could lose legitimately, and decided to try being a taxi driver. This job had always had a kind of romantic allure for me anyway.



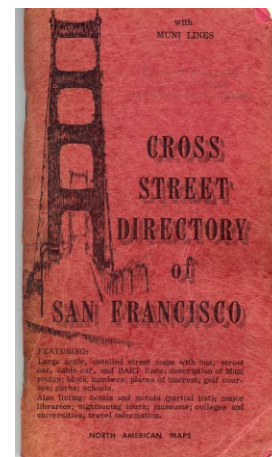
I went down to the Yellow Cab office – did they advertise for drivers? Tex, the old master sergeant type who ran the place, gave me the fisheye because of my beard, but he let me take the test anyway. Where's Central Emergency? What are the streets leading onto and off of the Freeway? I passed the test, had a clean enough driving record, and took the



required very boring full-day orientation, where I met a woman.

The woman was taking orientation too and the men were hazing her, so I became her ally, and one thing led to another – but that's another story. I got my taxi driver's license (see Document 16-1), was issued a badge and one of the yellow peaked leatherette hats marked YELLOW CAB which even then were going out of style, and was told to show up for work at the Yellow lot on Brannan Street.

Driving the taxi was fun. We picked up the cab and gassed up – at Yellow in those days there was no gate (the fee drivers must pay up front for the cab) or charge for the gas. We had a share of the meter, plus tips, and a minimum guarantee, even though it was understood that if we made a habit of drawing on the guarantee we would not remain long at Yellow. We were advised to buy a *Cross Street Directory of San Francisco*, a little red book with an atlas of the city and a table showing the cross streets for every address. I bought one at a magazine store next to the Court of Appeals at Seventh and Stevenson – I still have it in my car, and another one in my atlas collection, and use it often.



We had radios. The way they worked was that the dispatcher read out coordinates very fast – Pine and Steiner, 16th and Mission, Mission Emergency, Page and Stanyan – and we called in saying which one we wanted. Whoever called in first for a given location was then told the actual address. It was very bad form to turn up at another driver's call. We also cruised the streets and picked up fares who hailed us. If the dispatcher called a place and you happened to be right there you could call bingo and take it. If you took a call and went there and no one was there, you could report a no-show and get another call

without competing for it. Later on it became a policy that a driver had to tip the dispatcher to get calls, but that was after my time there.

It was great fun to drive around the city looking for fares, and answer calls on the radio. I took calls in out-of-the-way places other people did not want – I thought the extra time to get there was compensated for by getting a call promptly. A fare to the airport was a great prize, but to get a fare *back* from the airport you had to wait idle in a parking lot for quite a long time and pay a surcharge – I never thought that was worth it, so I didn't do it. I got a few lucky fares – a couple who just wanted to be driven around, and a sailor who had me drive him to his ship and tipped me \$20 in exchange for my promise to take a sailor to his ship free some day if asked to. I would have done it, too.

I also learned my way around the city, and found a lot of short cuts I still use (17th Street from Market over the hill to Stanyan, for example, or down Laguna Honda). I made decent money for the time, enough for my modest needs and expectations. I was out driving all day and not sitting at a desk. I never had to read cases. I could imagine myself a grizzled old cabbie who had seen it all. It was great.

However, after a month things changed. The first month we worked days, to get us used to the job. After that drivers started getting shifts according to the seniority roster, where of course I was at the bottom. This meant working nights, and at night it was not as easy to get fares. Also I got a few tickets, which the company did not pay, so I was not clearing much at all. Finally, we were told that since our introductory period was over, we now had to join the Teamsters' Union. The Teamsters' Union was more or less a criminal enterprise in those days, so I refused to join. Yellow Cab was a closed shop, and they said if I didn't join the union they would have to let me go. I said OK. So they let me go and I went downtown to Fourth and Harrison (I think it was) to sign up for unemployment compensation. This time I got it, as I had not quit but was unemployed for a legitimate reason.

I look back on the taxi job with great affection, and am reassured to know that if it ever came to that, I could do it again. It pays about \$10 a hour now, after deducting the gate, and is one of the most dangerous jobs in America. But never mind. When I ride in taxicabs I sometimes talk shop with the driver, and listen to the radio to see if I can still follow the dispatcher's calls.

Unemployment compensation was one of the best things that ever happened to me. You went down to the office and signed up. They computed your benefits from your highest paid quarter of the four quarters between six months and eighteen months before. I qualified on the basis of having worked for Kennedy & Rhine, even though I had quit that job, and I spent more than a year on unemployment. This financed a long psychedelic vacation, tripping and examining the flora on Bernal Hill.

