

A Cartload of Bones

- Andrew 'droid' Stone @twittelator

Visiting John Perry Barlow in the ICU at UCSF Medical Center today brought back a flood of memories from the last 25 years.

The Weird Dad's Club, which we founded as a figmental fraternity of freaky fathers in the early 90's, had turned out ok - the kids really are alright.

2 of the 3 Barlowettes joined us today - Leah Justine and Anna. Anna is now in education and in Portland just like my second daughter, and she energizes a non-profit helping foster kids <http://coloroutsidelines.org>



Anna has a special place in my heart because my beloved wife Katie pretended to be Anna at our last Grateful Dead show with Jerry Garcia at McNichols Stadium Denver June 1995. Barlow had lent Katie Anna's backstage pass, so we got to hang with the GD family between sets, Katie vacillating between the joy of pretending and the fear of being exposed!

That particular show was loaded with epiphanies - it could have been that bio regional ayahuasca or maybe it was the roses.



Earlier we'd gathered in Barlow's room where he'd been continuing his effort to sabotage his marriage with a local Bobby's girl, Carey. My friend Sophie was quick to point out 'Carey, you know, because she cares'...

Descending the elevator, our posse noticed the LL button next to the L button. "What's LL for?" Barlow pondered. To which I retorted in a heavy New Mexican accent, "Why, that ees el *Yobby*"

Somewhere during Space and Drums, it was revealed that massive fountains of colored light were emitting from the crown chakras of everyone in the audience.

My grandfather, who had died a few years earlier, trans-dimensionally communicated to me, "here it is, The Torch. It's yours now."



I was flabbergasted to understand that the passing of the torch was more than an expression. The mantle of wisdom was literally being bestowed upon me in a dramatic display of psychic fireworks. We are all connected in a very real and visceral way that can be experienced directly, but I digress...

It was at the August 1990 ACM SIGGraph (the Association of Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group 'Graphics') conference in Dallas that I first met John.



He was on a [virtual reality panel](#) with Timothy Leary, Esther Dyson, Jaron Lanier, and other VR notables, and the question of the cost of the then million dollar machines. Barlow quipped, "For \$5, I can get a better virtual reality machine with a hit of LSD!"

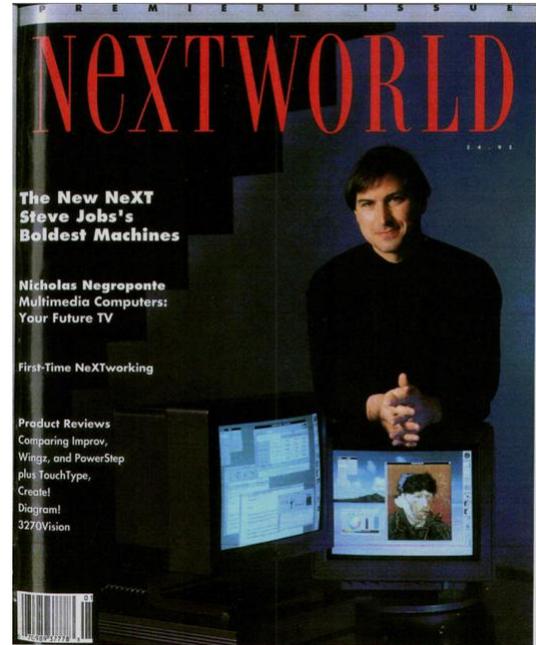
Here was the first public mention of the tabooed subject of psychedelics in such an open and honest way, and I found it both exciting and liberating.

I realized that just as each oppressed group before us, the psychedelic community needed a liberation movement too. I joined by 'being out' about my use of entheogens from that day forward.

As one of the first software developers for the NeXT computer, I got a call one day in '91. "Hello, Andrew? This is John Barlow from NeXTWorld magazine and I want to interview you."

"John Perry Barlow?", I queried. I could feel his delight at my recognition. It only grew when I reminded him of the SIGGraph story.

He interviewed me for the magazine, and the conversation wandered. Soon, I was providing sysadmin help to him for his NeXT computer, 'icecube'. We were both hosting server 'nodes' for uucp - the precursor to the internet that ran sendmail, mine went by cyberpunk nickname, 'droid'.



It was October 23rd 1992 at the Palace of Fine Arts when he and I first joined forces for a group liberation - **The 3D Reality Ball**.

We gathered our freaky friends from the burgeoning yet still underground rave scene, our cypher punk pals via John Gilmore's party list, Bobby Weir and buds, to mix it up with the NeXT community to launch stone.com's newest 3D modeling software.



By 1992, Steve Jobs had gotten his Q security clearance and sold a bunch of cubes to the NSA, and we had sold a boatload of software to some front company in Texas.

But since I was invited inside Fort Meade and got to enjoy that copper mesh covered building, I can tell you

there are Deadheads in the strangest of places, if you look at it right.

What better way to karmically clean dark money than throw a psychedelic rave and invite the NSA?



The Palace of Fine Arts had been totally transformed. Two dozen projectors on pillars on opposite sides of the room were projecting ambient images that would subtly change over time. A shamanic didgeridoo collapsed the space time continuum, as 'Bob' wandered about offering LSD

or MDMA to party goers. Genesis and Psychic TV performed a trippy concert, and the Cosmic Egg was cracked wide open.

