

MARYLOU CLANCEY

b. 1954

At the age of 17 yrs. my life revolved around weekends spent at "Winterland" concerts, on Post & Stiener Sts. in San Francisco. Never going there anything less than "stoned", this night in spring didn't start out as anything different. With a group of close friends, we arrived early to listen to the "Greatful Dead" -long-time original acid rock band. Already high on a blissful combination of weed, southern Gomfort, a few snorts of cocaine and atab of mescaline.... I was floating 2 feet off the ground already. About 1 hour into the Dead's psychedelic rendition someone passed me a jug of water, unbeknown to me, laced with LSD 25....I guzzled it down. Within 1/2 hr. this stuff gathered up my mind and took off running with it...literally. I didn't know what was coming down. The inside of Winterland and the people around me turned into a reeling, cosmic merry-go-round. Next thing I knew I was hopping over 3 rows of seats and out the doors of the concert hall onto Stiener St... I started running up the street and I mean in the middle of the street---oblivious to the cars, cops and young people all yelling at me.. I tore off my shirt and continued to run up the street bare-chested screaming "LIVE-DEAD", "THE DEAD ARE ALIVE" ---I was gone. From somewhere 2 people, who I remember only as Bruce and Joane, whom I never had seen before and never saw again afterward, grabbed me and rushed me off to their flat in Haight-Ashbury. They spent the rest of the night trying to help me "come down" off this bad trip. I had no sense of space or time. I must have asked to take a bath. Everything was a distorted hallucination, their faces and words. Joanne put me in the tub and sat by me in a chair eating a piece of watermelon. She got up for a minute and left the bathroom with me in it---while she was gone I turned on the hot water, full blast and submerged my head down under the water---I closed my eyes and waited for death. I had been sitting in that tub hallucinating to the very innermost depths of my subconscious mind---I kept imagining that my mom was walking toward the bathroom, looking for me. I was scared, shaking and I was just so tired...I wanted to die. Tired of running away from myself, my parents, the hateful world around me. I just was really trying to end it --shut the door on life and its pain for the last time.

Joanne came in and found me under the water trying to drown myself. She pulled me out but I fought her, trying to get my head back under the water ---I would have done it---I know I would ---I'm sure of that. They had to have been some good people to put up with me that night. They dried me off and put me to bed wrapped up in a blanket where I spent the rest of the night hallucinating and battling for any contact with reality.

When the sun finally shone into the room I got up, put on my clothes and walked out the front door like nothing had happened...I was still verrrry high. I was over 12 hrs late in getting home. If my parents had been there when I arrived (luckily they were not) I would have had a nice little stay in Juvenile Hall. They were always threatening me with that. In those days my parents worried about me a lot. As the parents of an only and adopted child, they were desperate about my using and abusing drugs and alcohol.

They adopted me at birth (or shortly after) through an attorney. That's all I know of it, besides the fact I was born in St. Mary's Hospital on April 16, 54, in San Francisco. My parents were worried that I would be insecure about being adopted that they didn't tell me until I was 18 yrs. old. I think it was heavier on them than it was on me. Raised in middle-class suburbia in Burlingame, Ca., weaned on parochial schools ...cheerleading and boyfriends had once been my main objectives in teenage life.

One person who affected me immensely in my childhood was my girlfriend, Daile, who I grew up with on the same block. Daile was born with a serious heart defect, and then at the age of three she contracted cerebral palsy, which left one side of her body damaged for life. So she was labeled "handicapped". She also had a lot of difficulty with her speech and therefore expressing herself because of a cleft pallet. She was spending so much of her early life in and out of hospitals, she fell behind in terms of school education. As many others like her, Daile, became ostracized as a result of going to "special schools" and "special education" classes within the public school system. A lot of people treated her as less than

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human. Different because she looked and talked a bit aside from what they termed "normal". She depended so much on her mom, Sandra, who loved her a great deal and always stood up for Daile and giving her support and caring whenever she needed it. Daile was crushed when Sandra died at the young age of 35 because of the pressures of trying to raise 4 children alone (her first husband died and the second one became a hostile alcoholic). Sandra was my second mom, I loved her a lot. Daile was a determined soul. She taught herself to sew and macrame with the use of one hand better than most people do with two. The way people continued to treat her made me angry as hell. It got really bad for her though no matter how hard she tried to make something of herself she got slapped down by some bureaucratic inequality or narrow-minded person who wasn't willing to give her a chance. She attempted to commit suicide two times at the age of 21. She ended up in a County Rehabilitation Center for over 2 years.