I strung it out as long as I could. You had to go down every two weeks and explain where you had looked for work – a person needed to have tried two places a week. A phone book was helpfully kept on the table with the forms so you could make something up. I never had to make anything up, not that I would have anyway – not getting hired was easy for me because I was a lawyer. They couldn't find me a job as a lawyer at the state labor exchange, and you didn't have to take a lesser-skilled job than the one you were qualified for. So all I had to do was call two law firms a week and ask the receptionist: are you hiring? They would say no, and that was that. If they had said yes, I would have thanked them and tried another one until I got two noes, but they never did.

After unemployment I had some other jobs. One was as an investigator for a shady-looking tort lawyer named Frank S. Hills. He had an office at Sacramento and Fillmore. I remember going out to accident scenes with a camera, taking pictures of banged-up cars and steps people had fallen on. One time I went to the scene of a gay bathhouse fire and spoke with Steve Rubinstein, a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter who had covered the story. Rubinstein is still with the paper. But I wasn't very good at this job and didn't last long.

I did some other things too – I remember a brief job with a young black egomaniac who called himself King. I was not clear on what my job actually was, except to be on his staff. That one was doomed. I am a little unclear why I was working when I had unemployment – it came in 13-week periods unless extended – this may have been after my eligibility expired, or between extensions.

Finally I found a steady, regular, non-demanding non-professional job as a clerk-typist for the San Francisco Unified School District in their head office at 135 Van Ness Avenue. Although I could not touch-type, I had been typing by the hunt-and-peck method long enough that I passed the test. I forget quite how I managed to get this job, but it wasn't through regular civil service channels – a tip from a friend, I think. I was a temporary worker – a person could be a temporary worker outside civil service for long periods. I wasn't needed in the Evaluation Office to which I was assigned – my role was just to fill the slot. If they gave up the slot just because they didn't need it, it would be taken out of their budget and they wouldn't have it later in case they did need it. So I was assigned to be an extra clerk-typist in an office without much to type.



That suited me perfectly. After taking all that speed for all those years, I wanted a restful sinecure, and this was it. Most of the time I read books at my desk. Sometimes I explored the bizarre warren of joined buildings that made up the School Board Headquarters (see one of them at right). In one tower I found a pigeon's

nest; one of the senior evaluators (these were all teachers who had been detailed to this overhead position for one reason or another) used to come up there with me on breaks and smoke dope. I was stoned most of the time. A short piece I wrote about myself as an old veteran civil servant who had learned to do absolutely nothing all day is attached as Document 16-2.

Sometime in 1972 my college friend Joel Solkoff came out to stay with me on Fell Street. His marriage had broken up and he was at loose ends, so it seemed like a good idea to bring him out here. As noted, California is an intelligence test. So he came out and we shared the Fell Street apartment. But he couldn't stand the noise either, so we decided to move. I went back to the rental agency, knowing the city a lot better this time, and looked for a place on Bernal Heights. I found a nice little red house at 256 Mullen Avenue.



Bernal Heights (right) was a funky lower-middle-class neighborhood, with great charm and wonderful views of the city from its northern slope. The top was undeveloped, with communications equipment in a fenced enclosure and the rest pretty much open to grass and weeds and flowers. Some of the streets, including Montcalm Street just behind us, were still unpaved – they were about the last unpaved streets in the city. Bernal Hill was a rocky outcrop, safe from earthquakes, and a sunny patch in San Francisco's complicated mosaic of micro-climates. The southern side went downhill to a homey little neighborhood centered on Cortland Street; Mission Street ran to the west of the hill, and on the north it dropped down to Precita Park and then Army Street (as Cesar Chavez Boulevard was then called). From there the Mission District ran flat all the way to South of Market and downtown.

The Mullen Avenue house was a sort of compound on a corner. Joel and I lived in the front. I had the bedroom looking north onto Mullen Avenue, where as in Philadelphia I read in a big armchair in a bay at the front of the house. The other front room was a kind of parlor we rarely used. Joel had a back bedroom looking east, and there was a kitchen off that. A door from the kitchen led to the landlady's apartment. She was a strange old bird named Rose Shaw, who had an equally strange but nubile daughter. Rose was a horrible cook – she asked us to dinner one time and I retreated with lead weights in my stomach, to be treated by a nurse Joel had found. In the back were two small houses. Jim Mandel, a hippie, lived in one of the houses; I smoked a lot of dope with him. A young hippie couple lived in the other; I forget his name, but she was very young and sweet and had charmingly curly furry armpits. These were hippie days, remember. We called her

Fish Oil because that is the first thing she said on meeting us. They had access to *kif*, which we smoked in pipes and sprinkled on joints. Very nice.

