

CHRISTINE RENEE LUCIENTES

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I grew up pretty much in a middle class atmosphere without the pain of physical deprivation. I, like so many millions more, grew up with the pain of shallow relationships and superficial exchanges. My dad, Jose, bought a tile company in Ukiah, Calif. and we moved, my mother, father, brother and sister and I, from Sacramento to Redwood Valley.

My dad always seemed to be a bitter and restless man and I suppose it was this in his nature that made him seek something outside the routine of his established life and into the budding drug cult of the 60's. Whatever the reasons, his searching wrought dramatic changes to his already shakey family. Jose, like a volcano, was always on the verge of a great outpouring in his case, of deep emotion, most generally anger; often gentle, sensitive and reflective, he was an enigma to me. His quick "Latin" temperament brought much grief to his offspring, yet this one has since come to the realization that he is merely a product of the pain and hurt that society heaped upon him. It was sad that he has always been ashamed of a Latino heritage and denied it with great vehemence. Certainly he was never conditioned to have pride and it never grew under a barrage of vicious teasing, "wetback" etc. that he received as a child.

My mother Gail, a passive person in many ways yet deeply affectionate, was a buffer to the violence of my dad and I feel indebted to her for what shreds of sanity I managed to salvage. Certainly she suffered as much or more than anyone in the Lucientes' circle.

As my parents experimented with drugs so did they with people. Our home was always filled with people since I was a small child but the diversity of our company increased with their psychic ventures into the unknown world of the great stranger- the mind. Drugs were viewed as the mystic vehicle to self-realization and actualization, yet dramatic illuminations and brilliant insights happened while personalities crumbled and deteriorated.

I was given marijuana at the age of 14- already a troubled personality- my problems were magnified and if I got any deep insights they were lost or absorbed in the chaos of my personality. The great clincher was the first LSD experience. While others had profoundly beautiful visionary experiences, or at least made claims to such, in my typically contrary hostile manner I had magnificent nightmares of undiscrivable dimensions. Deeply affected by the Vietnam war, my hallucinations consisted of napalmed Asian babies and I screamed out in outrage. It was quite an experience for the adults dealing with me as they tried to steer me away from the whole topic. In my mind it grew to paranoic proportions of international significance, the more they tried to get me off the subject the more I viewed it as a fascist plot to keep my concern off of Vietnam. It was an agonizing ten hours or so and I remember at one point, in an effort to divert my mind from the babies, someone removed a Christmas package from under the tree in the living room and allowed me the childish delight of opening a package- to my horror it was a meat cleaver and once again I was off on the subject of Vietnam.

I met Jim Jones as a friend of the family was trying to start a branch of the Peace and Freedom Party in Mendocino Co. We went to the Jones' home and spoke to Marceline Jones who graciously made arrangements for us to meet at Ridgewood Ranch after a People's Temple meeting for further discussion. Sue Jones, Jim's Korean daughter, was a classmate of mine and she introduced me to members of the organization and explained the vegetarian dishes as she served us plates. It seemed strange to me to meet people thoroughly mid-western in dress, speech and manner, yet strangely radical.

A few years later I heard of Jim Jones through students of his at the Ukiah Adult Education Night classes. All the young people in attendance raved about his class. I was at the high school one night with a friend and we decided to drop in the class for a visit. I must say I was very much unnerved when I found myself standing at the door, after class had started, peering into the window to discover a class packed wall to wall. I was ready to call it a day and go home. My friend was persistent and I entered the class with much trepidation and full anticipation of being physically tossed out of the room for 1) being a hippy 2) disturbing the class with our late entrance. Neither 1 nor 2 occurred. Number 3, Jim said, "Hello, how are you? We are so pleased to have you. Could someone get these young ladies

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a chair?" I sat down in amazement and gratitude. It was a shock to be treated like a human with respect and decency. I was very touched by his ability to find justice in every situation as he taught current events to a very mixed class ranging from rednecks to radicals.

One evening our home was further disrupted, my mom had recently seperated from my dad after he moved his young girlfriend quite boldly into our house. I had just been kicked out of the house again by my dad. After a few weeks at a friends house I came back and was accepted back without tomatoes and rotten eggs hurled at me. Unfortunately my timing was bad, it was the same night that Mendocino Co. decided to make an election issue out of the drug traffic in the county. Our home was descended upon. I was in my bedroom and saw cars entering the driveway at highspeed, thinking it was more company, I pointed out that someone had just arrived. Someone shouted, "It's the fucking cops." I ran out to the living room to inform Jose of this new development. With perfect and short-lived command Jose told me not to worry about anything. Always a worrier, I ran from door to door locking them. I got to the living room door to be greeted by two six foot giants, Sherriff Howard and Sherriff Bartlomei bursting in fully armed. I proceeded to try to stuff them back out the door and was quickly knocked down to the ground. When I got back to my feet I was standing between the cops and my dad who was holding a shotgun. The cops commanded him to drop his gun. He countered with a, "put your gun down." and "Where is your search warrant?" (not totally ignorant of his rights, though terribly naive). One cop said truthfully, "We don't need one." The other one lied, "It's in the car." By this time the entire house was filled with Sherriffs, Highway Patrolmen and Police as well. My dad was overwhelmed, knocked to the ground, disarmed and handcuffed. At this point I found it expedient to go back to my room and stuff the bag of marijaunia down my jeans. I came back to the dining room to see my dad struggling as they drug him out of the house. I screamed out in anger, "You can't take my dad away!" I tried to run after him and one cop grabbed me by the arm. I drug him through the dining room, the kitchen and out the back porch, struggling, fighting kicking and cursing. Another cop assisted him and they handcuffed me and drug me off to another car. I managed to get one handcuff off and eat the grass in the bag.