When I was 14 years old I was traveling with my parents to Guerneville for the weekend. We were driving up Bayshore freeway when all of a sudden this car with two men came barreling perpendicular across four lanes of freeway--just missing us and hitting the car directly on our left broad--went off the road, swerved back on and hit the same car, which was spinning all over the road, one more time. It was around 8 p.m. and there weren't many cars around. All I could see was a body hanging limply out a car window and I could hear the screams of frightened children from the car next to us that had been hit twice. I thought for sure my dad would stop and help those people and when he kept going down the freeway I started yelling at him--" What are you doing ! " . " Why don't you stop and help them? " But he just ignored me and I cried all the way to Guerneville-- for over an hour. I spent the whole weekend depressed and disillusioned. My parents reaction, or lack of reaction, had shocked me.

Another person who I owe my initial political "awakening " to was the big brother of my best friend, Terry. We were in the 7th grade when he left for Viet Nam, he was only 17 then. He came home 1 yr. and 2 mos. later --a changed person. He began slowly and painfully at first, to tell us about the people of Vietnam and what was really happening there in the name of " justice ". He painted vivid descriptions of the pain, suffering and starvation of those innocent children and people. He was so angry. Horrified that 100,000 's of innocent people against their will, were being used and murdered by manipulation of war, and that he had been, as a Marine, a part of that war machine. They hadn't fooled him. At first, maybe, but they had created in him, a hostile, seething, enemy to the war. He told us of one night when he awoke to find his buddies on either side killed in their sleep in an ambush. I began to hate war. Even more so I began to hate the system which created and paid for the war---the same system I had been pledging allegiance to every day in school. God---I was disillusioned. The values held up on a pedestal before me all my life were crumbling fast. I refused to pledge allegiance to the flag anymore. A lot was happening at that time I didn't understand as well. I was helping my mom campaign for RFK, going to Railroad stations and handing out leaflets. He was assassinated on the eve of my 8th grade graduation. I can remember sitting in front of the T.V. set crying.

I spent the first 2 years of high school in parochial all-girls schools. Continuing to be active in school activities like aquatics, diving teams, head class cheerleader, I even won a school spirit award that 1st year at Notre Dame College Prep in Belmont. The next year I transferred to Mercy High in Burlingame, although closer to home they were much the same. I was elected school mascot " Crusader Rabbit ", helped organize school dances, and attended all the parties and dances with the boys from the local all male parochial school. I spent my weekends skiing. (Another one of my parents' attempts to divert me from my less desirable activities). In my sophomore year my friends and I started smoking dope, dropping speed and getting drunk more often. Mercy High was located on an estate and we had modular (free) scheduling. All our free time between classes was spent in the " canyon " behind the school getting high. We did it every day and often attended classes quite stoned. If the nuns suspected, they never let on.

About this time I met a black young man at a high-school dance. He was a lot of fun to be around and we got along real well. When I told my parents about him they began hinting at first, then blatantly admitting that they did not want their daughter dating someone black. I absolutely flipped my lid. I was so angry and hurt I couldn't cry. To me they were blazing hypocrites. Where were all the principles of equality they had been preaching-teaching me all my life? Shortly after they did the same thing concerning a Mexican guy I met named Andy. From this point on my relationship with my parents took a slow but steady downhill course. I soon became bored stiff with the high school dances and Catholic School System in general. My grades were high but my morale was low. I stopped going to church (unbeknown to my parents) around this same time.

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Elected as Jr. Class President in 1970, I was required to give a 1st quarter statement to the School Assembly. I announced along with it my resignation as class president because in good conscience and in striving for a better education, I was leaving the high paid tuition of the parochial school paradox for the public school system.