Across the street lived Roy and Klaudia Nelson, a pair of jack-Mormons (apostates) from Utah. Klaudia worked for a leather factory in North Beach, sewing charming cartoon faces on leather jackets. Roy was a mechanic who could do anything with machinery. We both spent hours at their house and grew very close to them. Nancy Steele, their neighbor, was around some of the time also. And there was a kind of hippie ethos on that street – I remember an expedition to a nude hot springs up north, and a caravan of hippies who came and abducted Joel for a while, and Joel's nurse (the one who treated me for Rose's cooking) had an affair with Roy in New York, and everyone was stoned a lot of the time. Ron Green, my law school classmate, turned up one day – he was a Navy JAG officer stationed on Treasure Island, being processed out (honorably) for declining to prosecute dope cases. We became friendly also – we had not known each other well in law school. Another lady, whom I will not name because she now has a responsible job in government, lived on Montcalm Street and joined in some of our frolics. It was a very jolly scene. And I was continuing to trip frequently and read books both religious and secular (that was my Somerset Maugham period) and explore nature on Bernal Hill. For more on this see Chapters 17 and 18. One time the cops stopped me at gunpoint when I was walking stoned along Bernal Heights Avenue at the top of the hill at night.

Joanna Harcourt-Smith – Joanna Leary as she called herself – turned up about this time and she and Joel and I became very friendly. For more on her see Chapter 19.A. I took a course in San Francisco architecture at San Francisco City College, with a charming and learned professor originally from Minorca in the Balearic Islands – I learned a lot from that course and still remember some of it. When I was downtown I used the library of the U.S. Court of Appeals at Seventh and Mission as a kind of clubhouse – I was a member! Joel and I campaigned for McGovern in 1972, but he lost anyway.

Joel moved away from Mullen Avenue in 1973, into a strange Victorian house on 24th Street near Fair Oaks. The house was in the middle of the block – a small path led from the street to the house, whose windows were right up against the sides of houses in more conventional positions which had grown up around it when the block was developed.

I didn't travel much during this period (too poor), except to Feather Falls in Butte County, where Les' friends Norm Gravem and Trena Beagle lived in a cabin in the remote back country. They were the people who turned me on to LSD, and Joel and I went back there several times to trip. See Chapters 17.F and 18.D. I did go once to Boulder, Colorado for a meeting of the very left-wing National Lawyers Guild.

My father died in 1973 and I flew back to New York to attend his funeral. I gave a eulogy for him at a Unitarian Church somewhere in the 30s in Manhattan – a copy is included among the Supplements. I was genuinely sorry that my father died, although he

had been quite ill with heart disease for some years and in the days before angioplasty it was not unexpected that he would die of it.

I worked at the school board, happily reading *War and Peace* and other long books, until one day Jack Whisman, the former principal who headed our office, issued a *ukase* that we could not read at our desks, but had to look busy. Overnight what had been a pleasant sinecure became more like Saturday detention at Collegiate School. I decided that I liked the sinecure part, but needed one of sufficiently high status that bureaucrats like Jack Whisman could not harass me and keep me from reading at my desk. So I began to think seriously about going to library school. As discussed in Chapter 20.A, I had been a great fan of libraries all my life. I loved books and liked the atmosphere of a library. I imagined working in a library where not much happened – the teachers' professional library at the School Board, where I spent some idle time, seemed like a perfect example of what I was looking for.

I began exploring this and found that Berkeley's library school would take me but not until the following year. Columbia would take me right away, though, assuming I got acceptable scores on the Graduate Record Examination. I go into more detail in Chapter 20.B on how I prepared for library school, aced the GRE, put together the money, and then headed east to do this course. I quit my job at the School Board. Indeed, for reasons I now forget I had to quit twice – I was given a farewell party on my last Friday, with a cake and everything, and then had to make an emergency call to Jack Whisman at home to rescind it and turn up for work on Monday. Very embarrassing.

But finally I quit for real in the summer of 1973, and that was that. I stayed away for about three years – my adventures in library school, in Washington, and in Asia are detailed in Chapters 20-22. But during this stay of only two years I formed a bond with San Francisco which has remained firm to this day. Even though I spent two long intervals living elsewhere, San Francisco became home for me in a way which nowhere else (except New York) ever has. I plan to stay here for the rest of my life, and after it's over to have my ashes taken to the end of the Municipal Pier (right) at Aquatic Park and dropped gently into San Francisco Bay.