Barlow and I were determined to keep Steve's original mystical spark burning and, other than my phone line getting tapped and being put under DEA investigation, it was a huge success.

In 1993, Barlow and I threw the next Stone Rave in conjunction with the NeXTWorld convention. This was a night Barlow memorialized with Ira Glass in a 1997 *This American Life* 'Conventions'. John Perry tells the true life story of love at first sight - that was the fateful day of meeting Dr. Cynthia Horner, who he was madly in love with until her tragic early death an all-too-short year later.

What he didn't mention to Ira was our crazy party and the love nest captured in this photo.

The next year we had the last Stone Rave as NeXT



was beginning to falter - dropping their hardware and trying to live off their software OpenStep, which by the way evolved into the iOS used on iPhones/iPads today.

But Barlow picked up the ball and during the latter nineties, threw many such wild and impromptu bashes with other friends. And other software companies started throwing these types of parties, realizing the guerrilla marketing gold of gifting good experiences.

'Bob' recently told me that people come up to him to this day exclaiming that those raves were the best parties they have ever been to.

Barlow's BFF since childhood Bobby Weir dropped in to the ICU today, between gearing up for the first weekend of the Grateful Dead Fare Thee Well tour and his daughter's recital. Yes, that's the loyalty Barlow commands.



Between the docs, nurses, phlebotomists, PT's and OT's wandering in and out of our remembrances, Barlow recalled a special day I toured him around Northern New Mexico.

We'd been up at my old adobe in Ojo Caliente, and Barlow breaks out some purple microdots. He told me that Owlsley had a demonic sense of humor - he had made a large batch of 200 microgram purple microdots, and a subsequent batch of slightly purpler 800 microgram hits.

Needless to say, sometimes these batches got confused. Now to put this in context for the youth of today, street acid is sold with about 75 micrograms of LSD per dose. 200 is almost 3 of today's hits, and 800 is over 10x! Facemelting.

I ate one, Barlow ate two, and we were off to visit two very antithetical places in the Jemez mountains.

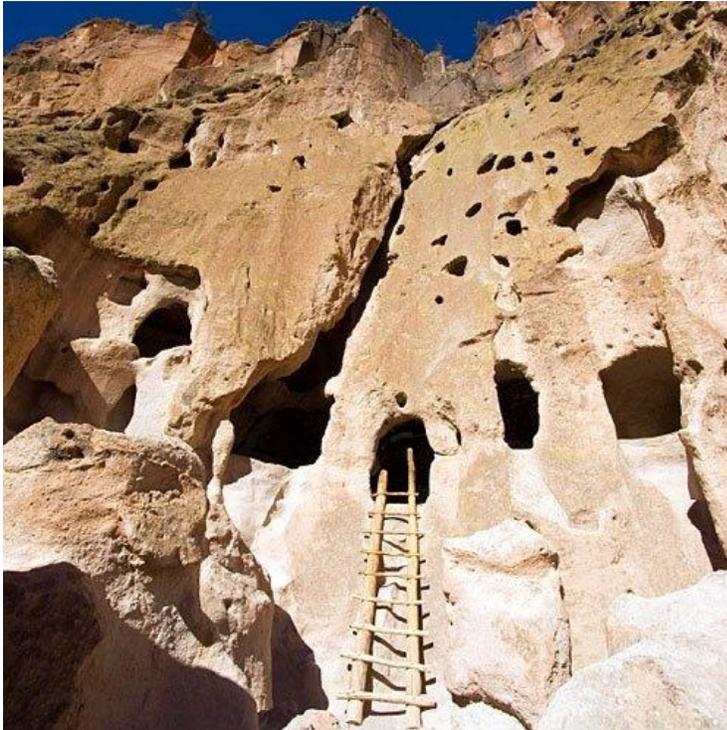


We arrive at the Los Alamos National Labs, drive by the guards with machine guns to visit their bomb museum, a tribute to the Manhattan Project. It's a creepy place, made even creepier with the onset of Bear's finest.



As we wandered through this orgy of death worship, I described to Barlow Hiroshima's bomb museum which documents with dioramas the day of one Japanese girl and culminates in the slab of sidewalk where the explosion had the effect of leaving the imprint of this young schoolgirl. Heart rending.

We escape Los Alamos and drive down the hill 1000 years to Bandelier National Monument. These are Anasazi ruins where the ancients had dug into the buttes made of lava ash to form connected spherical caves. This tuft is soft and easy to dig, and it hardens when exposed to air - the same stuff the underground towns of Capadoccia Turkey are carved out of.



We climb into the caves just as we are totally peaking, we settle in a bit, and notice how vibratory and echoey any sound is. We start om'ing and suddenly the synesthesia of seeing sounds and hearing visions manifests.

It becomes clear that the tools for creating altered consciousness have been around for millennia, and only now are we awakening en masse to the possibilities of a world that collaborates as we take the next quantum leap.

And it's thanks to my dear soul brother John Perry that so many have seen the light.

Come, shall we away?

San Francisco June 25th 2015