The next 2 years of High School at Mills in Millbrae, proved more productive educationally and socially. I got a new perspective of society. I volunteered one day a week as a candy-striper in transportation at Peninsula Hospital. I also worked actively to pass the Coastal Initiative...getting petitions signed, attending meetings, painting posters. I learned about International Relations with Mr. Alkema and attended War Moratoriums in Golden Gate Park. My parents continued to do their best to divert me from my political involvements by sending me to ski and spend "up to" the mountains ~~time~~ in the summer with friends. They were doing their damnest but it wasn't working, I was also using drugs more and more all the time.

There were only 12 black students at Mills. Most of whom I at least knew and spoke with-occasionally hung out with. They put on a dynamite program for National Black History Day at a School Assembly. It was outspoken with their Black Pride and Culture so profoundly I didn't hesitate at the end to stand up, applaud and yell my approval. Except for my friend Terry, standing beside me, we were the only 2 in the whole auditorium who showed any recognition of their message they so eloquently displayed. God-- I was angry -- so angry I almost refused to attend Commencement Exercises. Those white kids at that school were getting under my skin...deep.

I was always aware from about the age of 10 yrs. that my dad drank too much. He had a medical problem that complicated it further. On one hand I felt sorry for him because he was so tied up inside from trying so damn hard to make it for himself and his family, as an accountant at Bethlehem Steel Co.. 27 years of his life he gave to that corporation and all they gave him in return was overwork, overtime and ruin his health. He almost died of peritonitis one time and always had severe intestinal problems, all tension related. On the other hand, we had some heavy arguments when he had had too much to drink. One night at dinner we were having a discussion about Capital Punishment. I voiced my strong convictions against "legal murder" and he got so angry that he got up from the table with a steak knife in his hand and chased me through the house. I was more taken aback by his behaviour than I was scared. He was yelling, "No daughter of mine is going to talk like that about Capital Punishment!" With ~~as well as every other time~~ I found out I had been lied to about "democratic justice", I became increasingly more adverse and hostile toward my parents and society in general.

I left home shortly after I turned 18, when my mom confiscated $\frac{1}{2}$ pd. of marijuana I had purchased with my own part-time work money. I told her to give me the \$ 90.00 or the dope and she refused so I walked out and moved in with a friend. She turned over the weed to a friend of hers who belonged to the F.B.I. I really felt good about that. But, I was never busted, miraculously. So I moved in with my boyfriend. It was easy to leave my parents at this time, because, especially my mom had been harrassing my friends and I. Having us followed by police and even requesting that my friends house be searched. I felt nothing but contempt for them both. Our relationship had totally dissolved over my using drugs, and in the next year I only saw them 2 times. Once at my graduation and again at Christmas. I know it was hard on them. They saw their daughter being destroyed (as they saw it) and they couldn't handle it. They were desperate.

After being jilted over a deal involving Tim's candle business by his so-called "best-friend" in Oregon, we decided to settle down in Pescadero, Ca. We resolved ourselves to do our best all over again. We found a little house in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Pescadero, Ca., where we set up and made candles. We lived on very little but we were satisfied with our garden and fruit trees and our friends who often came to stay in our country-mountain home. We became close with the old man who lived up the hill from us, "Mac", Walter MacDonald. He would sit for hours and tell us of his past --everything from the S.F. earthquake and his years with the S.F. Fire Dept. to all about his family living and dead. He was so lonely. His only son, a wealthy architect, living in Marin County, had no time for Mac. In the year we lived there I never saw him visit once and he lived only 60 miles away. Mac treated us like his own. He was always buying us things and when I would ask him not to, he would conveniently go deaf. He taught us how to roaster-till and plant our 2 acre garden. We were often invited up for "Firemen's Stew", his specialty, many a time we would have to go home and start on candle making at midnight to catch up, but it was worth it. Mac got real sick that winter and I came over and cleaned house for him---what he'd let me--he argued with me the whole time to quit. His son never showed up one time when he was sick. When he got well he bought his granddaughter a horse in hopes she would come visit her grandpa and ride the horse. And I mean this horse was $\frac{1}{2}$ thoroughbred and beautiful. She wouldn't come because it might damage her "ballet knees" to ride the horse. Mac was heartbroken.