Meanwhile back in the house, some of the local high schoolers had managed to make it upstairs and up into the attic before being apprehended. They would have made a clean escape if the football star among them with the bum knee andn't shifted his cursed joint into a more comfortable position, bumping the trap door and alerting the officers of justice. They were drug down one at a time and frisked. Another enterprising soul, unaware that the entire house was surrounded by swarms of law officers, opened a downstairs window anticipating a quick getaway, as he stuck his head out his forehead was met with the barrel of a shotgun and the implied threat to get back in the house. My brother David age 15, decided it was time to have a little fun. He came downstairs with a billy club and was immediately relieved it by an untrusting officer. David then announced that the little knob (thermostat control) would cause the entire house to be blown up when turned. The officers stopped dead in their tracks and exchanged furtive glances between themselves, my brother, the thermostat and the exit. They were not amused.

My dad in one car, the minor females in one and the minor males in another, we were all driven to Ukiah, that is except for Dean Morehouse, the only other adult in the entire cast of arresteas. Somehow after serving the officers coffee, he convinced the law enforcement jokesters that he was necessary to stay at the house and guard it. His fifteen year old daughter Ruth Morehouse was also arrested with us. Why he was not arrested was a source of much suspicion to me. While he slept comfortably in bed we were bitterly lodged in a little cell. On the way to Juvenile Hall I admonished all the young ladies not to tell the pigs a thing. I must say we did a much better job than our weak kneed brothers, we didn't say a word and two of them signed statements. We locked arms and refused to talk. The others gave their names but I was determined to be totally uncooperative. I wouldn't tell them my name, in fact I told them that it was none of their motherfucking business. They told me to watch my language and I informed them that no one was in control of me and I could say what I fucking well pleased, further, they were a bunch of motherfucking punks. One officer went out of the room and asked an obliging little punk what my name was. It was downhill from there on out. I'll never forget the feeling of lying on the top bunk of the cell unable to sleep after they shut the damned door and one at a time all the youngsters with families that had money were removed and sent home.

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The charges were dropped against everyone but my dad. I believe that I was charged with resisting arrest, striking an officer, being a minor out of parental control and being in a house where drugs were being used or sold. They found no drugs in the house (while I was scuffling with the cops, my brother took the other bag of grass to the bathroom and hid it under the loose floorboard under the bathroom rug). My dad was charged with selling marijauna to an undercover agent. It was election year for Sherriff Bartlomei and he played up this whole issue to the hilt, as if he had cleaned up the major drug traffic in the county. In the months that followed I experienced one of the most painful events in my life. It easy to make light of now but at the time I was deeply affected and disturbed. The Ukiah Daily Journal took a little bit of fact and wove the most outrageous distortions that I could imagine. I was filled with an impotent rage that seemed to consume my personality. Already ostracized in the little provincial community we became nearly totally outcast. I remeber that I was not allowed to go to people's homes- the few times that I did it was under an actual assumed name! This was a new perspective for me as I had formerly been Girls Athletic Manager, Vice-President and President of the student body and people had related to me as being among the "popular set." I was used to my peers looking up to me and had a rude awakening to the shallowness of such relationships.

I continued to go to Jim's nighclass and was amzed that he was concerned about my family's situation. One time in class he asked me if my father's business was suffering as a result of the bad publicity. The subject was a difficult one for me and a bit of the pain must have flickered across my face. Jim immediately said, "Never mind, I don't want you to talk about it. I can see it is too painful for you to discuss." I was quite touched at that sensitivity, for it was very rare.

I became increasingly disturbed and quit attending night class. Jim continued to show concern and sent his associate minister, Archie Ijames, to my dad's trial. After Jose was sentenced to prison, Archie opened his home to Jose's girlfriend and she moved in with the Ijames family and began attending People's Temple.. Eventually I began attending, I was intrigued by his social message but had an extremely difficult time adjusting to the religious vernacular and mid-western constituency. I had always had a great deal of independence as a child and had to adjust myself to the tight-knit community of People's Temple. It was difficult for me to remember the importance of being accountable. People's Temple was the subject of harassment by racist elements in the community, threatening phone calls, torture to animals, etc., therefore it was necessary to be accountable, just for safety sake alone.

It seems to me that People's Temple tried in every way to affect change in the States. We worked with whoever would work with us, we spent hours writing letters, getting petitions signed, marching, working, distributing newspapers. We visited most of the major cities with a message that was extremely radical yet garbed in language that would be acceptable. This was done by people in many cases who had been nearly crushed by the society. It was amzaing that we were able to do as much as we did in view of what we had to work with. I feel that there is no hope for the United States in it's monopoly fascist stage. The apathy is worse than that of Hitler's Germany and the potential for evil is so much greater. With the fall of the economy racism flourishes and the climate for scapegoating, for genocide grows. I am confident that we did the wisest thing in leaving before we were crushed by a move that was orchestrated at a high leve!.

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