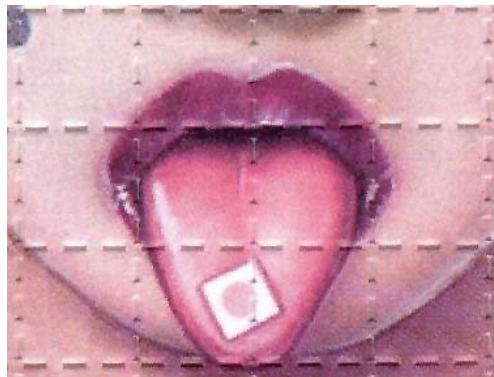
- I have chosen this method of disposal quite deliberately. It makes me feel comfortable to think of ending up in this beloved place, so familiar from so many acid trips, while spending eternity with my relatives in a Jewish cemetery in

Queens would give an unpleasant answer to the questions “O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?”<sup>7</sup> A friend, hearing of my plan in 2002, asked me in an e-mail: “No stone marker, though? Nothing physical that memorialists could commune with? It needn’t be Westminster Abbey, but no trace at all?” I replied:

Definitely no stone marker! Woffo I needs dat fo, Mr. Bones, when mah mimry lives on in de horts of de pipple?<sup>8</sup>

And why should it not be done exactly as one wishes? As Christopher says about funeral arrangements: “that’s one they owe me.” If people want to venerate the David F. Phillips Final Resting Place Historic Site, let them go down to Aquatic Park and venerate the damn bay. They could do worse – in fact, would do worse if they had to go to a cemetery in Colma or Queens. Somehow I think crowd control at my tomb will not be a problem. Anyway we are evanescent – a stone tomb is the silliest kind of denial -- sure, we come from dust, but we came from water before that. Tim Leary had the right idea – off into space – my only improvement would be to have the capsule burst open out there so each particle of ash becomes a tiny comet, orbiting the sun until the sun explodes and then joining the final transformation into a new star and new planets, worlds without end, amen. That’s where we came from before water.

You say so glibly “it needn’t be Westminster Abbey.” I’m insulted. Why not Westminster Abbey? Lilibet says I can have it if I want, wassamatta you?<sup>9</sup> You don’t think I’m good enough to lie with the quality, huh? You wouldn’t say that if I were white.



Tailpiece:  
Blotter acid  
(image from the  
Internet)

---

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:55.

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Bones, with Tambo and the Interlocutor, were the three stock characters of the 19th century minstrel show. I have no idea why the first part of this line came out in minstrel dialect and the second part in the voice of Lyndon Johnson. I was just transcribing into e-mail what came into my head, never thinking I might need to explain it later in a footnote. Historically, unlike Bones (who played bone castanets) and Tambo (tambourine), the Interlocutor didn’t speak in dialect but used standard English.

<sup>9</sup> *Lilibet* was Queen Elizabeth II’s childhood name for herself, used even years later by a few intimates who knew her as a child.

**Document 16-1: Taxicab Driver's License**

F 2533

Permit Number 39963 Date Granted MAY 16 1972

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Permission is hereby granted to

NAME DAVID F. PHILLIPS

LOCATION 256 Mullen Avenue

To CONDUCT THE BUSINESS DRIVER PUBLIC VEHICLE

This permit is valid for the person and location herein designated for the year ending

Unless revoked by the Chief of Police during a current year, it shall be deemed that application for renewal has been made at the end of each year and the application granted under the same conditions, limitations and obligations as originally imposed; provided however, that the Chief of Police reserves the right to terminate said permit at the end of any current year by filing written objection to the renewal of the license with the Tax Collector of the City and County of San Francisco. In the event said written objection is made to the Tax Collector this permit shall lapse and terminate at the end of the current year.

Issued by

This permit is accepted subject to all legal obligations and requirements and to the conditions set forth above

*Donald M. Scott*  
Chief of Police.

*[Signature]*  
Permittee.

## DOCUMENT 16-2: THE VETERAN CIVIL SERVANT

**SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT  
135 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102  
Telephone: (415) 863-4680**

The old veteran civil servant sat at his desk, motionless, like a lizard in the sun. He knew the rules. For more than forty years he had sat at that desk, or at others; for twenty-five years it had been at that one alone. He missed nothing; he acknowledged nothing. Outside, the pale sun had gone [REDACTED] early, leaving the sky to the clouds and the rain and the fog. Inside it was the same.

The old veteran civil servant never moved. His duties had, over his many years, dropped silently from him the way the leaves drop silently from the trees. He did nothing any longer; he had done nothing for many years- he had done nothing but sit at his desk since he first arrived at The Office so long ago the time had receded into legend. He had learned.

Three times a day the old civil servant did move. He moved at ten in the morning, when he took his morning coffee break (an indefeasible civil service right) in secrecy and in silence. He moved at noon, when he took his lunch alone, out of The Building, and he moved at two in the afternoon, when the afternoon coffee break completed the careful symmetry of the day. Always he went alone. He never moved otherwise. He never spoke. He never did anything but sit at his heavy wooden desk, and stare, with his heavy eyes, through the cool dark shady heavy air and whatever should pass before him. He was very old, and very wise, and very still, and very silent, and very stoned.