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So I went with Mac two or three times a week to feed Bubbles and sometimes ride her to. It made him happy so it made me happy. I had always been horrified with the way Sr. Citizens were regarded and treated by our society. One Christmastime in grammar school I had cried when we walked through the Convalescent Hospital singing Christmas Carols. Now here was another old person being ignored and neglected by his own self-centered son and family. Mac died last year, alone, in his hospital bed in Burlingame.

Then one day a neighbor came by with a petition ---there were plans to construct a Sattelite Monitoring Tracking System Station complete with asphalt parking lot and cyclone fences in the field directly across the road from our home. Everywhere we turned things were being ruined. When people we were acquainted with asked us what we were doing or why we chose to live in the mountains we answered that by just living the way we did---doing what we saw as "right" was all we felt we could do. There wasn't going to be any way to change things. Well, we thought we were "safe" living in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

One winter's day in January we finally looked up Jim Jones and Peoples Temple. That was in 1973 .. We had heard about him the previous summer on a trip to Colorado to a "spiritual festival" I won't ever forget that day. The four of us, Tim and me, and 2 of our closest friends walked into Peoples Temple, San Francisco expecting to see some "cosmic charismatic guru" type person like Swami Satchidananda or Mahareshi. We were pleasantly surprised. We were warmly greeted by a group of black and white men and women who sat down and talked with us about ourselves and where we came from. Then they took us on in to the meeting. We took our seats and waited to see "JIM". A very modestly dressed man stepped up into the pulpit and began, very humbly to tell about the Temple's Sr. Citizen homes and the Childrens Ranch and even an Animal Shelter taking in abused homeless animals. Then Tim nudged me and said, "Yea know, I think that is him". Sure enough. I was really impressed. This man was highly unusual---humble and to the point. We were further impressed by the friendliness and warmth of the interracial (mostly black) congregation. Several times Jim asked everyone to "greet your neighbor" and I found myself being genuinely embraced and greeted by black seniors, young people and small children-black and white alike. I was deeply touched. Jim mentioned his views on a few current events such as the Vietnam War and Watergate, Civil Rights and integration. I was greatly pleased to find myself in full agreement with him... and he had a lot to add to my present knowledge of all the issues at hand. I knew I would be back. I was very impressed.

About this same time all of us were getting a lot of drugs. Snorting, smoking, dropping, drinking anything to escape. We started to spend every weekend at the Temple---sometimes we'd stayed home to catch up on the candles. We were living double lives in a way. Weekends with the Temple and Monday thru Friday staying high and getting by. Life was becoming increasingly frustrating and more empty. Tim and I were no longer content with our lives. Knowing that there were so many people who needed help out there---and now we had a way to help them---no excuse anymore. So in May of 1973 we got married and moved to Redwood Valley. I was 19 years old then and Tim was 22. Shortly after I re-established communications with my parents.

Jim Jones represented much more to me than just an example of someone who was dedicating his entire life to improving the world for others. He expressed so many of the feelings and hurt I had experienced in my upbringing as an average middle class white child in suburbia. He opened up new dimensions and gave me a whole new perspective about what was going on in the world. Not only that but he and the Temple gave me a way to do something about it. I had always wanted to do something about it, and now the opportunity was mine. I just couldn't walk away and shun the truth. It became my whole life. That is quite a major improvement for a young woman who had spent the past 5 years of her life dedicated to not much more than getting by---staying high and hating it all the time....hating it because I could not see what direction all of it was leading me. Now I had direction and much more than that I had encouragement from Jim and the other Temple members, and motivation as well. The Temple sponsored me through 3 semesters in College and I got a job as a Community Health Aide in the Family Planning Project at the Health Dept as a direct result. I would have never landed that job by myself.

I left a lot of friends behind when I came to the Temple. I saw them once or twice later on, but of all things they seemed aloof and non-caring. I think now that they were indifferent, or even a bit angry that Tim and I and 3 other close friends who came to the Temple, rejected the life that was made

available to us as white-middle-class "hippies". We'd found something much more in life and discarded the more materialistic ways (such as drugs and constant partying) to buckle down and get something done to change things around us. There is also a fringe benefit to making and carrying out that decision. For us, we became persons who now had some self-respect and in good conscience we could continue to live out our lives to their fullest.

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