

Most of the guest speakers at the JC meetings gave rather dry presentations on the subject of business or government. One night, however, the guest was J. D. Kuch, the foremost advocate of LSD in the Washington, D.C. area. She gave a lecture on the expansion of consciousness and the ability of LSD to open one's awareness to levels of perception not experienced by most people. Her descriptions of "acid trips" that she had taken sounded like many of the mystical experiences I had read about in religion and philosophy classes. The audience was enthralled by her accounts of divine oneness with all of creation, enhanced sensory perception beyond description, sublime tranquility and waves of love for all of humanity. LSD was not a recreational chemical for her, but a tool for spiritual growth. These experiences were so far removed from the everyday routine of the average person that it was difficult for the audience to identify with what she was trying to put into words. For me, however, her tales of higher consciousness created a strong desire to have the mystical or transcendental experience she described. My increasing dissatisfaction with conventional living gave rise to a yearning for a more meaningful life. Her description of a "higher" state of consciousness seemed to offer some insights into a deeper reality.

The next day Lieutenant Bill Peyson and I had lunch together. Other than being the only young bachelors in the office, we didn't seem to have much in common. He was a typical clean-cut military officer and seemed quiet and reserved at the office. As we were walking over to the officer's club for lunch I decided to share my encounter with the LSD lady the night before, just to see what his reaction would be. After I finished telling him how excited I was about the possibilities of LSD he looked over his shoulder and said, in a matter-of-fact tone, that he and his friend Lieutenant Commander Walt Solinger were good friends with Timothy Leary. They went to his ashram/commune in Millbrook, New York every few weeks to take LSD trips. Timothy Leary was the world's leading proponent of LSD. He began experimenting with the drug as a psychology professor at Harvard in the early 1960s and was eventually fired for actively promoting the use of LSD. He inspired

thousands of young people with his slogan, “turn on, tune in, drop out.” Naturally, this activity was not compatible with being a professor at one of the leading educational establishments in the country and he was dismissed.

When Bill finished telling me his story my body became numb, as though I was given a massive shot of Novocaine . I felt my jaw slacken and thought to myself, *How could this be?* Here was a straight-arrow military officer in the middle of top secret activities “dropping acid” every other weekend with his former aircraft commander. Bill went on to explain that he and Walt had become interested in Eastern philosophy while stationed in Asia and that their LSD experiences were similar to those described in the Bhagavad Gita and other Vedic and Buddhist texts. He then asked me if I was interested in going to Millbrook with them for an LSD trip. Without hesitation I said yes. He arranged a meeting with Walt to discuss bringing me along on their next trip to Millbrook.

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